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WORLD



RUSSIAN MISSILES POUND KYIV AS G7 LEADERS MEET

WHITE HOUSE TO FIGHT STATES OVER ABORTION PILL P13

SALVE VS SIBAL, SINGHVI IN HIGH VOLTAGE BATTLE

Sena rebels challenge Dy Speaker's decisions in SC, to be heard today

One more minister flies to Guwahati, Shinde has 39 now

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, JUNE 26

THE MAHARASHTRA rebels camping in BJP-ruled Assam have moved their battle to the Supreme Court. The court will take up two petitions on Monday — one by rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde; the other by 15 MLAs belonging to his camp.

The petitions challenge the decision by Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal to recognise Ajay

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Aaditya Thackeray arrives for a meeting at the Shiv Sena office in Mumbai, Sunday. Amit Chakravarty

REPORTS, PAGE 6

Keep Central forces ready, says Governor; 15 rebel MLAs get Y-plus security

YOGESH NAIK
MUMBAI, JUNE 26

FLAGGING REPORTS of rebel Shiv Sena MLAs' houses and offices being targeted in Maharashtra, Governor B S Koshiyari has asked the Centre to keep "adequate" central security forces "ready... to address the situation".

Meanwhile, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Sunday granted Y-plus security cover, comprising CRPF personnel, to at least 15 rebel Shiv Sena MLAs. While the MLAs are in a hotel in Assam, sources said security will be provided to their families in Maharashtra.

In his letter to Union Home CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



SAD (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann after winning the bypoll in Sangrur on Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

BJP wrests SP's strongholds in UP, AAP loses Sangrur in Punjab LS bypoll

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

JUST MONTHS after it stormed to power in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) suffered a setback on Sunday as it lost the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat, vacated by its Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, to Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann. The AAP now has no member in the Lok Sabha.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party (SP) lost its strongholds of Azamgarh and Rampur to the BJP in the Lok Sabha bypolls. The two seats fell vacant after party chief Akhilesh Yadav and senior party leader Azam Khan were elected to the Assembly in March.

In Azamgarh, where the Muslim-Yadav dominance had helped Mulayam Singh Yadav win the seat in 2014 and Akhilesh in 2019, BJP nominee Dinesh Lal Yadav "Nirahua", a

EXPLAINED
Setback for Opp

THE DEFEAT in Sangrur, just months after its spectacular win in the Punjab Assembly elections, comes as a wake-up call for the AAP. In UP, by wresting two SP strongholds, the BJP has strengthened its already-dominant position ahead of the urban local body elections due later this year.

Bhojpuri actor, defeated SP's Dharmendra Yadav, a former MP and cousin of Akhilesh, by a margin of about 8,600 votes. In 2019, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MORE REPORTS
PAGES 3, 7

New SIT to probe Sreekumar, Teesta, Bhatt for conspiracy

VAIBHAV JHA
AHMEDABAD, JUNE 26

THE GUJARAT government on Sunday formed a six-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by the state's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) DIG Deepan Bhadrani to investigate retired DGP R B Sreekumar, activist Teesta Setalvad and former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt for criminal conspiracy and forgery, and other charges, "as per directions of the Supreme Court", a top official told *The Indian Express*.

The move follows an FIR CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Setalvad at an Ahmedabad court, Sunday. Nirmal Harindran

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

IN SC's NAME
PAGE 8

PM IN MUNICH

PM Narendra Modi addresses the Indian diaspora in Munich, Germany, where he arrived on Sunday to take part in the G7 summit. At the community event, the PM said the Emergency, announced on June 25, 1975, was a 'black spot' in India's history. P11

IDEA EXCHANGE
'We are no longer chess players from mythology; someone bespectacled who is slightly old. Now chess is seen as a fairly young sport'
VISWANATHAN ANAND
INDIA'S FIRST GRANDMASTER & FIVE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION
PAGE 11

EXPRESS NETWORK

YOUTUBE REMOVES NEW MOOSEWALA SONG AFTER GOVT COMPLAINT PAGE 10

Congress-ruled Rajasthan gets biggest investment pledges from Adani, Ambani: Rs 1.68 lakh crore

DEEPMUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, JUNE 26

THE BIGGEST investment pledges received by the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan under the 'Invest

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW
AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

Rajasthan' outreach programme include commitments by the Gautam Adani-led Adani Group and the Mukesh Ambani-chaired Reliance Industries Ltd, according to information obtained by *The Indian Express* under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Data furnished by the state's Bureau of Investment Promotion (BoIP) following the RTI application shows the two corporate houses together pledged over Rs 1.68 lakh crore between December 2021 and March 2022
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MP toasts its first Ranji title: 'Moment of a lifetime'



MP coach Chandrakant Pandit and captain Aditya Shrivastava on Sunday. P11

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
BENGALURU, JUNE 26

MADHYA PRADESH captain Aditya Shrivastava was waiting for his turn to speak after Mumbai skipper Prithvi Shaw at the post-match presentation of the Ranji Trophy final. But Shrivastava's team had walked over to the board reading "Champions", ready to pose for photographs.

Earlier, in another glimpse of what this maiden Ranji Trophy crown means to a state formed in 1956, Shrivastava was already in his official dark blue MP blazer as he stood a few metres from his impatient teammates just moments after the six-wicket victory over 41-time champions Mumbai.

"Completely ecstatic," the 28-year old captain began when it was his turn to talk to the presenter, Anjum Chopra, the former India captain.

"A generation...of time has gone by and MP has won the Ranji Trophy for the first time

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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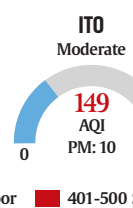
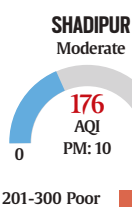
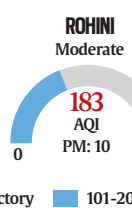
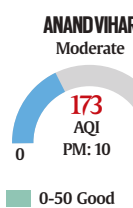
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PARTY'S DURGESH PATHAK BEATS BJP CANDIDATE BY 11K VOTES

Rajinder Nagar bypoll: AAP ka swagat hai



Pathak greets party workers after his bypoll victory on Sunday. He polled 40,319 votes. Abhinav Saha

Behind win: Kejriwal as a bankable face, support in lower income areas, popular schemes and trouble in Delhi BJP

ABHINAV RAJPUT

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

AAM AADMI Party's Durgesh Pathak won the bypoll for the Rajinder Nagar Assembly constituency Sunday, beating BJP's Rajesh Bhatia by a margin of 11,468 votes. Pathak polled 40,319 votes as opposed to Bhatia's 28,851, while Congress's Prem Lata was a distant third with 2,014 votes.

The seat fell vacant after AAP's former MLA Raghav Chadha was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Punjab. Compared to 2020, when AAP got 57.06% of the vote share in the constituency, Sunday's results saw a slight dip for the party at 55.78%.

Pathak took to Twitter to express his gratitude to voters: "Love you Rajinder Nagar." He also credited his rise to the "leadership of Arvind Kejriwal".

BJP candidate Bhatia thanked party workers and voters for supporting him: "Defeat and victory are part of life. We fought a tough battle with dedication for which I am thankful to party leaders and workers. Contesting an election against the ruling party candidate is never easy and we did well."

Delhi CM Kejriwal congratulated Pathak on the victory, and said it was a "defeat of dirty politics". "Heartfelt thanks to the people of Rajinder Nagar. I am grateful for this immense affection and love of the people of Delhi. This inspires us to work harder and serve," he tweeted in Hindi.

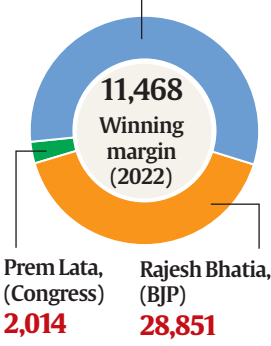
Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta thanked the people of Rajinder Nagar for their support to Bhatia: "Winning and losing is part of the democratic system. We accept the mandate of the people. Like in this election, our party workers will work even harder in future elections."

Both the AAP and BJP had launched a high-voltage campaign, with Kejriwal holding three road shows in the constituency in the last week of campaigning. The BJP had deployed several 'star campaigners', in-

THE NUMBERS

Durgesh Pathak, (AAP)

40,319



Prem Lata, (Congress) 2,014
Rajesh Bhatia, (BJP) 28,851

VOTE SHARE IN CONSTITUENCY

AAP 55.78%

BJP 39.91%

Congress 2.79%

2022

AAP 57.06%

BJP 37.7%

Congress 3.8%

2020

cluding MPs Gautam Gambhir and Manoj Tiwari.

What worked in AAP's favour

From the urban neighbourhood of Rajinder Nagar to middle and lower middle-class neighbourhoods of Naraina, Pandav Nagar and Dasghara, people were vocal on the issue of shortage of water and bad roads in the run-up to the bypoll. A point raised frequently was that even though Chadha was also DJB vice-chairperson, water woes persisted. Yet, the AAP pulled off a win.

CM Kejriwal remains the most bankable face for AAP wherever it goes to polls, and the party campaigned with the slogan 'Kejriwal ki sarkar, Kejriwal ka vidhayak' (Kejriwal's government, Kejriwal's MLA). It also tried to permeate the message that since AAP is at the helm in Delhi, having an MLA from the same party raises chances of the constituency's issues being solved.

Acknowledging that water shortage was a problem being faced by residents, the CM during a road show had said, "A lot of development work has been done in the area, but I acknowledge that some issues need to be addressed. There is a shortage of water supply, but I am working on it and I assure it will get fixed soon."

The AAP's two popular

schemes — free electricity and water — continue to attract the lower middle class and jhuggi dwellers who are the largest beneficiaries. At present, consumers in Delhi get a zero power bill up to 200 units of electricity and each house gets 20,000 litres of free water. While the BJP got support from posh urban areas like Rajinder Nagar and New Rajinder Nagar, the middle and lower-income neighbourhoods of Pandav Nagar, Dasghara, Todapur and JJ Colony were satisfied with AAP's policies.

While the voter turnout being low as compared to 2020 — 43.75% down from 58.72% — it was less in upscale Punjabi-dominated areas like Rajinder Nagar and New Rajinder Nagar in comparison to rural areas and jhuggis. BJP's Bhatia, a Punjabi, had a larger support base in upscale neighbourhoods while Pathak, a Purvanchali, got more support from other areas.

Another aspect that seems to have worked in AAP's favour was trouble in the BJP unit. The BJP had too many ticket seekers from the area including former MLA R P Singh, state vice-president Rajan Tiwari, spokesperson Harish Khurana, Purvanchal morcha leader Sonia Sinha, district general secretary Suresh Gupta, standing committee chairperson Chail Bihari Goswami, and district president Rajesh Goel. Sources in the

EXPLAINED For AAP, bypolls a mixed bag

AAP FACED its first bypoll in April 2017 after AAP MLA Jarnail Singh quit to contest from Punjab's Lambi against the then Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, which the former eventually lost. BJP-SAD joint candidate Manjinder Singh Sirsa won the bypoll by a margin of over 10,000 votes, leaving AAP's fresh face Harjeet Singh a distant third with just 10,243 votes. The Congress came second. BJP supporters were quick to suggest that AAP's 2015 victory was a fluke while Congress supporters called it the party's revival. "Neither was true, the AAP had lost as there was anger against Jarnail Singh for leaving voters in a year and going to Punjab," said a senior AAP leader. The second bypoll was in the same year in August as AAP legislator Ved Parkash quit and joined the BJP and became its candidate. He lost. Last March, AAP won four wards during MCD bypolls but lost one, the Chauhan Banger ward, to the Congress. The BJP lost its stronghold Shalimar Bagh. Pathak's win on Sunday is likely to reaffirm the party's strategy of planning its campaign firmly around Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

party said some ticket seekers did not participate in campaigning with much enthusiasm after being denied a chance. "This is now becoming a perennial problem for the party, where whenever someone gets a ticket, the other aspirants either do not support or try to sabotage their campaign. The central leadership must look into it," said a senior BJP leader.

'Victory of work done by CM Kejriwal': Pathak on first win

ABHINAV RAJPUT

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

FOR YEARS, AAP's Durgesh Pathak worked behind the scenes for the party, managing election campaigns and state organisations. On Sunday, when he won his first election, he credited the win to AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Pathak said he will ensure that the water woes in the Rajinder Nagar Assembly constituency are addressed.

What do you believe is the reason for your victory?

This is the victory of the splendid work done by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal; it is due to his work and his commitment that people trusted me. It is the victory of all the karyakartas and people of the constituency. People compared the work done by Kejriwal ji and by the BJP in MCD. People are seeing that there is garbage everywhere, drains are not being desilted by the MCD. And people also saw the Kejriwal model where schools and hospitals are in good condition.

You were called an outsider, how did you counter it?

When I came to Delhi and was preparing for the UPSC, I lived in Old Rajinder Nagar and now I am living in the hearts of the people. That is why they gave me such a big mandate. The BJP had no agenda, they had lost from Day 1 and that is why they were saying these things. In AAP too, I was in-



Durgesh Pathak hugs Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal after his win



THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW

WITH
DURGESH PATHAK
RAJINDER NAGAR MLA

involved with the constituency. I currently live in Rajinder Nagar and people know that my intent is development.

You lost the Assembly elections in 2020. What was your first reaction after Sunday's results?

I come from a small village called Sikohara in Sant Kabir Nagar. No one has been elected from there even as a zila panchayat, let alone an MLA. My ac-

count had just Rs 5 lakh and I am an MLA — this can happen only in Arvind Kejriwal's AAP and nowhere else.

What are the first few things you will work on?

Water supply is an issue and we will ensure that it is addressed. Though, in the past few years since AAP had come to power in 2015, pipelines and sewer lines have been laid in several areas. There are some issues due to the summer and low pressure. People knew that only AAP will get it fixed, so they gave me a chance. We will ensure that it is done.

You were MCD in-charge also, what do you have to say on polls being postponed?

It is clear now that BJP has lost support on the ground, so they deferred the MCD election. People are observing everything.

Losses in 6 seats during bypolls over two years, Delhi BJP leadership faces the heat

ABHINAV RAJPUT

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

WITH LOSSES in six seats that went for bypolls — including Rajinder Nagar and five MCD wards — under the current Delhi BJP unit headed by state president Adesh Gupta since it assumed responsibility in June 2020, murmurs of discontent have started growing within the party. Several party leaders have pointed to the need for more innovative campaigns, connecting with local workers and building a parallel narrative to the AAP.

During the MCD bypolls in March last year, the BJP lost all five seats including its stronghold, Shalimar Bagh, where it had won earlier.

Following Sunday's loss, Gupta thanked the people of Rajinder Nagar for their support to party candidate Rajesh Bhatia. "Winning and losing is part of the democratic system. We accept the mandate of the people. Like



Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta said: "Winning and losing is part of the democratic system. We accept the mandate of the people."

in this election, our party workers would work even harder in future elections... Even while being in the opposition, we will keep raising people's issues," he said.

Some leaders took to social media to call for a rethink. Former media panellist and BJP leader Rahul Trivedi tweeted: "Delhi BJP needs a lot of introspection. What is the reason that we win elections in every region of the coun-

try, but when it comes to Delhi, we have to face defeat only. The distance between the voter and the party is increasing, the responsibility should be fixed."

Another karyakarta, K S Duggal, wrote: "Not brainstorming meetings, but action should be taken on Rajinder Nagar assembly defeat."

Senior leaders *The Indian Express* spoke to acknowledged that there is a need to change strategy.

A BJP leader said that during the initial stage of campaigning, there was no proper communication with the press about visits of senior leaders. "There is a need to build local leadership in jhuggi clusters and unauthorised colonies. We cannot just bank on road shows of big leaders and hope people will vote in large numbers. The days of depending only on protests and pamphlet distribution have gone. There is a lack of innovation in the state unit in connecting with the masses," he said. "We keep blaming

Kejriwal for everything instead of offering an alternative to people."

Another leader said: "There is a need to think about how the BJP has been able to win in Azam Khan's and Akhilesh Yadav's constituencies in Uttar Pradesh but it has continuously failed in Delhi."

A BJP leader who was part of the Rajinder Nagar bypoll campaign team said there was a disconnect from the youth. "The state unit did not manage the campaign properly. While there were too many complaints on water supply, we were not able to convince voters of how the BJP will solve the crisis," she said.

Pointing to the low voter turnout, the leader said there could have been better arrangements to bring people from their houses: "The voter turnout was especially low in our strongholds like Rajinder Nagar, New Rajinder Nagar and parts of Naraina and Inderpuri."

The constituency recorded a voter turnout of 43.75% as opposed to 58.72% in 2020.

2k EWS kids await admissions in pvt schools, edu dept directs officials to expedite process

SUKRITA BARUAH

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

WITH MORE than 2,000 candidates still waiting to be admitted to allotted seats in private schools under the economically weaker section (EWS), disadvantaged groups (DG) and children with special needs (CWSN) categories, the education department has issued strict directions to admit all of them immediately.

Last week, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) had written to Delhi chief secretary Naresh Kumar about the denial of admission to children from the EWS category in private schools over the last two years.

NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo had written that after summoning the officer concerned from the education department, he found that 33,000 seats were

The education dept has issued strict directions to admit all of them immediately

allotted for these reserved categories in Delhi in 2022-2023, to which admissions were granted to around 27,000 children.

The education department has written to all district education officials. While the admission process for pending cases was to be completed by June 24, as of that date, 2,344 candidates were waiting to be granted admissions to their allotted schools. In another 1,747 cases, the status of admission had not been updated by schools.

District officials have been directed to ensure immediate admission of all selected children in waiting, and to get the status

of the remaining 1,747 candidates updated immediately.

They have also been asked to depute the education department nominees of all private schools to verify the cases where schools have marked that the candidates either did not report for admissions or were rejected and "to ensure whether the candidates have not reported genuinely and the rejections done by the school are on reasonable and prescribed grounds or not".

Earlier this month, the education department had written to all private schools stating that it had received complaints of admissions being denied by them to allotted EWS, DG and CWSN candidates citing low admissions in general seats, and had emphasised that private schools are bound to admit all allotted candidates against these reserved seats irrespective of the admissions to their general seats.

DCW sends notice to cops on video of man abusing minor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

TAKING SUO motu cognizance of a video on social media that allegedly shows a man hurling abuses at a young girl over her religion, the DCW sent a notice to police demanding action against the accused. Police said that while a picture of the notice had been posted on social media, they were yet to receive a copy.

The video purportedly shows

a man using communal slurs and abusing the minor, while asking her to abuse her religion and god. It also appears to show him threatening to "hit her badly". DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal, in the notice to DCP (Cyber Crime), said: "The man is clearly intimidating the girl who can be seen visibly frightened and shocked... it is a very serious matter."

KPS Malhotra, DCP (Cyber Crime), said, "We have not received any complaint in writing. We are looking into the matter."

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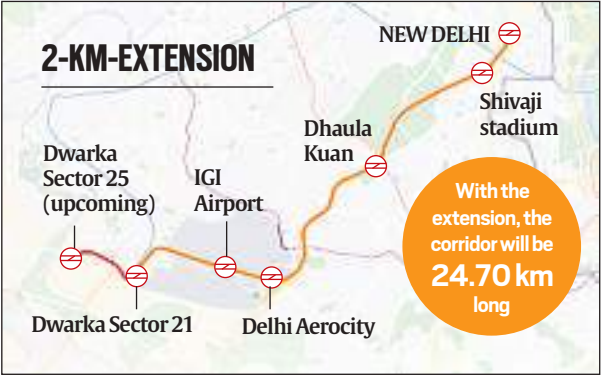
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Trials begin on Airport Metro Line extension



EXPRESSNEWSERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

THE DELHI Metro has begun trial runs on the extended section of the Airport Express Line, which is a 2-km-long stretch between the existing Dwarka Sector 21 station and the new Dwarka Sector 25 station to link it to the India International Convention and Exhibition Centre (IICC).

Currently, the Airport Express line has six stations. "Dwarka Sector 25 (IICC) is an underground station and an extension of the presently operational Airport Express Line connecting New Delhi Railway station with Dwarka Sector 21 via Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport. With the completion of this section, the New Delhi to Dwarka Sector-25 (IICC) Airport Express Line corridor will become 24.70 km long," said a senior DMRC official.

The new station will provide connectivity to Dwarka sectors 25 and 26 and outer areas of the capital. Officials said the signalling systems will be tested during the trial run. This will be followed by mandatory inspections by vari-

ous approving authorities including the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS).

"The section will be opened for passenger traffic after these mandatory approvals," said the official.

The main aim behind extending the line was to connect IICC, currently under construction, and the Airport so as to provide seamless connectivity and facilitate visitors/businesspersons visiting the centre for expos and conventions.

IICC is being developed as India's largest exhibition and convention centre and it will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities such as auditoriums, hotels, office spaces etc.

The Metro station at IICC shall cater to this new centre, said officials. "Apart from catering to the upcoming convention centre, this new station will also provide Metro connectivity to residents of sectors 25 and 26 of Dwarka and to the new sectors coming up along the Dwarka Expressway in neighbouring Gurgaon. Residents of these areas will be able to reach Central Delhi in about half an hour," Anuj Dahiya, principal executive director (corporation communication), DMRC.

'We'll be back at some point': Rustom's Parsi Bhonu founder as restaurant readies to shut shop this week

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

THEY SAY farewells are hard, but for Kainaz Contractor, the founder of Rustom's Parsi Bhonu, it has been a busy one. Ever since she announced on Friday evening, through a social media post, about the shutting down of the popular restaurant on central Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Contractor says she has been flooded with calls, messages and requests for one meal at the place before it winds up.

"It has been among the busiest weekends in the last eight years of the restaurant's journey," she says, adding, "Messages include those for the staff, most of whom have been there throughout and have now formed a personal connection with patrons."

Contractor herself calls the move "unplanned and sudden" since the place was doing well,



The restaurant at Central Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg; (right) Founder Kainaz Contractor. Photos by Rustom's Parsi Bhonu

even during the Covid-induced lockdowns, but they have run into some issues regarding the space.

While Contractor says they want to return at some point, as the brand is named after her father and means more than a business establishment to her, as of now, there is no clarity on

how and when.

It was eight years ago that Contractor, then a food writer, along with her partner Rahul Dua, had introduced the national capital to Parsi fare, courtesy of her Parsi roots and Dua's familiarity with the concept. Contractor says their aim was not to recreate the Irani cafes of



"It received a great response, and the space would usually fall short. So, we moved to the Parsi Anjuman at ITO a couple of years down the line. Although, the staff and the menu remained constant," she says.

Besides functioning as a guesthouse for the community, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman houses the only fire temple in the city. And so, it became a perfect setting for Rustom's as the city's first spot offering a home-style Parsi thali in a modest setting.

When pandemic-induced lockdowns started in 2020, she adapted the menu to suit a delivery model and never struggled as such, she says, "which is why it is now hard to believe that we survived that but still have to shut shop for an unanticipated reason".

Just before the pandemic struck, Dua and Contractor had embarked on another plan — Bhawan — which was meant to be a street food restaurant but had to be turned into a cloud

kitchen consequently.

"We had invested time and energy on a space in Greater Kailash II, which was due to open in 2020. But just a week before that, the pandemic started, and we had to let that go," she recalls. Bhawan takes from the concept of regional street food served across state bhawans in the national capital.

Two months ago, as they figured that Rustom's had to go, the duo focussed on realising the Bhawan dream. It is now running as a full-fledged restaurant on Gurgaon's 32nd Avenue, and receiving a great response, says Contractor.

But all is not over for Rustom's, she says. "It will come back as a restaurant, maybe by next year, but at another spot in the city, maybe in Gurgaon," she adds.

In the meantime, one can try reserving a table at the ITO outlet where nostalgia will be served along with authenticity, till this coming Thursday.

In 1st Covid phase, young patients with co-morbidities saw higher risk: Study

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

A RETROSPECTIVE study on the association of underlying co-morbidities with Covid progression and mortality in a Delhi hospital found that in the first phase of the outbreak, younger patients with co-morbidities were at a higher risk of mortality.

This study was conducted by researchers at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on 2,586 patients hospitalised for Covid from April 8, 2020, to October 4, 2020, to observe the association of diabetes, hypertension and chronic kidney disease on prognosis and mortality of Covid infection. The study

was published in the journal 'Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry' on June 25.

"The analysis of relative risk of the severity of Covid-19 shows younger patients with underlying co-morbidities are relatively at higher risk... compared to elderly patients with similar underlying condition except for diabetes where relative risk of ICU admission amongst patients with age less than 60 years is comparatively lower but almost similar to patients with age equal to or above 60 years," states the study.

It also states that chronic kidney disease was found to be the most susceptible to death outcome in Covid patients, followed by hypertension and diabetes.

"On comparing impact of multiple co-morbidities with severity of Covid-19 infection, it was found that presence of co-morbidity poses greater risk of ICU admission. As the number of comorbidities increased, risk of severity of Covid-19 infection also increases significantly," said Dr D S Rana, one of the authors of the study and chairperson of the hospital's Renal Sciences department.

Out of 2,586 patients, 779 or 30.1% needed ICU admission while 1,807 or 69.9% did not. 317 or 12.3% of the patients died.

"The relative risk analysis showed females are at greater risk of mortality... except for hypertensive patients ...," states the study.

Man arrested for 'sexually harassing minor student'

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

A 53-YEAR-OLD man has been arrested for allegedly sexually harassing a minor girl.

Police said the accused, a member of the School Management Committee (SMC) in the school where the girl studies, had allegedly sent vulgar messages to her and asked for sexual favours. An FIR under IPC Section 354A (sexual harassment) and Section 12 (sexual harassment of child) of the POCSO Act, said police.

DCP Pranav Tayal said the accused was arrested on June 24 and has been sent to judicial custody. "The victim alleged that the accused... had been harassing her by sending her unusual and vulgar messages via mobile and asking her for sexual favours for a few months," he said.

