



U.S. doesn't 'single India out' on human rights, says NSA Sullivan



Divergent views on Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi order



China's Yi slams U.S. **Indo-Pacific strategy** ahead of Quad meet **Manchester City** overcomes Villa, retains Premier League title page 15

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page 13



Telangana CM urges farmers to resume stir

CHANDIGARI In an attempt to position himself as a national leader, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao took part in an event in Chandigarh on Sunday to honour the victims of the recent farmers' stir. Mr. Rao urged farmers to resume their agitation for all demands. NEWS ▶ PAGE 11

Delayed tour to avoid false cases, says Raj

MNS chief Raj Thackeray said on Sunday that he had deliberately put his tour of Ayodhya on hold as he did not want false cases to be lodged against his party workers. **STATES** ▶ PAGE 5

Flood situation improving in Assam

GUWAHATI The flood situation in Assam improved on Sunday, but left six people, including two children, dead, taking the death toll to 24. **NEWS** ▶ PAGE 10



EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 5

Centre bearing full duty cut burden: FM

Sitharaman says basic excise duty on petrol and diesel, which is shared with States, remains untouched

VIKAS DHOOT NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, on Sunday, said the entire duty reduction in petrol and diesel announced on Saturday had been done out of the road and infrastructure cess (RIC) component of the taxes levied on petroleum products, and the entire burden of the tax cuts was hence being

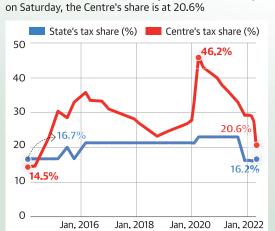
borne by the Centre. Allaying concerns that the duty cut will lower the devolution of taxes to the States, Ms. Sitharaman said the basic excise duty on petroleum products, which is shared with the States, had not been touched.

The Minister's remarks follow criticism by some States and Opposition leaders of her exhortation that they follow up the Centre's move by slashing State-level levies on fuel products.

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said the situation for the States was akin to being between "the devil and the deep sea", as they are getting very little by way of share of petroleum duties. "Their revenue is from VAT on Petrol and Diesel... I wonder if they can afford to give up that revenue unless the Centre devolved more funds or gave them more grants," he noted in a

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan reacted by stating that the Centre's tax rate dips but share remains high

The graph shows the Centre's and State's tax share in Delhi's retail petrol prices between May 2014 and May 2022. While the Centre's share has increased at various points, the State's curve has remained mostly flat. After the steep cut



varying tax rates between the Central and State governments, a comparison with GDP will bring out the difference better. Between FY15 and FY21, the Centre's tax collections have increased from 0.79% of GDP to 1.88% of GDP. In the same period, States' tax collections have marginally declined from 1.1% of GDP to 1.02% of GDP

Union government did not inform the States or ask for their views while increasing Central taxes on petrol by about ₹23 a litre (plus 250%) and by around ₹29 a litre (plus 900%) on diesel since 2014. "Now, after rolling back ~50% of their increases, they're exhorting States to cut," he said in a tweet, stressing it was an unfair and unreasonable expectation.

"Good to see the interest generated by @PMOIndia @narendramodi's decision yesterday to bring an Excise Duty cut on petrol and diesel," Ms. Sitharaman said in a tweet, before sharing "some useful facts" which could benefit the "criticism and appraisal" of the tax cuts.

The total taxes levied on petrol and diesel include a basic excise duty, a special additional excise duty, the road and infrastructure cess and the agriculture and infrastructure development cess, of which only the basic duty is shared with the States, she said.

Ms. Sitharaman said the duty cuts announced in November 2021, of ₹5 a litre of petrol and ₹10 a litre of diesel, were also made entirely in the road and infrastructure cess component of petroleum taxes.

The total revenue implication to the Centre, on these two duty cuts, is ₹2,20,000 crore a year, the Finance Minister noted, before emphasising that spending on development and subsidies has accelerated under the Modi government.

RBI data show total development expenditure incurred from 2014 to 2022 was ₹90.9 lakh crore. Only ₹49.2 lakh crore was spent on development expenditure from 2004 to 2014, she said. "The expenditure incurred by our government so far includes ₹24.85 lakh crore spent on food, fuel and fertilizer subsidies and ₹26.3 lakh crore on capital creation. Over the 10 years of UPA, only ₹13.9 lakh crore was spent on subsidies," she

Many States reluctant to cut tax

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Maharashtra government pared its value-added tax (VAT) levies on petrol and diesel by ₹2.08 and ₹1.44 a litre, respectively, on Sunday, a day after criticising the Centre for offering minimal tax cuts after drastic hikes over its tenure, a sentiment echoed by most States

ruled by BJP rivals. Telangana Finance Minister T. Harish Rao termed the Centre's partial reduction of the cess levied on petroleum products "bogus" and "humbug", and joined his Tamil Nadu counterpart P.T.R. Palanivel Thiaga Rajan in calling for further cuts in the Union taxes as they had been hiked sharply since 2014.

After Saturday's excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel of ₹8 and ₹6 per litre on Saturday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plea for States that had not cut their taxes since November 2021 - when the Centre announced the last round of tax cuts - to do so now.



Demolition drive: Bulldozers and excavators being used to

Houses of suspects in Assam violence razed

Action follows arson in police station

sons involved in torching

the Batadrava police station

on Saturday were arrested,

while 15 were detained. "A

special investigation team

would be formed and it will

be given 45 days to finish the

probe and 60 days to submit

the chargesheet in court,"

He said the death of Safi-

qul Islam, 39, the fish trader

who allegedly died in police

custody leading to the

storming and torching of the

police station, would be in-

vestigated by an Additional

Kumud Gogoi, the officer

in charge of the police sta-

tion, was suspended while

the other personnel were

"reserve-closed". The local

people had accused the pol-

ice of torturing Islam to

Superintendent of Police.

he added.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Authorities in Nagaon district of central Assam on Sunday demolished the houses of five persons suspected to have been among those who set a police station ablaze on Saturday after the alleged custodial death of a fish trader.

Bulldozers and excavators were used to flatten the houses of suspected arsonists in the Salbabari area.

Special Director-General of Police G.P. Singh told presspersons that investigation revealed some of the suspects had encroached upon land and acquired possession with forged documents. The eviction drive was carried out after a case was registered against them.

The affected people not illegal structures.

death for not coughing up claimed their houses were ₹10,000 and a duck. concluded. **CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 10 Mr. Singh said seven per-**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 10

COMMERCE & ACCOUNTANCY



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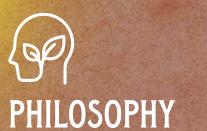
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CM YK

AAP-BJP trade barbs over desilting of drains | Post-COVID financial distress

MCD says 66% of desilting work done, plans to complete the task of all drains by June 15

DELHI CITY TEAM

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has failed to make preparations to desilt the city's drains in time, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said on Sunday.

The reunified MCD came into being on Sunday, with the three municipal corporations - North, South and East – merging into a single entity with the notification in this regard being issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday.

AAP's claims

Senior AAP leader and MCDin-charge Durgesh Pathak said weather experts have predicted that the monsoon season in Delhi will begin any time after June 5, however, the MCD has not even started cleaning the drains, 95% of which come under the municipality's purview.

"The BJP talks of bulldozers all day but where are the bulldozers that should be cleaning drains? By this time, a fleet of bulldozers should have been deployed to clean the drains," Mr. Pathak said.

He added that it was important to bring "this dismal state of affairs to public notice of how the BIP-led MCD is failing to fulfil its basic responsibilities."

MCD's response

However, the MCD in a statement issued on Sunday said



A DTC bus stranded under the waterlogged Minto Road railway bridge after a heavy spell of rain in Delhi. ■FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

it plans to complete the work of desilting all the drains by June 15, before the onset of the monsoon.

It said that it had already finished two-thirds of the desilting work.

The municipality said it has abundant equipment for removing the silt from the drains and experienced personnel to do this work.

"MCD has completed about 66% of the desilting work and removed about 60,000 metric tonnes of silt from the drains. Silt from the drains is sent to the landfill site, which is monitored by

ASSAM STATE TRANSPORT CORPORATION

TENDER NOTICE

Purchase of 100 Nos 9 meter AC Electric bus (High Range) from Original Equipment

Manufacturer/Authorized Dealer by Assam State Transport Corporation

and Financial) in online mode from reputed OEMs/Authorized Dealers for supply and delivery

of 100 (One hundred) fully built 9 meter AC Electric buses (High Range). The bidding system

All interested parties are requested to check the RFB at Assam tenders portal https://assam-

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The tender processing fee should be submitted online by means of Internet bankng/ NEFT/RTGS. Snapshot of proof of online payment of Tender processing fee should be

uploaded online along with the technical bid documents. Earnest money Deposit should be submitted in form of Bank quarantee in the format specified in the RFB. Hard copy of

the EMD along with any other document executed on non-judicial stamp paper, undertaking sought. forming part of the Bid as specified in the RFB myst reach the office of

the undersigned before the last date and time of submission as stated below. Bidders

should note that the financial bid must be submitted in assam tenders portal https://

The RFB document may be downloaded from https://assamtenders.gov.in from 21/05/2022

TENDER NOTICE

Request for Bid for

Purchase of 100 Nos 9 meter AC Electric bus (Low Range) from Original Equipment

Manufacturer/Authorized Dealer by Assam State Transport Corporation

Assam State Transport Corporation invites sealed tenders in 2(two) bid system (Technical and

Financial) in online mode from reputed OEMs/Authorized Dealers for supply and delivery of

100 (One hundred) fully built 9 meter AC Electric buses (Low Range). The bidding system shall

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be done through online mode Assam tenders portal https://assamtenders.gov.in

poratal only by means of a corrigendum or re-tender, if necessary

Tender Processing Fee:- Rs. 10,000/-

Earnest money Deposite:- Rs. 1,00,00,000/-

Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC)

Paribahan Bhawan, Partanbazar, Guwahati - 781008

Submission of tenders will be done only through https://assamtenders.gov.in/.

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NIT NO. ASTC/HO/CE(A&T)/Procurement of EV/024/Vol-2/2021-22/726

RFB submission last Date & Time: Till 4 PM on 20/06/2022

shall be done through online mode Assam tenders portal https://assamtenders.gov.in

Submission of tenders will be done only through https://assamtenders.gov.in/.

poratal only by means of a corrigendum or re-tender, if necessary

Tender Processing Fee:- Rs. 10,000/-

Earnest money Deposite: - Rs. 1,00,00,000/-

Assam State Transport Corporation invites sealed tenders in 2(two) bid system (Technical

Request for Bid for

NIT NO. ASTC/HO/CE(A&T)/Procurement of EV/024/Vol-2/2021-22/725

RFID, and there is no scope for human intervention in it," the statement read.

BJP's counterattack

Responding to the allegations, Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that Mr. Pathak had made a false statement by saying that 95% of Delhi's rains fall in MCD areas.

The truth is that 75% drains are under the Delhi government, he said.

"I challenge Mr. Pathak to show if any of Delhi government's departments, be it PWD, Jal Board or Flood Department, are carrying out any desilting work on any major drains. The fact is that past experiences show that the monsoon reaches Delhi in the first week of July and it is sad that Mr. Pathak speaks without proper knowledge on every matter related to

Delhi," said Mr. Kapoor. He added that one of the last decisions that the outgoing Mayors of the MCDs took on Sunday was to start of desilting of drains, for which work has already been

Mr. Pathak said that over a

Silt from the drains is sent to the landfill site, which is monitored by RFID, and there is no scope for human intervention in it

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI

thousand bulldozers are required for the cleaning of small-to-medium-sized drains across Delhi but the MCD does not possess more than 50 bulldozers.

"The procedure for cleaning these drains begins with acquiring/renting the required number of bulldozers about a month in advance," Mr. Pathak said.

Delhi's Vasant Vihar.

two-room house in the

area's Vasant Apartments,

for the last two decades, the

family lived a normal life

until the head, the father,

died of COVID-19 complica-

tions during the second

wave of the pandemic last

year. An assistant to a char-

tered accountant. Umesh

Srivastva used to earn just

The two daughters were

among the 2,500 children

who lost a parent to the CO-

VID-19 pandemic in the Cap-

ital between March 2020

and August last year, as per

official government statis-

tics. A total of 26,200 CO-

VID-19-related deaths have

been reported in the Capital

the family head, the finan-

cial condition of the woman

and her two daughters start-

ed deteriorating, forcing

them to cut down on ex-

ly, which hailed from Kan-

pur, used to keep to them-

selves and barely interacted

in

with anyone

neighbourhood.

Neighbours said the fami-

Soon after the death of

enough to run the house.

The descent

He added that the MCD had not even initiated the process to procure these bulldozers, "forget beginning the actual cleaning and silt removal work".

Weather forecast

According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the usual time for the arrival of the monsoon in Delhi is June 27.

Last year, the monsoon was delayed and reached the city on July 13. But with over 1,000 mm of rain, it was one of the wettest monsoons on record. Intense spells of rain had caused widespread waterlogging, with one person drowning in a waterlogged underpass.

STAFF REPORTER

"A strong message has to be sent to society that the orders of the court cannot be flouted by using strong-arm tactics," Justice Subramoni-

The wall was constructed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

leader Amanatullah Khan

has sent a legal notice to the

Delhi police demanding an

"unconditional public apol-

ogy" for allegedly violating

his and his family's "funda-

Okhla, was recently arrested

during an anti-encroach-

ment drive in Madanpur

Khadar and had been de-

clared a "bad character" by

Mr. Khan, an MLA from

mental rights".

owner of an adjoining property, Shyam Sundar Tyagi, have an ongoing legal dispute with regards to its de-

demolished the boundary wall. He submitted that the demolition was carried out as he was under the misconception that the wall had been constructed on his

Tyagi that the previous orders to construct the wall was passed by the court in on the property in Burari. Its his presence and hence, he owner, Nirmal Jindal and could not plead ignorance.

"Delhi Police is constant-

ly targeting me. This time,

the police attacked my right

to live with dignity besides

defaming my family. Delhi

Police is weaving imaginary

stories about me without

any evidence," Mr. Khan

tweeted on Sunday sharing

ice Commissioner on Satur-

day demanded an "uncon-

ditional, written, public

The notice sent to the Pol-

a copy of the notice.

apology".

'Orders can't be flouted by using strong-arm tactics'

The Delhi High Court has sentenced a man to 45-day imprisonment after holding him guilty of contempt of court for demolishing a boundary wall erected with permission of the court on a

um Prasad said.

On January 3, Mr. Tyagi

daughter once a week," said

HC sentences man to 45-day prison

Amanatullah Khan seeks

apology from Delhi police

NEW DELHI

disputed property.

'Reclusive, aloof' "When their father was alive, he always used to

greet me, but after his death, his wife became bedridden and the elder daughter also fell ill. The family went into a cocoon and stopped coming out of the house and interact with their neighbours. We used The judge reminded Mr. to see only the younger

> Pammi Mudgil, a neighbour. Ms. Mudgil said the only



pushes family over the edge

Why didn't they talk to us, ask family members, neighbours

Outside the house in Vasant Vihar where three members of a family were found

came out to feed the street dogs and cows.

The younger daughter was more active than her elder sister and the mother. She used to interact with the neighbours. She was smart and wanted to work. Somehow, due to her upbringing and the condition of her mother, she never took up a job," Ms. Mudgil added.

"The family never asked for any money. After their father's death, the RWA crowdfunded members ₹20,000 and gave it to them," Ms. Mudgil added.

The only person that the three family members frequently interacted with was their house help, Kamla. She was asked to leave two years earlier after the family's financial troubles.

"I had developed an emotional bond with the family, so I used to keep checking on them to see if they needed anything. On the day of the incident. I went to their house and found it locked. I got scared and informed the neighbours," Kamla said.

Both the daughters had completed their B.Com. but hadn't taken up any job yet. "Even when their father was alive, he used to restrict the activities of his wife and daughters. He prevented them from interacting with ger daughter was when she David, president of the so- a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

ciety's Resident Welfare

Association.

'Owned another flat' The family also owned another two-room flat next to the one they lived in and

earned a monthly rent of

₹13,000. "Six months ago, they suddenly asked their tenants to vacate the flat, saying that one of their relatives would stay there. I don't know why they did that. They were at least earning something out of it," Mr. David said.

None of their neighbours expected the family to take such a drastic step. "They could have talked to us and shared their concerns. We could have helped them both emotionally and mentally. I don't know why they didn't come forward," Mr.

David added. Around 500 metres from the house is a grocery store, to which the family owed ₹6,000. The family hadn't paid the store owner for the

past two months. "They used to regularly buy grocery items from us, but a few months ago they stopped buying goods from here and changed shops,"

said shop owner Lalita Jain. Outside the mortuary, the sisters' cousin recalled how they would always claimed that everything was fine and that they didn't need any financial help.

'Never asked for help'

"They never asked us for money as it was an issue of prestige for them. They always said everything was going well. I knew that they were barely making ends meet. I wish they had shared their problems with me," the brother said.

Sources said that in the notes left behind by the deceased, the family highlighted their emotional, financial and health problems.

"In one of the notes, they said that the family's belongings be handed over to Kamla and thanked all their neighbours who tried to help them," a senior police officer said.

Suicide prevention helpline:Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 time they spotted the youn- their neighbours," said M. 9002, Monday-Saturday (10

Bars move HC for 'harassment' over serving liquor beyond 1 a.m.

Petition by bars, restaurants claims police interference

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH NEW DELHI

The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has moved the Delhi High Court complaining that the city police were "harassing and obstructing" restaurants and clubs in the Capital from serving liquor beyond 1 a.m.

The association, whose members run restaurants and bars across Delhi, said the police was "prohibiting and preventing" restaurants and bars from operating beyond 1 a.m., in contravention of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22.

BJP's objection Senior advocate Vinay Kr.

Garg and advocate P.S. Singal, representing the restaurant association, stated that initially after the rollout of the excise policy, various restrictions due to COVID-19 were persisting in the Capital, which effectively continued till January 2021. But once the restrictions were lifted, NRAI members began opening their restaurants and bars till 3 a.m. in a routine manner with all the requisite licences and did not face any objection from any police officer. Since the launch of the

new excise policy in November last year, the BJP has been campaigning against the Delhi government over various issues in the policy. Earlier this month, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shan-



The "police harassment" has affected their business, say owners of bars and restaurants serving liquor. • FILE РНОТО

kar Kapoor wrote to Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana requesting him not to accept the government's proposal to allow bars and liquor-serving restaurants to open till 3 a.m., claiming "it is not in public interest".

According to the petition, "after some persons affiliated with political establishments approached the Delhi police", its officers started visiting restaurants, pubs and bars with "oral directives of shutting down the operations by 1 a.m. instead of 3 a.m."

The plea added that the "illegal action" by the Delhi police officers is being done with "dishonest intentions" because the police "refused to issue any challan or give anything in writing."

No response was received from the Delhi police on the matter till the time the story was published.

The High Court has scheduled the case's hearing for May 24.

The association pointed out that the new excise policy "unambiguously" lays down that the bars in hotels, restaurants and clubs are allowed to operate till 3 a.m. "This policy also permitted all the hotels, restaurants and clubs to serve liquor till 3 a.m. to sync with the present-day business and social perspectives and align the timings of operation of bars at par with the neighbouring cities," the petition said.

Business affected

The association said that to take advantage of the extended opening hours allowed by the new policy, its members had invested a huge amount of money for the licence fees, which had been substantially hiked.

It added that the "police harassment" has not only disrupted their business but also deprived them of the hard-earned goodwill of their business.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY NOTICE OF INVITING E-TENDER

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work(Rs): 1,50,09,052.12/- (3) Bid
security (Rs): 2,25,000/- (Online
Payment Only), (4) Date & Time for
Submission up to on www.ireps.gov.in
:14.06.22 Up to 15.00 hrs., (5) Website
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PNIe-T No.F.6(293)/TREDA/NCES/2022/427

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

On behalf of Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency (TREDA), Joint Director invites e-tender for design, manufacture, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 10 KWp Grid Interactive Solar Power Plants in Tripura on turnkey basis vide DNIe-T No.F.6(293)/TREDA/NCES/2022/426, dated 21/05/2022

The tender papers may be downloaded from e-procurement portal https://tripuratenders.gov.in and the last date for submission of online e-bid is 14/06/2022 up to 03:30 PM.

(D S DAS) Joint Director

Date 21/05/2022

Janasanyog /CF/644/22 **Assam State Transport Corporation**

Address for Submission:

O/o Managing Director

Phone: 0361-2730024

RFB submission last Date & Time: Till 4 PM on 20/06/2022

For more details please contact:

Balin Das, Chief Engineer (A&T)

Managing Director

Email: ce.ant.astc@gmail.com

Phone: 8811023706

Man beaten

Rajasthan over

A 40-year-old labourer was

beaten to death with rods

and clubs and his legs

crushed with a tractor by a

group of villagers in Rajas-

than's Bundi district on

Sunday following a dispute

over "illegal" occupation

of forest land, police said

been registered against

nine people and two of

them, suspected to be the

prime accused, have been

A case of murder has

on Sunday.

land dispute

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

to death in

TUESDAY, MAY. 24 RISE 05:27 SET 19:11 RISE 01:55 SET 13:38

WEDNESDAY, MAY. 25 RISE 05:26 SET 19:11

Delhi Weather Delhi City

Delhi Palam Today 38°C The weather will be hot and uneasy. Night will be uneasy. Few spells of dust storm and thundershower with strong winds to occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 35°C Temperature to decrease. Day will be warm. Dust storm and thundershower with gale winds to occur.

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THEMAHINDU

Haryana govt. ignoring farmers, says Hooda

'Cong. to formulate import-export policy for farm produce'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Former Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition in the Haryana Assembly Bhupinder Singh Hood on Sunday said an import-export policy for farmers' produce was discussed at the Congress' "Chintan Shivir" held earlier this month and it was decided to formulate a policy keeping the interests of the farming community at the top of the agenda.

Addressing a press conference at Rohtak, Mr. Hooda said there was also a discussion on making farmers debt-free and it was decided to constitute a national commission for this.

"We also decided that in case of non-payment of loan, no farmer's land would be auctioned. Apart from this, it was agreed to give many more concessions including free electricity to "The government has

Bhupinder Singh Hooda

farmers," he pointed out. Mr. Hooda accused the State government of ignoring the demands and problems of farmers.

"Despite repeated demands, the government did not give a bonus on wheat to the farmers, even as the price of wheat in the international market is skyrocketing. Farmers of the country and the State should get the benefit," he stated.

The former Chief Minister also said the future generations would have to bear the brunt of the indifferent attitude of the BIP-IIP government towards the education

completely ignored schools and model schools built during the Congress rule. In Rohtak, for example, model schools, which had to hold exams for admissions are not even able to fill their seats today," he said.

"It is obvious that the youth, farmers, labourers, employees, traders, teachers, students and everyone is troubled by the policies of the present government. Therefore, as the Opposition, the Congress has decided to go to the public. The next 'Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh' programme is going to be held in Fatehabad on May 29," he said.

62 booked for 'pro-Pakistan' slogans at Jharkhand rally

Video of poll victory procession goes viral; no arrests yet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

As many as 62 people, including a newly elected panchayat samiti member, have been booked for allegedly raising pro-Pakistan slogans at a panchayat poll victory procession in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

A video clip of the procession outside Bazar Samiti, where several people were heard shouting 'Pakistan Zindabad', went viral on social media, following which the police swung into action and registered a case in the matter, Hazaribag Superintendent of Police (SP) Manoi Ratan Chothe said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

An associate professor of a

college in Assam's Hailakandi district, who was arrested

for allegedly sending emails

to officials criticising government policies and using un-

parliamentary words against

the Chief Minister, has been

granted bail by a local court,

a senior police officer said

A suo motu case was re-

gistered by the police against

the accused based on his

emails and he was placed

under arrest on Saturday af-

ter nearly 18 hours of ques-

"The accused moved for

bail, which was granted to

tioning, the officer said.

on Sunday.

No arrest has been made so far as the police are still verifying the authenticity of the clip, Mr. Chothe explained. Local leader Amina Khatoon's victory in the first phase of panchavat elections prompted her supporters to take out a rally on Saturday from Shiladih in Barkatha

FIR registered

block, he said.

"An FIR has been lodged against 12 named people, including the newly elected panchayat samiti member of Shiladih, and 50 unknown persons. The team is working to ascertain the truth behind the viral video. If it is found to be authentic, strong

Assam professor arrested for

criticising government policies

He was later granted bail by a court in Hailakandi district

ing," he said.

the officer stated.

him late on Saturday even-

several government officials,

including the Superinten-

dent of Police of Hailakandi,

which was extremely hateful

and communal in nature,"

facing allegation of attempt-

ing to insult other religious

faiths with a purpose of

creating a divisive atmosph-

slang language and highly

objectionable words against

authorities of the Assam go-

vernment, including Chief

Minister Himanta Biswa Sar-

ma and Education Minister

"The email had used

ere, the officer added.

