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3 AIR GAMINI SINGLA ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	4 AIR AISHWARYA VERMA LAKSHYA, ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, ABHYAAS, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	5 AIR UTKARSH DWIVEDI FOUNDATION COURSE CLASSROOM	6 AIR YAKSH CHAUDHARY ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, ABHYAAS, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	7 AIR SAMYAK S JAIN ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	8 AIR ISHITA RATHI ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	9 AIR PREETAM KUMAR ALL INDIA TEST SERIES
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= हिंदी माध्यम टॉपर =

12 AIR YASHARTH SHEKHAR ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE, ABHYAAS	13 AIR PRIYAMVADA ASHOK MHADDALKAR ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE, ABHYAAS	14 AIR ABHINAV J JAIN ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	16 AIR ANSHU PRIYA LAKSHYA, ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE, ABHYAAS	18 AIR RAVI KUMAR SIHAG ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, हिंदी माध्यम	19 AIR DIKSHA JOSHI ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, ABHYAAS	20 AIR ARPIT CHAUHAN ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	21 AIR DILIP K KAINIKKARA ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	23 AIR ASHISH ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE, ABHYAAS	25 AIR SHRUTI RAJLAKSHMI ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, ABHYAAS
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70 AIR NARAYAN AMIT MALEMPATI ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE, ABHYAAS	71 AIR SHREYA SHREE ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	72 AIR PARTH GUPTA ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	73 AIR NAMRATA CHOUBEY ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	74 AIR AYUSH VENKAT VATS ALL INDIA TEST SERIES	75 AIR SURBHI SINGLA ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, ABHYAAS, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	76 AIR CHARU ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	77 AIR ASHUTOSH KUMAR LUCKNOW FOUNDATION COURSE CLASSROOM, ABHYAAS, ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	78 AIR SURBHI GOYAL ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	79 AIR SAMPADA TRIVEDI ALL INDIA TEST SERIES
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98 AIR ANIKET DNYANESHWAR HIRDE ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, INTERVIEW GUIDANCE	99 AIR THARUN PATNAIK MADALA ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, ABHYAAS	100 AIR KIRAN P B ALL INDIA TEST SERIES, MAINS ADVANCE COURSE					<p>Scan the QR CODE to download VISION IAS App. Join official telegram group for daily MCQs and other updates.</p> <p>f /visionias.upsc /c/VisionIASdelhi /c/VisionIASdelhi</p>		

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CHANDIGARH: 21st June

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JAIPUR: 22 जून, 4 PM

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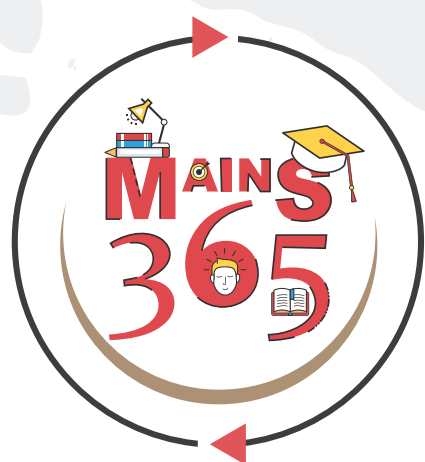


for **GS 2023: 12 June**

सामान्य अध्ययन 2023: 12 जून

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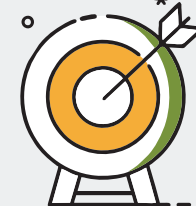
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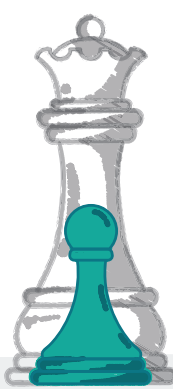
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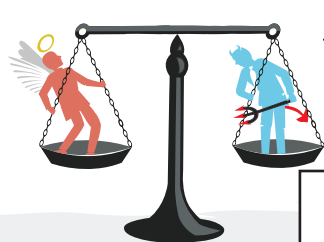
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Three arrested in connection with singer Moosewala's murder

page 10



11 people stranded in cable car in Himachal Pradesh rescued

page 12



Gustavo Petro elected Colombia's first leftist president

page 13

Verstappen wins Canadian Grand Prix, extends lead at the top

page 15



IN BRIEF



Pandits seek written assurance to rejoin duty

SRINAGAR
Kashmiri Pandit employees, recruited under the Prime Minister's special package, on Monday asked the J&K administration "to assure them in writing that no Pandit will be killed in the future so that they could resume their duties".

NEWS PAGE 10

BSES to install 50 lakh smart meters in Delhi

NEW DELHI
The BSES discoms have issued tenders to replace their 50 lakh existing electricity meters in Delhi with smart meters at a capital outlay of up to ₹4,000 crore. A BSES spokesperson described it as "the fastest and largest" private sector smart meter installation project in the country.

CITY PAGE 2



Rahul Gandhi questioned for the fourth day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

As former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday was questioned for the fourth day by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case linked to the *National Herald* newspaper, the Congress held a satyagraha against the misuse of the Central probe agencies and the Delhi Police's alleged manhandling of party leaders without any provocation.

On a day of hectic protests over multiple issues, Congress leaders marched down from Parliament to Rashtrapati Bhavan before a seven-member delegation handed over two separate memoranda to President Ram Nath Kovind. One demanded the rollback of the Agnipath scheme while the other pertained to Delhi Police committing excesses, including forcibly entering the AICC headquarters.

MEETS PRESIDENT PAGE 11

First set of Agniveers will join service in June 2023, says Army

Registrations to start on July 1, job rallies in August

DINAKAR PERI NEW DELHI

The Army has issued the first notification for recruitment of Agniveers under the Agnipath scheme, with the process set to begin in July and the first set of Agniveers to join service in June 2023. The Army has already said it will recruit 40,000 Agniveers in two batches this year.

"The registration will open on July 1, and the first recruitment rally is expected to be held in mid-August," an Army official said.

"Registration will be opened from July by the respective AROs [Army Recruiting Office] for Agniveer general duty, Agniveer technical, Agniveer technical (aviation/ammunition examiner), Agniveer clerk/store keeper technical, Agniveer tradesman 10th pass and Agniveer tradesman 8th pass," the notification said.

The Army plans to conduct the rallies till November, with induction into training centres to be done



The police detaining activists of the Left parties to thwart their rally in Visakhapatnam on Monday. • K.R. DEEPAK

'Govt. crushed our dreams'

For more than two years, 20-year-old Sahil Kumar has been running nine km every day, in the hope of getting a job in the Army.

Son of an agriculturist in a village in Bihar's Nawada

district, Mr. Kumar says his father had big dreams for him. "But this government has crushed all my dreams at one stroke, I have lost sleep, lost interest in life," he says. • PAGE 11

in two batches – a first batch of 25,000 Agniveers by the first half of December, with the remaining recruitments in the second batch by the first half of February 2023. The Army has planned 83 rallies across the country.

Candidates will be en-

rolled for four years, which includes a six-month training period. On discharge after completion of four years, Agniveers will be paid a "Seva Nidhi" package of approximately ₹11.71 lakh. They will not be entitled to any pension or gratuity.

Bharat bandh affects life in some regions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Bharat bandh against the Agnipath recruitment scheme called by unnamed organisations on social media platforms disrupted life in some parts of the country on Monday. Road and rail traffic was disrupted for the fifth day.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the umbrella organisation of nearly 300 farmers' groups, decided to hold nationwide protests against the scheme on June 24.

The police and other authorities in several States had a tough time controlling mobs. Ban on gatherings was imposed in several areas. The Railways cancelled 529 trains (181 mail/express and 348 passenger trains) on Monday.

Delhi witnessed massive traffic blocks due to protests by the Opposition parties and student groups.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

PROTESTS IN CAPITAL PAGE 3

Candy cloud



Monsoon clouds gather over the Beach Road in Visakhapatnam on Monday. • K.R. DEEPAK

Gopal Gandhi opts out of the fray; Opposition rejigs plan

Yashwant Sinha in the reckoning for President's post



Gopalkrishna Gandhi

SOBHANA K. NAIR NEW DELHI

Opposition parties went into a huddle after former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi declined their invitation to be the Opposition candidate in the Presidential election. Mr. Gandhi is the third public figure to back out after Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar and National Conference leader and former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah.

The Opposition is now considering Trinamool Congress vice-president Yashwant Sinha for the post, but a final decision will be taken

at a meeting on Tuesday morning.

Mr. Gandhi issued a statement saying that the Opposition's candidate should be one who will "generate a national consensus". "I feel there will be others who will do this far better than I."

"I have requested the leaders to give the opportunity to such a person," Mr. Gandhi said. He contested the Vice-Presidential election in 2017.

After Mr. Gandhi declined to contest, key Opposition leaders had an informal meeting at Mr. Pawar's residence. Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Jairam Ramesh, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D. Raja and NCP leader Praful Patel were among those present.

Though Mr. Sinha's name is in contention, there are many reservations about his candidature. According to sources, a section of Opposition leaders want Mr. Sinha to resign from the Trinamool to make it comfortable for everyone to support him. His past association with the BJP is a roadblock. He had served as Finance Minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

BJP trumps MVA in Council election

Party wins five of 10 seats; cross-voting by three MLAs each from Cong., Shiv Sena

ALOK DESHPANDE MUMBAI

The election to 10 seats in the Maharashtra Legislative Council resulted in a nail-biting finish with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) yet again scoring over the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) – after the recent Rajya Sabha polls – by winning five out of 10 seats.

Three MLAs each from the Congress and the Shiv Sena cross-voted in the secret ballot held on Monday.

The BJP did not only win five seats but managed to win 134 votes of the MLAs – an increase of 10 votes – by snatching 21 votes more than its actual strength of 113 in the Assembly. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which has a strength of 53, won 57 first preference votes, ensuring support of Independents to the party.

Second victory

This is the second victory of the BJP, led by former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, in 10 days with the first being



Uddhav Thackeray and Devendra Fadnavis. • FILE PHOTO

in the Rajya Sabha where the party managed to win three seats. Jubilant State BJP chief Chandrakant Patil, along with other party leaders, said it was Mr. Fadnavis's strategy that helped the party win five seats.

"We won in the Rajya Sabha with 123 votes and now we have got 134 votes. I have been saying from day 1 that MVA MLAs do not trust this government and they will go by their conscience and vote for us," he said.

Mr. Fadnavis said that the BJP's fifth candidate had zero votes to start with, but "we

ended up winning more votes than Congress candidate". "Discontent against this government is out now. We will continue our struggle and we will only stop when we bring a people-friendly government. This is the beginning of change," he said.

Cong. candidate loses

The list of victors includes the BJP's Pravin Darekar, Shrikant Bharatiya, Uma Khapre, Ram Shinde and Prasad Lad. The NCP's Eknath Khadse and Ramraje Naik-Nimbalkar; the Shiv Sena's Sachin Ahir and Amshya

Padvi and the Congress's Bhai Jagtap.

In what could be termed as a blunder in terms of strategy, the Congress despite having 44 votes could not ensure victory of its candidate in the first round as Chandrakant Handore and Mr. Jagtap won only 22 and 19 votes, respectively. Mr. Jagtap won in the second round, while the party's second candidate, Mr. Handore, lost the battle in the second round.

Mr. Bharatiya and Mr. Shinde of the BJP won the highest 30 first preference votes and ensured that their second preference votes counted first, helping Mr. Lad to achieve the quota of 26 votes surpassing Congress candidates.

Congress legislative party leader Balasaheb Thorat said he accepts that the party made mistakes and it was time to introspect. "We could not keep our flock together and we are not interested in blaming others. It is our fault and we need to seriously think over it," he said.

At these Rajasthan schools, English skills are medium

Internship in spoken English launched for teachers in Sriganganagar, to be duplicated in other districts

MOHAMMED IQBAL JAIPUR

The Mahatma Gandhi English Medium Schools started by the Congress government in Rajasthan with much fanfare three years ago have been a roaring success. From a modest beginning of one school each in the 33 districts, as many as 749 schools have been opened across the State since 2019.

The schools have become very popular with the number of applications received for admissions at the beginning of academic session exceeding the seats available several times over.

There is a slight problem though: the problem of poor language proficiency. Though the State government promised to provide quality education in English medium at these schools, most of their teachers are

still unable to converse and teach in the language.

The 2022-23 State budget has announced that 2,000 Mahatma Gandhi English Medium Schools would be set up in the villages and towns of all districts. The Education Department recently concluded interviews for teachers from the pool of its regular academic staff who are willing to shift to these schools.

Teachers' crunch

The schools, which had only Classes I to VIII in 2019, have been adding one class every year to accommodate the promoted students. However, a separate cadre of English-medium teachers is yet to be created and the government schools gradually being converted from Hindi to English medium are facing a crunch of teachers.

"These elite schools are re-



Teachers of government schools being trained in spoken English in Sriganganagar. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ceiving a heavy rush of applicants. They will run with full capacity and will require an adequate number of teachers, failing which their purpose will be defeated," said social entrepreneur Wasim Qureshi, who got his son admitted last year. A large number of parents also shifted their children from private schools to the Mahatma Gandhi Schools during the

pandemic to avail of free education.

Focus on fluency

The Education Department has taken an initiative to improve fluency in English among the teachers through an internship programme in Sriganganagar district. Chief District Education Officer Hansraj Yadav told *The Hindu* that the teachers of all the

500 secondary and senior secondary schools in the district are being trained in spoken English by specially invited tutors.

"Over 1,100 teachers have so far been trained. They would guide their students in learning and conversing in English. An English booklet on general awareness is also being prepared for the students to generate curiosity about their surroundings," Mr. Yadav said.

The Education Department proposes to start similar internship programmes in other districts. Sriganganagar Collector Rukmini Riari, who was instrumental in starting the course, said the trained teachers would be able to inculcate interest in the English language among students and help them converse without hesitation.

SHUBHRA RANJAN

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HC asks wholesalers to vacate land for water plant

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked fruit and vegetable sellers to vacate land belonging to the Delhi Jal Board in Najafgarh here to make way for setting up a water treatment plant.

In a recent order, the High Court said the water treatment plant, which has a capacity of 50 million gallons, is "essential to serve a

very large part of Delhi and would benefit about 15 lakh residents".

The fruit and vegetable sellers' union had said that its members are facilitating trade to the tune of about 3,000 tons a day. It argued that without an alternate arrangement for the present Najafgarh Mandi, Delhi would see a scarcity of fruits and vegetables and rise in their prices.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE No. ELS_SRE_T-25RT dtd. 17.06.2022	
Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalampura Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambala Division) for and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on website www.ireps.gov.in for the following work upto 11:00 hrs on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter:-	
Open Tender No	ELS_SRE_T-25RT
Name of Work	Repairing of driver seat assembly of 3-phase and conventional locomotives in ELS/KJ/GY/SRE for period three years.
Date of Closing/Opening	08.07.2022
Approx. Cost	₹ 14,39,955.00/-
Earnest Money	₹ 28,800/-
Completion period	03 Years
Validity period	45 days
Cost of tender form	Free of cost
1. Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works Tenders.	
2. Tenderer are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions.	
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1 Name of Work with its location	Shifting of SEMC at RCC center at New Delhi
2 Approx. Cost of Work	Rs. 11,29,269/-
3 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 22600/-
4 E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	04.07.2022 (00.00 Hrs.) to 18.07.2022 (15.00 Hrs.)
5 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	18.07.2022 (15.00 hrs.)
6 Fund Allocation	00844521
7 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No.: 11-TRD-NDLS-22-23 Dated: 20.06.2022	
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Jharkhand Agency for Promotion of Information Technology	
(An Autonomous body under Department of Information Technology & e-Governance, Govt of Jharkhand)	
Ground Floor, Engineer's Hostel - 1, Near Golchakkar, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand	
Phone: 0651-2401044, 2401047 email:japit_doit@rediffmail.com	
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1. Tender No.	JAP-IT/Sahiya/01/2022
2. Name of the Work	Request of proposal for Selection of Service Integrator for Development, Maintenance and Upgradation of Integrated Sahiya App Software
3. Name of the issuer of this tender	The CEO, Jharkhand Agency for Promotion of Information Technology (JAP-IT), Ground Floor, Engineers Hostel 1, Near Golchakkar, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004 Tel: 0651-2401044/67 japit_doit@rediffmail.com
4. Tender Fee	INR 10,000.00 (Ten Thousand Only)
5. Earnest Money Deposit	INR 20,000,000.00 (Twenty Lakhs Only)
6. Start Date of downloading tender document	21/06/2022 at 03:00 PM
7. Last Date for sending Pre-Bid Query	29/06/2022
8. Date and Time of Pre-Bid Meeting	05/07/2022 at 03:00 PM
9. Last Date/Time for Submission of Bids online	26/07/2022 at 03:00 PM
10. Last Date/Time for Submission of Technical Document offline	26/07/2022 at 05:00 PM
11. Date of Opening of Pre-Qualification and Technical Bids	27/07/2022 at 03:30PM
12. Date of Technical presentations & Commercial Bid opening	To be informed later
13. Place of Pre-Bid Meeting/Communication/Bid Submission/Bid Opening	JAP-IT, Ground Floor, Engineers Hostel 1, Near Golchakkar, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004
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"THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT TENDERS"	
TENDER NOTICE No: S/2022/17 Date : 17-06-2022	
The Principal Chief Material Manager, North Western Railway, headquarter 4th floor, Near Jawahar circle, Malviya Nagar, Jaipur-302017 for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-tenders on www.ireps.gov.in site as follows. All the E-tenders will be closed at 14.25 hrs.	
Sr. No	Tender No. Brief Description Qty Unit Due date
1	30211871A Spring Plank 269 Nos 05.07.2022
2	30220244 PNEUMATIC CONTROL UNIT 32 Nos
3	30222187 Lateral bump stop 2721 Nos
4	30222200 Yaw damper 992 Nos
5	30222268B Sealed glass unit for LHB fixed window 2891 Nos
6	79220006A FIRE RETARDANT UPHOLSTERY CLOTH CONFIRMING 1885 MTR
7	30223175 BRAKE CYLINDER WITH HAND BRAKE 26 Nos 06.07.2022
8	40220039 Blind socket assembly 165 Nos 07.07.2022
9	30223068 MICROCONTROLLER BASED ELECTRONIC SPEED 18 Set 12.07.2022
10	30223190 CIRCUIT BOARD 27 Nos
11	30223224 Pin 3176 Nos 13.07.2022
12	40221798 MICROPROCESSOR CONTROLLER 73 Nos 14.07.2022
13	30221900 Bogie centre pivot bottom 1694 Nos 02.08.2022
14	30222195 Flex ball cable 71 Nos 09.08.2022
CORRIGENDUM	
No.	Notice No. Brief Description Tender Notice No. Existing Quantity, Unit, Description & date Amended Quantity, Unit, Description & date
1	10210238 KIT OVERHAULING PISTON VALVE S/2022/16 519 Nos 111 519 Nos & 102 Set
2	30223066 OVERHAULING KIT 09.06.2022 781 Nos 781 Set
3	79220011 SINGLE TEXTURE WATER PROOF RAIN COAT S/2022/14 17.06.2022 28.06.2022 Change in Description Small Change in Description Replace of Annexure A & B In Annexure A "or similar reputed brands" is included along with Make/Brand.
Note :- (1) Interested tenderers may visit the website for Full details/description/ Specification/EMD & tender cost etc. All tenderers are requested to obtain digital signatures and get them registered on above site and quote electronically only. (2) For viewing and participating in other tenders such as open tender costing below Rs. 25 Lakh, limited tenders, special limited tenders and low value tenders, please visit www.ireps.gov.in.	
422-AC/22 Follow us on f t in v w NW/Railways NW/Railways	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

BSES to install 50 lakh smart meters

New meters to come up in city by March 2025; will give consumers outage alerts

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The BSES discoms have issued tenders to replace their 50 lakh existing electricity meters in Delhi with smart meters at a capital outlay of up to ₹4,000 crore.

A BSES spokesperson described it as "the fastest and largest" private sector smart meter installation project in the country.

Detailing the benefits of the smart meters, the spokesperson said that through the installation of smart meters, several value-added services will be offered to the consumers.

Value added services
For instance, a consumer could monitor and analyse their power consumption through data fed by the new meters.

The BSES spokesperson added that upon the installation of the smart meters, the consumers will also get alerts in cases of power outages.



The smart meters will allow consumers to monitor and analyse their power consumption. • FILE PHOTO

At the same time, the discoms could offer energy-saving tips to group housing societies.

"While there are no drawbacks in the existing electricity meter, its potential is limited when compared to a smart meter," said a BSES spokesperson.

The meters will also allow the discoms to detect power theft by parsing data in real-time while also helping the discoms in load forecasting, scheduling and integrating renewable and EV charging, among other benefits, the BSES official said.

The tender for the project

was floated on June 17. The BSES has planned to set up the smart meters from October this year and expects to complete it by March 2025.

Three-year deadline
Smart-meters rollout programmes, both in India and abroad, have typically been executed between five to eight years, the BSES spokesperson said adding that the smart meter project in Delhi targets the installation of 50 lakh smart meters within just two to three years.

"BSES's rollout program is a first-of-its-kind prestigious

Almost 5 million smart meters will be deployed in a single location utility, making it one of the largest such exercises anywhere in the country

BSES SPOKESPERSON

smart-meter programme on many fronts. Almost 5 million smart meters will be deployed in a single location utility, making it one of the largest such exercises anywhere in the country, including any metro city," the spokesperson added.

The BSES official said that the BSES smart meter project in Delhi is much larger than similar smart meter projects being carried out in several other states, such as Uttar Pradesh (11.54 lakh meters), Bihar (8.7 lakh) and Rajasthan (5.5 lakh), Haryana (4.52 lakh), Assam (2.83 lakh).

BJP accuses govt. of graft in hospital construction

Party leaders to visit the hospitals today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday accused the AAP Delhi government of perpetrating a scam worth ₹1,256 crore in the garb of setting up seven temporary hospitals during the second COVID-19 wave.

Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, earlier this month, permitted the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) to probe the allegations of irregularities in the Delhi Public Works Department's (PWD) tenders for the hospitals.

In October 2021, the Delhi BJP had alleged corruption in the award of PWD's contracts for setting up the temporary hospitals, which was followed by a complaint to the ACB by north-east Delhi BJP MP Manoj Tiwari.

