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AN INDIAN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION

WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS

OVER 1 LAKH RECORDS
Obtained by *The Guardian*, probed in 30 countries

the Uber files

START-UP TO GIANT
Emails, texts and documents expose how firm cut corners

Revealed: How Uber took the system for a ride, used its tech to drive past law



An Uber driver waits for a ride outside ISBT in Kashmere Gate, Delhi. *Praveen Khanna*

We are just f***ing illegal, wrote senior executive after blowback

RITU SARIN, SHYAMLAL YADAV & ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

AFTER TRACKING money flows of the rich into offshore tax havens, it's now about a tech giant that has, combining business aggression and customer convenience, reshaped cab-hailing across the world: Uber.

In its eighth collaboration with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), *The Indian Express* spent four months investigating The Uber Files, a cache of 124,000 internal emails, text messages and documents from inside Uber.

Obtained by *The Guardian* and shared with ICIJ and a global consortium of newsrooms in 30 countries, including *The Washington Post* and *BBC*, these records tell the untold story of how a shaky Silicon Valley start-up became a $44-billion global transportation giant with operations today in 72 countries — and counting.

And how it used stealth

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TOMORROW

WORKING THE LINES, SEALING DEALS

Rape in Delhi rang alarm bells in HQ: Uber scrambled to guard reputation, blamed local officials

Flurry of emails reveals panic, wariness over ban in Delhi

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

HUNDREDS OF emails and internal communications of the Uber top brass reveal the panic inside the company's headquarters in San Francisco after a woman passenger was raped in an Uber cab by its driver in New Delhi on December 5, 2014.

Data from The Uber Files — the emails and internal documents were obtained by *The Guardian* and shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists with which *The Indian Express* has partnered for this investigation — point to a worldwide damage-control exercise, leading to events in 2017 wherein the Delhi rape survivor's case and subsequent developments also contributed to the exit of Uber co-founder and CEO Travis Kalanick.

EXPLAINED E. **WHAT ARE THE UBER FILES**
PAGE 13

There are two distinct threads that emerge from the available Uber communications relating to the New Delhi rape case.

One, that the company immediately took the line that it was the "flawed" Indian system of Background Checks (BGCs) of drivers that led to the accused, Shiv Kumar Yadav, committing a second sexual harassment offence.

Two, that besides putting additional safety features on its ride-sharing app, Uber needed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'Kill Switch' is Uber's crisis SOP: shut down access, don't give info

Three months before Delhi rape, Uber Asia chief told India team to 'embrace the chaos'

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

BARELY one year into its launch in India, on August 23, 2014, Uber's then Asia Head, Allen Penn, sent an email to the team here: "Embrace the chaos. It means you are doing something meaningful."

There was some "chaos" a little over three months later — on December 5, 2014, a woman passenger was sexually assaulted in an Uber cab by its driver in New Delhi.

In his August email titled "dealing with regulatory issues," Penn laid out for his Indian colleagues what it now transpires was a standard operating procedure: how Uber managers should stonewall queries and missives from the government.

While encouraging the team — "Irrespective of what the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

KILL SWITCH, A REMOTE DISABLER

- Kill Switch is a remote mechanism to disable device, program
- Programs shut down computer access ahead of raids
- The Uber Files record at least 13 instances of Kill Switch use
- System in India shut around the time of ban following Delhi rape

On paper for security, but in car only for show

In 48 of 50 rides *The Indian Express* took, either panic button wasn't there or didn't work

HOW A PANIC BUTTON SHOULD WORK

- Multiple configurations available but mainly one red button for the back-seat rider, one for the front, and a third for the driver. Plus a Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLTD).
- VLTD has dual SIM and a GPS that relays the vehicle's location, speed and route to authorities on a real-time basis.
- This sends location signals every 10 seconds to the government's monitoring centre.
- When the panic button is pressed, the centre gets an alert every 5 seconds.

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

PAINTED IN red, the panic button is a crucial safety feature in vehicles used to ferry passengers. Mandated by a notification following the rape in New Delhi of a passenger by an Uber driver, this button, meant to be installed in all commercial passenger vehicles — taxis and buses — should trigger an alert to the police even when passengers cannot access or operate their smartphones to make emergency calls or use in-app safety features.

But nearly eight years after the rape, these panic buttons may not be of much use, at least in the national capital where about 11,000 vehicles have them.

Illustrative of this gap between regulation and practice is Uber's own infrastructure. *The Indian Express* took 50 Uber rides in Delhi over a month and did not find a functioning panic button in 48 of them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

IN FIRST REMARKS, DELHI SILENT ON RAJAPAKSAS

Stand with Lankan people as they seek aspirations: India

Hours after MEA underlines 'democratic means', Lanka Opp parties say they have a pact on forming interim govt

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

A DAY after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa went into hiding and agreed to resign following the storming of his official residence by thousands of protesters, New Delhi, in first remarks on the upheavals in Colombo, said it "stands with the people of Sri Lanka" as they seek to "realise their aspirations" through "democratic means and values, established institutions and constitutional framework".

Although India has been saying it is with the "people of Sri Lanka", its statement Sunday is a clear indication that it does not want to be seen supporting the Rajapaksa family in any manner.

The underlining of democratic processes, institutions and the constitution came in the wake of Saturday's explosion of popular anger on the streets of Colombo, against a regime blamed for plunging the island nation into its worst economic crisis.



Inside the President's house on Sunday. *Reuters*

Hours later, Sri Lanka's Opposition parties announced that they have decided to form an all-party interim government. Leaders of parties in Parliament are to meet Monday to discuss convening of the House for the

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MORE REPORTS
PAGE 10

BUSINESS AS USUAL

BY UNNY



Goa Cong faces split, accuses leaders Kamat, Lobo of joining hands with BJP



Former Chief Minister Digambar Kamat

MAYURA JANWALKAR
PANAJI, JULY 10

AMID HIGH drama on Sunday, the Congress in Goa accused two of its senior leaders, Micheal Lobo and Digambar Kamat, of allegedly hobnobbing with the BJP and being part of a "conspiracy" hatched with the ruling party to engineer defections.

Towards the end of a day marked by intense speculation and meetings with the MLAs, AICC Goa in-charge Dinesh Gundu Rao announced that Lobo had been removed from the position of the leader of the Congress legislature party and that action for anti-party activities would follow against him, Kamat and three other MLAs.

"There was a conspiracy that was hatched by two of our own

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Amarnath stream flooded last year too, yet tents set up at same spot

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN & BASHAARAT MASOOD
CHENNAI, SRINAGAR, JULY 10

IN JULY last year, a flash flood near the Amarnath cave occurred at the same place where a cloudburst triggered heavy flooding on Friday, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 20 others with many still unaccounted for.

No lives were lost in last year's July 28 flood — there was no yatra in 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The flash flood, which was caused by heavy rain, had triggered shooting stones, and the flood waters reportedly washed away a couple of tents set up by security personnel in the area, but no one was hurt.

Yet, as *The Indian Express* has reported, this year, the tents for pilgrims were set up on the flood channel, also known as the dry river bed. This was done to accommodate as many people as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

IDEA EXCHANGE

'Can't rule out Xi making a significant gesture to India in the interest of changing game in his favour'

KEVIN RUDD
FORMER AUSTRALIAN PM, PRESIDENT, ASIA SOCIETY
PAGE 11

FROM PAGE ONE

Rape in Delhi rang alarm bells in Uber HQ

urgent damage control to prevent a "reputational" fallout in other global markets.

Immediately after the rape incident, on December 9, 2014, Jordan Condo, Uber's Head of Public Policy in Asia, wrote to the company's top honchos, giving a dramatic description. "It is important that we show compassion and express our willingness to develop a longer term solution to stop this pandemic of violence against women in India," he wrote. Others on the trail mail replied with suggestions on technology upgrade and asked for a country-wise spreadsheet on BGCs for both licensed and non-licensed "products" (drivers).

But the unmistakable effort, the internal communications show, was to pitch the blame on Indian authorities. Consider these telling excerpts from what Uber bosses wrote to each other:

■ Mark MacGann, then Uber's Head of Public Policy for Europe and Middle East, wrote on December 8: "We're in crisis talks right now and the media is blazing…The Indian driver was indeed licensed, and the weakness/flaw appears to be in the local licensing scheme… the view in the US is that we can expect inquiries across our markets on the issue of background checks, in the light of what has happened in India."

■ Among the senior-most, Niall Wass, then Uber's Senior Vice President for Europe, Middle East and Africa, wrote to the entire office team on December 9: "We had done what was required in terms of the Indian regulations. However it's clear the checks required for a driver to obtain a commercial license from the authorities now appears to be insufficient as it appears the accused also had some previous rape allegations, which the Delhi police check did not identify (in what's called a 'character certificate.')."

■ One week after the rape incident, Mark MacGann again sent an email to his team: "we are in the process of platinum-plating our background checks in other regions, given the issue in India (where the official State system is at fault, not Uber)."

The rape incident resulted in a "worst-case scenario" for Uber in the Capital. The Delhi government banned its services, and it took seven months and an intervention from the Delhi High Court for Uber cabs to be back on the roads.

Now, records reveal that the company had serious apprehensions that the ban in Delhi could have a domino effect on operations in other cities as well.

There are email exchanges between Juan Batiz, a senior executive, and David Plouffe, Uber's high-profile Vice President for policy and strategy, who was an advisor to US President Barack Obama prior to joining the unicorn.

In the exchange dated December 11, 2014, and titled "threats", Batiz argues Uber's case: The fact is that we are not taxis, hence taxi regulations do not apply to us. I think taxis are really looking to get rid of current burdensome and corrupt requirements which they face today more than banning Uber like products…"

In the communication, Plouffe is also informed about how the City Taxi Association in Mexico had filed a lawsuit asking why a service like Uber should not be banned. He wrote, "In their communication, the association makes reference to countries that have banned the service and also mentions India's most unfortunate events."

Plouffe then does a round-up of "threats" from other countries and writes to colleagues, "wondering if you are concerned — and it's not directly connected to India but gives them more courage on the unlicensed argument especially — about any other cities/countries strengthening their arguments against us/taking action." He also asks top Uber Managers: "Can you guys lay out other places where you think in light of India/reputation issues, you could see courts or regulators find a way or reason to shut us down."

The most significant step Uber took after the New Delhi rape incident was to introduce two new In-app features in India: the receipt of a 'send feature' and an SOS button. Incidentally, one of Uber's communication managers, Benjamin Novick, cautioned others that the new feature should not be called a 'panic button' but a 'SOS' feature instead.

And in an email dated December 23, 2014, Plouffe gives away the insecurity gripping the company. He writes, "Driver verification capabilities will be a necessity — we are exceedingly vulnerable there and only a matter of time before we have an incident (Chicago could be it, hope not) where that becomes a global problem for us."

Other emails from January 2015 show that the rape incident was certainly on the mind of the Uber top brass, including Kalanick who decided to postpone his proposed visit to India.

Allen Penn, Uber's then Asia Head, listed the advantages of pushing forward the India trip for Travis. His reasons: One, "have a lead time for high level meetings (eg PM and Cabinet)." Two, "Let the air clear further on the rape, giving space for a higher success rate on Government and business meetings." And three, "Get Delhi back live… and thus not have that ban cloud."

'Kill Switch' is Uber's crisis SOP: Deny access

competition and entrenched interests say, You and Uber are the ones improving India" — he instructed them on how to keep the authorities at bay.

"We will likely have both local and national issues in almost every city in India for the rest of your tenure at Uber… Don't talk to the Government or folks close to the Government unless you have specifically discussed with Jordan (a reference to Jordan Condo, Uber's Head of Public Policy for Asia)... we will generally stall, be unresponsive, and often say no to what they want. This is how we operate and it's nearly always the best. Early quick meetings set us up for failure. Get comfortable with that approach… don't let it distract you from your mission to dominate the market," he wrote.

The email is part of The Uber Files investigated by *The Indian Express*. These records were obtained by *The Guardian* and shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists with which *The Indian Express* has partnered for this investigation.

The New Delhi rape case saw Uber being temporarily withdrawn from the Capital's roads and the ride-hailing service being forced, for the first time in any city in the world, to apply for a licence to manage operations through an Indian subsidiary, and not Uber BV, its international firm located in the Netherlands.

Uber later faced a slew of regulatory issues with the Reserve Bank of India and governmental authorities like the Service Tax, Consumer Courts and Income Tax. And it still does.

Emails and internal documents reveal that India was among the countries where Uber deployed its unique blocking software which company insiders refer to as 'Kill Switch' in internal emails.

The 'Kill Switch' was meant to be used to switch off systems in the event of serious regulatory action, like a tax raid.

To begin with, Uber used a software named 'Casper' and later 'Ripley'.

The data show 13 instances between 2014-2016 when the 'Kill Switch' was used in different cities across the globe. It was used in Amsterdam, Montreal, Hong Kong, Budapest, Lyon and Paris.

Travis Kalanick, Uber co-founder and CEO, personally ordered its use in Amsterdam in September 2015.

There are emails that show the 'Kill Switch' was also to be used during a tax raid on the company's offices in Brussels in March 2015, but the sleuths seized staff computers before it could be deployed.

The reference to India comes in confidential emails dated February 10, 2015 — two months after the rape incident in New Delhi and the subsequent ban on its service.

The emails are titled "Uber Belgium/special tax inspectors" and have a context of alleged VAT-return violations committed by Uber-Belgium.

In the emails, it is Uber Manager, Rob van der Woude, who provides a detailed account of how Uber blocked access to its data for Indian authorities.

It states: "What we did in India is have the city team be as cooperative as possible and have BV (the company in Netherlands) take the heat. E.g. Whenever the local team was called to provide the information, we shut them down from the system making it practically impossible for them to give out any info despite their willingness to do so. At the same time we kept directing the authorities to talk to BV representatives instead. Not sure if that works here given they have telco info but that bought us some months there."

Evidently, "shut them down" was the norm for Uber managers in territories from India to Paris.

After the Brussels fiasco, the company devised a "dawn raid app" and circulated a "dawn raid manual" among its senior employees. A 10-page manual is also part of the data.

In the manual are detailed instructions on how a "raid" should be managed; how telephone conversations should be sanitised should regulators be tapping phones; how a raid coordinator should be appointed; and, which categories of data can be shared with raid inspectors.

Asked about the frequent use of the 'Kill Switch', Uber's spokesperson in the US, Jill Hazelbaker, and the company's spokesperson in New Delhi had an identical response: "Uber does not have a 'Kill Switch' designed to thwart regulatory inquiries anywhere in the world and has not since Dara Khosrowshahi became CEO in 2017. On the contrary, authorities regularly make requests for information and we routinely cooperate with those requests. While every company has software in place to remotely protect its corporate devices, such software should never have been used to thwart legitimate regulatory actions."

Allen Penn and Rob van der Woude did not respond to queries.

In India, Uber was forced to make a structural shift in operations from the Netherlands to an India-based subsidiary, Resourcexpert India Private Limited, while in countries like Belgium, it was under pressure from tax authorities to hand over data of drivers who were using Uber phones.

For instance, there is a confidential email from Uber manager Filip Nuytemans, dated February 10, 2015, on the subject of demands for driver data from special tax inspectors. The Uber manager says he was "open to share data as part of a new regulatory reform, but handing out that data now could lead to all those + 500 drivers being 1) prosecuted with risk of permanent seizure of their car plus fine 2) being audited by tax authorities knowing that most of them are not able to declare under current conditions."

There is also an email – it has the same date — from Uber's legal counsel Zac de Kievit who said, "Providing the driver list will gut our supply: it makes it much more easier for the taxman, regulators and police to terrify our supply and enforce against it… what is the least bad option here? Drivers being pursued via criminal proceedings or ourselves?... If we hand over the drivers list, our goose may be cooked."

Following a raid in Uber's offices in Paris the same year, de Kievit was arrested for obstruction of justice by cutting IT access and activating the 'Kill Switch'.

On paper for security, but in car only for show

Instead, it found a monitoring system hobbled by glitches — including an unresolved software "integration issue" that prevents the nodal Transport agency, which receives the cab alerts, from passing them on immediately to the Delhi Police.

Consider this:

■ Of the 50 Uber cabs, only seven had active panic buttons. In five of these seven, pressing the button did not result in follow-up action from the Delhi Police despite a wait of 20 minutes.

■ In 43 cabs, 29 did not have panic buttons at all. Drivers in 15 of the 29 cars said they had bought the vehicles from Haryana and UP with fitness certificates despite the Union Road Transport Ministry notifying the use of panic buttons in 2016. The other 14 said they had bought their cars before 2019, the cut-off year from when these buttons became mandatory.

■ Of the rest on the list of 43, four drivers said the panic buttons in their cars were broken by their own children; three said that they had disabled the button to stop passengers from pushing it out of curiosity. And seven drivers said the buttons stopped working after they conducted repair work.

That's not all — and it's not just Uber.

HOLES IN THE SYSTEM

On November 28, 2016, in the wake of the Uber rape case and the months-long ban imposed on the cab aggregator by the Delhi government, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued a notification that all public service vehicles, except two-wheelers, three-wheelers and e-rickshaws, must be fitted with a VLTD and a panic button (*see box on page 1*).

On April 18, 2018, the Ministry issued another notification specifying a cut-off date, and said all such vehicles registered on and after January 1, 2019 shall be fitted with this combo safety feature.

Once the panic button is pressed, an alert is sent every five seconds to servers monitored by the Delhi Integrated Multi Modal Transit System (DIMTS), the nodal agency for the Transport Department, to be instantly relayed to the Delhi Police's Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) on 112. But officials said alerting the police has been "a time-taking process" so far due to a "lack of software integration between the two systems".

"At present, when we get a panic button alert from a cab, we call the police station concerned, which relays the details to the PCR van. A lot of time is wasted in figuring out the right jurisdiction," a Transport official said.

According to Delhi Statistical Handbook 2021, the capital has an estimated registered fleet of 1,12,401 private commercial taxi vehicles. Delhi Transport Commissioner Ashish Kundra said 11,832 commercial taxis registered after 2019 have been fitted with VLTD and panic buttons in the capital — and alerts are accessible through a web-based application.

"However, for the achievement of panic alerts integration with PCR 112 system, the API (Application Programming Interface) document and credentials are being obtained by the Transport Department from the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations & Communication). The integration is at an advanced stage and likely to be completed within a month," Kundra said. API is a software that allows two applications to interact with each other.

Officials say an average of 50 panic button alerts are received from commercial taxis in Delhi every day but "most of them are due to fights between the driver and customer on payment issues".

Delhi Police spokesperson Suman Nalwa said: "We are not receiving any panic button alerts from commercial taxis like Uber or Ola till now. This was supposed to be done by the Transport Department as per the Central Government notification. To counter this, we have come up with our own apps like Himmat Plus and equipped our PCR vans with state-of-the-art technology, which responds to distress calls immediately."

Nalwa said the police will take "around 20 days" to integrate their software with the Transport department's monitoring agency and were in talks with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), which was working on the initiative.

Asked about the delay, Transport Commissioner Kundra said: "The modalities of this integration are being completed on priority basis by the Transport Department and the police enforcement agency at their end."

Both Kundra and the police spokesperson Nalwa said that the software integration for buses (DTC and cluster services) has been completed.

Police officers say they respond within 15-20 minutes of each call received from DIMTS but suggest that it is "better for the riders to call the 112 number directly since we can track the location of the caller".

But there are "some bugs" in the 112 system as well. "For instance, Vodafone-Idea and Reliance-Jio networks are integrated but still don't show continuous location of the caller, which is crucial in making timely interceptions," an officer said.

"Intermittent location is shown and not a continuous location. We have some bugs in the system and CDAC is working continuously to improve the location-based services for these networks," said Nalwa, the police spokesperson.

Uber has other safety features of its own, including an in-app SOS, to raise alerts with the police, the sharing of ride status with trusted contacts, and a 24x7 safety team. But crucially, unlike the panic button, all these features require the riders to have access to their smartphones.

An Uber spokesperson said that to improve the security of riders, the company's ride-sharing app runs a "mandatory background check on all drivers by an authorised third-party vendor before they make their first trip on Uber".

Transport officials said there are other deterrents in place to ensure compliance.

According to Kundra, apart from regular monitoring, a "mandatory check" of these devices are carried out at the time of issuing annual fitness certificates. For drivers tampering with panic buttons or VLTD, he said, the Department will issue e-challans to the owners and in cases of further non-compliance, the vehicle will "be blacklisted automatically through VAHAN software".

Besides, one of the key proposals in the Delhi Motor Vehicle Aggregation scheme notified on July 5 is access for the Transport department to a web-based portal where aggregators would update the details of their vehicles and drivers to ensure passenger safety.

But drivers on Uber cabs that *The Indian Express* hailed pointed to other holes in the shield. Many of them said they managed to get fitness certificates for their vehicles at the Burari testing centre on the outskirts of Delhi — without functioning panic buttons.

An official at the centre, which is one of the two centres in Delhi, said: "About 800 vehicles come to this centre every day. It is difficult to check every vehicle for a functioning panic button. We mainly see if the documents are in place and the vehicle is not in a damaged condition."

Transport Commissioner Kundra said they are moving to soon "operationalise" an automated testing station in Burari on the lines of the other testing facility in Southwest Delhi that caters to trucks.

'We are just f***ing illegal'

technology to bypass regulators; tapped into a sprawling lobbying network; aggressively cut corners as it drove through loopholes in law and regulation.

These records cover 2013-2017, the period when the company, led by its flamboyant and brash co-founder, Travis Kalanick, was steamrolling its cab-hailing service from one world market to another.

Kalanick has responded to ICIJ's revelations through his spokesperson, Devon Spurgeon, in his signature style: "When Mr Kalanick co-founded Uber in 2009, he and the rest of the team pioneered an industry that has now become a verb. To do this required a change of the status quo, as Uber became a serious competitor in an industry where competition has been historically outlawed."

Since it launched services in 2013, Uber found in India one of its fastest growing markets — an estimated 6 lakh drivers plying today in over 100 cities riding on an urban workforce sprawling across cities with spotty public transport and restricted taxi services.

Uber's strategy was summed up in an email that Uber's then Asia head, Allen Penn, wrote to the India team in August 2014. "We've definitely made a splash in our first year in India…We will likely have both local and national issues in almost every city in India…That's life running a business at Uber," he wrote.

Records detail Uber's runins with a host of Indian regulatory authorities, including GST and Income Tax Departments as well as Consumer Forums, the Reserve Bank of India and the Service Tax Department.

Indeed, in September 2014, Uber prepared a presentation for its staff using India as a case study for handling Service Tax issues. "Authorities want Uber to open their books, otherwise we are facilitating fraud," says a slide in a PowerPoint presentation which is part of the records now revealed.

Shortly after that, in December 2014, crisis hit the company following the rape of a 25-year-old passenger in New Delhi in an Uber car by the driver.

Dozens of internal emails show that even as red flags were being raised on the ban imposed by the Delhi government, top executives squarely blamed the "flawed" licensing systems in India for letting the criminal record of the accused driver slip through.

Uber was in panic and in between some frantic damage control, Nairi Hourdajian, then the head of Uber's communications unit, wrote in an email to his colleague on December 11, 2014, just six days after the rape: "Remember that everything is not in your control, and that sometimes we have problems because, well, we're just f***ing illegal."

An investigation by *The Indian Express* shows that critical elements of the new safety features that Uber boasted of after the New Delhi rape incident, are not yet in place. Example: the "panic button" that every Uber cab — like public transport buses and cabs — is meant to be fitted with is yet to be integrated with Delhi Police and State Transport Department systems even six years after the rape.

Much has been said about the "nastytech" Uber deployed during Kalanick's tenure and The Uber Files dramatically expands upon instances and circumstances of its use: there are details of how the company used tools like "greyball" and "geofencing" to keep Uber rides away from prying policemen and Government officials.

Significantly, there are 13 instances uncovered in the files about deployment of the 'Kill Switch' in several countries – an in-house label for a process that shuts down local systems to firewall them from any probe. In fact, in six cases, the records reveal, the 'Kill Switch' was used even as raids by regulators were in progress at Uber offices.

One particular email from a top Uber executive of February 2015 (in the context of anticipated tax raids in Belgium) details the modus operandi Uber used for India: how the local team appeared to be cooperative before Indian authorities even as they were actually "shut down" — courtesy the 'Kill Switch' — by Uber's headquarters.

Uber is trying to leave many of these controversies behind and in response to questions sent to the company's India head, Prabhjeet Singh, its spokesperson responded, "When Uber launched in India almost a decade ago, no ridesharing regulations existed at that time as the transportation laws did not conceive app-based ride sharing as an option. We have long championed rules and regulations that reflect changing technology and interest of cities and our customers — riders and drivers alike. As a category defining company, we applaud and support progressive regulatory change that is good for riders, drivers and cities."

Across the world, the Uber Files also underline the almost military precision with which Uber has, over the years, made friends in high places.

The company, with the help of an advisory firm had prepared a list of more than 1,850 "stakeholders" from different countries, with among whom its top brass could seek meetings. The "stakeholders" were a mixed club: public officials, bureaucrats, members of think tanks and transportation experts.

Among Uber's "close" friends, the records show, was Emmanuel Macron, who, as a then Minister in France, was clearly identified as an Uber "ally." There are several exchanges between Macron and key Uber executives, including Kalanick.

The company had also courted oligarchs who had proximity to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Some of the oligarchs who figure in the data have since been sanctioned after the invasion of Ukraine.

Uber hired former Obama aide David Plouffe (he visited India in February 2016 and met three Chief Ministers) as head of the company's global branding in 2014 and worked there till 2017.

Records show that Plouffe participated in internal email discussions on use of the 'Kill Switch' during raids on two occasions.

India on Lanka

transition of power.

Earlier, Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, said: "India is Sri Lanka's closest neighbour and our two countries share deep civilizational bonds… We are aware of the many challenges that Sri Lanka and its people have been facing, and we have stood with the Sri Lankan people as they have tried to overcome this difficult period."

"We continue to closely follow the recent developments in Sri Lanka. India stands with the people of Sri Lanka as they seek to realize their aspirations for prosperity and progress through democratic means and values, established institutions and constitutional framework," Bagchi said.

He also flagged India's "unprecedented" support of over $3.8 billion this year to Sri Lanka.

Also Sunday, the Indian High Commission in Colombo said High Commissioner Gopal Baglay met the Sri Lankan Agriculture Minister.

"Various sections, diverse demands: one partner - #India!!!!High Commissioner met the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister and informed him about the arrival of more than 44,000 MT of urea supplied under a credit line extended by India to Sri Lanka..." the Indian High Commission said.

Amarnath

possible at a time. A langar was also permitted to operate from this dry river bed.

"It was well known that the water channel there is prone to flooding, but still the planning completely lacked any thoughtfulness, especially about the weather at this time of the year. The main effort was to show numbers," said an official in the state familiar with the matter.

Sonam Lotus, Director of the J&K meteorological centre, told *The Indian Express* he could not say how much it rained in Amarnath on July 28 last year, as there was no yatra and therefore, no measuring instruments had been installed in the area.

A statement from Raj Bhavan after last year's flood said, "A joint team of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Police and Army, acting swiftly, evacuated all the staff present close to the Nallah. No loss of human lives or property is reported... As per the latest report, the Holy Cave shrine is safe. Hon'ble Home Minister Shri Amit Shah also spoke to Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, who briefed him about the present situation and efforts made by the joint team of officials, Police and Army."

This year, the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) built a two-ft-high stone wall to channel the water in the stream to prevent it from flowing into the dry bed. But on the day of the flood, within seconds, the water in the stream had risen above the low wall and engulfed the tents.

Sources familiar with the yatra arrangements said that prior to this, in 2019 and earlier, the practice was to put up tents well beyond the flood channel of the stream. An official source said last year's flash flood as well as the one in 2015 had been discussed at all official meetings and on the basis of expected water levels, it was decided to take precautionary measures such as building the embankment. But the water that suddenly gushed into the stream last Friday was beyond all calculations, said the source.

This was also the first time that the government decided to track pilgrims through Radio Frequency Identification, a wireless tracking system that consists of tags and readers. Every yatri has been given a tag. This measure was introduced in view of the potential security threat to pilgrims. After the disaster, the several missing people should have potentially been traced through their RFID tags.

Rohit Singh Sambiyal, who heads the Jammu-based service provider G Max IT Services, said so far 1,82,110 pilgrims had been tagged. He said a total of seven readers, with two antennae each, had been set up along the route.

Sambiyal said he had been providing the victims' "last known location" to the security forces, administration and rescue teams. Asked why the missing people could not be located through their tags, Sambiyal said these were "passive" RFID tags that sent locations only within the range of the antennas.

An official familiar with the RFID system for the Amarnath pilgrims said the number of readers provided was inadequate, and there was no clarity of purpose to the entire project, and the issue had been discussed at several meetings.

Another official source said the RFID tag had proved "very useful" on the day of the disaster in ascertaining how many people had crossed into the area closest to the cave. But, the source said, at many places along the route, the pilgrims were seen taking off the tag while resting, and that this could be one reason why the missing could not be tracked through RFID signals.

Calls to Nitishwar Kumar, SASB CEO and Principal Secretary to L-G Sinha, went unanswered. He did not respond to questions texted to him. The L-G's media adviser, Yatish Yadav, said he was not authorised to speak on the matter.

Goa Cong

leaders who were hobnobbing with the BJP to see that the Congress party is weakened and to engineer a split... One is the leader of our legislature party, Micheal Lobo, and the other is former chief minister Digambar Kamat," Rao said Sunday evening.