According to the head of the school, while the girl's family had approached police, she had also confided in the school's counselor and the school had been working on notifying the education department about this.

each school's management committee is supposed to comprise the principal, 12 members who are parents of children of the school, a teacher of the school, a social worker involved in the field of education, and a representative of the local MLA. Empowering SMCs has been a major part of the Aam Aadmi Party government's 'education reforms'.

Their primary functions are supposed to be to monitor the functioning of the school; prepare and recommend the school's development plan; monitor maintenance, attendance, enrolment, the implementation of the mid-day meal, among other things. In 2018, the government also approved independent funds called SMC funds to enable some amount of independent expenditure for work at the school level.

A recent push has been that of parent outreach through SMC members and parent volunteers called 'school mitras', each of whom are in charge of around 50 children and have to be in touch with parents regularly, over call and in-person meetings.

"SMC members have addresses of students, and even though they are supposed to call parents through a toll-free calling system instead of personal numbers, it's very easy to get their phone numbers. As a master trainer for school mitras, I always spend some time talking to them about the POCSO act. Sensitisation, legal awareness and maintaining boundaries is very important," said Amar Pahadi, an SMC member at another government school in Northwest Delhi.

BRIEFLY

CFSL officer's chain snatched

New Delhi: A gold chain was allegedly snatched by bike-borne men from a senior scientific officer at CBI's Central Forensic Science Laboratory in South Delhi's Pushp Vihar Saturday, said police. Police said a case has been registered under IPC section 379 (theft), 356 (assault to commit theft) and 34 (common intention). Benita Mary Jaiker, DCP (South), said: "The complainant said he was walking near Pushp Vihar's Sector 1 with his family when two men on a motorcycle came from behind and snatched his chain."

In a first, DFS uses robots to douse fire

New Delhi: A fire broke out at a three-storey plastic godown in Samaypur Badli in the early hours of Sunday, police said, adding that the Delhi Fire Services used special robots, along with nearly two dozen fire tenders, to douse the blaze. It was the first time that the DFS sent robots to douse a big 'commercial' fire. The robots were inducted into the DFS soon after the Mundka fire tragedy last month to increase the efficiency of the department and reduce workload of firemen.

Two die after fire breaks out in cattle shed

Gurgaon: A woman and her daughter died after a fire broke out in a cattle shed at their house in Amanpura colony, Gurgaon village, in Sector 5, said police. Police said the incident took place around 5.30 pm Saturday when a short-circuit occurred due to which the fire broke out. Police said the deceased have been identified as Himanshi (19) and her mother Sumita (52). Police said Himanshi was in the cattle shed and her mother rushed out to help her but both were caught in the flames.

7 arrested for duping hundreds

New Delhi: Seven people were arrested for allegedly running a fake placement agency at Bhikaji Cama Place and duping hundreds of unemployed people of over Rs 20 lakh. Police said this amount was collected on the pretext of registration fees. Harsha Vardhan, DCP (Dwarka), said: "During a raid, it was revealed that a fake placement agency... was being run. They would call job seekers and take registration fees. Approximately 250 job seekers were cheated of about Rs 23,000,000." ENS

Government of Maharashtra
Government Transport Service, Mumbai

THE Controller, Government Transport Service has initiated to call tender for empanelment of Authorized Private Tourist Vehicle Suppliers and to finalize Vehicles Hiring Rates accordingly, to provide vehicles for Dignitaries and Government Offices (Mumbai & Suburban District). The detail e-tender documents will be available on www.mahatenders.gov.in from date 27.06.2022.

SEAL

Sd/-
(Kranti B. Patil)
Controller,
Government Transport Service,
Mumbai.

DGIPR-2022-23-1519

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
'Khanij Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500028.
Corporate Identity Number (CIN) - L3100TG195SG01001674

CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT
Tender Enquiry No: HO/Contracts/Conversion/Bachel/2022/142 Dated : 27-06-2022
MSTC Ref. No. NMDC/HO/31/22-23/ET198

NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from prospective bidders for the work of "Conversion of 2 Nos. (33KV Hilltop Feeder & 11KV Backfeed Feeder) Overhead Lines into Underground Cables near 10/11A & Screening Plant, Dep-5, Bachel Complex (C.G.)".
The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from 27-06-2022 to 18-07-2022 from following website links ;
1. NMDC website - <https://tenders.nmdc.co.in/nmcdcenter>
2. Central Public Procurement Portal - <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> and search tender through tender enquiry number.
3. MSTC portal - https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprocurement/nmcd/buyer_login.jsp
4. For further help refer to 'vendor guide' given in MSTC website.
The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTC Limited website. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT. The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.
For further clarification, the following can be contacted -
Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Fax No. +91-040-23534746, Tel No. +91-040-2353 2800, email : contracts@nmdc.co.in
Chief General Manager (Contracts)

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED
"A State Government Undertaking"

"Press Tender Notice" (E-tendering mode only)
ONLINE TENDERS are hereby invited in two part bids from OEM or authorized dealers for Supply of Spot Billing Machines with Impact Printers to HPSEBL, complete as per Tender Specifications. The dates of sale, receipt and opening of tender is as per detail below:-

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Description of Work	Estimated Cost	Earliest Money	Cost of Tender Documents inclusive GST (Non-refundable)	Completion Period
1	CEOMM/Tender No. 03/CEBL/2022-23	Supply of Spot Billing Machines with Impact Printers to HPSEBL Complete as per Tender Specifications.	Rs. 1,30,63,213.00 only	Rs. 1,30,83,32.00 only	Rs. 2,360/-	03 Months

Key Dates:-

1. Date of online publication	04.07.2022
2. Start date and time of bid submission	04.07.2022 (at 11.00AM)
3. End date and time of bid submission	19.07.2022 (upto 11.00AM)
4. Date and time of opening of techno. comm. bid	20.07.2022 (at 11.00AM)

The bid document is available online and bid shall be submitted on line on website <https://www.hptenders.gov.in>. Bidders would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidders are required to have digital signature certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized certifying authority (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPSEBL may obtain the same from the website <https://www.hptenders.gov.in>. DSC is mandatory to participate in e-tendering Bidders already possessing valid DSC issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender. Sd/-
Chief Engineer (OP) South, HPSEB Ltd., Shimla-7

Save Energy For the Benefit of Self & Nation.

Classifieds
PERSONAL

I, Parmod S/O Vijender, R/o Rithal Nirwal (75), Rohtak, Haryana- 124303, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Pramod Kumar 0070791985-1

I, Vipin Kumar Dhariwal S/O Maha Singh Dhariwal, R/o 4C, Professor Colony, Azad Nagar, Hisar, Haryana- 125001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Vipin Dhariwal. 0070791980-1

I, Santosh Kumar Shivmurti Mishra S/O Shivmurti Rajaram Mishra born on 07.07.1981 residing at 88-B, 2nd floor, B Block, Kalkaji, New Delhi-19, have changed my name to Santosh Mishra vide affidavit dated 25.06.2022 at New Delhi. 0050199517-1

I, Rajendra Kaur, W/O Late Praveen Kumar Walia R/o Walia Herbal Beauty Parlour, Vishnu Dham New Madho Nagar, Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh- 247001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Rajni Walia 0070791979-1

I, Rahisuddin S/O Abdul Rasheed Born On 25/06/1973, R/o H No 272/A Gali No.3, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, Have Change My Name To Raeesuddin Vide Affidavite Dated 03/06/2022 At Delhi 0050199516-1

I Punita Sharma W/o Shri Saurabh Sharma R/o Ebony A-701, Shalimar City, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, U.P. -201005 have changed my name after marriage from Punita Dubey D/o Shri Surender Kumar Dave to Punita Sharma for all future Purposes. 0040620086-1

I, Noshad S/o Manan Khan R/o 3333, Bhumiya, Pasonda, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Naushad Khan. 0070792028-1

I, Heera Devi, W/O Suresh Chand R/o 195/11 B, Saiktar 11B, Avas Vikas Kalauni Tehsil-Agra (UP)-282007. have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Hira Chand 0070791978-1

I, Deepak S/O Gulab Singh, R/o H No-80, Vill- Naina Teh-Kaithal, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Deepak Nain. 0070791987-1

I, Anoop Kumar S/o Sh Deep Chand R/o 7, Star Apartment, Sec-9, Rohini-85 declare that Anoop Kumar and Anup Kumar are one and the same person. 0050199448-1

ISaumya D/O, Jitender Singh Phor R/o H.no.-26, Sector -12, Sonipat -131001 have changed my name to Saumya Phor for all purposes. 0040620139-1

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone : 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135- 2763508,
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

पत्रांक सं. 368 दिनांक 25.06.2022

Corrigendum Tender Notice
In reference to the tender No. 03/EE(Gen)/Khodri/2022-23 invited by Executive Engineer (Generation), Khodri Power Station, Dakpathar, VA burden of Potential Transformer shall be read as 120 VA instead of 100 VA, under section-4 (Technical Specification) of tender. All other terms & conditions will remain unaltered.

Executive Engineer (Generation)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

SBI
STATE BANK OF INDIA
ITS Department, LHO, Maharashtra
Plot No. C-6, "G" Block, Synergy,
Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400051

RFP NO : ITS/TNDR/AMC/2022-23/1 DATED : 27/06/2022

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
EMANELMENT OF THIRD PARTY AMC VENDORS FOR MAINTENANCE OF COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Bids are invited by State Bank of India from eligible bidders for "Empanelment of Third-Party vendors for Maintenance of Computer Systems Peripherals under Annual Maintenance Contract for "Synergy" LHO Building, (Maharashtra & Mumbai Metro LHOs) and Branches of Maharashtra Circle." Bidders who are interested to submit bids, visit "Procurement news" at <https://www.sbi.co.in>
Commencement of download of RFP: From 27.06.2022 at 10.00 a.m.
Last date and time for submission of bids: 26.07.2022 at 3.00 p.m.

Ast. General Manager (ITS)

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED
(A State Govt. Undertaking)

"Press Tender Notice" (E-tendering mode only)
Online Tenders are hereby invited on partial lumpsum basis (two part bid) by the undersigned for & on behalf of Managing Director, HPSEB Ltd., Shimla-4, from the Bidders /Joint Venture firms having A-Class Electrical contractor license from Chief Electrical Inspector, for the following work:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Description of work	Estimated cost	Earliest Money	Cost of tender Documents inclusive GST (Non-refundable)	Completion Period
1	CEOMM/Tender No. 03/CEBL/2022-23	Construction of 33 KV and 11 KV composite feeder Beolia to Baraogon with ACSS Conductor (Linnet) for 33KV and 6/14.72 for 11KV on 13 mtr long steel tubular double pole structures with single continuous earth wire and 33KV Underground line with XLPE Cable, 500mm2, Under Electrical Division-II HPSEBL, Shimla	Rs. 13,12,08,78.15	Rs. 13,31,269/-	Rs. 2360/-	6 Months

Key Dates:-

1. Date of online publication	30.06.2022
2. Start date and time of bid submission	30.06.2022, 11:30 AM
3. End date and time of bid submission	15.07.2022, 11:30 AM
4. Date and time of opening of techno comm. bid	16.07.2022, 11:30 AM

The bid document is available online and bid shall be submitted on line on website <https://www.hptenders.gov.in>. Bidders would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidders are required to have digital signature certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized certifying authority (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and Password for participating in e-tendering in HPSEBL may obtain the same from the website <https://www.hptenders.gov.in>. DSC is mandatory to participate in e-tendering. Bidders already possessing valid DSC issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender. Sd/-
(Er. Rakesh Kumar)
Chief Engineer (OP) South, HPSEB Ltd., Shimla-4.

Save Energy For Benefit of self and Nation

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work:
Sl.No.; Tender No.; Name of the work;
Advised value(Rupees); Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Period of completion(months); Date of closing: (01);
Engg/23A/2022-23; Upgradation/ Augmentation of electrical locomotive maintenance & production facilities: Conversion of SFS Shop into functional depot; ₹38,11,754.08; ₹76,200.00; 04 Months; 28/07/2022 at 12.00 hrs. (02);
Engg/24/2022-23; Repairing of damaged drain in colony-1, 2 & 3 in CLW township; ₹30,96,200.13; ₹61,900.00; 06 Months; 28/07/2022 at 12.00 hrs. (03); Engg/25/2022-23; Upgradation & Augmentation of electric & diesel locomotive maintenance and production facilities Umbrella Works 2019-20; (i) Development of open area beside store Godown for storing materials, (ii) Development of VMG Yard for storing materials; ₹97,20,459.97; ₹1,94,400.00; 04 Months; 15/07/2022 at 12.00 hrs. Note:(i) Complete details can be seen in the Railways website www.ireps.gov.in & www.clw.indianrailways.gov.in. (ii) Contact Number: 9136640202. PR2-140 Divisional Engineer/CLW/CRJ Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
MACHINE A/TM/TM CONTRACT
No. 229 to 236/2022/Coml/BKN, Dt: 24.06.2022
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, N.W.Rly, Bikaner on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under two packet system for the purpose of allotment of Water Vending Machines in Cluster-A to H.i.e. at A category stations = Bikaner, Lalgarh, Suratgarh, Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh Jn., Bhiwani & Hisar & B category station i.e. = Sirsa over Bikaner division for the period as mentioned in the enclosed documents. The date of submission and opening of Tender and detail of the Tender form Cost, Earnest money and Reserve Price, are as under. (1) Name of the work: E-tender under two packet system for the purpose of allotment of Water Vending Machines in Cluster-A to H.i.e. at A category stations = Bikaner, Lalgarh, Suratgarh, Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh Jn., Bhiwani & Hisar & B category station i.e. = Sirsa over Bikaner division. (2) Approximate Cost of the work: Earning Contract (3) Period of contract: Five (05) years (4) Earnest Money to deposited: As per station and Cluster wise earnest money mentioned in the tender notice shall be accepted only online via net banking or gateway payment facilities. (5) Cost of Tender form: As per station and cluster wise non-refundable tender form cost mentioned in the tender notice shall be accepted only online via net banking or payment gateway. (6) Reserve Price (in ₹): As per station and cluster (A to H) wise Reserve Price mentioned in the tender notice for the period of five years. (7) Date and time of submission of e-tender: 22-07-2022 up to 15.00 hrs. through online www.ireps.gov.in only. (8) Date and time of opening of e-tender: 22-07-2022 at 15.30 hrs. (9) Authority and place for submission of tender Cost & Tender Security (EMD), required documents (if any) and seeking clarifications on Tender documents: The bidders who are interested to submit bids, visit "Procurement news" at www.ireps.gov.in. (10) Web site particulars: www.ireps.gov.in. Receipt of Bids: - The bidder should submit bid online on IREPS portal www.ireps.gov.in not later than 15.00 hrs. on date 22.07.2022 mentioned in above table. Bids shall be opened on the same day on IREPS portal www.ireps.gov.in at 15.30 hrs. In case of date of opening of tender is declared as holiday, the tender will be opened on the next working day at the same time. The Railway Administration reserves the full right to cancel tenders without assigning any reasons. 452-DP/22
Please join us on www.facebook.com/nwrailways

New Delhi

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



Opposition's joint presidential candidate Yashwant Sinha with Congress leader Jairam Ramesh (extreme right) during a meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

REACHING OUT

YASHWANT SINHA, the joint opposition candidate for the Presidential elections, will file his nomination papers on Monday. Sinha is planning to visit as many state capitals as possible as part of his campaign tour. Incidentally, Sinha is said to have reached out to BJP veteran L K Advani for a meeting with him to seek his blessings. One gets to hear that he was told that Advani's daughter Pratibha is down with Covid and a meeting perhaps would not be possible now. It will be interesting to see who all from the opposition turns up when Sinha files his nomination papers on Monday.

KEEPING ISSUE ALIVE

THE VIOLENT protests over the Agnipath scheme for recruiting soldiers across the three services may have died down, giving way to the Maharashtra political crisis to dominate the news cycle, but the Congress is trying hard to keep the issue alive. On Sunday, the Congress sent a battery of its leaders to hold press conferences in state capitals. In all 20 of its leaders addressed the media in 20 cities. Among them were Shaktisinh Gohil in Delhi, Deepender Hooda in Jaipur, Alka Lamba in Ahmedabad, Supriya Shrinete in Mumbai, M M Pallam Raju in Bengaluru, Gaurav Gogoi in Chennai, Pawan Khera in Kolkata, Kanhaiya Kumar in Patna and Ajay Maken in Lucknow.

POOR SHOW

THE TRINAMOL. Congress's dismal performance in the by-polls to four Tripura assembly constituencies, with all its candidates losing their security deposit, is likely to force an organisational rejig. The party was hoping to grow in Tripura, building on its hegemonic presence in West Bengal. But as the party analyses the factors behind Sunday's defeat, its over-reliance on West Bengal-based leaders and celebrities in trying to make inroads in the Northeastern state has been identified as one of the factors that went against it. The local party leaders also rue the absence of a strong local face with mass appeal in its local unit.

Emergency a black spot on vibrant history of India's democracy: PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

DESCRIBING EMERGENCY rule in 1975 as a "black spot" on the vibrant history of India's democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that democracy was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago but the people of India responded to it in a democratic way.

Addressing the Indian community in Germany, the Prime Minister said, "Today is June 26 which is also known as the day when India's democracy, which is in the DNA of every Indian, was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago. Emergency is a black spot on the vibrant history of India's democracy."

"The people of India responded to all the conspiracies to crush democracy in a democratic way. We Indians take pride in our democracy wherever we are," he said.

"Today, we can proudly say that India is the mother of democracy... The diversity of culture, food, clothes, music and traditions makes our democracy vibrant. India has shown that democracy can deliver and has delivered."

MANN KI BAAT

'Learn from Emergency, it was bid to crush democracy'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

CALLING THE imposition of Emergency in the country in June 1975 an attempt to "crush the democracy of India", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday in his 90th Mann ki Baat address that generations to come should remember and learn from that period.

"At that time, an attempt was made to crush the democracy of India. The country's courts, every constitutional institution, the press, were put under control. The condition of censorship was such



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with Indian diaspora during his visit to Munich on Sunday. PTI

back then, that is why it could not get the benefits. But now India will not be left behind in the 4th Industrial Revolution, it is now leading the world."

Modi said that drone technology is being used, which is unprecedented, and then cited several examples — fertilisers are being sprayed using drones,

land's mapping in Indian villages is being made through drones.

"Today's India has come out of the mindset of 'It happens, it runs like this'. Today India takes a pledge to 'have to do', 'have to do' and 'have to do on time'," he said.

Modi, who arrived in Munich on Sunday on a two-day visit to Germany, will attend the G7 summit on Monday and discuss issues like energy, food security, counter-terrorism, environment and democracy with the leaders of the powerful grouping and its partner countries.

"An early morning touchdown in Munich... PM @narendramodi will participate in the G-7 Summit...", the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Twitter.

"At the invitation of @Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, PM @narendramodi arrives in Germany for the G7 Summit. Besides participating in @G7 discussions on climate, energy, food security, health, gender equality and more, PM will also hold several bilateral meetings on the sidelines," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

Authorization Centre (In-Space), an independent nodal agency formed to regulate private industry in the space sector, as an achievement in promoting new opportunities. He mentioned several space-related startups, including Chennai-based AgniKul Cosmos, Hyderabad-based Skyroot, Bengaluru-based Digantara and Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space. Both Digantara and Dhruva Space are going to make their first launch from ISRO's launch vehicle on June 30.

Modi also lauded the sportspersons who set several records at the recently concluded Khelo India Youth Games.

spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

The G7 leaders are expected to focus on the Ukraine crisis that has triggered geopolitical turmoil besides fuelling a global food and energy crisis.

Modi is likely to meet German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Indonesian President Joko Widodo in bilateral meetings during his stay.

"During the sessions of the Summit, I will be exchanging views with the G7 counties, G7 partner countries and guest International Organisations on topical issues such as environment, energy, climate, food security, health, counter-terrorism, gender equality and democracy," Modi had said in a statement ahead of his visit.

Besides India, Germany, the host of the G7 Summit, has also invited Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa as guests for the summit to recognise the democracies of the global south as its partners.

Shah: Forensic probe to be made must for offences attracting 6 years or more in jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

THROUGH CHANGES in concerned laws, the government is planning to make forensic investigation compulsory in all cases where the offence attracts a punishment of six years or more, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday.

"The Narendra Modi government is... working towards making forensic investigation mandatory in all cases of offences punishable with imprisonment for more than 6 years," Shah said.

He was addressing the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs on the topic "Forensic Science Capabilities: Strengthening for Time bound and Scientific Investigation" in Kevadia, Gujarat. Shah was chairing the meeting.

According to the MHA, Shah called for the establishment of an independent Directorate of Prosecution and an independent Directorate of Forensic Science in each State/UT through proposed comprehensive amendments to the IPC, CrPC and the Indian Evidence Act. Shah stressed on the need for investigating agencies to be one step ahead of criminals in view of the use of technology by them and said that the central government in collaboration with the state governments is working on a three-pronged approach to reforms in Police Investigation, Prosecution and Forensics. He said that this is the right time to focus on technology-based and evidence-based investigation to achieve the targeted conviction rate, which he pegged at 90%.

According to the MHA, Shah "informed the members that the central government is providing funds to strengthen the forensic infrastructure across the country".



Union Home Minister Amit Shah



Public Affairs Forum of India



PAFI's flagship event is back.

In-person event with interactive deliberations via discussions, debates and dialogues for long-term broader policy and economic agenda emerging from active participation and interaction across a diverse set of stakeholders, including ministers and officials representing central and state governments, global and multilateral organisations, CEOs, media, think tanks, academia and legislators.

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MAHARASHTRA POLITICAL CRISIS DRAGS ON

Pawar convenes MVA meeting, calls for collective effort to fight Sena rebels

NCP president urges ministers to return to mantralaya, get back to work

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JUNE 26

WITH THE Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra facing a political crisis following a rebellion in the Shiv Sena ranks, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Sunday convened a meeting of all three coalition partners at his Silver Oak residence in Mumbai and reassured senior leaders that they could collectively weather the storm.

"Pawar stressed on collective efforts to fight the political battle against the rebel Eknath Shinde group," a Congress minister, requesting anonymity, said.

With the Shiv Sena likely to get embroiled in legal and legislative challenges as the Shinde-led rebel faction digs its heels in, Pawar reportedly also assured his allies that whatever was required to legally contest (the rebel camp's claims), would be done.

Senior Congress ministers Balasaheb Thorat and Ashok Chavan, Shiv Sena minister Anil Parab and senior Sena leader Anil Desai were present at the meeting. Later, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and home minister Dilip Walse Patil also met Pawar.

Sharad Pawar reportedly also told the ministers to return to work at Mantralaya. With political uncertainty, ministers have stayed away from their offices, adopting a wait-and-watch attitude. Sensing that the administration has come to a halt, Pawar reportedly "urged all ministers across Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena to get back to work".

Congress ministers at the meeting brought up the issue of farmers in the state. With the on-

set of the monsoon, farmers are preparing to start sowing seeds. An effective administration at this crucial time is a must, they pointed out.

Another concern was farmers' unrest following a price rise in fertilizers and quality seeds. Congress ministers also raised the issue of farmers failing to access fresh crop loans from various financial institutions. Though Kharif sowing should end by July 15, to date, less than 20 per cent of sowing has been completed, they pointed out. Moreover, agriculture minister Dadaji Bhuse, who is part of the Shinde-led rebel camp, is himself in Guwahati.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, Shinde was appointed as a leader by his faction and given the right to take any decision on behalf of the rebels, who are currently staying at a Guwahati hotel. Apart from Shinde and Bhuse, other rebel ministers at Guwahati include Gulabrao Patil, Shambhu Desai, Sandipan Bhumre and Abdul Sattar.

The Shinde faction, which has claimed support from 38 Sena MLAs out of 55 MLAs in total, is all set to take its battle to the Supreme Court. The rebel MLAs are planning to challenge the disqualification notices served on 16 MLAs by Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal. "The disqualification is applicable had they violated the whip on the floor of the House. Not attending a meeting convened by Uddhav Thackeray outside Vidhan Bhawan cannot justify disqualification," the camp has argued, pointing out that though it is mandatory to give members seven days' notice to explain their side, they have been given just two days to do so.



Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and state Home Minister Dilip Walse leave Sharad Pawar's residence, Sunday. Amit Chakravarty



Eknath Shinde with Maharashtra minister Uday Samant in Guwahati on Sunday. Express

Aaditya: Give CRPF cover to Kashmiri Pandits, not MLAs

VALLABH OZARKAR
MUMBAI, JUNE 26

ADDRESSING YUVA Sena workers in Mumbai on Sunday, Yuva Sena president and minister Aaditya Thackeray criticised the Union government after it decided to provide CRPF security to rebel MLAs camping at a Guwahati hotel. Aaditya said that instead of providing security to these MLAs "provide security to our Kashmiri Pandits and secure them first", in a reference to the killings of Kashmiri Pandits recently.

"We have been demanding the same CRPF security for the Kashmiri Pandits, but it was not given and these rebel MLAs are being given the security," he said.

A few other Shiv Sena leaders also slammed the Centre over providing CRPF cover.

During the rally, Thackeray also challenged the 40 MLAs to resign from their posts and contest elections and said that he will ensure that none of them win and gets to see the state assembly again.

"I am challenging all those rebel MLAs who have been sold out for a price tag, if you have guts then resign from the post and face election. I will ensure that each of you loses. The Shiv Sainiks have come out with strong force... And there is an energy in them. You (Shiv Sainik) decide what to do with those who have tried to split Shiv Sena... But first, ensure that they will not be able to enter into the Assembly again," the Yuva

Sena president said.

During the rally, Aaditya also called rebels liars and opportunists and said that the CM had offered Shinde CM position but he did drama and rebelled taking undue advantage of ill health of Uddhav Thackeray.

"I remember when I was in Davos, on May 20, CM Uddhav Thackeray had called Eknath Shinde and offered him to become CM, if he wanted to become so, but at that time, he did drama and started weeping. Just a month after, that he broke into rebellion. That too also when Saheb was ill, they took undue advantage of illness of Saheb," Aaditya said adding that this is separatism.