The AAP did not respond when asked for a comment on the matter.

According to the BJP, the Delhi government's expenditure committee had

cleared a proposal of over ₹1,210 crore for setting up the seven temporary hospitals to treat COVID-19 patients on August 10 last year.

"The government passed the tender for ₹1,216 crore, which was later raised to ₹1,256 crore. To bring out the reality about this corruption before the people, all BJP MPs, MLAs and office-bearers will visit these hospitals starting June 22," Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said at a press meet regarding the alleged scam on Monday.

Allegations against CM
Mr. Tiwari accused Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of indulging in corruption through "innovative ways" when COVID-19 was at its peak. "Indulging in corruption in the name of giving treatment to people during the peak phase of Coronavirus when even strangers were helping each other, is unthinkable," he added.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:	
1 Name of Work with its location	Shifting of SEMC at RCC center at New Delhi
2 Approx. Cost of Work	Rs. 11,29,269/-
3 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 22600/-
4 E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	04.07.2022 (00.00 Hrs.) to 18.07.2022 (15.00 Hrs.)
5 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	18.07.2022 (15.00 hrs.)
6 Fund Allocation	00844521
7 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No.: 11-TRD-NDLS-22-23 Dated: 20.06.2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
E-Tender for and on behalf of the President of India, Pr. CE, Northern Railway, Headquarters Office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001 invites the following tenders through E-Procurement System:	
Tender No. TS225038A	Due on 19.07.2022
Description of Item	Manufacturing & Supply of Blown Aluminium Powder as per Northern Railway Thermit Portion Plant Lucknow's Standard Specification TPP/BALP/2021 (as amended up to date)
Tender Value	Rs. 5,20,55,388.62
Tender Document Cost	Rs. Nil
Earnest Money	Rs. 10,41,110/-
Completion period	12 Months
Time of Submission of Tender	Up 19.07.2022 at 14:30 IST
Date & Time of Opening of Tender	On 19.07.2022 at 14:30 IST
Validity of Offer	180 days
Note: The complete information of above E-Procurement tender is available on website www.ireps.gov.in and www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in."	
1499/22	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE	
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.	
1 Name of work	3D scanning of River bed of Bridge No. 249 of span 12x60.96+2x18.3m width of 25 meter on both sides of the bridge in the section of ADEN/DLI.
2 Approx. cost of work	Rs. 10,99,882.54 (Rupees Ten Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Two & Fifty Four paise only)
3 Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 22,000/- (Rupees Twenty Two Thousand Only)
4 Cost of tender document	Rs. 0/-
5 Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	15.07.2022 @ 15:00 Hrs.
6 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system.	
• For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.	
• No manual offers are acceptable.	
• Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.	
1494/2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON	
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.	
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Ritik, S/o Sh. Basant, R/o: H.No. Q-95, Bhagvati Vihar, Bindapur, Delhi , has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 12296/2020 U/s 379/411/34 IPC registered at P.S. Rajinder Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said Ritik cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Ritik has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Ritik accused of FIR No.12296/2020 U/s 379/411/34 IPC , P.S. Rajinder Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 21.07.2022 .	
By Order Sh. Rishab Kapoor Metropolitan Magistrate-03, Central District, Room No. 150, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi	
DP/1580/CD/2022	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
The Chief Administrative Officer/Const/Northern Railway, Kashmir Gate, Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work:-	
Full Name of work	Civil works, permanent way works including Earthwork in filling in embankments and in cutting, supplying and spreading including compaction of blanketing materials, supplying & putting of stone ballast, Extension of 02 nos minor bridges, provision of retaining walls etc. Et and all other types of service buildings, extension of high level platforms, provision of drainage system in LDH yard, laying & linking of railway track/turn outs and all other permanent way installations etc. all type of dismantling of existing buildings and existing P-Way infrastructures and all other allied works etc. in CW yard remodeling of Ludhiana in the scope of Ludhiana-Mullanpur Doubling in the jurisdiction of Dy. Chief Engineer/Const./Jalandhar city on Ludhiana-Ferozpur Section of Ferozpur Division.
Approx. Cost of work	₹2965.90 Lakh
Completion period of the work	18 months
Earnest Money to be deposited	₹16,33,00,00/-
Sale/availability of tender document on Railway Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 20.06.2022 to 15.07.2022 upto 11:30 hrs.
Last date/Time of upload of tenders	15.07.2022 upto 11:30 hours, Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 01.07.2022 to 15.07.2022
Date and time of opening of tender	15.07.2022 at 11:30 hours (immediately after close of uploading of tender (D2)). In case of two packet system, Financial bids of the eligibility tenders would be opened subsequently on the date and time to be notified later on. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No. 74-W-1-1-454-WA-JUC Dated: 20.06.2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI-221004	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Open e-tender based on single packet system Tender Notice No. BLW-ISO-22163-RIS Dt.17.06.2022 is invited by DEE/M/BLW/BSB on Indian Railways portal www.ireps.gov.in for and on behalf of President of India for the following work:-	
Description of work :- Work for Re-Certification of ISO 22163:2017 as per scope of work at Banaras Locomotive Works, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh-221004 through Open Tender Basis. Approx. Value (in Rs.): Rs. 9,97,690.00. EMD/SD (in Rs.): 20000.00. Completion period of work:- 36 months • Period of submission of tender document- From 28.06.2022 to 12.07.2022 • Date & time of closing of Tender- 12.07.2022 at 15.00 hrs. • Date & time of opening of Tender- 12.07.2022 at 15.30 hrs. • Detailed Tender Notice, Eligibility criteria, Terms & conditions are available at Indian Railways IREPS website: www.ireps.gov.in in tender document. Note-1 Tenderers shall be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date & time only. Manual offers are not allowed for this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. 2 Earnest Money Deposit / Bid Security Cost will be accepted separately, only online payment through net banking in favour of PFA/BLW/BSB of Gate Way Payment through IREPS Portal. Manual payment through demand draft, Bankers Check, Deposit Receipt & FDR etc. are not allowed.	
PR/BLWE-03 DEE/M, BLW/Varanasi	
www.ireps.gov.in	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG	
CORRIGENDUM	
The e-tender for the work "Providing WSS to drought affected habitations in GP Sanwal, Shalleshlabari, Dehgran, Hajjakothei, Thaneikothi, Kuthedbudhora and Harwas under Churah Constituency in tehsil Churah Distt Chamba (HP)" was called vide NIT No. EE/Jal Shakti/Tissa/CB/Tender/NIT/2022-988-1036 dated 07-06-2022 (tender ID 2022_HPIPH_61521_1) and is to be opened on dated 23-06-2022. In BOQ which was already uploaded alongwith the tender, the units at Column No 5 for the items shown at serial No. 31 to 34.11 and serial No. 41.01 to 41.10 may be read as "Pair" instead of "Nos."	
Other contents of the BOQ will remain unchanged.	
Sd/ Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division, Tissa. Distt. Chamba (HP)-176316 HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAM SAMPARK HP / 187722-23	

SEARCH FOR MISSING	
	General Public is hereby informed that one lady Namely: Madhu, W/o Naveen Panchal, R/o: H.No. - 693/A, Gali No.-01, Sai Nagar, Mithapur Extension, Jaitpur, New Delhi, Age: 19 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: White Colour Suit and Blue Salwar & Juti in feet has been missing since 12.02.2022 from her house in the jurisdiction of P.S. Jaitpur, South-East District, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 31 A, Dated 13.02.2022 , has been registered at P.S. Jaitpur, New Delhi . Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform to the following:- Web-site : http://cbi.nic.in E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-23011334 DP/132/SE/2022
SHO P.S. Jaitpur, New Delhi Ph.: 011-26666410, 26666412	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
The Chief Administrative Officer/Const/Northern Railway, Kashmir Gate, Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work:-	
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Approx. Cost of work	₹2965.90 Lakh
Completion period of the work	18 months
Earnest Money to be deposited	₹16,33,00,00/-
Sale/availability of tender document on Railway Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 20.06.2022 to 15.07.2022 upto 11:30 hrs.
Last date/Time of upload of tenders	15.07.2022 upto 11:30 hours, Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 01.07.2022 to 15.07.2022
Date and time of opening of tender	15.07.2022 at 11:30 hours (immediately after close of uploading of tender (D2)). In case of two packet system, Financial bids of the eligibility tenders would be opened subsequently on the date and time to be notified later on. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No. 74-W-1-1-454-WA-JUC Dated: 20.06.2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
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3 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 22600/-
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5 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	18.07.2022 (15.00 hrs.)

Timings
DELHI

TUESDAY, JUN. 21
RISE 05:25 SET 19:22
RISE 00:28 SET 12:30

WEDNESDAY, JUN. 22
RISE 05:25 SET 19:23
RISE 00:59 SET 13:27

THURSDAY, JUN. 23
RISE 05:25 SET 19:23
RISE 01:29 SET 14:23

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	33	24
Safdarjang	33	24
Palam	34	24

Delhi Palam Today
34°C The weather will be warm and humid. Spell of rain and thundershower with strong winds is possible at few places.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C A dry weather to prevail. Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night will be comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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'BJP MLAs obstruct development works'

Opposition leaders are afraid because Kejriwal delivers double what he promises, says Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Monday alleged that BJP MLAs obstruct development works by the Delhi government in their constituencies and urged the people of Rajinder Nagar to elect its party candidate Durgesh Pathak.

The bypoll is scheduled for June 23 and results will be announced on June 26.

Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said there are eight constituencies in Delhi where the BJP has MLAs and because of its "dirty politics", no development work has happened in these constituencies.

Power bills
"Whenever government workers go there to construct a road, lay water pipelines, install CCTV cameras, BJP MLAs come there to obstruct the work in some way or the other. BJP leaders are afraid of Arvind Kejriwal's work," Mr. Sisodia said



Manish Sisodia addressing a 'Jan Sabha' at Rajinder Nagar on Monday. • PIC COURTESY: TWITTER

while addressing a 'Jan Sabha' at Rajinder Nagar.

"Unlike other parties, Kejriwal works and, in fact, delivers double what he promises. In 2015, the CM had promised to reduce power bills by 50%, but today power is free in Delhi. Over 75-80% houses in Delhi are getting ₹0 bill today," Mr. Sisodia said.

He claimed that the AAP government has improved education, health, electricity, water, and basic infrastructure in the city. "To give momentum to such development works in Rajinder Nagar too, people should vote for Kejriwal's politics of honesty and development," he added.

Earlier in the day, AAP MP

Sanjay Singh attacked the BJP over the Agniveer scheme and termed it as "Modi government's ploy to make the youth unemployed and betray the country".

"PM Modi's friends looted ₹10.50 lakh crore from the country. If the agencies catch them, they will get enough money to easily pay salaries to soldiers for 20 years," the

Whenever govt. workers go to Rajinder Nagar to construct a road, lay water pipelines, install CCTV cameras, BJP MLAs come there to obstruct the work

MANISH SISODIA
Deputy Chief Minister

AAP leader said.

Top AAP leaders, including Mr. Kejriwal, have been campaigning for Mr. Pathak for the bypoll.

Water shortage is the main issue in the area and the BJP has been trying to corner AAP on it. On Saturday, taking out a roadshow, Mr. Kejriwal acknowledged the problem and promised to solve it, after black flags were shown to him.

The Rajinder Nagar seat has fallen vacant following the resignation of AAP MLA Raghav Chadha who is now a Rajya Sabha MP.

Satyendar Jain admitted to hospital, stable

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain, who is currently in judicial custody in an alleged money laundering case, was on Monday admitted to Lok Nayak Hospital, according to AAP sources.

He was admitted to the hospital after he complained of low oxygen level, an AAP leader said. As of Monday night, his condition was stable.

Mr. Jain was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on May 30 under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). He was in ED's custody till June 13, following which he was remanded to judicial custody.

Last week, a special court had denied bail to Mr. Jain, noting that while he is not a flight risk, the possibility of him influencing witnesses or tampering with evidence cannot be ruled out at this stage.



READ MORE IN-DEPTH CONTENT AT THE HINDU'S WEBSITE
www.thehindu.com

Podcast Women Uninterrupted

■ An inter-generational podcast of women of different age groups engaged in difficult but important conversations. The first episode is a free-ranging discussion between a school girl and a working mother on the joys and trials of using the menstrual cup.

This series from *The Hindu* is brought to you by BSCPL Infrastructure Ltd.

■ You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text to do the same.



Hear PM's speech today, judges told

Rajasthan HC to hold events on Yoga Day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan High Court's Registry has directed the judicial officers across the State and invited the sitting and retired HC judges as well as the lawyers to attend the live telecast of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address on International Yoga Day at 6.30 a.m. on Tuesday during the programmes marking the day.

In addition to the district courts, the events will be held at the High Court's principal seat in Jodhpur and the Bench in Jaipur. The programmes in the districts will be organised at the prescribed "yoga places" in the judgements, according to a notice issued by the office of the Registrar-General.

Yudhisthir Sharma, Registrar (Administration), said in the notice issued to All District & Sessions Judges that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would deliver an address from 6.40 a.m. to 7 a.m. from Mysuru on the occasion of the Yoga Day. He instructed the District Judges to ensure the as-

sembly of judicial officers and staff of subordinate courts as well as the lawyers to attend the live telecast of Mr. Modi's address and celebrate the Yoga Day.

This is the first instance of the High Court administration taking interest in an activity led by the Prime Minister. The notice asked the District Judges to arrange the LED televisions and other display equipment at the programme venues.

The invitation extended to the sitting and retired High Court judges stated that the Yoga Day ceremonies in Jodhpur and Jaipur would be streamed live on the social media platform, YouTube. It also asked the invitees to take all preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19.

The post of the Rajasthan HC's Chief Justice has been lying vacant since Justice Akil Kureshi retired on March 6 this year. Justice S.S. Shinde, who was a Judge in the Bombay HC, is scheduled to be sworn in as the Chief Justice at Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday.

Traffic chock-a-block in Capital over Congress protests

Police detained 235 party workers and leaders for twin protests against Agnipath and Rahul Gandhi's ED summons

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Major arterial roads entering the Capital remained chock-a-block with traffic after the Delhi police put up several barricades in view of the call for a Bharat bandh given by the Congress on Monday over the Centre's Agnipath scheme.

Some of the entry points at the borders such as Noida via DND, Delhi-Gurugram Expressway, Ghazipur and Chilla saw long queues of vehicles.

Several areas such as Connaught Place, Jantar Mantar, Vikas Marg, Ring Road and ITO saw heavy commuter traffic due to the protests.

Roads leading to Lutyens' Delhi were heavily barricaded by the police due to the Agnipath protests, forcing commuters to take alternative routes.

Protesters halt train

The Delhi police deployed its staff at various border checkpoints and carried out intensive checking of vehicles. Several videos showing traffic congestion at Delhi's border points went viral on social media on Monday.

Meanwhile, Indian Youth Congress workers on Mon-



Traffic congestion at ITO in Delhi following a nationwide call for Bharat bandh given by the Congress party against the Centre's Agnipath scheme; party workers stage a sit-in at Jantar Mantar against the ED summons to Rahul Gandhi, on Monday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA AND SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

day stopped a train at the Shivaji Bridge railway station near Connaught Place to protest against the Agnipath scheme and the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) questioning of Rahul Gandhi regarding the National Herald money laundering case, causing further inconvenience to commuters travelling by train.

Workers detained

The track was later cleared by the police and train services resumed after about

half an hour.

Several Congress workers were also detained while holding twin protests over the Agnipath scheme and ED's questioning of Rahul Gandhi at Jantar Mantar.

Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order Zone II) Sagar Preet Hooda said 178 workers and leaders, including Congress MLA Ganesh Ghogra, were detained under Section 65 of the Delhi Police Act for violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC and

protesting at Jantar Mantar on Monday over the ED questioning of Mr. Gandhi. Another 57 protesters were detained under the same Act for staging a demonstration against the Agnipath scheme in several parts of the city.

"The permission to hold a protest at Jantar Mantar was granted for a gathering of up to 1,000 party workers with certain conditions. As the party workers exceeding the permitted numbers, they were directed to leave



the area in view of Section 144 of CrPC which was in force. The violators were detained in order to maintain law and order," Mr. Hooda said.

The Delhi police also received a separate request from the Congress to hold a protest at Jantar Mantar on Monday against the scheme. The Special CP said, "Permission was not granted keeping in view the law and order in place."

The bandh's impact was, however, not seen in mar-

kets such as Lajpat Nagar, Sarojini Nagar and Palika Bazar with traders' bodies saying that the footfall was normal throughout the day. Several protests are being carried out in various parts of the country against Agnipath, which was introduced last Tuesday.

It proposes the recruitment of youngsters aged between 17-and-a-half and 21 years in the Army, Navy and Air Force on a four-year contract basis. The upper age limit was later relaxed to 23.

Panel seeks more names for new AIIMS director

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by the Prime Minister on Monday sought wider panel of names for the post of director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here, official sources said.

The tenure of the incumbent AIIMS director, Randeep Guleria, which was set to end on March 24, was extended by three months.

Earlier in March, names of three doctors, short-listed by a search-cum-selection committee and subsequently approved by the Institute Body, the top decision-making body of the AIIMS, were sent to the ACC for final approval.

"...the Competent Authority in the ACC has directed to return the instant proposal with the request to send a wider panel of names for consideration of the ACC," an official source said, quoting an office memorandum sent to the Union Health Ministry by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Department of Personnel and Training on Monday.

Two policemen on rescue mission among 11 killed in Assam floods

120 people have died across three N-E States since April

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Two policemen on a rescue mission were among 11 people, including two children, killed in the floods across Assam in the past 24 hours.

With these, the death toll in rain-induced disasters rose to 120 in three North-eastern States since April - 82 in Assam, 32 in Meghalaya and six in Arunachal Pradesh.

Landslides claimed 18 of the 82 human lives in Assam and almost all those who died in the other two States. The floods in Assam also washed away 7,636 large and small domestic animals while seven hog deer and a leopard escaping the partially flooded Kaziranga National Park were run over by vehicles on highway.

Park officials said 18% of the 1,300 sq. km tiger reserve had been flooded and 55 of its 223 anti-poaching camps inundated.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), more than 41.69 lakh people across 4,660 villages of 32 of Assam's 35 districts have been affected by floods, accentuated by the release of excess water in the reser-



Volunteers distribute food among flood-affected villagers at Kalita Kuchi in Kamrup district of Assam on Monday. • PTI

voirs of hydroelectric projects in Assam's Karbi Anglong, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Bhutan.

Crops on more than 1.03 lakh hectares of land was affected.

Major rivers in spate

Brahmaputra, Beki, Puthimari and Kopili rivers were in spate, flowing above the danger level. Nearly 2.32 lakh of the marooned were taking shelter in 1,425 relief camps, most of them in southern Assam's Cachar district although western Assam's Barpeta is the worst affected district with almost 5 lakh people displaced.

An operation to rescue some of the marooned people in central Assam's Nagaon district proved fatal for Samujjal Kakati, the officer-in-charge of the Kamrup police station and constable Rajib Bordoloi.

Rescue personnel retrieved their bodies after they were washed away by the swirling floodwaters. "There is always a risk to life of a policeman's job. And yet, it's very tough to accept death of a colleague, especially in the line of duty," Assam's DGP Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reviewed the flood situation on Monday.

Bombay HC seeks report on conditions in State's prisons

Judge asks AG to visit jails, understand practical difficulties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Monday directed the Advocate General (AG) of Maharashtra to visit one or more prisons and submit an independent report on the conditions of prisons in the State.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice S.S. Shinde was hearing a PIL filed by People's Union of Civil Liberties, seeking immediate installation of telephones and other electronic modes of communication for the resumption of video and voice calling facilities in all prisons in the State, so that the inmates can speak with their lawyers and relatives.

'Update facilities'

AG Ashutosh Kumbhakoni appearing for the Maharashtra government said there are videoconference facilities in prison but there are some practical difficulties in using them.

Replying to this, Justice Shinde (elevated as Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court on Monday) said, "I would suggest, Mr. AG, you visit jails and then you will understand. I myself have vi-



The prisons have more prisoners than their capacity, so facilities have to be updated, said Justice S.S. Shinde.

sited two jails with Supreme Court judge Justice U.U. Lallit. Those prisons have a capacity of 600 and there are over 3,500 prisoners, so facilities have to be updated accordingly. The prisoners should know about the status of their matter and how much sentence they have served. After your visit, it will change your perspective."

He added, "You cannot have correctional homes with so many people. With the capacity of 600 only, 3,500 people are in... Hence the Supreme Court has passed orders during COVID-19 and set up committee to release prisoners."

Justice Shinde said, "Other things are very well main-

tained, but they have said that some facilities are beyond their control. There has to be technical person in prison for looking after such facilities. The police are doing it now."

The PIL said during the first two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, prison authorities had provided telephone and video conference facilities to all prisoners irrespective of the offences they were charged with.

The government, in its affidavit, said the above facility had been introduced as an "exception" between 2020 and 2021.

The Chief Justice later adjourned the matter for three weeks.

I-T Dept. detects over ₹400 crore tax evasion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Income Tax Department on Monday said it had detected huge tax evasion during the searches it conducted on the premises of the MGM Group last week. The tax sleuths searched over 40 premises belonging to the group in Chennai, Villupuram, Puducherry, Coimbatore and Hyderabad. Both the brothers who run the group - MGM Anand and MGM Maran - were under the I-T scanner.

A statement from an official spokesperson for the I-T Department said that during the searches, various pieces of incriminating documentary and digital evidence were seized. An analysis of the evidence indicated that the assessee group had indulged in large-scale tax evasion exceeding ₹400 crore by debiting non-genuine purchase bills in the books of account of varied businesses. Details provided in the statement showed that these non-genuine purchase bills were obtained either from the group's regular material suppliers or from accommodation entry providers.

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Rift in AIADMK widens

OPS seeks postponement of party meeting on June 23

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The controversy over the demand for unitary leadership in the AIADMK took a new turn on Monday, with the camp led by coordinator O. Panneerselvam demanding the postponement of the party's general council meeting, scheduled to be held in Chennai on Thursday (June 23).