The associate professor is

"He had sent out emails to

action will be taken against everyone," the SP added.

This was the second such incident reported amid the four-phase panchayat polls.

On April 21, a candidate for the post of gram panchayat head in a village of Giridih district, along with two of his supporters, was arrested for allegedly raising similar pro-Pakistan slogans, as he was on his way to file his nomination for the election.

Two phases of the elections have been conducted, while polling for the third and fourth phases will be held on May 24 and May 27 respectively. Results for the first phase of polls were de-

Ranoj Pegu. In the email. he

criticised the educational

system and tried to promote

a book written by him,

which is based primarily of

Islamic faith and virtue," he

The senior officer claimed

that it was a "deliberate and

malicious intend to outrage

the religious feelings and an

attempt to insult other reli-

gious faith with a purpose of

He also allegedly submit-

ted an objectionable petition

against the government Pro-

gram 'Gunotsav', an exercise

to evaluate government

schools, the police officer

creating

atmosphere".

detained, the police said. The deceased was identified as Sukhlal Gurjar, a labourer under the government's rural job scheme, MGNREGA.

According to the police, Gurjar, a resident of Chanda Ka Talab under Talera police station, was returning home on his motorcycle on Sunday morning when the accused attacked

On being informed, his family members and police rushed to the spot and took him to a hospital in Kota, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

The police said Gurjar had a dispute with some villagers over occupying a plot of forest grassland. The two sides had a

scuffle around seven months ago, when one youth of the other side sustained fracture, a police officer said.

The prime accused were identified as Gujraj Gurjar and Bhojraj Gurjar, the police said, adding efforts were underway to nab the remaining accused.

The body was handed over to family members after postmortem later in the day, he added.

Message against drugs



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann leads a bicycle rally against drugs in Sangrur on Sunday. • PTI

Waste dumping near Gurugram graveyard adds to mourners' woes

Construction rubble dumped regularly, says caretaker

ASHOK KUMAR

"Everybody deserves dignity in death. But members of the Muslim and the Christian communities laid to rest at these cemeteries are being deprived of even this," said Father Daman Rodgers, The Church of Epiphany, Civil Lines, referring to illegal dumping of the Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste that blocks the road leading to the graveyard in Sector 58

Two Christian cemeteries and a Muslim graveyard lie at the end of an 18-metre-wide road leading from Golf Course Extension road. With construction waste blocking the only access, mourners have to take an alternative, non-metalled road to reach the site.

The religious leaders of the two communities say that despite raising the matter with the authorities municipal body, the police and the Deputy Commissioner – for more than two years now, the construction waste continues to be dumped outside the graveyard.

Aslam Khan, chairman, Haryana Anjuman Charitable Trust, said the matter was brought to the notice of the municipality on several occasions as recently as May 5, when a letter was written to the Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG). However, Mr. Khan says, no action was taken to prevent waste

dumping. "The waste is mostly



Illegal dumping blocks the road leading to the graveyard in Guruaram's Sector 58. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tion ground to be shifted, the

cemeteries and graveyard re-

two Christian cemeteries

was allotted in 2005, we got

the possession of one ceme-

tery just a year back due to

resistance by the locals," said

cemeteries has also been en-

croached upon by locals,

causing inconvenience to the

two communities had also

requested the authorities to

allow them to fence the road

to prevent the dumping of

rubble. However, they re-

ceived no response from the

Ikramuddin, caretaker,

Anjuman Baghiya (a Muslim

graveyard), said, "They are

dumping not just construc-

tion waste here, but medical

waste as well. It emanates a

foul smell. All this waste forc-

es the mourners to reach the

graveyard via a bumpy, un-

metalled road with heaps of

rubble lying on both sides."

He said the leaders of the

mourners, he claimed.

The parking site for the

Mr. Rodgers.

authorities.

"Though the land for the

dumped at night and the tractor-trolleys that dump the waste don't have registration numbers on them, which makes it harder to track them. Some of these vehicles have 'Nagar Nigam Gurugram' inscribed on them, but the municipal body officials deny their involvement in it," said Mr. Khan.

The Gurugram police said they had warned the tractortrolley drivers not to dump the rubble at the site after a complaint was received from the Anjuman Trust. The police said they also wrote to the MCG asking them to shift the waste collection point near the graveyards. "It is not a criminal act. The municipal body must address it," said a police officer at Sector 65

police station. Mr. Rodgers said the locals opposed the two cemeteries, graveyard, and a cremation ground when the government allotted land for them

two decades ago. The locals approached the court seeking a stay. While the court ordered the crema-

Ricky Kej on Bengaluru immigration

Immigration at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has drawn flak of late. A month after Biotech honcho Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw slammed immigration at the KIA, Grammy award winner Ricky Kej on Sunday termed immigration at the

The music composer is no capacity"?

Video of long queue He also shared a video of a

travellers.

reduce the steps.

Pathetic, says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

airport "pathetic".

took to social media to share his harrowing experience after landing at the airport in the wee hours of Sunday. He tweeted: "Pathetic state of immigration at the Bengaluru International Airport. Been in the line for over an hour now. Currently well over 1000 people are waiting, not all counters working, staff is clueless, inefficient. @BLR Airport why have so many flights, when there

long queue of flyers waiting for immigration. The post was shared widely on the social media platform.

In another tweet, Mr. Kej said, "How are we expected to build Brand India if this is the welcome that everyone gets at the airports. The first impression of India for foreign

He said there are several lines for immigration check at the airport. He demanded authorities to

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However, Arrival and Departure of flights will not be affected.

The Flying Returns frequent flyer program will be unavailable from 1800 hrs. (6:00 P.M.) IST on May 24th, 2022 to 1510 hrs. (3:10 P.M.) on May 30th, 2022. During this time redemption and award bookings will not be processed on Flying Returns or with our Star Alliance partners, and accrual of miles from 24th to 28th May, 2022 could be delayed. Miles can still be redeemed with partners. Any miles accrued during the transition will be credited once the migration is completed.

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Azam, Shivpal skip SP meet ahead of U.P. Assembly session

Rampur MLA is reported to be unwell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LUCKNOW

Senior Samajwadi Party MLA Azam Khan and 'sulking' socialist leader Shivpal Singh Yadav on Sunday skipped the party MLAs' meet ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly session.

Mr. Shivpal had earlier too skipped the meeting amid differences with SP chief Akhilesh Yaday, Party MLA Ravidas Mehrotra said, "Though he won on the SP election symbol, he is the head of his own party."

Mr. Khan, who was released for

the Sitapur jail on Friday, did not attend the meeting due to health reasons, according to Mr. Mehrotra. However, Mr. Khan visited the Rampur jail with his son to meet his supporters lodged there. "Both Mr. Khan and his son will be attending the session tomorrow. Mr. Khan will sit on the left of Mr. Akhilesh and raise issues," Mr. Mehrotra said.

People close to Mr. Khan had earlier accused Mr. Akhilesh of ignoring him and the Muslim community, sparking speculation of a rift in the party.





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TENDER NOTICE

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(CPPP Portal Ref. ID-2022_SEEPZ_689375_1)

Sealed tenders are invited for aforementioned work by SEEPZ-SEZ Authority, Mumbai through online mode. The Tender Document along with procedure of online submission of bid is available at websites http://seepz.gov.in and https://eprocure.gov.in/ eprocure/app. Online Tenders will be accepted on or before 7th June 2022 at 16:00 Hrs and same will be opened on 8th June 2022 at 16:15 Hrs.

-sd-

Estate Manager SEEPZ SEZ, Mumbai

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

P Narasimhan (86). Retired Advertise ment Executive, The Hindu, Chennai passed away on 21-05-2022. Address: Old No:12, New No:25, Venkatarangan Pillai Street, Triplicane, Ch 600005. Contact: 044-28442516

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES







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Parties meeting the above criteria are advised to send thei Expression of Interest (EOI) in a sealed envelope together with their (1) Audited Balance Sheet for last 3 financial years. (2) Proof of Ownership of four wheelers in the field of Institutional based cab service. (3) List of Major Clients. (4) Certificate of Incorporation of Company. (5) Testimonial from reputed client and / or any other relevant details to reach CMC by 31st May 2022,

to the General Superintendent CMC, Vellore.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform to Public at Large that Nitesh Pandey S/O Kripa Shankar Pandey, Teeka Ram (Tinku) S/O Mahender Kumar, Vidhi D/O Sudesh & Seema, Brijesh Kumar and Chandan Kumar. All mentioned employees were working on Contract Basis /Project basis. Now they are no more associated in any ways or authorized in any manner whatsoever in relation to Prakash Inscript Innovations Private Limited and The Prakash Childrens Foundation due to their mismanagement / behavioral/ dicipline issues / damage of property of mentioned company / Trust. Physical and Financial damage to the property of mentioned company / Trust. Any Person / Company/ Firm that deals with them in any manner whatsoever is warned / cautioned do any dealing / transaction / employment at their own risk. Prakash Inscript Innovations Private Limited and The Prakash Childrens Foundation is not responsible is any manner.

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PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE

13th May, 2022 High Commission of India London has received a notice of intended marriage

from **Mr. Saurabh Jain, S**/c Joginder Pal Jain, holder of Indian Passport No S9399021 and Miss Ana Secara, D/o Mihai Secara holder of Romaniar Passport No. 059734067 under the Foreign Marriage Act. 1969 of India. Objection if any (along with valid reasons), to the intended marriage may be conveyed to the High Commission of

at the following address: Counsellor (Consular) Department, The High Commission of India, India House, Aldywch London WC2B 4NA Ph. No. 020-76323303, 3305, Fax No. 020-76323048. Email: counsconsular.

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london@mea.gov.in (Subhash Ramkrishna Pillai) Counsellor (Consular)

TENDERS

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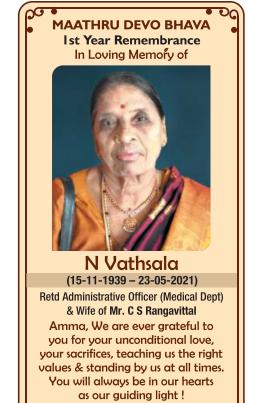
Inspection - Any working day but 2 days before last date of submission of tender Last date of Submission of tender along with EMD: 27-May-22.

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Parties to announce

nominees for Karnataka



passes away

THIRUVANANTHAPURAN Playback singer Sangeetha Saiith, 46, who has been active in the field since the early 1990s, passed away here on Sunday following kidney ailments. With over 200 songs to her credit in all South Indian languages, she is best known for the song Thanneerai Kathalikkum composed by A.R. Rahman for the 1996 film Mr. Romeo. Her recent hit is Thalam Poyi from Ayyappanum Koshiyum in 2020. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan condoled her death.

Kerala fisheries sector to go on strike today

Around half-a-million workers directly involved in fishing activities in the marine and inland fisheries sector as well as in the allied sectors in Kerala will strike work on Monday in protest against the rise in the price of fuel such as kerosene and the "inadequate" social security cover being provided. They allege that the Centre and the State have been following policies that would alienate the community from its traditional means of earning a livelihood.

KCR in Delhi to avoid PM, says Telangana BJP chief

HYDERABAD Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar has accused Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao of going to Delhi and other States on the pretext of a national mission "only to avoid facing Prime Minister Narendra Modi" who would be coming to Hyderabad on May 26. "KCR does not want to face Modi. That is precisely why he left for Delhi enroute other States." he charged while addressing a meeting with party functionaries ahead of the Prime Minister's visit.

Delayed tour to avoid false cases: Raj

MNS chief urges PM for action on Uniform Civil Code, population control law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Alleging that a trap was laid out for him ahead of his Ayodhya visit, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Sunday claimed he had deliberately put his tour on hold as he did not want false cases to be lodged against MNS workers.

Speaking at Pune's Ganesh Kala Krida Centre on Sunday, he said, "False cases would have been slapped on MNS workers had they accompanied me to Ayodhya. But I did not fall for this trap as I did not want my MNS activists to be languishing in jails there. I can endure criticism [for postponing the Ayodhya visit], but I will not let my children [MNS workers] get stuck there."

The MNS leader urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bring on the Uniform Civil Code and a law on population control as well as



Raj Thackeray speaking at a rally in Pune on Sunday. •PTI

to rename Aurangabad to 'Sambhajinagar' (after Shivaji's son, Chhatrapati Sambhaji), at the earliest.

Old case raked up

Targeting Brij Bhushan Singh, the BJP MP from Uttar Pradesh who had opposed Mr. Thackeray's entry in Ayodhya, saying that he first owed an apology of the MNS' past mistreatment of north Indians, the MNS chief asked: "Why have certain people awakened to the fact after 14-15 years that I must seek an apology for the alleged mistreatment of north Indians? Where were these leaders all this time?

Mr. Singh had demanded an apology from Mr. Thackeray before he visited Ayodhya on account of a 2008 incident, when the MNS workers had mistreated north Indians.

In his address, Mr. Thackeray defended the incidents of 2008 by stressing that the melee began after one of the aspirants had reportedly abused an MNS worker.

launched a diatribe against both Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar and his estranged cousin, Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray. Taking on the CM, Mr. Raj accused his cousin of "destroying" the late (Sena founder) Bal Thackeray's credibility by continuing the Shiv Sena's alliance with the NCP and

Congress. Dubbing Mr. Uddhav's claims on the Sena being the real 'Hindutva' party as "utterly hollow", Mr. Raj demanded why had Aurangabad not yet been renamed as 'Sambhajinagar' despite the Sena being the prime votary on this issue. "Despite having been in power for so many years, you have not solved the problem of renaming Aurangabad because you want to keep it alive for every election ... '

Twenty20, AAP not to back any front

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Aam Aadmi Party Twenty20 combine will not extend support to any political front in the upcoming by election in the Thrikkakara Assembly constituency in Kerala. The bypoll is scheduled

for May 31 and the LDF and the UDF have fielded Jo Joseph and Uma Thomas respectively. The election has been necessitated by the passing away of former MLA P. T. Thomas of the Congress party. A joint statement by Twenty20 president Sabu M. Jacob and AAP State convener P.C. Cyriac said that the result of the byelection would not affect the current social and economic conditions in the State. It was because of this that the combine had decided not to field any candidate.

Huge demand

JD(S) are

BENGALURU

Karnataka

Monday.

guaranteed four,

seats, respectively

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Curiosity over the candi-

dates to be nominated by

the parties in the ensuing

which members will be

elected from the Legisla-

tive Assembly, has height-

ened as the parties are set

to announce names on

Seven members are to

be elected from the Legis-

lative Assembly in the

elections to be held on

Iune 3. The BIP. Congress

and Janata Dal (Secular)

are guaranteed four, two

and one seats, respective-

Council elections,

Legislative

two and one

The Congress sources said that the list of candidates will be released on Monday as there is a huge demand from a large number of party leaders.

Speaking to presspersons on Sunday, KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar said the party had received applications from over 100 aspirants, and the State unit would also give its opinion and the party high command would decide.

"We only recommend names. But will not tell the high command any specific names," he said.

Rajya Sabha election

When asked if both he and Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah had recommended names jointly, he



Congress had received applications from over 100 aspirants: D.K. Shivakumar •

said: "We have finalised the list after sitting together. How many names can be recommended for the two seats we can win? The recommendation been made keeping in mind all communities.

Regarding the candidate for Raiva Sabha election, he said that the high command has been apprised of the ground realities, and the candidate would be selected by them. "JD(S) has declared that it will field a candidate. We will see how many candidates will be fielded by BJP. Based on that we will see how many candidates we can field."

The JD(S) sources said that it is likely that the partv will decide on its candidate on Monday as the choice has been narrowed down to three. The JDLP has also authorised party supremo H.D. Deve Gowda to choose the candidate. "The decision on the candidate for Rajya Sabha will be taken later."

The ruling BJP is also likely to announce the name of its candidates on Monday. The last date to file nominations for the polls to seven seats of the Karnataka Legislative Council is May 24.

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Sangita Kalanidhi awards announced

Music Academy to give away awards for three years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Music Academy on Sunday announced Sangita Kalanidhi award winners for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. The physical festival could not be conducted in the last two years because of the CO VID-19 pandemic.

"The executive committee of the Music Academy has decided to give the Sangita Kalanidhi and other awards for the two missed years along with the current year's awards," said N. Murali, President of the Academy.

Noted vocalist and teacher Neyveli R. Santhanagopa-





lan has been selected for the award for 2020, mridangam maestro Tiruvarur Baktavatsalam for 2021 and violinists Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and his sister G.J.R. Vijayalakshmi for 2022.

CM to inaugurate Mr. Murali said Tamil Nadu

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin

had consented to be the chief guest and inaugurate the 96th annual conference and concerts of the Academy on December 15, 2022.

Nagaswaram player Kizhvelur G. Ganesan has been selected for the Sangita Kala Acharya award for 2020, vocalist and musicologist Ritha Rajan for 2021 and musicologist Vainika R.S. Jayalakshmi for 2022.

The TTK award for 2020 goes to vocalist Thamarakkad Govindan Namboothiri. Mridhangam and jalatarangam player Nemani Somayajulu will get the award for 2021 and kanjira artist A.V. Anand for 2022.

Musicologist award for

2022 goes to V. Premalatha. The awardees belong to four southern States. Mr. Murali said the dance

festival will be held between January 3 and 9, 2023. The Nritya Kalanidhi awardees are Rama Vaidhyanathan (2020), Narthaki Nataraj (2021) and Bragha Bessell (2022).

THEMAHINDU

EDUCATIONELL

Learners need to move from being consumers of information to becoming producers

KADAMBARI RANA

Research-based learning involves investigation of concepts and theories and allows students to become solution seekers through an exploratory approach. Compared to a rigid textbook-based style that encourages rote-learning, this puts the student at the centre of knowledge acquisition. John Dewey's project-based approach, Jean Piaget's constructivist theory, Maria Montessori's play-way approach, Jiddu Krishnamurti's questioning mind approach are early examples of 21st century versions of Research Based Learning.

The 21st century has mandated a global shift towards enquiry, creativity, critical thinking, green inventions, passion, communication skills and leadership. Research-based learning triggers the development of these qualities by transforming the learner from being a passive participant to an active participant in one's development journey. Raising questions, seeking solutions, discussions, debates, making assumptions, testing assumptions, testing theories and principles, collecting data, effectively communicating ideas, drawing conclusions, engaging oneself in research activities, learning various research tools and techniques and engaging with senior professors are some of the ways to trigger research instincts in a classroom.

Importance The biggest disservice our Put the student at the centre



country's education system has done is to take away students' right and opportunity to have a personal experience with the subject. The 21st century requires learners to move from being consumers of information to becoming producers of information.

All life is learning and learning is lifelong. Therefore, students must be encouraged to appreciate the correlation between a scientific temper and quality of life. A mind based in research is an active one eager to unlock and understand the unknown realms of life.

Two components that

from university level are an increased degree of independence and freedom in the learning process and research. If a higher education institute has failed to transform into a self-driven exploratory mode, then it has failed to elevate itself from the level of school. The differentiator is to integrate research into teaching and learning.

distinguish school education

Research in India According to the National Institutional Ranking Framework, Ministry of Education, Government of India,

2020, some of the institutes listed in the top 20 were the Indian Institute of Science, Iawaharlal Nehru University, Banaras Hindu University, University of Delhi, Homi Bhabha National Institute, Vellore Institute of Technology, Aligarh Muslim University. Listed in the top 100 were Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Amity University, Shiv Nadar University, and Lovely Professional University. However, the measures used to grant rankings were void of considerations such as employer reputation, student-faculty ratio,

academic staff involvement in active research, students' engagement in active research, research facilities, research centres, and frequency of published papers. This methodology shows complete disregard for research as a tool to trigger knowledge acquisition.

On the other hand, according to Centre for World University Rankings, 2021-22 edition, Harvard University was ranked first in research, followed by Stanford University. The University of Oxford was ranked No 4 and MIT No 8. Among the criteria were quality of education, quality of faculty and educational qualifications of faculty, alumni employment rank, and research performance rank. This clearly highlights why the average Indian student aspires to study abroad.

The road ahead

The 21st century needs in students are learning, literacy, and life skills. Systems, government regulations and mandates must be put in place to ensure that university students are actively engaged in departmental research and go through compulsory research training modules. Universities must facilitate ample sector-specific internships and field work and have dedicated research centres in each department. Classroom teaching must be linked to research and concept application. The UGC must ensure that the teaching staff is well qualified and double up as student research guides and mentors. It is also important that university departments build international relations with their global counterparts. Views expressed are personal

The writer is an educationist who is documenting her observations on children's play and learning

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Director General

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Wheat confusion

Apprehensions of shortage in India are misplaced, and the Govt. must allow export

■ ndia, which surprised the world with its decision to bar wheat export with immediate effect, appears to Let be on the defensive now after its May 13 announcement. Initially, the Centre had amended the order by allowing export consignments registered in the Customs Department's systems and handed over for examination on or prior to May 13. Addressing a UN "Global Food Security Call to Action" ministerial meeting a few days ago in New York, Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan emphasised that the restrictions made allowance for countries that had food security needs, a position articulated earlier by Commerce Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam. But, more than farmers, it is traders who stand to benefit from the limited easing of restrictions. From the start, indications of a mismatch in demand and supply were evident. Rising levels of wholesale and retail inflation, the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war and a lower opening balance of wheat (on April 1, 2022) in the Central pool for the public distribution system than a year ago were well known. After several parts of wheat-producing States in the north experienced unusually warm weather in March-April, the Government lowered marginally, early this month, the estimated wheat production, from 111.32 million tonnes to 105 million tonnes. As for international food prices, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, said that even before the war, prices had reached an all-time high due to market conditions and the high prices of energy, fertilizers and other agricultural services. By May 4, the Centre clarified that there was no move to curb wheat export, the reasoning being that this was the opportune moment for exporters to sell in the international market as wheat from Argentina and Australia would begin arriving next month. The higher prices in the domestic market compared to the minimum support price offered by the Government were projected as favourable for farmers. Also, just days before the Government's decision, an official announcement was made that trade delegations would be sent to countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Indonesia to explore possibilities for wheat export. In addition to Egypt, Turkey had given its approval for the import of Indian wheat, and an announcement had been made that the current year's target for wheat export had been fixed at 10 million tonnes, three million tonnes higher than last year.

India's decision has faced criticism from the G-7's Agriculture Ministers. After its U-turn, the Government should not persist for too long with its current position of "restrictions" on the export of wheat, as the move seems to have hit the farmers, if reports of a fall in the price are any indication. Lessons must be gleaned from the experience 15 years ago when India took about two years to lift its ban on the export of non-basmati rice, by which time Thailand and Vietnam had moved in to take full advantage. Apprehensions of a food shortage are misplaced, and the Government would do well to lift the "restrictions" sooner rather than later.

Boxing days

Nikhat could inspire many Indian girls to take up boxing, seen by many as a male sport

or a country that sought boxing inspiration from six-time World boxing champion M.C. Mary Kom and Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain, Nikhat Zareen's World title in the women's 52 kg class in Istanbul is a fresh source of optimism. The Nizamabad-born Nikhat's story of struggle is vastly different from those emerging from Haryana or the North East. The widespread celebration of her success in India should further amplify the spread of boxing within the country. As the fifth World champion Indian woman boxer, who is the only one after Mary to win a gold in the last 16 years, Nikhat has joined an exclusive club of Mary, Sarita Devi, R.L. Jenny and K.C. Lekha. Her gold was the first by an Indian woman after Mary's sixth World title in 2018. For boxing fans, who were disheartened after India's below-par showing in the Tokyo Olympics, where Lovlina landed a lone bronze, Nikhat has provided cheer. Nikhat's journey was packed with challenges and she was determined to break barriers. When, as a teenager, she got to know that girls were not encouraged to take up boxing in her area as the combat sport was considered tailor-made for boys, Nikhat switched from sprinting to boxing to prove a point. Hailing from a Muslim family, she overcame hurdles posed by conservatives in society.

When Nikhat, a 2011 World junior champion, tried to graduate to the elite level, a career-threatening shoulder injury in 2017 stole a year away from her. Two years later, she was embroiled in a controversy, when she got on to the wrong side of her idol Mary in the run-up to the trials for the Olympics qualifier. She lost the trials and it stirred a debate and left a trail of bad blood. But nothing could dent Nikhat's steely resolve. Her parents remained her pillars of strength through thick and thin. The 25-year-old, who personifies the rise of women's power in sport, worked hard with different coaches and imbibed the best lessons from them to emerge as a polished boxer. Nikhat's new status will boost her confidence and make her a force to reckon with in events such as the upcoming Commonwealth Games, the Asian Games and the 2024 Paris Olympics. An ample supply of talented boxers will only benefit the country in its quest for a better performance in Paris. As a World champion, Nikhat could inspire many Indian girls who suppress their desire to take up boxing, wary as they are about an orthodox society. Nikhat's tale may strike a chord with talented boxers and motivate them to follow in the footsteps of the new poster girl of Indian sport.