He again termed the rebels as dirt in the party which has gone

Raut: Rebels living corpses, will be sent for post-mortem when they return

VALLABH OZARKAR
MUMBAI, JUNE 26

SHIV SENa MP Sanjay Raut's fresh salvo at the rebel party MLAs camping at a Guwahati hotel, on Sunday, calling them living corpses who would be sent to a mortuary for post-mortem on their return from the Assam capital, received flak from the Opposition and the Eknath Shinde camp, which termed it as a death threat to the rebels.

"When they step out of Assam, they won't be alive at heart. They know what can happen in the fire which has been lit here now. The dead bodies of all these 40 MLAs will come to Mumbai (from Guwahati), we will directly send them to the mortuary for post-mortem," Raut said at a rally of Shiv Sena workers in Dahisar on Sunday.

Calling the rebels buffaloes, the Sena MP said, "There is a temple in Guwahati where buffaloes are sacrificed. These 40 buffaloes have gone there to be sacrificed."

Deepak Kesarkar, the spokesperson for the rebel Shinde Camp objected to Raut's choice of language and his statement that the MLAs have many fathers, saying that "there is too much outrage in the rebels".

"He is insulting women in our families and it won't be tolerated. He is saying anything he wants and damaging the party. No party should have a spokesperson like Sanjay Raut. He is on a mission to finish the

party. It is because of his statements that all the MLAs are angry and more are joining us," Kesarkar said.

"He has called us corpses. He should remember that it was on our votes that he became an MP earlier this month. He has also called us animals. If we are animals and corpses then he should have some self-esteem and resign as MP. He should contest the polls afresh. He needs votes of only 41 MLAs, let's see from where he gets it," he added.

He said the rebel camp currently has 39 Sena MLAs and 12 Independents on its side and if Raut continues to speak like this, more will join in the coming days.

Bharat Gogawale, the chief whip of the Shinde camp said, "Party members are joining us as they are upset with Raut's statements and language. The more he speaks, the more will be the members joining us. He is damaging our party."

The BJP, too, came down heavily on the Sena MP on social media, claiming that it was a threat to kill the rebel MLAs once they return to Mumbai.

Facing a backlash over his remark, Raut issued a clarification later in the day, saying that his statement should not be taken in its literal sense as what he meant was that the rebel MLAs have lost their souls after betraying the party and are living corpses whose post-mortem will be conducted at Vidhan Bhavan (during a floor test).

in three and they know that the Shiv Sena will not let this happen hence a conspiracy is planned to finish the party.

"This is a big conspiracy against Shiv Sena and Thackeray. They have a plan to split Maharashtra into three parts, North Maharashtra, Vidarbha and make Mumbai an unko territory. They know that Shiv Sena won't let this happen and hence they want to finish Shiv Sena. Shiv Sena was founded for the security of Mumbai and Maharashtra and you cannot finish the party nor you can divide the state," Raut said.

"I have as requested Uddhav Saheb to not take this garbage (rebel MLAs) back. Let's dump them in a garbage dumping ground," he added.

Crisis casts shadow over appointment of new Mumbai police chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JUNE 26

APART FROM its impact on various governance-related issues, the rebellion in the Shiv Sena that could lead to the collapse of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state will also have a bearing on the impending choice of the Mumbai Police Commissioner. The term of the incumbent Commissioner Sanjay Pandey ends on Thursday and the chances of an extension to him, which has to be given by the central government, are slim in the current circumstances.

Sources said that the government, which currently has its hands tied up with the prevailing political situation, may end up giving the additional charge for the post to a serving officer if it cannot make up its mind about Pandey's replacement.

A government official said, "While there are frontrunners to the post, the change in the political situation has made the issue all the more complex. Powerful politicians like Eknath Shinde who would have had a say in pushing someone's name forward will no longer be in contention."

The official added, "In the current climate, where law and order can be an issue especially when the rebel MLAs come to the city in case of a floor test, the MVA government will be all the more careful about whom it wants to give the reins of the police force. In the changed dynamics, they may also go in for giving another officer the additional charge in the meantime."

Sources said that in the past, when the Commissioner had been away, additional charge was given to the senior-most joint commissioner in the city. In the current scenario, Vishwas Nangre Patil, the Joint Commissioner (law & order), and Rajwardhan, Joint Commissioner (traffic), both from the 1997 batch, are the senior-most officers in the city.

Prior to the rebellion, Thane Police Commissioner Jai Jeet Singh and Vivek Phansalkar, Director General-Police Housing, were seen as frontrunners for the post of the Mumbai Police Commissioner. Sources said if the MVA government remains in power, it is Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar who will weigh in on the choice of the Mumbai Police Commissioner.

Sawant reviews SIT findings on illegal land grabbing in Goa

MAYURA JANWALKAR
PANAJI, JUNE 26

TEN DAYS after it was constituted, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant reviewed a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into cases of illegal land grab in the state. According to the state government, several parcels of land with no stated legal heirs, and whose owners had either died or migrated elsewhere, had been usurped and illegally sold.

"Earlier the accused arrested by SIT had revealed that they had forged documents of close to 70 properties of which majority of them were of the similar nature," a government official said Sunday.

Sawant has convened a high-level meeting Monday to decide the course of action following the findings. At the meeting, the government will also determine the status of plots of land that are without registered owners, or whose owners had either passed away or migrated without succession proceedings.

The SIT has so far arrested four people in connection with forging documents to carry out illegal land deals. Of these, two were record attendants from the state government's Archives Department who had allegedly aided the other two accused in tampering with records.

The first to be arrested in the case, Vikrant Shetty, was released on bail by a court in Mapusa Friday. The others arrested are Mohammed Sohail, described by the SIT as one of 'kingpins' in the illegal land grab cases, Dhiresha Naik and Shivanand Madkaikar, both employees in the Archives Department.



Goa CM Pramod Sawant. File

The seven-member SIT led by Superintendent of Police Nidhin Valsan was constituted on June 15. It included officials from the Department of Archives, the State Registrar and a Deputy Collector. Last week, it was further strengthened with the addition of 22 police personnel.

Will expose illegalities: Rane
At a time showcase notices have been issued to at least three properties in which Congress leader Micheal Lobo is a partner, the state's Town and Country Planning (TCP) minister Vishwajit Rane Sunday promised to expose "illegalities" of people in high positions.

Rane had earlier suspended the outline development plans of Parra-Arpora-Nagoa, Calangute-Condolim (all in Bardez) and Vasco (south Goa), saying they would be reviewed because of "discrepancies". He had sparred with Lobo over the TCP's decision and Lobo had also alleged that he was being "targeted".

Rane said in a social media post: "Illegalities of people in high holding positions will be exposed. Investigation in this matter is still in process. I appeal to the people of GoA to see the caliber of people you elect. These people are the ones who at the cost of their power make profit for personal gains."



BOARD GAME

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and five-time world chess champion Vishwanathan Anand play a game of chess in Lucknow on Sunday, when the first-ever Chess Olympiad torch relay reached the city. Express

Majority in student, youth organisations drunkards, says Kerala Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 26

KERALA EXCISE Minister and CPI(M) central committee member M V Govindan on Sunday said a large number of members in student and youth organisations in the state are drunkards. Speaking at the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in the state capital, referring to the drive against alcohol and drugs, Govindan said, "The cam-



MV Govindan

paign should reach everyone... We can depend upon student and youth organisations. But what I noticed is that a major chunk of persons in student and youth organisations are drunkards."

"We should be able to create awareness campaign among the next generation, among students from class 12 to professional institutions," he added.

Amitabh Thakur to fight 2024 LS polls from Ballia

Lucknow: Former Uttar Pradesh cadre IPS officer Amitabh Thakur, who was given premature retirement, on Sunday announced his candidature for the 2024 Lok Sabha election from Ballia constituency.

Thakur's announcement comes a day after he confirmed floating a political party 'Adhikar Sena'.

In a press statement, Thakur said he had chosen Ballia because of the district's cultural traits.

The Union home ministry had on March 23 last year given him compulsory retirement from service in "public interest". PTI

Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran Offers e-Auction of Residential & Commercial Properties in Gurugram & Faridabad Zones											
On 8th July, 2022											
Residential Properties in Gurugram Zone				Commercial Properties in Gurugram Zone				Commercial Properties in Faridabad Zone			
Sr. No.	Sector/ Urban Estate	No. of Plots		Sr. No.	Sector/ Urban Estate	No. of Plots		Sr. No.	Sector/ Urban Estate	No. of Plots	
1	10, Gurugram	14		1	10, Gurugram	10		1	18P1, Faridabad	16	
2	10A, Gurugram	12		2	10A, Gurugram	5		2	18P2, Faridabad	8	
3	12A, Gurugram	7		3	12A, Gurugram	3		3	19P1, Faridabad	1	
4	14, Gurugram	1		4	15-I, Gurugram	6		4	2, Faridabad	3	
5	15-I, Gurugram	1		5	18, Gurugram	6		5	20A, Faridabad	10	
6	15-II, Gurugram	4		6	21, Gurugram	6		6	21B, Faridabad	8	
7	21, Gurugram	4		7	22, Gurugram	8		7	21D, Faridabad	8	
8	22, Gurugram	12		8	4, Gurugram	8		8	24, Faridabad	16	
9	23-23A, Gurugram	5		9	5, Gurugram	11		9	25, Faridabad	20	
10	37C, Gurugram	16		10	7Extn, Gurugram	1		10	28, Faridabad	8	
11	5, Gurugram	4		11	9, Gurugram	15		11	3, Faridabad	12	
12	5-VI, Gurugram	2		12	9A, Gurugram	16		12	55, Faridabad	8	
13	7Extn, Gurugram	2		13	JAILLAND, Gurugram	2		13	58, Transport Nagar Faridabad	16	
14	9, Gurugram	22		14	OJC, Gurugram	4		14	59, LOHA MANDI Faridabad	10	
15	9A, Gurugram	24		15	PV-1A, Gurugram	15		15	7, Faridabad	13	
16	1-PAT, Ptaudi	5		16	1-PAT, Ptaudi	14		16	8, Faridabad	14	
17	31-32A, Gurugram II	2		17	29, Gurugram II	13		17	9, Faridabad	8	
18	38, Gurugram II	8		18	33, Gurugram II	6					
19	39, Gurugram II	12		19	34, Gurugram II	4					
20	40, Gurugram II	12		20	38, Gurugram II	10					
21	42, Gurugram II	7		21	42, Gurugram II	4					
22	45, Gurugram II	17		22	45, Gurugram II	10					
23	46, Gurugram II	6		23	46, Gurugram II	6					
24	47, Gurugram II	8		24	53, Gurugram II	9					
25	49, Gurugram II	5		25	56, Gurugram II	4					
26	50, Gurugram II	7		26	57, Gurugram II	25					
27	51, Gurugram II	10		27	4A, Dharuhera	12					
28	52, Gurugram II	15		28	6, Dharuhera	4					
29	57, Gurugram II	27		29	1PART-1, Narnaul	12					
30	6, Dharuhera	10		30	3, Rewari	7					
31	10, Mahendargarh	6		31	5, Rewari	4					
32	9A, Mahendargarh	3		32	MTSKOSLI, Rewari	10					
33	10-DEF, Rewari	5									
34	3, Rewari	3									
35	4, Rewari	1									

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7 GOVT & POLITICS

100 days after Punjab sweep, a reality check for AAP in CM's bastion

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, JUNE 26

BARELY THREE days after the Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government in Punjab marked its 100 days, the Sangrur bypoll outcome has come as a sobering reminder that a record poll sweep can be followed by a humiliating electoral defeat.

Sangrur, the pocket borough of Chief Minister Mann, had catapulted him into the political stage by electing him with a record margin of over 2 lakh votes in the 2014 general elections. Mann had got re-elected from Sangrur in 2019 Lok Sabha polls by over 1 lakh votes. The bypoll was necessitated when he resigned from the seat after taking over as the CM on March 16.

The defeat of the AAP candidate Gurmil Singh at the hands of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president, Simranjit Singh Mann, with a margin of 5,822 votes in a neck-and-neck contest — which comes at a time when the Mann government is seen to have acted against the corrupt — is a wake-up call for the AAP dispensation. The AAP's leaders have been facing the charge of being "inaccessible", which used to be once the bugbear of the previous Capt Amarinder Singh-led Congress government.

Evidently, the ruling party seems to have failed to neutralise the public anger against the killing of popular Punjabi rapper Sidhu Moosewala, even as it fielded a relatively unknown candidate in a fiercely-contested five-cornered battle in Sangrur.

The AAP was certainly not expecting to lose to the SAD(A),



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann

which has not won an election since 1999, when Simranjit won from the Sangrur parliamentary seat. The AAP, on the other hand, had bagged all nine Assembly seats in this constituency four months ago. It also deployed its top brass for campaigning, with both Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and CM Mann hitting the Sangrur trail ahead of the election.

A former IPS officer, the SAD(A) chief had resigned from his job in 1984 in protest against Operation Blue Star. A two-time MP, Simranjit was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 1989 when he was in jail. He has been seeking a UN-monitored inquiry into the killing of Moosewala, who was gunned down on May 29, days after his security was withdrawn by the Mann government. Although the singer had contested the Assembly poll from Mansa on the Congress ticket, it was no secret that he had decided to support Simranjit in the Sangrur bypoll — a point that the latter highlighted in his electioneering and campaign ads.

Mann, who has been in political wilderness for years and was often dismissed as a relic of militancy who continued to harp on "a separate State", sprang back into the spotlight when a "Sarbat Khalsa" meeting called by him

against the sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 got a significant public response. He gained further traction during the 2020-21 farmers' agitation when "influencers" like late Deep Sidhu aligned with him. The bids mounted by some ruling quarters to paint the farm stir as "anti-national" gave ammunition to leaders like Simranjit, who have spent a lifetime highlighting the alleged "excesses" of the central dispensation against the minorities.

In the run-up to the Sangrur bypoll, Mann said his win would be a "victory of the secular people and minorities against the ultra-right parties such as BJP, AAP, and Congress". The AAP candidate, Gurmil Singh, a sarpanch, could not deal with such growing rage or match the rhetoric of his rival.

EXPLAINED

As the AAP failed to address the anger among voters due to the inaccessibility of local leaders, its choice of nominees for the Rajya Sabha also led to some rumblings as it did not include anyone from the Malwa region that gave AAP 66 of its total 92-seat haul in Assembly elections.

With the Sangrur bypoll coming close on the heels of the AAP's Assembly poll landslide, it was contested hotly by other parties, including the BJP. While the Congress fielded Dalvir Goldy, who had contested against Bhagwant Mann from Dhuri in the Assembly poll, the BJP nominated Kewal Dhillon, an industrialist and former Congress legislator, in the fray, with the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) giving its ticket to Kamaldeep Kaur, sister of Balwant Singh Rajoana, a death row convict in the ex-CM Beant Singh assassination case. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com



Simranjit Mann's supporters take out a victory rally to celebrate his win in Sangrur on Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

The comeback Mann: SAD(A) chief who had the last laugh on Punjab CM

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, JUNE 26

DEALING A severe blow to the ruling AAP in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president, Simranjit Singh Mann, emerged as the victor Sunday in the crucial bypoll in the Sangrur Lok Sabha constituency, the bastion of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, defeating AAP candidate Gurmil Singh in a neck-and-neck fight.

The bypoll was necessitated when the incumbent Sangrur MP Bhagwant Mann resigned from the seat after becoming the CM in March following the AAP's landslide victory in the state Assembly elections. It was considered to be the first test of the fledgling Mann-led AAP government's popularity.

Pushed to the margins of Punjab's mainstream politics for over two-and-half decades, the 77-year-old pro-Khalistan leader



Simranjit Singh Mann in Sangrur, Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

and ex-IPS officer Simranjit Singh Mann's stunning win is likely to boost the Panthic politics in the border state.

In its campaign for the Sangrur bypoll, the Sukhbir Badal-led Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) had also played the Panthic card and fielded Kamaldeep Kaur, sister of Balwant Singh Rajoana, the ex-CM Beant Singh's assassination convict lodged in jail, while making the release of the Sikh pris-

oners its plank. The principal Opposition Congress also campaigned vigorously for its candidate in the Sangrur fray. However, it was Mann who eventually won the race.

Significantly, an effort was mounted in the run-up to the Sangrur bypoll to get various SAD factions united with Sukhbir even visiting Mann's house to persuade him to withdraw in favour of Kamaldeep's candidature, but the SAD (Amritsar) chief turned it down and went ahead with his campaign.

It used to be said in Punjab political circles that Mann would contest all parliamentary and Assembly polls only to get defeated. A two-time Lok Sabha MP, he had last won from the Sangrur parliamentary constituency in 1999.

According to the Lok Sabha website, "Mann remained in jail from 1984 to 1989 for the devolu-

tion of powers to the Sikhs and although elected to 9th Lok Sabha, did not take oath. He was elected to 13th Lok Sabha from 1999 to 2004 and remained Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of External Affairs. He was committed to the protection of social, cultural, civil, economic, and political rights as enshrined in the UN charter. Protection of human rights and rights of minority were his special interests as MP."

Although he has been a pro-Khalistan leader, Mann had focused on constructing cow shelters during his term as an MP during 1999-2004. He was then also declared "outstanding parliamentarian" by the Lok Sabha Speaker. He is a relative of former CM Captain Amarinder Singh.

Mann had resigned from the IPS in 1984 in protest against the Operation Blue Star.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Tripura: Cong demands probe into attack on its Agartala office

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, JUNE 26

A CONGRESS supporter was stabbed in front of the party state headquarters in Agartala, leading to a clash between BJP and Congress workers after bypoll results were announced Sunday.

Police fired teargas shells to bring the situation under control. Around 20 people, including state Congress chief Birajit Sinha, were injured.

Sinha sustained head injuries when stones were pelted at him. A makeshift camp set up in front of the Congress Bhawan destroyed and several two-wheelers were damaged in the clash.

Soon after, the residence of a BJP corporator of Agartala municipality, Shilpi Sen, was allegedly targeted by Congress activists. Sen's daughter suffered minor injuries after being hit by an object hurled at the house. A BJP supporter, who came to Sen's rescue, was also injured when he was assaulted by the mob.

In Delhi, the Congress demanded an investigation into the attack on the party office and imposition of President's Rule if the "state government is unable to handle law and order".

The party decided to send a three-member delegation led by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury to Tripura to take stock of the situation and "make a report on the heinous attack".

"The Indian National Congress strongly condemns the mindless attack on Congress Bhawan and brutal assault on Tripura PCC president Birajit Sinha and other Congress workers by BJP goons, after the thumping victory of Congress party candidate Sudip Roy Barman in the Agartala bypoll," AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said. "It is utterly shameful that the police stood as mute and complicit spectators while the goons stormed the office and attacked our office bearers... We demand an apology from BJP president J P Nadda and an investigation by Home Minister Amit Shah into why these attacks occurred."

WITH ENS, DELHI

And the winners are...

Results of bypolls held on June 23 for 3 LS seats and 7 Assembly seats



Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi (centre, left) after winning the Rampur Lok Sabha bypoll. PTI

LOK SABHA SEATS

AZAMGARH, UTTAR PRADESH

WINNER: DINESH LAL YADAV "NIRAHUA", BJP
■ PREVIOUS WINNER: Akhilesh Yadav, Samajwadi Party
■ WINNING MARGIN: 8679 votes over SP's Dharmendra Yadav

RAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

WINNER: GHANSHYAM SINGH LODHI, BJP
■ PREVIOUS WINNER: Azam Khan, Samajwadi Party
■ WINNING MARGIN: 42,192 votes over SP's Mohd. Asim Raja

SANGRUR, PUNJAB

WINNER: SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN, SHIROMANI AKALI DAL
■ PREVIOUS WINNER: Bhagwant Mann, AAP
■ WINNING MARGIN: 5,822 votes over AAP's Gurmil Singh

ASSEMBLY SEATS

— TRIPURA —

ATMAKUR, ANDHRA PRADESH

WINNER: MEKAPATI VIKRAM REDDY, YSRCP
DEFEATED BJP's Bharat Kumar Gundlapalli by 82,888 votes

MANDAR, JHARKHAND

WINNER: SHILPI NEHA TIRKEY, CONGRESS
DEFEATED BJP's Gangotri Kujur by 23,690 votes

RAJINDER NAGAR, DELHI

WINNING CANDIDATE: DURGESH PATHAK, AAP
DEFEATED BJP's Rajesh Bhatia by 11,468 votes

AGARTALA

WINNER: SUDIP ROY BARMAN, CONGRESS
DEFEATED BJP's Ashok Sinha by 3163 votes

JUBARAJNAGAR

WINNER: MALINI DEBNATH, BJP
DEFEATED CPM's Sailendra Chandra Nath by 4572 votes



BJP supporters celebrate in Agartala on Sunday. PTI

Source: Election Commission

Absent Akhilesh, strong BJP campaign & BSP: Why SP sank

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, JUNE 26

WITHOUT AKHILESH Yadav at the helm of its campaign and facing an aggressive campaign by the BJP, the Samajwadi Party (SP) lost the Lok Sabha by-elections in Rampur and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh that were once considered its strongholds. The Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) strong performance in Azamgarh heavily damaged the SP.

By winning both the bypolls, the BJP on Sunday strengthened its already dominant position in the state ahead of the urban local body elections that are due later this year and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The elections are also likely to raise questions about Akhilesh Yadav's absence from campaigning in both Azamgarh, where his cousin Dharmendra Yadav was the contestant, and in Rampur the once bastion of senior SP leader Azam Khan now in the hands of the BJP. He leader is also likely to face questions about

his position in the party following this defeat as he had to negotiate hard with Akhilesh to give the candidature to his longtime associate Asim Raja.

Though the BSP could not win Azamgarh — it did not contest Rampur — its candidate Shah Alam, popularly known as Guddu Jamali, got 2.66 lakh votes and effectively ended Dharmendra Yadav's chances. Reacting to the results, BSP president Mayawati said they had "shown that only the BSP has theoretical and ground strength to defeat the BJP".

For the BJP, putting its entire might into the campaign paid off as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and almost his entire Cabinet canvassed for the party's candidates.

Azamgarh

The SP won the constituency in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections despite a wave of support across the country for the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Even in the state elections earlier this year, it won all the five

Assembly segments in Azamgarh. But this time, the parliamentary constituency fell to the BJP as its candidate Dinesh Lal Yadav "Nirahua".

Nirahua managed to take advantage of the BSP eroding away the SP's support base. The SP's alleged silence on Muslim issues also seemed to not go down well with Muslim voters.

Rampur

Considered the citadel of Azam Khan, the SP left campaigning in Rampur to the veteran leader and his supporters. But the BJP did not throw in the towel and mobilised its entire top leadership to storm Azam's bastion.

Azam campaigned for Raja and tried to garner sympathy by narrating the hardships he and his family faced in prison. But the strategy failed in front of the BJP juggernaut and the SP leader could not benefit from the decision of the BSP and the Congress to not contest the election. Political observers said several Dalit voters also chose the BJP.

‘Got lotus to bloom in Azam bastion’: BJP's Rampur winner

JIGNASA SINHA
RAMPUR, JUNE 26

"Azam Khan ke gadh me kamal khilaye hain (we have got the lotus to bloom in Azam Khan's bastion)," says Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi. The BJP candidate from Rampur is celebrating his bypoll victory at his farmhouse, filled with party workers chanting his name.

The victory is doubly sweet for Lodhi — he recently left the Samajwadi Party for the BJP and has reaped the rewards. Though the voter turnout was less than 50 per cent, Lodhi won the Lok Sabha seat with over 40,000 votes more than SP's Asim Raja.

"This is an achievement for all the party workers who worked hard for months. I felt the Samajwadi Party didn't deserve the win because they have no vision and no ambition. I left the party because I wanted to

change things. Today, I have support from everyone" he says.

At the Samajwadi Party office, meanwhile, the disappointment of the loss is hard to shake off.

"I don't want to say much but it is sad to lose in Rampur. We had hopes and it's a bad loss. We did push for more votes but everything was hay-wire. The nomination was filed at the last moment and there wasn't much support from the leaders. We have the potential and will work towards the next elections," said an SP spokesperson at the office, one of the few people present there. The other workers alleged that BJP fought the elections with unfair means.

The most disappointed, understandably, was the veteran Azam Khan himself, who refused to accept the result. "Why would you call this an election? My workers were detained and beaten up. Our supporters were

threatened and abused by the police. Lodhi is lucky he has a party that can bend rules and be happy. I can't do all that. I have spent months in jail. I run schools here and am a chancellor of the university. My aim has always been to help people. But can one fight with police and the goondagardi against us? We were called names and people were stopped from voting. There were only 6 votes from a place where 900 votes could come. I refuse to believe this was a fair election," he said.

In the town itself, the streets were quiet after the results were announced and many refused to talk about the elections. Many local residents said they were happy with the results but didn't expect much. One resident said: "I saw the results on TV. We hope they do make some changes here. Power cuts and roads are a huge issue. This is a developing city and we want change."

U.P. RESULTS: LEADERS REACT



"The bypoll wins in Azamgarh and

Rampur are historic. It indicates wide-scale acceptance and support for the double engine governments at the Centre and in UP..."

NARENDRA MODI
PRIME MINISTER



"Today's victory has given this message

very clearly in front of everyone that in 2024, the Bharatiya Janata Party is going to win 80 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh"

YOGI ADITYANATH
U.P. CHIEF MINISTER



"This victory of BJP is the victory of

dishonesty, disregard for democracy... the 'Dhritrashtra' vision of the Election Commission, and hijacking of public mandate... Democracy is bleeding and the public mandate lost"

AKHILESH YADAV
SP CHIEF



"The UP by-election results have once again proved that only BSP has the ideological and ground force to defeat the BJP here..."