The group led by co-coordinator Edappadi K. Palaniswami, also known as the 'pro-changers', insisted that the event be held as per schedule. It favoured the replacement of the present arrangement of dual leadership with single leadership.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Palaniswami, the party coordinator and one of the deputy coordinators, R. Vaithilingam - both representing the 'no-changers' - stated that the issue of leadership, which was raised at a meeting of the party's district secretaries and headquarters' functionaries on June 14 without any prior notice, had caused

"heartburn" among the workers of the party. Some of the district secretaries and the headquarters' office-bearers had expressed their views "without knowing [the significance of the by-laws]". Confusion prevailed among the cadre and the people. An "abnormal situation", caused by the damage to the reputation of the party on account of the view [which favoured the restoration of single leadership in the party], had arisen, which might create a law and order problem, they said.

Also, several district secretaries, headquarters' functionaries and members of the general council and the executive had complained that they had not received the agenda note for the proposed deliberations, they said.

Special invitees
On the decision not to have special invitees for the upcoming general council meeting, Mr. Panneerselvam and Mr. Vaithilingam

recalled that it had been the norm to invite former Ministers, district secretaries, parliamentarians, legislators and all those who had worked for the party, by according them the status of special invitees. When the general council meetings took place at the present venue during the general secretaryship of Jayalalitha, the special invitees had been asked to attend the meetings.

'Rank and file support'
Mr. Vaithilingam, who revealed the contents of the letter at a press meet at the residence of Mr. Panneerselvam in Chennai, claimed to have the support of 15 district secretaries, apart from "the rank and file" of the party. Fifteen more district secretaries had conveyed to his camp that they would stay "neutral", he said. Among those present on the occasion were organisation secretary J.C.D. Prabhakar, steering committee member Manoj Pandian and former MP V. Maitreyan.

Next hearing in Akhlaq case on July 4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NOIDA

A fast-track court in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar hearing the Mohammad Akhlaq lynching case on Monday deferred till July 4 the recording of the statement of his daughter after she could not depose before it due to lack of security.

Akhlaq's daughter Shaista, a key witness of the 2015 incident, could not depose in the court due to lack of security as police personnel remained engaged in law and order duty in the wake of the 'Bharat bandh' call over the Agnipath recruitment scheme, family's lawyer Yusuf Saifi said.

The case is being heard by Fast-Track Court Judge Anil Kumar Singh at the District and Sessions Court in Surajpur, Greater Noida.

Shaista had on June 14 started recording her statement and was to continue it on June 17 also but security could not be provided to her by the police for the same reason, the lawyer said. "Shaista could not reach the court and the next date was deferred to July 4," he said.

HC stays suspension of Rajasthan woman sarpanch

Shops she is accused of razing operating from the same spot

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

The Rajasthan High Court has stayed the suspension order against a woman sarpanch in Dausa district and issued notices to a Minister and an MLA in the State for initiating the action against her.

Sarita Nareda of Mandawar village panchayat was placed under suspension on June 8 on the charge that she had ordered the demolition of some shops situated near the panchayat building without the State government's permission. However, all the shops are operating from the same spot.

Though the State government maintained that a preliminary enquiry was conducted against Ms. Nareda, which concluded on April 6, and a chargesheet was served upon her, the sarpanch challenged the suspension order in the High Court, contending that it was in contravention of Section 38(1) of the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. Ms. Nareda's counsel Pra-

kash Chandra Jain placed on record the photographs of the existing shops which were alleged to have been demolished. Mr. Jain submitted that the suspension order had been passed on the instructions of Panchayati Raj Minister Ramesh Chand Meena and Mahuva MLA Om Prakash Hudla, who were camping in Udaipur.

The Vacation Bench of Justice Sudesh Bansal observed that prima facie it appeared that the impugned order of suspension had been passed in a "slipshod manner" without complying with the provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act. "There is no reference in the June 8 order as to when the shops were demolished, nor is there any reference to the conclusion of preliminary enquiry," the court said.

The court stayed the suspension order and issued notices to Mr. Meena and Mr. Hudla, who were implicated as respondents in the case, returnable by July 18.

However, the court stated that the stay order would not affect the initiation of inquiry against the petitioner, if so contemplated by the State government.

Remove W.B. primary board chief, orders Calcutta HC

SHIV SAHAY SINGH KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday directed the removal of the chairperson of the West Bengal Board of Primary Education, Manik Bhat-tacharya. The court also directed that he appeal before the court on Tuesday.

Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay said WBBPE secretary Ratna Chakraborty Bagchi can function as the chairperson till a new chairman is appointed. The court was adjudicating a matter of appointment of 269 teachers in the State-run schools over allegations that they did not pass the eligibility test.

The petitioner had approached the court alleging that 269 candidates were given an additional one mark for a wrong question out of 23 lakh aspirants in the Teachers' Eligibility Test in 2014. Last week, the court had sought details from the WBBPE on this issue. The counsels for the petitioners said the documents though several years old appear to be new. The court, holding WBBPE chairperson responsible for it, said he cannot continue on the post.

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IN BRIEF



Protest continues at Rajiv Gandhi varsity

NIRMAL
With the students' sit-in at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies at Basar in Telangana entering the seventh day on Monday, the authorities have stepped up efforts to address their demands. Students have been boycotting classes in pursuit of their 12-point charter of demands, including provision of basic amenities, laptops, upgrading of library and appointment of a regular Vice-Chancellor for the university.

Why memory card should be examined, asks HC

KOCHI
The Kerala High Court on Monday asked the prosecution why should the memory card containing the visuals of the 2017 sexual attack on the actor be sent for forensic examination, especially when the forensic report produced by the prosecution itself stated that there was no change in the hash value of the eight video files inside the card. The court noted that the hash value of the memory card was only changed while the hash value of the video recording was found to be the same.

Eight farmers injured in bear attack in Srikakulam

SRIKAKULAM
Eight farmers were injured after they were attacked by a bear in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh on Monday. They were attacked while working in coconut and cashew groves in the Kidisingi-Vajrapukotturu area. Six of them were hospitalised with grievous injuries. Around 10 head of cattle were injured. A 72-year-old died after he was attacked by a bear on Sunday, the residents said, adding that the forest officials were not taking steps to check the menace.

PM promises suburban rail in 40 months

Modi calls Bengaluru 'city of dreams'; says double engine government is aiding people of Karnataka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Hailing Bengaluru as the "city of dreams" for lakhs of youngsters from across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday assured the people of the city that he would strive to complete in 40 months the suburban railway project that had seen "just discussion" for the last 40 years.

"The project got stuck in files for 16 years. If it had been completed 40 years ago, the congestion in Bengaluru would not have increased," Mr. Modi said, while addressing a public programme at Kommaghatta ground in Kengeri here after laying the foundation stone for the suburban rail project and various other rail and national highway and ring road projects, worth a total of about ₹33,000 crore.

"Now the opportunity has been given to me to imple-

ment the project that has been inordinately delayed. I will not waste time," Mr. Modi told the audience.

The suburban rail project would help in increasing the infrastructural capacity of Bengaluru and reduce the compulsion to stay in the city for those travelling from other areas, he observed.

"Bengaluru is a city of dreams for lakhs of youth. It is also the reflection of the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat'. Evolution of Bengaluru is also evolution of lakhs of dreams. Hence the Centre is trying continuously to improve the infrastructural capacity of Bengaluru in the last eight years," he said, while remarking that "the life of those trying to turn their dreams into reality should be free from hassles and their travel time should reduce."

The Prime Minister repeatedly used the phrase



Projects galore: PM Narendra Modi and Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai at a function in Bengaluru. • K. MURALI KUMAR

"double engine government" as aiding the people of Karnataka, in an effort to reply to the Opposition in the State that has been ridiculing it using the same phrase.

At Mysuru too, he took a dig at the previous UPA government at the Centre and

the successive Congress governments in the State. He said that development works had been fast tracked in Karnataka under the double engine government of BJP.

At the Bengaluru public rally, the Prime Minister showered rich praises on the city, and said "Bengaluru's

'Some decisions will bring benefits later'

BENGALURU
Without mentioning the Agnipath scheme that has triggered protests in several parts of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that some decisions may look unpleasant now, but will help the country later. Addressing a public programme here, he said though some of the decisions look unpopular now, they would take the country to a new direction and help the youth to reap benefits in the future.

success story has inspired 21st century India to become 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'. This city has shown to what level youth and private sector can impact the society and take the country if given an opportunity to show their potential in entrepreneurship and innovation."



Bogtui village in West Bengal's Birbhum district after the violence on March 21. • FILE PHOTO

CBI files two chargesheets in March 21 Bengal violence

Ten people were burnt to death in retaliation to the killing of TMC leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed two separate charge sheets in the killing of TMC leader Bhadu Sheikh and the arson allegedly triggered by it in which 10 people were burnt to death in Bogtui village of West Bengal's Birbhum district on March 21, officials said on Monday.

The CBI has named four persons as accused in its chargesheet filed in the murder of Bhadu Sheikh whereas 18 people, including TMC leader Anarul Hussain and two juveniles, have been named in the arson case, they said.

Ten people, including women and children, were burnt to death on the night of March 21 when their houses in Bogtui village were fire-bombed by a mob in retaliation to the killing of TMC leader Bhadu Sheikh in a crude bomb attack that evening.

"On March 21, 2022, while the complainant was having tea at a shop in Bogtui 'More' around 8.30 pm, his brother Bhadu Sheikh (a deputy pradhan of the Barsal gram panchayat) was speaking over the phone sitting on

a motorcycle. It was alleged that the accused threw bomb targeting the head of his brother (Bhadu Sheikh) and on being hit on his head, his brother fell on the ground," CBI spokesperson R.C. Joshi said. It was also alleged that they kept throwing more bombs aiming at Bhadu Sheikh, he said.

The agency has named Palash Khan alias Faizul Khan, Sanju Sheikh alias Nur Islam Sheikh, Safi Sheikh alias Safizul Sheikh and Mahi Sheikh alias Mahirul Sheikh in the chargesheet related to the murder. The CBI had taken over the investigation of the case, following an order of the Calcutta High Court. In its charge sheet related to Bogtui violence and arson, the probe agency has alleged that it was a "direct fallout" of the killing of Bhadu Sheikh. It has been alleged that after Bhadu Sheikh was killed, his loyalists and group members armed with sharp weapons, crude bombs and country-made firearms went on a rampage burning the houses of rivals in the village.

The CBI has alleged that rivalry was among groups of Bhadu Sheikh and Palash Sheikh and Sonu Sheikh for dominance in the area and control over the income from illegal collection of moneys from commercial vehicles and other unlawful activities had existed for a long time.

Kerala to give 'maximum' water to T.N.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin thanks Pinarayi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Steps will be taken to provide maximum water to Tamil Nadu from Siruvani Dam considering the water shortage faced by Coimbatore city, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said.

In a letter to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Mr. Vijayan said on Monday that the water level in Siruvani Dam increased from 45 million litres per day (MLD) to 75 MLD on June 19 and to 103 MLD on June 20. According to the design of the dam, the maximum possible dis-



A file photo of the Siruvani reservoir. Kerala will be releasing water to meet the drinking water needs of Coimbatore.

charge level is 103 MLD.

The Chief Minister also replied in the letter that soon the matter would be discussed in detail and a consensus arrived at. Mr. Pinarayi also suggested a Chief Minister-level meet at the

earliest to discuss the issue further.

Mr. Pinarayi's statement was after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's letter on Sunday seeking Kerala's intervention to maintain the storage of the Siruvani dam at full re-

servoir level to meet the water requirements of Coimbatore and its suburbs. In his letter, Mr. Stalin pointed out that Kerala's Irrigation department was maintaining maximum water level instead of full reservoir level, as stipulated in the inter-State agreement.

On Monday, Mr. Stalin conveyed to his Kerala counterpart that he was looking forward to discussing and resolving issues between the two States with the spirit of cooperation. Post Kerala's order to release water from Siruvani to meet the drinking water requirements of Coimbatore city, Mr. Stalin thanked Mr. Vijayan.

(With inputs from Chennai bureau)

Siddaramaiah lashes out at Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

On the first day of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Karnataka on Monday, Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah lashed out at him for "ignoring" the State's interest in banking, infrastructure development, farming, and release of funds under GST and the 15th Finance Commission.

He termed the Centre's contribution to the State under various schemes "disappointing".

He also questioned Mr. Modi's silence on graft charges against the State. "The government is submerged in scams," he said.

Farmers set to strike gold with flowers

On-farm trial carried by a team in Kerala opens up new prospects for farmers

NAVAMY SUDHISH KOLLAM

Normally procured in bulk from neighbouring Tamil Nadu, marigold is hardly a favourite of floriculturists in Kerala. But an on-farm trial carried out by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Sadanandapuram, has opened up new prospects for farmers as the flowers have a huge demand during Onam and other festivals.

The research team had opted for three varieties developed by Indian Agricultural Research Institute that include Pusa Bahar, Pusa Basanti, and Pusa Narangi. "While the first two varieties yield yellow flowers, Pusa Narangi flowers are orange in colour. Through the trial we found that Pusa Bahar adapted well to our climatic conditions and the yield too was good. We have favourable conditions for cultivating marigold and it definitely has substantial market po-



Good tidings: Marigold plants being cultivated under an on-farm trial by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sadanandapuram.

tential," says V. Saroj Kumar of the KVK who led the team.

Demand for marigold soars during two seasons and the farmers can start cultivation mainly targeting the Onam market.

Harvest after 80 days
The flowers can be harvested 80 days after planting and the farmers can set up nurseries by the second week of

May. After Onam, planting time can be adjusted as per Christmas and Sabarimala seasons.

During winter, the quantity of flowers available from the neighbouring States will dip and the domestic growers are expected to get a fair price. The plants normally start flowering 45-60 days after transplanting and the yield will reach maximum af-

ter 80 days of planting.

Harvest lasts 80 to 120 days and if the flowers are large, 60 to 80 numbers will weigh one kg. A well-maintained marigold plant yields 500-600 g of flowers and during Onam the price easily crosses ₹100 per kg.

Depending on the size, colour and availability, the price can go up to ₹500 at times. "If the weather is favourable, it's a very profitable venture," says M. Lekha, who was part of the team.

After marigold farms set up by KVK in various places of the district yielded a promising harvest, many farmers are coming forward to try it.

"The aim of the programme is to promote commercial cultivation of marigold in Kerala. Since pest and disease attacks were minimal during the trial, the crop is also suitable for homesteads and women groups," she adds.

Train services normal at Secunderabad

RPF, PAF and Telangana police deployed at the railway station to tighten security

STAFF REPORTER HYDERABAD

The Secunderabad railway station, which was ground zero of anti-Agnipath protests in Telangana on Friday, remained peaceful on Monday. Though a call for a Bharat bandh was given on Monday, train services remained uninterrupted.

Railway Protection Force (RPF), Rapid Action Force (RAF), and Telangana police personnel deployed at the railway station were on alert throughout the day. Anticipating that protesters might visit the station again, Government Railway Police (GRP) officers have urged the youth on Sunday not to damage any public property and to protest peacefully. The GRP said that not even one protester has come to the station on Monday.

Security was tight at entry points of the railway station. RAF personnel were seen lined up alongside the path



Eight motorcycles were damaged and burnt during violence on Friday at Secunderabad railway station • NAGARA GOPAL

leading to the entry points. On the platforms too, personnel from the three forces were seen at regular intervals.

The usual passenger activity was witnessed there: some passengers were seen rushing towards the platforms to catch trains and

some remained seated on other platforms waiting to board trains.

Nine people discharged
Of the 13 people who got injured at the protest on Friday and admitted at Gandhi Hospital, nine were discharged on Monday evening.

Of the remaining four, three suffered injuries in the chest and one has fracture in the femur. The hospital authorities said that it would take around a week to discharge the remaining four patients.

Cases booked

On the day violent protests were held at Secunderabad railway station, a few protestors had vandalised glasses of three TSRTC buses too. Drivers of the buses have lodged complaints with the police.

The police said that they have registered cases under Sections 143, 149, 427, 341, of IPC, and Section 3 of Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

Regarding the case being handled by GRP, its SP B. Anuradha said on Monday that the case would be transferred to the police. It was learnt that it would take one or two days to transfer the case.

'YSRCP in A.P. mobilising fake voters'

STAFF REPORTER VIJAYAWADA

A delegation of Andhra Pradesh BJP leaders led by party State president Somu Veerajulu submitted a memorandum on the 'electoral malpractices' in the Atmakur Assembly constituency to Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena at the Secretariat on Monday.

Addressing the media later, Mr. Veerajulu said the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) was mobilising 'fake voters and money was being distributed through the ward and village volunteers'. People were fearing that they might be targeted if they cast their votes for candidates of their choice in the byelection, he said.

Rare dragonfly spotted in Kerala for first time

Spiny Horntail, seen in Kottiyoor forests of Kannur, was discovered in Maharashtra

STAFF REPORTER THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Dragonfly enthusiasts have recorded the presence of a rare dragonfly that was hitherto unseen in Kerala.

Afsar Nayakkan and Vibhu Vipanchika spotted the Spiny Horntail, *Burmagomphus chaukulensis* Joshi, Ogale & Sawant, 2022 (or *B. chaukulensis*), during a recent expedition to the Kottiyoor forests of Kannur. The species that is known to be endemic to the Western Ghats was discovered in Maharashtra earlier this year.

The discovery that was recorded from Kottiyoor was confirmed by Vinayan P. Nair, an odonate expert who represents the TNHS



Unusual find: Spiny Horntail spotted in Kottiyoor forest.

Odonata Research Group (TORG) of the Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS).

Researchers Shantanu Joshi, Dattaprasad Sawant and Hemant Ogale had spotted the species from Chaukul in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra.

Prior to their finding, the dragonfly genus *Burmagomphus* was represented by three species - *B. cauvericus*, *B. pyramidalis* and *B. laidlawi*. While *B. laidlawi* is found throughout the Western Ghats, *B. cauvericus* is more restricted in its distribution.

B. pyramidalis is found in the Western Ghats as well as in Peninsular India. All other species of the genus are found in the Western and Eastern Himalayas.

The new species can be separated from its congeners by the markings on the lateral thorax and peculiar shape of anal appendages, said Mr. Nair.

According to a paper published by TORG last year, 181 odonata species have been recorded in Kerala. The addition of *B. chaukulensis* will take the count to 182. TORG research associate Kalesh Sadasivan said the discovery demanded more detailed studies of odonates in the areas of Kerala that forms part of the Western Ghats.

ED secures order to get Swapna's confessional statements

She is an accused in diplomatic channel gold smuggling case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has secured a court order to obtain the confessional statements of Swapna Suresh and P.S. Sarith, accused in the UAE diplomatic channel gold smuggling case, made before the Customs in December 2020.

P.S. Nishi, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (Economic Offences), issued the order on Monday.

The directorate had approached the court on June 16 seeking certified copies of the confessional statements recorded under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.



Swapna Suresh

An earlier plea of the ED to obtain the statements was dismissed by the court on March 2, 2021 on the grounds that the investigation was not complete in the case. The agency ap-

proached the court afresh this month for the statements as the Customs Preventive had filed a prosecution complaint in the gold smuggling case.

Swapna and Sarith had given confessional statements to the Customs twice in the gold smuggling case, one on December 12, 2020 and the other on December 4, 2020.

Later, Swapna gave another statement this month before the Principal Sessions Court, in which she levelled allegations against Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, his family members and K.T. Jaleel, former Minister in the first government led by Mr. Vijayan.



An unjust pursuit

Julian Assange deserves freedom, not persecution for investigative journalism

The United States's relentless pursuit of Julian Assange received a fillip after the British Home Secretary, Priti Patel, gave the go-ahead to extradite him to the U.S. Wanted for criminal charges, which include violation of the country's Espionage Act of 1917, Mr. Assange could face punishment ranging up to 175 years in prison if convicted in the U.S. The charges were framed under the Donald Trump administration after accusing him of collaborating with U.S. soldier Chelsea Manning who published classified documents and communications on wikileaks.org, the website run by Mr. Assange. Mr. Assange is the first journalist to have been charged under the First World War era Act. Ironically, during the tenure of Mr. Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama (U.S. President Joe Biden was the Vice-President then) the Justice Department had concluded that it would not pursue criminal charges against Mr. Assange and WikiLeaks as it would pose grave threats to the country's press freedom laws, particularly the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution that guarantees freedom of expression. The cables and documents published by WikiLeaks reveal the severe abuse of international and humanitarian law, war excesses and crimes committed in Iraq and Afghanistan by the U.S. government among others, besides shining a light on the inner workings of the elite in democracies and autocracies across the world. The diplomatic cables in particular, initially released after careful redaction by media organisations, and other documents went on to form the bulwark of a large repertoire of investigative journalism. In a rational world, the perpetrators of the excesses revealed by WikiLeaks would have been pursued for justice while Mr. Assange would have been released from his harsh and extended stay in a British prison.

Yet, the dogged pursuit of Mr. Assange has been renewed by the Biden administration. The only guarantee that it has provided is that it will not hold him in a maximum security prison, which has strict confinement rules, and that if convicted, he could serve his sentence in his native Australia if he requested it. Its position runs counter to its stated aim of bringing the U.S. back to the forefront of world democracies that promote values enshrined in the West as pivotal, such as freedom of expression accorded to the press. Subjecting Mr. Assange to trial will be a blow against media freedom in the U.S. and will also criminalise investigative journalism, particularly one that is pointed at the inner workings of the deep state. Mr. Assange's representatives have filed an appeal before the British High Court. With the present Labor party-led Australian government – Mr. Assange remains an Australian citizen – also expressing its displeasure at the continued pursuit, the onus is on the British judiciary to do right by him.

Cracks at the centre

Macron seems to have lost some of his support base to the new left and the far-right

In the June 2017 parliamentary elections, held a few weeks after Emmanuel Macron was first elected President, Jean-Luc Mélenchon's leftist France Unbowed party won just 17 seats. Five years later, Mr. Mélenchon's coalition has emerged as the second largest bloc in the French Parliament with 131 seats, clearly showing a resurgence of the left. Mr. Macron's party, Renaissance, and its allies won 245 seats, short of the 289 needed for absolute majority in the 577-member National Assembly. The far-right National Rally led by Marine Le Pen came third with 89 seats, a historic high. The results largely endorsed the trend that was visible during the presidential elections earlier this year. In the first round, the two far-right candidates – Ms. Le Pen and Éric Zemmour – and the Left's Mr. Mélenchon together polled more than 50% of votes. Mr. Macron secured a comfortable victory in the run-off, but his margin over Ms. Le Pen shrank substantially unlike in 2017 – an indicator of slow-burning voter resentment. Mr. Mélenchon read the tea leaves correctly and built a wider leftist platform to fight the parliamentary polls. He forged an alliance with socialists, communists and greens, trying to avoid a split among voters in the left of centre spectrum. Ms. Le Pen doubled down on her anti-immigrant populism. Mr. Macron, faced with a two-front attack, could not hold his centrist fort.