Food security does not need this 'surgical strike'

India's flip-flop on the export of wheat is an example of the Government lacking a coherent policy of food security



MADHURA SWAMINATHAN & DEEPAK JOHNSON

The Government of India announced a sudden ban on export of wheat on May 13, 2022, a few days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stated that "at a time when the world is facing a shortage of wheat, the farmers of India have stepped forward to feed the world". Even a day before the export ban came into effect, Government officials were looking out for possible export locations, indicating that there were no plans for control of wheat exports. With the latest announcement, the Government has sent out confusing policy signals

Status of procurement

The sudden turnaround in the export policy appears to be on account of fears that low public procurement would affect domestic food security.

The system of public procurement has been in place since the mid-1960s, and has been the backbone of food policy in India. Progressive economists and social scientists have always argued that for a country the size of India, food security has to be ensured through domestic production. As part of the liberalisation policy, many other economists suggested that food stocks be run down in India and that needs of food security be met through world trade and the Chi-

This summer, procurement of wheat by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been very low. Last year, the FCI and other agencies procured 43.34 million tonnes of wheat. For the current season, procurement has only been 17.8 million tonnes, as of May 10, 2022. Given the low levels of procurement, the Government has reduced the procurement target for the current season from 44.4 to 19.5 million tonnes.

Is there a concern on that front now, in particular in terms of availability of food grain? The answer is an emphatic "no", but if and only if policy measures ensure adequate distribution through the food rationing network and open market operations are undertaken to ensure stable prices. (The assumption here is that both rice and wheat are now consumed in all parts of the country, and if needed, rice can be distributed in lieu of wheat. As of April 2022, there were 33 million tonnes of rice held

While wheat production this year has been lower than estimated on account of high heat and other factors in March, there is not a big shortfall in production relative to previous years. Wheat production was 103.6 million tonnes in 2018-19, 107.8 million tonnes in 2019-20, and 109.5 million tonnes in 2020-21. It was expected to be a record 111.3 million tonnes for the ongoing year (2021-22). The most recent estimate of production for 2021-22, revised downwards from the earlier estimate, is 105 million

There is, of course, a projection of a global reduction in production and trade on account of the war in Ukraine. Both Russia and the wisdom of not dismantling it,



wheat in the global market and disruptions from the war are affecting countries that relied on imports from these two countries, such as Egypt. India has been urged by developed countries to meet this shortfall and provide relief to importing counties. But it is also important to see that western countries, some of whom are much larger exporters of wheat, have themselves not increased their exports in the current

Need for effective PDS

Stocks of wheat in the central pool as of April 30, 2022 were 30.3 million tonnes, much lower than the 52.5 million tonnes of last year, but comfortably higher than buffer stock norms. While the Government procurement in this marketing season has been lower than the previous two years, the stock position so far is similar to 2019, when we had 35.8 million tonnes of stock in April. The stock position does not appear to be alarming.

In the two COVID-19 years (2020-21 and 2021-22), the Public Distribution System (PDS) played a stellar role, and, its role showed

as neoliberal economists advised. Total offtake of rice and wheat was 102.3 million tonnes in 2021-22 when distribution through the PDS and other welfare schemes is combined. Of this, 49 million tonnes were wheat (21.7 through the PDS and 27.3 through other welfare schemes). Not only is this a global record, but it kept people out of starvation during the CO-VID-19 pandemic.

It is essential that the PDS and open market operations be used to cool down food price inflation. The rural consumer price inflation at the all-India level for April 2022 was 8.38%. Rural food price inflation was 8.5%. These were much higher than the inflation recorded in the previous year. While most States have high inflation rates, States with better PDS, such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, have low inflation rates. The general consumer price inflation in April 2022 for Kerala was 4.82% and it was 5.64% for Tamil Nadu.

Increasing cultivation costs

To promote production, a key aspect of food policy in India has been to provide remunerative prices to farmers. As is well known, after the reports of the National Commission on Farmers, the announced minimum support price (MSP) for wheat has often been inadequate to cover costs of cultivation for several regions and classes of farmers, especially if comprehensive costs (or Cost C2) are taken as the base. The yearlong farmer protests were largely driven by the fear that the new Farm Acts were weakening public commitment to remunerative prices for agricultural produce.

production have risen sharply, one important component being the spiralling price of fuel.

Farmers are worried about the lack of involvement of the Government in procurement. After the export ban, and in light of higher input costs and yield losses this year, the All India Kisan Sabha and other farmer organisations demanded a bonus of ₹500 per quintal on current MSP of wheat. Rather than overcoming the shortfall in public procurement by increasing the procurement price and buying more, the Government has allowed traders to build up stocks of wheat. The benefits from future sales, domestic or in the export market, are thus likely to go to traders rather than farmers.

Farmers let down

The flip-flop on export of wheat is one example that this government lacks a coherent policy of food security, and has, perhaps, been too influenced by climate alarmists. Food security is both an immediate and long-term concern and does not require strikes". A well-functioning PDS can control prices and offer relief to consumers. At the same time, a procurement policy can and should offer a reasonable income to farmers. The Government has punished farmers and supported traders by not procuring food grain at higher prices, and letting private trade step in to buy up stocks for future gain.

Madhura Swaminathan is Professor and Head, Economic Analysis Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore Centre. Deepak Johnson is Associate Fellow. Foundation for Agrarian Studies,

India needs to keep an eye on its myopia prevalence

Even though current estimates in the country do not reflect trends in the Asia-Pacific, India must be vigilant



TEJAH BALANTRAPU &

illions of young children are growing up shortsighted every year because of myopia. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there were nearly two billion people with myopia in 2010 - a quarter of the human population. By 2030, they project myopia prevalence to reach 3.3 billion people. While East Asia and the Pacific have been reporting some of the highest numbers for a decade now, current estimates out of India do not yet reflect this trend. It may mean we have time to act and save the sight of our children.

'Near-work' is on the rise

Myopia is commonly found in children. As they grow and their bodies change, the length of the eveball and its power to refract light do not always align, leading to vision that is blurry. A pair of spectacles is enough to correct this mismatch. However, spectacles address the symptom and not the cause (eyeball length), so myopia can progress all through childhood. Progressive myopia, after a point, leads to 'high' myopia, increasing the risk of retinal detachment, glaucoma or macular degeneration that can cause permanent vision loss. A host of environmental and ge-

netic factors determine the onset of myopia. It is believed that exposure to sunlight and a healthy balance between distance- and nearwork can arrest myopia onset and progression. Many children, especially in urban environments, are spending more time indoors and on near-work. Be it at school or at nome, the quantum of near-work looking at books, television,

phones or laptops – has increased over the decades. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this trend by robbing children of outdoor playtime and exposure to sunlight. This big shift to nearwork seems to be triggering an increase in myopia prevalence.

Epidemic or not is the issue

Data from the East Asian countries have been particularly alarming. Even before the novel coronavirus pandemic, 80%-90% of high school children in East and Southeast Asia were presenting with myopia. Nearly 20% of them had high myopia. All these countries are racing to put in place systems to increase sunlight exposure and reduce near-work for children. The World Health Organization is warning of a global myopia epidemic, where millions of our children are at risk of vision impairment. Projections show nearly

50% of the world's population will

be myopic by 2050.

India seems to be bucking this trend. Current studies are recording low myopia prevalence among schoolchildren when compared to East Asia. In India, one in 30 to one in five schoolchildren are presenting with myopia. In a large study that surveyed 1.2 million schoolchildren in Telangana and parts of Andhra Pradesh, public health optometrist Winston Prakash and his team found myopia prevalence of a little over 5%. Even including those already with glasses, the prevalence numbers are low. What explains these anti-climactic numbers?

The urbanisation link

Despite a demographic shift towards cities and towns, nearly 65% of India's population still lives in rural areas. As urbanisation increases, so does the burden of myopia. Myopia can be twice as high among urban children when compared to rural ones. One study found a higher prevalence among South Asian children in the United Kingdom compared to those living in rural India. So, it is likely that urban schools are harbingers of increasing myopia in children. Small studies are already finding that myopia prevalence in urban Indian schools is relatively higher, at nearly 35%. The spectacle power of urban children with myopia is also increasing year on year. Taking all these factors into account, prediction models are pointing to a myopia prevalence of nearly 50% in India too by 2050 - similar

to global projections. There are many treatment strategies to constrain myopic progression, including pharmaceuticals and specialty spectacles or contact lens. But like all public health issues, prevention strategies that tackle myopia onset and progression are far more inexpensive and cost-effective. We need to encourage parents to take children out to parks and other outdoor spaces regularly. Schools must ensure adequate exposure to sunlight. We need educational methodologies at every school level that balances near-work distance-work.

Encourage annual screening

At the same time, we must make it easy to screen and provide spectacles for the many who will need them. Basic, annual screening can be performed by schoolteachers who can then refer myopic children to eve-care professionals. We must also tackle the social stigma around spectacle wear with tac and compassion. It is critical that we step up surveillance for myopia so that we are not caught unawares by a runaway epidemic that will destroy our children's

It is likely that India's myopia prevalence is still low because we are not yet on the 'epidemic' growth curve of East and Southeast Asia. The time to act is now.

Teiah Balantrapu is Associate Director, Science, Health Data, and Story-telling, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute. Payan Verkicherla is a Scientist and Consultant Optometrist at the Myopia Centre, L.V. Prasad Eve Institute. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Reining in inflation

One has to infer that two reasons should have prompted the Government to make its sudden announcement of duty cuts on petroleum products and a subsidy of ₹200 on LPG cylinders They are: the common man's resentment over galloping prices of essential commodities and State Assembly elections. However, the reduction in taxes cannot be called significant as piecemeal increases have already been made. There is also no relief for middle class consumers of LPG. V. JOHAN DHANAKUMAR,

■ It is for the Centre to ensure that the benefits are actually delivered to consumers. The Indian experience is that whenever there is a price rise, the 'benefit' is gleefully "passed on" immediately to the GOVARDHANA MYNEEDU,

■ After the recent elections in five States, the prices of fuel

have shot up. The Government must realise that people cannot be fooled with the slogan "It is always people first for us". Corporate taxes have been reduced and bad loans (again linked to corporates) written off. When will the common man be thought about? S.K. KHOSLA, Chandigarh

The LOC What kind of a nation are we living in where the Government is shy to own up the 'tough stance' it decides to adopt against its own citizens? Why cannot look-out notices be served well in advance? The sly nature of operations does cast a shadow on the Government (Page 1, 'Special' report, May 22). DR. GEORGE JACOB,

Courts must act fast The unfortunate situation of

communal elements trying to spread disharmony stems from the manner in which the Babri Masjid was allowed to be demolished. It is a blunder that some courts are

entertaining claims by communal elements, which is in contravention to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. It is an open secret that such moves are being encouraged by the powers that be with a motive to reap political benefits. THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,

The tone and tenor of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's observations on the Indian Foreign Service and "polarisation", on an international platform, might give room for criticism, but it is hard for anyone with objectivity to ignore the importance of "conversation" to deal with both national and international challenges. Hardball diplomacy always comes with pitfalls that

'Ideas for India' meet

would boomerang on the practitioner of the style, whereas conversational diplomacy always provides scope for empathy and course correction on either side. The argument by

spokespersons of the

Government, of Mr. Gandhi's

speech having been made on an international platform and therefore harming India's image is facile, as in the age of Internet, every medium, be it Twitter, Whatsapp or whatever, is an international platform in effect. S. SANJEEVI RAO,

■ The Government's spokespersons are right in countering the statements made by Rahul Gandhi, who is essentially an immature, politically unaware, and an unsuccessful leader prone to making gaffes. B.V. THAMPI,

Role of Governors The Supreme Court of India has stated that the Governor of a State is but a shorthand expression for the State government, further stating that, "the two highest dignitaries (the President and Governor) in our constitutional scheme, must act not on their own, but in accordance with the aid and advice of the Ministers". These statements, though

said to be within the ambit of certain constitutional schemes, sound a bit too harsh for the common man to comprehend. Given the current scenario, it can send a wrong message that undermines these offices and raises questions about the very purpose of their posts. If the Governor has to act on the advice of the Ministers, then what is the need for him/her to act at all? SHARADA NATARAJAN,

A 'glorification' One can well understand the

memorable welcome given to Nelson Mandela after his years long incarceration; he richly and rightly deserved the reception. But can A.G. Perarivalan be equated with Nelson Mandela? The detailed narration of a police official on the travails and tribulations of the mother of Perarivalan only denote motherly affection and love. To expatiate on this is purely the personal view of the officer. There are many of us who feel that the 'celebrations' and media 'glorification' of Perarivalan

are shocking given his involvement in the assassination of a a former Prime Minister.

Clever bird

MANI NATARAJAN,

Crows are known for their intelligence and adaptability, with a vocabulary of sounds (Open page, "Omnipresent, wise birds", May 22). It was Henry Ward Beecher who said, "If men had wings and bore black feathers, few of them would be clever enough to be crows.' R. SIVAKUMAR,

Boost for sports

It is heartening that the Tamil Nadu government is taking steps to boost sports. That a WTA 250 event is to be held in September is spectacular. In addition, the Chess Olympiad at Mamallapuram from July is wonderful. There should be more schemes to encourage sporting talent in the State. N. MAHADEVAN, Chennai

THE HINDU DELHI MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022

Iran's regional centrality and isolation

The U.S. has a tough choice between its strategic objectives in West Asia and the implications of Iran's location



A recent essay in Foreign Affairs argues that "Tehran has not achieved any of its lofty ambitions, but it has made progress towards them - and it is feeling emboldened by its recent successes". It argues that "Iran is both self-assured and deeply insecure", "displays external vigour that conceals ultimately incurable internal maladies", has "built its foreign policy on the twin pillars of confronting the United States and Israel" and is "closer to realising its vision than it was a decade ago". Yet, despite its success in cultivating militant groups across West Asia, there are tangible signs that it has overreached and that two-thirds of young Arabs in the region now view Iran as an adversary. The essay concedes that "Washington's perception of Iran has suffered from four decades of estrangement and strategic narcissism". Given the geopolitical and historical backdrop of Iran, does this reflect the totality of the country's interests and strategic perceptions?

A decade earlier, John Limbert, former senior diplomat who was one of the hostages of the embassy siege of 1979, felt certain rules seem to guide U.S. policy over the years. They include: "(i) Never walk through an open door. Instead, bang your head against a wall; (ii) Never say yes to anything that the other side proposes. Doing so will make you weak; and (iii) The other side is infinitely hostile, devious, domineering and irrational. It is the embodiment of all that is evil."

Political stability

With an area of 1.6 million sq km, Iran is the 18th largest country in the world in terms of area. It shares land borders with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Iraq and maritime borders with Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman. In its long history it has experienced periods of conflict, imperial dominance and foreign occupation and most recently, a revolution. All these left a mark on its collective memory. Its

culture has been hugely influential in world history and rightly depicted as an 'Empire of the Mind.'

Since the revolution of 1979, and the end of the U.S. security umbrella under the latter's Twin Pillars policy, Iran has been concerned about national security given its long and porous borders with Iraq and Afghanistan. Refugees have poured in from Afghanistan and an armed aggression resulted in the decade-long war with Iraq. With Pakistan, there was a moment of unease after the Bangladesh War of 1971, but was soon set at rest by India.

Despite the upheavals of the postrevolutionary era and the war, Iran maintained a degree of political stability. This was thanks to its power structure, based on a multitude of loosely connected and generally fiercely competitive power centres. These power centres remain formally grounded in the Constitution and the structure emanating from it and actually grounded in the religio-political associations emanating from the clerical leadership that retains an exclusive grip on state power. Each of these also has its own factional tussles with its own power to facilitate or obstruct individual policies. The locus of individual decisions therefore is always a challenging exercise.

Revolutionary slogans apart, Iran's foreign policy has focused on safeguarding independence, national sovereignty, and national interests and is characterised by conscious adjustment to the reality of regional interests in what has been described as the reality of strategic loneliness. This was evident in the ambivalent reaction to the U.S. attack on Iraq.

The end of the Khomeini era, and the period of Hashemi Rafsanjani, winessed Iran's attempts to regain a role in regional affairs. These initiatives were built upon by former Pre-

sident Mohammad Khatami. A beginning was made with regional policy envisaging three circles: the Persian Gulf, the Arab East and Eurasia.

Relationship with the U.S.

Apart from other matters, contention between the West and Iran developed on the latter's nuclear energy plans, which were initially developed before the revolution with U.S. assistance, but viewed very differently subsequently. Iranian scientists in the meantime developed them to the stage when alarm bells were sounded about their intentions.

All of this is reflected in Iran's relationship with the U.S., which underwent an overnight transition. Initially an ally, Iran became hostile and bit ter in individual and national terms. Over time, the perception tended to change; in the past three decades, attempts have been made to mend matters. There were many issues of contention, each with its own subjective angles, but they came to be focused on the nuclear question.

In May 2003, and after America's success in the Iraq war, Iran offered through the Swiss intermediary full negotiations with the U.S. This was ignored by the George Bush administration. In October 2003, the Tehran Declaration was reached between Iran and the European Union (EU). Iran agreed to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) including the Additional Protocol, and temporarily suspend all uranium enrichment. In September and October 2003, the IAEA conducted several facility inspections. In July 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was concluded between Iran and the P5+1 and the EU. The Donald Trump administration certified Iran's compliance with the agreements twice in 2017, but in May

2018, withdrew from it promising a better deal. This did not happen.

After changes of administration in both Tehran and Washington, quiet negotiations were resumed in Vienna in the expectation of an early success with an Iranian insistence on returning to the original terms of the JCPOA. The Ukraine war and the western regime of sanctions on Russia become an impediment; so is the Iranian insistence that U.S. sanctions be lifted on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, so effective in Iraq, Syria and with Hezbollah, and also playing a role in the Iranian economy. Some of the Gulf Cooperation Council states are supporting a powerful U.S.-lobby in this endeavour.

Despite being a victim of the regime of sanctions for long, Iran has been unrelenting in the development of military technologies. This is evident from its growing capabilities for asymmetric warfare in the region and its success in creating conventionally armed, precision-guided missiles and more effective air defence. Alongside is the apprehension of Iran crossing the much-dreaded nuclear threshold in a region that has India, Pakistan and Israel (undeclared) as nuclear capable nations. Some experts believe that if the stalemate in negotiations continues, Iran may even give notice of withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and, in a play on Israel's policy of 'strategic ambiguity' opt for an approach of 'creative ambiguity'.

In the final analysis, the U.S. has a difficult choice between its strategic objectives, requirements, and capabilities in West Asia in relation to Israel and the conservative Arab bloc on the one hand and with the reality of Iran's regional centrality and its implications, on the other. The failure of the so-called Arab Spring and the formalisation of the Abraham Accord is one aspect of it. Its domestic political compulsions and those of Israel were well reflected by the Israeli scholar Martin Kramer in 2011: 'In Israel we are for the status quo. Not only do we believe the status quo is sustainable, we think it is the job of the U.S. to sustain it.' To overcome this impasse, the centrality of Iran in its own neighbourhood has to be recognised along with the latter's commitment to regional cooperation.

Hamid Ansari is former Vice President of

Nature has the answers

It is our rich, albeit declining, biodiversity that provides us with potential solutions to our sustainability challenges



International Day of Biodiversity was celebrated on May 22. It gave us an opportunity to appreciate the wonder of biodiversity and renew our commitment to nurture and protect all the many forms of life with which we share our planet. We are a nation so defined by the richness of life around us that the words 'diversity' and 'India' have become synonymous. Our ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity has been greatly influenced by the unique features of our land, climate and geography, as well as the forces of migration and evolution. These forces have enriched our land with a multitude of species of plants, animals, and other organisms.

We, the human species, are an integral and influential component of biodiversity. Our own bodies host living microbiomes of tiny organisms without which we cannot survive. Our cultures shape the biodiversity around us, and biodiversity shapes our cultures and our future here on Earth.

Apart from the pandemic, the recent heat waves in much of northern India and floods in Meghalava are stark reminders of worsening climate change and an uncertain future. The uncertainty is further fueled by the continuing degradation of lands and biodiversity, growing malnutrition and hunger, and inequities and environmental injustice.

Nature-based solutions

Yet, it is our rich, albeit declining, biodiversity that provides us with potential solutions to our most pressing sustainability challenges. Nature-based solutions - the use of biodiversity and what we learn from the natural world to face our challenges – are emerging as the best path to take us forward.

Climate change is arguably the most severe crisis we face today. Global deforestation is one of the main contributors to climate change. Thus, the restoration of deforested and other degraded lands can lead to mitigation of climate change. Restoring biodiversity on large tracts of land is one of the major commitments that India has made under the Paris Accords. This direct connection between biodiversity and climate change was strongly affirmed by most nations in the Conference of the Parties in Glasgow concluded six months ago. Similarly, rejuvenation of our soils and agriculture, elimination of hunger, and improvement of nutrition depends upon our prudent use of biodiversity in the prevailing agricultural systems. Fostering

the return of biodiversity to degraded lands and enhancing blue carbon in oceans have immense environmental and considerable economic benefits. Restoration has the potential of creating millions of jobs, diversifying farming systems and agriculture-based

Enterprises based on India's biodiversity have huge untapped potential. For example, the sector based on the use of molecules of biological origin in biotechnology and healthcare was worth \$70 billion in 2020. And we have barely begun to tap the potential of our rich medical heritage that includes thousands of medicinal plant species.

Nature contributes not only to our economic and physical well-being, but also to our minds and spiritual enrichment. Our country is full of sacred landscapes, riverscapes, and seascapes. We can take refuge in nature for mental solace.

Strengthening biodiversity science The biodiversity that is all around us and in-

side us, that sustains us and protects us, is under assault. We have seen our natural landscapes and waterscapes decline and degrade at an unprecedented rate. Last year, in these pages, I briefly described an effort on the part of the government to launch a National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-Being, conceived and planned by the Biodiversity Collaborative pulling together public and private institutions. The Mission will embed biodiversity as a key consideration in all development programmes, particularly in the sectors of agriculture, health, bioeconomy, ecosystem services, and climate change mitigation. It will also seek to develop a system for assessing and monitoring, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity to enable the realisation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Public engagement is another key element of the Mission.

The pandemic has placed this Mission among the most significant national initiatives. We must urgently address the issues laid bare by COVID 19: the emergence of infectious diseases; inadequate food and nutritional security; rural unemployment; and climate change which all place additional stress on nature and public health, and which are what the Mission seeks to address.

Hundreds of professionals have participated in defining the road map for the Mission. International Biodiversity Day should serve as a reminder to our government and people to push forward the Mission and and reimagine our relationship with nature.

Kamal Bawa is President of the Bengaluru-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and convener of Biodiversity Collaborative. Views are personal

DATA POINT

Poor recovery, increasing delays mar IBC resolution process

In Q4 of FY22, for the first time the amount to be realised from the resolution process was lower than the liquidation value of assets

JASMIN NIHALANI

When a business turns sick, it starts defaulting on its loan payments and the creditor tries to recover the debt through various means. The recovery process is essential on two counts - one, to recover the maximum amount possible from the defaulter, and two, to do it as soon as possible so that the amount can be freed-up to issue fresh credit. Poor recovery of claims and inordinate delays in resolving bad assets were the problems that plagued the older recovery mechanisms such as SARFAESI, Lok Adalats, and Debt Recovery Tribu-

In 2016, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was passed to tackle the mounting bad debts and to favour the creditor during the resolution process. While the IBC's performance has been relatively better than the other recovery mechanisms, it suffers from similar systemic issues. For instance, of the 2,600 cases that were closed by December 2021, 55% ended in liquidation while only 16% were completed with proper resolution plans approved by the lender. The resolution process is also marred by delays. On average, over 700 days were taken in FY22 to complete a resolution process, against the stipulated deadline of 330 days. Moreover, during the fourth quarter of FY22, the amount to be realised from the resolution process was lower than the liquidation value of assets. Worryingly, the lenders continued to take steep haircuts. The haircut is the debt foregone by the lender as a share of the outstanding claim. In 100 out of 500 companies that saw proper resolutions, the haircuts were above 90%.

Reading the charts Chart 1 shows the share of companies

that were liquidated, approved, settled and withdrawn among the cases for which the resolution process was completed. Since 2018, a majority of the cases ended in liquidation in most of the quarters while approved cases ranged between 15% and 25%.

Chart 2 shows the number of days

taken to complete the resolution process. The darker the red, the more the number of days taken. For instance, in FY22, it took 772 days to resolve cases involving companies that owed more than ₹1,000 crore to the lenders. The average number of days it takes to resolve such cases has increased dramatically over the past five years.