MAYAWATI
BSP CHIEF

The IndianEXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

IN SC’S NAME

Had it not been for Court, justice would be elusive for Gujarat 2002. That’s why its latest order, its use by police, is disturbing

IN THE LONG, tortuous and still unfolding process of justice after the communal violence in Gujarat 2002, the Supreme Court of India has played a commendable role. Its several interventions have ensured that the process stays on course, that it was insulated from pressure by the powerful, and that victims and survivors could hope for a fair and just closure. This is why the two arrests on Saturday, of activist Teesta Setalvad and former Gujarat DGP RB Sreekumar, are disquieting — the FIR is based on extensive quotes from the SC verdict and its annexures the day before. On Friday, the SC upheld the SIT’s clean chit in the 2002 riots to the then Gujarat government led by Chief Minister Narendra Modi, discarding allegations of a larger conspiracy by high state functionaries. The collapse of that particular case was, arguably, foretold — connecting the dots right up to the chief minister’s office was a tall order to begin with, and the case may have been propelled more by the anguish of those devastated by the violence, less by evidence that could hold up in a court of law. In the same order, however, the Court went a worrying step further. Its verdict said, and the FIR lodged the next day faithfully quoted: “At the end of the day, it appears to us that a coalesced effort of disgruntled officials of the state of Gujarat along with others was to create sensation ... to keep the pot boiling, obviously for ulterior design... all those involved in such abuse of process, need to be in the dock and proceeded with in accordance with law”. The day after, the question is: Surely the court would not countenance a witch-hunt that borrows its lines from the court?

The law must take its course on Sreekumar and Setalvad. But there is a problem with an FIR that draws so heavily upon what the court says, and a court verdict that lends itself to such immediate police action against those standing with the petitioners in cases of 2002. What the court said on Friday and the police taking its cue from it on Saturday also appears to turn on its head the story so far — after all, it was the same court that, down the years, took a number of unprecedented steps to ensure justice for 2002. The SC stayed the trials in certain cases in response to allegations that there had been serious lapses in investigation. It set up an SIT and supervised designated fast track courts for hearing sensitive cases. It ensured that cases were shifted outside Gujarat so that justice could be done. Its interventions resulted in the reopening of nearly 2,000 post-Godhra riots cases. The SC, in fact, became the centrepiece of a larger effort in which individual activists, NGOs and the NHRC, among others, contributed towards bringing justice closer to victims and survivors of the communal violence that took place in Gujarat a little over two decades ago.

The cases stemming from Gujarat 2002 raise serious questions about a range of abdications by institutions and actors. The collapse of one case should not become the pre-text for a sweeping indictment of the whole struggle for justice and accountability. The SC must also reflect on whether it behoves its status and role as the wise custodian of constitutional processes and values to be seen to be turning on those who were stricken by the violence and knocked on its doors, even if, as it turns out in this particular case, their plea failed to hold.

BALANCING ON BRICS

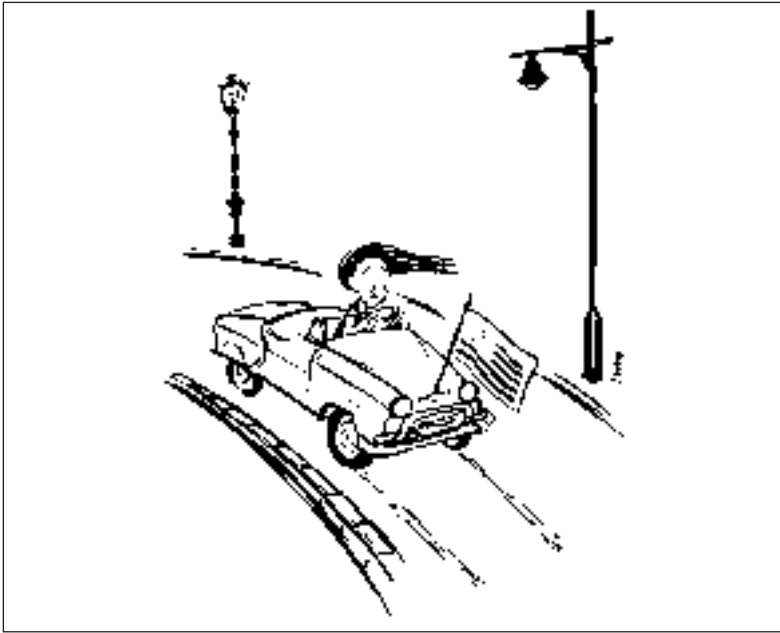
Its latest outing navigated tightrope on Ukraine. It is yet to live up to its promise of an alternative economic or trading bloc

THE MOST REMARKABLE thing about the BRICS summit last week was that its five members managed to negotiate their way through the meeting in a way that sent no ripples of surprise through the post-February 24 world. This was the 14th summit of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa grouping set up in 2009. It was hosted by China this year and was its opportunity to showcase multi-lateralism, Beijing’s big foreign policy slogan, and to hit out once again at US “hegemony”. Aside from the members, China had invited 13 nations from across continents, signalling its desire to expand the group. Getting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend despite the tensions owing to China’s military incursions in Ladakh was a bonus. For India, BRICS was always about its commitment to building non-western alliances, but this time it was, more, an international balancing act. Ditto for Brazil. It voted for the UN Security Council resolution “deploring” the invasion of Ukraine and the General Assembly resolution condemning Russia, but President Jair Bolsonaro went to Moscow on a “solidarity trip” a week before the invasion and has insisted his country stands for “peace”. South Africa too has been walking the neutrality tightrope on Ukraine. As for Russia, the summit gave President Vladimir Putin his first multilateral outing since February 24. The joint statement was able to find common ground on the invasion of Ukraine by asserting the sanctity of sovereignty and territorial integrity and the need to find a peaceful solution.

President Putin’s proposal for an alternative reserve currency was received with caution. The Western sanctions on Russia have had a fall-out on economies around the world, but a post-dollar world is an idea whose time has not yet arrived. Barring Russia now, the other BRICS members are well-integrated members of the US currency-led, digitised global financial market. But in a nod to the concept, a BRICS Think Tank Network for Finance is to be set up, to “work independently and provide intellectual support, as and when tasked, for knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences and practices and cooperation on finance issues amongst BRICS countries, aiming at addressing global challenges and serving the interests of the EMDCs (Emerging Markets and Developing Countries)”. The wording is suitably vague.

BRICS has yet to live up to its promise of an economic or trading bloc that can offer alternatives to developing countries. The New Development Bank, or the BRICS bank, is yet to catch speed as a multilateral lender of standing. China’s push to dominate BRICS, and Russia’s being in economic limbo, have set limits on what the grouping can hope to achieve.

FREEZE FRAME



E P UNNY

Backsliding in America



ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

Arc of rights must broaden further, instead of retreating. Overturning of Roe v Wade outlines democratic challenge

IN A DEMOCRACY, can a right once granted be taken away? In the current international debate, this question has become part of the rising intellectual and political concern over “democratic backsliding”, a concept that depicts how democracies weaken and decline without collapsing fully.

As the world’s oldest surviving democracy, the United States has figured prominently in this debate, especially since Donald Trump rose to the presidency in 2016, engaged in a lot of anti-minority politics, and finally sought to overturn his 2020 election defeat. But after all is said and done, the American debate thus far has been about whether it is legitimate to put some restrictions on the exercise of franchise by racial minorities, who vote markedly less for the Republican party and considerably more for the Democrats. Strictly speaking, the debate has not been about the right to vote per se.

With the US Supreme Court’s decision on June 24 to overturn a half-century-old right to abortion, granted by a 1973 Supreme Court decision in the Roe vs Wade case, the debate has now become wider, as it moves from how to engineer voter suppression to the larger realm of rights. With a 5-4 majority, the court has said that American women have no nationwide right to abortion. Rather, state legislatures should decide whether women can have that right in their respective states. In several states, within hours of the court’s decision, abortion was banned, for prior legislation existed. Though Democratic states would steadfastly protect the right to abortion, nearly half of the 50 states are likely to go the other way. In the new field of democratic backsliding, comprising the retraction of rights, the floodgates have opened up.

In poll after poll, a majority of Americans, bordering sometimes on three-fourths of the population, support women’s right to abortion. So, what the court has done is against popular will. But that cannot be the principal criticism against the decision. Courts are not fundamentally governed by popular passion or will, which can fluctuate from election to election, but by constitutional propriety. The key question is whether the right to abortion was constitutionally justified.

The 1973 court decision allowing the

Men don’t have to deal physically with pregnancy, whereas the foetus grows inside a woman’s body for nine months. If men have the right over their bodies, which can’t be taken away by the government, why can’t women have autonomy over their bodies as well? Why should they be subjected to the government’s authority and supervision any more than men’s bodies? That men are free, but women must forcibly be chained to maternity, is an idea whose time surely has gone. Maternity must be a voluntary choice. There is no going back to the notion of rights as they were viewed in the 18th century — unequal, unneutral, unbalanced.

right to abortion was based on the 14th Constitutional Amendment (1868). This Amendment, the court said, allowed protection of liberty and privacy, something the state could not impinge upon. Thus, even though abortion was not mentioned in the 1787 US Constitution, abortion’s defence was derived from the 1868 Amendment — via its protection of citizens’ liberty about matters as intimate as a decision to have a child. The 1973 court also argued that this right was not absolute, limited as it would be by considerations of “protecting potential life”. This line of reasoning led to a trimester-based court ruling, which more or less forbade the government from interfering in the first trimester of pregnancy but the state could ban abortions in the third trimester, when “the viability of the fetus” was beyond doubt.

This whole structure of judicial reasoning has now collapsed. In the court’s opinion, the right to privacy stemming from the 14th Amendment is not relevant, for abortion concerns not only the pregnant woman but also the life of the unborn. Moreover, the court said, abortion is neither “enumerated” as a right in the original 1787 constitution nor is it consistent with American history and tradition. In short, it is a political and legislative, not a constitutional, matter. State legislatures should decide what is permissible.

How should a political analyst comment on this tussle? Hard as we might wish otherwise, constitutional decisions are inevitably tied up with politics. There is no escape from political reasoning.

First of all, no constitution can fully anticipate how the arc of rights would bend in the future. Abortion was not mentioned in the 1787 constitution, nor explicitly in the 1868 amendment. That is because women were not autonomous political agents at that time. Until they were given the right to vote in 1920, they were not a constitutional category in the US, as was true virtually everywhere in the world. Women are autonomous agents today. Norms change; rights evolve.

Second, as the court’s dissent note puts it, how can this majority decision ignore rape and incest? Why should women carry the child of a rapist, a father or an uncle? If abortion as a right is dissolved, women can be

forced to give such unwanted births. The majority decision of the court is silent on this important matter.

Third, having a child is not simply a deeply moral obligation to the unborn. It is also a decision that affects “the ability of women to participate equally in (the nation’s) economic and social life”. These words are from a later decision, known as Casey (1992), when the US Supreme Court added the concept of “undue burdens” to support the idea of abortion. As more and more women become scientists, professors, journalists, lawyers, managers, executives, politicians and sportspersons, these considerations cannot simply be brushed aside. If a woman chooses to terminate a pregnancy now but has a child later, that may be more consistent with her dreams and desires, to which she has a rightful claim.

Finally, men don’t have to deal physically with pregnancy, whereas the foetus grows inside a woman’s body for nine months. If men have the right over their bodies, which can’t be taken away by the government, why can’t women have autonomy over their bodies as well? Why should they be subjected to the government’s authority and supervision any more than men’s bodies? That men are free, but women must forcibly be chained to maternity, is an idea whose time surely has gone. Maternity must be a voluntary choice. There is no going back to the notion of rights as they were viewed in the 18th century — unequal, unneutral, unbalanced.

With the Supreme Court’s overturning of abortion as a constitutionally guaranteed right, America has taken another step towards democratic backsliding. Now, democratic renewal not only means fighting for more easily accessible voting procedures but also a push for a legislative codification of the right to abortion. Typically, as they evolve and deepen, democracies allow the arc of rights to broaden further, not retreat. After this judgment in the US, the stakes have become much higher and the democratic challenges bigger.

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RUCHI GUPTA

THE POLITICAL crisis in Maharashtra has brought the focus back to the anti-defection law. By all accounts, the law has failed to shore up the stability of elected governments. Many governments have fallen due to defections and the defectors have not suffered any cautionary consequences. To thwart the provisions of the law, the Speaker can keep defection pleas pending and the beneficiary party can use money and investigative agencies to engineer enough defections to hit the two-thirds threshold. Voters, too, don’t penalise defections, with defectors routinely winning re-elections. Some have thus mooted amendments to the anti-defection law to mandate time-bound decisions by the Speaker and disqualify defectors from the next election.

The practice of politics is too wide for any institutional process to fully capture. Politicians are adept at subverting institutional processes and there are many possibilities for payoff for defectors outside of elected office alone. Moreover, politics has a history of the exercise of power by proxy and the disqualified representative can have a family member stand in their stead. It is thus unlikely that these amendments will stop defections in any substantive manner. The anti-defection law and proposed amendments approach the issue of defections from the prism of denying power to the defector, a framing which repeatedly comes up short in the face of a bigger and/or more punitive power.

It is obvious that if political parties want to resist defections, they must be able to project

A LESSON FROM MAHARASHTRA

Political crisis shows that anti-defection law is ineffective, even counterproductive

(imminent) power themselves. At the same time, out-of-power political parties must address organisational and ideological infirmities which have made them susceptible to mass defections. There are only about 4,000 MLAs in a country with a population of almost 1.4 billion people. However, political parties tasked with representing the aspirations of crores of people are unable to find candidates who take themselves seriously enough to not cross over to political opponents. The bar is so low that the MLAs have to be physically corralled and phones confiscated to ensure continuation with the party. This is not idealistic outrage but instead has pragmatic and organisational value. It is one thing for a few individuals to be susceptible to threats and inducement, another for the organisation to be vulnerable to mass defections. Individuals can be faulted in the former but the latter calls for urgent introspective and corrective measures at the level of the leadership.

Two measures with both short-term and long-term implications come to mind. First, political parties need ideological clarity and the ability to attract individuals with a sense of purpose and not the love of power alone. This ideological depth if reflected in the party organisation and its political programmes will give members the ability to withstand lean periods of power. Every party has committed individuals; internal party processes must be geared to identify and promote them into leadership positions. This ties into the second issue.

Multiple analyses have attributed the political crisis in Maharashtra in part to Shiv Sena’s inability to accommodate the aspirations of its dissident MLAs. The rebel MLAs on their part have spoken of the chief minister’s inaccessibility. The MLAs may be opportunistic but there is no question that political parties are failing to create intra-party forums where differences can be expressed and resolved on an ongoing basis. Internal mechanisms for inner-party democracy — from elections to deliberative forums — are ultimately at the discretion of the party leadership. Scrapping the anti-defection law would provide some institutional leverage to express intra-party dissidence and while it may be more chaotic in the short term, can lead to greater stability and political strength in the long term.

Finally, two fundamental questions. In trying to legislate political affiliation — a key freedom in democracy — political parties are ending up as supplicants in the court. This repeated ceding of political power to the judiciary is a deviation from the democratic paradigm and must be checked. Second, the anti-defection law has undermined not just the principle of representation but is also contributing to polarisation in our country by making it impossible to construct a majority on any issue outside of party affiliation. Instead of providing stability, the law is undermining our democracy. It is time to scrap the anti-defection law.

The writer is executive director of the Future of India Foundation

JUNE 27, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

ISRAEL’S INVASION

GUNS STAYED SILENT in Beirut while new diplomatic moves raised cautious hopes of a breakthrough in efforts to end the Lebanese conflict. The ceasefire proclaimed by Israel after three days of bombarding Beirut seemed to be holding. During the lull, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation studied new American proposals for neutralising the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon. No details were given but the former Lebanese Prime Minister Saeb Salam, who has played a go-between role in negotiations, told reporters, “There has been a new development. I believe things are looking better.”

PM MEETS ABDULLAH

PRIME MINISTER Indira Gandhi, and J&K Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah met for the second time to remove “misunderstandings”, if any, between them. Mrs Gandhi, accompanied by Governor B K Nehru, had a closed-door meeting for over 40 minutes with the ailing Kashmir leader at the latter’s residence in Srinagar. Farooq Abdullah, the Sheikh’s son and president of the ruling National Conference, said the two had a “cordial meeting”. Asked if the misunderstanding between them was removed by this meeting, he replied, “There was, in fact, no misunderstanding” and added “but most

of the things were sorted out”.

HAIG RESIGNS

US SECRETARY OF State Alexander Haig said he had resigned as he felt the Reagan administration’s foreign policy had strayed from its goal of “consistency, clarity and steadiness of purpose.” Haig, appearing in the State Department auditorium, read his letter of resignation, which said he and the President had agreed on the three aims at the start of the administration. “In recent months,” he said, “it has become clear to me that the foreign policy on which we embarked together was shifting from that careful course.”



THE IDEAS PAGE

West steps back, India shows way

While West curtails abortion rights, India empowers women through Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, Surrogacy Regulation Act and Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021



SMRITI IRANI

AT A TIME of distressing furore on social media and the streets against the near-total bans on abortion in the West, India's generous stance on the termination of pregnancy is a comforting sanctum. Coupled with the moratorium on commercial surrogacy and the proposal to equalise men's and women's ages at marriage, India is positioned securely in the highest echelons of countries that safeguard reproductive autonomy.

India's constitutional ethos commits to the protection of personal liberty through Article 21. Abortion or termination of pregnancy is a woman's prerogative. While women are exclusively fated to withstand child-bearing — purely on account of their biological predisposition — sociocultural constructs also subject them to a disproportionate share of child-rearing.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021, is a step in the right direction. It ensures that expectant mothers exercise self-determination in welcoming new life to their homes. Under the aegis of the Act, abortions may be performed up to 24 gestational weeks on grounds of risk to the mother's life, mental anguish, rape, incest, contraception failure or the diagnosis of foetal abnormalities. The Act navigates the 20 weeks challenge posed by the MTP Act, 1971 and is a nod to advances in the field of health and reproductive science. It is a liberal achievement over countries where abortions are disallowed since conception, even in the most traumatising of circumstances of sexual abuse or incest.

The MTP Act, 2021, attests to the intuition and farsightedness of its crafters. Readiness for and desirability of children decisively shape the life trajectories of mothers, families and children alike. Unwanted pregnancies unexpectedly curtail the life choices of parents, especially mothers, and may limit their mental well-being and personal growth. Further, children born unwanted may suffer reduced opportunities. Illustratively, the WHO links the likelihood of children being born "wanted" to greater parental investments in their education.

Incumbent law and policy-makers have skillfully given reproductive choice a life-cycle twist. Since fertility, child-bearing and child-rearing are unmistakably associated with marriage, by proposing to raise the legal marriageable age for women, policymakers are heralding welcome changes that delay pregnancy. The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeks to push the marriage age for women from 18 years to 21 years. The Bill is well-founded in the face of scholarship and evidence cited by the WHO, which holds that adolescent mothers aged 10 to 19 years are prone to higher risks of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, and systemic infections in comparison to women aged 20 to 24 years. Children born to such mothers additionally face higher risks of low birth weight, preterm delivery and severe neonatal conditions.

It is noteworthy that the unmet need for family planning in terms of limiting or spacing child-bearing decreased from 12.9 per cent



C R Sasikumar

to 9.4 per cent between NFHS-4 (2014-15) to NFHS-5 (2019-21). However, on a standalone basis, nearly 7 per cent of females aged 15-19 years were already mothers or pregnant at the time of NFHS-5, a marginal decline over NFHS-4's 7.8 per cent. Such young mothers are poorly aware of feeding practices and baby care, making them more likely to have stunted or wasted children. Together the MTP Act, 2021 and the PCMA Bill, 2021 — if enacted — can axe the vicious cycle of early marriages, consequent early pregnancies and poor maternal and child health outcomes.

Another underrated policy innovation that the government curated was the decimation of surrogacy bazaars that allowed "renting a womb". Given global inequalities, India became a lucrative "biomarket" for surrogate mothers. The bodies of poor Indian women became "bioavailable" to the residents of the Global North, spurring commercialisation of motherhood, the commodification of women and their reduction to their reproductive capacity. In a country with a long-standing cultural lineage of revering mothers, careless commercial surrogacy appeared to be in stark contrast with the cultural ethos. Responding to this dissonance, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, replaced commercial surrogacy with ethical, altruistic surrogacy. The Act prohibits couples who are not of Indian origin from availing surrogacy in the country and allows only locals with certified, medical reasons necessitating gestational surrogacy to avail of it. The MTP Act, the Surrogacy Act and the PCM (Amendment) Bill, 2021, collectively give new meaning to nari shakti.

Within this enabling politico-legal apparatus, the government has framed policies that readily coalesce to respect the choices and decisions made by women. Under the aegis of Ayushman Bharat-Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), a health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per annum is provided and a wide range of packages pertaining to obstetrics and gynaecology are offered. While the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) partially compensates wage loss before and after pregnancy, the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyaan (PMSMA) provides free antenatal care to pregnant women on every 9th day of the month, easing the financial burden of pregnant women.

Not only is the government making a con-

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021, is a step in the right direction. It ensures that expectant mothers exercise self-determination in welcoming new life to their homes. Under the aegis of the Act, abortions may be performed up to 24 gestational weeks on grounds of risk to the mother's life, mental anguish, rape, incest, contraception failure or the diagnosis of foetal abnormalities.

certed effort for reproductive choices to be easier on the pockets of women, it is also promoting safe motherhood through institutional deliveries under Janani Suraksha Yojana and quality, respectful care in labour rooms during deliveries under schemes like LaQshya. These efforts have culminated in a manifold increase in institutional deliveries from 79 per cent in NFHS-4 to nearly 89 per cent in NFHS-5. The ultimate reward to the nation is the greater longevity of mothers as evidenced by the declining Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) from 167 per lakh live births in 2011-13 to 103 per lakh live births as of 2019.

The present government evinces the highest regard for its *bahuroopi* daughters who act — at various points in their life — not only as loving mothers but as sincere students, valuable employees and valorous entrepreneurs. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign's call to ensure that girls are born and nurtured bore fruit in the form of an improved sex ratio of 1,020 females per 1,000 males. Yojanas such as Ujjwala and Jal Jeevan Mission gave many women much needed respite from the drudgery of collecting fuelwood or water so they could partake in other gainful activities. The Mudra Yojana has provided aspiring women entrepreneurs with loans sans collateral and yet another scheme, the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, has advocated for higher subsidies for women.

While the West is curtailing abortion rights, India is extending the ceiling of permissible abortions. While menstrual hygiene remains a conversation hushed in whispered tones in parts of the world, PM Modi addressed the issue from the ramps of the Red Fort with 1.3 billion Indians listening intently. By outlawing triple talaq, the government has addressed the constant state of insecurity faced by Muslim women. By proposing to revise the permissible marriageable age, the government has held men and women to the same, unbiased standards. The present government has instilled conscientiousness into the calculus of policymaking with a fervent hope that it will better the lives of the mothers and daughters of India for generations to come. Even as the West retrogresses, India shows the path to a progressive society.

The writer is Union Minister for Women and Child Development

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The Taliban are warming up to India faster than expected. Whether we like it or not, the Taliban are a reality now. To deal with them successfully, we have to re-evaluate our approach towards them.."

—DAWN

Using past to oppress future

Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid judgment makes it clear that revanchist claims to religious sites, post 1947, have no basis in law



CHANDER UDAY SINGH

NOVEMBER 9, 2019, was a historic day for the Supreme Court of India. On this day, five justices pronounced a unanimous verdict in *M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das*, better known as the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid judgment. In what was hailed by many as a masterful act of judicial statesmanship, the Bench speaking as one through a judgment ascribed to no individual judge, held that the Hindu parties had illegally planted idols in the central courtyard of the Babri mosque on the night between December 22-23, 1949, thereby desecrating it and that Hindu zealots committed a grave crime by demolishing the mosque on December 6, 1992. It also held that nevertheless, the title to the underlying land must be declared in favour of Ram Lalla Virajman, the deity of infant Lord Ram that had made out the best case of continuous possession and worship. The Sunni Central Waqf Board, as compensation for the illegal desecration and complete destruction of their structure, were to be given five acres of land elsewhere in Ayodhya.

Unprecedented too, even if not historic, was the celebration organised by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who constituted and headed the five-judge bench. This triumphalism would be worth it if the judgment succeeds in closing the door on revanchist claims upon other mosques that were already in the crosshairs of zealots long before it was pronounced: Gyanvapi and Shahi Idgah in Varanasi and Mathura, and as many as 3,000 others scattered around the nation.

Indeed, one of their strongest claims to judicial statesmanship lies in the manner in which the Bench explained The Places of Worship Act, 1991, and its effect. In para 97 the justices hold that this law "imposes two unwavering and mandatory norms": The first is an absolute bar on the conversion of a place of worship of one religious denomination to that of any other religion. Second, to preserve the religious character of every place of worship as it existed at Independence, on August 15, 1947. The only exceptions, carved out in the 1991 Act itself, were the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute that was pending in the courts, any cases that had become final by judicial verdict or concluded settlements prior to September 18, 1991, and any monuments governed by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

What is one to make then of the spate of suits being filed across the country, court orders directing entry into ancient mosques, videography by court commissioners, searches for religious artefacts or symbolism, and claims for the right of one denomination to worship in the place of worship of another? More importantly, what does one make of the timorousness of constitutional courts when faced with such claims? And what of the throwaway comments or remarks during hearings, which to the media and general public might suggest new av-

enues to use history and its wrongs to oppress the present and the future? And lastly, does the exclusion of ancient monuments and archaeological sites from the purview of Section 4 of the Places of Worship Act make a material difference to these suits?

The first question is easily answered, and not only because of The Places of Worship Act. Insofar as the Act is concerned, the Bench in *M. Siddiq* (supra) expressly quashed the findings of the Allahabad High Court to the effect that certain types of disputes could be kept alive, or subsequently raised. The five justices elevated non-retrogression to a basic feature of the Constitution. These findings were rendered after noting that many ancient places of worship were built upon the ruins of others, and sometimes even after destroying those that stood before, and that consequently religious artefacts, pillars, stones, carvings, and even idols might have been subsumed within the later place of worship.