France's polity, traditionally dominated by the centre-right Conservatives and centre-left Socialists, has undergone structural changes. As the old consensus collapsed, Mr. Macron, a liberal populist, emerged as the guardian of the status quo. With pro-market economic policies and social liberalism, he projected himself as an alternative to the emerging new left and far-right parties. Though it helped him win back-to-back presidential elections, he could not calm rising resentment, which has finally hit his own party. The next five years will be harder for him than his previous term. He will have to stitch an alliance with the conservatives or win support from the left to drive his legislative agenda. What makes matters worse is a relentless cost-of-living crisis that has shaken western economies. France has managed to control fuel and electricity prices, for now, with a cap, but consumer price inflation has hit record levels. With a mushrooming energy crisis in the wake of Russia's Ukraine invasion, France, dependent on energy imports, is facing added pressure. This explains Mr. Macron's guarded approach towards the conflict. Unlike the U.K., the U.S. or eastern European countries, he has repeatedly called for ending the war through talks. Unless the war ends, he cannot tackle the inflationary pressure effectively. And unless he tackles the cost-of-living crisis, he cannot stop the new left and the far-right from eating into his support base.

The choice is narrowing the circle or widening it

The nation must remain diverse and inclusive, continuing to build itself on the principles in the Preamble



M. HAMID ANSARI

An editorial comment recently opined 'India is witnessing the progressive normalisation of minority baiting'. Some developments in a related context lend credence to it.

Recent happenings within the country and their reactions in lands far and near tend to pose the problem. The sequencing is relevant and must not be interchanged. The reactions beyond our shores were not autonomous and were induced by what was said to audiences at home, by whom it was said, and why it became critical and induced reactions, immediate and over a passage of time.

Neighbourhood impact

One aspect of the matter, understandably played up in the domestic media, is the reaction in the Gulf Cooperation Council and Persian Gulf countries with whom India has extensive and diverse political and commercial relations. These also provide gainful employment to many million Indian nationals whose remittances are an important source of foreign exchange remittances, in turn sustaining millions of households. Each of these has been quantified. In strategic terms, the region is India's extended neighbourhood; so is the case with Malaysia and Indonesia and Brunei in Southeast Asia.

It is evident that the malaise

(while being domestic in its origin) has global dimensions. Its external manifestations are aggravated by modern means of communication. By the same logic, the correctives have to emanate in the context of domestic perceptions and practices.

An emerging disquiet

Muslims are our largest religious minority, constituting 14.3% of the total population and numbering over 200 million. If considered along with the populations in Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, they constitute the largest Muslim group anywhere in the world. They are spread all over the country and are well integrated, but of late, signs of disquiet have been evident in all segments of the community.

The reason for this are the remarks uttered in media debates by two spokespersons of the ruling party reflecting on the personality of the Prophet. After a lapse of over a week of deafening silence, one of these persons was suspended and the membership of the second dispensed with. Both actions are viewed as inadequate by the community. No reaction has emanated from senior levels of government. The silence of institutional bodies such as the National Human Rights Commission of India and of the National Commission for Minorities is intriguing; so is the apparent reticence of the judiciary.

On the contrary, the use of strong-arm tactics and bulldozers to counter public demonstrations seeking firmer action against alleged culprits is suggestive of bias and has been aptly summed up in a candid editorial comment: 'there is little doubt that the demolitions amount to an abuse of pow-



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er, a challenge to the rule of law and are inherently illegal due to the absence of due process or proportionality'. Some observers have even opined that the bulldozer is an instrument to silence the minorities since its use in similar cases involving non-minority public is wanting.

What then could be the intent? Would it be to discipline, and thereby give rise to a feeling of denial with all its consequences?

Furtherance of hate

The operative constitutional principle in social behaviour should be the promotion of equality and fraternity. In actual practice it is the contrary; this results in furtherance of hate by denigration. In an earlier period, this used to focus principally on regional types and linguistic expressions. This was found to be troublesome since retaliation in kind was often quick and in equal measure. The alternative was to denigrate faiths or socio-religious practices in competitive one-upmanship. An easy target in this was the numerous but socially and economically weaker segments that could even be mocked in terms of assumed backwardness. And, since most of

our fellow citizens have reverence for traditional beliefs, 'experts' were soon discovered for these target areas. The public's addiction to popular television and its concocted levels of debate (premised on a preference for the brash and the articulate) invariably produces the desired results sought in some sections.

Indic versus non-Indic

A categorising segment of recent origin is the differentiation between Indic and non-Indic. This, put together with the existential diversity of faiths, seeks to divide fellow citizens between those who pursue Indic faiths assumed to be of Indian origin and those who subscribe to Christianity and Islam allegedly of external import. The argument is premised on a certain reading of Indian history and the sociological issue is sought to be premised on what constitutes Indianness, ignoring that our society is 'a mosaic in which primordial cleavages both intersect and intermingle with contemporary socio-economic segments'.

This ideological effort in a quest of 'purifying exclusiveness' is premised on our reading of history. A relevant question is whose history – of India defined in the period of British rule, or of India traditionally defined as Bharat? The latter would include many segments of southern Asia covered today by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries. Furthermore, and in terms of what is sought to be presented as our history would also include parts of Afghanistan and even of Iran since the latter was depicted by M.S. Golwalkar as 'nothing but the base of Aryabhumi'. One consequence of this

would be to categorise Ghazni, Khilji, Lodi, etc. not as foreign invaders but as domestic brigands who committed acts of loot and plunder and even succeeded in establishing kingdoms. Nor can the landmass of Bharat be described in terms of faith alone since there was a period of several centuries when Buddhism was the dominant religion. Furthermore, in the centuries when the rulers were Muslims, no effort seems to have been made to carry out mass conversions; on the contrary, the influence of Sufi saints was more pervasive.

The Indian reality of migrating groups seeking greener pastures since times immemorial qualifies our nomenclature of a 'civilisational state' and is better depicted in Raghupati Rai Firaq's couplet: *Sar zamin-e-hind par aqwam-e-alam ke Firaq/Qafilaste baste gae hindostan banta gaya* (Caravans from nations of the world kept coming and contributed to the formation of Hindostan).

Linguistically, India has also been called 'a land of linguistic minorities'. The Linguistic Survey of India and the research of Ganesh Devy bring forth the regional diversity of living languages. This lends credence to outbursts against linguistic homogeneity that is attempted periodically in the guise of national unity.

In multiple senses, our national choice thus lies in an ever-widening circle and in resisting all attempts, however well meaning, in abridging it. India is and must remain diverse and inclusive, and continue to build itself on the principles inscribed in the Preamble.

M. Hamid Ansari is the former Vice-President of India, 2007-2017

A case of the court straying into the legislative sphere

The Allahabad High Court's directions in the context of marital discord, though noble in intent seem to be flawed



R.K. VIJ

Recently, the Allahabad High Court, while allowing two criminal revisions pertaining to a dowry case, took cognisance of the misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), proposed certain safeguards and directed the State authorities of Uttar Pradesh to take the necessary steps for their implementation in a given time period. The High Court expressed its concern over the growing tendency of dowry victims to rope in the husband and all his family members using general and sweeping allegations.

The directions, *inter alia*, include constitution of a family welfare committee in each district under the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), handing over the first information report to such a committee immediately after its registration, and no arrest to be made by the police during this 'cooling period' of two months. As far as the High Court judgment reads, there were no allegations against the police that had dropped charges against two persons for lack of evidence and charge-sheeted only the husband and his parents based on available evidence.

Strangely enough, the High Court specifically mentioned in its judgment of taking guidance from the judgment of the Supreme Court of India in *Social Action Forum for Manav Adhikar vs Union of India* (2018), a case in which the Supreme Court overturned the judgment of its two-judge Bench and held constitution of similar committees and an embargo on arrest by the police for one month till the submission of report by the family welfare committee, impermissible under the scheme of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) (*Rajesh Sharma vs The State of U.P.*, 2017). Both Court judgments also dealt with the growing misuse of dowry provisions.

Committee's role

Except for the minor difference in the composition of the family welfare committees (such as inclusion of a young mediator or an advocate or a senior law student) as directed by the High Court, the primary role of such committees remains the same, i.e., settling the matrimonial dispute between the two parties. Whereas, in the *Rajesh Sharma* (supra) case, directions did not apply to the offences involving tangible physical injuries, the High Court's directions shall apply to the cases involving Section 498A IPC, along with no injury - Section 307 (attempt to murder) and other sections in the IPC in which the imprisonment is less than 10 years. In other words, if a woman's bone is fractured or



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permanent privation is caused to any eye or ear or a joint by her husband during the course of a matrimonial fight, the police shall not effect arrest, as the maximum imprisonment prescribed in such cases of grievous hurt is seven years. The police shall only do peripheral investigations such as collecting the injury report and recording the statements of witnesses, whose worth is unsure in further proceedings. The judgment is also silent about the role of the police if a repeat offence is committed during such a 'cooling period' of two months, which was only one month in the overruled *Rajesh Sharma* (supra) case.

The moot question (without going into the nuances) is whether the High Court was well within its jurisdiction to issue such directions when the scheme of investigation under the CrPC was clearly laid down and there was no ambiguity about or gaps in the law on arrest, inviting such a fresh interpretation. In *Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan* (1997), the Supreme Court issued directions to enforce fundamental rights in the absence of law in certain cases of sexual harass-

ment at the workplace. However, in the case of *Social Action Forum for Manav Adhikar* (supra), the Court held that a third agency (i.e., the family welfare committee) had nothing to do with the CrPC, and more so in stalling arrest till a report is submitted by the committee. The directions to settle a case after it is registered is not a correct expression of law, the top court held.

It cannot be refuted that the directions issued by the High Court were inspired with noble intentions to curb the tendency of reporting cases with exaggerations and sweeping allegations in the heat of matrimonial discord. But these directions potentially fall in the sphere of legislature. The constitutionality of dowry provisions has already been established. Also, the misuse of Section 498A IPC by itself cannot be a ground to dilute it and issue directions which do not flow from any provision of the Code. Moreover, these directions might curtail the rights of a genuine victim of dowry harassment.

Possible solutions

However, in order to check false cases of dowry and avoidable incarcerations, two solutions seem plausible. First, the police must strictly enforce the Supreme Court's directions issued in *Armesh Kumar vs State of Bihar* (2014) and ensure that there is sufficient reason and credible material against the accused person to necessitate

arrest. The investigating officers must be imparted rigorous training with regard to the principles stated by the Court relating to arrest. At the same time, wrongdoers need to be punished departmentally.

Second, the legislature may deliberate upon and make Section 498A IPC bailable. Similarly, though the High Court (using its inherent powers under Section 482 CrPC) can quash a criminal proceeding which is not compoundable (after a settlement is reached between the opposing parties), the legislature can amend and make the offence under Section 498A IPC compoundable so that a compromise could be arrived at with or without the permission of the competent court. This will not only save cost to the parties in dispute but also the High Court's valuable time. Similarly, once the Mediation Bill, 2021 is enacted, the institutional mediation mechanism may also help in settling the matrimonial dispute through the civil route.

Till the time any such amendment is made or law is enacted, the law of the land needs to be enforced strictly by both the police and the courts, without any dilution. Any such directions which do not emanate from the provisions of law, are likely to be struck down by the Supreme Court again.

R.K. Vij is a former Special Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Agnipath and after

The Government's decision to implement the Agnipath scheme under the pretext of infusing young blood in the defence forces and pruning financial expenses being incurred for salaries and pensions, thereby using the saved amount to buy advanced weaponry systems lacks conviction. The Service Chiefs have been put in a delicate position by the Government to accept and endorse the scheme. When there is large-scale unemployment, made worse by the pandemic, how will space be found for the Agniveers who exit the services? Even if the private sector lends a helping hand, there are limits. When thousands of India's sons are risking their life guarding the country's borders round the clock to ensure our safety, donning the accountant's hat and

thinking about savings and pensions saved should not have entered the mind of the Government. To use the argument that this is the trend in some parts of the advanced world is specious.

SANTANAM SESHADRI,
Chennai

All officers who have commanded battalions will confirm that it takes at least six years of dedicated and involved training to create a soldier. The new scheme will affect the regimental spirit of *Naam, Namak, Nishan*. The defence forces and the Indian Army in particular will be reduced to another central armed police force. As a veteran, I can say that this scheme will have grave repercussions down the line. The service "brass" must work on the Government to withdraw this scheme in the interests of the nation.

C.B. MENON,
Chennai

The aspirants cannot blame anyone but themselves for the current situation, as their protests were violent from the beginning, giving no room for peaceful negotiations. Now that the Services have announced the recruitment schedule, there is no point in the aspirants continuing with their protests. As Agnipath is the only route for soldier recruitment, they must begin preparing for the tests. The Agnipath scheme may be imperfect from the public point of view, but the argument put forward by the Services – to bring down the average age and cost-cutting – needs to be understood in perspective. In the current technological age, more than numbers, the quality and agility of the armed forces is more important. Also, the Services would need younger people conversant with the latest technology. Instead of getting disheartened as only

25% of the Agniveers will be absorbed in the armed forces, it is better that they all note that they will be getting the best training possible in the country for four years, exit the forces and enter the job market with a distinct advantage over the others.

KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,
Hyderabad

The Government has put out a list of advantages of being an 'Agniveer', but there are some steps it can take to calm those protesting. It can announce that the previously ongoing defence recruitments can continue simultaneously with this scheme. Second, it can clarify what the percentage of defence recruitments will be under this scheme every year. Third, it can increase the initial period of service or ensure a 'Seva Nidhi' package in the form of

pension. If an Army official who supports the Agnipath scheme said that 'nothing is cast in stone' (about the earlier recruitment scheme), the same line applies to this as well.

DEEPA NSHU PANCHAL,
Kolkata

It was distressing to read some of the thoughtless remarks made by BJP leaders about the employability of those Agniveers who leave the defence services after four years (inside pages, "BJP leaders' comments lead to a strong backlash", June 20). One is not sure whether this might sow the seeds of doubt in the minds of aspiring Agniveers. It is important that defence officials who have spoken in praise of the

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The reference to Mr. Varun Gandhi as BJP MLA should be corrected to BJP MP in the report titled "BJP leaders' comments lead to a strong backlash" (June 20, 2022).

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

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scheme ensure that there is a bright future for our youth.

SHALINI GERALD,
Chennai

Think environmentally

India's standing in the recently released Environment Performance Index is disappointing. Ever since the index was started, India has not scored well. Its dismal ranking in air quality does not need elaboration. The Government needs to gauge the adequacy of its environmental policies. Economic prosperity and development cannot be used as an argument to not act against climate change.

KARTIKEY SINGH,
Faridabad, Haryana

At the centre of job creation

The government should re-establish its role as the principal employment generator



K.R. SHYAM SUNDAR

With his announcement that 10 lakh government jobs will be provided over the next 18 months on a "mission mode", Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent four messages. One, the creation of employment is indeed a problem and can no longer be hidden from the public discourse. Two, the private sector, especially modern sectors such as the service and manufacturing sectors, which are dominated by multinational companies, have not created many jobs. Even if the Information Technology sector or the modern gig economy have created jobs, these are either very high-skilled jobs or low-skilled ones. Three, the government in the Nehruvian scheme of development occupied an important place in the labour market. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, whose ideology is different and which often attacks the Nehruvian model, is now ironically forced to step in as persistently rising inflation, unemployment and underemployment threaten to politically affect it. And four, the NDA government has blown the 2024 general election bugle.

Employment trends

A populist announcement made by any government needs to be critically studied. Let's look at some employment data. First, the last year for which we have information on employment in the organised sector from the Directorate General of Employment and Training is 2012. The statistics were provided under the employment market information programme. The NDA government is at present relying on the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation/National Pension System/Employees' State Insurance Scheme registrations and exits as indicators of the formal labour market. This could be misleading as companies may be increasing registrations to cross the threshold to become eligible to fall under any of these. Hence, this might be more a case of formalisation rather than employment genera-



A MGNREGA site in Kalaburagi district. ■ ARUN KULKARNI

tion. Second, media reports show that more than 85% of those aspiring for those 10 lakh jobs could be consumed by existing vacancies in Central government departments (8,72,243). In that sense, the pronouncement possibly does not indicate 10 lakh new jobs. Third, 241 central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) have been shedding jobs in recent years – jobs declined from 10.84 lakh in 2017-18 to 10.71 lakh in 2018-19 and to 9.22 lakh in 2019-20. Mr. Modi did not speak of employment creation by the CPSEs though this downward trend is a cause for concern.

The 10 lakh jobs creation also needs to be seen in the context of the labour market. Even though the labour force and workforce participation rates have increased marginally, there is a decline in the quality of jobs, viz. there is a rise in the unpaid segment of the self-employed and a rise in the share of the agricultural sector in total employment over the last three Periodic Labour Force Surveys (43% to 47%). This is a historical retrogression. This huge mass of workers contributes, thanks to low productivity, to about one-sixth of our national income, which does not augur well for a healthy economy. On the other hand, the manufacturing sector's share in national income has declined in 2020-21 (10.9%) compared to that in 2018-19 (12.1%).

Again, even though the aggregate usual status unemployment rate has slightly declined by a few percentage points (4.8% in 2019-20 to 4.6% in 2020-21), the current daily status unemployment figure (internationally used statistic) is at 7.5% for all persons in 2020-21. The educated unemployment rate (secondary school and above) in general and youth unemployment (15-29 years) in particular in the urban areas have very marginally fallen from 2019-20 to 2020-21, but they still high enough to cause concern (in double digits). Employment shares in the informal enterprises have increased – for men (71% to 75%), women (55% to 57%) and all persons (68% to 71%) from 2017-18 to 2020-21. Even though the share of regular salaried workers who did not have a formal employment contract, paid leave and eligibility for any form social security have declined for both genders, the level is still high. The government could score a point or two by showing that there is a declining tendency in several labour market variables. But an honest government would concede that the levels of several variables remained disconcertingly high even after three decades of economic reforms.

Role of private sector
Even as the Nehruvian model of development is attacked in the current

dominant political discourse, we cannot avoid placing the government at the centre of employment creation beyond a certain point. The private sector creates jobs in response to market forces and while taking into consideration radically altering technological developments. We cannot rely on the projections about employment generation by the gig economy. They are estimates computed by a trade body or by consulting agencies which have vested interests. As they are political economy agents influencing government policies, their predictions need to be read with many pinches of salt. The job recovery stories, which are published from time to time in the pink press, based on employment service providers such as Monster Employment Index, need to be seen in the context of a highly job-impaired economy such as ours. Projects in the modern private sector consume a lot of capital to generate very few jobs. For instance, recently, there was a report that the Adani Group has invested ₹70,000 crore (or ₹700 million) in Uttar Pradesh to create merely 30,000 jobs. Foreign Direct Investment, which at any rate is highly capital-intensive, goes mostly into the non-manufacturing sectors.

Quantity and quality of jobs

Employment is not merely about numbers and growth figures. We need to concentrate on enabling the creation of decent work and a sustainable labour market to which India is committed as a member of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization. Wittingly or otherwise, the government's role in employment generation has entered into popular discourse and discussions on policy formation. While even one job is a miracle, we need millions. The government should play a significant role soon. A lean and mean government, which is often prescribed by the neoliberal project, often results in governance deficit. The government should re-establish its role as the principal employment generator through jobs in its ministries and CPSEs and through assured employment generation programmes like MGNREGA.

K.R. Shyam Sundar is Visiting Professor, XLRI, Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur

Resurrecting a dead law

Even if there is a backdoor attempt at legislation, bringing Section 66A back on the statute book will not be easy



PRABHASH RANJAN

Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, which the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional in 2015 in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* for having a "chilling effect on free speech", is back in the news. As part of the ongoing negotiations at the United Nations for a proposed international treaty on combating cybercrime, India made a formal submission for criminalising "offensive messages". The language in the submission is similar to what was used in Section 66A. Many contend that this amounts to a 'backdoor' attempt at legislation – that is, if India's submission becomes part of the proposed treaty, it would result in Section 66A springing back to life and being used by the state to curb free speech once again. However, it is not so simple.

Is international treaty binding?

First, international treaty negotiations are complex. It is premature to believe that India's suggestion of criminalising "offensive messages" will be readily accepted. The U.K. and many countries in the European Union have reportedly already contested India's submission because they see this as an undue impediment to the freedom of speech.

But suppose we assume that India's proposal is accepted, would that mean that the provision will have a direct effect on the Indian legal system? Arguably, India is a dualist state. Therefore, international law does not become a part of the domestic legal system unless it is specifically transformed into domestic law by Parliament, which will be required to enact legislation to implement the international law. This is different from the theory of monism, wherein international law is automatically incorporated into the domestic legal system of the country even without Parliament enacting an enabling legislation. However, over the years, the Supreme Court of India has moved away from this traditional dualist approach towards monism. In cases such as *Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan* (1997), *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India* (2014), and *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2018), the court followed an approach of judicial incorporation by reading international law into domestic law in the absence of any specific prohibition in municipal law. In other words, the emerging principle is that courts will res-

pect international law unless it can be shown that it is inconsistent with municipal law.

If we do get an international treaty combating cybercrime with a provision similar to Section 66A, the Indian courts will not read this provision as part of domestic law because of the ratio in the *Shreya Singhal* case. It will be a classic case of an international law being in conflict with domestic law. Thus, the Indian courts will give primacy to the domestic law, not the international treaty provision criminalising "offensive speech".

Transforming international treaty

However, things may become convoluted if Parliament enacts legislation or amends existing legislation to implement the international treaty that criminalises "offensive messages". The government may get a law passed in Parliament using Article 253 of the Constitution, which states that Parliament has the "power to make any law for the whole or any part of the territory of India for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention", and place a provision similar to Section 66A back on the statute book. Legally, such a law can be justified as a necessary action to comply with India's international law obligations. It will then give the executive the power to book people for alleged "offensive messages" as was the practice earlier.