Chart 3 shows the value of assets if they were liquidated as a share of outstanding claims in a quarter. The chart also shows the actual value realised by the creditors through the resolution process as a share of outstanding claims. The wider the gap between the two values, the greater the impact of the insolvency process. The gap has been narrowing in recent months. In the January-March 2022 quarter, the amount realised fell below what the assets would have fetched if they were liquidated.

Chart 4 shows the share of haircuts taken by the lenders. Each circle denotes a company for which the resolution was approved. For instance, in close to 33 of 85 companies that owed more than ₹1,000 crore, lenders had to take above 90% haircuts.

"The biggest issue is the delays and a lot of it is due to the capacity of tribunals. The functioning of the NCLT [National Company Law Tribunal] during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a setback for the IBC. One part of the timeline that isn't looked at so much is the delay in filing of admissions, where the clock starts. Several cases have been pending admission for over a year. And similarly, at the back end, the delay occurs between the approval of the resolution and the approval by the tribunal," said Aparna Ravi, a partner at Samvad Partners, who was also a member of the Bankruptcy Law Reform Committee.

'The preference of IBC is resolution over liquidation. But it still can't be resolved at any cost. If there is nothing viable about the business, then liquidation is the only option," she said.

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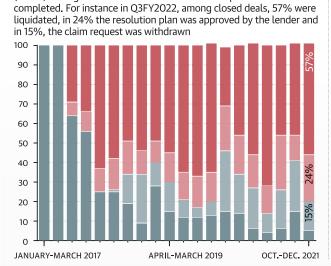
Haircuts and hold-ups

■ CHART 1 The chart shows the share of companies that were

among the cases for which the resolution process was

Six years since the implementation of the IBC, the resolution process continues to be mired in problems of systemic delays and steeper haircuts. On average, over 700 days were taken in FY22 to complete a resolution process, against the stipulated deadline of 330 days. In 100 out of about 500 companies that resulted in proper resolution, the haircuts were above 90%

), approved (), settled () and withdrawn



■ CHART 2 The chart shows the number of days taken to complete the resolution process. The darker the red, the more the number of days taken



For instance, in FY22, it took 772 days to resolve cases involving companies that owed more than ₹1,000 crore to the lenders while the stipulated deadline is 330 days

process as a % of outstanding claims In the January-March 2022 quarter, the amount realised fell below what the assets would have fetched if they were liquidated 60 50 40 10.4%

JAN.-MAR. 2022

OCT.-DEC. 2017

■ CHART 3 The chart shows the liquidation value

() of assets and the actual value realised () through the

Videocon 95% haircut **Lanco Thermal Power**

100-500 CR. 500-1000

50-100 CR.

lenders. Each circle denotes a company for which the resolution

■ CHART 4 The chart shows the share of haircuts taken by the

SOURCE: IBBI

The Man Trindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 23, 1972

From Ceylon to Republic of Sri Lanka

Colombo, May 22: At the auspicious hour of 12-43 p.m. to-day Ceylon became the Republic of Sri Lanka, severing its 157-year-old link with the British Crown and 2,500-yearold monarchical system - one of the world's oldest. This transition from a Dominion to a Republic took place at the Navaranghalala Hall, where the historic resolution, moved by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, to set up the Republic was adopted. Although Sri Lanka has cut its ties with the British Crown, it will continue to be in the Commonwealth. Mrs. Bandaranaike, and the last Governor-General, Mr. William Gopallawa, took oaths of allegiance to the new Constitution and assumed the office of the republic's first Prime Minister and the President respectively. There was a great rejoicing throughout the island, except in the Tamil areas, where the day was observed as one of mourning and prayer. Black flags were seen flying over some buildings in the northern provinces. Religious ceremonies were observed in places of worship of all that the republican and unitary Constitution has been duly adopted by the 157-member Constitution Assembly this morning.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 23, 1922

'Satyagrahis at fault'

The Director of Information has issued a lengthy note regarding the situation at Mulshi Petha where the Tata Co., are encountering opposition to their Hydro-Electric Scheme, in the course of which, after enumerating the generous terms offered to Mavlas in exchange for their lands, the Director says it should be noted that no question as to the reasonableness of the compensation paid has arisen. The whole agitation was directed towards embarrassing Government and the company by urging cultivators not to give up their land at any price whatsoever. This agitation has latterly led to collisions between coolies employed by the Tata Power Company and bands of people who have endeavoured to interrupt progress of work by methods which they euphemistically call those of passive resistance. A certain section of the press has devoted a great deal of space to untrue and misleading accounts of events of the past few weeks and endeavours have been made to show that Government by its officers had aided and abetted assault and outrage upon inoffensive villagers who were quietly and peacefully endeavouring to persuade the Tata Power Company to cease its operations. This is quite incorrect.



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Paddy incentive

In ₹ crore, the amount earmarked by the Punjab government to provide an incentive to farmers for the promotion of less water-consuming and cost-effective direct seeding of rice (DSR) technology. Punjab's agriculture department has set a target to bring 12 lakh hectares of paddy area under the (DSR) technique, which will be almost double the area covered last year. The DSR needs far less water for irrigation, improves percolation, reduces dependence on farm labour and improves soil health. PTI

Prisoners of war

taken prisoner by Russia. Russia has declared its full control of the Azovstal steel plant, which for weeks was the last holdout in Mariupol and a symbol of Ukrainian tenacity in the port city, now in ruins with more than 20,000 residents feared dead. The capture of Mariupol furthers Russia's quest to create a land bridge from Russia stretching through the Donbas region to the Crimean Peninsula. AP

Project delays

In ₹ lakh crore, the cost overruns of 425 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of ₹150 crore or more. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, out of 1,579 projects, 425 projects reported cost overruns and 664 projects were delayed. Out of the 664 delayed projects, 94 have overall delays in the range of 1-12 months, 124 have been delayed for 13-24 months. 331 projects for 25-60 months and 115 projects for 61 months and above. PTI

Operation fly formula

U.S. It is the first of several flights carrying infant formula from Europe expected this weekend to relieve the deepening shortage in the U.S. The flights were authorised by President Joe Biden. The crisis follows the closure of the nation's largest domestic manufacturing plant in Michigan in February due to safety issues. AP

Drug recall

disorders being recalled by Sun Pharma in the U.S. market. As per the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the company is recalling the affected lot due to the "presence of foreign substance: Customer complaint for the presence of dark, gritty substance found within the bottle, which was determined to be activated carbon from the desiccant

canister inside the bottle". PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Understanding the process of issuing LOCs

Are the 'accused' allowed intimation of look out circulars issued against them? When were banks authorised to file LOCs?

THE GIST

■ On April 5, the Punjab and Haryana High Court passed omnibus instructions to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Bureau of Immigration (BOI) to serve a copy of an issued LOC to the affected person, state the reasons for issuing the LOC and provide a "post-decisional opportunity". The Supreme Court however, stayed this particular paragraph of the High Court order

■ After several businessmen fled the country after defaulting on loans, the MHA in 2018 brought changes to the 2010 guidelines authorising executives of all public sector banks to generate LOCs against persons who could be detrimental to economic interests of the country.

■ Many citizens have moved courts to get the LOC quashed.

VIJAITA SINGH

The story so far: On April 5, the Punjab and Haryana High Court while quashing a Look Out Circular (LOC) against petitioner Noor Paul passed omnibus instructions to the respondents including the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Bureau of Immigration (BOI) to serve a copy of the LOC to the affected person, state the reasons for issuing the LOC "as soon as possible" and provide a "post-decisional opportunity". It asked the MHA to include these directions into the "Official Memorandum" or the guidelines that govern the opening of LOCs. The Government of India moved Supreme Court and the apex court stayed the particular paragraph of the High Court order. The High Court in its judgement has said that the action of the Bank of India to issue an LOC against Ms. Paul who was a guarantor to a loan procured by her father was "arbitrary, illegal and violative of Article 21 of the Constitution." Ms. Paul got to know about the LOC when she was turned away from the Delhi airport on February 22 when she was there to travel to Dubai.

What is a look out circular?

It is a notice to stop any individual wanted by the police, investigating agency or even a bank from leaving or entering the country through designated land, air and sea ports. The immigration is tasked to stop any such individual against whom such a notice exists from leaving or entering the country. There are 86 immigration check posts across the

Who can issue LOCs?

A large number of agencies which includes the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Income Tax, State police and intelligence agencies are authorised to generate LOCs. The officer should not be below the rank of a district magistrate or superintendent of police or a deputy secretary in the Union Government.

What are the details required to generate an LOC and who issues it?

According to a 2010 official memorandum of the Ministry, details such as First Information Report (FIR) number, court case number are to be mandatorily provided with

name, passport number and other details. The BOI under the MHA is only the executing agency. They generate LOCs based on requests by different agencies. Since immigration posts are manned by the BOI officials they are the first responders to execute LOCs by stopping or detaining or informing about an individual to the issuing agency. The LOCs can be modified; deleted or withdrawn only at the request of the originator. Further, the legal liability of the action taken by immigration authorities in pursuance of LOC rests with the originating

How are banks authorised?

After several businessmen including liquor baron Vijay Mallya, businessmen Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi fled the country after defaulting on loans, the MHA in 2018 brought changes to the 2010 guidelines authorising the chairman, managing director and chief executives of all public sector banks to generate LOCs against persons who could be detrimental to economic interests of the country. Though an LOC generated by the CBI on October 16, 2015 to "detain" Mr. Mallya existed based on the preliminary enquiry in a ₹900 crore loan default case, it was downgraded to "inform only" on November 23, 2015 as there was no FIR yet against him. Mr. Mallya who was a Rajya Sabha member then was a frequent flyer and he fled to the U.K in March 2016. The Ministry recently told the Delhi High Court that banks were authorised to generate LOCs as "in the recent past there have been incidents where the willful defaulters or economic offenders of public financial institutions have left the country after usurping public money or defrauding such public financial institutions."

Is there any other clause under which an individual can be stopped?

The 2010 Ministry guidelines give sweeping powers to police and intelligence agencies to generate LOCs in "exceptional cases' without keying in complete parameters or case details against "suspects, terrorists, anti-national elements, etc, in larger national interest." In 2015, Greenpeace activist Priya Pillai was stopped from travelling to London on a request by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) based on the "etc" provision in the 2010 order. The LOC was later quashed by the

Delhi High Court. After the special status of J&K under Article 370 of the Constitutions was read down by the Parliament in August 2019, LOCs were opened against several politicians, human rights activists, journalists and social activists to bar them from flying out of the country. The number of persons and the crime for which they have been placed under the list is unknown.

Are individuals entitled to any remedial measures?

Many citizens have moved courts to get the LOC quashed. The MHA has asserted that "LOCs cannot be shown to the subject" at the time of detention nor can any prior intimation be provided. The Ministry recently informed the Punjab and Haryana High Court that the LOC guidelines are a secret document and the same cannot be shared with the 'accused' or any unauthorised stakeholder: it cannot be provided or shown to the subject at the time of detention by the BOI since it defeats the purpose of LOC and no accused or subject of LOC can be provided any opportunity of hearing before the issuance of the LOC.

On January 12, a Delhi High Court bench led by Justice Rekha Palli had quashed an LOC against a Delhi businessman Vikas Chaudhary generated at the instance of the Income Tax department. The court said "no proceedings under any penal law had been initiated against the petitioner" and the LOC was "wholly unsustainable." A Delhi court on April 8 while quashing an LOC against Aakar Patel, chair, Amnesty International India said that "there cannot be any unfettered control or restriction on the right to travel" and that it was part of the fundamental rights and asked the Director of the CBI to tender a written apology. As per norms, an LOC will stay valid for a maximum period of 12 months and if there is no fresh request from the agency then it will not be automatically revived.



EXPLAINER

The case against Mehul Choksi

What happened to the charges brought against the diamantaire in Dominica? Does India have an extradition treaty with Antigua and Barbuda?

DEVESH K PANDEY

The story so far: Earlier this week, Dominica dropped criminal proceedings against diamantaire Mehul Choksi, who was accused of illegally entering the country in May 2021. Now wanted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for his alleged role in the ₹13,578 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud, he had shifted to Antigua and Barbuda in January 2018, days before the first case against him was registered.

What happened in Dominica?

On May 23, 2021, Mr. Choksi went missing from Antigua and Barbuda under mysterious circumstances. He later surfaced about 190 km away in Dominica, where he was detained on the charge of illegal entry. On May 27, 2021, the Dominican government confirmed his presence there. His family and lawyers alleged that he was abducted and taken to Dominica in a yacht, and had in that process, suffered injuries as well. In July 2021, a Dominica High Court allowed him to travel back to Antigua and Barbuda on bail for medical treatment. The Dominican government has now decided



Mehul Choksi as he arrives to the court in Dominica on June 4, 2021. • AP

to drop all charges against him.

What are the charges against Mr. Choksi in India?

On the PNB's complaint, the CBI registered the first case against Mr. Choksi, his nephew, Nirav Modi and others on January 31, 2018, alleging that they cheated the bank of over ₹280 crore in conspiracy with some officials. The alleged role of three companies, Diamonds R US, Solar Exports and Stellar Diamonds, was detected after they approached the bank's corporate branch in Mumbai for buyer's credit to make

payment to the so-called overseas suppliers.

Days later, the agency registered another case against three Gitanjali group companies of Mr. Choksi for causing an alleged ₹4,887 crore loss to the bank. Following investigations, the CBI filed a chargesheet alleging that the amount involved was over ₹7,080 crore.

In an unrelated matter, earlier this month the CBI registered yet another case against Gitanjali Gems Limited, Mr. Choksi and others for allegedly cheating the IFCI Limited of ₹22.06 crore.

The ED has filed chargesheets under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and attached properties worth hundreds of crores in India and abroad. Proceedings against him have also been initiated under the Fugitive Economic

How was the PNB allegedly cheated by Mr. Choksi and his associates? The CBI found that Mr. Choksi's companies were fraudulently issued 165

Letters of Undertaking (LoU). The value of 58 Foreign Letters of Credit (FLCs) were also enhanced in 2017 for payment to dummy overseas suppliers. In all, 347 FLCs were issued from 2014-16. The

suspect transactions had been initiated in 2011 and they continued till the bank authorities unearthed the "scam". They earlier remained undetected as the respective major entries were not made in the bank's Core Banking Software

Initially, the FLCs were opened for small amounts against which entries were recorded in CBS and letters sent to overseas branches through the SWIFT messaging system. As time went by, the value of FLCs was enhanced manifold by making amendments via SWIFT, without making CBS entries. The funds released to "suppliers" were used for clearing previous liabilities and other purposes, as

When did the shift to Antigua and Barbuda happen?

Mr. Choksi and his relatives flew out of India in the first week of January 2018, days before the bank lodged a complaint with the CBI. The agencies later found that he had applied for Antiguan citizenship in May 2017. His application was approved in November 2017. On January 15, 2018, he took the oath of allegiance to Antigua and since then has been living there. As alleged, Mr. Choksi had visited Hong Kong in December 2017 and told the dummy directors of "supplier" companies to apply for Thailand visa. Therefore, the ED has alleged that he knew beforehand about the impending criminal proceedings.

What measures are the Indian agencies taking to bring Mr. Choksi

Based on its findings, the CBI approached Interpol and got a Red Notice issued against Mr. Choksi in December 2018. Through diplomatic channels, the probe agencies have sought the fugitive's custody for his prosecution in India. India does not have an extradition treaty with Antigua and Barbuda. However, according to a Ministry of External Affairs' order dated August 3, 2018, provisions of the Extradition Act, 1962, (other than Chapter III) apply to Antigua and Barbuda with effect from the date of notifying India as a Designated Commonwealth Country under the Extradition Act of Antigua and Barbuda on September 17, 2001. India is currently pursuing its request for Mr. Choksi's extradition in the court there. He is also facing legal proceedings challenging the validity of his Antiguan citizenship.

Dominica dropped crimina proceedings against diamantaire Mehul Choksi, who was accused of illegally entering the country in May 2021. Mr. Choksi is wanted by the CBI and ED for his role in the ₹13.578 crore Punjab National Bank fraud.

Mr. Choksi flew out of India in January 2018, to Anitgua. On May 23, 2021, he went missing from Antigua and Barbuda under mysterious circumstances and later surfaced in Dominica, where he was detained on charges of illegal entry.

■ Indian is currently pursuing its request for his extradition in Antiqua. The CBI found that Choksi's companies were fraudulently issued 16 LoUs and 58 FLCs.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Are you plugged in on the latest news?

Getting stuck with stuck-up individuals is not a pleasant experience

S. UPENDRAN

"Why were you so late for Jyothi's party last night? Are you working on a new project?"

"I wish I were. The project I'm working on right now is pretty boring. I wish my boss..." "All I want to know is why you were late

yesterday." "That's simple. I was stuck up in traffic."

"Stuck in traffic." "What?"

"You don't say 'stuck up in traffic'. When you get caught in a traffic jam, you generally say 'stuck in traffic' and not 'stuck up'. If I don't leave home by 8:00 o'clock, I invariably get stuck in traffic."

"Many of my friends have started using the Metro because they don't want to get stuck in

'The use of the word 'stuck' also suggests that you are caught in a unpleasant situation. One from which you can't escape. For example, during the pandemic, children were stuck at home all day."

"Poor things. They couldn't even meet +their friends. How about this example? I was stuck in a lift yesterday with four other people. Luckily, it was only for ten minutes. But it was scary.'

"I'm sure it was."

"Tell me, is 'stuck up' ever used?"

"Of course. The expression is frequently used in informal contexts as an adjective. When you refer to someone as being a 'stuckup individual', what you're suggesting is that he's a bit of a snob."

"In other words, he thinks he's smarter or better looking than all those around him."

"He thinks he's the most important person in the room, and therefore treats everyone with contempt."

"Not a very friendly sort of person, I guess.

"Not friendly at all. Their daughter, Indu, is very well behaved. Jai, on the other hand, is a stuck-up little brat."

"My former boss was a stuck-up individual. It was difficult to talk to him."

"Good example. Many of my friends think

that Jyothi's husband is a bit stuck-up."

"Really? He seemed very friendly yesterday. He certainly knows how to throw a party. What fantastic food. By the way, can we postpone tomorrow's lunch? I think I ate a bit too much last night."

"No problem. It'll probably do my stomach some good as well. I've been eating out every day this week."

"Not a good idea. Jyothi told me that the Manager is planning to hire new people in the department. Is it true?"

"I'm the wrong person to ask. You should ask Revathi. She's plugged in to everything that happens in the office."

"Plugged in? Does it mean someone who is in the know?'

"Very good. When you say that someone is 'plugged in', what you're suggesting is that the individual is well informed. He has connections and therefore, he's always in the know about things. For example, if you wish to know about the stock market, you should talk to Deepesh. Among our circle of friends, there's no one who is more plugged in."

"How about this example? There was a time when I was up to date on all Bollywood news. I haven't been plugged in since graduating from college."

"That's a good example. It's sad to note that the Principal is not plugged in to the needs of the teachers."

"There are not many who are!"

"If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."

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-Lewis Carroll

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'

The rise of AI chips

What are the different ways in which AI chips are being used in various sectors? What are the recent innovations in the industry?

THE GIST

Al chips with their hardware architectures and complementary packaging, memory, storage and interconnect technologies, make it possible to infuse AI into a broad spectrum of applications to help turn data into information and then into knowledge.

■ The use of AI chips for NLP applications has increased due to the rise in demand for chatbots and online channels such as Messenger, Slack, and others that use NLP to analyse user messages and conversational logic.

■ Nvidia Corporation, Intel Corporation, IBM Corporation, Alphabet Inc., Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd, and Apple Inc. are some of the key players in the AI chip market.

ISHAN PATRA

The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) chips has risen, with chipmakers designing different types of these chips to power AI applications such as natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, robotics, and network security across a wide variety of sectors, including automotive, IT, healthcare, and retail. Market leader Nvidia recently announced its H100 GPU (graphics processing unit), which is said to be one of the world's largest and most powerful AI accelerators, packed with 80 billion transistors. Earlier this month, Nvidia's rival Intel launched new AI chips to provide customers with deep learning compute choices for training and inferencing in data centres. The increasing adoption of AI chips in data centres is one of the major factors driving the growth of the market.

What are AI chips?

AI chips are built with specific architecture and have integrated AI acceleration to support deep learning-based applications. Deep learning, more commonly known as active neural network (ANN) or deep neural network (DNN), is a subset of machine learning and comes under the broader umbrella of AI. It combines a series of computer commands or algorithms that stimulate activity and brain structure. DNNs go through a training phase, learning new capabilities from existing data. DNNs can then inference, by applying these capabilities learned during deep learning training to make predictions against previously unseen data. Deep learning can make the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting enormous amounts of data faster and easier.

These chips, with their hardware architectures and complementary packaging, memory, storage and interconnect technologies, make it possible to infuse AI into a broad spectrum of applications to help turn data into information and then into knowledge. There are different types of AI chips such as application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs), field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), central processing units (CPUs) and GPUs, designed for diverse AI applications.

Are they different from traditional chips? When traditional chips, containing processor cores and memory, perform computational tasks, they continuously move commands and data between the two hardware components. These chips, however, are not ideal for AI applications as they would not be able to handle higher

computational necessities of AI workloads which have huge volumes of data. Although, some of the higher-end traditional chips may be able to

process certain AI applications. In comparison, AI chips generally contain processor cores as well as several AI-optimised cores (depending on the scale of the chip) that are designed to work in harmony when performing computational tasks. The AI cores are optimised for the demands of heterogeneous enterprise-class AI workloads with low-latency inferencing, due to close integration with the other processor cores, which are designed to handle non-AI applications.

AI chips, essentially, reimagine traditional chips' architecture, enabling smart devices to perform sophisticated deep learning tasks such as object detection and segmentation in real-time, with minimal power consumption.

What are their applications?

Semiconductor firms have developed various specialised AI chips for a multitude of smart machines and devices, including ones that are said to deliver the performance of a data centre-class computer to edge devices. Some of these chips support in-vehicle computers to run state-of-the-art AI applications more efficiently. AI chips are also powering applications of computational imaging in wearable electronics, drones, and robots.

Additionally, the use of AI chips for NLP applications has increased due to the rise in demand for chatbots and online channels such as Messenger, Slack, and others. They use NLP to analyse user messages and conversational logic. Then there are chipmakers who have built AI processors with on-chip hardware acceleration, designed to help customers achieve business insights at scale across banking, finance, trading, insurance applications and customer interactions.

As AI becomes pervasive across different workloads, having a dedicated inference accelerator that includes support for major deep learning frameworks would allow companies to harness the full potential of their data.

What firms are making these chips?

Nvidia Corporation, Intel Corporation, IBM Corporation, Advanced Micro Devices, Alphabet Inc., Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd, Qualcomm Technologies, Inc., and Apple Inc. are some of the key players in the AI chip market.

Nvidia, which dominates the market, offers a wide portfolio of AI chips including Grace CPU,

What can be expected in the future?

detection, loan processing, clearing and

Nvidia's A100 GPU.

risk analysis.

H100 and its predecessor A100 GPUs, capable of

billions of parameters. The company claims that

twenty H100 GPUs can sustain the equivalent of

accelerated computing platform, announced in

becoming AI factories – processing and refining

Intel offers AI hardware that can train massive,

unstructured data sets, to extremely low power

silicon for on-device inference. Intel's Habana

learning processors – Gaudi2 and Greco. Intel

claims its Gaudi2 processor demonstrates two

items passing through a system or process) over

IBM's new AI chip, announced last year, can

support financial services workloads like fraud

settlement of trades, anti-money laundering and

times throughput (the amount of material or

Labs launched its second-generation deep

handling some of the largest AI models with

The American firm's next-generation

March, with Nvidia Hopper architecture is

designed to power data centres, which "are

mountains of data to produce intelligence,"

according to Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang.

the entire world's internet traffic.

AI company Cerebras Systems set a new standard with its brain-scale Al solution, paving the way for more advanced solutions in the future. Its CS-2, powered by the Wafer Scale Engine (WSE-2) is a single wafer-scale chip with 2.6 trillion transistors and 8,50,000 AI optimised cores. The human brain contains on the order of 100 trillion synapses, the firm said, adding that a single CS-2 accelerator can support models of over 120 trillion parameters (synapse equivalents) in size.

Another AI chip design approach, neuromorphic computing, utilises an engineering method based on the activity of the biological

An increase in the adoption of neuromorphic chips in the automotive industry is expected in the next few years, according to ResearchAndMarkets.

Additionally, the rise in the need for smart homes and cities, and the surge in investments in AI start-ups are expected to drive the growth of the global AI chip market, as per a report by Allied Market Research. The Worldwide AI chip industry accounted for \$8.02 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach \$194.9 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of

THE DAILY QUIZ

52-year-old Viswanathan Anand won the Superbet Rapid chess tournament in Poland on Saturday, underlining how competitive the maestro remains at an advanced age. Here's a quiz on veteran sportspersons.