Apart from the 1991 Act, it appears from the nature of these suits that they are barred by limitation and are untenable. Judging by press reports, the claims in these suits are based not on title, ownership and continuous possession, but on the right to worship at particular sites. The foundation of these claims is a belief that a sacred temple was destroyed centuries ago, and a mosque was built on the ruins. Such claims, as held by the Bench in *M. Siddiq*, are clearly time-barred under the Limitation Act, 1963.

My second question is clearly rhetorical, and the reader can fill in the answers.

As for the third, it must be said that queries and open-ended discussions during court hearings are par for the course. But when issues as fraught as this one are met with the Supreme Court musing on the possibility of discoveries by a court commissioner — and their significance — and hypothesising about a Parsi Agyari in which a Christian cross might be found, and the "hybrid" nature of such Agyari, some clarifications become necessary.

The Places of Worship Act, 1991, is concerned with one principal question: What was the religious character of a place of worship on August 15, 1947? The Act is not concerned with what existed before the construction of the place of worship, what materials were used to build it, or whether it stands upon religious symbols or icons or artefacts of any other religious denomination.

That brings me to the last question, on the Ancient Monuments Act, 1958. The mosques that are the subject matter of most of these suits are not covered by the 1958 Act, so this is essentially a red herring. However, other monuments like the Qutub Minar and Taj Mahal are certainly covered by the 1958 Act. Occasionally, there are places of worship within ancient monuments, and in such cases, section 16 of the 1958 Act grants them protection that is broadly on par with that which is available under The Places of Worship Act. This Act bars civil suits in respect of any matters falling within the purview of the National Monuments Authority, so it is unlikely that the 1958 Act will spring to the rescue of these revanchist actions.

The writer is a senior advocate. The full version of this article is available on the indianexpress.com



PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY

INDIA'S GOODS and services tax (GST) will be five years old on July 1. The GST Council, comprising minister representatives from all states and union territories, will be meeting over the next few days. There will likely be celebrations, commiserations and contestations.

Three significant issues — the breakdown of trust and cooperative federalism between states and the Union government, the expiry of the revenue guarantee that protected states' revenues and the recent Supreme Court's judgment highlighting that the GST Council's recommendations are not binding on the states — form the backdrop to this Council meeting.

Maharashtra, the highest contributor to GST revenues (20 per cent) may not be represented in today's meeting because its government is on the verge of collapse, aided in part by the BJP governments of the Union, Gujarat and Assam. Surely, these egregious political developments in Maharashtra will play in the minds of the non-BJP representatives in the GST Council meeting from Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delhi, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand and Orissa, that together contribute 36 per cent of overall GST revenues.

Cooperation between states and the Union cannot just be an economic compact, but a broader political ethic. It is foolhardy to expect states to indulge in a harmonious spirit of economic cooperative federalism inside the GST Council when their governments, leaders and

institutions are being politically attacked and destroyed outside.

The SC recently observed that it is in the national interest to have both cooperative and competitive federalism, and hence, the GST Council's decisions are not binding on the states. This means that states had and continue to have the right to either comply fully with the Council's recommendations or modify them as they deem necessary. This has opened the window for states to override the fundamental GST premise of a "one nation one tax". If pushed to a corner, states may now use the SC ruling as a shield.

The other fulcrum of GST was the tangible mechanism of guaranteed revenues for states. When GST was mooted amid lofty promises in 2017, sceptical state governments extracted a five-year insurance from the Centre of a minimum revenue guarantee, without which GST may not have been possible. It turned out to be prescient as GST failed to live up to its economic promises and states' revenues were protected through this guarantee, despite Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's attempt to wriggle out of this commitment during the pandemic under the alibi of an "act of God". The Union government's proclivity to levy and appropriate cess revenues for itself without sharing them with the states has lent credence to the wisdom of guaranteed compensation for states. This guarantee is now set to expire.

GST is too precariously perched to yank away the compensation guarantee for states.

The ideal solution to salvage and fix GST is to extend the compensation guarantee. The tenure of extension and the guaranteed rate of revenue growth can be mutually agreed upon by states and the Union.

However, the Union government is not desirous of extending the compensation guarantee. Its apprehension and reluctance are understandable, given its deteriorating fiscal situation, foisted by high global crude oil prices, rising fertiliser imports and expanding welfare expenditure. But in the larger and longer term interest of GST, it is prudent to extend the compensation guarantee, which will assuage states' concerns and buy time to revive GST. It is no secret that nearly all states, irrespective of their political affiliations, want an extension of the compensation guarantee. At this juncture of the GST regime, it is perhaps wiser to extend the compensation guarantee and hope to obviate its need through buoyant GST revenues than to further erode states' confidence. Sacrificing a percentage point or half of the fiscal deficit next year by extending the compensation guarantee is worth the potential benefits of a well-functioning GST.

At the root of the current GST, imbroglgio is a deficit of trust and revenues. Technical fixes such as rationalisation of rates and ease of GST compliance are necessary but not sufficient to bridge the revenue deficit since GST revenues are a function of the performance of the larger economy, which in turn depends on

various other factors. The trust deficit can be bridged only through acts of good faith. The Union government should commit to the states that it will not resort to cesses and surcharges that are outside the shareable pool of revenues. It must resolve to honour the revenue guarantee commitment to the states. It must respect and uphold the true spirit of not just fiscal federalism but political and constitutional federalism too.

Democratically elected state governments in India do not have sole powers for both direct and indirect taxation, which is unheard of in any other federal democracy. GST centralised India's indirect taxation. It is time to start a national discussion on reversing the course, moving towards decentralisation by giving states powers for direct taxation. A commitment to initiate such discussions by the Union government will be a healthy signal for states' confidence and fiscal freedom.

After five years, it is now well established that GST has failed to deliver on its economic promises. Contrary to the technocratic rhetoric, it is not just the flawed implementation that is responsible for GST's economic failure. GST was always an economic square peg in India's federal round hole. Regardless, we are now far down the GST path and must strive to make it work, to avoid a "GSTexit", a la Brexit.

Chakravarty is chairman of the data analytics department of the Congress Party

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INFORMATION AGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Let there be data' (IE, 25 June). Managing a country as diverse as India calls for availability of good quality, reliable and regular data. In our age of information, data and facts are everything, and their absence, a recipe for failure. There must, therefore, be a constant stream of data forthcoming on important national objectives, for use by policymakers, researchers and analysts. The proposed resumption of the Consumer Expenditure Survey, after a long hiatus, is welcome news, and one which hopefully marks a new beginning in the availability of comprehensive and regular official data in the country.

Hemant Contractor, Pune

NATION FIRST?

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Penny wise, security foolish' (IE, June 26). The government seems to be aware that despite its ill-conceived "Agnipath" recruitment scheme, the youth of the country will come forward to join it, due to compelling unemployment. Faced by the question of bread and butter, the youngsters have no time and energy to resist and compel the Centre to roll back the scheme. The most insidious facet of "Agnipath" is that only one-fourth of

the soldiers would be absorbed into the force. This will create a deep rift amongst them at the cost of camaraderie and the principle of "nation first" as every "Agniveer" would like to overshadow the other in sycophancy for senior officers. Besides, a fancy name and a "mercenary" like arrangement cannot be an alternative for motivated, dedicated and fulfilled soldiers ready to die for the nation and each other.

Devendra Awasthi, Lucknow

FOOD SECURITY

THIS REFERS TO the article 'Preparing soil for the future' (IE, June 24). Soil is an essential natural resource that supports various ecosystem services. Proper management of soil health is crucial, as it involves the survival of any species that directly depend on soil for their existence, including humans. Improper agricultural practices have impacted the soil health in many regions of the world. Monoculture and plantation-based farming has changed the natural character of local ecosystems, resulting in the degradation of soil quality. Aggressive and unsustainable farming cannot be justified on grounds of ensuring food security, as these practices, in the long run, will lead to a food-insecure world for future generations.

Sudip Kumar Dey, via email

10 EXPRESS NETWORK

BRIEFLY

BIHAR

Maoist arrested in Gaya, arms recovered

Gaya: Police on Sunday claimed to have arrested a hardcore Maoist and, based on his tip-off, recovered a few assault rifles and a large quantity of ammunition. According to Harpreet Kaur, the Senior Superintendent of Police of Gaya, a raid was conducted at a forest in the Maoist-infested Imamganj police station area, following information about a gathering of Left-wing extremists. Ashok Kumar Bhokta, said to be a zonal commander of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), was caught at the spot even though his associates managed to flee. **PTI**

MAHARASHTRA

2 brothers held for molesting, raping minor girl

Mumbai: Two brothers in their early thirties have been arrested for allegedly blackmailing, molesting and raping a minor girl. The police said one of the siblings, who works in a security firm, was booked for raping the girl while the other, who runs a gymnasium, was arrested for blackmailing and molesting her claiming that he had her intimate videos. According to the police, at the time of the incident, the two arrested persons and the minor girl were staying in the same building in the central suburbs of Mumbai. The mother registered a complaint last week. **ENS**

HIMACHAL PRADESH

8 arrested after raid at rave party in Kullu

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh Police raided a rave party and arrested eight people for possession of drugs in Kullu district, an official said on Sunday. A little over Rs 4 lakh cash, over 200 bottles of liquor, 88 gm charas and other drugs were recovered from their possession late on Saturday, the official said. All the accused are in the age group of 23-29 years. Of these, five are from Karnataka, and one each from Delhi and Himachal Pradesh, Kullu Superintendent of Police Gurdev Sharma said. **ENS**

7 labourers die in Karnataka after vehicle falls off bridge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JUNE 26

SEVEN PEOPLE died in Karnataka's Belagavi district when the vehicle they were travelling in toppled and fell from a bridge while trying to overtake another vehicle. All seven were labourers heading from Akkatangiyyara Halla village to Belagavi town for work.

Police sources said the incident took place around 9.20 am on Sunday, and that a preliminary investigation showed the driver of the vehicle — an MUV — lost control when trying to overtake another vehicle and rammed into a bridge, which caused the MUV to topple and fall off the bridge. Seven people died on the spot, and four others were hospitalised.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai was visiting Belagavi at the time.

The CM said: "It is most tragic that seven people have lost their lives... Arrangements have been made for free treatment of the injured. It has been decided to distribute Rs 5 lakh as a solatium for each of the families of those who were killed and another Rs 2 lakh each from the Deputy Commissioner of the district..."

Make Sanskrit compulsory from Class 1, RSS tells Gujarat govt

RITU SHARMA
AHMEDABAD, JUNE 26

THE RASHTRIYA Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Gujarat has made a strong pitch for teaching Sanskrit compulsorily from Class 1, at a meeting with the state government, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

According to sources, senior representatives of the Sangh and its affiliates met with Education Minister Jitu Vaghani, senior officials of the department and the organisational general secretary of Gujarat BJP Ratnakar in April to discuss the implementation of the new National Education Policy (NEP).

Sanskrit teaching was the main thrust of nearly 20 representatives of the RSS affiliate organisations, including Vidya Bharati, Shaishik Mahasangh, Samskrita Bharati, Bhartiya Shikshan Mandal, in the meeting with Vaghani who was accompanied by nearly 25 senior government representatives. The Sangh also pitched for giving Bhagavad Gita, Ramayan and Mahabharat a place in the school curriculum, making Vedic maths compulsory, offering value education based on Upanishad and Vedas, and regulating private universities.

In its presentation during the meeting, the RSS is learnt to have

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

■ At all levels, Sanskrit to be taught in Sanskrit medium only.

■ Steps to increase the number of open school students (at present 14 lakh are regular students and only 63,000 enrolled with open school)

■ Class 10 students be given two options to attempt science subject on the lines of mathematics.

■ Many schools have made separate classrooms for students who have taken admission under the RTE Act (Section 2 (1)c), which is encouraging social inequality. This should be controlled.



asked the state government to allocate at least six periods in a week for Sanskrit. The presentation on NEP implementation, a copy of which is with *The Indian Express*, speaks of giving "special preference" to Sanskrit in the NEP's three language formula and that schools should "teach best English but not at the cost of Indian languages" in primary classes.

Interestingly, the three-language formula in the NEP 2020 doesn't prescribe any specific language to be compulsorily taught in school. "The three languages learned by children will be the choices of states, regions, and of course the students them-

selves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India," the policy says.

Asked why the RSS is pushing Sanskrit under the three-language formula even though the NEP doesn't prescribe, Himanjay Paliwal of the RSS affiliate Samskrita Bharati told *The Indian Express*, "...the NEP speaks gol gol (unclear) about Sanskrit. It is not clear whether the NEP is in favour of the language or against it. Is par koi spashtata nahi hai (there is no clarity on this)," Paliwal is Samskrita Bharati's Gujarat sangathan mantri.

He added, "English is being taught compulsorily in schools

even though the NEP says no language will be forced on students. For teaching Sanskrit from Class 1, paramarsh (consultation) is being done at all levels with the state government... the NEP has laid down the formula. Now, how the formula will be explained and interpreted is up to the government."

However, the RSS' suggestion on the study of Sanskrit is not limited to school education. The Sangh has suggested that in secondary and higher secondary education, Gujarati should be taught as the first language, Sanskrit as second and the government can decide which should be offered as a third language option. Moreover, students who do not study Sanskrit in Classes 11 and 12 should be barred from taking admission in BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery) programmes, it has told the state government.

According to sources, a follow-up meeting between the RSS and the state government on the implementation of the NEP is expected in July.

On the implementation of the RSS' suggestions, Vaghani said, "We have been receiving several suggestions. The government will work on the feasibility and these will be implemented accordingly."

After govt complaint, YouTube removes new Moosewala song

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
CHANDIGARH, JUNE 26

YOUTUBE HAS removed a new song by deceased Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, from its platform in India following a complaint from the Union government. The song, SYL, is available in other countries.

It raises multiple issues, including — as its name suggests — the under-construction Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal that has been a bone of contention between Punjab and Haryana for the past four decades.

It also brings up undivided Punjab, the 1984 riots, militancy, Sikh prisoners and the flag hoisting at the Red Fort during the farmer agitation.

SYL was released on the evening of June 23 and it got 2.7 crore views in less than three days. It also received 33 lakh likes on the video sharing and social media platform.

It is the first Moosewala song to be released after the murder of the singer on May 29 this year.

"The content is not available on this country domain due to legal complaint from the gov-



Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala was murdered on May 29.

ernment," reads the song's YouTube link in India.

A YouTube spokesperson said: "We have clear policies for removal requests from governments around the world. We review government removal requests when notified through the correct legal processes, and also review content for violations of our Community Guidelines. And, where appropriate, we restrict or remove content in keeping with local laws and our Terms of Service after a thorough review. All of these requests are tracked and included in our Transparency Report."

WITH INPUT FROM ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

Sarabjit's sister Dalbir Kaur dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AMRITSAR, JUNE 26

DALBIR KAUR, sister of Sarabjit Singh — the Indian prisoner who was fatally attacked by inmates in Pakistan jail in 2013 — died late on Saturday.

Dalbir Kaur, who was suffering from asthma, died in a private hospital where she was admitted due to shortness of breath. She was cremated at Bhikhiwad on Sunday.

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda, who had played the role of Sarabjit in the movie 'Sarabjit' in which actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan had essayed the role of Dalbir Kaur, was seen at her cremation paying his last respects to Dalbir Kaur.

Randeep said that Dalbir Kaur was like his sister. He will always stand by her family.

Sarabjit was imprisoned in Pakistan jail on charges of espionage. In 1990, he had allegedly crossed the international border and reached Pakistan.

He was caught by Pakistan officials, who accused him of carrying out bomb blasts in their country. Terming Sarabjit an Indian spy, the Pakistan government claimed in court that he

Kaur was suffering from asthma

had come to Pakistan in the guise of one Manjit Singh. He was convicted for his alleged role in a bomb blast and was sentenced to death in 1991.

Dalbir Kaur claimed that his brother was a victim of a mistaken identity and started a legal battle to bring his brother back to India.

Soon her efforts caught the attention of national and international media. Many in India and Pakistan came in support of her campaign.

Sarabjit was lodged in Pakistan's Kot Lakhpat Jail where the inmates brutally beat him up on April 26, 2013. He succumbed to his injuries on the night of May 2, 2013.

Dalbir Kaur lived in Bhikhiwad with her sister-in-law Sukhpreet Kaur, nieces Swapandeep and Poonam. The then SAD-BJP coalition government of Punjab had made Sarabjit's eldest daughter Swapandeep Kaur as the Naib-Tehsildar.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

12 women from abroad move MP HC against Gundecha brothers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JABALPUR, BHOPAL, JUNE 26

TWELVE WOMEN from abroad have filed an intervening application in the Madhya Pradesh High Court seeking action against the Gundecha brothers of Bhopal-bused Dhrupad Sansthan over allegations of sexual harassment against them.

Those who have filed the intervening application (IA) in High Court's principal bench in Jabalpur were once students of the Dhrupad Sansthan, who are now in the United States, Sweden, Canada, Poland, Spain, Austria and Germany. These victims, too, have alleged that they were sexually harassed by the famous Gundecha siblings — late Ramakant Gundecha, Umakant Gundecha and Akhilesh Gundecha, who plays pakhawaj, the women's counsel Dhruv Varma told PTI.

The IA has been filed in support of an inquiry report of an Internal Complaints Committee

(ICC), which investigated the sexual harassment allegations against the Gundechas of the Dhrupad Sansthan, a UNESCO-accredited institution, levelled by a woman (from abroad) in 2020, he said.

After the report found them at fault, the Gundechas moved the Madhya Pradesh high court against the findings by filing a writ petition making ICC a respondent.

The hearing of the writ petition is scheduled to be held on Tuesday (June 28), Varma said. When PTI contacted Umakant Gundecha, 63, to get his reaction on the IA, he said, "No comments please. The matter is being heard by honourable court. We have full faith in the judiciary." The high court has restrained all the parties in the case from going to the media (for publicity), he said.

He said their brother Ramakant died on November 18, 2019. Umakant Gundecha admitted that the allegations of sexual harassment have been levelled against him as well.



People queue up to vote in Darjeeling on Sunday. Partha Paul

GTA polls pass off peacefully in Bengal, 57% turnout recorded

SWEETY KUMARI
DARJEELING, JUNE 26

THE ELECTIONS to the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) in north Bengal's Darjeeling Hills were held peacefully with 57% voter turnout till 5pm on Sunday, officials said.

"The polls were overall peaceful, except for a few minor incidents," Darjeeling District Magistrate S Ponnambalam said.

The final voting figures may slightly vary as reports were yet to be received from some polling stations, officials said.

Polling for the GTA, the semi-autonomous council that governs the Darjeeling Hills, began on a slow note in the morning on Sunday, said election officials.

The voting, held after 10 years, began at 7am with 9.98% voters casting their franchise till 9 am, it is learnt. Till 11 am, a 24.4% turnout was reported, of-

ficials said.

"The voter turnout was lower than the previous elections. In fact, during the initial hours we could hardly spot queues at the polling stations," said an official.

Voting was held at 922 polling stations for 45 seats spread across three sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Kalimpong. Out of 45, five polling stations were marked as 'critical' while 101 were identified as vulnerable.

Of the 277 candidates in the fray from 45 seats, 169 are Independents while 108 are from various political parties.

Kalpana Thapa, a young voter, said, "Proper supply of water and unemployment are the main issues here. We are voting for more job opportunities."

"We are peace lovers. We vote with a smile on our face and wish whoever forms the GTA board resolves basic issues of the people," said Manju Gurung who cast her vote at the 178

Municipal Girls High School in Darjeeling

The BJP and its allies Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and the Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists (CPRM) have boycotted the GTA polls. Bimal Gurung's Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), which was in power in the GTA for several years, is also not taking part in the polls.

The battle is mainly between Ajoy Edwards' newly-formed Hamro Party and Anit Thapa-led Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM). The new entrant Hamro Party, which won 18 out of 32 seats in the recent civic body polls, is contesting from all 45 seats, the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) is fighting from 36, the CPIM from 12, the state's ruling party Trinamool Congress (TMC) on 10, the Congress on 5.

The BGPM has extended support to Independents on other seats.



Posted his resignation letter on social media

WILL be before March 6, 2024". In his columns and tweets in the past, the IPS officer of 2000 batch had many times shown his dislike for the BJP's "communal politics".

In July 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had initiated an inquiry against Rath and suspended him for "repeated instances of gross misconduct and misbehaviour that have been brought to the notice of the government".

It also asked Rath not to "leave the headquarters without permission of DGP".

DGP Dilbagh Singh and Commandant General Home Guards and Civil Defence and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) Hemant Kumar Lohia. Rath is currently posted in Home Guards and Civil Defence.

Although Rath made public his decision, Lohia told *The Indian Express* that he is yet to receive the resignation letter. "I too have seen it (Rath's resignation letter) on social media but I have not officially received any letter," he said.

While Rath said he wanted to join electoral politics, in the past he had shown aversion for political leaders. In a tweet posted some hours before he posted his resignation letter, he said: "If I ever join a political party, it WILL be BJP. If I ever contest an election, it WILL be from Kashmir. If I ever join politics, it

J&K IPS officer quits, says he wants to join politics

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JUNE 26

SENIOR IPS officer Basant Kumar Rath on Sunday announced his resignation on social media, saying he wished to join electoral politics in Jammu and Kashmir.

A controversial police officer, who has several admirers in Kashmir Valley, posted his resignation letter on social media. "I wish to resign from the Indian Police Service in order to be able to participate in electoral politics. Please consider this letter as my request for resignation/voluntary retirement and process it accordingly," Rath said in a letter written to J&K Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta.

Rath forwarded copy of the June 25 resignation letter to J&K



THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

Nihal Koshie: You played back-to-back events in Poland and Norway and are scheduled to play in Lyon and Dortmund. So is Vishy Anand, at 52, planning to make a full-fledged comeback?

Well, I will play as often as I can, but select tournaments. I will not play tournaments that require huge commitment — like the World Championship cycle. But events that I can somehow fit into my schedule and I find interesting. It will be less chess than I used to play, but nonetheless, I still enjoy it very much.

Nihal Koshie: Can you talk about beating Magnus Carlsen, and also the ninth round against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, where you made an error and videos showed a lot of emotion from you?

So, against Carlsen, I had a winning position in the Classical, which would have been worth much more. I would've got the full three points, it would've been a three-point lead in the tournament, and that was a huge missed opportunity. (Against) Mamedyarov, I simply missed a certain thread, and after I made it, I saw it. And I was so disgusted with myself that I just decided to resign. And the worst thing is when he came and sat down, at first, he seemed very confused. By then, I felt really stupid, because I understood I had resigned prematurely, and I could have at least had the sense to go to the other room and wait for him to see. Maybe, he would have played instantly and I would have gotten away with it. I was so shaken by it that I resigned and this was quite emotional.

Nihal Koshie: You are calm and collected in public, but does Vishy Anand vent? And do you ever identify say with tennis players who throw their racquets?

I feel like doing those things, it's just that I restrain myself. And I was quite angry and I knew I would have a bad night's sleep (after resigning against Mamedyarov). I knew the next day I would be irritable. But you know you still have a game, and if you lose that as well, you will feel even worse. So, there are times when I mentally break a racquet but I haven't physically done it yet.

Nihal Koshie: Have you thrown things, ever?

In my room, sure. But nothing that really breaks. I mean nothing exciting. I can throw a pen on the bed or fling a key across the room. And nowadays, they don't even give you those keys. They give these key cards. What can you do with a key card? It's like the joke goes: in the old days, you could slam a phone on the receiver, but now what can you do with a mobile phone? Just punch the keypad!

Mihir Vasavda: Chess players sit quietly most of the time, but we saw Carlsen's reaction when Nepo (Ian Nepomniachtchi) blundered in the 2021 World Championship match and the famous Garry Kasparov blunder against you in 1996. Do you have a favourite meltdown of a chess player during a match?

There are times in games when I make a blunder and open my eyes. I shake my head and am furious with myself. That's as much as you permit yourself. I have seen some spectacular expressions from Kasparov, for instance. Famously, the Rapid game that I played against him in 1996, the fact that we still have it on video is very nice. Carlsen will sometimes fall and look up, there are people who look disgusted with themselves, they shake their head, you can see they are cursing themselves. They fidget, they do all these things, but it has never gotten violent so far.

Sandip G: What are the challenges of playing chess at 52?

As is the case with many things in life, some things happen gradually. It's not like some things change from the age of 49 to the age of 50. It had been happening over time. So you get used to it, but over the years I noticed that certain kind of mistakes recur more often. Your calculation is not so exact. But you notice that over time you cut yourself more slack; you overcompensate in other areas that you can. If you keep working on chess, you are able to learn new things and that compensates for a lot of other things. So, if you are able to work on new areas, your brain remains fresh and it still works.

Sandip G: Is it becoming more emotional with experience?

I don't think I have become more emotional as I have aged. The only thing I can say is that I continue to keep it inside. I have always been irritated, even when I was 22-23, and ridiculous when I blundered. Nowadays I just shake my head, do those small gestures that are permitted. You are cursing yourself inside and know that night's sleep is going to go. You know a certain amount of pain you are going to go through. But the thing is, once you play another game, the previous one goes away very fast. So you are also experienced. And it's true that if something has happened many, many times in your life, you

The best way to cure a bad game is to play a good one. And once you play a good one, it allows you to settle down emotionally and get on with it. Like maths... if you develop a fear, then it becomes much more deep-rooted and never goes away

Illustration: Shyam Kumar Prasad

stop overreacting.

Sandip G: You will mentor the Indian team at the Chess Olympiad and you are also a mentor at the Westbridge Anand Chess Academy, with Pragnanandhaa, Gukesh and Vaishali, all of whom started playing in the post-computer era with powerful engines. How fast are these kids and what are the major changes?