But what if the constitutionality of the re-introduced version of Section 66A is challenged? The courts will then examine the constitutionality of the re-introduced version of Section 66A in light of the fact that it was enacted to comply with India's international law obligations. But the constitutional court will still strike down the re-introduced version of Section 66A because the grounds on which this law was pronounced unconstitutional will still be valid in light of the fundamental right to free speech. In other words, just because Parliament enacts a law to give effect to an international treaty obligation, that does not mean that the law so enacted will not need to meet the test of constitutionality. Therefore, the possibility of Section 66A coming back on the statute book is bleak unless a bigger Supreme Court bench overrules *Shreya Singhal*.

But this issue is not just about legal technicalities. The alarming point is that the Indian government proposed the inclusion of a provision in an international treaty which was struck down by its own apex court for breaching fundamental rights. This mindset does not augur well for constitutionally protected fundamental freedoms in India.

Prabhash Ranjan is Professor and Vice Dean, Jindal Global Law School, OP Jindal Global University. Views are personal

STATE OF PLAY

A divided opposition helps BJP

With Congress and JD(S) squabbling, BJP walked away with an extra seat in the Rajya Sabha polls

SHARATH S. SRIVATSAA

The recent polls to four Rajya Sabha seats from Karnataka demonstrated the deep differences between the two opposition parties – the Congress and the JD(S) – which resulted in the ruling BJP winning a seat due to division of votes. Coming less than a year before the Assembly elections, this breakdown between the two parties is being seen as a precursor to the battle for "secular votes" in 2023.

The ego clashes between local Congress and JD(S) leaders nullified the efforts of senior leaders to arrive at a common ground on the candidate. While the Congress argued that it had supported the election of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda to the Rajya Sabha in 2020, and as quid pro quo, sought the JD(S)'s support this time, the JD(S) asked the Congress to support its candidate to enable both the parties to win one seat each. Both raised secular issues to force the other out of the fray, but neither blinked. Eventually, the BJP won three seats, and the Congress won one. A fuming JD(S) then vowed that it would not get into any understanding in the future with the Congress, a party with which it has formed two coalition governments, albeit short-lived ones, in the past.

For the Congress, which had fielded a Muslim as the second candidate, it became difficult to withdraw from the fray. Its effort to portray the JD(S) as the "B team" of the BJP did not go far since the regional party did not seek the BJP's support. The JD(S) said the Congress had fielded a Muslim candidate as a "scapegoat" despite knowing that he would not win the election as the party had only 25 votes after casting the ballot for its first candidate, Jairam Ramesh. The Congress, in turn, said that the JD(S) chose not to support a minority candidate who was already in the fray.

The JD(S), which claimed to have lost about 25 seats in the 2018 elections for being branded as the "B

team" of the BJP by the Congress, has been attempting to make inroads into the minority vote bank and appointed C.M. Ibrahim as the state president. The regional party claims to have emerged stronger than expected since only two of its legislators crossed voted in the Rajya Sabha, against the popular perception that there is large-scale dissidence in the party. Having turned down an alliance with the JD(S), the Congress has sent a clear signal that it wants to consolidate votes in the Old Mysore belt where the two parties are traditional rivals.

With these political equations, the Leader of the Opposition, Siddaramaiah; Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President D.K. Shivakumar; and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy, all from the Old Mysore region, could be stuck fighting their own battles, with little time for other regions. For the BJP, which has been under attack for lack of focus on development, endless allegations of corruption and divisive politics, this could work well as it draws its strength from the Lingayat-dominated northern region and the coastal area. In fact, as Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Kumaraswamy continue to squabble and poach leaders from each other's parties, the BJP, which is keen to increase its footprint in Old Mysore, could benefit there too.

It would be interesting to see how all this will affect Mr. Siddaramaiah. The JD(S) believes that he was the biggest stumbling block for an alliance as the Congress high command had supported its candidate. Mr. Siddaramaiah, who wrote an open letter asking JD(S) MLAs to cast "conscience votes" for the Congress candidate, is now bound to be hounded by the JD(S), a party he was expelled from in 2005. The BJP, too, will up its attack against him, as he has been its most consistent and vocal critic. The former Chief Minister has detractors within the party as well, making him quite a loner in the political arena.

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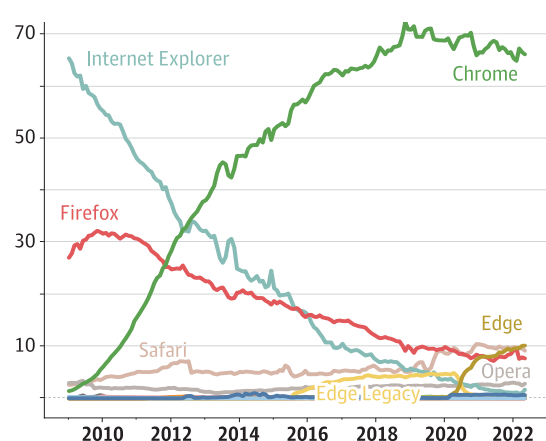
DATA POINT

Explorer ends its voyage

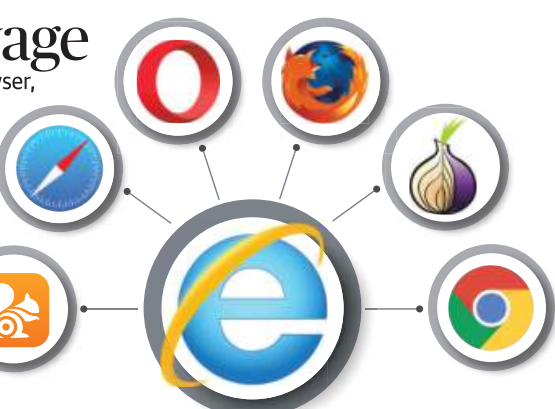
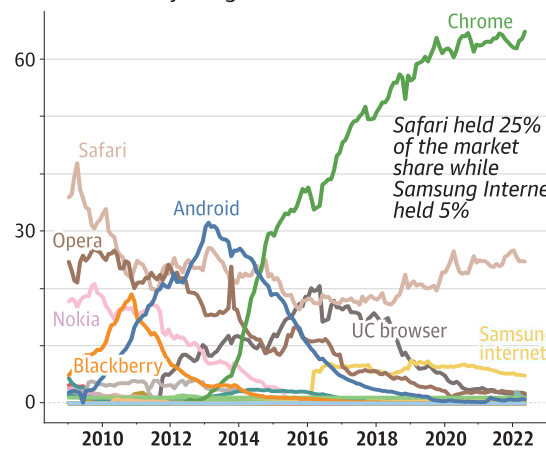
Twenty-seven years after its launch, Microsoft's web browser, Internet Explorer (IE), was retired last Wednesday. While IE has faced a lot of flak in recent years and has been blamed for poor surfing speed, it was once an Internet giant with an enviable market share. Today, the Google Chrome browser has taken IE's place across both desktop and mobile screens, holding more than 60% of the market share on both devices. In India, Chrome's market share on all devices put together has crossed 88%. However, Chrome's global market share has dipped significantly in the last few months due to notable increases in the market share of Microsoft's Edge browser and Apple's Safari. Firefox and Opera have been holding on to their existing users. Interestingly, there are still at least 20 nations in which more than 50% use browsers other than Chrome.

By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

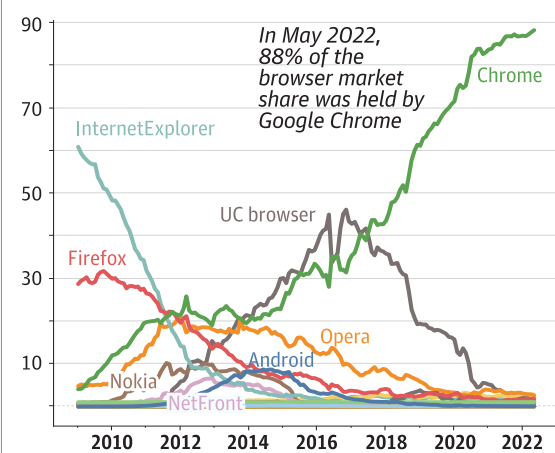
Desktop browsers | The graph shows the market share of web browsers worldwide among desktop users. As of May 2022, Google Chrome's market share was 66% of desktop browsers. With a 10% market share, Microsoft's Edge was second followed by Safari with around 9%. Mozilla Firefox (7.6%) and Opera (2.8%) were the other notable desktop browsers



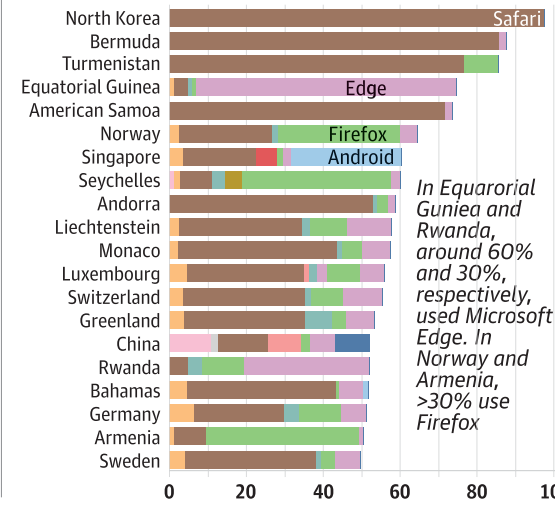
Mobile browsers | The graph shows the market share of web browsers worldwide among mobile users. As of May 2022, 64.8% of the mobile browser market share was held by Google Chrome



Browsers in India | The graph shows the market share of web browsers in India across devices. Interestingly, between 2014 and 2017, when IE's market share began to fall and Chrome's share began to rise, a majority of Indians preferred the UC browser



Non-Chrome users | The graph shows select countries where more than 50% of the market share is held by browsers other than Chrome. In North Korea, Bermuda and Turkmenistan, more than 75% used Safari



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 21, 1972

'Must recognise Bangla Desh soon'

Rawalpindi, June 19: President Bhutto told Pakistani Editors to-day that Pakistan must recognise Bangladesh by September or become the "odd man out" at the United Nations. At a meeting in Murree from which foreign newsmen were barred, participants said Mr. Bhutto told them he planned to seek immediate restoration of diplomatic relations with India when he met the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi on June 28. According to the Editors, Mr. Bhutto said that withholding recognition could push Bangladesh closer to India. Mr. Bhutto said he first wanted to meet the Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rehman before recognition, but not in India, to discuss business involving their two countries. He said he wanted to talk with Sheikh Mujib about the sharing of the United Pakistan's assets and liabilities. He said he did not want to extend recognition first and then start quarrelling. According to the participants, Mr. Bhutto cautioned Editors "not to expect much" from the first meetings with Mrs. Gandhi. He said he was willing to agree immediately to the resumption of diplomatic relations broken on December 7, when India recognised Bangladesh. He said also he would seek the resumption of communications disrupted by the war as well as the resumption of trade halted since the 1965 war. Editors said he would also press for the withdrawal of troops from the Pakistan-India border.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 21, 1922

Disarmament

London, June 19: The text is issued of a bill to be introduced in the House of Lords for carrying out Washington treaties respecting limitation of naval armaments and protection of non-combatants at sea in wartime. The Bill restricts the building of warships except by the license of Admiralty and empowers Admiralty to search any ship being altered after being built, armed or equipped and to seize the ship where reasonable ground exists for believing that the Act is being contravened. The penalty for contravention is imprisonment not exceeding two years with or without hard labour and fine not exceeding \$100 or both and forfeiture of ship. Anyone violating rules of warfare against commerce is liable to punishment similar to that awarded to pirates. The provisions cover the whole empire except Dominions, India and Irish Free State (when constituted).

Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



Russian crude exports

8.42 In million tonnes, the quantity of oil China imported from Russia last month, a 55% on-year rise. The latest number was a spike from the 5.44 million tonnes China imported in May 2021, according to figures from the Customs Administration. Thus, Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia as China's main source of oil. Beijing, which has refused to condemn Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, has also been accused of providing diplomatic cover for Russia by blasting Western sanctions and arms sales to Kyiv. AFP

Energy crisis in Africa

43 The percentage of the African population, or 600 million people, who lack access to electricity — mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of Africans with access to electricity fell during the COVID pandemic, but \$25 billion in annual investments could bring full coverage by 2030, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Africa is facing far more severe effects of climate change than most other parts of the world, despite emitting less energy-related carbon dioxide than any other region, the IEA added. AFP

Sea of waste

68,500 In tonnes, the amount of medical waste the city of Shanghai produced during its recent COVID lockdown, with daily output up to six times higher than normal. While the mass testing strategy has allowed the world's most populous nation to avoid a public health catastrophe, it is creating a sea of hazardous waste and a mounting economic burden for local governments. The disposal systems in the poorer rural parts of the country have long been overburdened. AFP

Dipping losses

9.7 In \$ billion, airlines' losses globally this year, down from \$52 billion in 2021, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). IATA represents some 290 airlines comprising 83% of global air traffic. The Director General of the IATA said that while the outlook for airlines globally is positive, the business environment remains challenging. The World Bank expects energy prices to soar 50% compared to 2021. Fixing balance sheets of airlines carrying debts of \$650 billion will be a monumental challenge. PTI

Two-year high

7.38 In million barrels per day (bpd), is Saudi Arabia's crude exports in April. Crude exports in April rose about 2% from about 7.235 million bpd reported for March. The world's largest oil exporter's April crude production rose to its highest level in two years at 10.441 million bpd from 10.300 million bpd in the previous month. Oil product exports eased 0.015 million bpd to 1.473 million bpd in April, while demand for oil products rose 0.177 million bpd to 2.234 million bpd, data showed. REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

A marooned Macron

What are the implications of President Macron losing the majority in the National Assembly? Who is his main Opposition?

G. SAMPATH

The story so far: President Emmanuel Macron has lost his majority in the National Assembly, the lower house of the French Parliament. In the legislative elections, which concluded on June 19, Ensemble, the centrist coalition led by Mr. Macron, could muster only 245 seats in the 577-member assembly. The number needed for an absolute majority is 289. At the same time, NUPES, the left-wing alliance led by Jean-Luc Melenchon, and the far-right National Rally of Marine Le Pen made substantial gains, finishing with 131 and 89 seats respectively. The mainstream conservatives, Les Republicains, managed to get 61 seats.

What is the significance of France's legislative elections?

Although the President's office is the most powerful of political posts in France, with scope to govern by decree, a majority in the National Assembly is still needed for passing new laws or amending the Constitution. In the 2017 legislative elections, Mr. Macron's party and his allies won an absolute majority of 350 seats, which meant he could push through whatever legislation he wanted in line with his policy goals. But this time, short of the majority needed to control the Assembly, he may be forced to make political compromises in order to cobble up the numbers.

After the first round, the centrist Ensemble coalition and the leftwing NUPES were neck-and-neck with around 25% of the votes each, while the National Rally got 19% and Les Republicains, 10%

Apart from having a say on key bills, members of the National Assembly, or 'deputies', also have the power to pose tough questions to cabinet Ministers, organise hearings, and set up enquiry committees.

How do the legislative elections work?

The legislative polls are held in two rounds, with one elected deputy for each of the 577 constituencies. The top two candidates with the most votes in the first round face off in the second round to determine the winner.

But if a candidate wins more than 50% of the vote in the first round — which is rare — then she is declared elected without the need for a second round. This year, the first and second rounds were held on the 12th and 19th of June respectively. After the first round, the centrist Ensemble coalition and the leftwing NUPES were neck-and-neck with around 25% of the votes each, while the National Rally got 19% and Les Republicains, 10%.

Why did President Macron lose his majority, and which parties have gained at his expense?

Mr. Macron's pro-business policies, rising inequality, and growing discontent over inflation have been steadily eroding his support base, especially among left-leaning voters. One major factor in his comfortable win in the Presidential elections was the keenly felt political imperative to keep the far-right Marine Le Pen out of the Elysee Palace. It delivered to Macron the votes of the left parties in addition to his own. But this factor was not in play in the legislative elections where the firebrand leftist Mr. Melenchon strung together a robust alliance of all the left and green parties and ensured they were not contesting against each other. As a result, the leftwing coalition increased its presence in the National Assembly from 45 to 131. Another big gainer from the disenchantment with Macron's policies — especially his forays into pension reform — seems to be the far-right Ms. Le Pen, whose party increased its tally more than ten-fold, from eight to 89.

What are the ideological differences between Mr. Macron and his main opposition in the National Assembly?

President Macron's main Opposition in Parliament would be the leftwing NUPES coalition led by Mr. Melenchon. NUPES, or New Social and Ecological People's Union, includes communists, socialists, Greens and different shades of leftwing groups that do not necessarily agree on every issue. Mr. Macron, a former investment banker, followed classic neoliberal policies in his first term as President — he lowered corporate tax rates from 33.3% to 25%, ushered in labour reforms that cut employment benefits and enabled easier lay-offs, and did away with the wealth tax. He now wants to raise



the retirement age — a move strongly opposed by the working classes and the vast bureaucracy. NUPES, on the other hand, has an agenda focused on social and climate justice. It is calling for the retirement age to be lowered from 62 to 60, the return of the wealth tax, and for the minimum wage to be hiked by 15%. While Mr. Macron already has — in the aftermath of the inflation fuelled by factors related to the Ukraine war — capped fuel and gas prices, NUPES wants a cap on the prices of all essentials. With regard to the EU, Mr. Melenchon has been speaking of France unilaterally disregarding EU treaties that interfere with its national policies, but he doesn't enjoy the support of all his coalition partners on this issue.

Lacking a majority in Parliament, what are Macron's options?

Political observers speculate that he might

try to regain control of the Assembly by seeking an alliance with a broadly like-minded rival, such as Les Republicains, whose 61 seats would be enough to secure a majority. The other alternative would be to negotiate and build consensus with select parties on specific issues in order to get key legislation passed.

What does the reduced majority mean in terms of France's position with regard to the Ukraine war?

It is unlikely to matter in terms of France's foreign policy.

However, the indirect political pressure on the Macron government on account of the war's impact on the domestic economy, especially inflation, is bound to go up with a higher representation of the Opposition in the Assembly and its enhanced power to block legislations.

Strong resistance:

Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of the left-wing coalition New Ecologic and Social People's Union (NUPES) and candidates hold up a victory sign before an outdoor news conference ahead of the second round of the French parliamentary elections, in Paris, France on June 17.

REUTERS

THE GIST

■ President Emmanuel Macron has lost his majority in the National Assembly, the lower house of the French Parliament. He could muster only 245 seats in the 577-member assembly. The number needed for an absolute majority is 289.

■ Mr. Macron's pro-business policies, rising inequality, and growing discontent over inflation have been steadily eroding his support base, especially among left-leaning voters.

■ President Macron's main Opposition in Parliament would be the leftwing NUPES coalition led by Mr. Melenchon. NUPES, or New Social and Ecological People's Union, includes communists, socialists, Greens and different shades of leftwing groups that do not necessarily agree on every issue.

EXPLAINER

El Salvador's Bitcoin bet

How has the adoption of Bitcoin as an official currency worked out for the Central American country?

PRASHANTH PERUMAL

The story so far: The crash in the price of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies has put El Salvador's government in trouble. The Central American country, led by President Nayib Bukele who is a self-proclaimed fan of cryptocurrencies, had adopted Bitcoin as an official currency in September last year. The crash in the price of Bitcoin has raised concerns over the government's ability to repay its debt.

What is the problem in El Salvador?

The crash in the price of Bitcoin from around \$69,000 in November last year to around \$20,000 this week has caused losses to investors around the world. According to some estimates, the average cryptocurrency investor is deep in losses after the significant correction in the prices of cryptocurrencies. The crash in Bitcoin's price has not spared the government of El Salvador either. President Bukele has been using taxpayer's money to bet on Bitcoin. In fact, a lot of times when the price of Bitcoin crashed steeply, he had gone on popular social media site Twitter to announce to the world that he was

'buying the dip' (this refers to purchasing an asset after it has dropped in price). Even during the current crash, he has plunged into the market to buy Bitcoin and has urged citizens of El Salvador to be patient. It is said that the El Salvador government's investment of over \$100 million in Bitcoin has lost more than half of its value till date due to the crash.

Why did El Salvador adopt Bitcoin as an official currency?

In 2001, El Salvador had adopted the U.S. dollar as its official currency. After Bitcoin was adopted as an official currency in September last year, both Bitcoin and the U.S. dollar have been used as official currencies. The El Salvador government has been trying to encourage citizens to primarily use Bitcoin for their daily transactions. It even came out with a payments wallet named Chivo which gave out for free Bitcoin worth \$30 initially to encourage people to use Bitcoin in transactions.

Analysts believe that the decision to adopt Bitcoin as an official currency may have to do with the El Salvador government's inability to borrow in U.S. dollars. El Salvador's public debt has risen to over 100% of gross domestic



President of El Salvador Nayib Bukele
REUTERS

product and its recent attempt to borrow \$1 billion using bonds backed by Bitcoin failed. The government's bonds are trading at a steep discount and are classified as junk by investors. President Bukele has already had to rely on financial help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to meet his government's spending needs. It should be noted that while the

El Salvador government can tax its citizens to meet its need for dollars, it could turn out to be an unpopular move among citizens. Many believe that the President has mismanaged funds received from abroad during the pandemic and this has made international organisations hesitant to lend any more dollars to his government. The IMF had also opposed President Bukele's decision to make Bitcoin an official currency.

Bitcoin offers a chance for the El Salvador government to cut down its reliance on the U.S. dollar to fund its spending. Greater adoption of Bitcoin in El Salvador will allow the government to tax and spend in Bitcoins instead of U.S. dollars. This maybe why the government is making various attempts to encourage the use of Bitcoin over U.S. dollars by its citizens. Mr. Bukele has also set up geothermal plants to power his Bitcoin mining facilities. He can use the mined Bitcoins to directly fund his government's domestic spending if Bitcoin gains greater acceptance in the country. Otherwise, he can exchange his Bitcoin for U.S. dollars and use it to repay debt or even spend it on the domestic economy since the dollar is still the most commonly accepted

currency in El Salvador. This is why the fall in the price of Bitcoin is worrying analysts. A crash in Bitcoin's price against the U.S. dollar means that the government will have to sell its Bitcoin for fewer dollars, thus affecting its capacity to repay dollar debt.