"Both these persons have been working in the background with the BJP. One person to safeguard his own skin. Because of so many cases against him and so many problems he was facing, he has compromised himself. And the other person... even if Congress has given him all positions,," he said, adding that he had brought this to the notice of the high command.

Till late in the night, the leadership in New Delhi hadn't reacted to the events in Goa, except for a tweet by Congress general secretary in charge of organisation, K C Venugopal, who said, "Hon'ble Congress President has asked Shri @MukulWasnik, MP to rush to Goa to oversee latest political developments in the state."

Rao further accused the BJP of trying to engineer a two-thirds split in the Congress by taking away "at least eight" of its 11 MLAs in the 40-member Assembly so as to dodge the anti-defection law. Claiming that as of Sunday evening, six MLAs were with the Congress, he said, "Many of our MLAs were offered huge amounts of money... But our six MLAs stood firm in spite of pressure."

The BJP has 20 MLAs in the Assembly, the Congress 11, the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and the Aam Aadmi Party two members each, the Goa Forward Party and the Revolutionary Goans Party have a member each. Besides, there are three independent MLAs. With the BJP ending up as the single largest party after the February elections, it had formed the government in the state with support from the MGP and the three Independents.

Over an hour before he called Lobo a "traitor" and a "backstabber", Rao was expected to address a press conference with him after two days of speculation over a possible split in the party. On Sunday afternoon, Lobo even met Rao at a hotel in Margao and Congress leaders visited Kamat at his home. However, at 6.45 pm, when the press conference was scheduled to start at the Congress House, only two Congress MLAs were present with Rao. By 8 pm, the number went up to five — Deputy CLP leader Sankalp Amonkar, chief whip Carlos Ferreria, working president Yuri Alemao and MLAs Rudolfo Fernandes and Altone D'costa. Senior legislator Aleixo Sequeira did not show up in Panaji but Congress leaders claimed that he was on their side.

Those who failed to turn up included Kamat, Lobo and his MLA wife Delilah, and MLAs Kedar Naik and Rajesh Faldessai. Late Sunday, Lobo and Delilah were both seen leaving Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's residence in Altinho. Lobo, who joined the Congress just ahead of the elections, was a minister in the previous BJP government.

Over the last two days, amid talk of MLAs jumping ship, Rao has been holding meetings with Congress MLAs while maintaining that the party was intact.

Late in the day, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant dismissed talk of him being in touch with Congress MLAs. Lobo, Sawant said, had called on him for a "routine meeting". He also said Union minister Bhupendra Yadav was in Goa for work related to his ministry.

Some part of the day's drama also played out in the Assembly, where the Speaker of the Goa Legislative Assembly, Ramesh Tawadkar, was in his office on a weekend. He said he was at work to prepare for the two-week monsoon session that begins Monday. Moments later, however, the legislature secretary, Namrata Ulman, issued a notification for the withdrawal of the July 8 notification for the election of the Deputy Speaker that was scheduled for July 12. The notification stated, "No nominations shall be accepted for the aforesaid election".

Late Sunday evening, Tawadkar was seen entering a hotel in Panaji. At the time of going to the press, an "emergency meeting" of the Congress legislature party was on.



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

SKYWATCH

FORECAST: July 11
Generally cloudy sky
Possibility of very light rain or drizzle

MAX: 35 (0.8° C below normal) | MIN: 27 (0.3° C below normal)



Mohammad Hadish Ansari, a daily wager, and his family continue to live in temporary sheds on the debris of their demolished home at Khori Gaon in Faridabad. *Amit Mehra*

HARDLOOK

Revisiting Khori Gaon

In July last year, hundreds of homes were razed by the Municipal Corporation of Faridabad following a Supreme Court order to clear encroachments on forest land. *The Indian Express* visits the site a year later to find several people continuing to live in the basti, amid the rubble, even as rehabilitation continues to elude many

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
GURGAON, JULY 10

AT KHORI Gaon in Faridabad, Mohammad Hadish Ansari (46) sits on a makeshift bed under a tarpaulin while his wife cooks on a wood fire in a cramped corner covered by a tin shed. Every day, he cycles to a tube well 3 km away to fetch buckets of water for his 'house', which has no fan, cooler, electricity, gas connection or water supply.

It has been close to a year since Ansari's home, along with hundreds of others in the Khori jhuggi cluster, was razed by the Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF) on the Supreme Court's directions, but he, his wife and their four children continue to live in temporary sheds on the debris of their demolished home. "*Apni 15 saal ki kamai maine iss ghar pe laga di thi... ek jhatke mein tod diya aur humein beghar kar diya* (I put 15 years of my life's earnings on this house... it was demolished in a moment, leaving us homeless)," said Ansari, a daily wager.

On June 7, 2021, the top court had directed MCF to "take all essential measures to remove encroachments on the subject forest land without any exception", giving the civic body six weeks to complete the task. It had stated that "there could not be compromise or concession on forest land", and that "land grabbers cannot take refuge in the rule of law" and talk of "fairness".

Demolitions had started at Khori on July 14, 2021, and locals and activists claimed at least 10,000 residential units were razed. The MCF had said those evicted would be rehabilitated as per government policy and given EWS (economically weaker section) flats in Dabua Colony and Bapu Nagar in Faridabad. However, one year on, the civic body has given allotment letters to only 1,009 eligible people and a majority is yet to move into the flats.

Staying put

A native of Bihar's Chhapra, Ansari had purchased a 65 square yard plot in Khori for Rs 70,000 in 2006 and built a house. Over the years, he claims to have spent over Rs 5 lakh on maintenance. He claimed: "When I bought it, I did not know it was on forest land. The mining mafia that used to operate here sold plots to thousands. Over the years, we paid police and officials, who looked the other way... We got our documents and voter IDs made on these addresses — some in Delhi, some in Haryana. Many such colonies came up illegally in Delhi... *wo ab pakke ho gaye hain* (They have become regularised now). We had assumed the same would happen here."

At Khori — a colony of encroached settlements in Aravalli forests — several like Ansari, who are mostly migrants engaged in daily wage jobs, continue to stay put in temporary plastic sheds at the basti spread over 170 acres across Delhi and Haryana on forest land. Some have rented 15-20 square yard flats in Lal Kuan and neighbouring colonies, but only to shift their belongings.

"We are poor. After our house was razed, we could only afford to rent a tiny room for Rs 2,300 a month. It cannot accommodate a family of six. So, we have kept our belongings there. The children sleep in the room when it rains, while we stay here amid the debris," said a woman who settled in Khori in 2012.

Shyam Singh (69) sold his plot in his village in Bihar's Saharsa and moved to Khori in 2010. After securing a job with a contractor of a private security company, he purchased a plot in Khori for Rs 2 lakh and built a house. In 2014, a paralytic attack left him bedridden and without work. Singh said he has no money now to rent a space.

"I am destitute. With the house, the last bit of my assets were gone. I sold bricks of my partially demolished house to get by. I have been sleeping in the open under a tarpaulin where my house stood since. When police and MCF officials come to remove encroachments, I hide behind a tree. Where do I go? It has been a year and the process of rehabilitation is still going on. No compensation has been given. *Hamara ghar giraane se pehle humein flat dena chahiye tha* (They should have allotted us a flat before demolishing our houses). I will die here," he said.

Many said they had filled forms and submitted documents to authorities and on the e-portal, but their documents were rejected due to discrepancies. "My Aadhaar card was issued on a Delhi address since my children were studying in a school there. Now, I am not eligible under the rehabilitation scheme," said a woman.

A senior MCF official said 500 of the 1,009 found eligible have taken allotment letters but only 130 people have paid the deposit and submitted an undertaking for taking possession. "For the remaining 4,840 applications, we asked them to submit their documents again and had set up camps for the same from June 20-29. We are reaching out to eligible allottees to take possession, but many are not coming forward. We have noticed people are reluctant to pay the sum."

Regarding people encroaching forest land again, MCF officials said that they have been conducting enforcement drives regularly and removing the encroachments. "Only a few people have built temporary sheds and during our enforcement drives, we are clearing them," the official said.

Police, meanwhile, denied allegations of connivance of officers with the land mafia. A Faridabad police officer said, "It has been alleged that the land mafia used fake power of attorneys to sell land to settlers at Khori. They offered them land at cheap rates and dealers gave them fake land deeds and bills. A probe is going on. We have not received any complaint of a police officer being involved in the nexus."

Police said that in July 2021, they had registered 25 FIRs against at least 30 people for fraudulently selling government land to Khori residents after they had filed complaints alleging that land mafia had sold them government land and taken money from them.

Balraj, SHO, Surajkund police station, said, "As part of the probe, an SIT was formed a while ago. No arrests have been made so far. The chargesheet is yet to be filed."





1,776 flats in Dabua Colony are to be used for rehabilitation. *Amit Mehra*

A YEAR ON

JUNE 7, 2021: Supreme Court directs MCF to remove encroachments from forest land 'without exception' within six weeks

JULY 14, 2021: Demolitions begin in Khori.

■ MCF identified 6,663 units/structures by numbering terraces in a drone survey as per a status report filed in Oct 2021 in SC

MARCH 31, 2022: SC directs MCF to pay solatium of Rs 2,000 per month to eligible persons until flats are allotted

APRIL 2022: 1,009 identified for allotment; 4,840 applications to be verified for documentation for eligibility

CURRENT STATUS: 500 have taken provisional allotment letters, of which 130 have paid deposit for possession of flats; 600 have been paid solatium of Rs 2,000 per month

FLATS TO BE USED REHABILITATION

1,776 IN DABUA COLONY

779 IN BAPU NAGAR

Rehabilitation status

The MCF had carried out a drone survey of unauthorised structures in Khori, which identified a total of 6,663 units/structures by numbering the terraces as counted from drone pictures. In a status report filed before the apex court in October 2021, the MCF said the survey was carried out to plan a phased demolition drive and amid resistance to a physical survey by residents.

As per the housing plan for rehabilitation of Khori jhuggi dwellers, they were supposed to be allotted EWS flats in Dabua Colony and Bapu Nagar. The earlier criteria stated that residents with an annual income of up to Rs 3 lakh were eligible if they fulfilled one of the three conditions — if the name of the head of the family is registered in the voter list of Badhkal assembly constituency as of January 1, 2021; if the head of the family has an ID card issued by Haryana as of January 1, 2021; and if any member of the family has an electricity connection issued by DHBVN.

As per the earlier criteria, those who qualify will be given flats worth Rs 3,77,500, for a deposit of Rs 17,000 within 15 days of allotment, and monthly installments of Rs 2,500 for 15 years. The deposit was later amended to Rs 10,000 and monthly installments of Rs 1,950 per month for 20 years.

On March 31, while questioning the MCF over the alleged delay in readying alternate accommodation, the Supreme Court had directed the civic body to pay a solatium amount of Rs 2,000 per month to eligible persons until flats are allotted to them. It had also asked the corporation to complete the allotment before April 30.

The status report filed in court in April 2022 said that with regard to repair and maintenance of EWS flats in Dabua Colony and Bapu Nagar, interior work for retrofitting, maintenance and rectification has been awarded by MCF in February 2022 and repairs were being done on 'war footing'. "The corporation is in a position to hand over possession of 852 flats in Dabua Colony with complete habitable amenities by April 30 to allottees," it said.

'Flats too far, in poor shape'

At Dabua Colony, some of the flats provisionally allotted to Khori residents were found vacant, with only a few families moving in. A few flats lacked basic amenities with window panes, doors, sanitary fittings missing and seepage in walls.

Umesh Kumar, an autorickshaw driver, said he moved into a flat last month: "Water and power connections are yet to be set up. The room is quite small, but what choice do I have? It is better than not having a roof above your head. Those still staying in Khori are living on hope."

Govind Singh, a vegetable vendor, added, "The government has offered to put us up in EWS flats in Dabua Colony, which is over 16 km from here. We don't know if we will find jobs there. Many here are employed in daily wage work and cannot commute such long distances. Our children study in the government school in Railway colony and a primary government school in Lal Kuan. We had a sense of community here. How can we suddenly shift?"

Vimal Bhai, from Team Saathi, a group of activists and academics working for people's rights, and who have been helping Khori Gaon residents, said: "It is sad that the government is thinking of rehabilitation after conducting the demolition. Poor people lost their homes which they had built with their savings and now they are being asked to pay to move into uninhabitable flats. This is not rehabilitation. One year has elapsed and flats are yet to be handed over to many."

Two MCF officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the flats in Dabua colony were habitable. "Since a majority of allottees are yet to take possession, the flats may require some cleaning but they are habitable. The department will facilitate the process for residents to apply for electricity and water connections. Other works of repair and maintenance are being completed," said an official.

"The rehabilitation policy has been made so restrictive that it excludes the majority. Out of approximately 10,000 families, only 5,813 filled the rehabilitation forms by November 2021. From that list, they have accepted 1,009 families. And now, the committee hearing process will add probably 400 or so. So from 10,000 families, a mere 14% will be considered eligible," said Ishita Chatterjee, an independent researcher who works on informal urbanism, housing rights and urban citizenship.

Rain continues to elude Delhi, light showers on forecast

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

DELHI IS likely to get only light or very light rain over the coming week, according to the India Meteorological Department. While the forecast for Sunday earlier was of moderate rain, it was later modified to light rain.

Parts of UP and Haryana have been receiving moderate to heavy rainfall over the past few days, but Delhi has remained largely dry. A few parts of Delhi, such as Palam and Ayanagar, received trace rainfall on Sunday while Jafarpur received 4 mm of rain. The rest of the city remained dry.



The city recorded a maximum temperature of 34.9 degrees Celsius on Sunday. *Archive*

The city recorded a maximum temperature of 34.9 degrees Celsius, a degree below normal. The minimum was 27.5 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the year. The humidity, however, was between 66% and 89%, making the day muggy and uncomfortable.

According to IMD, Delhi has received 89.2 mm of rain (city average) since June 1 this year, which is when monsoon arrives in Kerala. This is a deficit of 15%, which as per the IMD is normal deviation.

Monsoon reached Delhi on June 30 — three days behind schedule — and received heavy rainfall for a couple of days after. Since then, however, the city has received only light rainfall or traces. July and August are the rainiest months for Delhi. While July sees around 187 mm of rain in July, August sees 232.5 mm.

According to the IMD forecast, the maximum temperature is expected to be between 35 and 36 degrees Celsius in the coming week, and the city will see only light rain or thundershowers.

Work begins on 1,500 rainwater harvesting pits, PWD floats tenders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS of Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, the Public Works Department has begun work to construct rainwater harvesting pits to conserve water and improve groundwater levels to meet the city's water needs.

According to officials, the department has floated tenders for its construction at Aurobindo Marg and various other locations including Southwest, Southeast, Northeast, Northwest and other districts. "In Southwest Delhi, the department is planning to construct around 12 rainwater harvesting pits. In other districts, as many pits or more will be developed, and more than 1,500 new rainwater harvesting pits will be developed in total by different road-owning and civic agencies," said a senior PWD official. Currently, Delhi has around 927 rainwater harvesting pits.

Meanwhile, the New Delhi Municipal Council, which has under its jurisdiction New Delhi and Lutyens Delhi areas, is also developing modular rainwater harvesting pits apart from conventional pits. NDMC vice-chairman Satish Upadhyay said these are cost-effective, take a shorter time to install and require less maintenance.

CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS 41,102

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 142
OXYGEN SUPPORT 39
VENTILATOR SUPPORT 2

DELHI TOTAL CASES 19,40,735

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	9,469	9,318
ICU BEDS	2,116	2,064

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
July 9	544	607	2	16,158
July 10	433	549	2	14,623
Total	2,146*	19,12,305	26,284	3,92,22,651

*Total active cases in Delhi

NOIDA	July 9	July 10
Cases	N/A	N/A
Deaths	N/A	N/A

GURGAON		
Cases	196	142
Deaths	0	0

Delimitation panel to use digitised maps, rope in MCD employees to redraw ward boundaries

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

WITH A three-member delimitation commission being formed by the MHA to redraw boundaries of wards, in a step towards holding MCD elections, it would be a race against time to finish the exercise within the four-month deadline.

Officials privy to the commission's functioning said services of Geospatial Delhi Limited, which has digitised maps of each area of the national capital, would be used. To carry out a ground survey, a senior official said municipal staff will be roped in to expedite the process.

Sources said the commission will submit a draft of boundaries being redrawn and recommended number of wards, which it will be released in the public domain to seek suggestions and objections from MPs, MLAs, councilors and RWAs.

"After considering objections and suggestions, and taking into consideration genuine ones, a revision will be done," the official said.



There are currently 272 wards — 104 each in the erstwhile North and South corporations and 64 in the East. *Archive*

He said normally the whole process takes at least a year, but the commission would try to finish it in a time-bound manner using services of municipal staff.

Following the announcement, a war of words ensued between the AAP and BJP. CM Arvind Kejriwal tweeted on Saturday, "We are happy that the central government has constituted a committee for ward delimitation of MCD. But no order was made on how many wards there would be in Delhi. Then how will this committee work?"

To which Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor responded, "Till yesterday, AAP leaders were crying and asking when the Centre will form a delimitation committee... now when it has been announced, they are crying about why its terms and conditions have not been issued. They should understand that now that the committee has been formed, the MHA will duly issue its terms and conditions on the number of wards, which will not exceed 250."

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta, while hailing the home ministry's decision, said this step will go a long way in strengthening the unified corporation and benefit Delhiites. "Now the corporation will be able to function more smoothly," he said.

The MCD polls, originally scheduled for April, were put off hours before the election schedule was to be announced. The election was called off as the BJP-led central government planned to unify the MCDs and conduct delimitation to decrease the number of wards.

As per the Delhi Municipal Corporation Amendment Act, the number of seats in the unified corporation will not be more than 250. There are currently 272 wards — 104 each in the erstwhile North and South corporations and 64 in the East corporation.

The three members of the commission include Vijay Dev, State Election Commissioner of Delhi, who will be the Chairman; Pankaj Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, MoHUA, Government of India; and Randhir Sahay, Additional Commissioner, MCD.

EXPLAINED

Last such exercise

IN THE previous delimitation exercise, which was started in 2015 and completed in 2017, the average population of each ward was to be 60,000 with a variation of 10% to 15%. It was also specified that the ward should lie within an assembly constituency. A colony or slum cluster could not fall in two different wards and each ward had to be clearly defined along roads/ drains/railway lines so that there is no confusion, as per the process.

Wife, ex-wife, daughter held for hiring shooter to kill DTC employee

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

DAYS AFTER a 45-year-old Delhi Transport Corporation employee was gunned down while heading home with his wife and 9-year-old son, police have arrested three people — his wife, his ex-wife and her daughter for allegedly planning the murder. Police said the women were caught after police recovered a deleted photo of the victim's bike from his wife's phone.

The victim, Sanjeev Kumar, was fired at by two bike-borne assailants on July 6. Police said the accused, identified as Geeta (54), the first wife of the victim, her daughter Komal (21), and the second wife, Geeta alias Najma (28), had been planning the murder for two-three years.

DCP (Southeast) Esha Pandey said, "Najma told us that her husband died in a road accident in Govindpuri. She didn't say anything about his gunshot injuries. On questioning, she said Kumar had a tiff with other DTC workers and some of them had threatened to shoot him."

Police questioned Kumar's colleagues but could not find any leads. It was then that they suspected Najma and seized her phone. "We found a deleted photo from July 5. Najma had taken a photo of Kumar's bike's number plate and deleted it on the same day, which was suspicious. After we detained and questioned her again, she confessed," said DCP Pandey.

Najma revealed that Kumar was married earlier and that his first wife lives with their three children in Dakshinpuri. Najma said she found out about Geeta around two-three years ago and tried contacting her. Geeta then sent a phone to Najma through Komal so they could be in touch, police said.

"Najma complained that Kumar was abusive and would hit her. She hid the phone at her neighbour's house. The women hatched a plan to kill Kumar and seize his property," said police on her alleged confession.

Over the next two years, police said the women contacted Najma's cousin to find a contract killer. He finally found a sharpshooter who was paid Rs 15 lakh, police said.

On July 5, Najma sent the photo of the number plate to the sharpshooter and asked him to allegedly kill Kumar the next day. "The shooter and Najma's cousin came to Govindpuri on a bike and followed Kumar. Near Govindpuri, the former pulled out his pistol and fired. The duo fled and are still on the run. We are looking for them," added the DCP.

BRIEFLY

Local gangster arrested for shooting dead builder

New Delhi: Days after a 40-year-old builder was shot dead outside his office in Paschim Vihar, the Crime Branch arrested a man. Police said the accused, Deepanshu, is a member of a local gang and allegedly claimed that he killed the victim for "refusing to sell weapons to him". During questioning, Deepanshu told police that he got involved with local gangsters in 2015-16. He had also met the victim inside jail.

Elderly woman killed: 4 held

New Delhi: A day after a juvenile was apprehended for allegedly killing his 84-year-old relative over her refusal to give him money, four others were arrested for their alleged involvement. Police said the accused had allegedly encouraged the juvenile to commit the crime to repay a loan they had given him.

Survey of five markets under revamp project

New Delhi: On the heels of its proposal to redevelop five popular markets, the government will conduct an online survey of traders at the markets to take stock of facilities they lack. Kamla Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, Khari Baoli spice market, Lajpat Nagar and Kirti Nagar furniture markets are the five markets that will get a facelift. ENS



NO ENTRY

The Pragati Maidan tunnel remains closed on Sunday. The tunnel was to be closed to vehicles on Sunday but open for pedestrians to enjoy the murals inside. *Abhinav Saha*

2 underpasses on Mathura Road remain shut after inauguration

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

OF THE five underpasses part of Pragati Maidan Corridor project inaugurated by the Prime Minister on June 19, two on Mathura Road are yet to be opened to the public. According to the Public Works Department (PWD), the underpasses are being opened in a phased manner so that commuters don't get confused by the routes.

The project comprises a 1.3-km-long tunnel and six underpasses, of which five are on Mathura Road. Three underpasses on Mathura Road — at Bhairon Marg, DPS, and Sher Shah Suri Road — are operational. Two underpasses situated between Pura Quila and NSIC Sports Club, and Bhagwan Das Road respectively are yet to be opened for traffic. The sixth underpass on the Bhairon Marg intersection is under construction.

When asked about the closure, an official from ITPO — which helmed the redevelopment project — said, "The Pragati Maidan tunnel and five underpasses were opened to decongest traffic. This kind of a facility has been opened for the first time. Even when a single underpass is opened anywhere, it takes time for commuters to understand the route. As these are five underpasses, they cannot be opened in one go. To avoid confusion, it has been decided to open them in a phased manner."

Officials now plan to open the underpasses in the coming days.

Last week, the underpass on Bhagwan Das Road was waterlogged following the rain. An official had said: "The underpass is near residential areas — about four-five houses are close by and there is a problem of waterlogging... water has to be pumped out to through sumps situated inside."

A PWD official also commented on the closure, saying: "Traffic police asked us not to open the underpasses as commuters will get confused. So, it will be opened soon after consulting with them." However, DCP (Traffic) Aalap Patel had earlier said traffic police have not issued any order for closure of the underpasses on Mathura Road.

On Sunday, the DCP said, "We have not got any timeline so far for opening these two underpasses. Once the PWD informs us, traffic will be permitted on the stretch."

STATUS OF 6 UNDERPASSES

Open
- Near DPS, Mathura Road
- Near Sher Shah Suri Road
- At Bhairon Marg

Not Open
- Near Purana Quila Road and Mathura Road T junction
- Supreme Court near Bhagwan Das road

Under Construction
- Near Bhairon Marg and Ring Road T junction

1,000 applications pending for SC/ST/OBC scholarships, education dept pulled up

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

WITH MORE than 1,000 applications for various scholarships to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes students left pending after the end of the 2021-2022 financial year, the SC/ST/OBC Welfare department pulled up the education department over the delay.

In a letter to the Director of Education, the Secretary of Delhi government's Department for the Welfare of SC/ST/OBC said that a review of implementation of programmes for the socio-economic development of SCs and STs showed a large number of scholarship applications pending disposal.

The Welfare department has found that there were 918 pending applications for reimbursement of private school tuition fees for 2021-2022. In the same year, there were 397 pending applications for the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC and 20 for the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC.

"As 2021-22 is already over and the scholarship for the year should have been disbursed to beneficiaries much earlier, it requires urgent attention to ensure that all pending applications are verified immediately and forwarded to this department to avoid further delay in disbursement of benefits to the eligible beneficiaries," states the letter.

Information on the implementation of these scholarships was checked by the Welfare department after it had been sought as part of the Parliamentary Committee on SC/ST examination of the "Implementation of reservation policy in States and Union Territories including socio-economic development of SC/ST".

Following this, the DoE has written to the heads of all schools pulling them up for not completing the online verification of these applications.

Constable 'slaps' boy for skateboarding, faces action

New Delhi: An argument between a group of boys and a policeman over skateboarding in Southwest Delhi's Safdarjung Enclave on Friday escalated after the latter allegedly slapped one of them.

A video doing the rounds on social media shows the policeman slapping a boy while arguing with him. Police said disciplinary action has been taken against the constable, Ajeet Singh, for his conduct,

According to police, complaints had been received about some boys skateboarding and creating a nuisance in Safdarjung Enclave's B6 Market Enclave. Police said residents were disturbed by this, with one person even sustaining injuries, and beat staff were instructed to stop the skateboarding.

Police added that the constable in question was on duty on Friday and had asked the boys not to skateboard in the area as it was dangerous for residents. This escalated insto an argument, after which he slapped one of the boys.

Manoj C, DCP (Southwest), said: "The boys began arguing with the beat constable. He slapped one of them to control them. Disciplinary action has been taken against the constable for his conduct."

Delhi Police also said in a tweet: "We have taken cognizance of an incident of misbehaviour by a constable with a minor boy..." ENS

Advertisement for recruitment of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Atal Incubation Centre (AIC), Anushaktinagar, Mumbai

Advertisement No.–AIC- Anushaktinagar /Recruitment/2021/01

(This is the second advertisment for the Post)

An Incubation Centre is being established at Anushaktinagar, Mumbai under the auspices of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) – NITI Aayog.

Applications are invited from Indian nationals for the following position of this Incubation Centre:

1)	Job Title	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
2)	Location of posting	Mumbai, Maharashtra
3)	Number of Posts	1 (One)
4)	Nature of post	The vacancy is to be filled up purely on fixed term basis initially for one year, however, it is extendable further subject to satisfactory performance and requirement at the Incubation Centre, for 2 (two) years at a time.
5)	Age limit	Not more than 50 years (Male Candidates)/ 52 years (Female Candidates) as on the last date of submission of application
6)	Remuneration	Rs 1,50,000/- per month/ Rs. 18 lakhs per annum (all inclusive) with performance based annual increment

Further details regarding Job description, Responsibilities, Qualification, Experience, Eligibility Criteria, Selection Process, Terms & conditions and format of the Application Form, may be accessed and downloaded from

https://barc.gov.in/careers/vacancy16.pdf **Scan-->**

Duly completed application form along with the supporting documents may be sent by Indian speed post/ registered post ONLY to the address given in the form so as to reach us on or before **12th August 2022**

PLEASE NOTE:

1. **Application forms sent through any other mode such as through email, private courier OR hand delivery will NOT be accepted.**
2. **This is NOT an appointment in Government Organization. It is a proposed self financed Centre and appointment is purely on CONTRACT basis.**

GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI : TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
POLLUTION CONTROL DIVISION
5/9 UNDER HILL ROAD DELHI-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

ATTENTION: VEHICLE OWNERS PLYING VEHICLES WITHOUT MANDATORY POLLUTION CONTROL CERTIFICATE

The Transport Department, Govt. Of NCT of Delhi in its ongoing efforts to control pollution and improve Air Quality in Delhi requests all motor vehicle owners in Delhi in get valid Pollution under Control Certificate (PUCC) for their vehicles.

The department is going to issue challan of the vehicles whose PUC certificate has been expired. The challan will be issued under section 190 (2) of Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 as per which failure to possess PUCC may lead to imprisonment up to 03 months or fine up to Rs. 10,000/- or with both. They will also be disqalified to hold their license for 03 months.

All Registered vehicle owners whose vehicle are more than 01-year-old from the date of registration (except electric/ battery driven vehicles) are here by directed to get their vehicle checked and obtain the PUC certificate to avoid fine.

The list of authorized pollution checking centres is available at the website of this department (**www.https://transport.delhi.gov.in**).

Sd/-
Dy. Commissioner (PCD)
Transport Department

DIP/Shabdarth/0130/22-23

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



TRAVEL PUT OFF

AFTER THE Covid pandemic, monkey pox fear is now ruining travel plans of ministers and officials, who had just resumed hectic activities in their respective ministries. The fear over the monkey pox threat in San Francisco has caused disruptions in the proposed official visit of Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology. Chandrasekhar was expected to visit the city during the SEMICON West 2022, which is to be held from July 12-14. But he had to postpone the visit after a number of top management executives of Asian semiconductor companies deferred their travel to the US to August due to worries over monkey pox and a fresh wave of Covid.

MOVING OUT

TWO DAYS after he resigned as Union Minister of Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi vacated his official residence, 7 Safdarjung Road on Sunday. The type 8 bungalow, which are allotted to Cabinet ministers, saw a stream of well-wishers and supporters arrive to wish the Modi government's only minority face before he left in the evening. Naqvi has moved to a personal flat in Delhi. His close aides say he had at least six months before needing to vacate the bungalow. With many others keeping their bungalows for years even after leaving their official positions, Naqvi's quick release of his official residence has come as a surprise to many. For now, Naqvi is keeping his future plans close to chest.