I would say it's fairly similar to how I work and how they work. The only thing is that the younger generation soaks it up much more easily because there's nothing that they had to relearn or unlearn. And also, when a new idea contradicts a lot of chess knowledge and theory, it takes a while for me to accept it. I think it's easier for them to accept these things because they are not so steeped in old knowledge.

Sandeep Dwivedi: Normal people have fear of writing a math paper and the paper is blank and we don't know any of these questions... What are your nightmares like?

I do get nightmares. You learn to avoid painful memories. You put them away. After a while, you find your brain is trying to forget them. The most painful ones, when I look at them again, it hurts just as much, even after many years. But you get on with it. Somehow the best way to cure a bad game is to play a good one. And once you play a good one, then it allows you to emotionally settle down and get on with it. Like you mentioned maths as a subject, if you develop a fear, you feel something like 'I'm not good at this', then it becomes much more deep-

VISWANATHAN ANAND

INDIA'S FIRST GRANDMASTER & FIVE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION

‘We are no longer chess players from mythology; someone bespectacled who is slightly old. Now chess is seen as a fairly young sport’

Chess legend Viswanathan Anand on keeping it together as a chess player despite wanting to throw keys and pens around after a bad day's play, chess shrugging out of its Cold War garb and how he quietly hit back at Anatoly Karpov's casual snide of the Indian being too nice to win – by winning. A lot. The session was moderated by Senior Editor NIHAL KOSHIE



Every journalist who was sent to cover chess during the Cold War, even if he couldn't follow chess, could write a few lines about the KGB... everyone loved it. Once that was removed, it kind of left a certain vacuum but new storylines have emerged

and I had so many good results after that. I played my own career. Karpov hardly played for anything after that.

Sriram Veera: Is the pendulum still loaded so much against the challenger rather than the champion?

A champion can still nudge his way into a few choices first. But the challenger will be offered a pretty fair deal. There is no more a privilege of making a draw. If you make a draw, you play tiebreaks. Many of these changes happened because of previous results. So, I can say that the era when Karpov could do what he did, has disappeared. In fact, if I have to explain to someone what privileges Karpov got, I'll have to explain that those privileges existed first of all to these youngsters. And then 'can you believe that Karpov could get all these privileges' and they'll still give me a baffled look. It's like telling people that once upon a time you would book your telephone, wait six months and then they would give it to you. Can you believe it? That era passed. But a lot of things of that era have passed — the Soviet domination passed, the Soviet Union disappeared. So many things that I thought were permanent features in my childhood, just disappeared.

Shamik Chakrabarty: Your emergence coincided with the tail-end of the Cold War. Has the lack of political punch taken the sheen out of high-profile chess rivalries?

Yes, (Bobby) Fischer-(Boris) Spassky was the pinnacle of chess' Cold War rivalry. And there was some echo of that even in a match between a Soviet defector and a Soviet champion or someone like Kasparov who doesn't fit in and a Karpov who fits in

completely... you were still able to take sides. Every journalist who was sent to cover chess, even if he couldn't follow chess, he could write a few lines about the KGB, mention that some spies are standing here, some standing there and mention bugs and microphones and a few conspiracy theories and he could finish his article and send it to the paper and everyone loved it. Once that was removed, it kind of left a certain vacuum but new storylines have emerged. We are no longer chess players from mythology; which is someone bespectacled

sitting in front of a computer who is slightly old. Now chess is seen as a fairly young sport with all sorts of talented youngsters. Each one is an interesting charismatic character. Just to mention, the last two world champions have been Indian and Norwegian, neither possible even 30 years back. The sport has moved on and we don't need the Cold War thing anymore but it took a while because some new storyline had to emerge.

Shivani Naik: Does the writing of the sport need a fresh vocabulary?

The vocabulary we have is good enough but new forms of describing the game have already emerged. The streaming revolution has thrown in a new way of looking at chess. Streamers sound very different to what I am used to hearing about chess. And clearly every new fan base we are able to connect with will bring its own way of describing the game. I would say evolution is already happening. Now we are often compared to gamers, we are often seen on Twitch and YouTube. All these areas didn't even exist five years ago for us. The formats, time controls and all those things are changing very fast. One big difference now is that journalists have the best information about the game because as long as they are sitting with the computer they know, at least, what the best moves were and the mistakes the players made. So inevitably it will change the way they describe the game as well.

Shivani Naik: Have you ever played sentimentally, like thinking, today I don't feel like sacrificing a pawn or being attached to particular pieces?

There are moves that make me uncomfortable and there are moves that are comfortable. The uncomfortable ones I have to force myself to make. Unfortunately, if the computer says something is good, it is probably right and it is your job to understand why. One of the things of modern chess is that you are forced to understand what the computer is saying. Still, your personal preferences play a huge role.

Mihir Vasavda: Magnus Carlsen has already said that he may opt-out of defending his world championship title. If that happens, what kind of impact will it have on the Classical format?

We have not had a situation like this since Bobby Fischer. Fischer quit the game and ran away. Carlsen, as I understand it, still wants to play other events but he won't play this one. My tendency is to believe him and that he is serious. But also when the moment comes to actually doing it, he will hesitate because it is a big step. It will hurt the game for a while because after all you are losing a champion and it is a very strange transition. But eventually, people will move on and the game will go on.

For a longer transcript, go to indianexpress.com

rooted and it never goes away.

Nihal Koshie: You are in the running for the post of deputy president of FIDE. Do you believe a sportsperson can be a good administrator?

Yes, I do. The assumption that sports people can't be good at running the sport and or the only people who can run a sport are sportspeople — those two assumptions are flawed. It's good to have sportspeople and their opinions, but by no means should they be the only people who should be heard. You should listen to other people, even if it seems to violate your dogma or things you deeply believe in because it's outsiders' perspective. If you are talking to a fan or an outsider with a remote perspective on the game, then you have to understand what is it that attracts them to the game. So, it's good to get perspective.

Nihal Koshie: The current president, Arkady (Dvorkovich), is the former deputy Prime Minister of Russia and has close links with the Kremlin. Also,

Ukraine is a strong chess-playing nation and I'm sure you have friends over there. Did you get any negative feedback when you decided to contest as part of the Dvorkovich panel?

We know Arkady's background but he has shown through his actions since February that he is able to act as a FIDE president and represent players all over the world. He's able to separate it from his feelings inside. He's Russian, so he has feelings but he has mentioned multiple times that he felt for the Ukrainians and what they were going through. He has come out against the war. I feel that he has shown he is sufficiently independent of Russia. But he lives there with his family, which means he'll keep going back and forth. I have had no negative experiences with Ukrainian players. I have met quite a few of them and they've acted normally. They understand that this wasn't something any one of us was responsible for and they are trying to cope the best they can.

Sriram Veera: In 1998, the Anatoly

WHY VISWANATHAN ANAND



IDEA EXCHANGE

at the upcoming Chess Olympiad, an extension of what he does at his academy

The Indian chess great is playing at choice tournaments at 52 and still enjoying it. Anand is also contesting for the post of FIDE deputy president and will also mentor the Indian team



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EVERYDAY ECONOMY

WHO ARE THE G7, WHOSE SUMMIT IN GERMANY INDIA HAS BEEN INVITED TO?

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is in Germany to attend the Group of Seven (G7) Summit at Schloss Elmau, a century-old retreat in a nature reserve in the Bavarian Alps. He is expected to speak in two sessions that include Environment, Energy, Climate, Food Security, Health, Gender Equality, and Democracy, the Ministry of External Affairs said earlier this week. He will also hold bilateral meetings with leaders of some of the participating countries.

Group of 7

The G7 is an informal forum of leading industrialised nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Representatives of the European Union are always present at the annual meeting of G7 heads of state and government. Germany holds the G7 presidency in 2022. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has invited India, along with Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa to the 2022 Summit as partner countries. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, will take part virtually on June 27. The United Nations, the WHO, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the IMF and the World Bank, are also participating in the Summit.

G6, G8, G7

The G7 Germany website says the first "World Economic Summit", which later became the G7, was launched in 1975 by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and then Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. The heads of state and government of Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and the US — a Group of Six — met for a fireside chat at Rambouillet Castle in France.

The participants exchanged ideas on the economic problems of the 1970s — the first oil crisis and the collapse of the system of fixed exchange rates (Bretton Woods) — and agreed on international economic policy and



PM Narendra Modi addresses an event in Munich on Sunday. PTI

initial measures to fight the global downturn.

In 1976, Canada was added to the group, and the first G7 met in Puerto Rico. The first talks between the then European Community and the G7 took place in London in 1977, and since the Ottawa Summit of 1981, the European Community (now European Union) has been part of all working sessions.

In the 1980s, the interest of the G7 expanded to include foreign and security policy issues. In 1998, the Group of Eight was constituted as Russia became a member. Russia was thrown out of the group after its violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014.

G7 numbers

As of 2022, G7 countries make up 10% of the world's population, 31% of global GDP, and 21% of global carbon dioxide emissions, according to the Summit website. China and India, the two most populous countries with among the largest GDP figures in the world, are not part of the grouping.

In all G7 countries, annual public sector expenditure exceeded revenue in 2021. Most G7 countries also had a high level of gross debt, especially Japan (263% of GDP), Italy (151%) and the US (133%).

Why women itch less than men: study finds key in a hormone

COMPARED TO men, women have a significantly lower incidence of severe psoriasis — a skin condition that causes rashes and leads to itchiness. The underlying reason for the sex differences that made men more prone to this condition, however, had remained unclear so far.

Now a team of researchers has found that the female hormone estradiol suppresses psoriasis. The protective role of the hormone has provided a basis for its therapeutic potential, according to a media release from Kyoto University. The study has been published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.

"Our results have not only revealed the molecular mechanisms of sex differences in psoriasis but also shed new light on our understanding of the physiological role of estradiol," the release quoted Hamamatsu University School of

Medicine's Tetsuya Honda, formerly of Kyoto University, as saying.

The team tested conditional knockout mice (cko mice), which means mice with specific genes removed or inactivated. Here, the mice had their ovaries removed,

which were supplemented with estradiol pellets. In contrast to wild-type mice, the cko mice without the natural ovarian hormones estradiol showed symptoms of severe skin inflammation.

Once these mice were given estradiol, the production of cytokines in immune cells was reversed, reducing the inflammation. This effect was also observed in human cells *in vitro*.

"These results indicate that estradiol suppresses psoriatic inflammation by regulating neutrophil and macrophage cells," the author was quoted as saying.

Source: Kyoto University



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Why sanctions are flagging

Western sanctions were predicted to inflict pain on Putin's govt. The EU's dependence on Russian energy has prevented that from happening so far, and Russia's export outlook continues to look good in the near term.

HARISH DAMODARAN

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

SINCE FEBRUARY 23, the day before Russia invaded Ukraine, the European Union's Council has adopted six rounds of sanctions to "impose clear economic and political costs" on the Vladimir Putin government, and to "cripple the Kremlin's ability to finance the war".

Western governments, including the United States and United Kingdom, have cut off major Russian banks from SWIFT, the interbank messaging system to enable cross-border payments. They have frozen some \$315 billion out of the \$550 billion of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation's (CBR) foreign exchange reserves held in currencies and gold within their jurisdictions, as on January 1.

On April 6, the White House issued a statement that the "most impactful, coordinated and wide-ranging economic restrictions in history" would cause Russia's GDP to "contract up to 15 per cent this year, wiping out the last 15 years of economic gains".

Has this intent been borne out by reality?

More than four months into the war, the story hasn't quite followed the West's predicted script. To begin with, the latest median forecast of GDP decline for 2022 — based on a survey of 27 economists from various organisations (including the likes of Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs and J.P. Morgan) conducted by the CBR between May 25 and 31 — is at 7.5%. This is better than the -9.2% average growth forecast in a previous survey from April 13-19.

The median forecast of consumer price inflation for the year too, has fallen from 22% to 17% between the two surveys.

The sanctions initially led to a free fall of the Russian ruble, from about 76 to the US dollar in mid-February to a low of 158.3 on March 7. The CBR was forced to raise its key interest rate from 9.5% to 20% on February 28, which was aimed as much at bolstering the currency — which US President Joe Biden had mocked as "rubble" — as at reining in inflation risks.

But as the ruble bounced back to 75-76 levels towards the second week of April — and is currently trading at over seven-year-high levels of 53.4. And the central bank slashed its key rate to 17% on April 8, to 14% on April 29, 11% on May 26, and to 9.5% on June 10.

With the ruble appreciating, inflation trending downwards (rather than upwards as

RUSSIA'S GOODS EXPORTS: OIL & GAS VERSUS OTHERS

	TOTAL EXPORTS	CRUDE OIL	OIL PRODUCTS	NATURAL GAS*	OTHERS	OTHERS (% SHARE)
2001	96.55	24.99	9.37	17.77	44.42	46.00
2011	515.41	181.81	95.71	68.14	169.74	32.93
2012	527.43	180.93	103.62	66.93	175.95	33.36
2013	521.84	173.67	109.41	71.48	167.27	32.05
2014	496.81	153.90	115.81	59.93	167.17	33.65
2015	341.42	89.59	67.45	46.32	138.05	40.43
2016	281.71	73.71	46.19	34.09	127.72	45.34
2017	352.94	93.38	58.25	41.83	159.48	45.19
2018	443.92	129.20	78.24	55.04	181.44	40.87
2019	419.72	122.20	66.97	49.38	181.17	43.16
2020	333.38	72.56	45.37	32.43	183.01	54.90
2021	493.82	110.97	69.98	62.85	250.02	50.63

*Includes liquefied natural gas.

Source: Central Bank of Russia

predicted by the White House) and GDP unlikely to shrink quite as much as predicted, the sanctions have not had their intended effect.

Nor has Russia's external trade really suffered. The country's surplus of goods and services exports over imports has widened, from \$44.5 billion in January-May 2021 to \$124.3 billion in January-May 2022. So has its overall current account surplus — from \$32.1 billion to \$110.3 billion — for the comparable periods.

Why do the sanctions appear not to have had the desired effect?

The main reason is the dependence, especially of EU countries, on energy imports from Russia. In 2021, Russia accounted for 25.7% of the petroleum oil, 44.5% of natural gas, and 52.3% of coal imported by the 27-nation bloc.

During the first 100 days of the war, from February 24 to June 3, Russia's revenues from fossil fuel exports totalled 93 billion euros (\$98 billion), according to the Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

That included 46 billion euros from crude oil, 13 billion euros from refined oil products, 24 billion euros from pipeline gas, 5.1 billion euros from liquefied natural gas, and 4.8 billion euros from coal. Out of the 93 billion euros, the EU's share alone was 57 billion euros or 61%.

In its sixth "package" of sanctions on June 3, the EU decided to phase out imports of

crude oil and refined products from Russia over six and eight months respectively. Temporary exemption was granted to countries such as Hungary and Slovakia, which import crude oil by pipeline and "have no viable alternative options".

This was preceded by an outright prohibition on Russian coal imports from August, as part of a fifth round of sanctions on April 8.

It remains to be seen how successful these import phase-out plans will be, in terms of implementation on the ground. The test will be in the winter, when energy demand peaks.

Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, recently warned that Europe is at risk of energy rationing, particularly "if we have a harsh and long winter", and if the cold weather coincides with resurgent demand in China post the lifting of Covid lockdowns there.

The EU for now has not announced any ban on natural gas imports from Russia. This, even as the Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom has cut gas supplies to nearly a dozen EU countries, including Germany, France and Italy, over the past few weeks.

Have China and India had a role to play in this situation?

It is significant that China and India have emerged as major buyers of Russian fossil fu-

els, CREA's latest tracker shows Russia's cumulative exports of oil, gas, and coal to the EU since February 24 at around 64.4 billion euros.

But among individual countries, China (16.6 billion euros) has surpassed Germany as the largest importer from Russia. At No. 8 is India. Its imports during this period are valued at 3.7 billion euros, comprising 3.2 billion euros of oil, and the balance coal.

While the EU is trying hard to wean itself off Russian energy, Moscow has aggressively diversified its exports towards China and India. China was the world's top importer of crude oil in 2021, with India ranked third behind the US.

In May, Russia overtook Saudi Arabia to be China's leading crude supplier. In 2021-22, Russia was the ninth biggest crude exporter to India. However, by May, it had jumped seven positions to displace Saudi Arabia and become No. 2 after only Iraq.

By continuing to sell to the EU, and at the same time ramping up exports to China and India by offering steep discounts on international prices, Russia has effectively blunted Western sanctions.

Does this mean sanctions targeting Russia have ended up hurting the West?

The table shows the share of oil and gas in Russia's merchandise exports at close to 50% in 2021. It was roughly 66% during the 2011-14 period, when crude prices averaged over \$100 per barrel. High prices are again benefiting Russia, although its average oil production has fallen to 10-10.1 million barrels per day (mbd) in April-May, from 11-11.1 mbd in February-March.

As Russia has increased efforts to find alternative markets and the world is figuring out ways to trade with it, the country's exports may not drastically drop from the \$494 billion of 2021.

Moreover, it isn't just fossil fuels. In the coming months, one can expect Russia to step up exports of wheat and fertilisers. Being also the world's biggest supplier of palladium and nickel — which are central inputs in emission control systems and electric vehicle batteries respectively — besides ferro-alloys, chromium and vanadium (required for steel production), makes it easier for Russia to cope with sanctions than it is for Cuba, Iran, or North Korea.

Europe and the West might be discovering that sanctions are perhaps hurting them more than they are hurting Russia.

The coat hanger as a symbol for abortion rights



A protester makes a statement with a coat hanger earring in Roanoke, Virginia on Friday. The Roanoke Times via AP

risk to women's health and bodies.

Use as a protest tool

It was notably used in April 1969, a few years before the *Roe v Wade* verdict in 1973, in which 3 lakh protesters in Washington marched with coat hangers around their necks. They also held up signs that read: "Never Again".

In 2016, protesters in Ohio decorated the

Statehouse fencing with coat hangers to oppose the Heartbeat Bill, which would outlaw abortion once a foetal heartbeat could be heard — at six weeks, before most people even discover they are pregnant — even though, at that point, *Roe v Wade* allowed abortion until viability (roughly 24 weeks).

In May this year, a college student bought a pack of six wire hangers on Amazon and shipped them to the Supreme Court. In a viral Tik Tok post, she encouraged others to do the same.

IMAGERY: Very often, pro-choice protest imagery shows Lady Liberty with the coat hanger in her hand instead of the scales — something that the late Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Paul Conrad, a devout Catholic, drew back in 1988 while critiquing anti-abortionists with a cartoon captioned 'Alternative to Roe vs. Wade'. Conrad had previously criticised then US President George H W Bush by depicting him holding a gun in one hand and a coat hanger in the other, meant to show his pro-gun and anti-abortion stance.

Some pro-choice activists and doctors advocate using less sensational imagery. They believe the coat hanger makes abortions

seem unsafe and violent, which bolsters anti-abortion arguments and dissuades women from seeking abortions.

JEWELLERY: The DC Abortion Fund, a US-based non-profit group that helps low-income women afford abortion care, used to give out silver coat hanger pendants to its monthly donors. "The coat hanger is a reminder of patient's suffering when abortion is placed out of reach," according to its website. The coat hanger has been turned into pro-choice jewellery or accessories, such as pendants or badges, often. Some even get it tattooed as a reminder of protests for legal abortion rights.

ART: Abortion has also been an important theme in feminist and political art. For some, the coat hanger comes as a loaded metaphor.

'The Right to Choose' (2021), a print by Laia Abril and Carmen Winant, shows the coat hanger on one side and newspaper obituaries of feminists on the other. It was created in response to a Texas law banning most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

In 2019, a Los Angeles-based guerrilla street artist, who goes by the name Plastic Jesus, placed a set of wire coat hangers in pharmacies calling them "at-home abortion kits".

Nepal's abandoned partnership with US troops, and how its Army weighed in

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, JUNE 26

NEPAL RECENTLY had to abandon at the last minute a plan to sign a State Partnership Programme (SPP) with the United States. Amid political outrage against the programme, the Nepal Army stepped in on June 15, asserting it will not accept a deal that goes against Nepal's non-aligned foreign policy. The Sher Bahadur Deuba government relented, deciding three days later that the Foreign Ministry would communicate with the US government.

The SPP would have brought the Utah State National Guard and the Nepal Army working together on "humanitarian and disaster management". It was to be signed during Deuba's proposed visit to the US in July. It is now shelved for the foreseeable future.

The widely expressed fear was that giving legitimate entry to US forces would have dangerous security implications for Nepal.

The criticism has been on three concerns: that it would mean Nepal aligning militarily with the US; that India, which has close links with the Nepal Army, would not like a US presence of this nature; and that it would provoke China to retaliate in some way or the other.

These concerns are based on series of developments: Nepal and US signing the \$500-million grant of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (Nepal compact) after a US threat to review relations with Nepal in February; Nepal voting against Russia in the United Nations; US Deputy Secretary of State Zeya Ujira visiting a Tibetan refugee camp in Nepal; and Kathmandu recently rolling out the red carpet for Charles A Flynn, commanding general of United States Army Pacific.

Political storm

Last week, the House of Representatives debated the consequences of the SPP once signed. A "draft agreement" purported to have been exchanged had found its way to the media, the opposition and Army gener-

als. Three ministers made different statements: Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka said the SPP was not a "military pact" and the US troops would go back on completion of the term; Law Minister Gobinda Bhandi denied any letters having been exchanged; and Home Minister Balkrishna Khand said the government would not sign such a deal.

At a Cabinet meeting on June 20, ministers asked the Foreign Ministry to write to the US. A day earlier, the State Affairs Committee of Parliament had forced the Foreign Minister to backtrack from his earlier statement.

Deuba has so far been avoiding a response to the full House as well as the Committee. There is pressure on him to call off his US visit.

The Army

Literally disowned by political parties and the government since the 2005-06 political changes, the Army has been largely quiet all these years — until this assertive reaction against the programme.

In April 2006, after the Maoists decided

to give up insurgency against the state, their leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda denounced the Nepal Army at the Prime Minister's residence as "an institution of rapists and the corrupt". Later that year, Prachanda signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with Prime Minister G P Koirala. While the Maoists became part of the government, the Nepal Army was projected as the 'Private Army' of the King.

International agencies involved in the peace process, including United Nations Mission to Nepal (UNMIN), began holding seminars for downsizing the 100,000-strong Army as part of "security sector reforms". Nepal Army Generals were denied leadership roles in the peace process in view of the Army's human rights record. UNMIN was later packed off prematurely for its alleged bias towards Maoists.

The Army, which never confronted political leaders during this period, has chosen to speak up at a time when it is being seen as regaining its esteem amid political instability

and allegations of corruption in government.

The latest move

President Bidhya Bhandari, in her capacity as Supreme Commander of the National Army, conveyed her concern to the PM about the impact of the SPP, a source said.

A letter by then Army Chief Rajendra Chhetri to US Ambassador Aliana B Tepliz on October 27, 2015, leaked to the media recently, said: "As authorised by the government of Nepal, it is my honour to formally request the establishment of a National Guard State Partnership program for Nepal in the near future." While the Army has said Gen Chhetri's letter was in the context of the devastation caused by an earthquake that year, which led to aid from US and other countries, his letter has come to the rescue of Deuba, who can use it as a shield to claim that the Nepal Army was seeking a partnership with the US before his time — when his rival K P Oli, now a critic of the SSP, has just taken charge as Prime Minister.



DEEPEST WRECK DISCOVERED EXPLORERS FIND WWII NAVY DESTROYER

The USS Samuel B Roberts, popularly known as the "Sammy B," was identified on Wednesday broken into two pieces at a depth of 6,985 metres. "We have the chance to retell her story of heroism and duty..." said American explorer Victor Vescovo.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi shakes hands with Iraqi PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi in Tehran, Sunday. Reuters

IRAN

Iraqi PM in Tehran after Saudi visit

IRAQI PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi arrived in Iran on Sunday, Iranian state TV reported, a day after he travelled to Saudi Arabia in a bid to revive talks between the regional rivals to ease years of hostility. An Iranian official said that "the resumption of talks between Tehran and Riyadh will be discussed during Khadimi's trip to Iran". On Saturday, Kadhimi held talks with Saudi de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah and discusses bilateral relations and "boosting security and stability in the region". **REUTERS**

ECUADOR

Emergency lifted amid protests

ECUADOR PRESIDENT Guillermo Lasso on Saturday lifted a state of emergency he had imposed in six provinces amid an Indigenous-led strike, a surprise move that came as lawmakers in the National Assembly heard an opposition petition to remove him from office. The decision followed an initial meeting between officials and Ecuador's largest Indigenous organisation, which began the strike two weeks ago to demand gasoline prices be cut, price controls on agricultural products and a larger budget be set for education. **AP**

MEXICO

8 bodies found, likely to be of missing workers

EIGHT BODIES were found Saturday on Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, and they appear to be those of eight men apparently kidnapped from a resort on the Caribbean coast. At least seven men, and possibly eight, had been reported abducted Friday from the beach town of Xcalak. The bodies were found by a farmer in a field just over the border. Prosecutors said the men do not appear to have been killed where they were found, and were probably dumped there. **AP**

Roe v. Wade overturned, White House seeks to take on states over abortion pill

LAWRENCE HURLEY
WASHINGTON, JUNE 26

PRESIDENT JOE Biden's administration indicated it will seek to prevent states from banning a pill used for medication abortion in light of the Supreme Court ruling overturning the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling, signaling a major new legal fight.

The administration could argue in court that the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of mifepristone, one of the pills used for medication abortions, pre-empts state restrictions, meaning federal authority outweighs any state action.

Over a dozen states plan to almost totally ban abortion with the Roe precedent upended. The conservative majority Supreme Court overturned Roe on Friday, saying there is no right to abortion in the US Constitution.

Mifepristone was approved for abortions by FDA in 2000. The pill, also known as RU 486, blocks the pregnancy-sustaining hormone progesterone. **REUTERS**



Abortion rights protesters demonstrate after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, in Boston. Reuters

No smooth passage

WHILE REPRODUCTIVE rights experts have lauded the Biden administration's stance on the pill, Mifepristone, legal experts say the law on pre-emption is murky. The Congress has never said ex-

EXPLAINED

PLICITLY that FDA approval trumps state law as it has done in the context of medical devices.