How well has Bitcoin done in El Salvador?

Most citizens of El Salvador have been reluctant to adopt Bitcoin as a medium of exchange, that is, as money. Many citizens, it is claimed, registered on the payments wallet Chivo that was pushed by the government simply to sell off their free Bitcoin in exchange for \$30. It should be noted that the acceptance of cryptocurrencies in general has been minuscule across the globe. This has been the case despite the fact that the supply of cryptocurrencies is limited by design, which could potentially help them maintain or increase in value over time. One big reason for the low acceptance of cryptocurrencies has been their extreme price volatility, making them an unreliable store of value. People in general are hesitant to accept something as money if they are not fairly sure about its likely value in the future.

THE GIST

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■ However, most citizens of El Salvador have been reluctant to adopt Bitcoin as a medium of exchange, that is, as money.



Under lock-down: A view of the Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi. ■ RAJESH N



KEYWORD

Dutch disease

How countries see uneven growth due to the sudden discovery of natural resources

SANAL. M. SUDEVAN

Dutch Disease in economics refers to a phenomenon wherein a country witnesses uneven growth across sectors due to the discovery of natural resources, especially large oil reserves. According to the concept, when a country discovers natural resources and starts exporting them to the rest of the world, it causes the exchange rate of the currency to appreciate significantly and this, in turn, discourages the exports from other sectors while encouraging the import of cheaper alternatives.

While the idea was first proposed by economists Peter Neary and Max Corden in 1982, the term 'Dutch disease' was first coined by *The Economist* in 1977 to describe the decline of the manufacturing industry in the Netherlands.

The origin of the term

In the 1960s, the Netherlands discovered gas reserves in the North Sea. The subsequent export of oil and the appreciation of the Dutch currency made Dutch exports of all non-oil products less competitive on the world market. Unemployment rose from 1.1% to 5.1% and capital investment in the country dropped. Following this, over the years, the country witnessed a downfall in the industrial sector.

According to a recent research paper titled "40 years of Dutch Disease literature: lessons for developing countries", by Edouard Mien and Michael Goujon, the framework of the model of the phenomenon is based on three sectors: energy (traditionally oil, gas or mining resources), tradeables, and non-tradeables of a small economy. As labour and capital are immobile internationally, the Dutch disease is a "purely domestic phenomenon" which cannot be "exported."

The model is concentrated on the spending and resource-movement effects. That is, exports of energy generate additional revenue for the factory owner and the government (through taxes), hence increasing the demand for tradeable and non-tradeable products in the country. The boom in the energy sector forces labour to move out of trade and service sectors, creating a shortage of manpower in these two sectors. This reduces the output in the trade and service sector due to the gap between supply and demand. At the end, output in the trade sector declines and the service sector stagnates, resulting in the downfall of the economy in the long-run.

However, there are theories that contradict this model. For instance, Fredrick van der Ploeg in 2011 explained that if the trade or manufacturing sector is more capital-intensive than the service sector, then the boom in the energy sector will be shifted to the trade sector resulting in an absolute fall in the service sector.

How to combat the Dutch disease

Mien and Goujon also focus on what the developing resource-rich countries should do to avoid the occurrence of the Dutch disease.

First, the role of fiscal policy can prevent the adverse effects of Dutch disease. According to the researchers, the role of fiscal policy is important to control the boom following the discovery of natural resources. Rising income due to the export of natural resources should be adjusted with cautious spending on public welfare. The study focusses on the efficient use of revenues coming from taxation to compensate for the adverse effects of the Dutch disease.

The second important move is to promote spending policies. Public spending such as concentrating on imports of tradeables rather than non-tradeables would help slow the impact of the Dutch disease. Private spending in order to improve the productivity of private firms would also help reduce the impact.

Third is monetary policy. The choice of an appropriate monetary policy is important for macroeconomic management in commodity-exporting countries. With the discovery of natural resources, the country sees a huge inflow of money, especially foreign currency. The export of natural resources tends to affect the equilibrium in the money and exchange rate markets. The Dutch disease can be prevented if the central bank raises the banking system reserve's requirement, which decreases domestic credit.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Solving the Sterlite problem

The trust deficit between the plant's operator and the people of Thoothukudi needs to be bridged if the smelter has to restart

M. KALYANARAMAN

In an unexpected announcement, Sterlite Copper, part of the Vedanta Group has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) for its Thoothukudi based plant, which has been under lock and key since 2018. In this article dated January 24, 2022, M. Kalyanaraman talks about the need for the corporate group to bridge the trust deficit between them and the locals in order for the plant to function again.

Sterlite Copper of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu has become a moral issue after the police firing on protesters resulted in the deaths of 13 people in May 2018. Over some 20 years of plant operation, the company had violated many pollution regulations and faced at least two major allegations of excessive emissions. It also faced consistent protests against pollution from the plant. It had been ordered shut many times only to reopen and expand capacity.

Complaints against the plant

Residents around Sterlite say that when the plant was operating, there would be release of gas at 3 a.m. every day. They would wake up short of breath and to a foul smell. Even cattle were refusing to drink groundwater since it was contaminated by Sterlite effluents, they say. Now, the air is cleaner, they contend. The business community complains that Sterlite did not employ enough local people and did not give enough contracts for local businessmen. It was a high-handed management that talked down to them.

Though Sterlite has constructed toilets, water tanks and community centers, it has not invested much in serving the educational or health needs of the local population.

Distrust of Sterlite is so much that many people now credit good rains to the shuttering of the

plant. During the 2018 protests, WhatsApp videos of a grieving widow of a cancer patient demanding shutting of Sterlite went viral. There has not been any study to link cancer with Sterlite emissions. But people were only eager to believe the talk. Sterlite representatives have faulted protesters for spreading rumours and serving hostile vested interests. But the company's record has not been above board. It is unapologetic about the 13 deaths in firing.

Sterlite's product, copper, is a strategic metal. Important applications are energy, electrical equipment and electronics. Nations are switching more and more to wind and solar. This means new projects and transmission lines. There is a push for electrical vehicles. Globally, and in India, copper demand is only set to ramp up. Imports can cause supply bottlenecks. End consumers such as electrical equipment manufacturers sometimes pay a high premium as a result.

There are more than 120 copper smelters across the world. All major copper-consuming countries have copper smelters within their country. Copper production provides strategic balance and price stability. The shuttering of the Sterlite plant quickly made India, a copper exporter, an importer. Domestic copper price is typically higher than the landed price of imported copper, increasing forex outgo. India now imports copper at the rate of 3 lakh of tonnes a year and the figure is only likely to grow. Volatile global copper prices are now at least 50% more than what they were when the plant shut.

A copper smelter would serve India well. The only other major smelter in India is Hindalco. Thousands of jobs were lost when Sterlite shut. Real estate and local businesses serving the employees were hit. Imports through the Thoothukudi port fell by 25% the year Sterlite was shut and have only slid further since then. The port lost some 120 calls of vessels every year

carrying copper concentrate. Port dues, berth charges, wharfage, etc. took a hit. In 2018-19, the operating income of the port fell by 15% and operating surplus reduced by 20% compared to the previous year. Without Sterlite's copper exports, the port's container terminal has been struggling. The business of some 20 stevedores and 100 clearing and forwarding agents came to zero. On average, 5,000 lorry trips were needed to transport the concentrate import from each ship to the plant. A whole lorry ecosystem had developed in Thoothukudi sustaining thousands of families.

In 2020, the Madras High Court, while upholding the 2018 State government order closing the plant, said, "when economy is pitted against the environment, environment will reign supreme." Sterlite has gone on appeal to the Supreme Court.

An opportunity

While the economic and national interest case for a copper smelter is proven, the trust deficit between Vedanta and the people of Thoothukudi needs to be bridged if the smelter has to restart. The framework for a solution could focus on adherence to norms and creating harmony between the company, government and the people. Sterlite presents an opportunity for the people of Thoothukudi to move forward in national and local economic interest. It is an opportunity for a corporate group to act responsibly and take people along while conducting its business.

The process, however, needs someone who can help bridge the trust deficit. An assurance from him, her or an agency should guarantee any settlement. And it's not something governments can do.

M. Kalyanaraman is founding editor of inmathi.com

THE GIST

■ Sterlite Copper of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu has become a moral issue after the police firing on protesters resulted in the deaths of 13 people in May 2018.

■ Sterlite's product, copper, is a strategic metal. Important applications are energy, electrical equipment and electronics. Copper production provides strategic balance and price stability. The shuttering of the Sterlite plant quickly made India, a copper exporter, an importer.

■ However, distrust of Sterlite is so much that many people now credit good rains to the shuttering of the plant. The community complains that Sterlite did not employ enough local people and did not give enough contracts for local businessmen. Therefore, the corporate group needs to act responsibly and take the people along with it if it wants to conduct its business.

THE DAILY QUIZ

June 21 marks the longest day of the year for the Northern hemisphere. Called the summer solstice, it occurs when one of Earth's poles has its maximum tilt toward the Sun. Here is a general quiz on geography

1 What is the word used to describe a moment in time when the Sun crosses the Earth's equator, which is to say, appears directly above the equator?

through?

2 The Tropic of Cancer is the most northerly circle of latitude on Earth at which the Sun can be directly overhead. Which is the highest mountain on or adjacent to the Tropic of Cancer?

5 The Mahi River is the only river in India which crosses the Tropic of Cancer twice. Which are the two States where the river crosses the line?

6 There is a natural light display in the Earth's sky, predominantly seen in high-latitude regions (around the Arctic and Antarctic). What is it called? What is it named after?

7 This is the point on the Earth's surface at zero degrees latitude and zero degrees longitude (0°N 0°E), i.e., where the prime meridian and the equator intersect. Located in the Gulf of Guinea, what is this commonly called?

3 These cycles describe the collective effects of changes in the Earth's movements on its climate over thousands of years. The term was coined and named after a Serbian geophysicist and astronomer. What is the term?

8 GMT is the mean solar time, counted from midnight. The term GMT is especially used by the United Kingdom bodies. What does GMT stand for?



◀ Identify this place and the phenomenon it is associated with.

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

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The father of Shakespeare's Cordelia, Goneril and Regan. **Ans: King Lear**
2. The father this quote is talking about "It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived." **Ans: Atticus Finch**
3. The Jane Austen character who said "Let me not have the grief of seeing you unable to respect your partner in life". **Ans: Mr. Bennet**
4. This father screws the caps on to toothpaste tubes and appears in two novels by the same author. **Ans: William Bucket**
5. The title of Denethor. **Ans: Steward of Gondor**
6. This book often described as a father-son story has the famous line: "For you, a thousand times over". **Ans: The Kite Runner**
Visual: The name of this film which is based on a short story. **Ans: Kabuliwala**

Early Birds: Titiksha Dabraan| Sanjay Chandra| Roopa Srinivasan| Sindhu Dinesh| Adya Upasana Routray

FROM PAGE ONE

Bharat bandh affects life in some regions

The capital was under tight security of the police. The Youth Congress blocked a train at the Shivaji Bridge station in Delhi and the police removed 16 protesters to clear the tracks. Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Assam, West Bengal and Rajasthan also witnessed protests.

Authorities said the bandh call was given on social media, though no group had owned it.

The Opposition continued to target the Centre over the scheme. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the intention of the BJP was to create its own private army. "The BJP is trying to create its armed cadre base through this scheme. What will they do after four years? The party wants to give arms in the hands of the youth," she said in Kolkata.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said the Centre was playing with the future

of the country, national security and the dreams of unemployed youth.

"The jawan of this country is a uniformed farmer. Most of the soldiers are from farmer families. Army job is tied to the honour and economic strength of lakhs of farmer families. It is a matter of shame for the country that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who started his victory campaign by rallying ex-servicemen with the promise of 'one rank, one pension', has now launched this scheme of 'no rank, no pension'," the SKM said.

The next national meet of the SKM, scheduled for July 3 in Ghaziabad, will chart the future programmes in connection with the ongoing agitations, SKM leaders Hannan Mollah, Darshan Pal, Jagjit Singh Dalwal, Joginder Singh Ugrahan, Shivkumar Sharma Kakkaji, Yudhveer Singh and Yogenra Yadav said in a release.

Gopal Gandhi opts out of the fray; Oppn. rejigs plan

The Opposition had a first round of meeting on June 15 and the next is coming up on Tuesday. The Left parties have been particularly keen on Mr. Gandhi's candidature, with Mr. Yechury framing the contest as "Gandhi versus Godse", coinciding as it is with the 75th anniversary of Independence.

The Trinamool and the Aam Aadmi Party were banking on Mr. Pawar. But even before the first round of a joint Opposition meeting, he declared that he would not contest.

With Mr. Gandhi counting himself out, Opposition parties are back to square one. "There is a division among the Opposition parties. One section believes

that we should wait for the government to declare their candidate and propose a suitable one to counter that. However, in such a case, we are letting the government set the narrative. In a battle where we do not have the numbers with us, at least we must control the narrative," a senior Opposition leader said.

Tuesday's meeting will try to ensure Opposition parties such as the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), which skipped the first meeting, are present. Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao had said he would send a representative to the first meeting but no-one from the party participated.

Kashmiri Pandits seek written assurance to rejoin duty

Since Rahul Bhat's murder, over 5,400 employees have stopped attending office; hundreds have moved to safer locations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Kashmiri Pandit employees, recruited under the Prime Minister's special package, on Monday asked the J&K administration "to assure them in writing that no Pandit will be killed in the future so that they could resume their duties".

Thirty-two days have passed, with no Pandit attending office in the Valley after the spree of killings of the community members in May.

"Until the Lieutenant-Governor's government will not give in writing that no minority member will be killed, we will not resume offices.

Kashmir is very unsafe and the brute forces are out to kill us for news. For them, we are just numbers. We don't want to become news. We want our family and children to be secure," Ajay, a Kashmiri Pandit employee and a member of the All Minority Employees' Association Kashmir (AMEAK), said.

Demonstration held

Scores of Kashmiri Pandits held a demonstration in Budgam's Sheikhpora transit migrant colony. Over a month ago, an employee from the colony, Rahul Bhat, posted at the tehsil office in Beerwah, was shot dead by militants in his office. Since

Miscreants attack Tripura Congress leader Sudip

He has been admitted to hospital

A CORRESPONDENT
AGARTALA

Sudip Roy Barman, former Health Minister and Congress candidate in the 6-Agartala constituency in the upcoming byelection, suffered severe injuries in an attack at Ujan Abhognagar here on Monday.

He has been admitted to a private hospital.

Sources said Mr. Barman and the State Youth Congress President Rakhu Das went to the locality after hearing about an assault on Congress supporter Bapi Goswami.

Attack on May 2

Sources said Mr. Barman did not take security guards along with him. He was attacked with bricks and sticks, they added.

Earlier on May 2, a secur-



Sudip Roy Barman

ity staffer and driver of Sudip Roy Barman were wounded in an attack by bike-borne miscreants outside the residence of a senior advocate. Barman, however, had escaped unhurt.

Security deployment intensified in the city to quell tension. Byelections in four Assembly constituencies will be held on June 23.

Three held in Moosewala murder case

One of them, Priyavrat, led the team of shooters and was in touch with Goldy Brar, the police say

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has arrested three persons for allegedly planning and executing the murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, officers said on Monday.

H.G.S. Dhaliwal, Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), said the accused had been identified as Priyavrat, 26, alias Fauji, of Sonapat in Haryana; Keshav Kumar, 29, of Bhatinda in Punjab; and Kashish of Jhajjar in Haryana.

Main shooter

Mr. Dhaliwal told presspersons that Priyavrat led a team of shooters and was in direct touch with the Canada-based gangster Goldy Brar in the execution of the killing.

"He is the main shooter and executioner of the murder," the Special CP said.

Apart from Priyavrat, Kashish was the shooter involved in the incident. Kumar was the facilitator and



In the net: Police personnel with three persons including two main shooters arrested in connection with Sidhu Moosewala murder case, in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

received the shooters after the incident. Kumar dropped the shooters till Mansa district on the day of the incident.

Mr. Dhaliwal said the ac-

cused had conducted multiple recce before carrying out the murder.

"Eight grenades, nine electronic detonators, three pistols and one assault rifle

have been recovered from the arrested accused," he said, adding that they had kept the grenades as an alternative option in case the other weapons did not work.

Three more militants killed in J&K

Seven killed in the past two days, 114 killed this year in Valley, the police say

THE HINDU BUREAU
SRINAGAR

Three militants were killed in two separate anti-militancy operations by security forces in the Kashmir Valley on Monday, taking the toll to seven in the past two days.

The police said two of them were killed at Chandigarh at Lolab in Kupwara, where an encounter started on Sunday.

All the slain militants were affiliated to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

An arrested militant, Showkat Ahmad Sheikh, who was "trapped" during the search operation in the area, is among the dead. A local militant, Sheikh was a resident of Sedow in Sho-



On guard: Security personnel stand guard at a camp of Amarnath pilgrims in Jammu on Monday. ■ PTI

pian. "Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition, including two AK-series rifles, six AK Magazines, an M-4 rifle along with a magazine and three live grenades were recovered from their possession," the police said.

Meanwhile, an LeT militant was killed in an overnight gunfight in the Chatapora area of Pulwama district of South Kashmir.

The police identified the slain militant as Suhail Ahmad Khan from Maidan Cho-

gal, Handwara. An encounter started in the area after a joint team of the security forces came under fire from hiding militants.

On Sunday, two militants – identified as Haris Sharief from Srinagar, a 'C' category militant affiliated to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Zakir Padder from Kulgam, a 'C' category militant affiliated to the Jaish-e-Muhammad – were killed in an operation in Kulgam's D.H. Pora area in south Kashmir.

"So far, 114 militants have been killed in the Valley this year, including 32 foreign militants, compared with 21 killed last year," Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

Shah flags importance of data protection

Ready to thwart cyberattacks, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that forces inimical to India had constituted "cyber armies" to launch cyberattacks against India but the Home Ministry was ready to thwart any such attempt.

The Minister said data privacy and protection of critical infrastructure from cyberattacks were imminent challenges in the wake of the digital revolution in the country and it was a matter of happiness that 80 crore Indians had online presence.

Mr. Shah was speaking at the inauguration of the national conference on cyber-safety and national security. The conference was organised by the Home Ministry as part of the efforts to create mass awareness for the prevention of cybercrimes in the country.

He said it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision that each Indian should be empowered with Internet and technology. "Today, 130 crore people are able to receive Direct Benefit Transfer. This was unthinkable before 2014 as 60 crore people did not have bank accounts due to corruption and other reasons," he said.

In the past few days, cyber awareness campaigns had been conducted in different parts of the country, including Jharkhand.

Mr. Shah said crimes such as malware attacks, phishing, attack on critical infrastructure and child pornography were not new and

Three Maoists killed in Balaghat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
RAIPUR

Three alleged Maoists, including a woman, were gunned down during an encounter with security forces in Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh on Monday.

According to State Home Minister Narottam Mishra, the slain left-wing extremists were collectively carrying a reward of ₹30 lakh on their head. The Hawk Force, the State's elite combat unit raised to tackle armed threats, was involved in the encounter, he said. The deceased have been identified as Nagesh, Manoj and Rame, the Minister said.

The police also claimed to have recovered an AK-47 rifle, a .303 rifle and a 12-bore action gun from the spot.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced out-of-turn promotion and gallantry award for the policemen involved in the encounter.



Amit Shah

these were going to only increase in the future. The number of cybercrimes registered in 2012 was 3,377 and in 2020, it had increased to more than 50,000 cases and by 2025, the crime rate was projected to go up by 231%.

11 lakh complaints

The cybercrime portal – cybercrime.gov.in – launched three years ago had so far received 11 lakh complaints, out of which more than two lakh pertained to social media.

He said there had been a 96% reduction in the price of Internet data in the past seven years and the more the rate fell, the more users would be connected to the Internet. He said till now \$1 trillion worth of transactions had been made through BHIM-UPI and the interface was gaining global reach.

Ashutosh Agnihotri, Joint Secretary, Cyber and Information Security, said the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre had seven components, including a 24/7 cybercrime reporting portal.

Nupur Sharma seeks time to appear before Kolkata police

As reason for her absence, she cited fear of possible attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Sacked BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma did not appear before the Narkeldanga police station here on Monday, though it had sent her notice on the basis of an FIR filed by a local resident over her controversial remarks against Prophet Muhammed, an officer here said.

Citing fear of "possible attack" on her, Ms. Sharma sent an email seeking four weeks' time for her appearance, the senior police officer said. "Nupur Sharma wrote to us to say that she will not be coming to Narkeldanga Police Station today. In the mail, she has cited her apprehension about possi-

ble attacks as reason for her inability to come today. She has sought at least four weeks' time for appearing before our officers," he said.

During the day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, speaking on a motion tabled in the West Bengal Assembly against the controversial remarks made by Ms. Sharma, said that provocative statements were being made to vitiate the atmosphere in the country.

"I don't want to name anyone as the matter is *sub judice*. Some people are deliberately making provocative statements to vitiate the atmosphere. I think those who have made such remarks should have been arrested long ago," she said.

The motion condemning the controversial remarks by Ms. Sharma was passed in the House. Ms. Sharma's comments, made during a TV debate, had sparked violent protests in several parts of the country.

Protests turned violent in West Bengal on May 26, with agitators blocking roads, vandalising public property and torching vehicles in Howrah district.

A complaint was filed before the Narkeldanga police station by a local person claiming that her comments caused the unrest. The Delhi Police provided security to Ms. Sharma and her family after an FIR was registered on a complaint that she was getting death threats.

Communist leader from Vietnam meets J.P. Nadda

Meeting was organised under 'Know the BJP' programme

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP's national headquarters in New Delhi had an unusual visitor on June 20 – Politburo member of the Communist Party of Vietnam and secretary of the Ho Chi Minh City party committee Nguyen Van Nen had an official meeting with BJP president J. P. Nadda.

India and Vietnam have had cordial relations for decades but the two ruling parties can be considered to be belonging to two ends of the ideological spectrum, and therefore Mr. Van Nen's visit is considered unusual.