THE EMBLEM

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will inaugurate the State Emblem atop the new Parliament building on Monday at a low-key function at be attended by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri among others. Last month, the Ashoka Emblem was placed atop the under-construction building. The metal sculpture was built by artists Sunil Deore and Lakshman Vyas. The earlier design incorporated a spire atop the building. It was replaced with the Ashoka Emblem in 2020. Work on the new Parliament, a ground plus two-storey triangular-shaped building, is expected to be completed before the Winter Session of Parliament.

PM invokes Goddess Kali: Her blessings always with India

BJP targets Trinamool over Mahua remarks; she hits back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 10

AMID THE controversy surrounding Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra's remarks on a film poster featuring Goddess Kali, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday invoked the Hindu deity during a speech at an event organised by the Ramakrishna Mission, triggering a fresh war of words between the TMC and BJP.

Virtually addressing the centenary celebrations of 15th president of Ramakrishna Math, Swami Atmasthananda, the Prime Minister said that "blessings of Maa Kali are always with the country, which is moving ahead with a spiritual energy for the welfare of the world".

"Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa was one such saint who had a vision of Maa Kali and had surrendered his whole being at the feet of Maa Kali. He used to say this world, everything is pervaded by the consciousness of Goddess Kali. This consciousness is visible in the Kali Puja of Bengal. This consciousness is visible in the faith of Bengal and the country."

The PM then went on to say: "Whenever I had the opportunity, I visited Belur Math and Dakhineshwar Kali temple. It is natural to feel a connection. When your faith and beliefs are pure, the power herself shows you the way. The limitless blessings of Maa Kali are always with India."



PM Narendra Modi digitally addresses centenary celebrations of Swami Atmasthananda, in New Delhi, Sunday. *PTI*

With the PM invoking Goddess Kali, the BJP leaders took the opportunity to hit out at the Trinamool Congress and its MP Mahua Moitra. "PM Narendra Modi speaks reverentially about Maa Kali being the centre of devotion, not just for Bengal but the whole of India. On the other hand, a TMC MP insults Maa Kali, and instead of acting against her, (TMC chief) Mamata Banerjee defends her obnoxious portrayal of Maa Kali," tweeted BJP's IT cell chief Amit Malviya.

Soon, the TMC MP hit out at the PM and Malviya. "Would advise BJP's troll-in-charge for Bengal to tell his masters to stop commenting on things they have no clue about. Didi-O-Didi got them the boot. Now, Maa-O-Maa will get them a foot on their chest," Moitra tweeted, referring to PM's 'Didi-O-Didi' jibe at Mamata Banerjee during the last year's Assembly election campaign.

Senior TMC leader and party MP Sougata Roy also hit out at the PM. "The PM does not know about Kali Puja. He may have come one or two times to Belur Math or Dakshineswar, but how would he know about Kali puja… Mamata Banerjee has Kali thakur in her residence and she does Kali puja. So, we are not going to take lessons of Kali puja from the BJP," Roy said.

CPI(M) MP Bikash Bhattacharya also slammed the PM for invoking religion. "The PM should talk about the Constitution. Instead, he is speaking on a particular religion and invoking God. Our Constitution tells us to safeguard all the religions, and the Prime Minister should echo the Constitution."

State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the PM should talk about welfare of people instead of religion. "CM (Mamata Banerjee) should also talk about welfare and development of people. Instead of that, both are saying either Ram or Allah. Because they are not interested in development and welfare of the country," he said.

Modi pushes for natural farming

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

NATURAL FARMING feeds millions and also "protects" people from "deadly diseases caused by pesticides and chemicals", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a conclave on Sunday where he asserted that it is also a means of "economic success".

Addressing a natural farming conclave organised in Surat via video link, Modi discussed the growth of natural farming in Gujarat and said the "Surat model" of natural farming could become a model for the whole country.

In Surat, the PM said, village committees, taluka committees and district committees were formed to select 75 farmers from each village panchayat to get into natural farming. This, he added, resulted in more than 40,000 farmers from over 550 panchayats taking up natural farming in a short span of time.

Modi also mentioned the five-km natural farming corridor being developed along both banks of the river Ganga. Such corridors can also be developed on the banks of the Tapi and the Narmada rivers, Modi said. He also said the government linked natural farming with the Namami Gange Programme.

Bishnoi set to join BJP, tweets photos of meet with Shah, Nadda

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, JULY 10

A MONTH after the Congress in Haryana removed Kuldeep Bishnoi from all party posts for cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections, the MLA from Adampur tweeted Sunday pictures of his meetings in New Delhi with senior BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the party's national president JP Nadda. He also removed the pictures of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi from his Twitter account this morning, all but confirming that he is set to leave the Congress and join the BJP.

"It was a real honor and a pleasure to meet Mr @amitshah ji. A true statesman, I felt his aura and charisma in my interactions with him. His vision for India is awe-inspiring," Bishnoi said in a tweet in Hindi.

According to the Congress, Bishnoi did not vote for Ajay Maken, the party's candidate from Haryana and cross-voted in favour of the BJP-Jannayak Janta Party (JJP)-backed Independent candidate Kartikeya Sharma, who eventually edged out Maken in the Rajya Sabha polls held on June 10.

Bishnoi's decision not to vote for the Congress came after the party sidelined him in favour of naming Udai Bhan, a Bhupinder Hooda loyalist, as the Haryana Congress president. Bishnoi was not even considered for the post of four working presidents. In an interview to *The Indian Express*, he took a jibe at Rahul Gandhi, calling him "an inaccessible leader who takes decisions under pressure."



Home Minister Amit Shah with expelled Congress leader Kuldeep Bishnoi. *PTI*

Bishnoi, A four-time MLA and a two-time MP, was widely expected to quit the Congress ever since. He said he was being approached by the BJP, Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) but had yet to announce his choice. Bishnoi though ruled out joining the JJP, which he dubbed a "choti-moti party" (a small party).

Sources close to Bishnoi had earlier told *The Indian Express* that he was yet to make up his mind on whether to revive his own Haryana Janhit Congress or join the BJP. Over the last month, Bishnoi issued statements that he would announce his next course of action after talking to his supporters.

Lanka crisis: Cong expresses solidarity with the people

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

AS SRI Lanka reels under its worst ever political and economic crisis, the Congress on Sunday hoped that New Delhi will continue to assist the people and government of Sri Lanka as they deal with the difficulties of the current situation.

The main opposition party expressed its solidarity with Sri Lanka and its people in the "moment of grave crisis" and hoped that they will be able to overcome it. "The Indian National Congress has been following with concern the evolving political situation in Sri Lanka. The economic challenges, rising prices and shortage of food, fuel and essential commodities have caused enormous hardships and distress among the people there," Congress president Sonia Gandhi said.

She expressed solidarity with Sri Lanka and its people in the moment of grave crisis and hoped they will be able to overcome it.

"We hope that India will continue to assist Sri Lanka as they deal with difficulties of the current situation," she said. She also urged the international community to extend all help to Sri Lanka.

Babul appointed TMC's national spokesperson

Kolkata: Singer-turned politician Babul Supriyo, who recently joined Trinamool Congress, has been appointed the party's national spokesperson.

In a tweet, he thanked TMC chief Mamata Banerjee and party MP Abhishek Banerjee. "My sincere gratitude to Hon'ble Didi MamataOfficial & @abhishekaitc for appointing/including me in the illustrious Team of National Spokespersons of @AITCofficial. Shall do my very best to live up to the responsibility entrusted upon me." (sic) Sources said the party will use Supriyo's experience ahead of the 2024 elections. **ENS**

Would fight next elections under MVA: Pawar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 10

NATIONALIST CONGRESS Party (NCP) patriarch and president Sharad Pawar has said he would like to fight the next elections under the aegis of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), the alliance of the Shiv Sena, NCP and the Congress which lost power following a split and rebellion in the Sena ranks engineered by senior leader and current chief minister Eknath Shinde.

Pawar also claimed that his party was not consulted before Aurangabad and Osmanabad districts were renamed as Sambhajinagar and Dharashiv respectively. The renaming of these districts was the last executive decision taken by ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray before demitting office.

At a press meet in Aurangabad on Sunday, Pawar said it was his personal opinion that the elections must be held under the banner of the MVA, but he would have to consult his party colleagues and later, alliance partners Congress and the Shiv Sena for a collective decision in the matter.

Pawar said the proposal to rename Aurangabad and Osmanabad was placed before the cabinet at the last moment and his party was not consulted. This was not the government's agenda and the CM's decision was final, he added. He said he would have been happier if many problems plaguing Aurangabad had been solved instead. Taking a dig at Governor BS Koshyari, Pawar said unlike MVA tenure when he sat on the Speaker's election for over a year, he sanctioned the same in two days after the fall of the Uddhav government.



Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and his wife Lata Shinde perform a puja at Vitthal Rukmini temple, on the occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi, in Pandharpur, Sunday. *PTI*

Rebelled not for ministerial berth, but for ideology: Shinde

ENS & PTI
PUNE, JULY 10

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister Eknath Shinde and his wife performed a 'maha puja' of Lord Vitthal and Goddess Rukmini at a famous temple in Pandharpur town on Sunday on the occasion of 'Ashadhi Ekadashi'. The CM sought God's blessings for the prosperity of society even as he added that his government was that of the common man.

Addressing a gathering later, Shinde said he would reveal his "experience of the last two and a half years" in the then MVA government at an appropriate time. "...I revealed part of it during my speech in the Assembly last week…Warkaris (pilgrims) never attack anyone but we suffered assault from our own people. We had to suffer in silence," he said.

On heavy rain lashing the state, he said, "The state machinery is active to ensure there is no loss of life or property."

"The state government is exploring how rainwater from rivers in western part of the state, which goes waste into the sea, can be diverted to drought-affected regions of Marathwada," he said.

The CM said he got the opportunity to perform the pooja of Lord Vitthal because of the blessings of people of the state. "With the thoughts of (late Sena founder) Balasaheb Thackeray, the teachings of Anand Dighe, the blessings of all the people, and the support of 50 MLAs [who followed him in his rebellion against the Sena leadership last month], I got to see this day," he said.

Shinde also tried to clarify that the rebellion was not meant for personal gains but was over ideologies. "We have not rebelled for the sake of ministerial berths. We have rebelled because our ideology was being compromised. Instead of analysing why we were forced to take the decision, I was criticised strongly. However, I don't stoop low…I work more and speak less," he said.

Stating that the rebellion by the Shiv Sainiks was not an ordinary one, Shinde said, "It is not as simple as it seems. As many as 50 MLAs, including 40 from Shiv Sena, showed faith in me. This is historic. As per my information, as many as 33 countries have taken note of the rebellion…."

Aaditya: Despite betrayal by some, grassroots workers still with Sena

VALLABH OZARKAR
MUMBAI, JULY 10

FORMER MAHARASHTRA minister and Shiv Sena's youth wing (Yuva Sena) president Aaditya Thackeray on Sunday said that the doors of Matoshree are open for legislators who wish to return, stressing that the grassroots workers were still with the party "despite betrayal by the rebel MLAs on whom the party trusted".

Matoshree is the private residence of the Thackeray family.

To reach out to the party cadre at the grassroots level, Aaditya began a Nishtha (loyalty) Yatra on Friday as part of which he will visit all shakhas of the Sena across Mumbai. On Sunday, Aaditya visited Shiv Sena shakhas in Borivali, Dahisar and Magathane and interacted with the workers.

Addressing party workers in Dahisar, Aaditya said the rebel legislators took advantage of ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray's illness and betrayed the party for their own "monstrous ambitions".

He said, "These people (rebel MLAs) showed that good people have no place in politics. But I want to show that even good people have a place in politics. Even as these people have betrayed us, the grassroots of the party are still with us and in each constituency, we have two-three formidable Shiv Sainiks…men and women who are ready to take on rivals at the hustings," the first-time MLA said.

Meanwhile, Aaditya also joined those protesting the shifting of Metro car shed back to Aarey. Calling Aarey "a unique forest within the city", he said, "(Former CM) Uddhav Thackeray ji declared 808 acres of Aarey as forest and the car shed must move out (of there)."



Aaditya Thackeray at a protest against the proposed metro car shed project in Aarey forest area, in Mumbai, Sunday. *Express*

HARYANA

Hooda: Complete breakdown in law and order

Chandigarh: Former CM and leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda Sunday said law and order in Haryana had collapsed under the BJP-JJP government.

Haryana has become a refuge for criminals, thanks to the current regime where neither the common man is feeling safe nor the MLAs, Hooda alleged. "Six MLAs of the state have received death threats, but police have not been able to do anything. Due to unsafe environment, industrialists are reluctant to invest here," he said.

On Saturday, five men barged into the Pataudi house of Badli's Congress MLA Kuldeep Vats. They roughed up his cook and threatened to set the MLA right. Four other Congress leaders had also received threat messages. **ENS**

ROW OVER CPM LEADER'S CONSTITUTION REMARK

A bout on the side between RSS, Congress leader Satheesan

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 10

THE ROW over CPI(M) leader Saji Cheriyan's remarks on the Constitution, which led to his stepping down as minister last week, has now escalated as a war of words between the RSS and the Congress.

While targeting Cheriyan over his controversial remarks on the Constitution, Congress leader Satheesan alleged that the CPI(M) leader had reiterated what Golwalkar stated in his "Bunch of Thoughts" and that Cheriyan shared the RSS leader's ideology. "Who does not know that the approach of Cheriyan towards the Indian Constitution is the same as that of the RSS," Satheshan, the Leader of the Opposition, had said.

The RSS state committee on Saturday responded by serving a notice to Satheesan and warning of legal action if he failed to retract his statement.

In an outburst against the Constitution at a party function, Cheriyan had stated, among other things, that the Indian Constitution endorses the exploitation and loot of the common people.

In Kerala, where the minority vote bank is crucial for winning any election, both the CPI(M) and the Congress have always tried to accuse each other of having Sangh Parivar leanings.

Recently, the CPM had, while referring to the protests over K-Rail and the gold smuggling scandal, accused the Congress, BJP and other Sangh Parivar outfits of joining hands against the party-led Left Democratic Front government. Similarly, when the CPI(M)'s party congress held in Kannur in April decided against a pre-poll alliance with the Congress at the national level in the next general elections, the Congress had accused the CPI(M) and the Sangh Parivar of working together in Kerala. Also, when the Kerala government sent a delegation to Gujarat to study the state's dashboard system, the Congress had taunted that Pinarayi Vijayan was emulating the Modi model of development. It reminded the CPI(M) that a decade ago, the party had sacked their MP A P Abdullakutty on charges of praising Modi.



CPI (M) leader Saji Cheriyan

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Satheesan stuck to his stand and said, "Golwalkar had stated that the Constitution is just a cumbersome and heterogeneous piecing together of various articles from various constitutions of Western countries. It has absolutely nothing which can be called our own. This is the same thing that Cheriyan stated about the Indian Constitution, that the British prepared it… I reject their notice with contempt."

The RSS responded by pointing out that Satheesan had in the past attended several Sangh Parivar events related to Golwalkar.

RSS leader and Kerala Hindu Aikyavedi general secretary R V Babu said in a Facebook post, "In 2006, Satheesan had inaugurated a seminar on religious terrorism on the occasion of the birth centenary of Golwalkar. He lit a lamp in front of an image of Bharat Mata. He did not find any fault with the RSS then. Now, Satheesan who backs Islamic terrorism, hopes that his anti-RSS stand will fetch him votes," he said.

The BJP also hit out, with party state vice-president C Sadanandan Master pointing to a 2013 RSS event that Satheesan reportedly attended as a Congress legislator. "He (Satheesan) is now comparing the anti-national statement of CPI(M) leader Saji Cheriyan with the words of the honourable Guruji (Golwalkar). If Satheesan had felt that Guruji's words were seditious, why did he then attend the RSS event in 2013 in Thrissur? Satheesan had then given a lengthy speech on the thoughts shared by Bharatheeya Vichar Kendram (which is associated with RSS). He had praised the Kendram and its activities. Now things have changed for Satheesan. This is self-deception," he said.

Satheesan on Sunday did not react to the RSS's statements.

EXPLAINED

Criticism of RSS over Golwalkar's views

SANGH'S CRITICS have often used Golwalkar's views on Constitution and Muslims to take on the RSS. In 2018, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had, referring to a new edition of Golwalkar's Bunch of Thoughts, said, "...every statement carries a context of time and circumstance… we have removed all remarks that have a temporary context and retained those that will endure for ages. You won't find the (Muslim-is-an-enemy) remark there."

BRIEFLY

KERALA

IAC Vikrant completes its fourth sea trial

Kochi: The fourth phase of sea trials of the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Vikrant was successfully completed on Sunday, the Navy said. IAC Vikrant, which left the Cochin Shipyard on July 2, undertook integrated trials of most of the equipment and systems onboard. "The ship's delivery is being targeted at the end of July 22, followed by commissioning of the ship in August 22...," the Navy said. **PTI**

CHHATTISGARH

Denied alcohol, three men shoot couple dead

Jashpur: A couple in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district were shot dead by three unidentified persons, who allegedly opened fire after being denied alcohol, a police official said Sunday. The incident took place in Gaimunda Navapara village Saturday, the official said. "Three unidentified persons reached the couple's residence late night and demanded alcohol. When the couple, Sandeep Panna and Droupadi, refused, they were shot dead," he said. **PTI**

DELHI

Apex court to hear Varavara Rao's bail plea today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea filed by Telugu poet and an accused in the Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad case, P Varavara Rao, challenging a Bombay High Court order that rejected his prayer for permanent medical bail in the matter. A three-judge bench of justices U U Lalit, S Ravindra Bhat and Sudhanshu Dhulia is likely to take up the matter. **PTI**

Assam man held for playing Shiva in play on price rise, let off a day later

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, JULY 10

A 38-YEAR-OLD man was detained on Saturday for "hurting religious sentiments" when he dressed up as Lord Shiva in a street play about price rise in Assam's Nagaon district. He was released on Sunday.

Birinchi Bora, a social worker from Nagaon's Nonoi village, was detained based on police complaints filed by the VHP and BJYM among other groups on Saturday. Following that an FIR was registered at Nagaon's Sadar Police Station and he was booked under Section 295(A) (deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings) among other sections of the IPC.



CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said plays on current issues are not blasphemous

Bora spent the night at the police station, but was Sunday given a notice and released, said Nagaon SP Leena Doley. He has been asked to appear at the station on a later date.

In Bora's play, videos of which are now circulating on social media, Shiva and Parvati are seen riding a two-wheeler, which runs out of fuel. An argument ensues as Shiva is unable to afford petrol because of the price rise.

Bora, who is now back home, said the main objective of his street play was to "highlight price rise". "There was no intention to hurt anyone's beliefs. I used that analogy to make the point that the prices are so high that even the Almighty would be distressed if they were on earth," he told The Indian Express.

He said it was not uncommon for gods to be portrayed in human form in Assamese plays. "However, now the situation is such that the right to free expression has been suppressed and you cannot express anything against the current regime," he said.

The complainant, BJYM's Anurom Bora, said, "While we do not have any problem with someone protesting against price rise, using god to express the protest was wrong."

Following the incident, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that street plays on current issues were not "blasphemous".

"Nukad Natak on current issues is not blasphemous. Dressing up is not a crime unless offensive material is said. Appropriate order has been issued to @nagaonpolice," he tweeted.

Cong says new forest rules dilute tribal rights; Centre says aimed at streamlining

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

THE CONGRESS Sunday accused the Union government of diluting the rights of tribal communities through the new forest conservation rules, drawing a rebuttal from the Centre which said these rules simply aim to "streamline" project clearances.

The new Forest Conservation Rules — notified by the Ministry on June 28 — do not mention the earlier requirement of attaining gram sabha permission before diverting forest land for a project. They also allow forest rights to be settled after the final approval for forest clearances has been granted by the Centre, a point flagged by Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh in a statement on Twitter on Monday.

In response, Union Environment and Forests Minister Bhupender Yadav posted on Twitter that the 2022 Rules are not inconsistent with the Forest (Conservation) Act, whose compliance can also be ensured "simultaneously".

In 2009, Ramesh, who was then Union environment minister, introduced a rule that no clearance for diversion of forests would be considered unless the rights under the FRA, 2006 (a still-ongoing process) were settled. This included acquiring gram sabha permission. This was later included as a part of the Forest Conservation Rules in 2015 under the Act.

He said in his statement: "Now, in a new set of Rules issued very recently, the Modi Government has allowed for forest rights to be settled after final approval for forest clearances has been granted by the Central Government. Obviously, this has been done in the name of 'ease of doing business' for a chosen few. But it will end the 'ease of living' for the vast many. Once forest clearance is granted, everything else becomes a mere formality and almost inevitably, no claims will be recognised and settled."



Environment minister Bhupender Yadav defended the rules after ex-minister Jairam Ramesh's criticism

NEW RULES AND WHAT THEY ENTAIL

- **Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 replaces all earlier rules**
- **Experts say most contentious change is related to settling forest rights issues**
- **New rules do not refer to an NOC issued by gram sabha. Instead, settling forest rights now mandate of state govts**
- **Under new rules, project screening committee to look at rights cases, apart from the Forest Advisory Committee, which experts say has been formed to expedite the diversion of forests for projects**

The settling of forest rights now needs to be carried out by the state government instead of the Centre, as was the case earlier.

"The state governments will be under even greater pressure from the Centre to accelerate the process of diversion of forest land," Ramesh said.

But Yadav tweeted: "Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022, are reformative with an objective to streamline the process of approvals under the Act, and enable the parallel processing under other Acts and Rules including FRA, 2006..."

"The Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 have been promulgated solely to implement the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. No rule or provisions of any Act are being diluted. The process has been streamlined for reducing the timelines for arrival at the final decision… Processes and provisions envisaged in the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 are not inconsistent with the other statutory laws including FRA compliance of which can also be ensured simultaneously by their respective nodal implementing agencies to reduce the time lag and cost involved," said a note tweeted by Yadav.



OFFERING CONDOLENCES

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav in Lucknow on Sunday, a day after the death of Mulayam's wife Sadhna Gupta. She died at a private hospital in Gurgaon after a prolonged illness. Her mortal remains were brought to Lucknow late on Saturday night and she was cremated on Sunday. *PTI*

CHHATTISGARH

I-T officers told me to frame official, be CM: businessman

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, JULY 10

COAL AND transport businessman Suryakant Tiwari, whose premises were recently searched by Income-Tax department in Chhattisgarh, on Sunday alleged that I-T officials told him that he could become CM if he uses his ties with ruling Congress MLAs to topple the government. This led to a war of words between the opposition BJP and the Congress.

In a video message circulated on social media, Tiwari alleged he was physically and mentally tortured during the searches after he refused to implicate a government officer posted at Chief Minister's Office by giving false statement.

"During the IT search since June 30... They forced me to link Soumya Chaurasia, deputy secretary posted at the CMO, with my business...," he alleged. "I-T officers wanted me to implicate her and they also offered me to become CM by toppling the government," he alleged. "I was told that the Congress MLAs I know will be supported by the BJP, if I help them, to form the government."

State BJP spokesperson Sanjay Shrivastav said Tiwari's allegations were made at the behest of CM Bhupesh Baghel and were baseless. "Bhupesh Baghel should be ready to accept his destiny. His agents have been exposed. Such baseless statements are not going to save them," he said.

State Congress communication wing head Sushil Anand Shukla said the coal trader's statement shows that the BJP is trying to destabilise a democratically elected government in Chhattisgarh. "It is evident from Tiwari's statement that the BJP can stoop to which level to topple governments in non-BJP ruled states. Its examples were seen in Karnataka, MP, Manipur and Maharashtra."





MARKING EID

(*Above*) Former Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi with his wife Seema Naqvi during Eid celebrations at his residence in New Delhi on Sunday. (*Left*) MP and J&K National Conference president Farooq Abdullah comes out from the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar after offering prayers on the occasion of Eid. *PTI*

MLA among 40 stuck for over 45 minutes after Uttarakhand ropeway glitch

Dehradun: More than 40 people including BJP MLA Kishore Upadhyay, who were travelling on a cable car between the Surkanda Devi temple and nearby Kaddukhal in Uttarakhand's Tehri Garhwal district, got stuck for over 45 minutes after the ropeway service stopped due to a technical glitch.

"The way the trolleys stopped midway, and around 40-50 persons were suspended mid-air, this should be taken with utmost seriousness. We cannot put someone's life in danger. I will talk to the Tourism Secretary and those running the service. What if a heart patient or a blood pressure patient is suspended? This is a matter of concern," Upadhyay said. He suggested that though the issue was resolved, the ropeway service should be properly examined.

Later in the day, district authorities confirmed that all the passengers came out of the cable car safely.

The ropeway service was inaugurated by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in April this year. In order to reach the temple of Surkanda Devi, people earlier had to trek around two km from Kaddukhal to the temple. **ENS**

Amarnath flash flood rescue ops resume, J&K L-G visits base camp

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JULY 10

RESCUE EFFORTS to track Amarnath pilgrims who went missing after the flash floods last week resumed Sunday afternoon, after bad weather delayed the operations in the morning.

J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha visited the base camp at Pahalgam in south Kashmir to monitor the rescue and relief operations.

An official release said that Lt Governor Sinha reviewed the rescue operations during a meeting with the officials at the Nunwan base camp in Pahalgam. "The Lt Governor was briefed about the rescue and relief operations, debris clearance, deployment of machinery and manpower," the official release said. It said the Lt Governor will stay overnight at Pahalgam to monitor the efforts.



J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha at Nunwan base. *PTI*

A Defence spokesman said the rescue operations could be resumed only after 2 pm because of bad weather in the morning. The Army flew 43 missions on Sunday and picked up 34 injured, the spokesperson said.

Udaipur killing: NIA arrests 'close criminal associate' of main accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

THE NIA has arrested a seventh person in connection with the killing of tailor Kanhaiyalal in Rajasthan's Udaipur last month, a spokesperson said on Sunday.

"The seventh accused, Farhad Mohammad Sheikh, was produced before the court from where he was sent to police remand till July 12," special public prosecutor T P Sharma said.

The NIA spokesperson said Farhad Mohammad Sheikh, alias Babla, was arrested on Saturday evening. He was a "close criminal associate" of Riaz Akhtari, one of the two main accused, and took an active part in the conspiracy to kill the tailor, the spokesperson said.

Kanhaiyalal was killed with a cleaver inside his tailoring shop on June 28. The attack by Riaz Akhtari, who is also referred to as Riyaz Attari, on the tailor was recorded on a phone by Ghouse Mohammad, and the video was posted online. They said in a video later that they hacked Kanhaiyalal to death to avenge an alleged insult to Islam. The duo was arrested within hours of the killing.

Besides the duo, the security agencies nabbed two more people — identified Mohsin and Asif — who are alleged to be a part of the conspiracy to spread terror amongst the public at large. Two more accused — Mohammed Mohsin and Wasim — were arrested subsequently for being part of the criminal conspiracy.

388 roads shut in Gujarat due to heavy rain

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, VADODARA, JULY 10

AS MANY as 388 roads, including highways, across Gujarat were shut due to heavy rain on Sunday, while over 3,000 persons were evacuated from different districts by emergency response teams.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel who reached Gandhinagar from Rajkot took stock of the situation even as teams from National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force were deployed for rescue and relief operations. As per the information department of the Gujarat government, five inches of rain was recorded in six districts of Chhota Udepur, Dang, Narmada, Valsad, Navsari and Panchmahal on Sunday between 8 am and 6 pm.



At Chhota Udepur in Gujarat on Sunday. *Express*

"A total of 3,250 persons, including 400 from Chhota Udepur, 550 from Navsari and 470 from Valsad, were evacuated.

The CM visited the state emergency operation centre in Gandhinagar to take stock of the situation, especially in six districts where maximum rainfall was recorded. The CM has asked local administration in these six districts to evacuate those living in low-lying areas or in kutcha houses and provide them food and medical facilities," read a statement from the Information Department of Gujarat government on Sunday.

TN Governor says 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian' are geographical terms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VELLORE, JULY 10

THE GEOGRAPHICAL regions, north and south of the Vindhyas known as 'Panch Aryas' and 'Panch Dravidas', respectively, were distorted to create a racial divide among the people to weaken the nation's unity, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi said here on Sunday, blaming the former British rulers for this.

The country was systematically "ruined" by the British who tried to divide people along several imaginary lines, Ravi said, addressing a gathering of INA veterans, ex-servicemen and their families. Before the British occupation of India, people could move freely to all parts of the country for education, trade, pilgrimage and settlement, he said.



Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi

The geographic regions, north and south of the Vindhya range known as 'Panch Aryas' and 'Panch Dravidas' respectively were mischievously distorted to create racial divide among people to weaken the country's unity, the Governor said.

The term Dravidar or Dravidian represented regions, including those in present-day Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Kerala. While leaving India, the British not only partitioned the country but had left "some 600 independent countries" within, a Raj Bhavan release quoted him as saying.

The Governor thanked Sardar Patel for uniting the country by removing the artificial and sinister divisions.

Minor sits with sibling's body as father looks for transport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, JULY 10

Eight-year-old Gulshan Jatav watched over two-year-old Raja's body after the toddler was declared dead on arrival at the Morena district hospital. Their father could not afford an ambulance.

IMAGES AND video clips of an eight-year-old boy holding his toddler brother's body and sobbing while their father, a labourer, was away trying to arrange a vehicle to take them home has sent shock waves across the state.

Gulshan Jatav, 8, watched over two-year-old Raja's body after the toddler was declared dead on arrival at the Morena district hospital on Saturday.