When Roger Federer defeated Marin Cilic in the 2018 Australian Open, he was a ripe 36 years, 5 months and 7 $\,$ days old, and one of the oldest male players to win a Grand Slam. But the record is held by a player who was 37 years, 2 months and 1 day old when he won the Australian Open. Who and in which year?

2 Which cricketer was aged 46 years and 82 days when he scored a hundred at Melbourne to set the record for the oldest cricketer to score a test century?

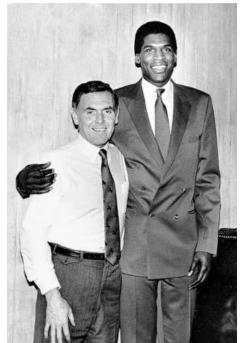
3 Known for celebrating his goals with a jig near the corner flag, which footballer holds the record for being the oldest to score a goal

Compiled by: Srinivasan Ramani

in the FIFA World Cup? From which country?

4 While Viswanauran Anand continues to rank While Viswanathan as the highest rated Indian chess player even in his early 50s, this chess player became the oldest to win a national championship (the Swiss national title) at 80! Name this former Soviet Union champion who was stateless for a couple of years before settling down in Switzerland.

5 Which legend became the oldest player (male or female) to win a Grand Slam tournament partnering with Leander Paes in the 2003 Australian Open?



◀ Name this basketball player (the taller man in the picture), nicknamed The Chief, who holds the record of playing the most NBA games and was the oldest to win a championship as well. • CITY OF BOSTON ARCHIVES, WIKIPEDIA

37.4% from 2021 to 2030.

Please send in your answers to the dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the May 20 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The reasons why May 20 was chosen for World Metrology and World Bees Day. Ans: The date is the anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention in 1875 and Anton Janša, the pioneer of beekeeping, was born on this date in 1734

2. The units for luminous intensity and electric current. Ans: candela and ampere

3. The three types of residents in hives. Ans: Queen, workers, and drones 4. The scientist after whom the number of units in one mole of any substance is named after.

Ans: Amedeo Avogadro 5. The 'royal jelly' in the context of bees. Ans: It is the special food fed by workers to a

young larva to make it into a queen bee in the event of an existing queen dying 6. The names assigned to two dimensionless derived units. Ans: The radian (rad) and the

7. The two-word term used for the movement performed by a honey bee to indicate to other bees the direction and distance of a source of food. Ans: 'Waggle Dance' 8. The way in which William Thomson has been immortalised as regards the SI system of units.

Ans: He was the 1st Baron Kelvin and gives his peerage name to the unit for temperature Visual: This legend and the feat he accomplished. Ans: Sir Edmund Hillary, who, along with Tenzing Norgay, was the first to scale Mt. Everest in 1953

Early Birds: Mahima Sajani Jacob| Roushani Kalia| Anuradha Dwivedi

FROM PAGE ONE

Many States reluctant to cut fuel taxes

Mr. Thiaga Rajan termed this an "unfair and unreasonable" expectation, in an elaborate statement on the issue on Sunday, while Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot pointed out that the Centre's excise duty cuts were followed by "a sudden increase" in petrol prices by 71 paise per litre on Sunday. "The reduction will become irrelevant if the fuel prices are increased," Mr. Gehlot

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said he would consider if duty cuts were feasible, while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which now administers Delhi and Punjab, and the Trinamool Congress did not isofficial any communiques on their stance. In response to the Prime Minister's plea for States to cut taxes, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said last month that would be possible only if Centre cleared its pending dues of about ₹97,000 crore.

Cascading effect

Both Mr. Gehlot and the Tamil Nadu Finance Minister pointed out that States were already losing revenues due to the Centre's tax cuts, which had a cascading effect on their effective levies.

"The Centre should reduce the excise duty on petrol and diesel to the level at the time of the UPA government to provide relief to the common people in the real sense, as such a decision would bring down the fuel prices to less than ₹70 per litre," Mr. Gehlot said.

The Centre still levied a cess of ₹7.40 a litre on diesel and ₹16.40 a litre on petrol and the State would appreciate if it rolled back the cess on diesel to ₹3.46 a litre which prevailed in March 2014, Mr. Rao asserted. By contrast, his government had left the VAT on these products unchanged since assuming office in 2014, he pointed out.

"It was neither fair nor reasonable to expect the States to reduce their taxes on fuel since the Union government had never consulted them while increasing the taxes multiple times," said Mr. Thiaga Rajan, noting that the reduction in Central excise duties would result in an additional loss of around ₹800 crore in annual revenue to the

State, in addition to the ₹1,050-crore loss from the announced November.

Though the DMK government inherited a precarious fiscal position and incurred an additional expenditure towards COVID-19 relief activities, it reduced the VAT on petrol in a few months after assuming office even before the Centre's November 2021 reductions

Manifold increase

In the past seven years, the Union government's levies on petrol had gone up substantially, resulting in a manifold increase in its revenues, but the States did not see a matching increase in their revenues. "This is because the Union government has increased the cess and surcharge on petrol and diesel while reducing the basic excise duty that is shareable with the States," the Minister said.

With the recent cuts, the Union government's taxes on petrol were ₹19.90 a litre and ₹15.80 a litre for diesel, but was still higher than the 2014 rates by ₹10.42 a litre on petrol (₹9.48 a litre in 2014) and ₹12.23 a litre for diesel (₹3.57 a litre in 2014), he said, adding that there was a "strong case" for the Union government to further reduce its taxes.

"It is pertinent to point out that the Union government had never consulted the States when it increased the taxes multiple times. The exorbitant increase in taxes by the Union government has been only partially reduced through the cuts, and the taxes continue to be high, compared with the 2014 rates," Mr. Thiaga Ra-

'Not enough'

AAP spokesperson in Punjab, Malwinder Singh Kang, said the Centre's reduction of excise duty on diesel and petrol was not enough and demanded a further reduction in the excise duty. "Punjab is already under a severe financial crisis," he told The Hindu.

The Maharashtra government said it expects to lose ₹80 crore on petrol and ₹125 crore on diesel a month due to the VAT cuts, which will translate into an annual revenue loss of ₹2,500 crore.

(With inputs from Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Kolkata)

Houses of suspects in Assam violence razed



Fruit of fury: Charred remains at the Batadrava police station

Director-General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta trashed the accusation and said the attack might not have been spontaneous but

after a medical check-up. The next day, he was released and handed over to his wife. His wife even gave him some water/food. Later, he complained of sickness and he was taken to two hospitals. Unfortunately, he was declared dead," Mr. Mahanta said. "The bad elements came in all forms men, women, young and old. But the preparedness with which they came, the ferocious and organised attack they staged on the police force had made us think deeper," he said.

"We don't think these are grieving relatives of the dead, but as we have identified, they were bad characters and their relatives with criminal records. Proof, incriminating evidence - all burnt down. So, [we] don't think this is a simple actionreaction incident. There is much more to it," Mr. Mahanta said, warning action against the perpetrators of the crime and any policeman found guilty.

The autopsy was conducted and the viscera preserved for forensic investi-

A team from the forensic science laboratory in Guwahati was scheduled to visit the Batadrava police station to find out if petrol or kerosene was used during the mob attack, Mr. Singh said.

Most documents at the police station, several twowheelers and firearms were destroyed in the fire. The mob also thrashed the police personnel, two of them

PM to attend Tokyo launch of U.S. trade initiative

India is yet to take a decision on joining trade partnership framework, but is keen on understanding 'contours' of the plan

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in U.S. President Joseph Biden's unveiling of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) in Tokyo on Monday, a U.S. initiative for trade partnerships in the region, sources confirmed.

Mr. Modi's attendance at the event is a significant step towards building economic ties among Quad countries (India, the U.S., Australia and Japan) in the Indo-Pacific, though officials were hesitant to bill the IPEF as a counter to the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the 17-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that China is a member of.

Briefing the media ahead of the event, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the IPEF would have a "very wide-ranging membership", adding significantly, that the programme was "designed to put workers at the centre - American workers", with a focus on the digital economy, clean energy transition, infrastructure and resilient supply chains.

India has not taken a decision on joining the frame-

work, but is keen on understanding the "contours" of the American plan, said an official, confirming that Indian delegates would join the launch of negotiations expected on Monday as well. On Saturday, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said that "discussions and the conversations are still going on" on the IPEF draft.

After landing in Tokyo on Monday, Mr. Modi is expected to meet Japanese business leaders in one-on-one interactions, including heads of NEC Corporation, Uniqlo Garments, Suzuki Motors, and the SoftBank Group, attend the IPEF event with Mr. Biden and other leaders, and also attend a business roundtable.

Quad summit

On Tuesday, he will meet with Mr. Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and the new Australian PM Anthony Albanese for the Ouad summit after which he will hold bilateral talks with each of them. Though officials have said

that the Quad focus is on areas of convergence such as trade, infrastructure, climate change and critical technologies, it is clear that divisions

in Ukraine

Stiff resistance: Protesters march against the Quad summit ahead of U.S. President Joe Biden's arrival in Tokyo. ■REUTERS

over the war in Ukraine, food security, the vaccine initiative and a number of other issues, including the U.S. push to bring Taiwan back as an observer at the World Health Assembly (WHA) this week, will also come up at the

"The second in-person Quad Leaders' Summit will provide an opportunity for the leaders of the four Quad countries to review the progress of Quad initiatives. We

will also exchange views about developments in the Indo-Pacific region and global issues of mutual interest," Mr. Modi said in a departure statement.

Mr. Modi's reference to "developments in the Indo-Pacific" region indicates India's consistent policy that it would not include comments on Russia in its diplomatic engagements with other countries. The position was underlined during the

Quad leaders' last interaction, a virtual meeting in March, where the joint statement did not reflect sharp criticism of Russia that marked the statements made by the other three leaders.

Wheat export ban

In the past week, India has also run up against the U.S. and Japan at G-7 meetings, as well as at the UN Security Council over its decision to ban wheat exports amidst global shortages of Ukrainian wheat.

In a press briefing on Sunday, the U.S. NSA said Mr. Biden would continue to discuss the "impacts of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine on a wider set of concerns in the world, including this food security concern," in his conversations with Mr. Modi in Tokyo.

However, Mr. Kwatra said on Saturday that "there is a full understanding and appreciation of [India's] policy [on Ukraine] in the world, including among [India's] main partners", and reiterated India's food security needs were "paramount", when asked about the U.S.'s call to reverse the government's wheat export ban.

Mr. Kwatra said the Quad

would organise a special session on the sidelines of the WHA on May 24, where the four countries would jointly tackle issues of disinformation during the pandemic boosting confidence.

The grouping is also expected to discuss and possibly review its Quad Vaccine Initiative project to disburse U.S.-developed and funded, India-made vaccines with the support of Japan and Australia amongst Indo-Pacific countries that had been stuck due to what Mr. Sullivan called "regulatory issues" with India.

The first Quad interaction last year had committed to distributing one billion of the vaccines, made at Hyderabad-based Biological-E by the end of 2022, but have made no headway on the project vet.

Another issue the Quad is divided over is whether to support Taiwan's request to be included as an observer at the WHA, something China opposes. While the U.S., Australia and Japan have backed the Taiwanese request, India has made no statement thus far, and MEA officials did not confirm whether would endorse it.

U.S. doesn't single out India: NSA

We have found a way to pursue practical cooperation with countries: Sullivan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The United States doesn't "single India out" on issues of human rights and ensuring fundamental freedoms, said American National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, speaking ahead of the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Joseph Biden to be held in Tokyo on the sidelines of the Ouad summit.

During a briefing onboard the flight to Tokyo, Mr. Sullivan was asked by a reporter how the U.S. administration "balances" engaging economically with Mr. Modi, given what the reporter called accusations of "human

'India to spend

\$26 billion to

curb inflation

The Indian government is

considering spending an

additional ₹2 trillion (\$26 billion) in the 2022-23 fiscal

year to cushion consumers

from rising prices and fight multi-year high inflation,

two government officials

The new measures will

revenues

be double the ₹1 trillion hit

could take from tax cuts on

petrol and diesel the Fi-

nance Minister announced

on Saturday, both the offi-

India's retail inflation

rose to an eight-year high

in April, while wholesale

inflation rose to at least a

17-year high, posing a ma-

jor headache for Prime Mi-

nister Narendra Modi's go-

vernment ahead of

elections to several State

The Indian government

plans to borrow a record

₹14.31 trillion in the current

fiscal year [possibly in Ja-

nuary-March 2023], ac-

cording to Budget announ-

cements made in February

this year.

Assemblies this year.

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

told *Reuters*.

government

cials said.

President Biden has been clear from the beginning of this administration that we'll speak out when we see any form of departure from or deviation from basic principles, human rights, the values of democratic institutions, and the rule of law JAKE SULLIVAN, U.S. National Security Advise



"President Biden has

been clear from the beginning of this administration that we'll speak out when we see any form of departure from or deviation from basic fundamental freedoms, human rights, the

tions, and the rule of law," Mr. Sullivan said. "That's true for a range of countries. And, vou know, we don't single India out," he added.

He also said that the U.S. had "found a way" to pursue practical cooperation with countries that were demo-

Life aid: A man collecting relief material in Hojai district, Assam, on Saturday. •RITU RAJ KONWAR

Assam flood scene improving

provided by the Assam State

Disaster Management Auth-

ority (ASDMA), the number

of flood-affected districts re-

duced from a high of 29 dis-

tricts to 22 districts during

The authority says that

the number of affected peo-

ple, however, remained

more or less constant at 7.2

lakh with 91,518 of the most

Six people, including two children, drowned on Sunday

the last 24 hours.

cratic and non-democratic, "while at the same time being clear and consistent of where American values lie".

Asked about India and the U.S.'s differences over Russia, where India has abstained from all resolutions seeking to criticise the invasion in Ukraine, and continues economic and oil trade with Moscow, Mr. Sullivan said that would be part of the bilateral talks, stressing that he expects the talks to be "constructive and straightforward" as previous private exchanges between Mr. Biden and Mr. Modi have been while "talking through" all the issues on the bilateral

SC asks AIIMS to follow roster-based allotment

Plea filed by INI-CET candidates

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has directed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to implement a roster system for allocation of seats for institutional preference candidates who clear the Institutes of National Importance Combined Entrance Test (INI-CET).

The order from a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao came on a petition filed by medical students' associations and others, who complained that they were not getting their favoured disciplines in the AIIMS despite clearing the INI-CET with flying colours.

The petitioners, including Association of Students of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) of Bhopal, said there was no mechanism of allotment of seats for institutional preference candidates.

INI-CET exams are held for postgraduate medical students seeking admission to elite medical institutions,

HANS, Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, Puducherry (JIPMER), PGI Chandigarh, and SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram. Seats are filled during the INI-CET admission process either by institutional preference or through open competition.

including the AIIMS, NIM-

Unlike JIPMER, the AIIMS does not have a roster system for institutional preference candidates.

During the hearing, advocate Dushyant Parashar, for the AIIMS, filed an affidavit agreeing to evolve a "roster point-based reservation for preferential candidates". However, the actual roster point for the AIIMS would be different from that of JIPMER. The court accepted the statement in the affidavit made on behalf of the AI-

"We direct that the roster point-based reservation for preferential candidates shall be implemented in all the AIIMS institutes," the court directed.

Panel to investigate Ramban tunnel collapse

It will give report to ministry in 10 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Centre has constituted a committee of three independent experts to investigate the reasons for the recent collapse of a part of an under-construction tunnel in Ramban on Jammu-Srinagar highway and suggest remedial measures.

The state-owned National Highways Authority of India has already initiated a process to handle such emergency situations and is taking all possible measures to avoid such incidents in future, an official statement said on Sunday.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways office order, Professor

J.T. Sahu of the IIT, Delhi will be the chairman of the committee, and it will submit the report within 10 days.

According to the official statement, the stretch between Digdole and Khooni Nallah of the Ramban Banihal section is prone to frequent landslip and shooting stones due to fragile geolo-

Those whose life could not be saved are being given workman compensation and an additional ex gratia of ₹2 lakh by EPC contractor which amounts to at least

It is yet to be determined whether the incident occurred due to work being executed or natural reasons.

'Infra projects to be routed through NPG'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

All logistics and connectivity infrastructure projects, entailing investment of over ₹500 crore, would now route through the network planning group (NPG) constituted under the PM GatiShakti initiative with the Finance Ministry issuing the necessary instructions and creation of the national master plan digital platform, an

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The flood situation in Assam

improved on Sunday, but

left six people, including

two children, dead, taking

While 19 people drowned

According to an update

since the "first wave" of

floods struck in mid-May,

five were killed in landslips.

the death toll to 24.

According to an office memorandum of the department of expenditure dated April 28, a revised format has been issued for Public Investment Board (PIB)/Delegated Investment Board

(DIB) project proposals. "The revised format of the

PIB/DIB memorandum...will apply to all the PIB/DIB proposals for new projects sub-2022," it has said.

proposals should include whether the project has components of logistics or

infrastructure connectivity; and whether it has been examined by NPG for convergence and integration at the conceptualisation or feasibility study stage.

vulnerable taking shelter in

269 relief camps across the

parts of the rain-lashed

northeast was also reported

Landslips killed eight peo-

ple in Arunachal Pradesh

while flash floods claimed

the lives of three people in

Meghalaya in the past week.

to be stable on Sunday.

The situation in other

State.

This will help bring down the logistics cost and promote effective and efficient planning of infrastructure

er treatment and supportive care. Donations ent by Ch/D.D. favouring **V.S. Medical Trust** rill be acknowledged. The donations sent prough Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY ouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is empted under 80G IT (Please do not mention

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No, GF 1 Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006 Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/9941843362. E Mail: womenswelfaresyndicate@

after it was set on fire, on Saturday. •PTI

organised. "He [Islam] was booked

gation.

are in hospital.

mitted on or after April 28, As per the revised format,

projects.

SilverLine is undemocratic: Medha Patkar

STAFF REPORTER

Social activist Medha Patkar on Sunday said that the semi-high-speed SilverLine project in Kerala was "undemocratic, non-sustainable, and unjust".

Addressing "No to K-Rail, yes to Kerala', a meet organised by the Anti-SilverLine Protest Committee here, Ms. Patkar said the project followed a development paradigm that was against "truly acceptable priorities and processes".

She said natural resource management and priorities in the name of development in Kerala did not ensure equity, sustainability, and justice, and that the project would divide society.

She added that whether it was SilverLine or the bullet train, it was the same bilateral agency, Japan Inter-Corporation national Agency, which brought money and technology. And, the technology is reportedly outdated and a failure in Japan.

Earlier in the day, she met endosulfan victims in Kasaragod and raised the issue of compensation.

Divergent views on Krishna Janmabhoomi order

District judge says Places of Worship Act not applicable, worshipper could file a suit as the next friend of deity

In an significant development that can have farreaching ramifications, the Mathura District Judge, who allowed the civil revision petition of the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust and other private parties, has observed in his order that the provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 were not applicable in the case because of Section

The order also said a worshipper could file a suit as the next friend of a deity.

4(3) (b) of the 1991 Act.

Responding to the order, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) said it vindicated its stand on the Mathura and Kashi temples. The lawyers of the Shahi Idgah said the Supreme Court should make its stand clear on the 1991 Act, or else, the lower courts would continue to interpret it arbitrarily.

'Fraudulent agreement'

The petitioners, Bhagwan Shri Krishna Virajman Ashthan Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi, moved through the "next friend of the deity", Ranjana Agnihotri, had argued that the agreement

reached between the Shri Krishna Janmasathan Sev Sansthan and the Shahi Idgah Trust in 1968 was fraudulent and it resulted in a compromise decree in 1974.

In the agreement, the society had conceded the "valuable property" of the deity/trust to the Trust without having the right to enter into a compromise, the petitioners said. The lawyers representing

the Trust argued that the society was an agent of the Trust and the compromise agreement was also subsequently registered.

District judge Rajeev Bharti reasoned that as the decree was drawn before the commencement of the Act of 1991 and since the same is the subject matter of challenge in the suit moved by the petitioner and therefore, by virtue of Section 4(3) (b) of 1991 Act, the Act shall not be applicable on this

"Nothing contained in sub-section (1) and sub-section (2) shall apply to any suit, appeal or other proceedings, with respect to any matter, referred to in subsection (2) finally decided, settled or disposed of by a



A view of the Shri Krishna Janmasthan Temple and the Shahi Idgah Mosque in Mathura. • PTI

to file the suit, had come up

The court said a worship-

per, as the next friend of a

deity, can file a suit for resto-

ration of the religious rights

The order further said the

lower court committed ille-

gality, and asked it to hear

both sides. "Whether the

plaintiffs are entitled to

maintain the suit would be

determined only during the

trial on the basis of evidence

adduced by both the par-

ties," the order said.

for revision.

of the deity.

'Hear both sides'

court, tribunal or authority before the commencement of this Act," Mr. Bharti said, "in light of the discussions made and the legal tenets on the mentioned question, this court is of the considered view that the provisions of the Places of Worship (Spe-

not applicable." Mr. Bharti passed the order on Thursday but it was uploaded only on Saturday.

cial Provisions) Act 1991 are

The suit that was dismissed by a lower court in September 2020, saying the plaintiffs being the devotees of Shri Krishna had no right

ers in both the Mathura and Varanasi cases, welcomed the order, advocate Tanveer Ahmed, who argued for the Shahi Idgah Trust, said the Supreme Court should make its stand clear on the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act. Legal observers said the

While Hari Shankar Jain,

the advocate of the petition-

order effectively meant that the Special Provisions Act did not come in the way of cases that sought a declaration on the period prior to 1991 and for enforcement of claim, which was recognised before the Act came into being.

Vinod Bansal, VHP spokesperson, told The Hindu that the order vindicated the outfit's stand on Mathura and Kashi temples. "The Act doesn't come in the way of the investigation of truth. Even the Supreme Court has not put the survey in the Gyanvapi mosque on hold," he said.

He said that at present, Mathura and Kashi were on the VHP's agenda but one could not say about the future. "It is not a Hindu-Muslim issue, every citizen should come forward in dig-

Mr. Ahmed feared it would spiral into a series of pleas to correct the so-called historical wrongs. "In Mathura courts itself, eight to 10

ging out the truth," he said.

pleas have been filed. One has asked for a survey on the lines of the Gyanvapi mosque, another has sought a stoppage of worship in the Idgah. Such superfluous applications are filed to get media space, which in turn entices many more Krishna and Vishnu bhakts to knock at the doors of the judiciary."

Advocate and social acti-

vist Madhuvan Dutt Chatur-

vedi said the recent demand for demolition of Jama Masjid in Aligarh on the ground that it is built on public land, the call for changing the character of Qutub Minar, and fuelling the controversy around Taj Mahal despite the Allahabad High Court's order show that there has been a concerted attempt to arouse majoritarian sentiments. "The people of Mathura have always resisted the attempt to communalise the atmosphere as we had seen on December 6, 2021. I hope they would continue to thwart such attempts," Mr. Chaturvedi said.

Jharkhand moves SC in migrants case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The purpose of public interest litigation (PIL) plea is to help the "minorities" "disadvantaged groups", the Jharkhand government has told the Supreme Court while opposing a plea seeking a direction to the Centre and the States to "identify, detain and deport" illegal immigrants.

The reply of the JMM-Congress-RJD coalition government in Jharkhand has been filed in response to a plea by BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay, who has sought a direction to the Centre and the States to identify, detain and deport all the illegal immigrants and infiltrators, including Bangladeshis and Rohingvas.

In the 15-page affidavit, filed through Prashant Kumar, Inspector-General, Special Branch, Jharkhand Police, the State government has said that there is already a mechanism in place for setting up detention centres, holding centres and camps in various States to restrict the movement of illegal immigrants or foreign nationals.

Telangana CM urges farmers to resume stir

Mann, Kejriwal join KCR at Chandigarh stop of his India trip

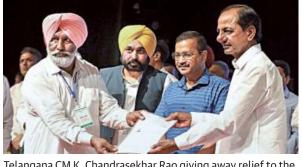
VIKAS VASUDEVA CHANDIGARH

In an attempt to position himself as a national leader and build a consensus for setting up an anti-BJP platform, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao attended an event here on Sunday, along with his Punjab and Delhi counterparts, Bhagwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal, respectively, to honour the victims of the recent farmers' agitation and the soldiers who died fighting Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley.

Mr. Rao, who is touring various States to get the support of non-BJP parties for a legal backing for the minimum support price, urged farmers to resume their agitation for all demands, including MSP on all crops constitutional guarantee.

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi president was in Chandigarh as part of his week-long tour to attend national-level programmes.