According to sources, the guest displayed considerable curiosity over the structure of the party, its organisation, internal polls, how



J.P. Nadda with senior Communist Party leader of Vietnam Nguyen Van Nen.

members are recruited and trained, and how discipline is maintained by the party.

"There was a lot of inquisitiveness about how party cadres are organised, since communist parties world over are also cadre-based, he seemed curious about non-

communist cadre-based parties," the source said.

The meeting was organised under the "Know the BJP" programme that has seen several meetings, in groups, with envoys of various countries stationed in Delhi and even very high profile visits to the BJP headquarters by Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Singapore's Minister for Foreign Relations Vivian Balakrishnan.

BJP general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh and the party's foreign affairs cell convenor Vijay Chauthaiwal were present at the meeting. A statue of Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh will be unveiled on June 21 in front of that country's embassy in New Delhi.

Sonia Gandhi discharged from hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi was discharged from Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here on Monday and has been advised rest at home, the party said.

The hospital discharge comes barely three days before the Congress chief is scheduled to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case linked to the *National Herald* case.

It is not clear at this stage if Ms. Gandhi would seek another date or appear before the federal agency on June 23.

Originally summoned for questioning on June 8, she tested positive on June 2 and sought more time to appear.

Ms. Gandhi was admitted to the hospital on June 12 following COVID-related complications and bleeding from the nose.

Centre has with one stroke crushed our dreams, say Army aspirants

In Nawada, the first district in Bihar where protesters set the local BJP office on fire, there is a sense of betrayal and an uncertain future

AMARNATH TEWARY NAWADA

Under a huge banyan tree at a village ground in Nawada district, Sahil Kumar, 20, is one among the 30 Army aspirants mulling over the uncertain future that lies ahead of them ever since the Union government announced the Agnipath scheme for recruitment of soldiers into the armed forces.

"Life is meaningless now," he murmurs while lowering his head and fighting back tears.

For the past two-and-a-half years, he has been preparing for a job in the Army, running five km on the ground in the morning and four km on a nearby dry riverbed in the evening, every day. Being the only son of an agriculturist, Sahil says his father had big dreams for him and wanted to see him as an Army man. He too was working very hard, planning

to marry off his two younger sisters as an Army man. "But this government has crushed all my dreams with one stroke, I've lost sleep, lost interest in life," he says. His friends, who appear equally disheartened, try to console him.

Over 100 Army job aspirants from over a dozen surrounding villages practise every day at the village ground chasing their dream job.

Nawada is the first district in Bihar where protesters set the local BJP office on fire and attacked the local BJP MLA Aruna Devi's vehicle on June 16. Thousands of students preparing for the Army job and living in lodges in Nawada town had come out on the streets against the Agnipath scheme. They vented their ire on the local BJP office located on the outskirts of the town, ransacking the



Long road ahead: Aspirants to the armed forces training at a village ground in Nawada, Bihar. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

three-storey building and setting it ablaze. Even after three days, when *The Hindu* reached the party office on June 19, broken plastic chairs, tables, switch boards, burnt files, posters of party leaders and other furniture were lying strewn around.

"Luckily, there was no one in the office at that time, otherwise the protesters might have killed them. I reached here seeing columns of smoke billowing into the sky and informed the police and party leaders about the incident," said local BJP leader Vinay Kumar.

Now, three security personnel have been posted at the BJP office, which is without electricity, water, sanitation and other facilities.

The passion for an Army job is so intense among the aspirants that one of Sahil Kumar's friends, Sanjit Kumar, has affixed "Army Lover" before his name. Though Sanjit is 23 years old, he wants "a two-year relaxation in recruitment age as there was no vacancy in the Army in the last two years because of COVID-19". "We who come from such rural and poor background eat, dream and sleep thinking about an Army job," he says. "The sheer thrill of wearing the Army uniform makes us mad about the job. An Army job automatically earns you respect in society," he says. His friends Rohit and Mohit Kumar, both 21 years old and sons of marginal farmers,

too nod and say, "Unless the government withdraws this short-term scheme of Agnipath, we'll continue our protest in a peaceful manner".

Asked why trains and offices of a particular political party were being attacked and burnt down during the protests, one aspirant said, "It might be the handiwork of some anti-social elements masquerading as students. How can we who aspire to die for the nation, harm national property? Like the *kisan andolan* (farmer's protest), we'll continue our protest peacefully and force the government to relent."

"First we've to pass the physical test, then the medical test and finally the written exam," says Sahil Kumar, pointing out how difficult it is to get into the Army. In the physical test, aspirants have to pass the 1,600 metres

race, perform a long-jump of 12 feet and do pull-ups, he adds. "But the medical test is the toughest one," he says and most of the aspirants under the banyan tree agree.

However, speaking to *The Hindu*, a young IPS officer posted in Patna, who earlier served in the Air Force for seven years, suggested that the Central government should extend the four-year service tenure for Agnipath aspirants to at least seven years and provide them their graduation and Master's degree with provision of priority in other armed forces, either at the Centre or in the States.

"Most of the protesting students we've rounded up support this suggestion," he said.

(Names and location of aspirants have been changed as they fear police reprisal)

Joining Army voluntary, there is no conscription'

Union Minister slams Opposition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Union Minister and former Army chief General V.K. Singh (retd.) has said that joining the Army is voluntary and there is no conscription. The Opposition, particularly the Congress, is trying to mislead the youngsters.

"Joining the Army is voluntary and not a compulsion. If any aspirant wants to join, he can join as per his will, we don't conscript soldiers. But if you don't like this recruitment scheme [Agnipath] then don't come [to join]. Who is asking you to come? You are burning buses and trains. Who told you that you will be recruited into the armed forces. You will be selected only if you fulfil the eligibility criteria," the Minister told presspersons on the sidelines of an event in Nagpur on Sunday.

Gen. Singh said the Opposition, particularly the Congress, was trying to mislead the youngsters. "They want to create unrest in the coun-



General V.K. Singh (retd.)

try to defame the government," he said.

The Union Minister slammed the comments by Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on the Agnipath scheme. "The Congress is upset because Rahul Gandhi is being questioned by the Enforcement Directorate. Hence, the party finds fault with even the best of the best work of the government," he said.

He said the concept of short tenure was proposed by the Kargil review committee.

The Army was neither an employment agency nor a company or a shop and people join out of their interest to serve the nation.

Cong. leaders meet President to seek withdrawal of Agnipath

Delegation urges him to look into police excesses, misuse of Central agencies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

As former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday was being questioned for the fourth day by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case linked to the *National Herald* newspaper, the Congress held a satyagraha at Jantar Mantar to protest against the Centre's misuse of government agencies to carry out political vendetta against Opposition leaders and the Delhi Police's alleged mishandling of Congress leaders without any provocation during protests that were recently organised against the Agnipath scheme.

On Monday, Mr. Gandhi was summoned again by the federal agency, clocking more than 40 hours of questioning. Congress leaders marched from Parliament House to the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and a seven-member delegation handed over two separate memoranda to



Making a point: Congress leaders at a satyagraha held in Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, on Monday. *SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

President Ram Nath Kovind.

One of them demanded the rollback of the Agnipath scheme, while the other pertained to the Delhi Police committing excesses such as forcibly entering the All India Congress Committee headquarters and beating up members of Parliament (MPs) without provocation.

"We have requested the President as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces to protect the Constitution, protect the security and defence of this country, protect the traditions and ethos of the Army, Navy and Air Force and to ensure that those who offer to join the

defence forces are not left high and dry after four years," former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram told reporters. Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, the party's leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel, senior leaders K.C. Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh and Mr. Chidambaram were part of the delegation.

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and the party's leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, were

part of the delegation who went to meet President Kovind.

The petition regarding the Delhi Police has urged the President to refer it to the Privileges Committees immediately and suggested that "the Committee begin a time-bound enquiry on breach of privilege".

At the satyagraha at Jantar Mantar, senior Congress leader Subodh Kant Sahai courted controversy by stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "behaving like Adolf Hitler and will die like Hitler" if he follows the path of the German dictator.

Distancing itself from the comments, the Congress's communication chief Jairam Ramesh tweeted that the Congress would keep on fighting against "the dictatorial approach and anti-people policies of the Modi government but it would never endorse any indecent comments against the Prime Minister".

Lawyer moves Supreme Court against scheme

'Scheme will harm nation as a whole'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A public interest litigation (PIL) petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Monday challenging the Agnipath scheme, saying the recruitment to the armed forces under the scheme will cause "serious injury" to citizens, the institution of the armed forces and the country as a whole.

The petition filed by advocate M.L. Sharma urged the Supreme Court to declare the scheme notification issued by the Ministry of Defence on June 14 as "illegal, unconstitutional and ultra vires" the Constitu-

tion. "On June 14, contra to the constitutional provisions, without having approval in Parliament and without any gazette notification, the respondent [government] quashed century-old Army selection process and imposed the Agnipath scheme for recruitment in all three armed forces divisions and declared to start it from June 24, 2022," the petition said.

The lawyer said the armed forces could not discriminate with a policy that dropped 75% of those inducted after four years' service without even the provision of pension.

EC deletes 111 'non-existent' parties from list

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Monday ordered the deletion of 111 registered unrecognised political parties that it found to be "non-existent" and referred three of the parties to the Department of Revenue for legal action for "serious financial impropriety", an EC statement said.

This was the second such action in the recent past against registered parties that have been found violating the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

On May 25, the EC deleted 87 non-existent registered unrecognised political parties.

Letters returned

The EC said the 111 parties in question had violated sections of the Act that required them to submit their address of communication and any change in address to the EC. "CEOs have reported that these RUPPs either have been found to be non-existent on verification or the letters issued by them, in pursuance to the Commission's order dated May 25, have returned undelivered by the postal department," the EC said.

The EC said if any of the parties were aggrieved by its decision, they should approach the Chief Electoral Officer concerned or the EC within 30 days along with evidence of existence, year-wise annual audited accounts, contribution report, expenditure report and other required documents.

"Further, a reference has also been sent to the Department of Revenue for necessary legal and criminal action against three RUPPs involved in serious financial impropriety," the EC said.

Vedanta Group puts up copper plant for sale

It has invited expression of interest

P. SUDHAKAR SANGEETHA KANDAVEL THOOTHUKUDI/CHENNAI

In a surprising move, the Vedanta Group has invited expression of interest for its Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi, which has been under lock and key since 2018 amid protests from the local people and a police firing.

"Vedanta, in conjunction with Axis Capital, invites expressions of interest for the sale of its copper plant along with its other units, which includes the smelter complex (primary and secondary), sulphuric acid plant, copper refinery, continuous copper rod plant, phosphoric acid plant, effluent treatment plant, captive power plants, reverse osmosis units, oxygen generation unit and residential complex," the company said in an advertisement on Monday. The last day to submit the EOI is July 4, 2022.

The Thoothukudi plant has an installed capacity of 4,00,000 Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) at the integrated copper smelter and refinery, with another 4,00,000 MTPA under expansion. When the plant was operational it provided employment to over 5,000 people and to another 25,000 indirectly through the value chain. It also produced approximately 40% of India's demand for copper and contributed around ₹2,500 crore to the exchequer; 12% of the Thoothukudi port's revenue; and 95% of the market share for sulphuric acid in Tamil Nadu. The company claimed that Vedanta was committed to the



Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi. *FILE PHOTO

State and its people with the aim to contribute towards its development and revenue and employment generation.

The announcement came as a surprise because in the last few years officials from Sterlite Copper have been meeting several people and insisting that closing the plant, selling the plant or moving away from T.N. was not on cards. Sources in Thoothukudi said no one was aware of the move to sell it till now. The company spokesperson later sent out a message which said: "The Tuticorin plant is a national asset which has been catering to 40% of our national demand of copper and has played an integral role towards India's self-sufficiency in copper. In the best interest of country and the people of T.N., we are exploring options to make sure that the plant and the assets are best utilised to meet the growing copper demand."

Since the closure, the plant has been incurring a loss of ₹5 crore a day. The company officials recently said that around ₹800 crore-₹1,000 crore would be required to revamp the plant, if and when the permission for its reopening came.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail : ceworldbankprojects@gmail.com
2nd Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. CE-W.B.P.(O) - 03 / 2022-23
The tender invited for the work at (SI No.04) Construction of H.L.Bridge over Power Channel at 6-250km of Gosala - Mundoghat road in the District of Sambalpur under State Plan for the year 2022-23, Tender ID No.2022_EICCL_77287_4 is hereby cancelled.
All other terms and conditions remain unchanged
B-295: Chief Engineer, World Bank Project, Odisha OIPR-34003/1/0021/2223

ARULMIGU MARIAMMAN TEMPLE, SAMAYAPURAM, TRICHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT - 621 112.
Telephone No.0431 - 2670460 E-Mail : symmariamman@gmail.com
Ref No. 12984/1431/C4 Public Auction / Tender Notice Dated : 18.06.2022
Public Auction / Tender for the collection of loan secured hair of devotees of Arulmigu Mariamman Temple Samayapuram, and its sub temple Arulmigu Adhi Mariamman Temple, Inam Samayapuram, Trichirappalli District, Tamil Nadu, for Fasali 1432 (06.08.2022 to 30.06.2023) will be conducted on 08.07.2022 at 11.30 am Mariamman Mandapam, First floor in Master plan Complex Samayapuram as follows
1. Cost of Tender Form Rs.500/- (Not Refundable)
2. Auction / Tender Deposit amount Rs. 50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakhs Only)
3. Date of issue of Tender forms 22.06.2022 to 07.07.2022 upto 5.45 PM (Between 10.00 AM to 5.45 PM) office working days
4. Last date for submission of Tender 08.07.2022 till 11.00AM
5. Date of Public Auction 08.07.2022 11.30 AM
6. Date and Time of opening the Tender After Public Auction as in column 5
7. Place of Tender opening Mariamman Mandapam First floor (Master Plan Complex) Samayapuram.
Tender forms and Auction / Tender conditions can be had from the temple office during office hours and also from the following website: https://samayapurammariamman.hrcce.in.gov.in S.Kalyani.M.L., Joint Commissioner/Executive Officer/ Fit Person.

NOTICE INVITING BID Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL)
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751001
Tel.:(0674) 2380950; Website: www.osmcl.nic.in; Email: drugs-osmcl@gov.in
Bid Ref. No. OSMCL/2022-23/DRUGS-VETERINARY/14 Date : 20/06/2022
Online Bids through e-Tender portal (https://tendersodisha.gov.in) are invited from eligible bidders for Supply of Veterinary Items as per the particulars mentioned below:
Sl. No. Particulars Date and time
1. Date & time of release of bid 20/06/2022, 3 PM
2. Date & time for submission of queries by E-Mail id - drugs-osmcl@gov.in 23/06/2022, up to 5:00 PM
3. Date & time of Online bid submission Start Date & Time End Date & Time
29/06/2022, 3 PM 19/07/2022, 6:00 PM
4. Date & Time for submission of Tender Documents, Tender Document Fee of tender document. 20/07/2022, 10 AM 27/07/2022, 11.00 AM
5. Date & time of Online Technical bid Opening 27/07/2022, 11:30 AM
6. Date of opening of Price Bid To be informed to the qualified bidders
The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: www.osmcl.nic.in and https://tendersodisha.gov.in. The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.
SD/- Managing Director, OSMCL Ltd., Odisha CAD-857 OIPR-10112/11/0021/2223

Central University of Himachal Pradesh Dharamshala, District Kangra, HP-176215
Civil Services Examination (UPSC) 2023 Free Coaching for SC Candidates
The Central University of Himachal Pradesh invites Online Applications for admission to its Free Coaching for Civil Services Examination (UPSC) both Prelims & Mains- 2023 to the SC Candidates under Dr. Ambedkar Centre of Excellence (DACE) initiated by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India. Interested candidates can apply for admission through the University portal https://cuhimchaladmission.samarth.edu.in. The last date of receiving the application along with relevant documents is 24th June, 2022.
REGISTRAR

Central University of Himachal Pradesh (Established under Central Universities Act, 2009)
Employment Notice No. 001/2022, Dated 15.06.2022 for TEACHING POSITIONS
Central University of Himachal Pradesh invites online applications from eligible candidates for various teaching positions to be filled on regular/contract (against lien vacancy) basis. The Candidates may apply online from 15.06.2022. Last Date 14.07.2022. For further details please visit University Website i.e., www.cuhimachal.ac.in
REGISTRAR

REGIONAL DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING) OFFICE
No.7, Daniel Thomas Nagar, Thanjavur - 613 007.
TAMILNADU - INDIA Ph: 04362-274855
SITES FOR SALE
1. ZC 104 Mannargudi Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.,
2. T 322 Pattukottai Cooperative Building Society Ltd.,
3. T 1391 Arulanandha Nagar Little Flower Cooperative Building Society Ltd.,
4. T 1391 Prathabashimapuram Cooperative Building Society Ltd.,
5. T 490 Sivajipuram Cooperative Building Society Ltd., (Liquidation)
6. Z 137 Thiruvurur Cooperative Housing Society Ltd., (Liquidation)
7. Z 3 Mayuram Cooperative Building Society Ltd., (Liquidation)
8. Z 557 Nagappattinam Cooperative Housing Society Ltd., (Liquidation)
9. ZB 102 Mayuram Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.,
Applications are invited through e-Tender Cum Auction for the sale of vacant sites plots owned by the above cooperative societies. The detailed particulars are available by the following web site
https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgp/app
Authorised Sale Committee

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI TIRUPATI DISTRICT e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
Office of the Chief Engineer Adv.No.17/03/CE/TTD/2022-23 Date: 18-06-2022
e-tenders invited on e-procurement of the following work of TTD Engineering Dept.
NIT No. Name of the work Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs & Time for completion Schedule Download Start Date End Date & Last Date for bid submission
1 2 3 4 5
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-I
28/ SE-1/ TTD/ 2022- 23 Procurement of 1 Gram 22 Carat Gold Mangalasutrams of 10,087 Nos. for Kalyanasastu programme 2022 Open Tender 20 Days 22-06-2022 5.00 p.m. 07-07-2022 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.
Note: For full details log on to the website
https://tender.approcurement.gov.in/ or https://www.approcurement.gov.in/
Roc.No.PR/13943/Adv.No.92/PRO/2022, Dated:20-06-2022 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Nine of a family found dead in Sangli

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PUNE

Nine members of a family were found dead in their house in Sangli district of western Maharashtra on Monday.

According to the authorities, the bodies were found in two different locations at Mhaisal in Sangli Miraj taluk. While the cause of the tragedy has yet to be ascertained, the police suspect it to be a case of "collective suicide".

A senior district police official said the bodies were of two brothers (a veterinary doctor and a teacher) and their mother, wives and children.

The deceased are believed to have consumed a poisonous substance. Authorities said they were probing whether this was a "suicide pact".

(Those who require assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts may contact Sanjivini Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-4076 9002 (10 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., Monday-Saturday).

Central Vista Avenue will be opened in a few days, says Puri

Closed from February 2021, the area is being thrown open after redevelopment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Central Vista Avenue is set to open in the next few days after remaining closed to the public since February 2021 for redevelopment, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri said on Monday.

At the launch of the National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN) to train one lakh construction workers, he said: "In spite of heavy rain and all impediments, Central Vista Avenue will be opened in a few days."

The area, which is popular with Delhiites and visitors alike, was briefly unveiled for the Republic Day parade, but was barricaded again after January 26 as portions of the redevelopment project were yet to be completed. The project was to have been completed in November 2021.

Mr. Puri said the Pragati Maidan integrated transit



Changing face: Work in full swing on the new Parliament building complex under the Central Vista redevelopment project in New Delhi on June 9. •R.V. MOORTHY

corridor was an example of a project completed within a stipulated time.

Referring to a visit by Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister and Public Works Department Minister Manish Sisodia in March, Mr. Puri said: "We have a very senior leader in Delhi who somehow came to know a month ago that the project is complete

so he made a visit and got his photo clicked. In Punjab, in one month alone, he spent ₹18 crore or ₹20 crore on advertisements."

Mr. Puri said the ₹930 crore project was supposed to be funded 80% by the Centre and 20% by the Delhi government. He said he had asked Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Manoj Joshi,

"Was that 20% forthcoming?", adding, "I don't need to answer it because you know." "We have world-class mohalla clinics which collapse in the pandemic... You have people going to the UN to talk about world-class health and education, but whereas those of us who live here know what this is all about," he said.

11 persons stuck in cable car in Himachal Pradesh rescued

Ropeway developed a snag after it moved from the hilltop

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

All the 11 persons who were stranded mid-air on a ropeway (cable car) in the "Timber Trail" hotel in Parwanoo district of Himachal Pradesh on Monday were rescued.

The cable car reportedly developed a snag after it moved from the hilltop and the travellers – six men and five women – got stuck around 11 a.m., according to the State's Emergency Operation Centre.

A rescue team of the hotel and National Disaster Response Force personnel conducted the evacuation.

"We will look into the incident. A safety audit would be conducted," Kritika Kulari, Deputy Commissioner (Solan), told *The Hindu*.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, who reached the spot, said an inquiry had been ordered.

He said steps would be taken to prevent such incidents.



Hanging by a thread: Rescue on after a cable car got stuck mid-air at Parwanoo in Himachal Pradesh on Monday. •PTI

'Muslim girl above 15 years can marry'

High Court cites Muslim personal law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has held that a Muslim girl above 15 years of age is competent to enter into a contract of marriage with a person of her choice.

Justice Jasjit Singh Bedi's assertion came during a petition filed by a Muslim couple, who fell in love and solemnised their marriage on June 6, 2022, as per Muslim rites and ceremonies. Both the petitioners in Punjab's Pathankot had approached the High Court seeking protection of life and liberty from the respondents, including family members.

Competent to marry

Pointing out that the marriage of a Muslim girl is governed by the Muslim personal law, Justice Singh stated, "...As per Article 195 from the book *Principles of Mohammedan Law* by Sir Dinshah Fardunji Mulla, the petitioner No. 2 (girl) being over 16 years of age was competent to enter into a contract of marriage with a person of her choice. Petitioner No. 1 (boy) is stated to be more than 21 years of age. Thus, both the petitioners are of marriageable age as envisaged by the Muslim Personal Law."