Their father, Pujaram Jatav, could not afford an ambulance run by a private agency hired by the hospital. The agency charged him between Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,000 to ferry them to their village, Badphara, about 40 km from the hospital.

Pujaram did get a hospital ambulance, but only after Gulshan's sobs caught the attention of passersby, one of them a policeman, Yogendra, who contacted the hospital authorities and the sub-divisional magistrate.

"I first thought it was an accident as a lot of people had assembled there. But we were shocked to see the boy sitting with the body. I tried asking the boy what had happened but all he kept repeating was that papa will come," said Yogendra.

"I could not understand what he was trying to say. I asked him to come back and that I will arrange for a vehicles if he has gone looking for one," Yogendra added.

Using the hospital papers that Gulshan was holding, Yogendra contacted Pujarama and told him to return . The policeman then called the SDM and the hospital authorities.

According to hospital authorities, Raja was referred to Morena from Ambah civil hospital with symptoms of acute anemia. Dr Rakesh Sharma, Chief Medical Officer of Morena district hospital, said Raja's body had swollen due to fluid accumulation.

The boy was declared dead on arrival, he said, but alleged Pujaram had left the hospital looking for a private vehicle without contacting the authorities.

"At the hospital we have ambulance to ferry patients but to ferry dead body, a private agency has been roped in called the Rogi Kalyan Samittee, which charges people. But, in case of those who cannot afford to pay, the hospital makes arrangement for it," said Rakesh Sharma.

"Soon after it was brought to notice of the hospital authorities they were sent home with arrangements through Rogi Kalyan Sammittee," said Sharma.

Dr Sharma, meanwhile, also visited Pujaram's home in Badphara. "As per the neighbours, Raja had fallen ill about four to five days ago but had not gotten proper treatment in time," he alleged.

WORDLY WISE

THE SADDEST ASPECT OF LIFE IS THAT SCIENCE GATHERS KNOWLEDGE FASTER THAN SOCIETY GATHERS WISDOM. — ISAAC ASIMOV

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SRI LANKA RESTART

Public anger also points to the way out: A new political leadership is needed to steer Sri Lanka out of present impasse

IN SCENES REMINISCENT of the Arab Spring, citizens stormed the residences of Sri Lanka's president and prime minister in Colombo on Saturday, forcing both leaders to announce that they would quit their respective offices. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the main target of the protests that erupted in April over food and fuel shortages and have continued since, promised to resign by Wednesday. The Speaker of Sri Lanka's parliament, Yapa Abeywardena, is expected to take over as acting president and prime minister, and facilitate, possibly, the setting up of a national unity government. Gotabaya's resignation could bring down the temperature and help the authorities to persuade the protestors to return home. Though the marches and sit-ins in Galle Face and elsewhere have been largely peaceful, Saturday's violent events suggest that the people, battling acute shortage of essentials, including milk, baby food, petrol, are on the edge. Only a new leadership can win back public trust in government and steer the island nation's economy out of choppy waters.

Gotabaya should have taken moral responsibility for failing to stem the rot and quit long ago. Instead, he chose to deflect the blame on to his ministers, shuffle the Cabinet and cling on to power. His choice of Ranil Wickremesinghe as the replacement for Mahinda Rajapaksa, who resigned as PM in May after massive protests, failed to yield results. Wickremesinghe, though a seasoned politician with considerable experience in managing the economy, has lost credibility through his association with the Rajapaksas. New Delhi has been helping Colombo with money for food and fuel, but the world must step in quickly and for that it is important that there is a government. Sri Lanka certainly needs a deep clean and while this is a chance to do that, anything that is likely to cause more political instability should be eschewed. Both Gotabaya and Wickremesinghe need to make way for fresh faces so that the country doesn't slip into anarchy, a situation that Sri Lanka experienced when the ultra-Left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna staged a violent insurrection in the 1980s. The international community must not allow Sri Lanka to become the second failed state in South Asia after Afghanistan.

Eventually, Sri Lanka's salvation lies in parliamentary politics. After all, it is one of South Asia's oldest democracies, with a patchy record on minority rights and civil freedoms including free speech but an admirable record in building a welfare state. The Rajapaksas were beneficiaries of a polarised polity that thrived on promoting a populist majoritarian nationalism and in power, focussed on "internal enemies" — first Tamils, and later, Muslims — instead of rebuilding the post-war state through social reconciliation and demilitarisation of the political economy. That phase in Sri Lankan politics may well be over, going by the sentiment on the streets. That's the silver lining to build on.

TAMING THE SCOURGE

Breakthrough in cancer therapy offers hope. Policymakers must now ensure that fruits of research are made more accessible

LAST WEEK, THE University of Houston announced that its researchers have made significant improvements to a next-generation cancer therapy that kills tumour cells while leaving healthy tissues intact. The treatment uses genetically engineered or naturally occurring microbes — oncolytic viruses — that replicate in cancer cells and overwhelm them. The therapy also strengthens the cancer patient's immune system against the tumour. However, this also means that, at times, the oncolytic viruses come up against the body's natural defence system. At the University of Houston's Centre for Nuclear Receptors and Cell Signaling, researchers used gene editing to cancel out such an immune response, enabling the anti-cancer microbes to work with all their might. Along with the breakthrough, last month, in anti-rectal cancer treatment, advances in the use of oncolytic viruses offer hope that cancerous tumours can be eliminated without the use of surgery or debilitating chemotherapy.

Cancer has been a scourge of humankind for centuries. Advances in molecular cell biology and genetics since the second half of the 20th century have made the disease far less intractable. Early tumour detection with non-invasive imaging such as CT, MRI and PET scans has helped in discriminating between aggressive and non-malignant tumours. There is a vaccine for cervical cancer. Scientists have taken important steps to unravel the complex linkages between individual immune systems and cancerous cells. Research has also underlined connections between the disease, local environments, cultural practices, and individual habits. Such facets of the disease could have been difficult to model or quantify about two decades ago. But advances in computational methods and the ability to generate and share big data have made it easier to arrive at a more granular understanding of the disease.

Cancer accounted for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020 — before the world was overtaken by the Covid pandemic, nearly one in six deaths was cancer-related. That two-thirds of all cancer deaths occur in low-and middle-income countries indicates the limited reach of this state-of-the-art research. For a large section of those who can access treatment, the high costs of modern-day healthcare often mean a devastating financial burden. Even in the US, a report of a Kaiser Family Foundation-NPR survey released last week has revealed that "two-thirds of adults with health care debt who have had cancer themselves or in their family have cut spending on food, clothing, or other household basics". The Covid pandemic has re-ignited debates on making healthcare equitable and reforming practices — including patent systems — that lock out a large number of people from accessing healthcare. Cancer treatment should be an essential part of such conversations. It's time the groundbreaking work in research labs reaches people who suffer from the disease.

FREEZE FRAME — E P UNNY



It happened in Colombo

Events on July 9 point to the re-imagining of a country, creation of a new citizen's identity



KAUSHALYA KUMARASINGHE

JULY, AS A month in the modern history of Sri Lanka, had a different meaning altogether before July 9, 2022. Previously, it brought back dark memories of the 1983 July pogrom against Tamils. However, July 9, 2022, now appears as a moment that marks a new civic beginning in the history of the island nation. I must say it was not an exaggeration to name it the republic day of Sri Lanka — as many have done on social media.

As far as the unbelievable number of people who occupied the streets of Colombo are concerned, it is reasonable to raise the recurring question again: How did this happen? To my knowledge, answers to this question would inevitably contain ideologically biased perspectives, but the incidents unfolding since March 2022 tell the story.

Only a small number of urban people, mainly from the middle and lower-middle class, gathered in their localities to silently protest, against the shortage of fuel, gas, milk powder and power cuts, in general, against the government for making their quotidian lives miserable. Most of the time, the protests were self-declared with no organisational structure. People simply gathered at a site when a random person posted on social media that he or she would stand there at a specific time. This soon became a trend, though not a very popular one — people stopped at these protest sites in solidarity on their way back from work and vehicles passing by honked to show their support. The numbers of people, as well as demonstrations, gradually increased, and on March 31, a silent protest near the president's private residence quickly changed into a chorus of wild yelling. Angry crowds attempted to break barricades, and the clash between riot police and the people clearly indicated the latter's frustration. The slogans on gas, fuel and power cuts noticeably altered now, not only to mark the failure of the president and the government but also to demand that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa "go home". When the government invoked a state of emergency in the aftermath of a demonstration near the president's private residence, for the first time in the country, people openly breached the curfew.

> The economic crisis that has spread across the country indeed played an essential role in moving people to protest. But the political aspirations of the people cannot simply be confined to the return of the old normal when the shortage of fuel, gas, medicine, food and power cuts were not an everyday reality. Political aspirations are extremely high even though imagining a new country while it is facing economic bankruptcy may sound somewhat odd. It is apparent, however, that a new citizen identity, which has experienced the people's power in historic ways, has emerged.

Meanwhile, a social media post calling for one million people to assemble at Colombo, Galle Face on April 9, went viral. This paved the way for the occupation of several important spaces at the site, including the main gate of the presidential secretariat. Gradually, several makeshift facilities at the Galle Face — a community kitchen, toilets and washrooms, a medical centre and media centre, citizens' assembly, library, cinema, open-air theatre, art studio, open mic spaces, public university, and a children's activity centre. It was clearly visible that the thousands of people who had gathered were not the usual participants at political rallies or protests; they comprised people from all classes, ethnic and religious groups, gender, ages (the majority were young) and lifestyle categories, but few represented political institutions such as parties, trade unions or organisations. As a participant in the April 9 demonstrations, I noticed that people's political aspirations now had evolved from calling for a change in government to demanding a change in the system. Although the occupied space was named Gotagogama (Gota go Village), the name of President Gotabaya now carried a variety of connotations — the end of corruption, ethnic and religious harmony, abolition of an executive presidency, and a new democratic constitution. In short, in revolting against the president, the people were demanding a new social contract.

On May 9, thousands of angry supporters of the then prime minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa, attacked the peaceful protesters at Gotagogama and burnt a few makeshift facilities. Since this happened in the presence of the police and the military, it created a strong wave of resentment. Later that night, protestors set on fire many properties that belonged to the Rajapaksas and pro-government politicians. The prime minister was compelled to resign.

Protesters who occupied the Galle Face remained at the site organising political, cultural and educational activities. Their act confirmed that resistance could take a variety of forms. The occupied space now featured art forms once marginalised such as alternative music and performance art. Since the young generation played the most important role in organising the space as well as the activities at the site, there was an unmistakable air of newness. Although the heterogeneous nature of the socio-political views of the protesters came in the way of the formation of a centralised organising committee, they managed to have a daily assembly in which a variety of issues were discussed — providing food and water at the protest space, the health of the protesters as well as current political situation and future political actions.

The historic July 9 demonstrations were announced by the Galle Face protesters as a decision taken in the assembly. They did not only announce the date for the demonstrations but also organised a campaign across the island to invite people to Galle Face. The economic crisis that has spread across the country indeed played an essential role in moving people to protest. But the political aspirations of the people cannot simply be confined to the return of the old normal when the shortage of fuel, gas, medicine, food and power cuts were not an everyday reality. Political aspirations are extremely high even though imagining a new country while it is facing economic bankruptcy may sound somewhat odd. It is apparent, however, that a new citizen identity, which has experienced the people's power in historic ways, has emerged.

The writer is a Sinhala novelist

TRANSITION AND UNCERTAINTY

As GST compensation ends, states need to be provided certainty of revenues



ADITI NAYAR

THE FIVE-YEAR TRANSITION period after the adoption of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on July 1, 2017, came to an end on June 30, 2022. With this, the era of GST compensation that the state governments were entitled to has ended. While many state governments have asked for the compensation period to be extended by a few years, the actual fallout from the end of this critical revenue stream for states is unclear. To tangibly assess the near-term outlook for state finances, we have to rely on the states' own estimates for their market borrowing requirements for the second quarter of 2022-23.

The indicative calendar of market borrowings by 23 state governments and two Union territories for the second quarter has pegged their total state development loan issuance — the primary source of financing state government deficits — at Rs 2.1 trillion. This projected issuance is 29 per cent higher than the same period last year, and at an eight-quarter high. This high level of issuance projected by states reflects concerns that some of them might rightfully have regarding the uncertainty of their cash flows in the post-GST compensation era. Of these 23 states, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Gujarat have indicated large increases in borrowings. Most of these states have an above-average dependence on GST compensation.

However, the state issuances this year (in the first quarter only Rs 1.1 trillion was raised by 18 states), will also be impacted by the changes initiated by the central government in determining the net borrowing ceiling of the state governments for 2022-23.

> Discontinuation of the GST compensation flows would alter the revenue composition of some states adversely, particularly those with a relatively larger share of such receipts in their overall revenue streams. To offset a portion of the associated revenue loss, we expect such states to enhance their borrowings and/or to undertake some expenditure adjustments in the quarters ahead. An unfortunate sacrifice of capital expenditure simply can't be ruled out at this stage.

At the time of communicating to states their annual borrowing limits for the ongoing year, we understand that the Centre had informed state governments that their off-budget borrowings for the past two years (2020-21 and 2021-22) would be adjusted from their borrowing ceiling this year. It appears that the calculation of the adjusted borrowing limit required the submission of detailed data by the state governments related to their off-budget borrowings for the last two fiscal years, followed by a thorough assessment of the same by the Centre.

Despite these changes, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana and Punjab were able to raise bonds in the first few weeks of the first quarter. However, others such as Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh entered the borrowing fray only in end-May 2022, indicating perhaps a later receipt of their borrowing permission, either on a full or an ad hoc basis, for the ongoing year.

On the whole, though, states appear to have entered the year with a comfortable cash flow position. This follows from the back-ended release of the tax devolution to states for 2021-22 — nearly half of the full-year amount was released in the fourth quarter. Additionally, the total amount was also well above the revised estimate, providing an unexpected gain to states. This may have allowed them to temporarily withstand the changes related to their borrowing permission. Subsequently, the release of the GST compensation grant of Rs 869 billion for several months in May is likely to have further eased their cash flows.

However, the discontinuation of the GST compensation flows would alter the revenue composition of some states adversely, particularly those with a relatively larger share of such receipts in their overall revenue streams. To offset a portion of the associated revenue loss, we expect such states to enhance their borrowings and/or to undertake some expenditure adjustments in the quarters ahead. An unfortunate sacrifice of capital expenditure simply can't be ruled out at this stage.

We believe that both the government's tax revenues and the tax devolution to states budgeted for the year are quite conservative. The gross tax revenues of the central government expanded by a robust 29 per cent in April-May 2022. While the cess on petrol and diesel was reduced towards the end of May 2022, this is not shareable with the states and therefore does not affect their share of central taxes. We assess that the states may be entitled to as much as Rs 9.3 trillion of tax devolution, roughly Rs 1.1 trillion relative to the 2022-23 budget estimate.

If the government does decide to step-up tax devolution to the states in the near term, instead of back-ending it as was done in the last year, it may reduce the size of state borrowings in the second quarter. But more significantly, such revenue certainty, despite the end of the GST compensation era, may embolden states to ringfence their capital spending, providing a positive impulse to the economy.

The writer is Chief Economist, ICRA


INDIAN EXPRESS

JULY 11, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

SINGH VS KHANNA

SUPPORTERS OF ZAIL Singh and H R Khanna launched a last-minute war of words in favour of the two contenders in the presidential elections that will choose the seventh president of the republic. The Congress-I got a shot in the arm with the official announcement of the Akali (L) support to its candidate, Zail Singh. Singh has been assured of support from a large number of regional parties in addition to the Congress (I)'s 6.69 lakh votes. They include the AIDMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu, all UDP partners in Kerala except perhaps the Janata (G), and the ruling National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir.

PAN-AM AIR CRASH

A PAN-AMERICAN WORLD airways jetliner bulldozed into suburban homes just minutes after taking off from New Orleans international airport in a thunderstorm, killing all 145 people aboard and at least four on the ground, officials said. It was the second-worst air disaster in US history. The three-engine Boeing-727 ploughed through two blocks of houses, and workers laboured into the night in search of additional victims.

BEIRUT PEACE TALKS

TALKS ON ARRANGING a withdrawal of Palestinian guerrillas from Beirut pressed ahead despite an apparent blow dealt by Syria in refusing to accept the fighters. Israel reported a lull in its fighting against Palestinian guerrillas in the besieged West Beirut as the talks involving the special US envoy, Philip Habib, and Lebanon government leaders got underway. Palestinian sources said the main obstacle continued to be disagreement over when a proposed international force should arrive and be deployed in Beirut. Lebanese President Elias Sarkis, Prime Minister Shafiq Al-Wazzan and Foreign Minister Fuad Butrose held another meeting with Habib at the presidential palace in the village of Baabda.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Losses from natural hazards are escalating. Reliable early warning systems are critical for disaster management. Adaptation and mitigation responses should be socially equitable, scientifically sound and economically efficient."

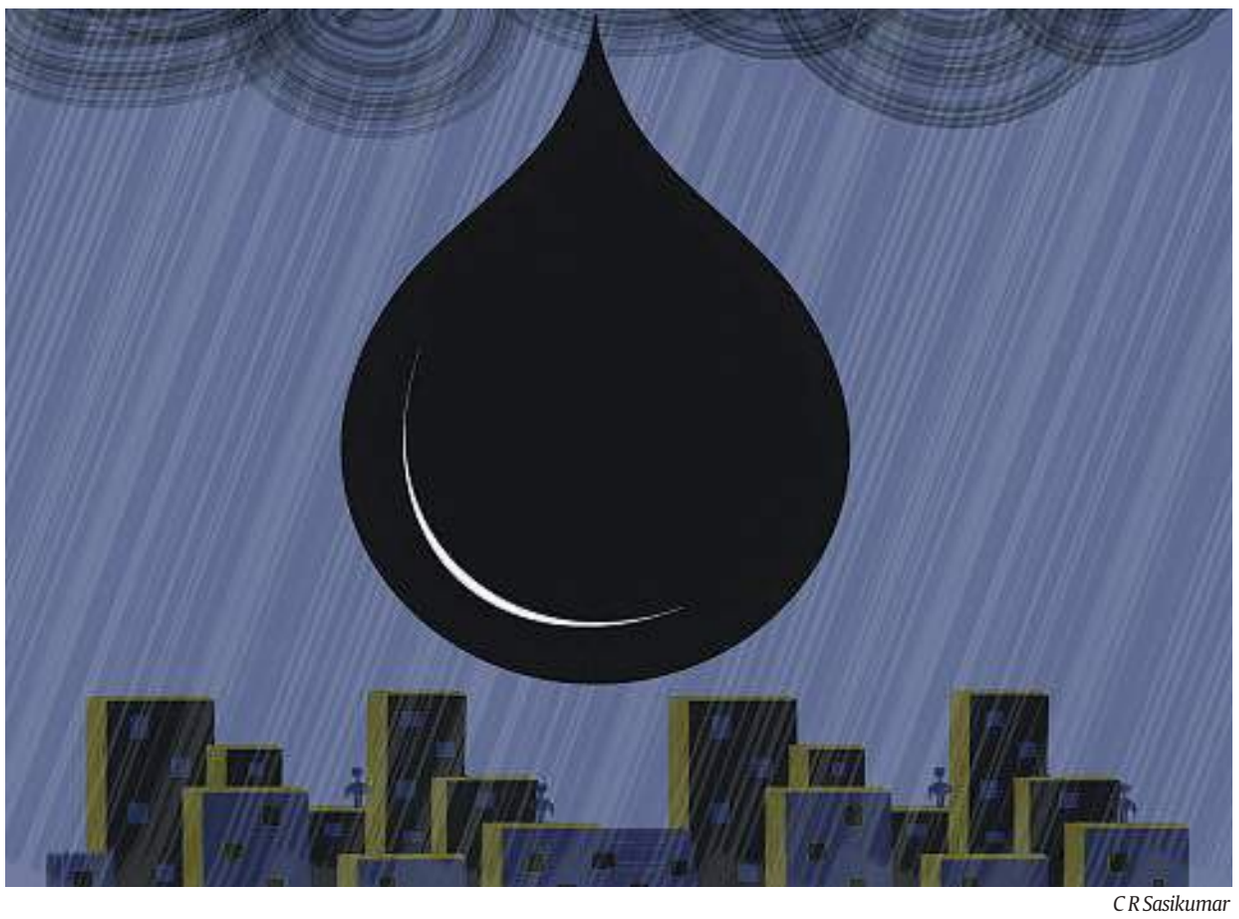
— THE KATHMANDU POST

Diary from a deluge

There was fear and horror as the worst floods in nearly a century hit Silchar, Assam. Even as the flood waters recede, another spectre looms



JOYDEEP BISWAS



C R Sasikumar

I've known rivers
Ancient, dusky rivers

NIGHT WAS FALLING on the skyline of Silchar. The mighty Barak had by then made its detour through the second-largest urban conglomeration of Assam. Turbid waters were gushing through the breached portion of an important embankment. Three-fourths of the 27 square-kilometre landmass that makes Silchar had been completely submerged. The Barak was flowing with gusto at more than 1.5 meters above the danger level. And waters were rising thick and fast to make things even more horrific in the engulfing doom and despair.

In the heart of the town, euphemistically known as the "posh" enclave, where the real estate prices are perhaps some of the highest in the country, 18 families including ours were huddled in a five-storey housing complex to see before our disbelieving eyes how ravaging the river could be. But the day started on an otherwise normal note for us, even as reports of waters sneaking into the low-lying areas of the town had been pouring in since the previous evening. There were incessant rains over the past few days. Old-timers of the town were trying to recall if they had ever experienced downpours of such lethal intensity in the Barak Valley.

Weather offices confirmed that Assam and Meghalaya had by then recorded the highest June rainfall in 121 years with 858.1 mm, breaking the earlier record of 789.5 mm in 1966. Not to miss the matter of fact statistics, flash flood had lashed Silchar in 1966 as well. To put things in perspective, the government initiative to build embankments along the Barak to save Silchar from frequent floods was first seen in the aftermath of the devastating inundation of 1966. Various dykes along the town-side of the course of the river continued to be constructed in intervals from the Sixties till the Eighties.

The entire Barak Valley in general and its headquarters, Silchar, have always been vulnerable to recurring floods due to the Barak going in spate resulting from heavy rains upstream, around Manipur and Mizoram. The recorded history provides information on the mammoth flooding in 1916, 1929, 1966, 1985, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991 and 2004. On other occasions too, the Valley went through minor floods. Partial accounts of the deluge of 1929 are available in two important individual memoirs. Both from the *Silcharer Kadcha* (Silchar Diary) by Kaliprasanna Bhattacharjee (ed. Amitabha Dev Choudhury, 2008) and a report on the great floods of 1929 by Sundari Mohan Das, published in the renowned Bengali periodical from the then Calcutta, *Prabasi*, edited by Ramananda Chatterjee in the same year, we come to know of the degree of devastation caused by the river systems of the Barak-Surma twin Valley. The similarity between the two great floods, separated by seven-years-less-than-a-century, mainly lies in the fact that both the Surma and the Kushiyara rivers in Sylhet were equally in spate as the Barak. Also, both the natural disasters happened in June. Some archival photographs reproduced in the memoirs by Bhattacharjee along with his narration tell us how waters were flowing at the first-storey height along the Central Road of Silchar. There are ghastly stories of corpses floating on the water. There was death, squalor and devastation all along. That was 1929. That was India under British rule. That was the time when the Barak had no dykes to stop surging waters.

But more than nine decades on, in the third week of June 2022, we, the residents of a middle-class housing society, were experiencing a chill down the spine when waters were inching up, one after another of the staircase leading up to the first floor of the building. The ground floor of our housing complex, Sukumari Apartment, a 15-year-old building located in the lane that ends at the south Assam headquarters of the indomitable Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, was already submerged. Marauding waters had filled the lift shaft of the building and five steps of the staircase went under the water. The central power panel of the housing society was just four inches above the water level. The whole area had plunged into darkness as the APDCL office had disconnected supply fearing short circuits.

That was the beginning of the travail for survival for us, like at least four lakh other Silcharites. The town, which started municipal administration as far back as 1882, and which was recently declared as a municipal corporation by the Government of Assam, saw the fury of nature at its worst. The people of the town were yet to recover from the fear and losses inflicted by the first round of floods just a month back. Communication and connectivity systems went haywire. The May floods from torrential rains and the resultant heavy landslides in the Dima Hasao district had already thrown life out of gear. Rail communication in the Lumding-Badarpur section of the North East Frontier Railway remained snapped since the May mayhem. Severe landslides on the national highway in Meghalaya closed the surface transport as well. When the Valley was under siege and its hapless dwellers in a beleaguered spot, in came the second round of floods.

The stock of water in the overhead tank of our building was fast depleting. Inverter batteries were being dried in the flats. Mobile towers were not working. Internet connectivity got a beating as there was no power to supply electricity to the modems. The middle-class has long forgotten the use of lanterns and candles. Kerosene is no more a lighting fuel. Nights in the marooned Silchar were getting asphyxiating. With the sky loaded with dark and heavy clouds overhead, the meteorological department forecasting more rains and babbling waters underneath, we were hearing stories about people getting drowned. With an uncanny resemblance to the anecdotes of 1929, we saw the visuals of abandoned dead bodies looking for a piece of dry land.

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The government machinery got activated to look for the "miscreants" who had dug the dyke. A credible segment of the local media reported that a canal had been cut through the embankment on May 22, in the aftermath of the first round of floods to allow the stagnant waters in the Mahisha Beel (a natural reservoir where the town canals offload their water flow back to the river as there was no sluice gate to do so). That the locals had breached the dyke was no state secret. It was already in the public domain and the line agencies were very much in the loop. The good 20-odd days in the interregnum could easily be used to refill the canal and mend the dyke. But that was not to be. Those who pierced the protection of the town and those who almost oversaw the deed were equally convinced that the problem of regular inundation of the catchment area had a solution. The ruling political class in the district knew of the development. And none of them, it appears, had any idea as to what was in store for Silchar. But the disaster was a "manmade one", they began to say, when the deluge set in.

The name of an otherwise obscure location — "Bethukandi" where the dyke had been breached — suddenly became a global cynosure as the people who did the damage to the dyke and the majority of the townsfolk swept by the floods belong to two different communities. Flood waters will recede, life will reboot losses and pains will remain mere accounts in the annals of history. But elections will surely arrive. And, unfortunately, they will usher in a new tagline — flood jihad. Hopefully, the state that failed to guard the river will succeed in saving the social fabric.

The writer is associate professor and head of economics in Cachar College under Assam University, Silchar

The work of justice

Why the Supreme Court's observations on Nupur Sharma, Delhi Police promise a new and brighter dawn



REKHA SHARMA

ON JULY 1, the Supreme Court broke the nation's silence. That day it dismissed a petition filed by Nupur Sharma, praying for clubbing all the FIRs registered against her over her controversial remarks on the Prophet in a TV debate, and transferring the same to the jurisdiction of Delhi Police. Not only did the Supreme Court decline to grant her any relief, it also made some critical observations. Although the media has extensively reported the observations of the Supreme Court, in order to get a sense of how incensed and concerned the Supreme Court felt over the situation, particularly the communal violence which took place in parts of the country in the aftermath of her comments, the court's observations must be read in the context in which they were made.

The Supreme Court is reported to have said that Nupur Sharma is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country even as her counsel submitted that she faces a security threat. When her counsel stated that she had withdrawn her comments, and tendered an apology, the Bench observed that she should have apologised to the whole country and further observed that the apology was conditional and came too late.

These observations of the Court may appear harsh. But can it be denied that Sharma's comments triggered an international row, specially in the Islamic world, because of which she was suspended from the BJP, and removed as its spokesperson? Can it be denied that there were violent protests in Kanpur, Saharanpur, Prayagraj, and in the state of UP, where the house of a protestor was also bulldozed?

There can be no justification for the barbaric killings of a tailor, Kanhaiya Lal, beheaded in Udaipur allegedly by two fanatics belonging to the Muslim community, who cited the insult to the Prophet, and a chemist, Umesh Prahladrao Kolhe, who was stabbed to death in Amravati on June 21, ostensibly because of his social media post supporting Sharma.

But the Supreme Court sought to highlight the grave consequences when communal passions are given a free run, or are seen to enjoy state patronage. The apparent intent of the Court was to put brakes on the motor mouths who frequently make inflammatory statements which give rise to hate, build up communal tension, cause social unrest. Unfortunately, soon after the Supreme Court's observations, the troll army supporting Sharma started trolling the judges, particularly Justice Surya Kant, who reportedly did most of the talking. The words spoken by the judge were twisted to build a false narrative against him, as if he was justifying the killing in Udaipur.

Incidentally, the troll army has no problem with the order of another bench of the Supreme Court, which while accepting the SIT report relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots, has made observations to the effect that some people "keep the pot boiling, obviously, for ulterior design", and "all those involved in such abuse of process need to be in the dock, and proceeded with in accordance with law." While the Court was well within its rights to accept or reject the SIT report, it exceeded its remit when it made observations which amount to shooting the messenger. The troll army rejoiced when pursuant to the aforesaid directions, Teesta Setalvad was arrested the very next day of the order. When Nupur Sharma is indicted by the same Supreme Court, however, it has problems.

The Supreme Court also turned the heat on Delhi Police. It reportedly said that Delhi Police must have laid a "red carpet" for her (Nupur Sharma), and that when she makes a complaint the person is arrested, but even when there is an FIR against her, she is not touched which speaks of the clout that she enjoys. The Supreme Court was fully justified in making this observation against Delhi Police. The manner in which it is conducting its investigation in Sharma's case bears testimony to this.