Mr. Rao paid tributes to the farmers from Punjab and



Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao giving away relief to the kin of the farmers in Chandigarh on Sunday. • PTI

Haryana who lost their lives during the year-long farmers' agitation against the Centre's now-repealed farm laws and the fallen soldiers in Galwan Valley. He handed ers across the country. over ₹3 lakh each to the families of farmers and ₹10 lakh each to the kin of soldiers who died in Galwan, on behalf of the people of

Call to expand protest "The farmers' struggle

should not be restricted to the States of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh. Farmers from other States should proactively

come forward to get their genuine demands accepted by the Centre," he said. Such a struggle was necessary to ensure the welfare of farm-

Mr. Rao opposed the Centre's move to introduce electricity meters in the farm sector, and said the Telangana government would not implement it.

Mr. Kejriwal said that during the farmers' agitation, there had been tremendous pressure on his government from the Centre to stall the agitation by converting all stadia in Delhi into open jails so as to jail the farmers.

BJP ended corruption in the northeast: Amit Shah

'Funds were siphoned off earlier'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had ended the "corruption culture" prevalent in the northeast during the Congress rule to ensure the proper utilisation of every penny sent to the region.

Addressing a public rally in eastern Arunachal Pradesh's Namsai, he said that the development funds earmarked for the region used to be siphoned off by middlemen when the Congress reigned supreme. "The northeast saw fast-

track development only after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. But Congress won't see the development if their leaders keep their eyes closed," Mr. Shah said. He inaugurated a slew of

projects and laid the foundation stones of others worth a total of ₹1,000 "Rahul Gandhi, open

your eyes and discard Italian glasses and wear Indian ones. You could then see what Modi has done for the region you neglected for 50



years," he said.

"The culture of corruption in the northeast ended under the Modi government. Every penny is being utilised with total transparency and the development funds are percolating down to the last man," Mr. Shah

"During the time of the Congress, one Chief Minister would lay the foundation stone of a project, another would announce it and possibly the third would inaugurate it. For us, [Arunachal Pradesh Chief Ministerl Pema Khandu will lay the foundation stone and also inaugurate it," he said. Mr. Shah said the people in the country could learn patriotism from the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

BJP Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh returns to Trinamool

Major setback for the saffron party in West Bengal

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

In a major setback to the West Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh on Sunday left the party and rejoined the Trinamool Con-

Mr. Singh joined the State's ruling party in the presence of Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and other senior leaders from North 24 Parganas at its Camac Street office in the city.

"I have returned home. I have been associated with the party (Trinamool) since its foundation in 1998," Mr. Singh said. The Barrackpore MP said that he wanted to fight for the interest of all the stakeholders of the jute industry and only Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee can lead the struggle.

Before joining, the MP on Sunday held a meeting with Abhishek Banerjee and other Trinamool leaders, who had expressed unhappiness over Mr. Singh's return. As soon as he switched sides, BJP flags and posters from



'Back home': BJP MP Arjun Singh (fourth from right) after joining the Trinamool Congress in Kolkata on Sunday. •@AITC

his residence and several party offices near his residence were replaced with Trinamool flags.

Asked whether he will resign as an MP, Mr Singh said that there are two Trinamool MPs who have joined the BJP and have not resigned. "The day they will resign

as MP, I will also resign," he added.

Mr. Singh quit the Trinamool Congress in 2019 just before the Lok Sabha election after he was denied ticket to contest the polls. He won the election from Barrackpore on BJP ticket, defeating Trinamool candidate Dinesh Trivedi.

Before crossing over to the BJP, Mr. Singh was elected to the West Bengal Assembly four times as a Trinamool representative.

Mr. Singh's defection to the BIP in 2019 had triggered a series of political violence in the Barrackpore subdivision of North 24 Parganas that claimed dozens of lives. The violence on certain occasions had communal over-

Mr Singh was appointed vice-president of the State unit of the BJP and was one of the heavyweight leaders of the party with significant influence in Barrackpore.

'Udaipur conclave helped Cong. identify structural weaknesses'

Cong. needs to reach out to every home, says Kerala leader

SANDEEP PHUKAN NEW DELHI

Identifying structural weaknesses of the Congress apparatus and the need to have micro-level election management are key learnings from the Udaipur Chintan Shivir, former Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly Ramesh Chennithala said on Sunday.

The senior Congress leader, who was part of a panel that suggested sweeping organisational reforms, asserted that the party needed to concentrate on reaching out to every voting household rather than harping on the "leadership issue" that, he claimed, "will sort itself

He also played down poll strategist Prashant Kishor's comments that Udaipur chintan shivir was a "failure" and the party was headed for a drubbing in the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh elections later this

"We have thoroughly examined the structural weaknesses of the party appara-



tus and have suggested some major changes," Mr. Chennithala told *The Hindu* in an interview over the phone.

Micro-level management

"The party has to reach to the grassroots because the election system has completely changed. One person has to be in-charge of 40 houses. We have to ensure micro-level management so that every household is in touch with the Congress. This is important as we have to counter disinformation campaigns by cadre-based parties. A separate general secretary in-charge of elections can look at these aspects," he added.

Asked if the Congress is trying to adopt a "Kerala model" by announcing to set up a political affairs committee in every State unit, and training for party workers, he said, "It is correct that many of these things are in my State and to that extent, it is a Kerala model. But we can't simply put everything about Kerala in, say, Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. That's why I have suggested to have separate constitutions for every State as we used to have

Mr. Chennithala said the conclave had given clarity both in terms of ideology and programmes to reconnect with the people.

'Secularism is the core'

Though the party intensely debated its articulation towards Hindutva in closed door sessions and senior leaders such as Kamal Nath and Bhupesh Baghel argued not to shy away from Hindu festivals, the Kerala Congress leader said, "Secularism is the core of the Congress".

NCP to support Shiv Sena candidate in Rajya Sabha polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Chief Sharad Pawar has said his party will support Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati or any other candidate chosen by the Shiv Sena in the elections to six Rajya Sabha seats in Maharashtra. Mr. Pawar was talking to

presspersons after meeting

representatives of some

Brahmin community organi-

sations in Pune on May 21.

The polls are scheduled for June 10. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) can win two Rajya Sabha seats with the number of MLAs it has, while the ruling allies Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP in Maharashtra can win a seat each. The contest will, therefore, be for the sixth seat.

Mr. Sambhajiraje, a member of the Kolhapur royal family and descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was earlier a nominated

member of the Upper House of Parliament. He recently announced that he would contest the election as an Independent, and appealed to all parties to back him. "After supporting our can-

didate, we will have votes to support one candidate of the Shiv Sena. They may choose Mr. Sambhajiraje or any other candidate, we will support the candidate chosen by the Shiv Sena," the NCP

office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Baripada "e" Procurement Notice for Building Work Identification No.- Online Tender-Building N.C.B. No.228 for 2022-23 Letter No. 1742 / Date : 21.05.2022 // Building work : O1 No. (One) : Rs.385.52 Lakh (approximately). Total No. of Work Estimated Cost . Eligible Class of Contractor 'A' & 'Special' Class Period of Completion 15 Calendar months Other details Availability of Tender Date & Time of Opening Last Date Procurement & Time of C.E.R.W.Circle, Baripad Officer

Bid Chief Constructio t.25.05.2022 Dt.08.06.2022 Dt_07_06_202 Dt.09.06.2022 Will be Engineer, Rural 11.00 A.M. 5.00 P.M. 5.00 P.M.

Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Baripada

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Notification for Admission into Ph.D., course for the academic years 2020-21 & 2021-22

Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for admission into Ph.D course i

Regulations 2020-21 & 2021-22 of Dr. NTR University of Health Sciences, Vijayawada from **24.05.2022 to 25.06.2022.** For detailed information please visit University Dated: 21.05.2022 REGISTRAR



CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL), Bengaluru is a premier R&D laboratory in the area of Aerospace and a constituent unit of CSIR, New Delhi under the administrative control of Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. of India. Over the years, Surface Engineering Division of CSIR-NAL had developed several market ready coatings and products suitable for aerospace and allied sectors. Considering the potential applications, EOI is invited from the eligible industries for out-licensing of following technologies:

for out-licensing of following technologies: 1. Eco-friendly anodization for the corrosion protection of aerospace

components. 2. Giant magnetoresistance (GMR) based multilayer magnetic sensor

for industrial applications. 3. A process for the preparation of thermal insulation paint.

4. A process for the synthesis of plasma sprayable grade YSZ and similar powders for thermal barrier applications

For further details, the interested industries are requested to visit CSIR-NAL website at http://www.nal.res.in/en/tender, under the internal links Tenders (Works & General) Column and download the EOI documents. The EOI documents completed in all respects may be dropped in the quotation box kept at CSIR-NAL reception on or before 20.6.2022 till 05.00 PM or alternatively can be sent by e-mail at manjuprasad@nal.res.in / rvenkatesh@nal.res.in

Firms who have applied to earlier EOI KTMD/BDG/SED-EOI/ 2021-22/1 January 25, 2022 need not required to submit response again.

The Director, CSIR-NAL, Bengaluru reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the prospective EOI in full or part thereof without assigning any reason whatsoever and his decision on all matters in this regard shall be final and binding.

Sd/
Sd/-(Head, KTMD)

Row erupts over ground survey near Puri temple

Study to trace any archaeological treasure has snowballed into a full-scale political controversy between BJP and BJD

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

Months after undertaking construction around the 12th century Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri, as part of the ₹800-crore Shree Mandir Parikrama Project (SMPP), the Odisha government started the Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPRS) to trace any archaeological treasure beneath the soil on Saturday

The Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation (OBCC), the State government's designated agency that implements the project, had roped in the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, which deployed Geo-Carte Radar Technology Private Ltd. for the survey, according to official sources.

As per guidelines, the survey should have been done prior to the commencing of construction.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had informed the Orissa High Court, which is hearing a public interest litigation petition pertaining to the controversial construction around the temple, that, "No GPRS has been conducted to ascertain the archaeological and



Treasure hunt: The State government had roped in the IIT, Gandhinagar, to carry out the Ground Penetrating Radar Survey to trace antiquities beneath the soil. • FILE PHOTO

historical importance lying buried in the subsoil of 75-m radius (construction zone) of Centrally protected monument.'

"At several locations as seen from the cuttings, it is evident that the removal of about 15 ft to 20 ft stratified deposit has taken place, which has caused irreparable damage to the heritage site. During the discussion, OBCC officials were clueless about the method of soil removal and cultural findings from the digging," says ASI's joint inspection report.

Two half-broken lion sculpture pieces were discovered from the demolished site of the Emar Math. Anticipating it to be ancient remnants, the ASI took the pieces into its possession.

'Lies exposed'

The current GPRS has triggered a massive political con-

Addressing a press conference at New Delhi, national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sambit Patra came down heavily on Puri MP Pinaki Misra saying that his lies have been exposed.

A couple of days ago, Mr. Misra took to Twitter saying, "As documents will show, GPRS was duly done and therefore allegations about digging without doing GPRS are baseless. HC affidavit will clarify all these aspects. All that is needed is a little more patience and a little less malice." "History will identify these people as charlatans and malefic clowns who were obstructing development, security and conservation works of Puri Temple, purely out of selfish greed and unbridled malice," he said.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) backed the Puri MP, Pinaki Misra, with party spokesperson Sulata Deo saying, "the GPRS study was done earlier and was submitted along with the Detailed Project Report (DPR) to the National Monument Authority. But still you are trying to mislead the people of Puri".

The statement is, however, contrary to ASI's joint inspection report which said that no GPRS was done.

Stating that the GPRS was conducted secretly and hurriedly at midnight, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said, 'The Odisha government should have first got the GPRS done and thereafter, it could have gone for digging of soil for construction. On the contrary, the government first dug soil and then carried out Ground Penetrating Radar Survey. This is unconservation scientific

apprehensions raised by ASI appeared to be true. Many archaeological and historical importances might have been lost due to Odisha government's unscientific way of handling sensitive monuments and their surroundings," the BJP spokesperson charged.

'A cover-up'

Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, who had been vocal about the Shree Mandir Parikrama Project (SMPP) being implemented in violation of existing ASI guidelines, said the present GPRS was done "to cover up the past mistake".

Similarly, Narasingha Mishra, leader of Congress Legislature Party in the Odisha Assembly, questioned the delay behind the House Committee undertaking verification as the construction was stated to have posed a threat to the main Jagannath

After several MLAs raised fear about indiscriminate digging around the Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro constituted a House Committee during the last Assembly session.

State teams pitch tent at Davos for WEF meet

CMs, Ministers aim for big investments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

With nearly 100 CEOs and over a dozen government leaders here for a rare springtime annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Indian contingent at this Swiss ski resort town is brimming with confidence when it comes to sharing their story of fighting the pandemic and attracting investments.

The government leaders and their associates are also confident that India will be able to tell the world that their approach towards the Ukraine crisis has been the most balanced.

The Indian story at Davos

this time also has a key component of States making their strong respective pitches for investments and global collaborations. Prominent among those are Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. The Telangana team led by Minister K.T. Rama Rao will be making a strong pitch for presenting his State as a key investment destination and innovator, while Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Bommai has ex-



WEF in Davos. ■PTI

pressed confidence about attracting more investments into the State

'Will be interacting with business heads of 18 countries about important economic & environmental issues," he said in a tweet.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, as also Maharashtra Minister Aditya Thackeray and Thangam Thennarasu from Tamil Nadu will lead the respective delegations from their States. Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Mansukh Mandaviya and Hardeep Singh Puri are also participating in the event. Moreover, industrialists such as Gautam Adani, Sanjiv Bajaj are attending the summit.

Yet another case against Hajela

New FIR against former NRC chief for 'allowing doubtful voters to enlist names'

RAHUL KARMAKAR

Prateek Hajela had been the face of the exercise to update the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam for six years till November 2019. Less than three years later, this 1995-batch IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre has been tagged an "anti-na-

Hitesh Dev Sarma, Mr. Hajela's successor as the State NRC Coordinator, on May 19 lodged an FIR with the Criminal Investigation Department seeking action against his predecessor for knowingly disobeying the law, intentionally avoiding mandatory quality checks in the process of updating the NRC and allowing declared foreigners, doubtful voters and their descendants to enlist their

The FIR said Mr. Hajela "intentionally avoided reverification of 64,247 persons despite a complaint" and his act should be treated as "treason for doing an activity which is likely to threaten national security".

This was not the first case against Mr. Hajela since the Supreme Court, which monitored the NRC exercise from December 2014, transferred him to his home State Madhya Pradesh in November 2019. The court did not give any reason, but it was believed that he was under



pressure from the BJP-led coalition government in Assam for handling the "expensive" NRC exercise "only to produce a faulty list of citizens that left out genuine Indians and included illegal immigrants".

The Assam NRC exercise cost more than ₹1,600 crore, and indigenous groups were unhappy that the number of "people with suspicious nationality" was "trimmed" from 41 lakh in the draft citizens' list of July 2018 to 19.06 lakh in the complete draft published on August 31, 2019. There was a total of 3.3 crore applicants.

Explosive project

The bureaucratic circle in Assam had an inkling the axe would fall on Mr. Hajela, who began work on a "potentially explosive project started in the Congress era", once the draft citizens' list was published during the BJP reign.

He had himself indicated he was skating on thin ice.

'The exercise was easier said than done. We had to create our own model of updating the NRC of 1951 as there was no precedent anywhere in India, apart from a failed pilot project in Assam's Barpeta and Chhaygaon in 2010," he told The *Hindu* before the complete draft NRC was published. The BJP government in

Assam demanded re-verification of at least 20% of the names in districts bordering Bangladesh and 10% in the other districts. The NRC authority did not disclose the details of those who were left out of the list, but it is believed the BJP was unhappy with the rejection of as many non-Muslims as Bengalispeaking Muslims perceived to be "Bangladeshis" or "ille-

Not the first case

Mr. Sarma's was not the first complaint against Mr. Hajela. The Assam Police had in September 2019 registered two cases against him and other unidentified officials for alleged "discrepancies" in the complete draft published less than a month before. A businessman in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh and an indigenous Assamese Muslim students' organisation in Guwahati had filed those cases against him.

In May 2020, the Assam Public Works, the NGO whose July 2009 petition in the Supreme Court led to the NRC exercise, filed a complaint against him with the Central Bureau of Investigation, which did not find it worthy of a probe. In June 2021, the same organisation lodged an FIR with the State's CID, accusing him of manipulating the family tree verification during the up-

dating process. The family tree is the detail of different generations of an applicant's family traced to a legacy person, preferably someone who figured in the 1951 NRC or was established as a pre-1971 resident of Assam.

Mr. Hajela chose not to react to the FIR against him by his predecessor. Neither did most organisations or political parties in Assam except for a few voices such as All India United Democratic Front MLA Aminul Islam. "The NRC Coordinator is not fit to carry on," he said.

"Mr. Hajela had erroneously claimed the NRC list of August 2019 was final, leading to confusion and unwarranted decisions by the Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs). The NRC will be final only if the Registrar General of India issues a notification saying so," Mr. Sarma said, adding that the next phase of NRC is yet to be undertaken.

Fighting for livelihood



In deep trouble: J&K Union Territory staff employed under the Rehbar-e-Khel and Rehbar-e-Janglat schemes staging a protest on Sunday against the administration's decision to make fresh recruitments to their posts. *NISSAR AHMAD

Cannes: Minister bats for India's tech skills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

India has the biggest talent pool in the audiovisual sector, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality, Union Minister L. Murugan said on Sunday and urged global filmmakers to explore the country's movie market.

At Cannes Next, a business event on the sidelines of the Cannes Film Festival in Mr. Murugan

pitched India as a great land of story-tellers with the biggest pool of technical and software talent, which play a crucial role in movie mak-

"Audiovisual is the area where technology marries art," he said, expressing happiness that five Indian startups were pitching their expertise in dubbing, automated solutions for lipsynchronisation and gaming at the event.

Prithvi Jain, the co-founder and CEO of VerboLabs, a sub-titling service in major languages of the world, made a pitch before entertainment industry representatives at Cannes Next.

Ivoti Joshi, co-founder of Kroop AI, said her start-up specialised in generating quality videos with just audio or text as input, which enables clients to reach cus-

tomers with hyper personalised videos created using artificial intelligence.

"The beauty and aesthetics of movies are accentuated and given superlative effects by the excellent audio and visuals," Mr. Murugan said, commending the organisers of the Cannes Next for giving a platform to the budding talent and start-ups in the field of audio-visuals and movie making.

THEROSSWORD+ 13563 Type your answers in our online grids. Type your answers in our online grids. Type your answers in our online grids.

14 Appalled, I scorn appropriating hip-hop for some junk metal (5,4) 16 Sticky substance (a polymer) starts to thicken, unleashing inflammation

@ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn



SCAN TO PLAY

and warmth (4-11) 19 Extremely crude bots redesigned to incorporate sight (9)

22 Family members least nuanced about hugging? (5) 24 Strip, subjugating husband with extremely lascivious poetry (7)

27 Even unfinished and sloppy lacquer gets rid of the onset of corrosion (5) 28 In the morning, they might offer guidance for show; after a bit of breakfast, they are surprisingly offensive! (9)

1 Turning a long way, endlessly left – playing for draw? (6)

3 Article about my steps for harmony (10) 4 Bradman accumulates runs with England's seaming openers and goes on

5 Pitcher full of bad, spoiled beer gets one mouthing off (8)

8 Anyone suffering after swallowing some dubiously "special" painkillers?

15 Doctor's regularly used app, or compiler of detailed records over time

16 George Eliot was a girl? This further confused Leelawati so badly (8) 17 After putting away all jackets, why must butler say archly, "What you

normally order?" (3,5) 18 Dignified short hat lying around, oddly rejected already (8)

23 Secretly admires a distinctly evil person (6)

26 Peacekeepers getting terribly bored took off clothes (7)

2 Sure about acquiring flamboyant angora jumper? (8)

6 "Nap/sex?" – partners going for tip (4)

7 Appreciate one avoiding unnecessary expenditure for auditors (6)

20 Purchase pans (4,2) 21 These may go up and down during an election? (6)

25 Bless Bertie's bloody partner! (4)

SUDOKU



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FAITH

Moving pasurams

Nammazhvar's four works are considered the Tamil equivalent of the four Vedas, The Vedas have six angas, and the six works of Thirumangai Azhvar are the angas of Nammazhvar's works. Thirumangai Azhvar not only expresses thoughts similar to those of Nammazhvar, but we find in some pasurams that he expresses them in the same manner. In one of Nammazhvar's pasurams on the Lord of Thirumala, he says of himself – nees an a e n , niraivon drumilae n. Here Nammazhvar describes himself as a sinner. The same naichya bhava is seen in Thirumangai Azhvar's pasurams on Lord Srinivasa, said Koothapakkam Chakravarthi Ranganathachariar, in a discourse.

Thirumangai Azhvar refers to himself as a dog, and laments that he has wasted his life serving others. He had valued familial ties. Only later did he realise that there is only one permanent relative that anyone can have, and that is the Lord Himself. Thirumangai Azhvar composed verses in praise of the deities of more than 80 of the 108 special kshetras, revered by Sri Vaishnavas as Divya Desams. Of his many pasurams on the deities of various temples, the ones on Lord Srinivasa are among the most moving. While having darshan of Lord Narasimha of Ahobila, Thirumangai Azhvar was seized by a desire to worship the Lord of the Seven Hills. But travel takes time. So he first bid his manas to make haste and reach Tirumala. He would follow later.

Thirumangai Azhvar's verses on Lord Srinivasa are not only steeped in bhakthi and love for the Lord but they are also descriptive verses. They give us an idea of the beauty of the environment in which the temple is located. Thirumangai Azhvar marvels at the variety of flowers on the hills and records that red fish abounded in water bodies of Tirumala.

ACROSS 9 Famous setter seen every now and then in retreat in La Sierra (a

11 Famous Gothic opera on frequently ignored warning signal (7) 12 Tree with unusual floral activity finally replaced by kiss in Hindi cinema (7)

13 Made a mistake? Offer redress to some extent (5)

10 Rook captured by a minor piece and king, perhaps (5)

Russia dials up offensive in Donbas region

Poland's President travels to Kyiv; Zelensky asks EU to fast-track Ukraine's proposal to join bloc

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia pressed its offensive in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region on Sunday as Poland's President traveled to Kyiv to support the country's Western aspirations and became the first foreign leader to address the Ukrainian parliament since the start of the

lawmakers Ukrainian stood to applaud Polish President Andrzej Duda, who thanked them for the honor of speaking in a place where "the heart of a free, independent and democratic Ukraine beats," according to remarks carried by the Polish state-run news agency PAP.

Mr. Duda's visit, his second to Ukraine's capital since April, came as Russian and Ukrainian forces engaged in battles along a 551kilometer wedge of the country's eastern industrial heartland.



Guaranteed support: Poland's President Andrzej Duda, fourth from left, meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, fifth from left, in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Sunday. • REUTERS

After declaring its full control of a sprawling seaside steel plant that was the last defence holdout in the port city of Mariupol, the Russian military launched artillery and missile attacks in Ukraine's industrial heartland, seeking to expand the territory Moscow-backed separa-

tists have held since 2014. In a Saturday night video

address to the nation, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky described the situation in the Donbas as "really hard.

Mr. Zelensky stressed on Saturday that the 27-member European Union should con-

sider Ukraine's desire to join the bloc as soon as possible within the context of Russia's invasion

Russia appeared to have made slow grinding moves forward in the Donbas in re-

It intensified efforts to capture Sievierodonetsk, the

'Kyiv's EU entry will take time'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A bid by Ukraine to join the European Union would not be finalised for "15 or 20 years," France's Europe Minister said on Sunday. "We have to be honest. If you say Ukraine is going to join the EU in a year or two, you're lying," Clement Beaune said. "It's probably in 15 or 20 years.'

main city under Ukrainian control in Luhansk province, which together with Donetsk province makes up the

Russian shelling on Saturday killed seven civilians and injured 10 more elsewhere in Donetsk province, the regional governor said.

PM-elect Albanese vows to repair Australia's global image

Climate will be top among Labour leader's list of priorities

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Incoming Prime Minister Anthony Albanese vowed to end Australia's reputation as a climate laggard and reset relations with the rest of the world on Sunday, as he raced to form a government in time for a key Tokyo

Fresh from an electoral victory, Mr. Albanese signalled an era of fairer, greener and less pugilistic politics for Australia

It is still unclear whether Mr. Albanese's Labour Party will win enough parliamentary seats to form an outright majority, or whether he will have to turn to independents or smaller parties for support. But "Albo" and key ministers are expected to be sworn in on Monday to be able to attend the Quad

Mr. Albanese said the summit was "an absolute priority" for Australia and an opportunity "to send a message to the world". He said partners overseas can expect wholesale changes "particularly with regard to climate change".

Mr. Albanese has vowed

to adopt more ambitious emissions reduction targets and make the continent-nation a renewable energy superpower.