Therefore it would be left to courts to decide the question under a theory known as "implied preemption".

Vatican: Activists can't be selective on pro-life issues

ANTI-ABORTION activists should be concerned with other issues that can threaten life, such as easy access to guns, poverty and rising maternity mortality rates, said the Vatican's editorial director said on Saturday.

In a media editorial on the US Supreme Court's ruling to end the right to abortion, Andrea Tomielli said those who oppose abortion could not pick and choose pro-life issues. "Being for life, always, for example, means being concerned if the mortality rates of women due to motherhood increase," he wrote. "Being for life, always, also means defending it against the threat of firearms, which unfortunately have become a leading cause of death of children and adolescents in the US".

The Roman Catholic church teaches that abortion is murder because life begins at the moment of conception. **REUTERS**

BARBARISM, SAYS JOE BIDEN

Russian missiles pound Kyiv as G7 leaders meet

Homes, kindergarten hit in first such attack since early June

TOM BALMFORTH & MARKO DJURICA

KYIV, POKROVSK (UKRAINE), JUNE 26

RUSSIAN MISSILES hit an apartment block and kindergarten in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv on Sunday, in strikes US President Joe Biden condemned as "barbarism" as world leaders gathered in Europe to discuss further sanctions against Moscow.

Up to four explosions shook central Kyiv in the early hours, in the first such attack on the city in weeks. Two more blasts were heard on the southern outskirts of the city later in the day, a Reuters reporter said.

"The Russians hit Kyiv again. Missiles damaged an apartment building and a kindergarten," said Andriy Yermak, head of the president's administration.

Ukraine's police chief, Ihor Klymenko, said on national television that five people had been wounded, and police later said one person was killed.

Russia has stepped up air strikes on Ukraine this weekend, which has also seen the fall of a strategic eastern city to pro-Russian forces.

"It's more of their barbarism," said Biden, referring to the mis-



A damaged residential building in Kyiv. Reuters

sile strikes on Kyiv, as leaders from the Group of Seven (G7) rich democracies gathered for a summit in Germany.

Gold sanctions

During the summit, Biden told allies "we have to stay together" against Russia. At the start of the meeting, four members of the Group of Seven rich nations moved to ban imports of

Russian gold as part of efforts to tighten the sanctions squeeze on Moscow and cut off its means of financing the invasion of Ukraine.

However, it was not immediately clear whether there was consensus on the move, with European Council President Charles Michel saying the issue would need to be handled carefully or risk backfiring. **REUTERS**

G7 plan to counter China influence

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ELMAU (GERMANY), JUNE 26

THE GROUP of Seven leading democratic economies or G7 Sunday formally launched a global infrastructure and investment partnership aimed at pushing back China's influence in the developing world. The G7 programme responds to China's so-called Belt and Road Initiative, which Western officials have long argued traps receiving

countries in debt and with investments that benefit China more than their hosts.

The White House says the initiative seeks to leverage USD 200 billion in US investment over the next five years, along with a similar amount from G7 allies, to boost infrastructure development in lower- and middle-income nations.

It adds that most of the funding will come from the private sector, sovereign wealth and global development funds, rather

that direct taxpayer dollars.

Among the first initiatives are a USD 2 billion solar farm investment in Angola in Southwest Africa, USD 320 million for hospital construction in Ivory Coast, in West Africa, and USD 40 million to promote regional energy trade in Southeast Asia.

In a jab at China, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the G-7 is offering "sustainable, quality infrastructure" and will be "listening closely to the recipient countries."

No, NATO, No

Demonstrators take part in an anti-NATO protest ahead of the NATO summit on June 28 and June 30, in Madrid, Spain, on Sunday. The protesters said an increase in defence spending in Europe urged by NATO is 'a threat to peace'. **Reuters**

Prince Charles got suitcase of cash from Qatar, says report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, JUNE 26

PRINCE CHARLES, the heir to Britain's throne, allegedly accepted a suitcase full of cash as a charitable donation from the former PM of Qatar, according to a UK media report on Sunday.

The Sunday Times says the suitcase was one of three bundles of cash given as charitable donations which the 73-year-old received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani. The three lots, which reportedly totalled Euro 3 million, were handed to the prince personally between 2011 and 2015. "Charitable donations received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim were passed immediately to one of the Prince's charities who carried out the appropriate governance and have assured us that all the correct processes were followed," Prince Charles' office said in a statement.

AHEAD OF NUCLEAR TALKS

Tehran launches rocket into space as US fumes

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, JUNE 26

IRANIAN STATE television said Sunday that Tehran had launched a solid-fueled rocket into space, drawing a rebuke from Washington ahead of the expected resumption of stalled talks over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

It's unclear when or where the rocket, christened Zuljanah, was launched, but the announcement came after satellite photos showed preparations at Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's rural Semnan province, the site of Iran's frequent failed attempts to put a satellite into orbit.

The White House said it was aware of Iran's announcement and criticised the move as "unhelpful and destabilising." It said it was committed to using sanctions and other measures to prevent further advances in Iran's



Footage released by Iran's state TV, IRINN, shows the rocket blasting off. AP

ballistic missile program.

The launch comes just a day after the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, traveled to Tehran to resuscitate negotiations over Iran's nuclear program that have stalled for months. Borrell said on Saturday talks over the nuclear deal would resume in an unnamed Persian Gulf country in coming days, with Iranian media reporting that Qatar would likely host the negotiations.

Lanka struggling to secure fresh fuel supplies, energy minister says

UDITHA JAYASINGHE
COLOMBO, JUNE 26

SRI LANKA is struggling to secure fresh fuel supplies, a top government minister said on Sunday, as the crisis-hit country of 22 million people is down to just 15,000 tons of petrol and diesel to keep essential services running in the coming days.

"We are struggling to find suppliers. They are reluctant to accept letters of credit from our banks. There are over \$700 million in overdue payments so now suppliers want advance payments," Power and Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera told reporters.

In the past two months Sri Lanka largely received fuel via a \$500 million Indian credit line, which ran out in mid-June. A petrol shipment due last Thursday failed to arrive and no fresh shipments are yet scheduled, Wijesekera said. "We have about 9,000 metric tons of diesel



A daily wage labourer waits for work in Colombo, Sunday. AP

and 6,000 metric tons of petrol left. We are doing everything we can to get new stocks but we don't know when that will be."

The government on Sunday asked public employees to work from home until further notice.

US delegation visits

A top delegation from the US Treasury and State Departments arrived in Colombo on Sunday

for a three-day visit to assess the situation. The US delegation will hold talks with the country's top leadership and explore the "most effective ways" to help the island nation resolve its unprecedented economic crisis.

A team from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is already in Sri Lanka for talks on a possible \$3 billion bailout package. **REUTERS**

SOUTH AFRICA

22 youths found dead in tavern, cause not yet known: police

AGENCIES

JOHANNESBURG, JUNE 26

SOUTH AFRICAN police are investigating the deaths of at least 22 people at a nightclub in the coastal town of East London early Sunday morning.

It is unclear what led to the deaths of the young people, who were reportedly attending a party to celebrate the end of winter school exams.

Local newspaper Daily Dispatch reported that bodies were strewn across tables and chairs without any visible signs of injuries.

"At this point we cannot confirm the cause of death," said health department spokesperson Siyanda Manana.

"We are going to conduct autopsies as soon as possible to establish the probable cause of death," Manana said.

"We are talking 22 bodies right now," Manana added.

Police Minister Bheki Cele was on Sunday morning expected to visit the scene.

The owner of the club, Siyakhanga Ndevu, told local broadcaster eNCA that he had been called to the scene early Sunday morning.

"I am still uncertain about what really happened, but when I was called in the morning I was told the place was too full and that some people were trying to force their way into the tavern," he said.

Earlier Brigadier Tembinkosi Kinana said police were alerted by members of the public to the incident at Scenery Park, about three kms from the city centre. "The circumstances under which they died are under investigation," Kinana said.

Brigadier Kinana added it was too early to determine the cause of death of the youngsters aged between 18-20 years.

POPULARISED KATHAK, BHARATANATYAM AND ODISSI IN THE COUNTRY

New fans pay tribute to China's legendary Indian classical dancer

K J M VARMA
BEIJING, JUNE 26

THE INDIA-CHINA frictions took a backseat for a while here as a large number of Chinese flocked to a scintillating show of Indian classical dance performances to pay emotional tribute to Zhang Jun, China's legendary dancer of Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi.

Over 300 Chinese fans of Zhang thronged the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) auditorium on Friday night to watch sterling performances from young Chinese children as well as highly talented profession-

als who devoted their lives practicing and performing Indian classical dance forms in this country. It was a dream come true for Jin Shan Shan, Zhang's ardent student and widely acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer both in India and China who took to her Guru's footsteps and devoted her life in popularising the Indian classical art form.

The audience included India's Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat and former Vice Minister of Finance of China and President of AIIB Jin Liqun who cheered the meticulous dances to classical Tamil and Hindi music.

Zhang Jun (1933-2012) has inspired generations of Chinese



India's ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat with performers at the show to pay tribute to Zhang Jun (right) in Beijing on Friday. PTI

and Indians with her relentless passion to learn Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi and make

them popular in China. Encouraged by the then Chinese premier Zhu Enlai at the



height of India-China bonhomie, she first visited India in the early 1950s during which she was

captivated by the Indian dance and art forms.

Barring Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution (1966-76) during which millions of intellectuals were persecuted, she travelled to India seven more times mastering the dance forms studying under maestros like Birju Maharaj, Uday Shankar and later at the Kalakshetra, a revered institution of Bharatanatyam in then Madras, now Chennai.

She later helped to form China's famous dance troupes, the Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble. "She wanted to bring the beauty of the Indian dance to more people. I hope that she will continue to enjoy, on the other side

of heaven, the joy and beauty that Indian dance has brought to her," Zhang's son Han Xiao Xia said.

Rawat, who during his earlier stints here met Zhang, said she was one of the greatest teachers of Indian classical dances in China. "I always wondered what attracted her towards Indian dance forms as the attraction was very deep, almost like soul touching. To us it appeared that probably in her earlier birth she was born in India and carried that bond to this birth in China. "The energy radiated out of her devotion attracted many students even during a phase when our bilateral relations were undergoing some turbulence," Rawat said. **PTI**

14 ECONOMY

SECTOR WATCH ELECTRIC VEHICLES

‘Loose wheels’ behind EV recall: What next in Toyota’s journey



WHERE THE PROBLEM LIES

2,700 CARS: Recall of new electric vehicle, bZ4X

BETWEEN MAR-JUNE: Period of production

SRIDHAR V
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

LESS THAN three months after it launched the bZ4X SUV globally, Toyota Motor Corporation has issued a recall of nearly 2,700 units of the new electric vehicle (EV) following concerns that its “loose wheels” may fall off. The Japanese auto manufacturer, in a recall notice issued to owners of the bZ4X on Friday through various channels, said the action is for all vehicles “in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific”.

What is the issue?

According to a spokesperson for Toyota, the hub bolts on the wheels of the concerned bZ4X battery EVs run the risk of loosening “to the point where the wheel can detach from the vehicle” after “low-mileage use”. In case one of the wheels detaches from the car while driving, it could result in the vehicle veering off, increasing the risk of a crash.

Even though the cause of the defect is “still under investigation”, Toyota said it had alerted Japanese safety regulators about the issue. “No one should drive these vehicles until the remedy is performed,” the company added. The recalled vehicles include nearly 2,200 in Europe, about 270 in North America, over 110 in Japan and 60-odd in the rest of Asia, Toyota said Thursday. All these vehicles were produced between March and June. Moreover, nearly 400 units of the Solterra all-electric SUV by Subaru, developed in collaboration with Toyota, have been recalled for the same issue.

How will it affect Toyota?

Despite being a long-standing giant in the automotive game, Toyota is a rather late entrant in the EV arena. Announced in early 2021, the bZ4X — the first in Toyota’s ‘bZ’ (beyond Zero) series of battery EVs — is touted to be its flagship EV offering in the crossover SUV segment. Starting at ₹42,000 (over ₹32,86,000) and available in

limited markets, the bZ4X has not really set the roads on fire. Following its launch in Japan earlier this year, Toyota had said the model was only available on lease as concerns remained over maintenance, residual battery performance and residual value.

According to experts, the bZ4X recall comes early in its lifecycle, and as the defect pertains to a mechanical component rather than the vehicle’s electric drivetrain, Toyota is likely to resolve it quickly. However, the fact that the recall affected its first mass-market electric car may pull Toyota back a bit in the global EV race — a competition where Tesla has a significant lead.

The US EV maker made a name for itself back in 2012 with the market-topping Model S sedan. Tesla cemented its status in 2015 with the launch of the mid-size crossover SUV Model X, now among the world’s best plug-in cars. Adding to Toyota’s roadblocks is the global semiconductor shortage, which forced it to significantly curtail production across models and markets.

Road ahead for Toyota

Vehicle recall is not a new trend; in one of the biggest recalls in recent times, Toyota and other automakers had flagged several millions of car models manufactured since 2013 due to faulty airbags manufactured by Japan’s Takata Corporation, which subsequently went bankrupt. The bZ4X recall may turn out to be just a minor setback for Toyota, given its large plans across the globe.

In India, Toyota and Suzuki Motor Corporation signed a memorandum of understanding in 2017, to bring together their strengths and promote mutual supply of vehicles. On Friday, the Japanese majors announced that work will start on production of a new SUV developed by Suzuki at Toyota Kirloskar Motor — Toyota’s India arm — in August. The companies plan to export the upcoming model to markets beyond India, including Africa.

ON THE TABLE: 28% GST ON ONLINE GAMING, CASINOS, HORSE RACING

GST Council to vet verification plan for high-risk taxpayers

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

VERIFICATION AFTER registration for high-risk taxpayers under Goods and Services Tax (GST), along with use of geo-tagging and physical verification, are some of the measures suggested by a Group of Ministers (GoM) on system reforms. These steps, along with another ministerial panel’s recommendation to levy 28 per cent GST on online gaming, casinos and horse racing, are expected to be discussed in the upcoming GST Council meeting on June 28-29.

The GoM on system reforms, chaired by Maharashtra Finance Minister Ajit Pawar, has also recommended mandatory biometric authentication for high-risk taxpayers along with use of artificial intelligence to prepare reports detailing risky behaviour of such taxpayers. Verification of electricity bill details and bank accounts will also be used as a source for identifying these high-risk taxpayers, sources said.

The other ministerial panel on gaming and casinos, headed by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, has recommended that no distinction should be made in these activities merely on the

SOME SUGGESTIONS BY GoMs

■ The GoM on system reforms, chaired by Maharashtra FM Ajit Pawar, has also recommended mandatory biometric authentication for high-risk taxpayers along with use of artificial intelligence to prepare reports detailing risky behaviour

■ The other ministerial panel on gaming and casinos, headed by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, has recommended that no distinction should be made in these activities merely on the ground that an activity is a game of skill or of chance or both

ground that an activity is a game of skill or of chance or both. As per the estimates shared by Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports to the GoM, the online gaming sector’s market size is around ₹34,600 crore. It has also suggested that online gaming should be taxed at full value of the consideration, including contest entry fee paid by the player on participating in the game. In case of race courses, the GoM has suggested that GST be levied on the full value of bets pooled in the totalisators and placed with the bookmakers.

For casinos, the GoM is learnt to have recommended that the tax would be levied on the full face value of the chips/coins purchased from the casino by a player. No further GST would apply on the value

of bets placed in each round of betting, including those placed with winnings in previous rounds, sources said.

The GoM is also learnt to have suggested that 28 per cent GST be levied on entry/access fees into casinos, which compulsorily includes foods/beverages etc. But, optional supplies, made independently of the entry tickets, would be taxed at the rate applicable on such supplies, sources said. At present, online gaming (without betting) attracts 18 per cent GST. Now, all categories are likely to attract a higher levy of 28 per cent. The Council will also discuss rate hike suggestions from the fitment committee for items such as cut and polished diamonds and tetra packs; and rate cut for rope-

way cable and ostomy appliances, including waterproof pouch for collecting waste from the body. Also, a clarification would be issued on GST rates on electric vehicles, to state that EVs, whether fitted with batteries or not, would attract 5 per cent tax. The fitment committee had also clarified that Nicotine Polacrilex Gum, which is commonly used to aid in smoking cessation in adults, attracts 18 per cent GST. On the issue of taxation of virtual digital assets including cryptocurrency, the fitment committee has recommended deferring the decision and suggested that states of Haryana and Karnataka shall study all aspects and submit a paper in due course.

The committee, which includes officials from both states and Centre, gives its recommendation regarding tax rates, after receiving demands from stakeholders, in almost every meeting of the Council. This time around it has suggested the status quo for over 215 goods and services.

Rate rationalisation measures under GST are being considered as the compensation regime — under which states were offered compensation for revenue loss below the guaranteed compounded 14 per cent rate — comes to an end in June after five years of the rollout of the indirect tax regime.

423 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹4.95 lakh cr

As many as 423 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of more than Rs 4.95 lakh crore, as per a Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation report



OF 1,568 PROJECTS, 423 reported cost overruns and as many as 721 projects were delayed

TOTAL ORIGINAL COST OF IMPLEMENTATION of the 1,568 projects was Rs 21,59,802.67 crore and their anticipated completion cost is ...Rs 26,54,818.05 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of Rs 4,95,015.38 crore (22.92 per cent of original cost)

EXPENDITURE incurred on these projects till May 2022 is Rs 13,42,535.22 crore, which is 50.57 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects

43.34 MONTHS: The average time overrun in these 721 delayed projects

OF THE 721 DELAYED PROJECTS

NO. OF PROJECTS	DELAY SPAN
113	1-12 months
121	13-24 months
350	25-60 months
137	61 months

REASONS

- Delay in land acquisition
- Delay in obtaining forest and environment clearances
- Lack of infrastructure support and linkages

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation/PTI

563: Number of delayed projects decreased if delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion

For 569 projects, neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported

‘Should ensure no intolerable growth sacrifice to tame inflation’

New Delhi: The economy has barely recovered from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and it should be ensured that there is no “intolerable growth sacrifice” in attempts to tame inflation “too abruptly”, according to RBI’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Jayanth R Varma. With a cautiously optimistic outlook for the country’s economy, Varma on Sunday said growth prospects for 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years are “reasonable” even after taking into consideration the possibility of a long-drawn-out period of geopolitical tensions and elevated commodity prices.

In an interview with *PTI*,



‘Inflation will be brought down ... in medium term’

JAYANTH R VARMA

Member, MPC via IIM-A

Varma, an external member of the MPC, said the pandemic was

the biggest test to the system so far. “The inflationary episode has lasted longer than we would have liked and will continue to last longer than we would like, but, I have no doubt in my mind that inflation will be brought down to the target level in the medium term. “The Indian economy has barely recovered from the pandemic, and we have to be careful not to impose an intolerable growth sacrifice in our attempt to tame inflation too abruptly,” Varma said.

Amid inflationary pressures remaining high in recent times, the Reserve Bank of India’s MPC is moving towards a hawkish stance. *PTI*

SBI, other PSBs commit ₹6,071 crore to Adani Group for copper biz

New Delhi: Adani Group has forayed into copper manufacturing with tying up of finances from public sector lenders for a 1 million tonnes a year unit at Mundra in Gujarat.

“Kutch Copper Ltd (KCL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), is setting up a greenfield copper refinery project for production of refined copper with 1 million tonnes per annum in two phases,” the company said in a statement.

For the phase-1 capacity of 0.5 million tonnes, KCL has achieved financial closure through a syn-

dedicated club loan for the greenfield copper refinery project at Mundra, Gujarat.

It has executed “financing documents with the consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI). The other consortium members are Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, EXIM Bank of India, Indian Bank, Punjab National Bank, and Bank of Maharashtra,” the statement said.

The consortium of banks has sanctioned and signed an agreement for the entire debt requirement of Rs 6,071 crore for the Phase-1 of the KCL Project. *PTI*

Govt to invite power bids from 8K MW thermal capacities without PPAs



RK SINGH

Power Minister

New Delhi: The government will invite bids from states to sell electricity generated from 8,000 megawatt (MW) thermal capacities without PPAs, Power Minister RK Singh has said.

A total of 8,000 MW of thermal capacities in India are without any power purchase agreements, Singh, who is also the Minister for New and Renewable Energy, told *PTI*. Replying to a question related to capacities without PPAs in India, the minister said, “There are 8,000 MW of capacities which don’t have PPAs in the plan”. Sharing the government’s theme to resolve the issue, the minister informed that states have been asked to send their electricity requirement, and accordingly bids will be invited.

“We will aggregate (their demand) and call on for bids and based on the bids, whoever puts in the lowest bids, PPAs will be signed. Once PPAs are signed, they (states) will get the power,” he said.

Speaking further, the minister said there are also some thermal capacities undergoing the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) proceedings, and the government has already taken several steps to resolve the issue at the earliest. *PTI*

BRIEFLY

SAIL ex-Chairman

New Delhi: V Krishnamurthy, a former chairman of steel PSU SAIL and Maruti Udyog Ltd (now Maruti Suzuki), passed away Sunday at age of 97 in Chennai.

Goyal, economy

New Delhi: India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and it is expected to reach \$30 trillion in the coming 30 years, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

TKAP, e-parts

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar auto parts unit TKAP announced inauguration of its new electrified components line, E-Drive. *PTI*



The United States Supreme Court, Washington. Reuters

bans abortion after 15 weeks. Meanwhile, some Democratic-led states are moving to bolster access to abortion.

Companies will have to navi-

gate that patchwork of state laws and are likely to draw the ire of anti-abortion groups and Republican-led states if they adopt policies supportive of em-

ployees having abortions.

State lawmakers in Texas have already threatened Citigroup Inc and Lyft, which had earlier announced travel reimbursement policies, with legal repercussions. A group of Republican lawmakers in a letter last month to Lyft chief executive Logan Green said Texas “will take swift and decisive action” if the ride-hailing company implements the policy.

The legislators also outlined a series of abortion-related proposals, including a Bill that would bar companies from doing business in Texas if they pay for residents of the state to receive abortions elsewhere.

It is likely only a matter of time before companies face lawsuits from states or anti-abortion campaigners claiming that abortion-related payments violate state bans on facilitating or aiding and abetting abortions, according to

Robin Fretwell Wilson, a law professor at the University of Illinois and expert on healthcare law.

Amazon, Citigroup, Lyft, Conde Nast and several other companies that have announced reimbursement policies did not respond to requests for comment.

For many large companies that fund their own health plans, the federal law regulating employee benefits will provide crucial cover in civil lawsuits over their reimbursement policies, several lawyers and other legal experts said.

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) prohibits states from adopting requirements that “relate to” employer-sponsored health plans. Courts have for decades interpreted that language to bar state laws that dictate what health plans can and cannot cover.

McLaughlin breaks own 400m hurdles world record

REUTERS
EUGENE, JUNE 26

FOCUS, SKILL and a little bit of “Track Town, USA” magic propelled Sydney McLaughlin to break her own world record - again - in the 400 meters hurdles on Saturday.

The Olympic gold medalist won the U.S. championships final in 51.41 seconds at Hayward Field, improving upon her own benchmark time at the American track haven of Eugene, Oregon.

The 22-year-old wrestled the lead early and never gave the rest of the field a fighting chance, clinching her spot in the world championships in front of an adoring crowd.

“It’s Track Town, USA, what can you expect?” said McLaughlin. “Any time I come here I can just feel something amazing is going to happen.”

She previously set the record with a 51.90-second performance at the U.S. Olympic trials in Eugene almost a year ago to the day, only to shatter that figure in Tokyo, collecting gold in 51.46.

“I don’t anything compares to the first time you do it, just crossing that line in awe,” she told reporters, when asked to compare which of her record-breaking efforts meant the most.

“This is just a great indicator of where we are and hopefully (we’re) going to go home and work on some things.”

Running out of lane five, McLaughlin put on a flawless performance with her opponents offering little in the way of pressure to push her toward the finish line.

McLaughlin, who also collected a relay gold in Tokyo, offered a subdued smile and double thumbs up as her accomplishment became clear. Britton Wilson finished 1.67 seconds behind with Shannier Little taking third in 53.92.

“Zoning in on what I have to focus on puts me in a headspace to really not worry about anyone else and focus on 10 my hurdles,” she said after the race, adding that she planned to celebrate by eating some “real food - beside vegetables.”

McLaughlin faces a potential showdown at the world championships with chief rival and reigning champion Dalilah Muhammad, who was absent from the national championships due to injury.

She finished second to Muhammad by seven hundredths of a second at the 2019 Doha world championships.

The top three finishers in Eugene, Oregon, who meet certain qualifying standards, and reigning global title-holders will compete at the world championships, which will be held in the United States for the first time from July 15 at the same track.

Ashwin stakes claim with restrained but probing spell

Decision on spinner’s spot would hinge on extent of off-spinner’s recovery, right/left handedness of England squad and how Jadeja and him bowl in the nets

SANDIP G
JUNE 26

THREE DAYS after he landed in Leicestershire, his arrival delayed due to COVID-19 infection and subsequent isolation at home, he produced a spell that allayed fears on both his fitness and readiness. In an unchanged 11-over-spell, where he was restrained yet menacing, he looked the most potent of India’s bowlers on a sun-baked placid surface, where most batters found run-scoring a less challenging exercise than it was on the first three days.

The swing on the surface had dissipated, but it had yet deteriorated to encourage spin. In the morning, the seamers, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami bowled with venom and vim, pounding the deck hard, but a breakthrough eluded.

So strolled in Ashwin to bowl the 20th over of the final day. From the outset, his intentions were obvious, he was not looking to marvel batsmen with outrageous turn or twinkling variations. In fact, he hardly unpacked his full bag of variations. He wanted to work his rhythm into the game, stifle the batsmen, get a measure of the conditions and then spread his wings.