The FIR against Nupur Sharma was registered in Delhi on June 8. Since then, except for recording her statement on June 18, the case has not proceeded any further. It appears to have been put on the back burner. Contrast this with the latest case of Mohammed Zubair, co-founder of Alt News, who was arrested for a tweet by him which pertained to the year 2018 apparently showing an image of a hotel signboard repainted from "Honeymoon Hotel" to "Hanuman Hotel". It was not without reason that Sharma had asked for the transfer of FIRs against her to Delhi — it is believed to be a safe haven for persons like her who, regardless of the gravity of the offence alleged to have been committed, have nothing to fear while those who are ideologically opposed to the present dispensation are arrested at the drop of a hat.

Given the selectivity with which Delhi Police has been arresting or not arresting the accused, specially in cases with political or ideological overtones, it is no longer enough to merely castigate the police. The role of the judiciary is not only to interpret, but also to apply the law, and to prevent its mutilation. Hence, the Supreme Court needs to be more proactive in ensuring even-handed application of law by the police. The Supreme Court also needs to rein in TV channels that in the name of prime-time news, spew venom against a particular community or a religious group.

For now, the observations made by the Supreme Court promise a new and brighter dawn.

The writer is a former judge of the Delhi High Court

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SERVICE CHARGES

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Service charge: Collectors told to act against eateries' (IE, July 10). Service charges are always mentioned on the menu, indicating the implied consent of the consumer. They are used by restaurants to pay the staff. It is a transparent, worker-friendly policy that has been recognised by many judicial orders. The government earns revenue from the charge in the form of taxes. So, the CCPA's direction to act against eateries seems to be imprudent.

S S Paul, *Chakdaha*

A DEAR FRIEND

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lead like Abe' (IE, July 9). Shocking would be an understatement to describe Shinzo Abe's assassination. Political violence is rare in Japan. Abe's tenure was marked by two significant features. First, he was able to see the implications of China's aggressive foreign policy. He was an advocate of a free and open Indo-Pacific region and was the key force behind the formation of Quad. Second, during his tenure, India-Japan relations deepened further. Abe and PM Modi's personal rapport only helped matter. The fact that India is developing a bullet train project today is in huge part, thanks to Abe. He was a great friend of India.

Bal Govind, *Noida*

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lead like Abe' (IE, July 9). The grim trend of assassinations has been globally pacing for some decades now. It alludes to the soaring intolerance in society and the mistrust between people with different bents of mind. Most of the great leaders who have been assassinated shared one thing in common — the will to push through the sociopolitical inertia of the day. Bhagat Singh once said, "They may kill me, but they cannot kill my ideas." It would bode well for us to remember that conversation is the only way to any resolution.

Vinay Saroha, *New Delhi*

THE REAL TEST

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Whose party is it, anyway?' (IE, July 9). The recent split of the Shiv Sena into two groups led by Uddhav Thackery and Eknath Shinde is peculiar. Which faction of the erstwhile party adheres to the ideals and objectives of its founder, Bal Thackery must be the parameter for answering the author's question. On this score, the group headed by Eknath Shinde seems to have taken the lead over Uddhav Thackery who, in the eyes of a lot of their voters, had forsaken the party ideals in 2019.

Ravi Mathur, *Noida*

DAILY STRUGGLES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'How much do people care' (IE, July 10). The middle class has always been at the helm of affairs in our country. However, in recent times, it seems that they have retreated and are weighed down by unemployment and inflation. How to feed and house oneself will always be the most important question. The Indian middle class is busy trying to stay afloat. Sadly, they have no time to engage with national affairs or initiate any societal change. Economic insecurity needs to be addressed if change is to follow.

Devendra Awasthi, *Lucknow*



The importance of do-gooding

Regardless of motivations, small acts of kindness bring joy, if fleetingly

SHOBHIT MAHAJAN

IN GOOD FAITH

PANDITJI LOOKED VERY worried. His eyes were searching the dense foliage which overhung the high wall and he was making sounds which one normally makes to summon an animal. In the end, he just gave up and went back home. Another effort to locate the cat he had been feeding daily for months had failed.

The cat had been coming every day at around 6:30 pm and waiting at a specific spot on the wall for Panditji to come with the food. Panditji would leave the food and the cat would come down, eat and leave. But now for several days, the cat was not coming and Panditji was distraught. He feared that a rogue dog that had recently been seen in the neighbourhood had killed it.

Panditji is a man of modest means who makes his living from officiating at weddings and funerals and other ceremonies. And yet, for the cat, he ensures that there is always branded cat food. The reason, as he told me, is that cats are non-vegetarians and so need their quota of meat. He is obviously a strict vegetarian and thus to ensure that the cat gets a balanced meal, he buys a big bag of cat food.

A lot of people in my neighbourhood feed stray dogs and many more feed stray cows. Normally the animals are given the extra chapattis which are left over from the previous meal and hence these acts of kindness seem to incur very little cost. But in the case of Panditji, the bag of expensive cat food is obviously an expense which must be stretching his modest income. And yet he does it.

Another person whom I regularly see during my evening walk is a woman who distributes sweets to small children of the people working at construction sites. She goes every evening to the market, buys a large number of toffees and hard-boiled sweets and then goes from one construction site to another in the neighbourhood to give these to the children. The joyous faces of the children on the construction site on getting the two toffees is possibly the only reward the lady wishes for. Unlike Panditji, the lady does not appear to be lacking in means to afford this small expense. But come rain or shine, she makes this trip every evening.

Why is it that some people go through such trouble to do these acts which can only be described as acts of kindness to strangers? What could possibly be the motivation for people to perform these acts at some cost to themselves?

Religion provides one motivation. It provides a robust framework for ethical behaviour when it comes to fellow humans and in some cases, to all living beings. All religions have stressed the importance of helping others in need — whether it is the feeding of the hungry outside a temple, or hospitals run by the church or the mandatory zakat prescribed by Islam. Thus for most believers, gaining religious merit is motivation enough. However, it is not as if they do a mental calculation of merits — a certain kind of behaviour becomes a way of life and comes naturally from years of internalising the ethical framework provided by their religion.

Those of us who consider ourselves as belonging to the agnostic or atheist camp do not subscribe to this ethical calculus. And so, not for us the simple joy of doing something which will at least bring temporary relief or joy to those in need. We would rather wax eloquent on the grand narrative of systemic failure, the political economy of capitalism and its attendant inequalities, or the organised beggar mafia. And then some have convinced themselves of a contorted version of the survival of the fittest: The unfortunate ones are simply not good enough and so deserve their lot or worse, are indolent.

Of course, our society is highly unequal and no amount of, what is disparagingly called do-gooding, will bring about any significant structural change. But does that mean that one doesn't do small acts which can bring a little joy, no matter how fleetingly, to those who are not as fortunate as us?

Then one evening I saw Panditji standing near the wall and pleading with the cat to come down and eat. The cat had returned but for some reason was hesitant to come down from her safe perch even to eat. Panditji tried to convince the cat for some time and then finally just left the food and went away. Moments later I saw the cat come down and polish off the food. Across the road at the construction site though, the children were still waiting since the lady with the goodies was late.

The writer is professor of physics and astrophysics, University of Delhi



WORLD'S BIGGEST GAMBLING HUB

COVID: MACAU SHUTS CASINOS

The region will shut almost all commercial and industrial businesses including its casinos for one week from Monday, as authorities race to curb a surge of Covid-19 infections.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Joe Biden says his views on human rights are clear and long-standing. *File*

UNITED STATES

Biden says rights on agenda of Saudi visit

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Saturday defended his decision to travel to Saudi Arabia saying human rights would be on his agenda as he gave a preview of a trip on which he aims to reset ties with the crown prince, who he previously denounced as a pariah. In a commentary published in the Washington Post late on Saturday, Biden said his aim was to reorient and not rupture relations with a country that has been a US strategic partner for 80 years. **REUTERS**

NEPAL

China's ruling party leader meets minister

CHINA IS keen to improve its relationship with India as it will guarantee "an Asia free from outside interference". The message, *The Indian Express* has learnt, was conveyed by a leader of the ruling Communist Party of China, Liu Jianchao, during his meeting with Nepalese Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka Sunday. Liu also flagged the role of the US in Nepal, in particular the Nepal Parliament's ratification of the $500 million grant as part of the Millennium Challenge Corporation deal. He also raided Nepal's condemnation of Russia over Ukraine. Sources said Khadka assured Liu that Nepal's dealings with the US were not related to security — and "in no way" directed against China.

- YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

THE KOREAS

Seoul detects shots 'launched by Pyongyang'

SOUTH KOREA'S military said on Sunday it had detected the trajectories of what appeared to be shots fired by North Korea, possibly from multiple rocket launchers. South Korea's Joint Chief of Staff announced the shots were detected after 6 pm and that the military had strengthened surveillance and alert levels. North Korea often test-fires MLRs during military drills, and in recent years has also developed larger versions of such rockets. Smaller rockets and missiles are seen as key to North's plans for striking targets in the event of conflict. **REUTERS**

THREE ARRESTED FOR ARSON AT PM'S HOUSE, CID TAKES OVER PROBE

Gotabaya set to quit, Sri Lankan Opp agrees to form all-party interim govt

Leaders to meet today to discuss convening of the House for power transition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, JULY 10

SRI LANKA'S main Opposition parties on Sunday agreed to form an all-party interim government after the anticipated resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday, following unprecedented political turmoil that forced him and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to offer their resignations over the mishandling of the nation's crippling economic crisis.

Opposition parties held talks to seek ways to steer the country forward in the current unprecedented economic crisis after Rajapaksa's resignation.

"We agreed in principle to form a government of unity with all parties participation for an interim period," Wimal Weerawansa of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party's breakaway group said. "This will be a government where all parties are represented," he said.

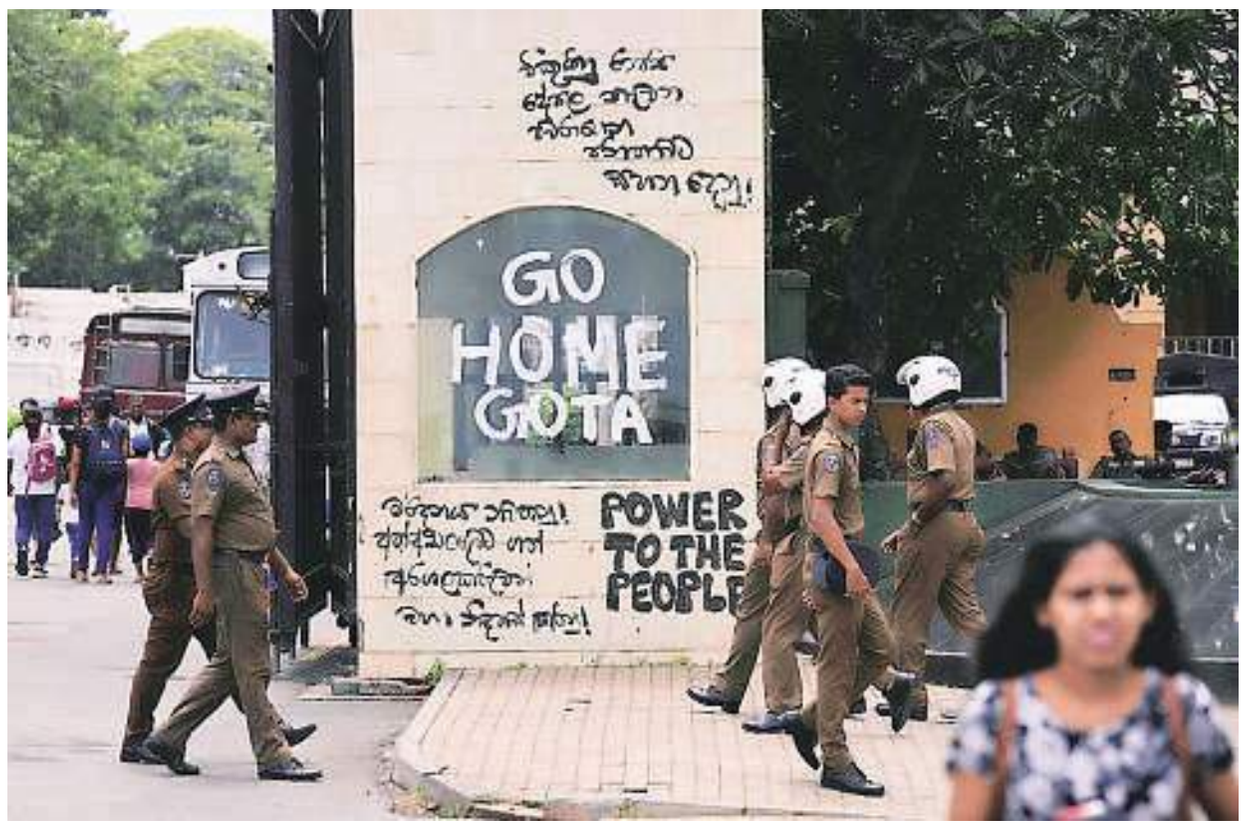
Vasudeva Nanayakkara, another leader of the SLPP breakaway group said they need not wait for Rajapaksa's resignation on July 13.

The leaders of political parties represented in Parliament are to meet on Monday afternoon to discuss the convening of the House for the transition of power for a new government.

Under the Constitution, when Gotabaya resigns, the incumbent PM would automatically get appointed as the acting president until Parliament votes and appoint a successor to the president. The resignation of both the president and PM would mean Speaker Abeywardena would become the acting president.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Investigations Department on Sunday took over the investigation into the arson attack at Wickremesinghe's private residence, hours after three persons were arrested for causing extensive destruction to the property.

Chief of Defence Staff General Shavendra Silva on Sunday called on all Sri Lankans to support the armed forces and the police to maintain peace.



Police officers at the entrance of the President's official residence in Colombo on Sunday. *AP*

Camping inside President house, protesters get a taste of luxuries

NYT & REUTERS
COLOMBO, JULY 10

THEY DID flips into the pool. They lounged on canopied beds. And, on wide-screen televisions, they watched cricket and news footage of their fellow protesters, who had massed in Sri Lanka's capital and joined them in storming the presidential residence and secretariat.

The scenes in Colombo offered rare moments of levity, as demonstrators who literally occupied the seats of executive power took a moment to appreciate the luxuries.

In the official residence of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who had fled to an unknown location on Saturday, the protesters swam in the clear blue water of an outdoor pool, while others crowded around the edges. Some found a gym, where they watched as one man did curls on a bench. Others rested on the grass of well-manicured gardens.



Demonstrators eat breakfast at the Presidential Secretariat premises on Sunday. *Reuters*

On Sunday, demonstrators continued to crowd onto stairways and snap selfies in the vast foyers of the residence.

A few people cooked curries and snacks for the protesters, while others showered in the bathrooms or posed for photos at desks.

One of them, 61-year-old handkerchief seller BM Chandrawathi, accompanied by her daughter and grandchildren, said, "I've never seen a place like this in my life".

"They enjoyed super luxury while we suffered. We were hoodwinked. I wanted my kids and grandkids to see the luxurious lifestyles they were enjoying."

17.85 mn rupees 'found inside President house'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, JULY 10

THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT protesters in Sri Lanka who stormed embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's official residence have claimed to have recovered 17.85 million Sri Lankan Rupees inside his mansion.

A video was being shared on social media showing the protesters counting the currency notes that were unearthed.

Protesters said they had found 17,850,000 Sri Lankan Rupees at the President's official residence on Sunday when they stormed into the mansion after breaking the barricades. They have handed over the cash to the local police.

The President's whereabouts is still not known. His only communication outside since the protesters stormed into the city has been with the Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, who announced late Saturday night that the President would resign on Wednesday.



People pay condolence at the Tokyo residence of former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe on Sunday. *AP*

Two days after his death, Abe's party triumphs in polls

Govt can now pursue ex-PM's dream to change Japan's pacifist Constitution

MOTOKO RICH
TOKYO, JULY 10

TWO DAYS after Japan's former PM Shinzo Abe was gunned down at a campaign stop on Friday, his Liberal Democratic Party and its allies swept to victory in a parliamentary election that gave them a chance to pursue Abe's long-held ambition of revising Japan's pacifist Constitution.

It was the clearest sign that Abe, Japan's longest-serving PM, remained a guiding political force. "I have the responsibility to take over the ideas of former Prime Minister Abe," the current prime minister, Fumio Kishida, told a crowd west of Tokyo on Saturday, the day after Abe's killing, as he campaigned for their party's candidates for the Upper House of Parliament.

The LDP and its coalition partners gained enough seats in Sunday's election to form a crucial two-thirds supermajority. They can now amend a clause in the Constitution, imposed by postwar American occupiers, that renounces war. That long-held goal would open the door for Japan to become a military power, capable of global leadership.

Abe's death appeared to have helped increase voter turnout slightly, to over 52 percent, up from about 49 percent.

As returns rolled in, Kishida said he hoped to "gain people's understanding" and "deepen the discussion" about the party's proposal for revising the Constitution.

Even with the supermajority, much stands in the way of the plan — not least that it has long been unpopular with the Japanese public. And with inflation pressures mounting, the yen weakening and coronavirus infections again on the rise, changing the Constitution could be a harder sell than ever.

Also, though unshackling Japan's military was a cherished goal of Abe, without him, the will to push through a difficult parliamentary process could wane.

"Now that he is gone, there is no clear leader among the LDP senior members who will push through the constitutional revision," said Hiroshi Nakanishi, professor of politics at Kyoto University. **NYT**

US eyes moves to counter Beijing in Southeast Asia

MATTHEW LEEAP
BANGKOK, JULY 10

THE BIDEN administration moved Sunday to strengthen ties with key Southeast Asian ally Thailand as it pressed ahead with efforts to counter China's relentless push for influence in the region.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken signed two cooperation agreements with his Thai counterpart, pledging to expand strategic cooperation and improve the resilience of supply chains.

Although modest, the deals fit into the administration's broader strategy for the Indo-Pacific, which is aimed at blunting China's increasing assertiveness and offering alternatives to Beijing-sponsored development that many US officials regard as a trap for smaller, poorer nations.

Blinken did not mention China by name in his comments with Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha or Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai but after signing the deals said the US and Thailand "share the same goal of a free, open, interconnected prosperous, resilient and secure Indo-Pacific." American officials use that phrase often to refer to the prevention of Chinese dominance in the region.



Antony Blinken with China's Wang Yi in Bali, Saturday. *AP*

Thailand is already a member of President Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific Economic Forum, a bloc that was created earlier this year with the aim of curbing the momentum of China's Belt and Road Initiative

.Blinken went to Bangkok after attending an international conference in Indonesia, where he also raised concerns about China's increasing assertiveness, as well as its backing for Russia's war in Ukraine. **AP**

South Africa: 19 dead in 'random' bar shootings

Johannesburg: Gunmen killed 19 people in two apparently random shootings within hours of each other at taverns in South Africa, police said on Sunday, reinforcing the country's bleak status as a global centre for murder.

Attackers armed with rifles and pistols opened fire in the Orlando East bar in the township of Soweto in the early hours of Sunday, killing 15 people and wounding nine, police said.

"You can see by the way the bullet cartridges are cast around that they were just shooting randomly," said Elias Mawela, police commissioner, Gauteng province.

Bar waiter Thobani Mhlabiso said he hid behind the fridge to survive the onslaught. "There was blood everywhere," he said.

Police confirmed a second apparently random shooting hours earlier, at around 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, in a tavern in Pietermaritzburg, 500 km southeast of Soweto, which saw four people killed and eight wounded.

Officers said they did not believe the two shootings were linked. The killers from both incidents are on the run, according to police, who said it was not clear how many attackers were involved in the shootings. **REUTERS**

UK: PM race gets bloody with anti-Sunak briefings, memo

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, JULY 10

THE RACE to succeed Boris Johnson as British PM got bloody for the governing Conservative Party on Sunday, with reports of damaging briefings against frontrunner Rishi Sunak and even a so-called "mucky memo" or "dirty dossier" doing the Tory WhatsApp group rounds.

The 424-word attack seen by *The Sunday Telegraph* contains personal attacks branding the British Indian former Chancellor a "schoolboy" and a "liar", who cannot be trusted on tax.



Rishi Sunak

Headlined "Get Ready for Rishi", after Sunak's Ready4Rishi campaign launch, the memo reportedly brands the 42-year-old MP as having a "Big Tax and Big Spend" agenda. It criticises Sunak personally, saying he "publicly lied" when seeking to explain his Indian wife Akshata Murty's legal non-domicile tax status. Pointing to the fact he "secretly" held a Green Card to work in the US 18 months into his chancellorship of the UK, it casts doubt over his claim that "his resignation within minutes of [fellow Cabinet minister Sajid Javid] was an unplanned coincidence".

REUTERS ADDS: Former health ministers Jeremy Hunt and Sajid Javid used interviews with the Telegraph newspaper to announce they werejoining the race to succeed Johnson. Also, junior trade minister Penny Mordaunt on Sunday launched her bid, becoming the ninth Conservative lawmaker to mount a bid.

NEW VIEWERS FOR WORLD'S GREAT ART PIECES

Beyond buffets, slot machines: Casinos double down on work of fine art

WAYNE PARRY
ATLANTIC CITY, JULY 10

THE LOUVRE, The Museum of Modern Art and ... the Hard Rock?

Hoping to expand their appeal beyond the slot machine and buffet crowd, some casinos are turning to fine art galleries or exhibitions to bring in new business from customers who might not otherwise visit a gambling hall.

In the process, they are helping not only broaden their own customer bases, but are also putting new eyeballs in front of some of the world's great works of art.

One such effort began Friday at Atlantic City's Hard Rock casino, where the highly acclaimed "Beyond Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience" exhibit opened. The 30,000-square-foot display uses over 300 of Van Gogh's works, reproducing them digitally and projecting them onto screens, walls and floors.

"The whole point of an experience like this is to bring people in," said Fanny Curtat, the exhibit's art historian. "For a lot of people, museums are intimidating. It's all about exploring and having more ways of experiencing art."

Joe Lupo, the casino's president, said casinos need to appeal to as broad a range of potential customers as possible.

"You need to try different experiential things to help the city acquire new visitation, whether it's art or some other experience to acquire that person who doesn't look at Atlantic City as just a gaming destination," he said. "The Van Gogh exhibit has been successful in every major market in the country, and Atlantic City needs to be looked at as one of those major markets. I think it elevates the city and the property with such a high-profile exhibit."



A 'Beyond Van Gogh' exhibit at a casino in Atlantic City. *AP*

The walk-through exhibit projects Van Gogh's artwork onto the walls and floor of a viewing room, with images growing and flowing into one another: cherry trees, for example, sprout and grow blossoms, that then blow away in the breeze. Shimmering walls of color dissolve and flow into other shapes and images all around the viewer.

Other casinos are doing likewise. The Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art in Las Vegas has displayed works by Picasso, Monet, Warhol, Titian and Van Gogh.

The Palms Casino Resort features modern art pieces from Jean-Michel Basquiat, Richard Prince and Andy Warhol, and numerous street artists.

The Hippodrome Casino in London in 2013 appointed a digital artist in residence, Thomas D Gray, and offers a competition for UK artists to have their works displayed there.

Placing fine art in casinos benefits not only the gambling halls by appealing to new customers, according to Curtat, the Van Gogh exhibit historian. She said it also helps create new art lovers.

"It might seem like an unlikely pairing, but if anybody gets out of this a feeling that they have this connection with Van Gogh, maybe the next time they are in New York they'll want to go to (The Museum of Modern Art) and see the actual 'Starry Night' on the museum wall," Curtat said. "That will be a win." **AP**

KEVIN RUDD

FORMER AUSTRALIAN PM, PRESIDENT, ASIA SOCIETY

'I can never rule out Xi Jinping making a significant gesture to India in his overwhelming interest of changing the game in his favour'

In his book, *The Avoidable War,* former Australian PM Kevin Rudd analyses the layers of the US-China relationship, the need for strategic competition, what it means for Quad and the way Australia looks at India. He also explains why the new Australian Labour government is moving closer to India and shares the same international policy prism. The session was moderated by Deputy Chief of National Bureau Shubhajit Roy



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

Xi Jinping sees himself as a grand strategist, looking at the aggregation of China's external circumstances and pressure points. To him, only the US can prevent China's historical rise to become a dominant power in the region

AUKUS is different because the bilaterals between Canberra and London and Canberra and Washington have been long established. This is an arrangement around a N-powered boats project. The biggest dynamic, of course, will be with the Quad

Shubhajit Roy: Why write this book now? You also mention that there's a potential for a conflict between the US and China. That it is a question of not 'if' but 'when.' Why do you say so despite all the guardrails or systems in place?

The book sets out to describe how the US-China relationship got to its current stage by quickly retracing its history. Second, it seeks to outline the worldview of Xi Jinping. Third, it seeks to describe the managed strategic competition given the current nature of the relationship.

Right now, we have unmanaged strategic competition with no guardrails, no rules of the road. In fact, it's a series of a strategic push and shove in order to find an equilibrium. In the process, there are incidents which give rise to escalation, crisis, conflict and war. Any one of those incidents could emerge any day of the week, in the Taiwan Straits, the South China Sea, East China Sea, and even for that matter, over strategic miscalculation in the Korean Peninsula, let alone what happens in cyberspace or the Sino-Indian border. So that's unmanaged strategic competition.

Managed strategic competition is different. I describe that as finding the five strategic red lines in the areas I've just referred to. And it's for each side to articulate to the other what its irreducible positions would be. The second element of managed strategic competition, beyond the identification of mutually identified strategic red lines, is what I call non-lethal strategic competition in other domains — security, foreign and economic policies, including trade, investment technology, capital markets, currency, talent markets, as well as the great contest for ideas and ideology, the ideational system. The last underpins the international rules-based system. And as I say in the book, may the best system win. As a supporter of the Freedom Project myself, I hope that those advocating a liberal international order prevail but China will have a different view.

The third domain is where there's still sufficient political and diplomatic space for strategic cooperation and collaboration. There are certain global public goods like climate change, global financial stability, the next pandemic or other challenges to global public health where it is in the national interests of both these powers to bilaterally and globally collaborate to deal with a common danger. So, in a nutshell, managing strategic competition can stabilise the US-China relationship.

As far as unmanaged strategic competition is concerned, a conflict is bound to happen. The question is not about if but when. There are many reasons. One, China is now more powerful, militarily, economically, technologically and in foreign policy terms. The second is that Xi Jinping's leadership seeks to adjust the strategic status quo in a manner that's more compatible with Chinese interest. Third, since 2017, the US has chosen to respond. Particularly since the election of the Biden administration, there has been a range of measures, both in the security sphere, alliance consolidation, the construction of new institutions like the Quad and AUKUS, as well as in a series of impending technological restrictions. So if you go to the operational terrain of the relationship, where you have literally hundreds of military aircraft and vessels and in some cases, troops deployed in an ever-confrontational environment, the law of probability points to a collision occurring. Hence, the concept of managed strategic competition seeks to reduce a statistical risk.

Shubhajit Roy: You say that one can never rule out the possibility of Chinese President Xi Jinping bringing about a rapprochement with India despite the border standoff. Why do you say so?

Xi Jinping sees himself as a grand strategist, looking at the aggregation of China's external circumstances and pressure points. To him, only the US can prevent China's historical rise to become a dominant power in the region. When he looks at the rest of what the Chinese would describe as a comprehensive national power, or what the Soviets in an earlier stage might have called the correlation of forces around the world, his strategic lens includes Japan, the Russian Federation, the European Union and India. To a lesser extent, he'll look at countries like the Republic of Korea, Australia and the rest of Southeast Asia.

Over the last few years, Xi has sought to reduce strategic tensions, certainly with Russia, and their relationship is turning into a de facto security arrangement. In recent years, China has tried to reduce structural tension with Tokyo. The Chinese have done the same thing with India. For example, there was the Wuhan meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping. With Europeans, it is an ongoing project, which has had recent setbacks in terms of the European reaction to China's de facto support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But Chinese diplomacy is at work in Europe as well to turn that around. So, we should not rule out the possibility of a Xi-driven initiative to turn the Indian strategic worldview into a position which is more accommodative. China has been successful with Russia, not so much with Japan and is trying in Europe. Its diplomacy with India depends on the current state of the border and the bilateral economic relationship. I looked carefully at what External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said during his recent meetings with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi when the latter travelled to Delhi. He said there could be no normalisation of or improvement in the India-China relationship in the absence of the border question. But I would not rule out the possibility that at some stage, looking at global geopolitics, Xi makes a significant gesture towards India in his overwhelming interest. But as the decade of living dangerously unfolds between China and the US, with the former being deeply surprised by the strategic collaboration between the US, Japan, India and Australia through Quad, we should not rule out the possibility of Xi "changing the game." This isn't probable but possible.

Shubhajit Roy: The Galwan incident cemented Quad but can the four countries (US, India, Japan, Australia) continue with this alliance effectively, considering each has a very strong relationship with China?

All countries will place a priority on their economic relationships with the US and China. But they will place an even higher priority on their national security. Therefore, when you look at the reaction from Japan, and the attempted rapprochement between Tokyo and Beijing, or the turnaround under both Yoshihide Suga and Fumio Kishida, it was because of China's security policy behaviour towards Japan in the East China Sea. The Chinese diplomacy and the Chinese military were speaking in different voices. Whatever Chinese diplomats may say in Delhi , the People's Liberation Army's (PLA's) behaviour along the Indo-China border has been consistent, assertive and, from Delhi's perspective, aggressive. This creates the dynamics for a much deeper geostrategic response.