After the summit and bilateral meetings with Quad leaders on Tuesday, Mr. Albanese said he would return to Australia on Wednesday. 'Then we'll get down to business," he said.

Official results showed Labor expected to win 75 seats – almost within reach of the 76 required for a majority in the 151-seat lower house. A handful of other races are still too close to call.

Wang Yi says U.S. strategy is to sow discord in Indo-Pacific Ahead of Tuesday's meeting of the India, U.S., Australia and Japan Quad grouping in Tokyo, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi has hit out at the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy

Quad meeting faces

criticism from China

nomic Framework (IPEF) set to be unveiled by U.S. President Joe Biden in Tokyo on Monday. Mr. Wang asked if the framework was "a political tool for the U.S. to maintain regional economic hegemony and deliberately exclude specific countries". "Is the U.S. politicising, weaponising, and ideologising economic issues and using economic means to coerce regional countries to choose sides between China and the U.S.?" he said to reporters, adding that "attempts to create camps, a NATO or Cold War in the Asia-Pacific

the new Indo-Pacific Eco-

In the Guangzhou talks, China and Pakistan called for "all outstanding disputes" in South Asia to be

will not succeed."

addressed and proposed extending the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project to Afghanistan. A joint statement said "it is critical to resolve all outstanding disputes to promote regional cooperation" given on-going challenges such as "the global pandemic, soaring commodity prices, climate change and

J&K issue

The joint statement did not specify which disputes, but did add that the Pakistani Foreign Minister "briefed the Chinese side about the latest developments in Jammu & Kashmir" and "the two sides underlined the importance of the peaceful resolution of the dispute based on the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements."

The talks also discussed on-going Chinese projects in Pakistan and safety issues in the wake of last month's attack on a Confucius Institute in Karachi which killed three Chinese teachers and was claimed by a Baloch group. Both sides discussed ways to beef up security, officials

Baby food arrives in U.S. from Germany

70,000 pounds of baby formula to tide over severe shortage

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ANANTH KRISHNAN

and accused Washington of

trying to sow discord in the

Speaking to reporters fol-

lowing talks on Sunday with

visiting Pakistani Foreign Mi-

nister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

in the southern Chinese city

of Guangzhou, Mr. Wang

said the strategy was "con-

cocted by the United States

under the banner of 'free-

dom and openness" and

Washington was "keen to

gang up with 'small circles'

and change China's neigh-

ahead of Tuesday's Quad

meet in Tokvo to be attend-

ed by Prime Minister Modi.

Some Chinese officials have

called the group a "small cir-

cle" and part of an attempt

to create "an Asian NATO", a

charge that its members

have rejected pointing to the

group's varying cooperation

and India not being a treaty

Mr. Wang also took aim at

ally of the U.S..

His comments came just

bourhood environment."

region.

A U.S. military plane bringing several tonnes of the much-needed baby formula from Germany landed on Sunday at an airport in Indiana as authorities scramble to address a critical shortage.

Scarcity of medical-grade baby formula caused by production problems and supply-chain issues has created grave problems for thousands of parents whose infants, allergic to cow's milk protein, rely on it, sending

them on a frantic search. The military cargo plane took off from the U.S. air base at Ramstein, Germany, carrying more than 70,000 pounds of powdered formula, the White House said.

The initial shipment will cover about 15% of the immediate need, presidential economics adviser Brian Deese said on CNN.

Rising woes: People wading through a flooded street after heavy rain in Bangladesh's Companiganj on Sunday. • AFP

Millions marooned in Bangladesh after floods

Rescue workers struggle to send help

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

North-east Bangladesh's worst floods in nearly 20 years began receding on Sunday, but rescue workers were struggling to help millions marooned by extreme weather across the region that has killed around 10

Floods are a regular menace to millions of people in low-lying Bangladesh, but many experts say that climate change is increasing the frequency, ferocity and unpredictability.

In the past week after heavy rains in India, floodwater breached a major embankment in Bangladesh's Sylhet region, affecting around two million people, swamping dozens of villages and killing at least 10

Bhuiyan, Arifuzzman head of the state-run Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, told AFP that the floods had hit some 70% of Sylhet district and about 60% of neighbouring Sunamganj.

"It is one of the worst floods in the region," he

But he said the situation would improve further in the next few days after heavy rains stopped.

The police said that a scuffle broke out in the rural town of Companiganj on Saauthorities as stepped up relief operations for the roughly two million people hit.

Relief shortage

"There were more flood-affected people than the estimated relief packs. At one point everyone started to snatch relief goods when dispersed crowd," local police chief Sukanto Chakrobarti said.

Mozibur Rahman, head of Sylhet district, said that the embankment washed away along the Bangladesh-India border was yet to be

"It is impossible to fix the embankment unless waterflow from India plunges. The inundation scenario in Sylhet city has improved. But outer towns are still underwater," Mr. Rahman said.

"We are trying to send relief and have opened hundreds of shelters for the flood-hit people."

Women TV presenters cover faces in Kabul

New decree by Taliban takes effect

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Women television presenters on Afghanistan's leading news channels on Sunday vowed to speak up for their rights after being forced by Taliban authorities to cover their faces on

This month Afghanistan's supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada issued a diktat for women to cover up fully in public, including their faces, ideally with the tradi-



tional burga.

The feared Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice ordered women television presenters to follow suit. After defying the order a

day earlier, presenters on

Sunday wore full hijabs and veils across leading channels including TOLOnews, Ariana Television, Shamshad TV and 1TV. **TOLOnews** Khpolwak Sapai said the channel had been com-

pelled to follow the order. "I was called on the telephone yesterday and was told in strict words to do it. So, it is not by choice but by force," Mr. Sapai said.

Women presenters were previously only required to

STEP presents a fun-filled learning course for kids from classes 4 to 7. STEP Live Junior has interactive exercises, tests, polls, quizzes and a lot more to hold

Indian aid reaches Sri Lanka port

New Delhi sends consignment of rice, milk powder and drugs to Colombo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO

An Indian ship carrying urgent relief supplies like rice, life-saving medicines and milk powder for the people of crisis-hit Sri Lanka arrived in Colombo on Sunday and the consignment was handed over to the government in the island nation.

Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay handed over to Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris the consignment which consists of 9,000 metric tonne (MT) of rice, 50 MT of milk powder and more than 25 MT of drugs and other medical supplies.

"Sri Lanka today received ₹2 Billion worth Humanitarian aid including milk powder, rice and medicines from India. Our sincere gratitude to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Hon. @mkstalin and the People of India for the support extended. I also ap-



This is also the first consignment under a larger \$16 million commitment of 40,000 MT of rice, 500 MT of milk powder and medicines by Government of Tamil Nadu, an official release

"A message of care!!! From the people of India to the people of Sri Lanka... High Commissioner handed over rice, milk powder & medicines worth more than SLR 2 billion to Hon'ble FM Prof.G.L Peiris in #Colombo today," the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka

"More consignments from

#India to follow," it said in another tweet. Speaking at the ceremony

here attended by several Lankan ministers, Foreign Minister Peiris said "India has not sent any assistance anywhere of this scale ever before".

"They are to assist us more for which we would be grateful," Mr. Peiris said, adding that India had so far extended assistance worth \$4.5 billion.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had flagged off the ship laden with relief supplies, the first to be dispatched to Sri Lanka, from Chennai on Wednesday.

The items shall be distributed among vulnerable and needy sections in various parts of Sri Lanka including Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Provinces by Government of Sri Lanka in the coming days.



Timing: 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm To know more, visit BIT.LY/SJUNIOR

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K. NITYA KALYANI

Q. I am a senior citizen. My spouse and I hold health insurance policies of ₹5 lakh, ₹7 lakh and ₹6 lakh issued by two private and one public sector insurers. There is no top-up cover. As such, in case of any claim that exceeds the coverage of one policy, we might have to prefer claims against more than one policy. As the original documents of the claim would be required by every one of the insurers, we would be grateful if you could explain the procedure to be followed. MADHUSUDHAN

A. In two different scenarios here is how you can take different approaches. If your claim is ₹5.5 lakh, while you can claim ₹5 lakh from the first policy and ₹50,000 from the third policy, make things simpler by claiming the entire amount from one policy that has sufficient limits, namely policy #3. Since they are all basic hospitalisation policies and not top-ups you have the option of claiming from any of the policies or any combination of

With this approach, only for claims above ₹7 lakh do you need to claim from more than one policy, namely from policy #3 plus either #1 of #2 depending on the claim amount.

What if you have to claim from more than one policy? When you bought these policies, you would have declared other hospitalisation policy details. With that as the basis, you can prefer your claim with different

As for documentation, these claims require original bills and hospital documentation like medical history and diagnoses, prescriptions, diagnostic test results and discharge summary. You can claim under one policy with the original documents and obtain a set of certified copies of all the required documentation from the hospital for every additional policy under which you are going to claim. Mention the details in the covering letter of your claim form and supporting

documents to each of the insurers.
If you have cashless claims settlement on all your policies, these processes become simpler and your Third-Party Administrator (TPA) will advise you on the formalities and should take care of all of them for you.

This is one reason why having policies with the same insurer is advocated, though there are two sides to that coin. A combination of basic + top-up policies would make for more efficient coverage for you, both from a claim formalities point of view as well as premium cost. You can talk to one of the insurers at the time of renewal to switch to a top-up policy instead. An important point, request them to waive the waiting period for pre-existing conditions as you have already worked this off under the basic policy and they have your claims history.

You can apply the same premium towards the top-up policy which would mean the same income for them but significantly more coverage for you. You can keep renewed the highest value policy (₹7 lakh) as your basic policy and buy a top-up tailored to that sum insured as deductible or trigger amount. For the same premium as your ₹5 and ₹6 lakh policies put together, you would be able to get a top-up policy of significantly higher sum insured. Basic plus top-up would leave you with a neater and higher coverage.

Q. I am a 40-year old central government staff member, male and married with two kids. I was lured into a life insurance plan that makes me pay about ₹8,500 per month for a not-so-lucrative sum assured. I wish to discontinue my endowment plan and switch to a term plan that has a much higher sum assured for a lesser premium. Please advise as to whether I should continue with the endowment plan for the next 15 years or discontinue (ie, forfeit the lost money) and focus on better investment. I have a home loan, so I am not in the plan for tax benefit. SREEJITH S S

A A term policy is the most efficient of life insurance policies in that you pay only for life cover. Since a term policy is a risk-only cover, remember the following: should the life assured survive the term of the policy, there is no maturity value / maturity claim payable. There will be no bonus, no money-back, nothing but life cover.

At 40, you can still get a decent premium on a term insurance plan that will give you more coverage per rupee of premium (compared to endowment coverage at the same age for the same policy term). In a new policy you can tweak a few other factors like increasing coverage period as well.

As for letting go of your endowment, you can do one of three things. The first is, stop paying premiums and the policy will lapse. You will have to write off your 48-odd months multiplied by ₹8,500 premium. For obvious reasons, this should be your very last

Find out if your policy has already acquired surrender value. If surrender is possible, then you will get back a pre-decided percentage of the premiums you have paid till now and coverage under the policy will end. This can be your second option, if available. The other option, and this should be your first option if it is available, is your policy can be made "paid-up". Under this you can stop paying premium, the policy coverage will continue until the original policy period but with a truncated sum assured. There is a standardised term policy that Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has mandated every life insurer to offer. This policy will be always named (name of insurance company) Saral Jeevan.

Study this as it is a template, and see how premium quotations behave across companies for your profile. At the end of this, you may opt for the standardised policy from the company of your choice, or a suitable variant.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Readers can e-mail queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. The experts on personal finance will answer select queries. Moneywise will not give specific $recommendations \, for \, investment \, in \, a \, particular$ mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.



VIDYA BALA

Should I invest in this this covered bond? Should I go for the small cap AIF that my relationship manager suggested?

How about this secured bond sold on a new platform that delivers 11%? When confronted with these questions on newer products that float in the market, our question to our investors is – how many investment products do you really need?

If you're expecting that I put a number to this, saying 3, 5 or 10 products, that's not what I am suggesting. It is simply knowing whether you need a particular product for your specific situation and your time frame of investing. This can be done in three steps.

The three steps

The first is to decide whether you need regular income from your investment or you need your money to grow, or if you simply want to preserve your capital. Second, if you fix some time frame for each of your re-

quirements, it will further help filter products. For example, you could decide that you wish your money to grow but need to access it after 10 years. Or, you could say you need to generate income from a certain amount for the next 20 years, and so on. These requirements can be easily identified.

But, here's the third thing. And, this is where many of you can go wrong. It is mapping the right product for the right time frame. For example, many of

you want your equity fund to deliver 12% returns every year and take some profit for your expenses. This just doesn't work simply because a mutual fund is not a

fixed income product. On the other hand, you lock into a bank cumulative FD at 6%, for growth, at a time when interest rates are low. So here you are expecting a long-term product to deliver short-term steady returns and but still want a steady but low-returning product to give you long-term growth. You see the mix up?

Mapping products

Using the above thumb rules, let's take a look at regulated products in the market and how to use them, and whether you need them.

Take the simple, post office schemes that may not deliver high returns (other than the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme) but which will help preserve

It is all about knowing whether you need a particular product for your specific situation and your investment time frame

capital as they are sovereign guaranteed. And, importantly, there is certainty in their returns. But not all guaranteed products can generate income.

For example, if you are contributing to PPF or EPF or special products such as Sukanya Samriddhi, then you should know that they are meant for growth, for the long term. But growth here is less than it is for more aggressive products like equity. If you have the cushion of time, you should ideally mix

such products with some equity exposure to get kicker returns for your portfolio.

Bank FDs also fall in this 'preserving and giving income' category. While safety is not 100%, the ₹5 lakh deposit insurance will ensure you are somewhat protected. Bank FDs act as good income-generating products when you lock in when rates are high. And at high rates, they can be locked in for 3-5 years as well under the cumulative option. This can make them a growth product as well.

When you have a shorter time frame, say 1-2 years, then products like FDs or very shortterm mutual funds are far safer bets than going for stocks or equity funds, as you can lose money with the latter.

Here, the interest rate should be less of a factor to consider and safety must be given higher weight, as you don't have time to take risks in short periods.

The lesser-known government bonds (G-Secs) and State development loan (SDL) bonds offered in the RBI Retail Direct platform on auction can also be great income generators for the long term, especially in a period when rates are rising. These can even be better substitutes for pension products in the market that yield far lesser and are also taxable.

Eliminate options But at the same time.

if you enter these G-Secs or SDLs when you don't need income and merely to diversify your equity portfolio, then they may not be great options for two reasons: one, there is only an interest-payout option and you will lose out on compounding unless you diligently reinvest the interest.

Two, they are fully taxable and are, therefore, not suitable for those in the high-income bracket. This is where proxy products such as debt mutual funds and passive debt ETFs help you invest more efficiently if you don't need income. With no payouts (under growth option) and better tax efficiency (indexation benefit), they can be great options for those who need diversification without any income requirement. This is an example of how you can avoid some products even if they are good ones, if they don't fit your need.

If you have a large corpus, then services like PMS may fit if you don't have time to manage your own stock portfolio. But, do you then need to add an alternative investment

fund (AIF) as well? Not really. And if your corpus is not large, then mutual funds can become a core of your portfolio for short- and long-term investment needs.

Two other rules that will come in handy are whether the product gives you liquidity, and whether you understand the product. Covered bonds, market-linked debentures and other fancied bond options may deliver more than FDs for higher risk. But do you understand them? Can you liquidate them any time? If not, you can eliminate them from your choices.

(The writer is Co-founder, *Primeinvestor.in*)

THINK INVESTOR: STRUCTURING A FUND

Designing equity funds to meet life goals

There is a need for a fund that is managed based on a transparent, profit-taking rule

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

Asset management companies (AMCs) are planning to introexposure ranging from Internet sustainable healthcare and cloud computing.

Yet, retail investors need investment products that can help them meet their life goals such as buying a house and taking an exotic vacation. In this article, we look at how an equity fund can be structured to enable investors to meet their life

Risk-regret trade-off

Suppose you invest in a growth option of an equity fund because it is tax-efficient compared with the income distribution-cum-capital withdrawal option (previously called dividend option). The issue is that you are unsure of when to redeem your units and realise gains. This uncertainty exists even if you have a clear time ho-

rizon to achieve your goal. Suppose you invest to achieve a goal in 10 years. What if you have 30% unrealised gains on duce funds that intend to take your investments in two years? Should you take profits or con-

> If you take profits and the market continues to move upward, you experience regret. Knowing that this is possible, you may want to avoid such regret today and, hence, decide against redeeming the units. But what if the market tanks? You could easily lose your unrealised gains. For instance, a 33% decline in your equity investments will wipe-out unrealised gains of 50%! That means you cannot accumulate large unrealised gains in your equity investments. And yet, you cannot redeem all your units in an equity fund. Why? If you do so, your investments cannot grow at a higher rate than bank deposits. And that means you cannot achieve your goal unless you increase your capital contribu-



Tailored to size: Retail investors need products that can help achieve their goals, such as buying a house. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

tion! So, what should you do?

Rule-based profit-taking

The required return on your goal-based investment is a function of your savings, your asset allocation, the expected return on each of those asset classes, the time horizon for your goal and the amount required to achieve the goal. Typically, goal-based portfolios must have equity and bonds. Because your bond investments will be in fixed deposits, the expected return and actual return will be the same ignoring credit risk.

The expected return on equi-

ty is based on past returns experience, independent of your risk attitude and other factors mentioned above. This allows AMCs to create equity funds with simple profit-taking rule

Suppose the expected pretax return on equity is 12%.

An equity fund can be structured to take profits when returns are greater than the expected return of 12%.

So, if in any year unrealised gains in the fund is 14%, the fund should sell shares amounting to two percentage points (14% less 12%) of its total portfolio. This profit-taking rule is

based on the argument that you must risk so much capital as is required to achieve your goal. Therefore, the fund should retain 12% per annum unrealised gains in the portfolio; for this is the expected return on your equity investments, which, together with your bank deposits, should accumulate to the required amount to achieve your

Enhanced index fund AMCs could offer an enhanced

index fund – a fund that will insay, the Nifty Index but take profits based on above-mentioned rule.

So, the fund is not positioned to mirror the index returns. It can, however, choose to take profits in such a way that its portfolio weights are closely aligned to the benchmark index after selling the assets.

The objective is to enable investors to improve their chances of achieving their goals; this depends on the actual return of the fund being equal to or greater than the expected return. Hence the need for a fund that is managed based on a transparent profit-taking rule.

(The writer offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

A ND-NDE

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES											
Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure - 5 years	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure - 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)							
HDFC Bank	10.25 onwards	10,685.13 onwards	2,137.03 onwards	Upto 2.5% (Max Rs 25,000)							
ICICI Bank	10.25 onwards	10,685.13 onwards	2,137.03 onwards	Upto 2.50%							
Bank of Baroda	8.65-16.00	10,294-12,159	2,059-2,432	2% (Min Rs 1,000 and Max Rs 10,000)							
Canara Bank	10.60-14.30	10,772-11,712	2,154-2,342	Upto 1%							
Punjab National Bank	8.30-14.85	10,210-11,856	2,042-2,371	Up to 1%							
Federal Bank	10.49-17.99	10,744-12,694	2,149-2,539	Upto 3%							
Bajaj Finserv	13.00 onwards	11,377 onwards	2,275 onwards	Upto 4%							
Punjab & Sind Bank	9.90-11.90	10,599-11,097	2,,120-2,219	Upto 1%							
South Indian Bank	10.35-18.10	10,710-12,724	2,142-2,545	Up to 2%							
Indian Overseas Bank	10.00-11.00	10,623-10,871	2,124-2174	Upto 0.75%							
Indian Bank*	8.90-9.40	10.355-10,477	2,071-2,095	1%							
Karnataka Bank	12.00-17.00	11,122-12,426	2,224-2,485	Up to 2% (Max Rs 8,500)							

Source: Paisabazaar.com

Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure-5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)									
Union Bank of India	7.20-8.40	9,948-10,234	Rs. 1,000									
Punjab National Bank	7.05-8.20	9,912-10,186	0.25% (Rs 1,000-1,500)									
Bank of Baroda	7.40-10.70	9,995-10,797	0.50% (Rs 2,500-Rs 10,000)									
Canara Bank	7.70-10.30	10,067-10,697	0.25% (Rs 1,000-5,000)									
UCO Bank	7.55	10,031	1% (Upto Rs 1,500)									
State Bank of India*	7.25-8.15	9,960-10,174	NIL									
Bank of Maharashtra**	7.20-10.70	9,948-10,797	waived off till 30th June 2022									
Indian Overseas Bank	7.55	10,031	0.5% - 0.6% (Rs 500-Rs 10,000									
ICICI Bank	7.50-9.00	10,019-10,379	Rs 5,500-Rs 8,500									
HDFC Bank	7.95-8.30	10,126-10,210	0.5% (Rs 3,500-Rs 8,000)									
Karnataka Bank	7.95-10.00	10,126-10,624	0.5% (Rs 2,500-Rs 10,000)									
Dhanlaxmi Bank	8.10-9.20	10,162-10,428	1% of the loan amount									
Federal Bank	8.90	10,355	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500									
Axis Bank	7.45-14.50	10,007-11,764	Rs 3,500-Rs 5,500									
South Indian Bank	9.15-10.60	10,416-10,772	1% (Max: Rs. 10,000)									
RBL Bank	12.00-14.00	11,122-11,634	Up to 2%									
City Union Bank	12.25-12.75	11,185-11,313	1% (Min: Rs 250)									

**0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holder. 0.05% concession on interest rate to women & armed forces personnel subject to minimum floor ceiling of RLLR.

Rates and charges as on May 18 Source:Paisabazaar.com

Karthik back in India colours; Arshdeep, Umran picked too

Rahul to lead in South Africa T20Is; Pujara in squad for rescheduled England Test







Making it: Karthik's and Umran's IPL exploits were rewarded, while Pujara got a fresh lease of life. • FILE PHOTOS & SPORTZPICS/IPL

ASHWIN ACHAL

Dinesh Karthik, Arshdeep Singh and Umran Malik earned spots in the India squad for the five-match T20I home series against South Africa, which begins in New Delhi on June 9.

Captain Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah have been rested for the series. The trio will feature in the rescheduled fifth Test against England, which will be held in Edgbaston (Birmingham) from July 1 to 5.

K.L. Rahul will lead the T20I side in Rohit's absence.

Karthik, 36, makes a comeback after a brilliant IPL season as finisher for Royal Challengers Bangalore. Umran impressed with his raw pace for Sunrisers Hyderabad, while left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh performed

well for Punjab Kings. Umran and Arshdeep earned their maiden international call-ups.

Hardik in T20I squad Hardik Pandya, who has led

Gujarat Titans to the top of the IPL points table, has been named in the T20I

Batter Cheteshwar Pujara, who was dropped for the recent home Test series against Sri Lanka, has been included in the squad for the rescheduled fifth Test.

Ajinkya Rahane will be out of action for two months after hurting his hamstring in the IPL last week. He has been ruled out of the Ranji Trophy knockouts in June and India's lone Test in England in July.

The teams:

T20Is: K.L. Rahul (Capt.), Ruturai Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan, Deepak Hooda, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (Vice-capt.) (wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), Hardik Pandya, Venkatesh Iyer, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav. Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel. Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, and Umran Malik

Test: Rohit Sharma (Capt.), K.L. Rahul (Vice-capt.) Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant (wk), K.S. Bharat (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav, and Prasidh Krishna.

The schedule:

T20Is against South Africa: June 9 (Delhi); June 12 (Cuttack); June 14 (Visakhapatnam); June 17 (Rajkot); June 19 (Bengaluru).

Fifth rescheduled Test against England: July 1-5 (Birming-

Kings sign off with easy win over Sunrisers

Harpreet's spell and Livingstone's quickfire knock highlight Punjab's victory

IPL 2022

ASHWIN ACHAL

Punjab Kings outclassed Sunrisers Hyderabad by five wickets in the last IPL group stage fixture at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

PBKS took the sixth spot, while SRH – with six losses in its last seven outings - finished eighth.

Chasing 158, Kings cruised home on the back of an explosive knock from Liam Livingstone (49 n.o., 22b, 2x4,

The Englishman's assault on the express Umran Malik provided exciting fare. With sixes over extra-cover and mid-wicket, Livingstone clearly won this battle.

Opener Jonny Bairstow received a life when Umran put down an absolute sitter. The damage was minimal, however, as the Englishman was cleaned up by Afghanistan fast bowler Fazalhaq Farooqi soon after. The England batter engaged in some verbal jousting with the opponents as he walked off the park.

After electing to bat, Sunrisers struggled to find rhythm and finished with a sub-par total. Left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar broke the back of the Hyderabad batting with three wickets.