The lengths thus were fuller, trajectory a fraction flatter and line on off-and-middle stump. He seemed in no mood for a battle of wits with batsmen. Sam Evans, the Leicestershire batsman who averages a shade under 30, bestowed him with respect, studiously blocking every ball. But his partner Shubman Gill, conversely, decided to draw Ashwin into a challenge. So in the next over, he dragged Ashwin from a country mile outside the off stump—a rare instance he bowled wide in the early part of the spell—and swept him powerfully through square-leg.

On cue, Ashwin corrected his line and went around the stumps to angle the ball across him. But Gill would still not spare him. He stepped out and powered him through mid-wicket, picking the ball, slower through the air but harmlessly, from the off-stump.

The stroke roused Ashwin. The contest intensified. He reverted to bowl from over the stumps, alternating between a good-length on off-stump and middle-stump, mixing up his pace. He couldn’t harness a dangerous degree of drift, the wind blowing into him worked against him as well, but now he was making the ball drop. So many variegated skills has he that he could sum-



It was R Ashwin's first appearance following his recovery from COVID-19.

mon whatever he wants whenever he wants. He gradually pulled the length back, bringing Gill, who prefers the back-foot perch, forward. Gill probably read too much into Ashwin’s ploys. Ashwin, sometimes, tends to over-complicate himself, but these days, batsmen over-complicate themselves when tussling him.

Anyway, Gill was brought out of his comforts. He chalked out an escape route—to sweep himself out of misery and reclaim the early ascendancy. This is what Ashwin does at his best—to sow self-doubts in batsmen’s mind. Until then, Gill was batting with an air of authority. Now, though, he felt both insecure and inadequate. He unfurled the sweep. But Ashwin, ever a psychoanalyst of batsmen, floated one on the leg-stump. Gill failed to control the shot and holed out in the deep.

Thereafter, he began to work over Evans. As tempting as it might have been to bamboozle him with a deceptive variation of his, he was in no mood for quick kill. Rather, he induced a suicide. Evans was keen to use his feet, but Ashwin’s pace and trajectory kept him crease-tied. He knew it was only a matter of time before the restless Evans would step out. The batsmen’s feet telegraphed his plan and Ashwin bowled a shortish ball outside the leg-stump. Evans was beaten and stumped. One more over, and Ashwin walked back gingerly into the pavilion, wearing a content smile.

Shortly, Ravindra Jadeja replaced him. Louis Kimber welcomed him with a four before Hanuma Vihari, hitherto in wretched

form, walloped him for a six and four off successive balls. Jadeja bounced back, suffocated the batsmen with tight lengths and grabbed a brace of wickets to the three he had snaffled in the first innings. That would lay another layer to the Jadeja-Ashwin debate for the Edgbaston Test.

A stray warm-up game, though, would not have the final word on the debate. The decision would hinge on several factors—the extent of Ashwin’s recovery, the nature of the surface (Edgbaston has a spin-friendly reputation), the combination that India would seek, the right/left handedness of the England squad, and how they bowl in the nets in the days preceding to the Test that begins on July 1. But Ashwin, to his credit, has emphasised that he is in fine fettle, having been benched for the first four Tests of this series last year.

Overall, the visitors would leave East Midlands satisfied with their bowlers’ rhythm, but dissatisfied with most of their batsmen’s touch. Only Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and KS Bharat were fluent. Both Shreyas Iyer and Hanuma Vihari spent considerable time in the middle, without exuding any assurance. Cheteshwar Pujara was scratchy rather than steady in the second innings, after the first-innings duck. The brightest spark of the sleepy day, though, was Ashwin.

Brief scores: Indians 246 for 8 dec (Bharat 70, Walker 5-24) and 364 for 9 (Kohli 67, Jadeja 56*) drew Leicestershire 244 (Pant 76, Jadeja 3-28, Shami 3-42) and 219 for 4 (Gill 62, Kimber 56, Ashwin 2-31).

England 113 runs away from series sweep against New Zealand

REUTERS
LEEDS, JUNE 26

ENGLAND ARE 113 runs away from completing a series whitewash against New Zealand after the hosts put themselves in a commanding position with eight wickets in hand in the final innings of the third test on Sunday.

Chasing 296 for victory, Ollie Pope and Joe Root were at the crease at stumps after the pair made light work of a competitive target as England finished day four on 183-2.

The pair set up what promises to be an intriguing final day, with Headingley hopeful of having a packed house as they look to replicate the Trent Bridge test’s atmosphere by offering free tickets.

England lost Alex Lees to a run-out after a mix-up in the fifth over while his opening partner Zak Crawley (25) was caught in the covers off Michael Bracewell, with skipper Kane Williamson involved in both dismissals.

But Pope (81) and Root (55) steadied the ship with an unbeaten 132-run partnership as they saw off the fast bowlers and targeted spinner Bracewell, who went for over six per over. New Zealand also lost two reviews in successive balls when Root was rapped on the pads. The former England skipper survived on both occasions, giving Williamson a lot to ponder every time there was a shout for leg-before wicket.

Earlier, New Zealand were dismissed for 326 after the in-form Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell had again frustrated the hosts.



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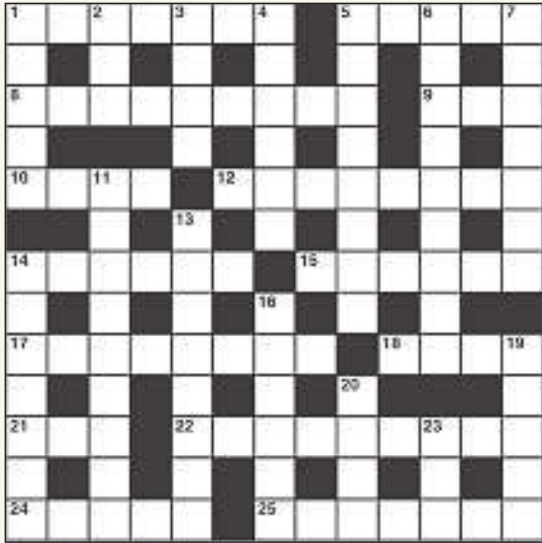
England’s momentum gained by taking three wickets late on the third day seemed to be fading away in the morning as Mitchell and Blundell continued their fine form in the series. The pair batted through the first session, negotiated the early swing in gusty conditions and also saw off a bit of the new ball, completing their half-centuries after lunch.

But Matthew Potts finally broke the 113-run stand when he had Mitchell (56) trapped leg-before. That wicket opened the flood-gates as the tourists lost half their side for 52 runs while Jack Leach became the first England spinner to claim two five-wicket hauls in a home test since Derek Underwood in 1974. Blundell was in fine form and desperately tried to reach his century with unorthodox shots but he was left stranded on 88 not out as he ran out of partners.

The hosts were dealt a blow before play started when wicketkeeper Ben Foakes was ruled out of the remainder of the game after testing positive for COVID-19, with Billings brought in as a substitute.

Brief scores: NZ 392 & 326 Vs England 360 & 183/2 (Ollie Pope 81*, Joe Root 55, M Bracewell 1-70)

CROSSWORD 4778



ACROSS

- 1 Has second thoughts about a hundred workers (7)
- 5 Approaches a listener in two directions (5)
- 8 Dead Roman exchanged for wife of Perseus (9)
- 9 Left with a thousand to beat (3)
- 10 They take turns on and off (4)
- 12 Plant it in haste (8)
- 14 Display by top-class band (6)
- 15 Published and is prosecuted (6)
- 17 Sticking together he said no changes are needed (8)
- 18 Ring maker (4)
- 21 A religious palindrome (3)
- 22 It may help to rescue a country from mad policy (9)
- 24 Cask Edward put into good order (5)
- 25 He has something to say on the radio (7)

DOWN

- 1 Respond - to an encore call? (5)
- 2 Fish paid for at the door (3)
- 3 Either way it’s high time (4)
- 4 Embarrassing moments in parts of the play (6)
- 5 Possibly ten areas mostly in southwest Asia (4,4)
- 6 Not occupied? There’s no hurry (2,7)
- 7 Breed of dog that will change some day (7)
- 11 Separate layer on ruined temple (9)
- 13 It could be indeed so unfair (3-5)
- 14 Opposed to making a profit. Good man! (7)
- 16 Manages adequately round a bend in two-door cars (6)
- 19 A better bed (5)
- 20 Knows the sound of an organ (4)
- 23 Put a question like ‘the capital of Kenya?’ (3)

Solutions Crossword 4777: Across: 1 Tenement, 5 Ford, 9 Arras, 10 Tension, 11 Supernatural, 13 Hyenas, 14 Turban, 17 Installation, 20 Minimus, 21 Orate, 22 Nice, 23 Ministers. Down: 1 Trap, 2 Nurture, 3 Master-at-arms, 4 Noting, 6 Oiler, 7 Dangling, 8 Instructions, 12 Chairman, 15 Brocade, 16 Alumni, 18 Sonic, 19 Mess.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip. There are 350 varieties of shark, not counting __ and __ - L M Boyd (4,-4)

LNZAO



EPUYLL



DNSOO



NAPPED

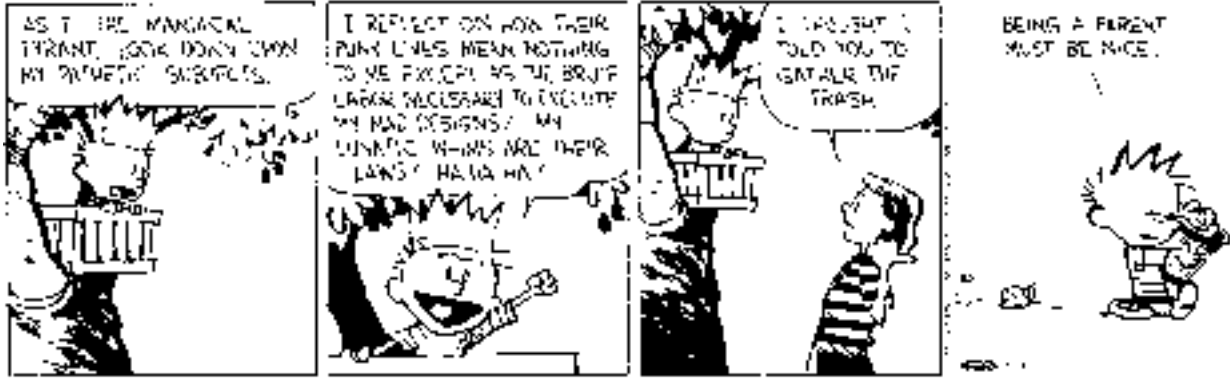


SOLUTION: ZONAL, SNOOD, PULLEY, APPEND. Answer: There are 350 varieties of shark, not counting __ and __ - L M Boyd

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



Difficulty Level 4s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4877



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Lunar alignments are very much to your taste today, but will only confer their promised benefits if you are happy to go along with all adventurous suggestions and invitations. Remember to check up on your rights, lest someone takes advantage of you.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

As the days pass, it will become much easier for you to relax and enjoy yourself. On the other hand, if you imagine domestic responsibilities are becoming lighter, you might be in for a shock! If people you live with begin to think that you’re slacking, then they may soon play a trick on you.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Good communication is of the essence. Over the next few days you must say what needs to be said. You should have got something important off your chest by now, but there are still one or two hidden resentments. These can be left until later.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

The Sun is now preparing to reduce its romantic presence, a poetic indication that you must draw the veil over several difficult situations, and make sure that a number of promising opportunities are of lasting value. Hang on to the past by all means, but not on to people and places that are no good for you.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Sometimes planetary cycles just refuse to be convenient. Your stars are out of tune with the working week, and ideally you should extend your personal activities until Wednesday, at least. If there is serious business to conduct today, make sure you concentrate on the financial aspects.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Secrets are all very well, but the fact that you’re still not letting on about something important could eventually cause a spot of aggravation. You must pick your time carefully - next week might bring the best moment to reveal all. Can you wait? I think so.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Like many other people, your mood will change on Wednesday and Thursday. So, if you have social arrangements to confirm, do so as soon as possible, because by the end of the week partners will be showing an increasing tendency to misunderstand the simplest instruction.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

There’s still a lot to happen at work, and you are by no means at the end of a period of professional adjustment. A complete change of direction is likely for many Scorpios, and even if you’re not in paid employment, a long-term ambition is about to crystallize.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

The Moon is in an intense relationship with your sign, an indication that while you may be a little more emotional than usual, you have the advantage in most dealings with other people, both at work and at home. You must use your talents and energy wisely.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

If financial decisions are pending, don’t mess around or prevaricate. There is a great deal to be gained from exerting your monetary muscle to get your own way. Dazzle people with the facts, and you may just find that they come round to your way of thinking.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

You’ll have to clarify the issues in all personal relationships now. Although you are about to enter a phase in which the emotional situation should be generally satisfying, you’ll be guided by your instincts and hence liable to make one or two false moves.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

If conditions at work need to be improved, or if your daily burden must be lightened, then talk to the people who can help. You have everything to gain by opting for dialogue and debate, everything to lose by keeping yourself to yourself. Stay close to the folk who matter.

BRIEFLY

Will compete with myself at CWG: Mirabai Chanu

Patiala: It won't be surprising if diminutive Mirabai Chanu, stands atop the podium, flashing her radiant smile, after winning a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games on July 30. After all, she will enter Birmingham, as title favourite. Chanu's personal best is 207kg (88kg+119kg) which is far better than the best effort of Nigeria's Stella Kingsley, who will be her nearest rival and has managed only 168kg (72kg+96kg) till date. "CWG will be easy for me. I will be fighting with myself," Chanu said. She then added, "There is not much competition in CWG, but that doesn't mean there is no competition. I have to give my best performance keeping in mind the future tournaments." The former world champion also wants to breach the much-anticipated 90kg mark in the snatch section, which she confesses has become somewhat of a mental block. "Yes (it has become a mental block). We have planned to lift 91kg or 92kg at the CWG. Hopefully, it will happen." **PTI**

Deepika & Co. bag silver at Archery WC

Paris: The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur settled for a silver medal after the trio's fairytale run was halted by Chinese Taipei in a one-sided final at the World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday. India concluded their campaign with one gold and two silver medals -- two of them coming in the compound section. The tournament was all about compound archer Jyothi Surekha Vennam's dream comeback, who led India's medal tally with one gold (mixed team event with Abhishek Verma) and one silver (individual) on Saturday. **PTI**

Dhanalakshmi wins 200m gold

Almaty: Ace sprinter Sekar Dhanalakshmi ran her personal best time to win 200m gold at the Qosanov Memorial Athletics Meet while the likes of shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor and javelin thrower Rohit Yadav returned to India without competing in the event here on Sunday. Dhanalakshmi ran a creditable sub-23 second, clocking 22.89s to better her earlier personal best of 23.14s she had come up last year. She had won a 200m gold in the national Inter-Sate Championships in Chennai earlier this month with a time of 23.27s. She missed the automatic qualification mark of 22.80s for World Championships. **PTI**

Indian U-17 women suffer 0-2 defeat

New Delhi: The Indian women's team suffered a 0-2 defeat against Mexico in their last match of the 6th Torneo Female U-17 Football Tournament in Vilesse, Italy on Sunday. Mexico netted one in each half to wrap up the match, with Katherine Sillas and Alice Gallegos getting on the scoresheet. The Indian girls had earlier gone down to USA 0-7 and Chile 1-3. India is set to host the FIFA 2022 U-17 Women's World Cup later this year. **PTI**

Madhya Pradesh end long Ranji wait

Coach Chandrakant Pandit guides them to six-wicket win over 41-time champions Mumbai

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
BENGALURU, JUNE 26

MADHYA PRADESH, which last won the Ranji Trophy 69 years ago – back then known as Holkar state – finally returned to glory days, thumping powerhouse Mumbai by six wickets on Sunday. Holkar dominated the domestic scene around the time of Indian independence, and in times when cricket relied on benevolence of the antiquated princely states. But the 2021-22 crown counts as the first for the state of MP and for the region since modern-day federalism took firm root in India, and it's taken a long time coming for the cricket-loving central plateau.

There was the last-afternoon disappointment of the 1998-99 final at the same Chinnaswamy stadium, 23 years ago when Madhya Pradesh had gone down in the final. This time they beat the 41-time champions Mumbai outright by six wickets. The team was coached by former India wicketkeeper-batsman Chandrakant Pandit — hoisted on his players' shoulders after victory. Pandit has now won his fourth Ranji title in five final appearances in six seasons, after Mumbai in 2015-16, and Vidarbha in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

MP boasts of a rich ancient past and in the 11 seasons from 1944-45 to 1954-55, the erstwhile Holkar team made the Ranji final ten times, and won the title on four occasions, including against Bombay in 1947-48. Boasting greats such as CK Nayudu, CS Nayudu, Syed Mushtaq Ali and Chandu Sarwate, the Holkar era was one of the most dominant for any side in Indian domestic cricket, before the states' reorganisation led to the formation of Madhya Pradesh in 1956.

For a cricketing culture that has subsequently produced players such as Narendra Hirwani, Rajesh Chauhan, Amay Khurasiya, Jai Prakash Yadav, Naman Ojha and Devendra Bundela, and boasts the proud heritage of the Holkar decade, the 1998-99 final was the only one MP had had to remember with longing all these years. Led by Pandit, MP had taken a 75-run first-innings lead against Karnataka and had one hand on the trophy.

Set a target of 247, they were 108 for 3 and in sight of a draw before collapsing to 150 all out late on the final day.

To this day, Bundela, who would become the third-highest run-getter in Ranji history, rues what could have been – for his team as well as for his then dream of playing at the



The 2021-22 Ranji Trophy counts as a first for MP, even though as Holkar, the state was a force in domestic cricket.

PTI

For a cricketing culture that has produced players such as Narendra Hirwani, Rajesh Chauhan, Amay Khurasiya, Jai Prakash Yadav, Naman Ojha and Devendra Bundela, and boasts the heritage of the Holkar decade, the 1998-99 final was the only one MP had had to remember with longing all these years.

highest level – had he not fallen to Vijay Bharadwaj around tea to spark the MP collapse. 2021-22 looked poised to be different and this team has achieved the ultimate goal despite not having the services of players like

Venkatesh Iyer, Avesh Khan, Ishwar Pandey and Kuldeep Sen. They played only four front-line bowlers, leaving out seam regular Puneet Datey and playing a debutant batting all-rounder in Parth Sahani instead.

"Missing out on this trophy when I was captain and to win this trophy (on Sunday) on the same ground is indeed special. Some say father could not do it but son has done it so Aditya Shrivastava has done this tremendously," Pandit said.

How Mumbai was outgunned

Gaurav Yadav made his debut back in 2012 but bowled the spell of his life on the first morning of the match, going past Prithvi Shaw's edge five times in a single over alone. His new-ball partner Anubhav Agarwal made his debut this season, and displayed similar commitment and control, as the pair bowled nearly 65 overs in

the first innings. They made the ball do a lot more than the three Mumbai seamers, although they also had a much longer stretch of overcast skies to exploit.

Off-spinner Saransh Jain, playing only his 11th first-class game in eight years, tossed up the ball beautifully and got it to climb. He also played his part in flattening Mumbai with the bat, making a maiden half-century at No 8. Young left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya posed questions on an unhelpful surface with his accuracy and ability to drift and cut the quicker ball into the right-handers.

Promising Yash Dubey and veteran Shubham Sharma sucked the fight out of Mumbai with contrasting centuries in a 222-run second-wicket partnership. And Rajat Patidar arrived to bat Mumbai out of the match with a hundred that will be remembered for its disdainful dominance.

Bumrah likely to be a rare fast bowling captain for India

There is still a slim chance for Rohit to play, and lead India, in Birmingham as the five-day isolation period mandated for Covid-positive persons finishes just before the game begins

room for a significant duration.

Bumrah was named vice-captain for the ODI series in South Africa at the beginning of the year, when Sharma was out with injury and Rahul had to lead the side. Fellow fast bowler Pat Cummins has had an impressive start to his Australian Test captaincy stint, winning the Ashes and a series in Pakistan. But India has been reluctant to trust pace bowlers with the added responsibility.

The fact that there was hardly anyone of Kapil's overall stature over the last 35 years could be a factor. Also, fast bowling is back-breaking business, especially on pitches traditionally associated with India, and there may



Jasprit Bumrah was named vice-captain when India faced South Africa in an ODI series at the beginning of the year.

AP

be a line of thought that after sending down their share of overs, pacers would be left with little physical and mental reserves to focus on bowling changes, field placements, team build-

ing and motivating other players.

But there's a chance Bumrah may be cut from a different cloth.

"If given an opportunity (to lead India), it would be an honour. I don't think any player would say no. There's no bigger feeling than that," Bumrah had said earlier this year when he was named vice-captain for the ODI series in South Africa.

"I don't like to chase things because I don't want to. I am a person who believes that God has a plan and everything will find its own way, so I don't like to hamper the plan that is there. I try to never change anything. Whatever role is asked of me I would do it with the best ability that I can. I don't want to change the whole organisation, you are always a leader when you are a senior member of the team so it's just a post that comes with you. Basically, you try to help all the people in whatever capacity you can."

With England a transformed lot lately under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, it remains to be seen how Bumrah deals with the challenge – both as a bowler and captain – if he is elevated to the top job.

Ben Foakes tests positive for Covid

Headingley: England Wicketkeeper-batter Ben Foakes has tested positive for Covid-19 and is replaced in England XI by Sam Billings as a like-for-like replacement.

Foakes will miss the rest of the third Test against New Zealand at Headingley.

On a further medical assessment yesterday evening, he subsequently tested positive after administering an LFT COVID-19 test.

Foakes was unable to keep wicket on day three due to a stiff back – Jonny Bairstow took the gloves at that point – and he subsequently tested positive for coronavirus after further medical assessment. **ENS**

Can unique Wimbledon without ranking points throw up a surprise champ?

NAMIT KUMAR
JUNE 26

The sun shines brightly on the pristine grass at SW19 as Wimbledon, devoid of ranking points but full of intrigue, is set to kick off on Monday. Two of the main draw's biggest personalities – Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams – were confirmed at the last moment, and the men's World No. 1, and three of the women's Top 20 are barred from participating in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Top seeds Novak Djokovic and Iga Swiatek, both coming into the Championships in polar opposite form, are the overwhelming favourites. The pressure of expectation weighs heavily on both as they open the play on Centre Court on Monday and Tuesday respectively, though questions on their form leave the door slightly open for fans to see a first-time winner lift the trophy this year.

The Big 4 monopoly

The men's singles title at SW19 has been won by one of Djokovic, Nadal, Roger Federer, or Andy Murray every single year since 2002. That streak is showing no signs of letting up either, with Djokovic and

Nadal the top two seeds, and Murray a big dark horse, floating unseeded in the main draw this year.

Djokovic is the bookmakers' favourite: the three-time defending champion, chasing a seventh London crown, having been more dominant on grass than any other player. But it has been a muted run-up to the third Major of the year.

Djokovic's 2022 season has been a mess, due to his contentious anti-vaccination stance and the unwelcome distraction it brought. He has played only 21 matches, and as things stand, will not be travelling to New York for the US Open.

Handed a relatively easier draw, the 35-year-old has avoided any dangerous floaters in the early rounds; Nadal, Matteo Berrettini, Stefanos Tsitsipas, and Felix Auger-Aliassime are all in the other half, and Hubert Hurkacz is in the other quarter.

Nadal, halfway to the Calendar Slam for the first time in his career making him customary favourite.

But the chronic foot injury, is a cause for concern and the 36-year-old has said the new radio frequency treatment has alleviated the pain, but only the first week will indicate whether he is moving with power and freedom. With a fourth-round against



Novak Djokovic plays a return as he practices ahead of the Wimbledon.

AP

2017 finalist Marin Cilic looming, he will need to find as much match-sharpness as he can find early on.

With Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev out, the one likely to lead the charge

to break the Big 4's hegemony is last year's finalist Berrettini. The Italian, whose massive serve and forehand combination seem tailor-made for grass, would have been an outside-favourite a few months ago, after he

missed the clay season for an operation in his right hand. He's unbeaten ever since his return though, with titles in Stuttgart and the Queen's Club making him one of the tournament favourites.

The big-serving Hurkacz, who beat Federer in straight sets in the quarterfinal last year, and the well-rounded and powerful Auger-Aliassime are both threats. Even Tsitsipas, usually out of touch on grass, picked up form by winning the title in Mallorca this week.

Can Swiatek keep her run going?

The 21-year-old from Poland has been on a 35-match winning streak that started in Doha back in February and lasted all the way through to the recent French Open. Her powerful game and aggressive tactics are yet to find a match, and her overwhelming dominance on the women's tour is reminiscent of a certain American making her comeback over the next fortnight.

Swiatek is yet to prove herself on grass though. She could not go past the fourth round at SW19 last year, the only times she has ever won a main draw match there. Her power is an asset, and she has crucial and versatile return of serve in her armour.

Primarily among her challengers, is third seed Ons Jabeur. The Tunisian became the first Arab to break into the top 10 this year and with a title at the Berlin tune-up, will be hoping for a more impressive showing this time around.

A trio of former Wimbledon champions – Simona Halep, Angelique Kerber, and Petra Kvitova – have been handed confidence-boosting draws. Serena Williams too makes her long-awaited return to the tour, no matches in exactly one year barring a few rounds of doubles at Eastbourne last week, but self-belief intact. The American has a new coach and looks calm and fit.

Emma Raducanu, whose fairytale story to the US Open title last year began at Wimbledon, will have the partisan British crowd willing her on but has a tough first-round encounter against Alison van Uytvanck and injury and fitness issues plaguing her first full year on tour though.

Chief among the dark horses is Beatriz Haddad Maia, a relative unknown on the tour whose 12-match winning streak resulted in back-to-back titles in Nottingham and Birmingham, and becoming the 23rd seed in the main draw at SW19. While still untested on the big stage, she is one to watch to go deep in the draw.