Shubhajit Roy: It was under your prime ministership that Australia played ball with the Quad grouping. In your book, you talk about how your predecessor John Howard and our then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had not shown interest. This is contrary to the widely held perception...

The position to reject Quad by Manmohan Singh, Yasuo Fukuda in Japan, my predecessor John Howard and US President George Bush was taken months before my election as Prime Minister in late 2017. Those are empirical facts. We know from WikiLeaks that the Bush administration had moved in the same direction well before my election. It was mutually convenient for countries, including the domestic political debate in Australia, to blame the decisions of my government.

Nirupama Subramanian: How can Quad manage the relationship between US and China in view of predicted conflict scenarios?

Managing strategic competition is primarily intended as a joint strategic narrative between China and the US. Because that is where the day-to-day calculus of risk, incident, crisis, conflict and war will come from. But some of the triggering mechanisms occur with American allies and strategic partners — Japan, Australia and India. Therefore, operationalisation of any managed strategic competition will mean that all of us will need to have inputs on a rolling basis on the nature of the articulation of strategic red lines. We need to identify irreducible points of national interest for each of us, including the daily risk of cyber attacks against our central, political and economic infrastructure. Quad partners have a role in the balance of power. Without effective counter-balance, China would be much less predisposed towards moving towards managed strategic competition.

Nirupama Subramanian: You mentioned that the Chinese military is separate from the political leadership. Many in the Indian establishment thought so too but not now anymore.

What I meant was a separation between the military and the foreign policy establishment, not between the military and the political establishment. The military in China is organised around the Central Military Commission, whose chairman is Xi. And the decisions by the Central Military Commission, in my long analytical experience, are all taken with the support of its central leadership, not just its military leadership. The military works entirely with the sanction and support of Xi. The foreign ministry has never been a powerful institution and its principal function is to create the most positive image possible for China in the world, irrespective of the other substantive arms of the party, the military or the economic bureaucracy.

Shubhajit Roy: Australia has just seen the Labour Party return to power. How does it look at the relationship with China as well as with India?

I know the new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong very well. I had appointed both of them to my Cabinet. I had appointed Richard Marles, now the Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister on the Pacific. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. The previous Australian Labour government, in its six years in office, undertook a lot of effort in strengthening the relationship with Delhi and forging a strategic partnership. My government launched the free trade negotiations between Australia and India, removed the historical reservations about the sale of nuclear supplies to India, notwithstanding India's non-adherence to the non-proliferation treaty. The Australian Defence White Paper, 2009, for the first time identified China as a strategic challenge in our region because of its changing behaviour back then in the South China Sea. I think the early interaction between Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Modi at the Quad summit in Tokyo was good. They are seeing reality much through the same international policy prism and I do not see any basis for that changing. In fact, I see the basis for the relationship only improving.

As for the Australia-China relationship, the tension has been evident since the change in government as well. But Albanese's upfront statement, that normalisation of a relationship means China has to act on punitive trade sanctions against Australia, is robust.

Shubhajit Roy: There's bipartisan support for better relations with India. Are there any nuances to watch out for?

The Australian Conservative government was often distracted by its own domestic political need to sound hairy-chested on China every day of the week by using the megaphone. However, as India has shown, there is a big difference between a declaratory policy — what politicians say — as opposed to an operational strategy, which is what a country does in response to a security challenge. The new Labour government is less likely to use the megaphone. You conduct normal diplomacy with China on very difficult, complex and conflicting positions. But you use the public microphone only when absolutely necessary. For example, Jaishankar does not provide a rolling commentary on Chinese politics. But when Wang Yi comes to Delhi and seeks some sort of strategic cooperation with India over the question of Russia and Ukraine, he takes a public position that normalisation can never occur while the border remains as it is. It is this selective use of the public positioning of the relationship, which is needed.

On the operational nature of the relationship between Australia and China, you will see very little difference.

Esha Roy: Will the new, pro-environment government change policy? Do you see environment and climate change become electoral planks?

The Australian Conservative government changed its formal position towards carbon neutrality by 2050 because of Glasgow. Even powerful media personalities like Rupert Murdoch has committed to carbon neutrality by 2050. The truth is climate change has become a less binary political matter in Australia because two conservative forces — the Morrison government and Rupert Murdoch — changed their position.

Nirupama Subramanian: How does AUKUS fit into the relationship with China?

First, the AUKUS agreement has bipartisan political support in Australia. Second, China's objection to AUKUS and its argument that Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines was an act of nuclear proliferation is odd, given the rapid expansion of its own nuclear arsenal. Third, the Australian Labour Government will now be dealing with the operationalisation of AUKUS in rolling out a complex submarine acquisition deal. And to do so in a manner which also doesn't allow any gaps in our capabilities.

Given the absence of a civil nuclear industry within Australia, which we have chosen not to develop, the question is how we can effectively service these boats. Anyway, the acquisition of these nuclear powered boats will proceed.

As for France, the Labour Party fundamentally objected to the way in which the previous Conservative government handled the unilateral cancellation of the previous submarine contract.

The penalty clause was something close to $5 billion of what we would regard as wasted public funds. This has generated a big debate in Australian domestic politics but we have also been keen to preserve and rebuild our relationship with France. That's why Albanese agreed to a bilateral visit to France at the invitation of President Emmanuel Macron.

Shubhajit Roy: Is AUKUS a Quad-killer?

I think we're up to variable geometries, to use the phrase of International Relations scholars. In the overall architecture of the Indo-Pacific region, the anchoring elements are the bilateral security treaties and arrangements which the States have with their treaty partners and strategic allies, including India. The second are the plurilateral arrangements, of which the Quad is pre-eminent. A third is a lateral arrangement as with the British. But in terms of AUKUS, Quad is an unfolding narrative.

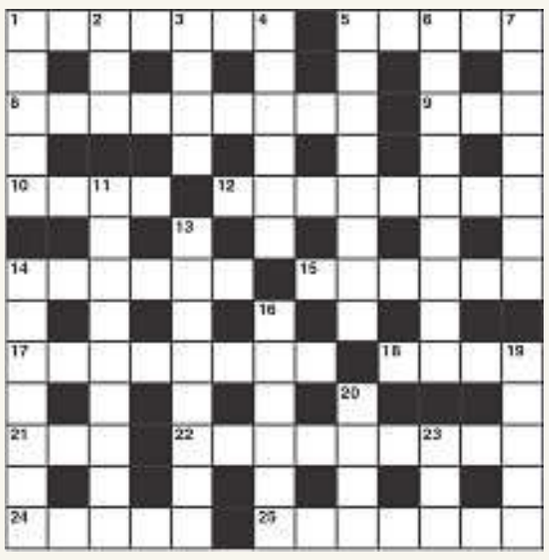
AUKUS is different because we've been treaty partners with the British since the beginning of the European settlements in Australia. The bilaterals between London and Canberra and between Canberra and Washington have been long established. This is simply a particular arrangement around a nuclear-powered boats project. The biggest dynamic, of course, will be with the Quad and where the Republic of Korea goes as well.

WHY **KEVIN RUDD**

IDEA eXCHANGE

As two-time PM of Australia and now president of Asia Society, Kevin Rudd has had the unique privilege of observing world politics, particularly the power dynamic between the US and China. He analyses its evolution, its complexities and its future in his new book, *The Avoidable War*

CROSSWORD 4790



ACROSS
1 Step on it before the opening (7)
5 Negotiate for free entertainment (5)
8 Cruel like an ungrateful Frenchman (9)
9 A good starting point for a drive (3)
10 About to include it in the ceremony (4)
12 Went and got married again? (8)
14 The plant looks like wheat to you and me (6)
15 A close arrangement for comfort (6)
17 Serious crime publication not for northern readers? (8)
18 Wildebeests whose return is celebrated (4)
21 Part of the Baltic you find frozen (3)
22 Try a new road venue (9)
24 Transplanted trees (5)
25 Worker joins in a band shouting angrily (7)

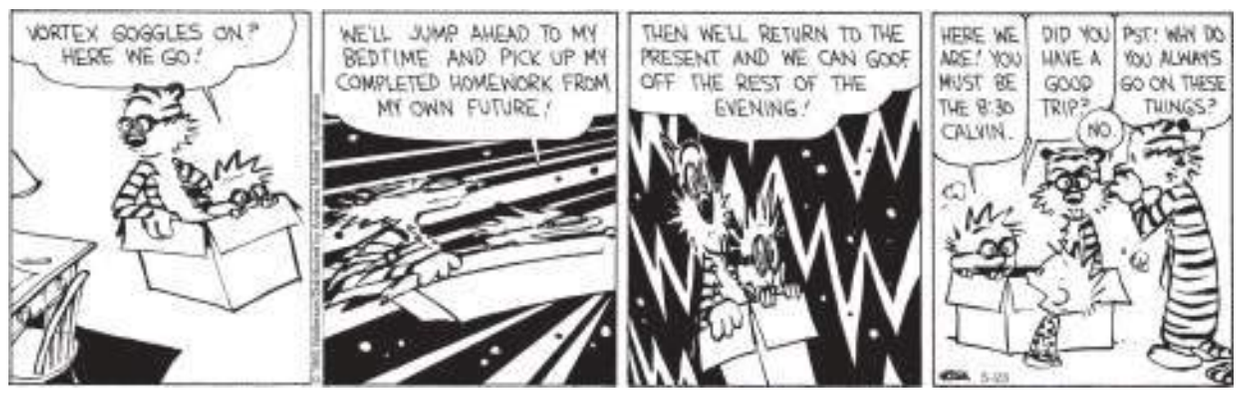
DOWN
1 To be hesitant is not entirely modest (5)
2 Blade used by a cutter perhaps (3)
3 Defence post (4)
4 Works for degrees? The ones here have point (6)
5 He's willing to have an examination list put up (8)
6 Keep in mind what the host will do (9)
7 Foot pedal that could be altered (7)
11 Overworked pupils? (5,4)
13 Not quite free to give the result of the division (8)
14 Dismiss a bank official (7)
16 Fine stuff we drop all over the place (6)
19 A gesture one doesn't care to make (5)
20 The one in jail killed his brother (4)
23 Charming feature of Japanese dress (3)

Solutions Crossword 4789: Across: 1 Flat rate, 5 Sons, 9 Scrum, 10 Air mail, 11 Going concern, 13 Litter, 14 Chapel, 17 China cabinet, 20 Repined, 21 Drake, 22 Styx, 23 Browbeat. **Down:** 1 Fast, 2 Airport, 3 Roman remains, 4 Trance, 6 Ovate, 7 Silently, 8 French window, 12 Placards, 15 Peerage, 16 Ladder, 18 Imply, 19 Next.

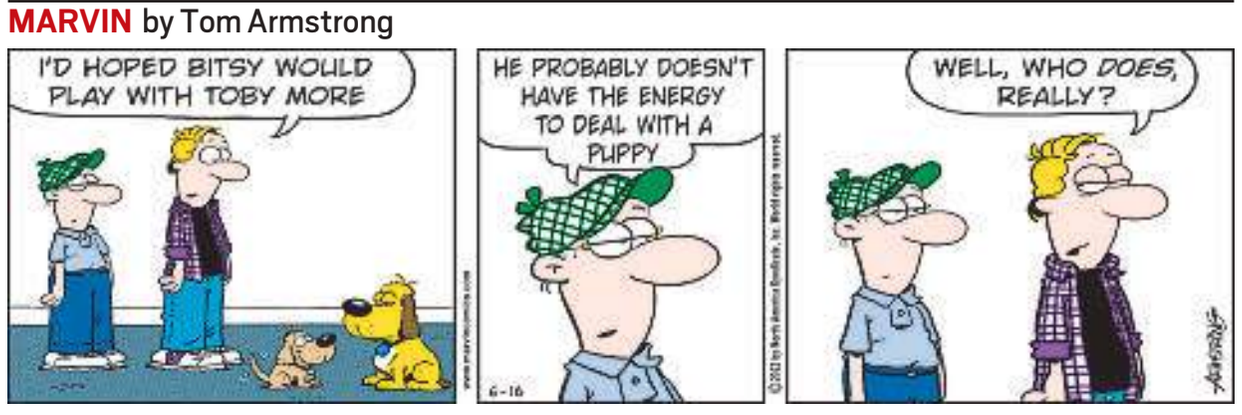
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
You've been through a demanding phase, and you may imagine that certain cares now lie in the past. However, you will have to face up to old troubles one more time, so be bold. One thing in your favour is that your level of sheer determination makes it virtually impossible for them to get the better of you.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
You should be on top form today, now that lunar influences are batting on your team, so to speak. Allow a new enthusiasm free rein this morning but get down to serious business around mid-afternoon. That's the time when you'll be ready to talk about your next step.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You're now in a charming phase. Surprised? You may not be, but some of your associates certainly will be. Yet the dominant planet in your life is no longer abrasive Mars but gentle Venus. It's time for friendly co-operation rather than fierce confrontation.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You thought you had made your mind up, but what takes place today will make you think again, probably regarding joint financial commitments. An extravagant offer, on the other hand, will provide a valuable boost to your morale and set you up for the future.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Jupiter is fighting a celestial battle with Saturn, but Venus is about to mediate between these two warring forces. The benefits will arrive very soon when a close ally, perhaps a woman, intercedes with someone who has been trying to hold you back.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Why don't you spare a little time for dealing with travel plans. Holiday arrangements may be finalised and all overseas contacts should be assiduously cultivated: you could well be taking a journey for business rather than just pleasure. Keep an eye out for legal complications this afternoon.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
The whole point about your current stars is revealed by Mercury's odd behaviour: other people, mainly close partners, will be acting erratically and will change their minds without warning. You must cultivate tolerance and flexibility, and keep the peace.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
You are far too bright to be taken in by people who are telling you what you can or can't do at home or in your private life. If you know what's best, you will form alliances with partners who will back you to the hilt: there's no point in hanging around with people who don't care.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
Sometimes good fortune comes in strange forms, and you should be content if the day brings more than your fair share of responsibilities. The more you accomplish over the next forty-eight hours, the better able you will be to appreciate social developments after then.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Those revolutionary and inspired planets, Uranus and Neptune, are behaving like a couple of synchronised swimmers, ducking and diving through your chart. Behind every apparently trivial event this week will lie a deeper purpose as your destiny unfolds.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Your innate resistance to change is strong and growing stronger. There is nothing wrong with this. In fact, if romance, pleasure or self-indulgence are among your goals, you may do very well indeed. Only in the most practical of family matters may flexibility be necessary.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
The key to a successful life is good communication. This morning you may be obliged to exaggerate a little, but this afternoon you should stick to the facts. Watch for similar inconsistencies in partners' words for, surprisingly, they may not actually mean what they say.

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.

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I __ and I ____ - Confucius (2,10)

CHAER

DIWNNU

VOTES

AOODDD

SOLUTION: REACH, STOVE, UNWIND, DOODAD
Answer: I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I **do** and I **understand** - Confucius

SUDOKU 4892

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4891

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

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Ritu Bansal, W/O Mukesh Kumar Bansal R/o 2B-1572, Krishan Kunj, Near Swati Auto, Ahmed Bagh, Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh- 247001. have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Ritu Rani Bansal. 0070794071-1

I, Ranjan Kumar S/O S P Singh, R/o D- 2/402, The Legend Sushant Lok 3, Sector 57, Kanahi (73), Gurgaon, Haryana-122003, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Ranjan Singh Parashar. 0070793952-1

I, Pammi Singh, W/O Harendra Pratap Singh R/o B-33/25-C, Gali No-2, Arjun Mohalla, Maujpur, North East Delhi-110053. have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Babita Singh 0070793967-1

I, PUNEET KUMAR, S/o CHARAN SINGH, R/o H.NO -1860 PANA MAMURPUR NARELA DELHI - 110040 have changed my name to PUNIT KUMAR 0070794005-1

I, Mamta W/o Ashwani Kumar R/o-E-28, Sham Nagar, Delhi-110018 have changed my name to Mamta Mandiratta for all purposes. 0070794044-1

I, Kailash Chand S/o Late Shri Mahabir Singh R/o C-6/183, Keshav Puram, Delhi-110035 have changed my name to Kailash Chand Singh. 0070793990-1

I, Dinesh Kumar S/O Dhalu Ram, R/o 1173, Gali No.7, Arjun Nagar, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 have changed the name of my minor Son Kush Verma aged about 2 years and He shall hereafter be known as Kiyansh Verma 0070793962-1

I Yashi D/O Sunil Kansal R/O HD-29 Upper Ground Floor Pitampura North West Delhi Delhi 110034 have changed my name to Yashi Kansal for all purposes 0040621873-1

Ms.Dyulek Prava Dass as mentioned in my husband Mr.Tushar Kanti Patnaik's passport residing at S-1,144 ,Sector 4 Vaishali Ghaziabad-201010 shall henceforth be known as Ms.Dyulek Prava Das. 0040621868-1

I, Chhaya Rani, D/o Anesh Bhatnagar R/o 1702, Tower - C3, Mapsko Casa Bella, Sector -82, Gurgaon (Haryana) - 122004, have changed my name to Chhaya Bhatnagar. 0040621544-1

I Pranav Gupta S/O, Rahul Mohan Gupta R/o 702, T6, Unitech Heights, Sector Chi Iii, Greater Noida-201310 have changed my name to Pranav Rahul Gupta for all purposes. 0040621870-1

I, Taruna Sandeep Bhalla, R/o B-2, 1201 Cleo County, Sector 121,Gautam Budha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh – 201301, do herebysolemnly affirm and declare that my name is Taruna SandeepBhalla and not Taruna Bhalla as mentioned in Passport of myhusband Sandeep Bhalla. 0040621839-1

I, Shivi Sharma W/o Rajat Garg, R/o V-001, Najafgarh Road, DLF Capital Greens, Karam Pura, Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Shivi Sharma Garg for all purposes 0040621818-1

I, Sandeep Bhalla, R/o B-2, 1201 Cleo County, Sector 121,Gautam Budha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh – 201301, do herebysolemnly affirm and declare that my actual name is SandeepBhalla and not Sandeep Joginder Sain Bhalla as mentioned in mywife Taruna Sandeep Bhalla's Passport. 0040621837-1

I, Sahani Akashkumar Shivkumar S/O Shivkumar Sahani, R/o Mallah Toli, Bahadurganj, Pattigar T. Bahadurganj, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh- 275201, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Akashkumar Sahani. 0070793955-1

LOST & FOUND

I, Charu Gupta W/o Jitender Gupta R/o-A-30/11-H, 3rd-Floor, Mata Mandir Marg, Maujpur, Delhi-110053 have lost my original property Sale Deed at above address. Finder may Contact-8810608892 0070794042-1

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT
(Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

IN THE COURT OF SH. HARISH DUDANI, LD. PRINCIPAL JUDGE NEW DELHI DISTRICT, FAMILY COURT, PATIALA HOUSE, NEW DELHI

Case No. HMA 648/19

SAURABH S. BISHT ....PETITIONER
VS
DIVYA SINGH ....RESPONDENT

To,
DIVYA SINGH
VV/O SH. SAURABH S. BISHT
D/O SH. DEVENDRA SINGH
R/o. 18/10, TARAPORE DEFENCE ENCLAVE, RANGPURI, VASANT KUNJ,
New Delhi-110070

THE DEFENDANT/RESPONDENTABOVE NAMED

WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the **12th. Day of August,** 2022 the day fixed for the final disposal. it will be heard and determined ex-parte.
Given under rny hand and seal of the Court this **04th Day of July, 2022.**

Sd/-
(JUDGE)
Principal Judge
Family Court,
New Delhi, District
Patiala House Delhi

SEAL

WESTERN RAILWAY - RAJKOT DIVISION

REWIRING OF STAFF QUARTER

Tender Notice No. DRM/RJT/E-Tender/2022-2023/07 (EL) Dt.04-07-2022. **Tender No. DRM/RJT/EL/2022-2023/07 (i) Name of Work:** Rajkot Division: Rewiring of staff quarter at various stations colony (Type I-224, II-639 III - 26 IV - 17 V - 6 Total 912 nos.) **(ii) Approx. Cost:** ₹ **1,74,33,666/- (iii) EMD Cost:** ₹ **2,37,200/- (iv)** Date and time for on line apply: on **03-08-2022** up to 14:00 Hours. **Address of the Office:** Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical), Western Railway, Kothi Compound, Rajkot-360 001. Web site particulars: **www.ireps.gov.in** RJT-044

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PROVISION OF SCADA AND RTU INSTALLATIONS

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संख्या-6/2618/2022-6/241/2022-23 दिनांक: 8 जुलाई, 2022

-:विज्ञापन:-

शासनादेश संख्या-514/33-3-2022-1713/2021 दिनांक 02 जून, 2022 के अन्तर्गत राज्य स्तर पर उ0प्र0 मातृभूमि योजनान्तर्गत प्रोजेक्ट मैनेजमेन्ट यूनिट(पी0एम0यू0) में निम्न पदों पर ऑउटसोर्सिंग के माध्यम से चयन हेतु निम्नांकित योग्यता व विवरण के अनुसार आवेदन पत्र अर्ह अभ्यर्थियों से आमंत्रित किये जाते है

क्र0 सं0	पद नाम	योग्यता	अनुभव	मानदेय प्रतिमाह (लाख रुपये में) + कर अतिरिक्त	पदों की संख्या	आयु
1.	कन्सल्टेन्ट (मैनेजमेन्ट)	बी०टेक0/एम0बी0ए0/पी0जी0डी0एम0	प्रोजेक्ट मैनेजमेन्ट, प्लानिंग एवं योजना के क्रियान्वयन में 05 वर्ष का अनुभव	0.90	01	30-50
2.	कन्लसटेन्ट (एम0आई0एस0)बी	बी०टेक0/एम0सी0ए0/बी0ई0 या समकक्ष	योजना का प्रभावी अनुश्रवण, डैशबोर्ड की स्थापना में सहायता देना, विभिन्न प्रकार की सूचनाओं को तैयार करना, आदि में 05 वर्ष का अनुभव	0.90	01	30-50
3.	कन्सलटेन्ट (आई0ई0सी0/सोशल मीडिया)	बी0टेक0/एम0सी0ए0/एम0बी0ए0/मास कम्यूनिकेशन या समकक्ष	विभाग की आवश्यकतानुसार आवश्यक टिप्पणियां प्रस्तुत करना, सोशल मीडिया प्रबन्धन, योना का प्रचार-प्रसार एवं उससे सम्बन्धित सामग्री तैयार करना आदि में 03 वर्ष का अनुभव	0.90	01	30-50
4.	सोशल कन्सलटेन्ट	एम0बी0ए0/एम0एस0डब्ल्यू/एम0ए0 (समाज शास्त्र)	योजना के संचालन में सहयोग प्रदान करना एवं 03 वर्ष का अनुभव	0.70	01	30-50
5.	एसोसिएट कन्सलटेन्ट	बी0टेक0/एम0सी0ए0/बी0ई0 या समकक्ष	योजना के संचालन में सहयोग प्रदान करना एवं 03 वर्ष का अनुभव	0.70	01	30-50

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CO AND ALL RANKS, 1/11 GORKHA RIFLES (BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE) (BATALIK)



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THIS WORD MEANS

DIGITAL NOMAD VISAS

Indonesia is the latest country to allow people to travel and work remotely; hopes it will boost tourism

SANSKRITI FALOR
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

INDONESIA HAS joined the growing list of countries that are tweaking their visa policies to offer work-from-anywhere plans. The country hopes that its five-year visa plan will boost tourism and create more jobs by allowing digital nomads to live 'tax-free'.

THE TERM: Digital Nomads are people who work remotely while travelling to different places and spending their earned income in the host country.

According to the 2020 State of Independence in America report by the company MBO Partners, "Digital nomads are defined as people who choose to embrace a location-independent, technology-enabled lifestyle that allows them to travel and work remotely, anywhere in the Internet-connected world. Unlike regular remote workers, who tend to stay in one geographic area, digital nomads travel and explore while working."

The study also found that 10.9 million US workers described themselves as digital nomads in 2020, up from 49% in 2019.

PROPOSED VISA: The Digital Nomad Visa would allow remote workers to stay in Indonesia, including Bali, tax-free as long as the remote workers earn from companies outside Indonesia.

Announced by Indonesia's Tourism Minister Sandiaga Uno to boost tourism in the country, the visa will be applicable for five years. This would make Indonesia's visa one of the longest digital nomad visas allowed by any country.

Through the visa, Indonesia aims to bring in over 3.6 million overseas travellers into the country over the next year.

Uno told Bloomberg that in a survey, 95% digital nomads responded that Indonesia, especially Bali, was the remote working location of their choice.

OTHER SUCH VISAS: Italy in March released a new permit for non-EU nationals, or digital nomads, who can stay in the country for up to 90 days without a visa.

Antigua and Barbuda offer a digital nomad visa for two years where the travellers are required to maintain their own health insurance.

Barbados offers a year-long remote working visa which can be extended further.

Among the other countries offering nomad visas are Croatia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Mauritius, Norway, and Spain.

Cloudbursts & heavy localised rainfall — why hills are at risk

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

SUDDEN, "highly localised rain" near the Amarnath shrine in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday evening triggered heavy flooding that has so far led to the deaths of at least 16 people, with many still unaccounted for.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the weather event was not a "cloudburst" as had been initially reported, because the Amarnath shrine saw 31 mm of rainfall between 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm on Friday — less than what would qualify as a cloudburst. The IMD has an automatic weather station near the cave shrine.



At least 16 people have died after heavy rain triggered a flash flood near the Amarnath shrine. *PTI*

CLOUDBURST: A cloudburst is short-term extreme precipitation that takes place over a small area — it is not, as is sometimes understood, the "breaking open" of a cloud resulting in the release of huge amounts of water. Cloudbursts have a very specific definition: if rainfall of about 10 cm or above per hour is recorded over an area of roughly 10 km x 10 km, it is classified as a cloudburst event. By this definition, 5 cm of rainfall in half an hour would also be classified as a cloudburst. Cloudbursts wreaked havoc in Uttarakhand in June 2016.

VULNERABLE HILLS: While cloudbursts occur over plains as well, there is a greater probability of their taking place in mountainous zones — this has to do with the terrain. Cloudbursts happen after saturated clouds are unable to produce rain because of the upward movement of a very warm current of air, which carries raindrops upwards. New drops are formed and existing raindrops gain in size until, after a point, they become too heavy for the cloud to hold — and they fall together in a flash. Hilly terrains aid in heated air currents rising vertically upwards, thereby increasing the probability of a cloudburst situation.

Such heavy downpours can trigger landslides and flash floods that can sweep away houses and roads, and lead to caveins. This is also why cloudbursts cause extensive damage in the hills.

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Uber in India

The Uber Files show how the ride-hailing company found ways around laws, and lobbied aggressively with governments during the period of its dramatic expansion. What is Uber's profile in India, and what do the Files say about its operations in the country?

SHYAMLAL YADAV & RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

What are the Uber Files?

The Uber Files are a leak of 182 gigabytes of data that were obtained by *The Guardian* newspaper from an anonymous source and shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and its media partners from 30 countries, including *The Indian Express*.

The dump comprises 124,000 records from the 2013-17 period — mainly internal company emails (83,000), and memos, presentations, and WhatsApp messages. The Uber Files show how the ride-hailing start-up begun by Travis Kalanick in San Francisco in 2010 became a global behemoth by harnessing technology, working around laws, and using aggressive lobbying tactics to curry favour with governments during the period of its dramatic expansion.

Over the years, Uber has faced intense media scrutiny. In 2017, Uber's investors forced Kalanick out amid a series of sexual harassment and privacy scandals, causing huge reputational damage to the company.

What are the main findings with regard to Uber's operations in India?

The Uber Files show the cavalier manner in which the company's top executives reacted to the allegation of rape by an Uber driver in New Delhi in December 2014. While officially expressing shock and empathy, the executives in internal communications tried to put the blame on faulty background checks on drivers carried out by Indian government officials. After Uber services were banned in the capital, the company's managers tried to douse fires they feared might start in other countries.

The data also reveal the manner in which Uber tackled tax and regulation issues that arose frequently in India, and used it as an example in other countries. India being a key market, Uber used its lobbying tactics to the hilt here. Among the steps the company took was to prepare a list of "stakeholders" from among the bureaucracy and political class to influence policy, and to sign around a dozen Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in different states — agreements that remained mostly on paper.

How big is Uber in India?

Uber launched in India on August 29, 2013 as a ride-hailing platform in Bengaluru. It had phenomenal success around the country, and on November 18, 2021, launched the service in India's 100th city, Warangal in Telangana. According to the company, it had served nearly 9.5 crore Indian riders and drivers until then.

As of now, Uber has nearly 6 lakh driver-partners; at a meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in San Francisco in April, CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said the company was aiming to grow to 20 lakh driver-partners in the country. Uber offers a variety of services in India, including Rentals, UberConnect, Auto, and Moto.

The company has reinvented itself several times in India. Its first Indian arm was incorporated as Cupolone Capital Advisors Private Limited in Mumbai in January 2011, which was renamed as Xchange Leasing India Private Limited in November 2015. On January 25, 2012, Meinstein Edumart Private Limited was incorporated in Delhi; it was renamed as Resourcexpert India Private Limited on December 27, 2013, then as Uber India Technology Private Limited (UITPL) on March 4, 2015.

Uber India Systems Private Limited (UISPL) was incorporated on August 16, 2013 in Mumbai. Another firm, Uber India Research and Development Private Limited (UIRDPL), was incorporated on March 11, 2016 in Hyderabad as Uber India Support Centre Private Limited, and later renamed. Uber India Development Private Limited (UIDPL) was incorporated on April 13, 2016 in Bengaluru.