Rahul Tripathi (20, 18b, 1x4, 1x6) was his first victim, a mistimed sweep finding Dhawan at short fine-leg. Abhishek Sharma (43, 32b, 5x4, 2x6) was taken well by Livingstone at long-on.

Harpreet saved his best for South African Aiden Markram (21, 17b, 2x4), drawing him out with flight and beating the bat with turn. Harpreet, who recorded his best figures for this season, proved his worth by dismissing three settled

Washington Sundar (25, 19b, 3x4, 1x6) and Romario Shepherd (26, 15b, 2x4, 2x6) put on 58 runs for the sixth

Australian Nathan Ellis, playing his second match of the season, picked up two wickets in the final over.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar led Sunrisers in the absence of the unavailable Kane Williamson.

Top of the charts Jos Buttler (RR) Matches: 14

Runs: **629** | HS: **116** SR: 146.96

Yuzvendra Chahal (RR) Matches: 14 | Wickets: 26 BB: 5/40 | Econ: 7.67

SCOREBOARD

After the league stage

Priyam Garg c Mayank b Rabada 4 (7b), Abhishek Sharma c Livingstone b Harpreet 43 (32b, 5x4, 2x6), Rahul Tripathi c Shikhar Dhawan b Harpreet 20 (18b, 1x4, 1x6), Aiden Markram st. Jitesh b Harpreet 21 (17b, 2x4), Nicholas Pooran c Jitesh b Ellis 5 (10b), Washington Sundar c Shikhar Dhawan b Ellis 25 (19b, 3x4, 1x6), Romario Shepherd (not out) 26 (15b, 2x4, 2x6), J. Suchith c Prerak b Ellis O (1b), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (run out) 1 (1b), Umran Ma-

FALL OF WICKETS

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING Livingstone 4-0-25-0, Arsh-



Spin king: Harpreet spun a web around the Sunrisers batters. • SPORTZPICS/IPL

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

lik (not out) O (1b); Extras (b-2, lb-1, w-8, nb-1): 12; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 157.

1-14 (Garg, 2.4 overs), 2-61 (Tripathi, 8.3), 3-76 (Abhishek, 10.3), 4-87 (Pooran, 12.6), 5-96 (Markram, 14.4), 6-154 (Washington, 19.3), 7-154 (Suchith, 19.4), 8-156 (Bhuvneshwar,

deep 4-0-25-0, Rabada 4-0-38-1, Ellis 4-0-40-3, Harpreet

PUNJAB KINGS Jonny Bairstow b Farooqi 23 1-28 (Bairstow, 2.6), 2-66 (Shahrukh, 6.3), 3-71 (Mayank, 7.5), 4-112 (Shikhar Dhawan, 12.3), 5-133 (jitesh, 13.6). **SUNRISERS BOWLING**

Mankad (not out) 4 (1b, 1x4); Extras (lb-2, w-4): 6; Total (for

(15b, 5x4), Shikhar Dhawan b

Farooqi 39 (32b, 2x4, 2x6),

Shahrukh Khan c Washington b

Umran 19 (10b, 2x4, 1x6), May-

ank Agarwal c Suchith b Wash-

ington 1 (4b), Liam Livingstone

(not out) 49 (22b, 2x4, 5x6),

Jitesh Sharma c Garg b Suchith

19 (7b, 3x4, 1x6), Prerak

Bhuvneshwar 2-0-22-0, Washington 2-0-19-1, Faroogi 4-0-32-2, Suchith 4-0-38-1, Umran 2.1-0-24-1, Shepherd 1-0-23-0. Toss: SRH: MoM: Harpreet.

five wkts. in 15.1 overs): 160. **FALL OF WICKETS**

Kings won by five wickets with 29 balls to spare.

FINAL POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	w	L	Pts	NRR
Gujarat Titans (Q)	14	10	4	20	0.316
Rajasthan Royals (Q)	14	9	5	18	0.298
Lucknow Super Giants (Q)	14	9	5	18	0.251
Royal Challengers Bangalore (Q)	14	8	6	16	-0.253
Delhi Capitals	14	7	7	14	0.204
Punjab Kings	14	7	7	14	0.126
Kolkata Knight Riders	14	6	8	12	0.146
Sunrisers Hyderabad	14	6	8	12	-0.379
Chennai Super Kings	14	4	10	8	-0.203
Mumbai Indians	14	4	10	8	-0.506

⁺ First Serie A crown in 11 years for AC Milan

Snatches title from Inter



A long drought ends: Milan players are ecstatic after their

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE REGGIO EMILIA (ITALY)

AC Milan won its first Serie A title in 11 years on Sunday after beating Sassuolo 3-0 to snatch the crown from local rival Inter Milan.

Needing just a point to claim the Scudetto, Milan swept its host aside thanks to an Olivier Giroud brace and another from Franck Kessie in the first half in front of an army of away fans at the Mapei Stadium.

Stefano Pioli's Milan finished two points ahead of Inter, which beat Sampdoria 3-0 in the San Siro.

soneri' returned to the top.

risic 49, Correa 55, 57) bt Sampdoria O; Sassuolo O lost to AC Milan 3 (Giroud 17, 32, Kessie 36); Spezia O lost to Napoli 3 (Politano 4, Zielinski 25,

Linette packs off Jabeur; Kanepi knocks out Muguruza

Bolivia's Dellien ousts Thiem; Zverev progresses with ease; Auger-Alissiame claws back from two sets down



Fans partied in Milan and poured onto the pitch in Reggio Emilia as the 'Ros-

The results: Inter Milan 3 (Pe-Demme 36).

On Saturday: Atalanta O lost to Empoli 1 (Stulac 79); Fiorentina 2 (Duncan 45+1, Gonzalez 90+2) b t Juventus 0.

1-Djokovic vs. Nishioka 5-Nadal vs. Thompson

In practice it is really decent but a match situation is something different, Grand Slam especially. I am definitely thinking of going back to the Challenger level for one or two tournaments

of Frenchmen

Seventh straight first-round defeat for Thiem since his comeback from iniury in late March. Also, a second straight first-round exit in Paris for the two-time

This is the fourteenth time Slams that two-time Major champion Muguruza hasn't progressed beyond the fourth round. Only exception: 2020 Australian Open final

Kanepi has won 19 matches against seeds in the first three rounds of a Slam. Only Serena (29), Venus (22), and Azarenka (21) have more among active players

Only the second time in 21 tournaments Jabeur has lost to a player ranked outside the top-50

ROLAND-GARROS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Arab trailblazer Ons Jabeur crashed out of the French Open at the first hurdle on Sunday as full crowds returned to Roland Garros after two years.

Sixth seed Jabeur, regarded as a potential champion despite never having got past the fourth round here, lost 6-3, 6-7(4), 5-7 to Poland's 56th-ranked Magda Linette. Jabeur came into the

event with a season-leading 17 wins on clay in 2022, the prestigious Madrid title under her belt and the runnerup spot in Rome. However, she was undone by 47 unforced errors in the two hour 28-minute match.

Linette had lost to Jabeur in the third round in 2021, having stunned an injury-hit top seed Ashleigh Barty in her previous match. "I just tried to stay focused

after the first set," said Also making an early exit

was 2016 champion and 10th Garbine Muguruza,

beaten 6-2, 3-6, 4-6 by Estonia's Kaia Kanepi, the oldest woman in the tournament who fought back from a set and break down.

World No. 46 Kanepi, who turns 37 next month, made the quarterfinals at the French Open in 2008 and 2012. Sunday's victory was her 10th top-10 win at a Slam.

Two-time runner-up Dominic Thiem, whose ranking has slipped to 194 after a lengthy battle with a wrist injury, was another early casualty, losing 3-6, 2-6, 4-6 to 87th-ranked Hugo Dellien of Bolivia.

Thiem, the 2020 US Open champion, has yet to win a match in six attempts since his return in March. He has now lost 10 Tour-level matches in a row.

Canadian ninth seed Felix Auger-Alissiame lost the first two sets to Peruvian qualifier and Grand Slam debutant Juan Pablo Varillas before recovering to win 2-6, 2-6, 6-1, 6-3, 6-3. German third seed Alexander Zverev cruised into the second round with a 6-2, 6-4, 6-4 win over Austria's Sebastian Ofner.

IMPORTANT RESULTS

First round Men: 3-Zverev (Ger) bt Ofner

(Aut) 6-2, 6-4, 6-4; Griekspoor (Ned) bt 25-Davidovich Fokina (Esp) 2-6, 6-0, 6-4, 6-3; 18-Dimitrov (Bul) bt Giron (USA) 6-1, 6-1, 6-1; Dellien (Bol) bt Thiem (Aut) 6-3, 6-2, 6-4; 15-Schwartzman (Arg) bt Kuznetsov (Rus) 6-3, 1-6, 6-4, 6-2; Cuevas (Uru) bt 31-Brooksby (USA) 6-2, 6-1, 6-2; 9-Auger-Aliassime (Can) bt Varillas (Per) 2-6, 2-6, 6-1, 6-3, 6-3; 23-Isner (USA) bt Halvs (Fra) 7-6(3), 4-6, 7-6(1), 7-6(6).

Women: 4-Sakkari (Gre) bt Burel (Fra) 6-2, 6-3; Linette (Pol) bt 6-Jabeur (Tun) 3-6, 7-6(4), 7-5; 18-Gauff (USA) bt Marino (Can) 7-5, 6-0; 26-Cirstea (Rou) bt Maria (Ger) 6-3, 6-3; 14-Bencic bt Jani (Hun) 6-1, 6-1; Stephens (USA) bt Niemeier (Ger) 5-7, 6-4, 6-2; Kanepi (Est) bt 10-Muguruza (Esp) 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Fallen seeds

■ Men: 25-Fokina, 31-Brooksby

■ Women: 6-Jabeur, 10-Muguruza

Salah, with his 13 assists, won

the Playmaker of the

20Alisson and Ederson

shared the Golden

glove with 20 clean

23 Salah was also joint winner of

the Golden Boot with

Spurs' Son, the first Asian to bag the award

23 Son became the second

score 20+ goals in

a season without a

single penalty after

Bale's 21 in 2012-13

Spurs player to

sheets each

City pips Liverpool in yet another epic season, claims sixth crown

PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCIES

MANCHESTER Manchester City clinched a sixth Premier League title in 11 seasons on Sunday by scoring three times in five minutes to come from behind to beat Aston Villa 3-2 in the finale to avoid being toppled by challenger Liverpool, which won 3-1 at home to Wolves.

City was trailing 2-0 to Villa until Ilkay Gundogan began the comeback in the 76th. Rodri equalised two minutes later and Gundogan put City in front in the 81st.

At one point even when City was losing, it was still set to defend the title as Liver-

pool was only drawing 1-1 to Wolverhampton. But Mohamed Salah then put the second-place side in front in the 84th minute, which would have taken Liverpool into first place had City not mounted its fightback at the Etihad Stadium. Andy Robertson then sealed Liverpool's 3-1 win. Arsenal finished the sea-

son with a 5-1 win over Everton on Sunday but had to settle for fifth place - and Europa League football next season – after Tottenham grabbed the last Champions League spot with a 5-0 win at Norwich on the final day of the campaign.

The results: Premier League: Arsenal 5 (Martinelli 27-pen,

Nketiah 31, Cedric 56, Gabriel 59, Odegaard 82) bt Everton 1 (Van de Beek 45+3); Brentford 1 (Canos 78) lost to Leeds 2 (Raphinha 56-pen, Harrison 90+4); Brighton 3 (Veltman 50, Gross 80, Welbeck 90+2) bt West Ham 1 (Antonio 40); Burnley 1 (Cornet 69) lost to Newcastle 2 (Wilson 20-pen, 60); Chelsea 2 (Havertz 11, Barkley 90+1) bt Watford 1 (Gosling 87); Crystal Palace 1 (Zaha 37) bt Manchester United O; Leicester 4 (Maddison 49, Vardy 74, Perez 81, 90+4) bt Southampton 1 (Ward-Prowse 79-pen); Livernool 3 (Mane 24, Salah 84, Robertson 89) bt Wolves 1 (Neto 3); Manchester City 3 (Gundogan 76, 81, Rodri 78) bt Aston Villa 2 (Cash 37, Coutinho 69); Norwich O lost to Tottenham 5 (Kulusevski 16, 64, Kane 32, Son 70, 75).

10-Norrie vs. Guinard

1-Swiatek vs. Tsurenko

2-Krejcikova vs. Parry

15-Azarenka vs. Bogdan

27-Anisimova vs. Osaka

Wawrinka vs. Moutet

WOMEN



That winning feeling! City players celebrate after beating Liverpool to the top. • GETTY IMAGES

Statosphere



Man City scored 3+ goals in the second half of a PL game for the 7th time this season in the game against Villa

4. Guardiola, with four titles, overtook Mourinho and Wenger who have three each 6 City moved one ahead of Chelsea's five league crowns.

58 Manchester United's worst-ever points United still leads the table with 13 tally in a season

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, day 1, FanCode,

Roland Garros 2022: Sony Ten 2 & 3 (SD & HD) & Sony LIV, 1.30 p.m. onwards

Women's T20 Challenge 2022: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Adebayo drives Heat to victory over Celtics

Bam Adebayo scored 31 points with 10 rebounds for Miami Heat, which blew a 25-point, first-half lead and lost Jimmy Butler to a knee injury but held on to beat Boston Celtics 109-103 in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals on Saturday. Heat now leads the series 2-1. AF



Tai and Lee crowned **Thailand Open champs**

World No. 2 Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan stunned Olympic champion Chen Yufei of China 21-15, 17-21, 21-12 on Sunday to win the Thailand Open women's singles title. Malaysia's World No. 6 Lee Zii Jia downed Chinese rookie Li Shifeng 17-21, 21-11, 23-21 to take the men's crown. AFF

Gokulam slams seven past Sports Odisha

BHUBANESWAR Gokulam Kerala maintained its top spot in the Indian Women's League after beating Sports Odisha 7-1 here on Sunday. The result: Gokulam Kerala 7 (Elshaddai 4, Soumya Guguloth 2, Manisha 1) bt Sports Odisha 1 (Pyari Xaxa). PTI

Women's T20 Challenge from today

Smriti's Trailblazers and Harmanpreet's Supernovas meet in the opener

T20 CHALLENGE

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Shubhangi Kulkarni will drive to the MCA Stadium, in the outskirts of the city, on Monday evening. Since the BCCI announced that her hometown will host the Women's T20 Challenge, the former India captain has been looking forward to the tournament.

Like her, just about everyone associated with the women's game will closely be following the six-day tournament, considered as a trial for a women's IPL. With the BCCI keener than ever about launching the Women's IPL, and a few IPL franchises showing interest in forming teams, you find a lot of excitement about the T20 Challenge, especially from uncapped domestic players.

Batters like Kiran Navgire and bowlers like Maya Sonawane and Aarti Kedar could well be in focus. The hardhitting Kiran had hit headlines when she clobbered



Leading the way: Smriti and Harmanpreet will look to fire on all cylinders for Trailblazers and Supernovas. • FILE PHOTOS: V.V. KRISHNAN

162 not out off just 76 balls for Nagaland against Arunachal Pradesh in the Senior Women's T20 tournament last month.

Shafali Verma, one of the most explosive batters, is among the biggest attractions of the tournament. Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur too are expected to dazzle.

As in the past, the event will also feature some of the

biggest stars from overseas, like Deandra Dottin, Sophie Ecclestone, Laura Wolvaardt, Sune Luus and Sophia Dunkley.

The teams – Supernovas, Trailblazers and Velocity -

will play each other once and the top two will contest

The teams: Supernovas: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Taniya Bhatia, Priya Punia, Harleen Deol, Meghna Singh, Monica Patel. Muskan Malik, Pooja Vastrakar, Ayushi Soni, Rashi Kanojia, V. Chandu, Mansi Joshi, Sophie Ecclestone (Eng), Sune Luus (SA), Deandra Dottin (WI) and Alana King (Aus).

Trailblazers: Smriti Mandhana (Capt.), Poonam Yadav, Arundhati Reddy, Jemimah Rodrigues, Priyanka Priyadarshini, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Renuka Singh, Richa Ghosh, S. Meghana, Saiqa Ishaque, Sharmin Akhter, Sujata Mallik, Shradda Pokharkar, Hayley Matthews (WI), Sophia Dunkley (Eng), Salma Khatun (Ban) and Sharmin Akhter (Ban). Velocity: Deepti Sharma

(Capt.), Sneh Rana, Shafali Verma, Kiran Navgire, Radha Yadav, Aarti Kedar, Shivali Shinde, Simran Bahadur, Yastika Bhatia. Keerthi James, Maya Sonawane, Pranavi Chandra, Laura Wolvaardt (SA), Kate Cross (Eng), Ayabonga Khaka (SA) and Natthakan Chantham (Tha). Monday's match: Trailblazers

vs. Supernovas, 7.30 p.m.

It's Mito Pereira's turn in the van

Limping Tiger Woods pulls out

PGA C'SHIP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE rulsa (usa)

Chile's Mito Pereira sank a 27-foot birdie putt on the par-4 18th hole to seize a three-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the PGA Championship.

But with the leaderboard's top six each seeking a first Major title and a trio of Major winners just behind them, the scene was set for a thrilling final-round showdown.

Pereira, making only his second Major start, fired a one-under 69 to finish 54 holes on nine-under 201. He's the first player to hold an outright 54-hole lead on PGA debut since winner John Daly in 1991.

England's Matthew Fitzpatrick and American Will Zalatoris shared second on 204, one stroke ahead of American Cameron Young with Mexico's Abraham Ancer fifth on 206 and Irish-



man Seamus Power sixth on

Meanwhile, Tiger Woods withdrew after limping to a nine-over 79.

Top scores: 201: Mito Pereira (Chi) 68. 64. 69: **204:** Will Zalatoris (USA) 66, 65, 73, Matthew Fitzpatrick (Fng.) 68, 69 67; 205: Cameron Young (USA) 71, 67, 67; **206**: Abraham Ancer (Mex) 67, 69, 70; **207**: Seamus Power (Irl) 71, 69, 67; 208: Stewart Cink (USA) 69, 68, 71, Bubba Watson (USA) 72, 63, 73, Justin Thomas (USA) 67, 67,

India needs to handle pressure against Pak

ASIA CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A second-string Indian men's hockey team will have to tactfully deal with pressure when it opens its title defence against Pakistan in the Asia Cup here on Monday.

While Pakistan has fielded quite a few new faces in the tournament, India will be represented by its A-team under the leadership of veteran Birendra Lakra, who came out of retirement after the Tokyo Olympics.

For India, the Asia Cup provides a platform to test its bench strength ahead of a busy season, that includes the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the FIH World Cup next year for which the Tokyo Olympic medallists have already qualified as the host nation.

Pakistan, on the other hand, is looking at the tournament to make the cut for the 2023 World Cup in Bhubaneswar.

The top three teams in Asia will qualify directly for the January show-piece

Verstappen drives to his third win in a row

Takes championship lead; Leclerc done in by electrical fault

SPANISH GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Max Verstappen reaped the reward of Charles Leclerc's misfortune to rack up his third straight win this season in Sunday's Spanish Grand Prix and move top of the Formula One drivers' standings.

Sergio Perez took second for a Red Bull 1-2 at the Montmelo circuit behind the World champion where in 2016 Verstappen had opened his F1 account as a teenager.

Leclerc was sitting comfortably in the lead from pole until lap 23 when a sudden loss of power proved fatal to his Ferrari.

The man from Monaco arrived in Catalonia 19 points in front in the title race, but left it six points behind Verstappen ahead of his home race next weekend. Verstappen had to over-

come being blown off the circuit and into the gravel by a gust of wind early on and some technical niggles.

"Difficult beginning but a good end! I tried to stay focussed, which is not always easy," said the Dutch driver, who hit the front late on after passing Perez who had been instructed to relinquish the lead over the team radio.

Russell third

Mercedes showed improved form after a bumpy start to the season with George Russell claiming third. Lewis Hamilton in the other Mercedes threaded his way through the field after being forced into the pits shortly after the start with a puncture to take fifth.

Meanwhile in the Formula 2 feature race, electrical problems denied Jehan Daruvala the chance to fight for victo-



Speed ace: Verstappen's winning run continued on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

⁺ Gukesh and seven other Indians among the leaders

PM congratulates shuttlers

Relives historic Thomas Cup win while meeting the

Special occasion: The victorious squad with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sports Minister

Modi met in person and inte-

racted with the badminton

squad, which also included

players from the women's

team on behalf of the nation.

This is not a small feat. You

have done it. There was a

time when we were so be-

hind in these tournaments

that no one would know

During his interaction

"I congratulate the whole

Uber Cup team.

here," said Modi.

Anurag Thakur and BAI president Himanta Biswa Sarma. • TWITTER/SRIKIDAMBI

CHESS

SPORTS BUREAU

Gukesh and seven oth-Der Indians made a winning start to their campaigns in the \$60,000 Sharjah Masters chess tournament on Saturday.

In the 80-player field, 27 players won their first-round matches but second seeded Armenian Gabriel Sargissian lost to Spain's Daniil Yuffa while top seed Vladimir Fedoseev, fourth seed Arjun

badminton squad in person

Erigaisi and seventh seed S. bt Vahap Sanal (Tur); Shamsid-L. Narayanan were held to

Raunak Sadhwani, B. Adhiban, S. P. Sethuraman, Aryan Chopra, Abhimanyu Puranik, Aravindh Chithambaram and Abhijeet Gupta won their opening games. Nihal Sarin, seeded 14, was also among those who dropped half a point.

The results (involving Indians): First round: Mikheil Mchedlishvili (Geo) drew with Ariun Frigaisi; S.L. Narayanan drew with Luca Moroni Jr (Ita); D. Gukesh

din Vokhidov (Uzb) drew with Nihal Sarin; Shant Sarsyan (Arm) bt Sankalp Gupta; Aditya Sahakyan (Arm); Raunak Sadhwani bt Oliver Dimakiling (Phi); Adbelrahman Hesham (Egy) lost to B. Adhiban; Surya Shekhar Ganguly drew with Ilyas Msellek (Mar); Mert Erdogdu (Tur) lost to S. P. Sethuraman; Aryan Chopra bt Nataliya Buksa (Ukr); Abhimanyu Puranik bt Teodora Injac (Srb); Aravindh Chithambaram bt Husain Aziz (Qat); Lothar Vogt (Ger) lost to

with the champions, an elat-

ed PM relived the memory of

the historic Thomas Cup

campaign where India clinched gold medal by de-

feating favourites Indonesia.

titude has become the new

strength in the country

"I assure you that the go-

vernment will give all possi-

ble support to our players,"

said the Prime Minister.

today.

"The 'Yes, we can do it' at-

HOCKEY

Daulus Lakra scored six goals as Odisha recorded a 9-0 win over Puducherry in a Group-C match of the 12th Hockey India-National junior men's championship in Kovilpatti on Sunday. The results:

B: MP 7 (Satyam Barde 2, Shubham Lahoriya 2, Gaurav Shrivastava, Deepak Yadav, Vinay Sanik) bt Bengal 2 (Ravindra Nath Thakur, Santanu

C: Odisha 9 (Deepak Minz,

E: Bihar (Bhavuk, Narendra Mundu) drew with Arunachal 2 (Lovepreet Singh 2).; J&K 3 (Saksham Sharma, Manmeet Singh, Shoib Mughal) drew with Assam 3 (Anurag Rajbhar, Bidyut Roy, Sourav Hajam).

Earlier results: D: Haryana bt Manipur 9-0; Kerala bt Tripu-

INDIANS ABROAD

Top seeded pair of Prar-I thana Thombare and \$25,000 ITF women's tennis in Portugal. Other results: \$15,000 ITF

men, Cancun, Mexico: Doubles (final): Juan Sebastian Gomez (Col) & Bryce Nakashima (US) bt Jake Bhangdia (US) & Dhruv Sunish 6-3, 6-4. Semifinals: Jake & Dhruv bt Luis Britto & Fernando Ya-

Paulus stars in Odisha's big win

SPORTS BUREAU

Group-A: Himachal 4 (Krishan Chand 2, Lakhan Bharadwaj 2) bt Telangana 2 (Bheem Rao Vetti, Aloori Vamshi);

Roshan Kujur, Paulus Lakra 6, Akash Soren) bt Le Puducher-

Prarthana loses in doubles final

SPORTS BUREAU

Alana Parnaby lost 6-3, 6-4 to second seeds Francisca Jorge and Matilde Jorge in the doubles final of the

macita (Bra) 6-1, 7-6(1).



phone for their historic triumph at the prestigious tournament in Bangkok, PM CM YK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

This is not a small feat,

Prime Minister Narnedra

Modi said while hosting the

victorious Thomas Cup

team, players of which were

chuffed to get the backing of

Few days after congratu-

lating the players over tele-

the country's premier.