Xchange Leasing is categorised as a "Passenger transport services" provider, and the description of its service is "Leasing of Vehicles". Its total income in 2018-19, the latest balance sheet available with RoC, was Rs 103.61 crore. UISPL's category as per its balance sheet is "Other Professional and business services", and its total income in 2020-21 (latest available) was Rs 538.73 crore. UIDPL is in the business of "research and development", and showed a loss of Rs 29,500 in 2019-20 (latest available).

UIRDPL is categorised as "Other professional, technical and business services" as per the declaration to the RoC, and its turnover in 2018-19 (latest available) was Rs 335.60 crore. UITPL's revenue for 2020-21 was Rs 6.97 crore, RoC records show.

How has Uber managed its growth profile in India?

Uber has diversified its riding from four wheelers to three and two wheelers as well. To get around labour laws, the company has said that drivers are not its employees. It has categorised itself as "tour operator" and later as "rent-a-cab" to reduce its service tax burden.

Uber entered India through Europe. In 2012, a few months after it started services in France, Uber set up a Dutch company, Uber BV, to receive payments from customers in India and some other countries. Uber BV (Netherlands) holds 52% of UISPL's shares. Except UIDPL, all the aforementioned companies are subsidiaries of Netherlands-based companies.

In its declaration to the RoC for 2020-21, UISPL said, "The Company entered into an agreement with Uber BV for support services including accounting, treasury, finance, employee stock compensation administration, payroll, administrative services, human resources, legal, management support, and information technology support and such other general and administrative services that the Company may need from time to time to operate the Rides and Eats business. For these support services, the Company was required to pay Uber BV an arm's length fee calculated on a cost-plus basis."

With regard to its payments towards Uber BV, the RoC declaration states that from October 1, 2019, "whereby the consideration for the rides service will be a fee based on i) an allocation of networking costs for the Fiscal Year based upon the number of trips and ii) a 30 % of net revenue earned and 80 % of commercial profit in excess of 1% net revenue whichever is less earned by the Company from Rides business".

What impact has Uber had on transport and employment generation in India?

Before Uber entered India, engaging a taxi was often difficult and costly in many Indian cities. When it started out, Uber received generally positive feedback for its clean vehicles and affordable tariffs, and attracted many commuters who might otherwise have taken public transport such as buses.

With approximately 6 lakh driver-partners and a presence in 100 cities and towns, Uber has created significant earning and employment opportunities for both owner-drivers and those who are contracted by owners to drive vehicles on the platform. After expanding its footprint to three wheelers and bikes, the company has offered options for faster and cheaper mobility to riders.

What challenges does Uber face in India?

Uber leads the cab aggregator business in India, and invested Rs 1,767 crore in it in November 2019. The company says its India journey is "only just beginning". But Bloomberg reported last month that Uber Technologies Inc had explored options for its Indian ride-hailing business, including a sale, but suspended discussions after tech start-up valuations cratered. CEO Khosrowshahi had rejected the report in a tweet.

In a letter written to employees in May, Khosrowshahi indicated cost cutting: "Some initiatives that require substantial capital will be slowed. We have to make sure our unit economics work before we go big. The least efficient marketing and incentive spend will be pulled back."

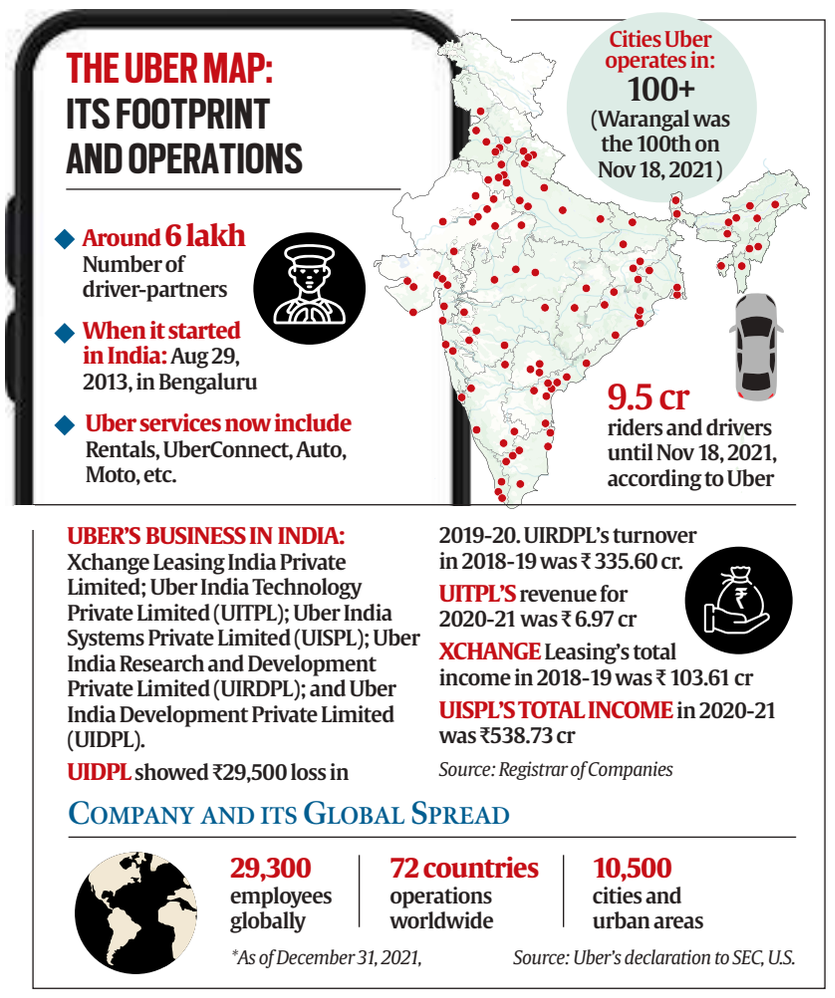
In the United Kingdom and France, Uber's driver-partners have already been declared its "workers". A similar PIL is pending before the Supreme Court in India, and its outcome is likely to determine the company's future growth prospects and strategy.

Uber's surge pricing is seen by many as being predatory. Why have states not been able to control it?

In November 2020, the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued Motor Vehicle Aggregators Guidelines "to provide a guiding framework to the State governments/UTs to consider for issuance of licenses as well as regulating the business being conducted by such Aggregators." The guidelines gave a formula for surge pricing. However, in the absence of policies by state governments, no standard surge pricing formula is used by Uber.

Karnataka is the only state that has notified a fare structure for aggregators. In Mumbai, the licensing process started after the High Court intervened this year on a PIL filed by advocate Savina R Castro, but the Supreme Court issued a stay after Uber challenged the Centre's Motor Vehicle Aggregators Guidelines 2020.

On surge pricing, Uber says: "Pricing for trips varies city by city for a number of reasons, including fare regulations, fuel prices, and general cost of living. Dynamic pricing helps ensure that there are enough drivers to handle all ride requests, so riders can get a driver quickly and drivers can earn more. We show riders the price of their ride before they accept it so they can make an informed choice."



Global edible oil prices crash; will other food commodities follow?

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

THE PRESENT prolonged bout of global food inflation from around end-2020 began with edible oils. Could it end with edible oils?

As far as overall food inflation goes, these are still early days. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index hit an all-time high of 159.7 points in March, the month immediately following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since then, the index — a weighted average of world prices of a basket of food commodities over a base period value, taken at 100 for 2014-15 — has eased a tad, by 3.4%, to 154.2 points in June.

The picture is clearer in vegetable oils, where the FAO's sub-index has fallen by 15.9%, from 251.8 to 211.8 points, between March and June. The rise during April 2020 to March 2022 was sharper for vegetable oils (from 81.2 to 251.8 points) than for the general index (from 92.5 to 159.7 points). But so has been the subsequent dip from March to June *(See chart)*.

Palm vs 'soft' oils

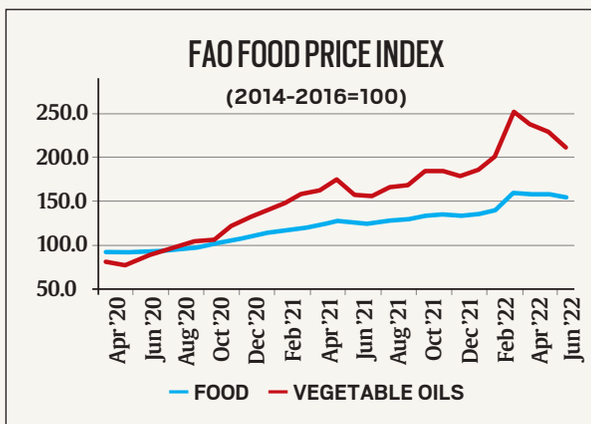
A better idea of the price decline can be had by looking at individual oils. Crude palm oil (CPO) traded at a record 7,268 ringgit per tonne at the Bursa Malaysia derivatives exchange on March 9. On Friday, the most-active two-month futures contract settled at 4,157 ringgits. That's 42.8% down from the peak.

Four months ago, the landed price (cost plus freight) of CPO in India was about $2,000 per tonne, while it was $1,960 for RBD (refined, bleached and deodorised) palmolein, $1,925 for crude degummed soyabean oil and $2,100 for crude sunflower oil. Those prices have since retreated to $1,185 (CPO), $1,160 (RBD palmolein), $1,460 (soyabean) and $1,700 (sunflower) per tonne.

The accompanying table shows much of this price collapse to have taken place in just over the last one month, with the fall more in palm than for so-called soft oils, namely soyabean and sunflower. It is also reflected in the data from the Department of Consumer Affairs. Between June 8 and July 8, the all-India modal (most quoted) retail price of packed palm oil has come down from Rs 160 to Rs 145 per kg; it has been less for soyabean (Rs 170 to Rs 160/kg) and sunflower (Rs 190 to Rs 182.5), and non-existent for groundnut (Rs 180).

"The transmission of international to domestic prices will be higher for imported oils and which require less voyage time," says BV Mehta, executive director of the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA).

India annually consumes around 23 million tonnes (mt) of edible oils, out of which 13.5-14.5 mt is imported and 8.5-9.5 mt domestically produced. The imported oils mainly comprise palm (8-9 mt), soyabean (3-3.5 mt) and sunflower (2-2.5 mt), while those sourced indigenously include mustard (2.5-2.8 mt), soyabean and cottonseed (1.2-1.3 mt each), rice bran (1-1.1 mt) and groundnut (0.5-0.8 mt).



HOW GLOBAL EDIBLE OIL PRICES HAVE CRASHED
($ PER TONNE)

	Crude Palm Oil@	RBD Palmolein @	Degummed Soyabean Oil@@	Crude Sunflower Oil@@
Jul 8, 2022	1,185	1,160	1,460	1,700
Jul 1, 2022	1,320	1,310	1,495	1,800
Jun 8, 2022	1,735	1,710	1,825	2,000
Jul 2021*	1,135	1,111	1,300	1,278

*@Cost & Freight Mumbai; @@Cost, Insurance & Freight Mumbai; *Average for month.*
Source: Solvent Extractors' Association of India.

"Palm oil tanker vessels from Malaysia and Indonesia take 8-10 days to arrive in India. The same for soyabean oil from Argentina and Brazil is 40-45 days. Given the steeper fall in international prices of palm oil and less time to bring fresh cargoes, it's natural to see it becoming cheaper first before the other oils," adds Mehta.

Being a 'hard' oil that is semi-solid (as opposed to liquid) at room temperature, palm oil isn't used much in home kitchens for direct cooking or frying. Most of it goes to make hydrogenated fats (*vanaspati*, margarine and bakery shortening) or as key ingredient in bread, biscuits, cookies, cakes, noodles, *mithai*, *namkeen*, frozen dessert, soap, and cosmetics. The benefits of the slide mainly in palm oil prices will thus accrue more to the food, restaurant, or skincare industries than to households. They would want prices of 'soft' (soyabean and sunflower) and indigenous (mustard and groundnut) oils to fall more.

The other side

Davish Jain, chairman of the Indore-based Soyabean Processors' Association of India, feels that the government should review the existing import tariffs on edible oils, considering the recent crash in world prices and the ongoing planting season for kharif oilseeds.

The effective import duty is currently 5.5% on crude palm, soyabean and sunflower oil, while it is 13.75% for RBD palmolein. Further, the Centre, on May 24, allowed up to 2 mt each of crude soyabean and sunflower oil to be imported at zero duty during 2022-23 and 2023-24 (April-March). Quantities beyond this would attract the regular 5.5% duty.

"Domestic soyabean prices have already dropped from roughly Rs 69,000 to Rs 62,000 per tonne in the past month. If the trend in international prices continues, it will send a negative signal to farmers when kharif sowing is at its peak. A rollback of the customs duty exemption and even a gradual increase is in order," points out Jain.

According to the Agriculture Ministry, farmers had planted 77.80 lakh hectares (lh) under kharif oilseeds till July 8, against 97.56 lh during the corresponding period of last year. Acreages are down in soyabean (from 69.54 lh to 54.43 lh), groundnut (25.31 lh to 20.51lh) and sesamum (1.71 lh to 1.53 lh). The lower area covered has been attributed to weak monsoon activity in June, with all-India rainfall 7.9% below the historical average and 24 out of the country's 36 meteorological subdivisions registering shortfall in excess of 10%.

July, however, has recorded 31.3% above-normal rains so far, resulting in the cumulative rainfall from June 1 to July 10 turning 5.2% surplus. SEA's Mehta expects a substantial pick-up in sowing due to the monsoon's revival and the acreage gap closing before the month-end.

Ukraine to Indonesia

As noted earlier, the current global food inflation began with edible oils. The initial trigger was the 2020-21 drought in Ukraine (the world's biggest sunflower oil producer) and Covid-induced migrant labour shortages in Malaysia's oil palm plantations. The war was the final straw. The supply disruptions from Ukraine and Russia were aggravated by Indonesia's restrictions on exports of palm oil in response to domestic price increases and drought in South America badly affecting the region's 2021-22 soyabean crop.

Those supply shocks seem to be easing somewhat. Soyabean production in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay is set to recover this year. Indonesia was forced to lift its ban on palm oil shipments in late-May after a piling up of stocks. Excess supplies from the world's largest producer are now exerting downward pressure on prices.

Whether other food commodities will follow vegetable oils may be only a matter of time.

MARKET WATCH

FPIs pull out ₹4K cr in July so far

New Delhi: Foreign investors continue to desert equity markets and have pulled out over Rs 4,000 crore this month so far amid steady appreciation of the dollar and rising interest rates in the US. However, the pace of selling by FPIs has been declining over last few weeks. **PTI**

FOCUS SHIFTS TO PROFITS

Premium mobilisation: PSU general insurers lose market share in Jun qtr

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, JULY 10

WITH PUBLIC sector insurance general companies, which once monopolised the sector, focussing more on profits, they have lost market share in gross premium underwritten to the aggressive private sector during the quarter ended June 30, 2022.

While the market share of private companies rose to 51.82 per cent in June 2022 from 47.63 per cent a year ago, PSU general insurers lost the market share from 42.23 per cent to 37.85 per cent. Gross premium collection of general insurance companies showed a growth of 23 percent at Rs 54,492 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2022.

According to the data available from the General Insurance Council, private sector companies registered higher growth of 33.8 percent at Rs 28,235 crore in premium collection for the June quarter. However, four public sector general insurers witnessed only 10.25 percent growth in premium collection to Rs 20,626 crore during the last 3 months.

Among private sector companies, ICICI Lombard General insurance retained the top position by mobilising a Rs 5,370-crore premium, a rise of 43.86 percent growth. Bajaj Allianz mobilised Rs 3,100 crore during the quarter, growth of 25.43 per cent.

The New India Assurance, India's largest general insurer but functioning without a Chairman and MD now, reported an 8.13 per cent rise in premium collection at Rs 9,550 crore during the June quarter, according to the Council's data. Health insurance companies mobilised Rs 5,263 crore, a growth rate of 28.63 per cent during the quarter.

According to insurance sources, the government has asked PSU general insurers to focus on profitability rather than going for a higher top line in loss-making areas.

The Finance Ministry has asked Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and government departments to relax the requirement of minimum solvency ratio of 1.5 of the liabilities as one of the eligibility criteria for the participation of public sector insurance companies in the tender process.

According to an office memorandum by the Ministry to various departments and insurance firms, the stipulation on high solvency ratio makes three of the four public sector general insurance companies — National Insurance Company Ltd (NIC), Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OIC) and United India Insurance Company Ltd (UII) — ineligible to participate in the tender process in spite of their "vast experience and risk management skills".

The Ministry's note follows the intense competition in the sector and the decline in the performance of three PSU insurers. Only New India Assurance Company Ltd has reported a solvency ratio of more than 1.5 among the four PSU insurers. Government departments and CPSEs, which constitute a big market for insurance companies, award insurance contracts through a tender process.

Solvency ratio — net income and depreciation divided by liabilities — is the financial capacity of an insurance company to meet its obligations. A high ratio means the company is financially sound and it has enough capital to pay all valid claims. As per the IRDAI's mandate, the minimum solvency ratio that insurance companies must maintain is 1.5 to lower risks. In terms of solvency margin, the required value is 150 per cent.

EXPLAINED

Pvt cos gain

WHILE THE market share of private companies rose to 51.82 per cent in June 2022 from 47.63 per cent a year ago, PSU general insurers lost the market share from 42.23 per cent to 37.85 per cent. Gross premium collection of general insurance companies showed a growth of 23 percent at Rs 54,492 crore for the quarter ended June.

BETWEEN 2014 AND 2020

Content blocking orders by govt and courts to Twitter soars 48,000%

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

THERE HAS been a rise of more than 48,000 per cent in legal demands being made by India — from various courts and the government — to remove content from Twitter between 2014 and 2020, an analysis of Twitter's global transparency reports show. Incidentally, in the same time period, the number of content blocking orders issued to social media companies by the government has also increased by almost 2,000 per cent, data shared with Parliament showed, highlighting the growing trend of online censorship in India.

According to the data shared in the Lok Sabha by former Minister of State for Electronics and IT Sanjay Dhotre, the government ordered social media companies to take down 9,849 links from their platforms under Section 69 (A) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, in 2020, compared to 471 such requests made in 2014, an increase of 1,991 per cent.

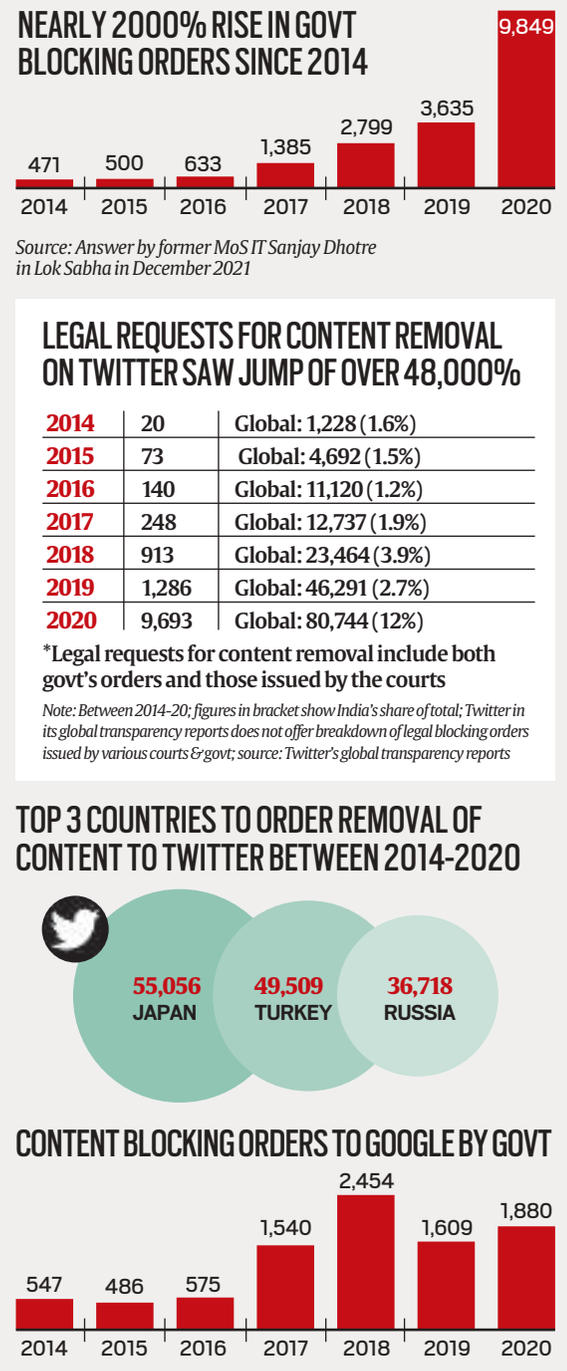
According to Twitter's global transparency reports, between the same time period, India has made legal requests to remove 12,373 pieces of content from the microblogging platform, of which more than 9,000 requests were made in 2020 alone. This places India in the fourth spot to issue blocking orders between 2014 and 2020, after Japan, which made more than 55,000 such requests; Turkey which made close to 50,000 requests; and Russia which ordered removal of more than 36,000 tweets.

Outside of that time frame, in the first six months of 2021, Twitter was asked by various Indian courts and the government to block a little more than 4,900 tweets — this coincided with the company blocking more than 250 accounts in relation to sharing "provocative" tweets over the then ongoing farmers' protests and the company receiving orders from the government to take down some tweets critical of the government's handling of Covid-19.

It is worth noting that Twitter in its global transparency reports does not offer a breakdown of legal blocking orders issued by various courts and the government. However, Twitter's petition against the Ministry of Electronics and IT's (MeitY's) blocking orders revealed that between February 2021 and February 2022, the government ordered the company to block more than 1,400 accounts and 175 tweets. Between 2014 and 2020, the government ordered Google to take down over 9,000 pieces of content from services like Search, YouTube, Gmail, and Bloggr, for reasons like criticism of the government, defamation, adult content, and impersonation among other things, an analysis of the company's global transparency reports show. Unlike Twitter, Google does offer a breakdown of how many takedown notices were issued to it by the government and how many from the courts.

Incidentally, on Facebook, takedowns have taken a downward trend. For instance, in 2014, the company blocked over 10,000 pieces of content, which further rose to more than 30,000 links being blocked on the platform.

However, in both 2019 and 2020, not more than 2,100 links were blocked on the platform, as per its transparency reports. In these two years, the company took down content following government orders, including content against security of the state and public order.



SECTOR WATCH
AVIATION

IndiGo technicians in Hyderabad, Delhi call in sick over salary issues

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

A SIGNIFICANT number of IndiGo aircraft maintenance engineers at Hyderabad and Delhi called in sick over the last few days in protest of the salaries being paid to these technicians, according to multiple sources. This comes barely a week after the airline's cabin crew took a sick leave on July 2 causing more than half of IndiGo's flights getting delayed.

According to a source, a significant number of aircraft technicians did not report for duty on Friday's night shift at Hyderabad airport. This was followed by technicians not reporting for duty on Saturday morning as well.

The disruptions at the country's largest airline come at a time when rival airlines such as Air India are conducting recruitment drives, in addition those by upcoming airlines such as Akasa Air and a revived Jet Airways.

Just last week, days after the cabin crew mass leave, IndiGo restored salaries of pilots and cabin crew by an additional 8 per cent. The airline had cut salaries by about 28 per cent during Covid19 pandemic, and this was the second partial rollback — the first one also being 8 per cent. The company also mandated its crew members reporting sick to visit their respective basis for verification. IndiGo did not respond to a request for a comment.

Notably, IndiGo is in midst of a senior management reshuffle with CEO Ronojoy Dutta and chief commercial officer Willy Boulter set to exit the company. KLM's president and CEO Pieter Elbers is set to take over as IndiGo's next chief executive.

Other companies have also witnessed protests by aircraft technicians this year. In March, state-owned AI Engineering Services Ltd, which was earlier a subsidiary of Air India, also saw its technicians going on a flash strike seeking salary revisions.

3 KEY POINTS

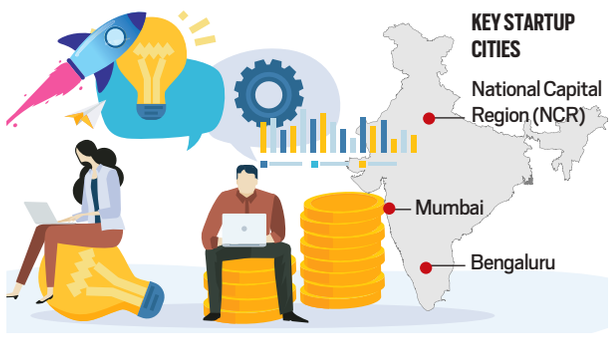
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'Startup funding declines 40% to $6.8 bn in April-June'

Geopolitical instability appears to be taking a toll on the Indian startups with the total funding declining by 40% to $6.8 bn in the April-June quarter, as per a PwC India report



Over 60% Share of early-stage deals in the total with an average ticket size of $5 million, as per the PwC India report titled, 'Startup Deals Tracker - Q2 CY22.'

Funding in early-stage deals during Q2 CY22 continued to be stable at around $800 million and could remain stable or even grow in the next few quarters — given that entrepreneurial activity continues to flourish with increased digitisation as well as the quantum of venture capital funds waiting to be deployed in the Indian market

Factors:
- Global slowdown
- Decrease in tech stock valuations
- Inflation

***Overall funding** landscape to take 12–18 months to stabilise, during which it would be beneficial for startups to increase their 'funding runway'. No matter which stage a startup is in, they would do well to keep a close tab on core business and ensure unit economics is strictly as per plan*

Source: PwC India /PTI

'Sebi looking at issuing market risk factor disclosures'

New Delhi: In a global first, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is planning to issue regular 'risk factor disclosures' on market trends, including surges and collapses, to help investors make right decisions by learning from the regulator's insights, sources said.

The move, which is still in a preliminary stage of discussion, can help investors avoid a herd mentality that has been particularly witnessed during the last couple of years — starting with large-scale selloffs when the pandemic hit the world in early 2020, followed soon by a sharp surge in buying of stocks without understanding the fundamentals and largely on account of get-rich-quick stories and then subsequent losses. Particularly of significance has been the losses suffered by investors in a large number of IPOs in the recent past and in the highly complicated futures and options segment of the capital market.

"Though the investors have seen a fixed pattern play out in every single cycle -- that is, everyone rushes to buy shares when the going is good and then they indulge in panic-selling when a crisis strikes. The basics of capital market investments are always thrown out of the window and one key reason for that is the lack of truly independent insights," a top official said.


Sebi headquarters, Mumbai

The official further said most of the research material available in the market has been prepared by the market participants who have their own business interests in mind and therefore it could be a great idea if the regulator itself makes public its insights from upswings or downtrends. **PTI**

Mahindra open to investing in EV battery cell maker: CEO

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

MAHINDRA & Mahindra could consider investing in a battery-cell company to meet future electrification needs, its CEO said, after the company raised funds for its new electric vehicle (EV) unit at a $9.1 billion valuation.

Mahindra on Thursday raised $250 million from British International Investment for the unit and is exploring a partnership with Volkswagen AG to source such EV components as batteries and motors. While the Volkswagen deal would meet Mahindra's "short to medium term" battery needs, Mahindra CEO Anish Shah said the company was open to looking at some sort of "investment with a global leader" in the battery-cell space if it needed to secure future supplies. "Our intent is not to get into (manufacturing) batteries," Shah said in an interview. "There are people who do it very well. We can partner with them; we could be a co-investor in some form. We don't need to own it and run it."

CEOs see better job creation chances, policy tightening in H1FY23: CII poll

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

A MAJORITY of CEOs in a poll conducted by CII anticipate improved job creation prospects in their companies in the first half of FY23 ending September, even as expectations of monetary tightening are pervasive, the industry body said on Sunday.

The recent poll was conducted by CII at its Second National Council Meeting for FY23, which saw a participation of 136 CEOs from across the country.

"Further, GDP growth is expected to be in the range of 7 per cent to 8 per cent as revealed by 57 per cent of the CEOs while only 34 per cent of them anticipate below 7 per cent expansion in the economy," said CII. Besides, about half of the CEOs (49 per cent) felt that rural demand would be better in H1 FY23 as against the same period last year. The results reveal that while expectations of monetary tightening are pervasive, given the sharp increase in inflation and heightened inflation expectations, overall outlook for H1 (April-Sept) FY23 looks robust, CII said.

A major percentage of the CEOs revealed an upbeat sentiment —as 44 per cent of them felt that their company's revenue growth would be in the range of 10 per cent to 20 per cent during first half of FY23, followed by another 32 per cent of the CEOs anticipating a bigger jump in revenues, of more than 20 per cent during the same period, CII stated.

"The CII CEOs Poll results clearly demonstrate the resilience of Indian industry and the positive business performance outlook...," said Chandrajit Banerjee, director general, CII. **WITH PTI**

BRIEFLY

Accolite hiring

New Delhi: Texas-based IT firm Accolite Digital plans to raise headcount by over three-fold in India to around 8,500 in the next three years, a top company official said.

Maruti growth

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India plans to protect and enhance its market share in the non-SUV space while expanding presence in the SUV segment, where it has been lagging behind the competition, as part of a twin-pronged strategy, as per a senior official. **PTI**

PSB leadership plan: IBA seeks bids from institutes

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

THE IBA has invited bids from advisory firms and institutes to design and deliver a leadership development programme for public sector banks (PSBs) to prepare a pipeline of leaders in tune with the increasing competitive landscape. The selected entity will design and deliver the training programme for senior officers of PSBs, including chief general managers (CGMs), general managers (GMs) and deputy general managers (DGMs).

The training programme can be delivered through three modes — online as e-learning modules, online through live webinars/meetings and through in-person mode, a public notice said. The objective is to develop future generation of leaders who are digitally savvy, strategic thinkers with capability to build highly collaborative teams and create customer-centric organisations that thrive in a very dynamic competitive environment, it said.

"The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has been requested by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau to appoint an Agency/ Firm/ Institution to design and deliver a leadership development programme for Public Sector Banks in India," it said. **WITH PTI**

Mars, but no Twitter: Musk captivates Sun Valley

REUTERS
LOS ANGELES, JULY 10

ELON MUSK avoided discussing the collapsed Twitter deal as he addressed an audience of moguls on Saturday in Sun Valley, two sources who attended the conference told *Reuters*.

In a wide-reaching interview, Musk spent most of his time talking about colonising Mars and extolling the virtues of boosting birth rates on Earth, said the sources. Musk, chief executive of Tesla Inc and rocket company Space X, has long advocated establishing a civilization on the red planet. Musk earlier this week said he will do his best to help what he called "the underpopulation crisis," following a media report that said he had twins with a top executive at his brain-chip start-up Neuralink.


Elon Musk at the recent Met gala. *Reuters file*

He spoke about how birth rates are declining in wealthy countries, a subject he has explored extensively on Twitter.

The billionaire entrepreneur took the stage at the Allen & Co Sun Valley Conference, an annual gathering of media and technology executives in Idaho, less than 24 hours after he announced he was terminating his $44 billion deal to buy Twitter Inc.

The interview was conducted by Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, an artificial intelligence research company founded by Musk and several others. "It just seems like an absolute mess," said one senior media executive, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of the interview. "The guy makes his own rules … I'd hate to be Twitter, where you have to take this guy seriously." Sun Valley is typically covered like an athleisure version of the Met Gala, with photographers capturing the arrivals of fleece-vested media moguls and reporters making note of power-lunches at the Konditorei cafe on the property.

One Hollywood power-broker Friday expressed hope that the Musk interview would enliven the conference's staid, cerebral atmosphere this year.

Hours later, Musk's attorneys delivered an eight-page letter to Twitter, saying he planned to call off the deal to acquire the social network. Following Musk's announcement, one chief executive noted the elephant in the room, Saturday's remarks might well be uncomfortable to two conference attendees: Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal and Chief Financial Officer Ned Segal. One of Musk's last public messages to Agrawal came in the form of a tweet of a poop emoji in response to the Twitter CEO's defense of how the company accounts for spam bots.

> He's (Djokovic) a bit of a god, I'm not going to lie. thought I played well. You've won the championship I don't even know how many times."
>
> NICK KYRGIOS

BRIEFLY

AFI finally gives Jeswin nod for Worlds



New Delhi: Long jumper Jeswin Aldrin was on Sunday cleared by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) to take part in the upcoming World Championships despite failing to touch the stipulated mark in the two trials held earlier this month. Aldrin was called for trials on July 4 and 8 and asked to jump close to 8.10m mark to take part in the July 15-24 World Championships in Eugene, USA. But, he could only clear 7.99m and 7.93m in the two trials held in Thiruvananthapuram and Patiala. The AFI, however, decided to allow Aldrin to compete in the showpiece.

Babuta, Makhija enter 10m Air Rifle final

Changwon: India's Arjun Babuta, Paarth Makhija qualified for the men's 10m Air Rifle final at the ISSF Shooting World Cup here on Sunday. Arjun scored an impressive 630.5 in the 60-shot qualification stage to finish second in the 53-strong field. Paarth, on the other hand, finished fifth with a score of 628.4. The third Indian shooter in the Men's 10m Air Rifle event, Shahu Tushar shot 624.4 to finish 30th. Veteran Israeli shooter Sergey Richter topped the chart with a score of 631.6.

Haryana, SSCB continue to dominate

Chennai: Eleven women from Haryana and as many men from Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) moved into the semifinals of the Youth Men's and Women's National Boxing Championships here on Sunday. Reigning Asian Youth Champion Tamanna (50kg) from Haryana convincingly defeated Maharashtra's Simran Verma in a unanimous decision. Asian Youth Championship silver medallist Kirti (81+kg) dominated her bout against Aswin Biju of Kerala from the beginning which forced the referee to stop the contest in the first round.

Indian GM Iniyan finishes second

La Plagne (France): India's teenage Grandmaster P Iniyan finished second in the La Plagne International Open Chess Tournament 2022 here. The 19-year-old GM scored 7 points from nine rounds to tie for top spot with Ukraine GM Vitaly Sivuk early on Sunday. The Ukrainian, however, won the first prize on the basis of a better tie-break score. India's Sayantan Das with 6.5 points took the third place.

World Games: Verma, Jyothi win bronze

Birmingham (USA): The Indian compound mixed team archery duo of Abhishek Verma and Jyothi Surekha Vennam won a bronze medal by getting the better of their rivals from Mexico by one point at the World Games here. Having started off with a perfect first round, the Indian duo faced some resistance from Andrea Becerra and Miguel Becerra, who levelled the second end. But Verma and Jyothi held their nerves to return strongly in the third end before slotting in a perfect final round to clinch it 157-156 in their bronze medal playoff on Saturday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

> Every single time, it gets more and more meaningful and special. It (Wimbledon) always has been, and will be, the most special tournament in my heart. The one that motivated me and inspired me to start playing tennis in a small little mountain resort in Serbia.
>
> **NOVAK DJOKOVIC,** 2022 WIMBLEDON CHAMPION

Djoker beats Talker

After dropping first set, Djokovic claws back winning in four to capture his 21st Grand Slam singles title

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WIMBLEDON, JULY 10

NOVAK DJOKOVIC waited. He waited for Nick Kyrgios to lose focus and lose his way. Waited to find the proper read on his foe's big serves. Waited until his own level rose to the occasion. Djokovic is not bothered by a deficit — in a game, a set, a match. He does not mind problem-solving. And at Wimbledon, for quite some time now, he does not get defeated.

Djokovic used his steady brilliance to beat the ace-delivering, trick-shot-hitting, constantly chattering Kyrgios 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (3) on Sunday for a fourth consecutive championship at the All England Club and seventh overall. "Every single time, it gets more and more meaningful and special," the top-seeded Djokovic said.

"It always has been, and will be, the most special tournament in my heart. The one that motivated me and inspired me to start playing tennis in a small little mountain resort in Serbia." He extended his unbeaten run at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament to 28 matches and raised his career haul to 21 major trophies, breaking a tie with Roger Federer and moving just one behind Rafael Nadal's 22 for the most in the history of men's tennis.

Among men, only Federer, with eight, has won more titles at Wimbledon than Djokovic. In the professional era, only Federer was older (by less than a year) than the 35-year-old Djokovic when winning at the All England Club. This comeback on a sun-filled afternoon followed those in the quarterfinals, when Djokovic erased a two-set deficit against No. 10 seed Jannik Sinner, and in the semifinals, when No. 9 Cam Norrie grabbed the opening set. In last year's title match at Wimbledon, Djokovic dropped the opening set. In the 2019 final, he erased two championship points against Federer.

Solid start

Kyrgios was terrific at the start Sunday, almost perfect in the first set, with 11 aces before he made a second unforced error. Could it last, though? There were two particularly key moments, ones that Kyrgios would not let go as he began engaging in running monologues, shouting at himself or his entourage (which does not include a full-time coach), earning a warning for cursing, finding reason to disagree with the chair umpire he fist-bumped before the match, and chucking a water bottle.

In the second set, with Djokovic serving at 5-3, Kyrgios got to love-40 — a trio of break points. But Kyrgios played a couple of casual returns, and Djokovic eventually held.

When that set ended, Kyrgios waved dismissively toward his box, sat down and dropped his racket to the turf, then groused, to no one in particular: "It was love-40! Can it get any bigger or what?! Is that big enough for you?!" And then, in the third set, with Kyrgios serving at 4-all, 40-love, he again let a seemingly sealed game get away, with Djokovic breaking there.

The 40th-ranked Kyrgios was trying to become the first unseeded men's champion at Wimbledon since Goran Ivanisevic in 2001. Ivanisevic is now Djokovic's coach and was in the Centre Court guest box for the match.

Kyrgios, the 27-year-old Australian, had never had been past the quarterfinals in 29 previous Grand Slam appearances — and the last time he made it even that far was 7 1/2 years ago.

Still, his talent is unmistakable. But over the years, Kyrgios has drawn more notice for his preference for style over substance on court, his tempestuousness that has earned him ejections and suspensions and his taste for the nightlife.

During the past two weeks alone, Kyrgios racked up $14,000 in fines — one for spitting at a heckling spectator after a first-round victory, another for cursing during a wildly contentious win against No. 4 seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the third round — and caught flack for wearing a red hat and sneakers before or after matches at a place where all-white clothing is mandated. Word also emerged that he is due in court in Australia to face an assault allegation.

On Sunday, Kyrgios tried shots between his legs, hit some with his back to the net, pounded serves at up to 136 mph and produced 30 aces. He used an underarm serve, then faked one later.

For all of the significant records and other factoids logged in the 560-page Wimbledon Compendium — including categories such as "ambidextrous players" or "runners-up who wore glasses in a final" — no mention is made of "underarm serves in a gentleman's final," but it seems safe to say that was a first.

Perhaps, in some ways, it would have been fitting for such a unique player to emerge as the champion at such a unique Wimbledon.

All players representing Russia or Belarus were banned by the All England Club because of the war in Ukraine; among the men that kept out of the field were No. 1-ranked Daniil Medvedev, the reigning U.S. Open champion, and No. 8 Andrey Rublev. In response, the WTA and ATP professional tennis tours took the unprecedented step of revoking all ranking points from Wimbledon.

There's more: Federer missed the tournament for the first time since the late 1990s because he is still recovering from a series of operations on his right knee. The No. 2 man in the rankings, Alexander Zverev, sat out after tearing ankle ligaments at the French Open. Three of the top 20 seeded men, including 2021 runner-up Matteo Berrettini, pulled out of Wimbledon after it began because they tested positive for COVID-19.

A rare occurrence

And Nadal withdrew before he was supposed to face Kyrgios in the semifinals, the first time since 1931 that a man gave walkover at Wimbledon in a semifinal or final. Djokovic and Kyrgios have not always gotten along. Kyrgios was quite critical of Djokovic publicly until he became one of the earliest voices backing the Serbian during the legal saga that played out before the Australian Open in January, culminating in Djokovic being deported from that country because he is not vaccinated against COVID-19 (which also might prevent him from participating in the U.S. Open in August).

That apparently helped create a détente of sorts; Kyrgios used the term "bromance" to describe their relationship status. They kidded around via social media on Saturday, trading messages about heading for drinks or dinner, with the winner footing the bill.

"He's a bit of a god, I'm not going to lie," Kyrgios said during the trophy ceremony.

"I thought I played well. You've won the championship I don't even know how many times."



Djokovic used his steady brilliance to beat the ace-delivering, trick-shot-hitting, constantly chattering Kyrgios 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (3). *AP*

Russia now revels in Rybakina triumph

NAMIT KUMAR
JULY 10

AHEAD OF the Championships at Wimbledon this year, the All England Club said they "remain unwilling to accept success or participation at Wimbledon being used to benefit the propaganda machine of the Russian regime" as they banned Russian and Belarusian players from the event. With Elena Rybakina's breakthrough triumph on Saturday, things have not quite gone the way they would have liked.

Rybakina was born in Russia and still has a home in Moscow. The 23-year-old, who became the first player from Kazakhstan to win a Grand Slam title, emigrated to her neighbouring country to take advantage of top tennis facilities, a paid stipend, and many other things offered to her by the Kazakhstan tennis federation. The All England Club's ban was unpopular not just in Russia, but all over the world and eventually rebuked by the men's and women's tours. And now some Russians have announced Rybakina's triumph as one of their own.

Russian reaction

In the hours that followed Rybakina's remarkable Wimbledon triumph, both Russians and Kazakhstanis jumped to take credit for her win. Qassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kazakhstan's President, tweeted: "Kazakhstani tennis player Elena Rybakina has won a historic victory in the most prestigious Wimbledon tournament. I sincerely congratulate our athlete."

But Russian tennis federation president Shamil Tarpischev, who had called the 23-year-old "our product" prior to the final, said "It's the Russian school, after all. She played here with us for a long time," after the win per AP. Russia Today, a state-controlled media outlet, led with the headline 'Russian-born Rybakina triumphs at Wimbledon' on their website.

There has been plenty of backlash to Wimbledon's move, not followed by any other event on tour, and its critics categorising it as an unfair punishment to athletes competing in an individual capacity for the actions of their political leaders. But the All England Club's stance was solid, and with Russian commentators now taking credit for Rybakina's triumph, their decision has effectively resulted in the very outcome they were trying to prevent.

The Kazakh connection

At the age of 18, Rybakina was put in a difficult position with regard to her future. An extremely promising junior player, who had played the Wimbledon juniors event under the Russian flag, she was presented two opportunities. The first was to take the scholarship offer presented to her to complete a collegiate education in the United States. The second was to take up the handsome financial offer presented to her by the Kazakhstan Tennis Federation.

Ultimately, she switched allegiances to Kazakhstan and has represented them on the international stage since 2019 - even narrowly missing out on a medal at the Tokyo Olympics last year. Perhaps unfairly, Rybakina's nationality has been a dominant theme around her Wimbledon run this year. But she has been decisive in the face of some difficult questions. "I didn't choose where I was born. People believed in me. Kazakhstan supported me so much. Even today, I heard so much support. I saw the flags, so I don't know how to answer these questions," she said after the final. There have been no official statements from the Kremlin on Rybakina's triumph so far, and it is difficult to see them taking credit for her success when it was their lack of support that drove her to another country. Rybakina is not alone in accepting Kazakhstan's offer. Yulia Putintseva, who has won 2 singles titles and has a career-high ranking of No.27 also switched allegiances. So did Alexander Bublik, whose showmanship and flashy shot-making have made him a dangerous opponent on the men's tour, and a regular feature in popular tennis compilations on YouTube.

Medvedev consolidates top spot

The men's and women's tours reacted strictly to the All England Club's ban, stripping Wimbledon of ranking points this year. Thanks to that, Russian tennis can not only stake claim on the reigning women's Wimbledon champion, but perhaps more legitimately, also the men's World No. 1 Daniil Medvedev.

Despite Novak Djokovic's Wimbledon triumph, he will be dropping to seventh in the World rankings, giving the Russian a huge margin for error at the top.

He is over 900 points ahead of No. 2 Alexander Zverev and nearly 2,000 points ahead of No. 3 Rafael Nadal, both of whom have uncertain seasons ahead of them due to injury. Djokovic, who can still gain ground in the rankings, has his participation in the American hardcourt swing and subsequent US Open in doubt due to his unvaccinated status, putting things further in his favour.

The 26-year-old Medvedev is a well-known hardcourt specialist. And America has been his favourite hunting ground. With his path clear over the next four months, he is the heavy favourite to finish the year as World No. 1 for the first time - one of the sport's biggest achievements.

Ferrari's Leclerc wins in Austria after late scare, Hamilton distant 3rd

REUTERS
JULY 10

CHARLES LECLERC survived a late throttle scare to win the Austrian Grand Prix for Ferrari on Sunday and roar back as Formula One world championship leader Max Verstappen's closest rival. Red Bull's Verstappen had to settle for second, still with a comfortable 38-point lead over the Monegasque after 11 of 22 races and banking a bonus point for fastest lap on top of his Saturday sprint win.

Mercedes' seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton was a distant third, after starting eighth, to complete the podium for the third race in a row. "Oh my God. I was scared. I was really scared," said a relieved Leclerc over the radio after taking the chequered flag at the Red Bull Ring with Verstappen in his mirrors and one and half seconds behind.

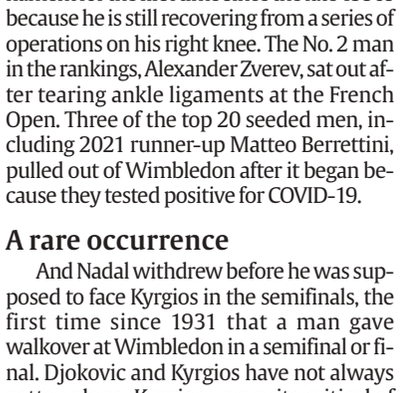
He overtook the Dutch driver three times on track in the race but, after two engine failures in the previous five, feared the win might still slip through his fingers as he battled a throttle problem over the last few laps.

"It would get stuck at 20 or 30% throttle in the low speeds, so it was very tricky. We managed to make it stick until the end and I am so happy," said Leclerc. "I definitely needed that one. The last five races have been incredibly difficult for myself and for the team. To finally show that we have the pace in the car and we can do it is incredible."

Sainz out in flames

Leclerc's Spanish team mate Carlos Sainz, a first time winner at Silverstone last weekend,had already retired with a fiery engine failure. Flames erupted from the rear of the car as he pulled off with 14 laps to go while chasing a likely Ferrari one-two. Sainz tried to scramble clear but the car began rolling backwards before a marshal stopped it and extinguished the fire.

Championship leaders Red Bull also suffered a retirement with Verstappen's team mate Sergio Perez, second overall going into the race, damaging his car in a first lap collision with Mercedes' George Russell and stopping on lap 26. Russell ended up fourthdespite a five-second penaltyfor causing the collision.



Charles Leclerc has now moved up to second overall. *Reuters*

The win was Leclerc's third of the season, fifth of his career and first since Australia in April as well as the first time he was won from anywhere other than pole position. For Ferrari it was the second in a row, after a run of six successive Red Bull wins, and first in Austria since Michael Schumacher in 2003.The Italian team are now 56 points behind Red Bull. Verstappen had been chasing his fourth Austrian GP win in five years, with his Orange Army out in their tens of thousands to cheer him on. Organisers put the weekend attendance at 303,000. "Unfortunately I couldn't give them a win today but second place is still a good result," he said.

RESULTS

DRIVER	TIME/RETIRED	PTS
Leclerc	1:24:24.312	25
Verstappen	+1.532s	19
Hamilton	+41.217s	15
Russell	+58.972s	12
Ocon	+68.436s	10
Schumacher	+1 lap	8
Norris	+1 lap	6
Magnussen	+1 lap	4
Ricciardo	+1 lap	2
Alonso	+1 lap	1

Schumacher scores again

Alpine's Esteban Ocon was fifth, ahead of Mick Schumacher -- who scored the first Formula One points of his career at Silverstone last weekend -- in sixth for Haas. The German was voted driver of the day.

Lando Norris finished seventh for McLaren ahead of Haas's Kevin Magnussen and McLaren's Daniel Ricciardo with Alpine's Fernando Alonso taking the final point after starting last on the grid. The starting grid was set by the sprint, the second of the season, won by Verstappen from pole position with Leclerc second. The top eight in that race took points. Verstappen led from the start on Sunday, with Leclerc in close pursuit as Perez and Russell tangled with the Mexican spinning into the gravel.

Leclerc passed the Red Bull on lap 12, diving down the inside of turn four, with Sainz moving up to second after Verstappen then pitted and came back out in eighth.

The lead changed hands again through the pitstops before Leclerc, who had pitted and was on fresher tyres, passed Verstappen for the third time on lap 53.

Top-3 fined

Austrian Grand Prix podium finishers Charles Leclerc, Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton were handed suspended 10,000 euro ($10,000) fines on Sunday for a breach of post-race procedures.

Race stewards summoned Ferrari, Red Bull and Mercedes representatives after the podium celebrations following a report from the race director. They said video evidence had confirmed the drivers' physios and/or drivers' assistants had entered parce ferme, the closed pit lane area, without permission and in violation of an established procedure.

The ban on them entering the area is to ensure no items are handed to drivers before they are weighed.

The stewards said the fine was suspended for the remainder of the season and warned drivers that the individuals concerned could have their passes revoked if there was a "systemic violation".

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Shettigar shocks top seed Pranav, Unnati progresses

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JULY 10

HARYANA'S HIGHLY rated Unnati Hooda, seeded fifth at the country's premier junior tournament, Krishna Khaitan Memorial, was ruthless in beating AP's Durga Isha Kandrapu, 21-13, 21-9 in the Round of 64 at Panchkula on Sunday. Top seed Sakshi Phogat of Rajasthan was stretched by Telangana's Driti Bhonsle 21-5, 18-21, 21-9 in the mid set to also progress.

Hooda, already a winner of a senior title in Orissa, is expected to fight for the title, though other seeded rivals also advanced on the day. Notably, the tall second seed Anupama Upadhyaya benefitted from a walkover, while Devika Sihag, completing the trio of higher seeds from Haryana, was put through a wringer by Karnataka's Gloria Athavale, fighting back for a 19-21, 21-10, 21-19 win. Akanksha Matte, 4th seed, also rallied back against MP's Priyanka Pant to win 17-21, 21-12, 21-17. Tara Shah, another contender, was clinical in beating Gayathri Jaiswal of Karnataka, 21-19, 21-11. Maharashtra's Riya Habbu played well but couldn't beat UP's Gargi, and became the highest seeded casualty of the day, losing 21-17, 21-19.

Maharashtra's Raksha Kandasamy put up a good fight but couldn't defeat Tanvi Sharma of Punjab, going down 22-20, 21-11.

Tamil Nadu's Rakshita Sree S was engaged in one of the day's most exciting battles, trumping over Haryana's Anmol Kharb, 21-19, 22-20. While Shreya Lele win the battle if Gujarat against statemate Adita Rao, winning 21-16, 11-21, 21-19. Telangana's Shriyanshi Valishetty took some doing to down tenth seed Neysa Cariappa 21-19, 21-23, 21-7, as Neysa fought gamely after dropping the first set.

Shettigar causes big upset

Maharashtra boy Pranay Shettigar produced the day's biggest result when downing boys' U19 top seed Pranav Rao Gandham of Telangana, 21-17, 21-15. Sanskar Saraswat of Rajasthan, seeded sixth, defeated Jaskaran Singh 21-16, 21-15. 16th Dishant Ahlawat of Haryana was shut down 21-16, 16-21, 23-21 by Punjab's Akarshit Sharma. While Tamil Nadu's Sugi Sai Bala Singha G beat back Nikhil Chetry 17-21, 21-15, 21-15.

Results: Girls U19: (1) Sakshi Phogat (RAJ) bt A Bhonsle Driti (TS) 21-5, 18-21, 21-9;

Jahnavi Nammi (AP) bt Stuti Agrawal (Dli) 21-13, 21-13; (3):Shreya Lele (Guj) bt Adita Rao (Guj) 21-16, 11-21, 21-19; Rijul Saini (Har) bt Meenal Rautela (Dli) 21-13, 21-9, Unnati Hooda (Har) bt Durga Isha Kandrapu(AP) 21-13, 21-9; Tanvi Sharma (Pnb) bt Raksha Kandasamy (Mah) 22-20, 21-11; Shriyanshi Valishetty (TS) bt (10) Neysa Cariappa A. 21-19, 21-23, 21-7;

Samayara Panwar (UP) bt Tanisha Singh (Raj) 21-11, 21-14; (12) Hrissha Dubey (Mah) bt Riddhima Raturi (Har) 21-19, 16-21, 22-20

Boys U19: Pranay Shettigar (Mah) bt (1) Pranav Rao Gandham 21-17, 21-15; Gagan (Har) bt Sri Mohit Veera Venkata S K (AP). 21-9, 13-21, 21-15; Aryan Sharma (Dli) bt Ankit Mondal (WB) 23-21, 21-17; Dheemanth Ramavath (TS) bt Tarun Morab (14) 23-21, 21-17.



Pranay Shettigar celebrates after winning the match. *Jasbir Malhi*

Surya shines in defeat

Yadav's mesmerising ton can't get India over the line as England win by 17 runs to register consolation win in high-scoring game

SANDIP G
JULY 10

SOAKED IN sweat and applause, Suryakumar Yadav walked off the ground as a tragic hero. Just when the elusive shores of victory drew closer, the man who had anchored the ship towards the sands drowned. In the end, India lost the match by 17 runs — the target of 216 always seemed steep — but not after the most refined of hundreds one would behold in a T20 game.

Like all great batsmen — Yadav is on the way, if he could produce more such evenings — he gave hope. The mountain of runs always seemed unsurpassable.

At one point, India were 31 for 3, with the established trio of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant all back in the dugout. At another point, India required 120 off 48 balls. The stadium had begun to empty. There were distracted and dismayed faces. An England win seemed all but a formality in a dead-rubber game after India had sealed the series on Saturday.

But Yadav breathed hope, he drilled in a sense of belief that something special was to unfold. Even when the match seemed drifting away from his team, when a win dwindled from the horizon, he believed and made the audience will him on too. He might still be new to international cricket, with experience of only 25 white-ball games. However, he is not too young to scale statistical peaks - he is already 300 days past his 31st birthday – and when he is here, when he is batting as astoundingly as he did in this innings, he promises to orchestrate something truly remarkable in his time.

All it took was a boundary to revert the attention of the distracted audience. His first hit to the fence. He coaxed a low full-toss on off-stump from Richard Gleeson through the covers. He had no natural room to manoeuvre the shot, but manufactured it with a dexterous twitch of the wrists, the last-moment opening of the bat-face.

It was just a staple Yadav shot. But in the context, more than a shot. A wake-up call for the England bowlers, an alarm for the dozing spectators.

In that sense, all of Yadav's strokes were glorious; only some were more glorious. Like a cover-driven six off Gleeson. Yadav backed away, on sixth stump on the leg-side. So, Gleeson flung the ball wide and full. But Yadav possesses such good hands that he stretched his bat, got to the pitch of the ball, opened the bat face and lofted it over extra cover. The greatest quality of his is that he is always moving, yet remarkably still.

He can be on his haunches, on the knee, trotting down the strip or shuffling to the leg-side, but is always in control, always a step ahead of the bowlers, always manipulating the gaps. He has fast hands, and a faster head. He has nimble feet and nimbler wrists. The whirl of the wrists at the last moment helps with placement as well as power-generation. Those wrists were prominent even when he sweeps, a reason the ball goes finer than squarer. The four that ferried him to his hundred too was all wrists — as he glided the ball, one- handed, to the third-man boundary.

The century was achieved in merely 48 balls and with not a stroke in anger. It was artistic brutality that afflicted England bowlers.



Suryakumar Yadav celebrates after reaching his century on Sunday. *AP*

Bowlers had no answer

And for a good measure of his innings, England were clueless. Jos Buttler, the new captain, just kept shuffling the bowlers and changing the field in wishfulness rather than belief.

He thrust all his hopes on David Willey, England's most successful bowler. But Yadav consigned him to a square-drive off the first ball before effortlessly dropping to his haunches and flicking him over backward square-leg for a six. Shortly, the seasoned Chris Jordan was creamed through extra cover. Buttler panicked, and of all the alternatives, introduced part-time spinner Liam Livingstone. Yadav took full toll on him, smearing three fours in his over.

Almost immediately, he was pulled out of the attack. Yadav clanged the handbrakes and waited for Livingstone's reintroduction. He did not strike a boundary for the 12 balls, but blasted two sixes in his next over, the 21-run over that revived India's hopes. But the scorecard flashed 99 runs off 42 balls. Soon, Yadav had whittled the requirement to 40 off 12 balls, and then 25 off 8 before that fatal shot of his. His clarity of thought and approach would have made MS Dhoni, who was in attendance at the stadium, proud.

He could not wrap up the innings, but on current form, no Indian batsman looks as comfortable in T20s as Yadav does. He reads the ebbs and flows of the match, understands the pulse of the game, bats at the pace the situation demands him to, and could seamlessly straddle multiple roles. He could be a destroyer, enforcer, finisher and even stabiliser. In short, he could be the perfect T20 batsman. Or at least, his hundred was the near-perfect T20 hundred.

If only he had the support — there was none but a rickety Shreyas Iyer, with whom he accumulated 119 runs, of which Iyer scored only 28. But it is days like these and knocks like these that make batsmen. A tragic hero, but a hero nonetheless.

Brief Scores: England 215/7 in 20 overs (Dawid Malan 77, Liam Livingstone 42*; Ravi Bishnoi (2/30), Harshal Patel (2/35) beat India 198/9 in 20 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 117; Reece Topley 3/22) by 17 runs

Chandimal ton gives Sri Lanka a 67-run lead

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GALLE, JULY 10

FORMER CAPTAIN Dinesh Chandimal scored a hundred as Sri Lanka reached 431-6 at stumps on day three of the second test against Australia on Sunday. Sri Lanka now leads by 67 runs with four wickets in hand.

It was a terrific effort by Chandimal, who stitched some crucial partnerships with the middle order to give the home side the edge after a disappointing batting performance in the first test that they lost by ten wickets.

Walking out to bat in the third over of the day after the dismissal of overnight batsman Kusal Mendis, Chandimal was aggressive early on in the innings with close-in fielders piling on the pressure.

His first scoring shot was a boundary as the right-hander gave Nathan Lyon the charge and drove him past cover.

The very next ball he sent down the track again and lofted the off-spinner over long-off for six. That gave him some breathing space and with the field spreading out, he settled in.they fought their way back into the game.

Brief Scores: Australia 364 vs Sri Lanka 431/6 in 149 overs (D Chandimal 118*, D Karunaratne 86, K Mendis 85, A Mathews 52; M Starc 2/47). Sri Lanka lead by 67 runs