In his order on June 13, Justice Singh, however, pointed out that the issue in the case was not with regard

to the validity of the marriage but to address the apprehension raised by the petitioners of danger to their life and liberty at the hands of the private respondents and to provide them protection. He directed the Senior Superintendent of Police, Pathankot, to decide the representation of the petitioners and take necessary action as per law.

Address apprehension "...The court cannot shut its eyes to the fact that the apprehension of the petitioners needs to be addressed. Merely because the petitioners have got married against the wishes of their family members, they cannot possibly be deprived of the fundamental rights," Justice Singh said.

The petitioner's counsel contended that in Muslim law, puberty and majority were one and the same and that there was a presumption that a person attained majority at the age of 15 years.

Australia seeks to revitalise Indo-Pacific ties

Deputy PM on a three-day visit, says New Delhi is one of Canberra's closest security partners

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

India is one of Australia's closest security partners and the government is focused on revitalising Australia's historically deep engagement with our partners across the Indo-Pacific, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Australia Richard Marles said ahead of a visit to India. The visit is scheduled from June 20 to 23.

This is the first high-level visit from Australia after the formation of a new government under Prime Minister

The rules-based international order that has brought peace and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific for decades is experiencing pressure, as we face shifts in the geostrategic order. Australia stands ready to work closer with India in support of an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific

RICHARD MARLES
Defence Minister of Australia



Anthony Albanese in May, just two days before the Quad leaders summit in Tokyo where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Defence and security

cooperation between India and Australia has significantly expanded in the past few years both at bilateral and multilateral levels. "The rules-based interna-

ional order that has brought peace and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific for decades is experiencing pressure, as we face shifts in the geostrategic order," Mr. Marles said in a statement issued by the Australian Defence Ministry.

"Australia stands ready to work closer with India in support of an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific".

Noting that India and Australia are comprehensive strategic partners, Mr. Marles said he was committed to strengthening Australia's defence and security cooperation with India. "I am look-

ing forward to meeting with my counterpart, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and holding our first bilateral Defence Ministers' meeting."

"Minister Singh has been instrumental in advancing India-Australia defence ties and I look forward to working with him to enhance the defence pillar of our comprehensive strategic partnership," he further added.

During the visit, Mr. Marles is also scheduled to meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and engage national security and defence policymakers.

IIT-Madras to set up 5G test bed for Army

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, along with the Army Training Command (ARTAC), will establish a 5G test bed at the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering in Indore to facilitate the use of 5G technology for the Army along the borders.

Lt.Gen. M.U. Commandant, MCTE, on behalf of the Army Training Command, Shimla, and Institute Director V. Kamakoti signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday.

Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering, who is heading the programme, said, "The project would enable students and trainees at the college to be thoroughly familiar with the advanced technologies embedded in the 5G system. It is an example of how the 5G test bed developed with support from DoT to enable Indian companies and startups to test their products, can also be successfully leveraged for other productive purposes," he said.

The collaboration would provide an impetus to the induction of systems, devices and equipment using niche technology and use of AI-based algorithms for enhancing capabilities of the Indian armed forces.

CBI nabs Joint Drugs Controller in bribe case

He had allegedly taken ₹4 lakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The CBI on Monday apprehended Joint Drugs Controller S. Eswara Reddy for allegedly receiving a ₹4-lakh bribe to waive phase-three clinical trial of insulin Aspart injection, an underdevelopment product of Biocon Biologics, officials said.

After getting inputs about an exchange of bribe, the CBI registered a case of criminal conspiracy and corruption against Mr. Reddy, posted at the CDSCO headquarters, Dinesh Dua, director at Synergy Network In-

dia Private Ltd., and others. The CBI, which was working on the input for over a month, carried out a raid and Mr. Dua was caught giving the bribe to Mr. Reddy of the total promised amount of ₹9 lakh on behalf of Biocon Biologics, a subsidiary of Kiran Majumder Shaw-led Biocon, officials said.

The CBI alleged that the regulatory work of Biocon was looked after by Guljit Sethi of Bioinnovat Research Services. Bioinnovat and Synergy Network have business dealings; so Mr. Dua agreed to pay the bribe.

Women's body notice to Indian Bank for discriminatory norms

Pregnant women not allowed to join service immediately

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Monday issued notice to Indian Bank over media reports that it has framed new guidelines preventing women who were more than three months' pregnant from joining service after being selected through due process.

"The Commission has learnt that the Bank has allegedly framed rules which state that if a woman candidate is three months' preg-

nant, then she would be considered as 'temporarily unfit' and would not be given immediate joining upon her selection. This will lead to delay in their joining and subsequently they will lose their seniority," the notice said.

The DCW said the action appeared to be discriminatory and illegal as it was contrary to the maternity benefits provided under the Code of Social Security, 2020.

"Further, it discriminates on the basis of sex which is

against the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India," the notice read.

The DCW asked the bank to provide its response by Thursday. The panel also wrote to the Reserve Bank of India on Monday asking RBI governor Shaktikanta Das to intervene. The DCW pointed out that this was the second bank to do so, after State Bank of India framed similar rules earlier this year but later withdrew after facing a backlash.

THE CROSSWORD + 13588 (set by Bruno)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site @ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

13 Currency of world body impounded by Shell (5)
14 Red, uncut rocks sold at a loss (8)
16 Paid money to fry dead flies with hint of elaiichi (8)
18 Mug of German scientist – not #1 in Germany (5)
20 Boycott ate English vegetable (4)
21 Inmate gang stole artwork that was smuggled (10)
23 Car company overcame struggle to advance (7)
24 Puerto Rico's gold taken at America at a certain rate (3,4)
25 Order Scottish dress to put on Queen (6)
26 Furniture of St. John returned to archives, finally (6)

Down
1 1-0 United? (2,3)
2 State's valuation – excluding crude oil – sadly unsatisfactory (7)
3 Check date and year represented by stock market event (6,3)
5 Overturn Union and wait for judgment (5)
6 Somewhat slow GE – a rival's found a way to accelerate (3,4)
7 Extra dubious opportunity that can get you some money (3,6)
10 Unemployed communist worker staging dhurna often (9)
13 Pizza at church office – paid by the slice? (9)
15 Animal from river tasted er... awful (6,3)
17 Regeneration of kidneys infected with tapeworm in the middle (7)
19 Ban half of poem – ban essay (7)
21 Abuse of drugs, finally overcome by medicine (5)
22 Attack overturned records (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13587

P	U	R	E	A	N	D	S	I	M	P	L	E	
N	N	I	P	U	E								
O	P	T	I	C	O	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	S
N	U	O	R	D	H	T	U						
T	O	N	G	U	E	T	I	E	D	D	A	M	P
H	E	R	R	M	R	E							
E	N	D	G	A	M	E	A	N	D	E	R		
B	U	N	G	L	E	A	R	N	I	N	E	P	I
T	U	O	P	T	I	E							
T	U	R	F	L	I	T	E	R	A	T	U	R	E
O	A	E	N	I	G	N							
N	I	C	K	N	A	C	K	S	N	O	S	E	D
A	I	E	U	E	I								
C	O	N	D	E	S	C	E	N	D	I	N	G	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Lesson from Rasa leela

Many of the episodes in the Bhagavata Purana can be interpreted as illustrative of the deeper and esoteric meanings in the Bhagavad Gita, said Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse. For instance, the underlying aim in the Rasa leela episode is to explain the realised state as one wherein true bhakti and jnana merge to become a singular quality of the experience of God. The Lord describes this state in the Gita: "The jnani, the one with discrimination, is continually united with Me. He is always devoted to Me and to no other. I am very dear to that person and he is dear to Me."

In the Rasa leela episode, the Gopis are shown to be engrossed in love sports with God and are immersed in limitless joy. Each one feels she is exceptional and so Krishna has chosen her as His companion. They are devastated when Krishna suddenly leaves them. They reveal their state of mind and console themselves with the surmise that the Lord has disappeared with one among them who is obviously more special to Him. They feel that she is a cut above all of them and Vyasa uses the phrase 'anaya araaditho noonum,' in this context. When roughly translated, it means, 'very devotedly worshipped by her.' He has chosen to be with her only because she has selfless devotion to Him.

She represents the realised state of a jnani in whom the intrinsic power of the Lord coexists with transcending bhakti. She is a symbol of jnana and is His very essence. In that state, there is no room for self importance or pride. The Lord's intention is to make all of them reach that state of a jnani. With the separation from the Lord and the consequent experience of extreme viraha tapa, the Gopis overcome their ahankara and repent. They are united with the Lord by His Sankalpa.

'Unresolved national question impaired Sri Lanka's economic progress'

Addressing the long-pending demand of Tamils for self-determination will allow Sri Lanka to project a new image internationally, says the senior Tamil leader

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Addressing Sri Lanka's Tamil national question is imperative for the island nation's recovery from the crushing economic crisis it is facing, veteran Tamil leader R. Sampanthan said, contending that the unresolved issue had proved a major impediment for the country's economic progress since Independence.

Speaking to *The Hindu* recently, the 89-year-old Parliamentarian recounted the many historic opportunities that the Sri Lankan leadership missed, allowing the ethnic conflict to fester, and push the country into a protracted civil war. While corruption, misgovernance, and skewed priorities have led to Sri Lanka's current economic collapse, years of

strife amid unfulfilled demands of the Tamil people impaired the country's economic progress, he said, drawing links between the island nation's worsening economic crisis and its long-pending political question.

An economic crisis brewing over the last couple of years aggravated in 2022, with Sri Lanka's foreign reserves dwindling amid a balance of payments crisis. The island nation has opted for a pre-emptive default on its nearly \$50 billion foreign debt, while citizens struggle to access essentials amid crippling shortages and record food inflation - 57.4% in May. Protesting citizens have blamed the ruling Rajapaksa administration for failing to arrest the rapid decline of an economy that was already fragile.

Referring to a longer arc of the island's history, Mr. Sampanthan said: "The unresolved Tamil question was the ground for the war that went on for about 30 years... colossal sums were spent on it. If not for the war, the country's economy would not have got to this situation."

United country
In his view, addressing the long-pending demand of Tamils for self-determination will allow Sri Lanka to project a new image internationally. "We can then show the world that we are a united country, where the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims - all communities can work together and build the country, through a Constitution that enables all the peoples of the country to exercise



R. Sampanthan

their sovereignty," Mr. Sampanthan said. "I don't see how our economy can improve without our conflict being resolved."

The civil war itself may have ended in 2009, but the conflict that led to it remains unresolved, he pointed out. "The reason for the war to

occur has not been resolved in all these years." In fact, there are new reasons for concern. "It is a matter of utmost concern that the Sri Lankan government has been able to change the demographics of the north and east by settling Sinhalese families in areas traditionally inhabited by the Tamils. The Tamils are being weakened," he said.

Unkept promises
In March this year, a delegation of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) that Mr. Sampanthan leads - it is the largest parliamentary group representing Tamils of the north and east - met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to discuss Tamils' concerns and prospects of a political solution through a constitutional settlement. Mr. Sam-

panthan, in a detailed letter to the President ahead of the meeting, had emphasised the need for a political solution. But the President's meeting, twice postponed and held on March 25, focused on four other areas that he said would be promptly addressed. He promised to look into the release of long-term detainees under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), prevent land grabs in the north and east by different state agencies, probe cases of enforced disappearances and establish special development fund for the north and east. The TNA awaits action on all four areas.

"At that time, Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris told us that the draft [Constitution] would be ready in two weeks. I have serious doubts

if it will ever come," Mr. Sampanthan said.

Prior to that, the TNA submitted its proposals for a new Constitution.

Commenting on President Gotabaya's position on the issue, he said: "I don't think the President is unwilling to do the right thing. Even if he is willing to do the right thing, it appears that others are preventing him from doing it. Sometimes, I have asked myself if President Gotabaya is impeded by some sources close to him from moving forward... I have not come to a conclusion, but I wonder if the clergy and the Army could be involved [in that]." All the same, whether President Gotabaya and his government will come up with a new Constitution "remains a matter of great doubt", the

Tamil leader said, adding: "which means that the country's main problem that started over 70 years ago, continues."

In this context, India has a "special duty", Mr. Sampanthan noted. The Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 was signed in July 1987, about 35 years ago and is "yet to be fully implemented". The Prime Minister of India offered India's good offices in 1983 and has been involved ever since then. In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Sri Lankan Parliament and spoke of his belief in "cooperative federalism", Mr. Sampanthan recalled.

"We should all come together and resolve the Tamil question. It will be in the best interests of Sri Lanka and India," he said.

Macron seeks way to salvage majority

His alliance won 245 seats, short of the 289 needed for majority; left and far-right parties make gains

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron and his allies on Monday were scrambling for a way out of political deadlock after losing their parliamentary majority in a stunning blow for the president and his reform plans.

Mr. Macron's Ensemble (Together) coalition emerged as the largest party in Sunday's National Assembly vote, but was dozens of seats short of keeping the parliamentary majority it had enjoyed for the last five years.

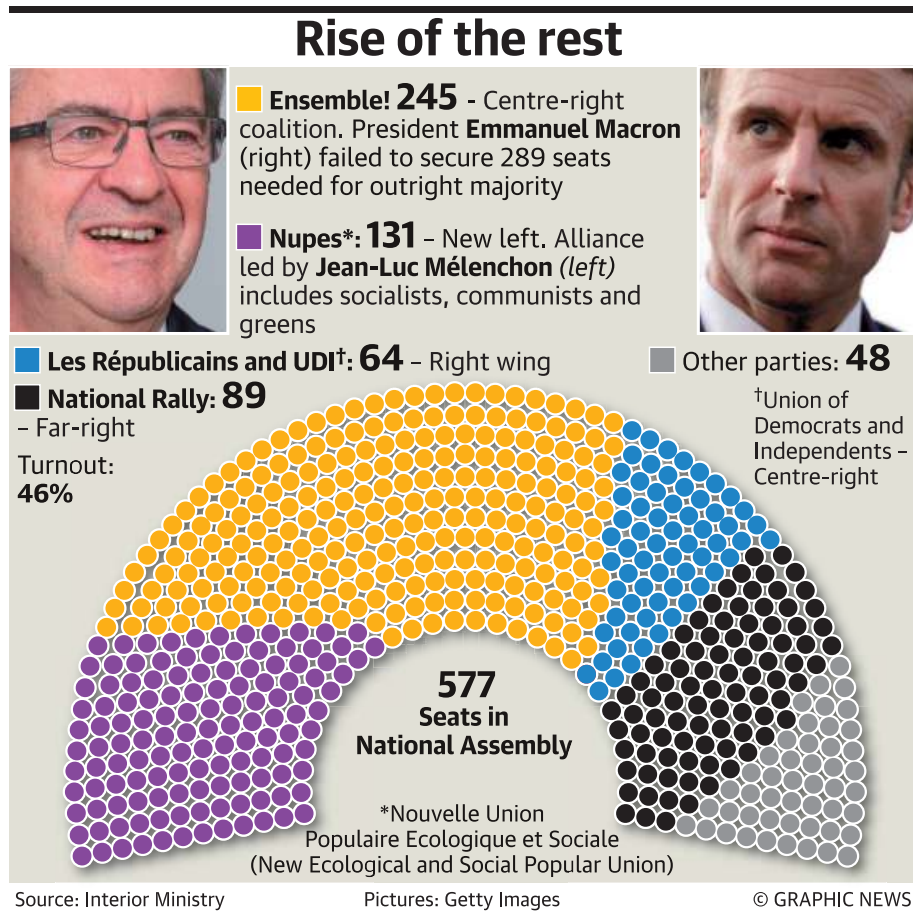
Surges on the left and the far-right destroyed the dominant position of Macron's deputies who, for the past five years, had backed the President's policies without fail.

The left-leaning *Liberation* daily called the result a "slap in the face" for Mr. Macron, while the conservative *Le Figaro* said he was now "faced with an ungovernable France".

Mr. Macron's Together alliance won 245 seats, far short of the 289 needed for an overall majority.

The election saw the new left-wing alliance NUPES make gains to become the main opposition force along with its allies on 131 seats, according to the Interior Ministry. But it is unclear if the coalition of Socialists, Communists, Greens and the hard-left France Unbowed will remain a united bloc in the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, the far-right under Marine Le Pen posted the best legislative perfor-



mance in its history, becoming the strongest single opposition party with 89 seats, up from eight in the outgoing chamber.

A confident Ms. Le Pen said her party would demand to chair the National Assembly's powerful finance commission, as is tradition for the biggest opposition party.

"The country is not ungovernable, but it's not going to be governed the way Emma-

nuel Macron wanted," Ms. Le Pen told reporters on Monday.

Ms. Le Pen said she would now give up her party's leadership and focus instead on running her parliamentary group.

No-trust motion
Left firebrand Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who leads the NUPES alliance, said he would bring a motion of no-confidence against Macron's

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne as early as July.

"The government formed by Emmanuel Macron cannot just continue as if nothing had happened," Mr. Mélenchon ally Manuel Bompard said Monday.

Ms. Borne, who was elected to Parliament in her first-ever political race, was seen as vulnerable as Mr. Macron faces a new Cabinet shake-up after several of his top allies lost their seats.

His health and environment Ministers lost their seats and by tradition will have to resign, as did the Parliament Speaker and the head of Mr. Macron's parliament group.

"For now, the Prime Minister remains the Prime Minister," government spokeswoman Olivia Gregoire defiantly told France Inter radio on Monday. "My fear is that the country is paralysed".

The outcome tarnished Mr. Macron's April presidential election victory when he defeated Ms. Le Pen, becoming the first French President to win a second term in over two decades.

The options available to Mr. Macron, who has yet to publicly comment on the result, range from seeking to form a new coalition alliance, passing legislation based on ad hoc agreements to even calling new elections.

The most likely option would be an alliance with the Republicans, the traditional party of the French right, which has 61 MPs. LR president Christian Jacob however said his party intended to "stay in opposition".

Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire admitted "a lot of imagination will be needed" from Mr. Macron's party in what *Le Figaro* said was "a jump into the unknown".

Mr. Macron had hoped to stamp his second term with an ambitious programme of tax cuts, welfare reform and raising the retirement age. All that is now in question.

Ex-guerrilla leader Petro elected Colombia's President

He will succeed deeply unpopular conservative Ivan Duque

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BOGOTA

Ex-guerrilla Gustavo Petro was elected the first ever left-wing president of Colombia on Sunday, after beating millionaire businessman Rodolfo Hernandez in a tense and unpredictable run-off election.

With all votes counted, Mr. Petro - the 62-year-old former Mayor of Bogota - won with 50.4% to Hernandez's 47.3%. "As of today, Colombia is changing, a real change that guides us to one of our aims: the politics of love... of understanding and dialogue," said Mr. Petro.

Mr. Hernandez, 77, accepted the result, in which he came up short by 7,00,000 votes, in a Facebook live broadcast.

"I hope that Mr. Gustavo Petro knows how to run the



Rise of Left: Gustavo Petro (left) and Franca Marquez after victory of second round election on Sunday. *REUTERS

country and is faithful to his discourse against corruption," said the construction magnate, who had made fighting graft his main campaign pledge.

Mr. Petro will succeed the deeply unpopular conservative Ivan Duque, who was barred by Colombia's Constitution from standing for re-election, in a country sad-

ded with widespread poverty, a surge in violence and other woes. Speaking to delirious supporters at his party headquarters in Bogota, Mr. Petro held out an olive branch to his opponents.

Mr. Duque on Monday promised a "transparent and efficient" transition to the new administration led by Gustavo Petro.

Israel headed for fresh elections

Bennett said that his weakened coalition will be disbanded

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office announced on Monday that his weakened coalition will be disbanded and the country will head to new elections.

The election, expected in October or November, would be Israel's fifth in three years. The election could also set the stage for a

return to power by longtime PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who is now the opposition leader. Mr. Bennett has struggled to keep his unruly coalition of eight parties together, and defections have left the crumbling alliance without a majority in parliament.

Mr. Bennett and his main coalition partner, Yair Lapid, decided to present a

vote to dissolve parliament, Bennett's office said. Mr. Lapid is then to serve as caretaker prime minister.

Mr. Bennett formed the eight-party coalition in June 2021. It included a diverse array of parties, from dovish factions that support an end to Israel's occupation of lands captured in 1967, to hardline parties that oppose Palestinian independence.

Hunt 'moderate Republicans': Senate runner

'Republicans in Name Only are surrendering to Joe Biden and radical Left'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

With former U.S. President Donald Trump's role in the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol being increasingly highlighted by a series of hearings at the House of Representatives, Republicans who are not supportive of Mr. Trump have faced threats to their lives and their families.

The latest example was a Twitter ad released on Monday by GOP Senate hopeful Eric Greitens, a former Rhodes Scholar and U.S. Navy SEAL, asking supporters to order "hunting permits" (stickers) for use on moderate Republicans.



Eric Greitens

"We are sick and tired of the Republicans in Name Only [RINO] surrendering to Joe Biden & the radical Left. Order your RINO Hunting Permit today!" the advertisement says, with a video showing men in fatigues [depicting SEALS] blasting

open the door of a house with automatic weapons, following which Mr. Greitens enters the house with a gun and asks people to join the MAGA crew (MAGA stands for 'Make America Great Again').

The stickers, which can be bought for a price, say, "Expires: When we save America."

Mr. Greitens, who faces a Republican primary election in early August (which will determine the party's candidate for the November mid-term election), had resigned from the post of Governor of Missouri in 2018, amid allegations of sexual assault and campaign finance violations.

Prior to joining the GOP, Mr. Greitens used to be a Democrat.

His ad, which received immediate criticism after it was posted, comes weeks after an 18-year-old murdered 19 children and two adults at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. "The modern Republican Party is a party of extremists and political violence, plain and simple. This is proof," said a tweet from the Lincoln Project, a political action committee that was created to prevent Mr. Trump's re-election.

Another reaction blamed House and Senate Minority (Republican) leaders for the problem.

Russia flays Lithuania transit ban

REUTERS
MOSCOW

The Kremlin on Monday called Lithuania's decision to ban the transit of some goods to Russia's Kaliningrad region 'unprecedented' and vowed to respond.

Lithuanian authorities banned the transit of goods which are sanctioned by the European Union across its territory, which includes the only rail route between mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad enclave on the Baltic Sea. Banned goods include coal, metals, construction materials and advanced technology.

Belgium gives Patrice's remains

REUTERS
BRUSSELS

Belgium handed over a tooth, the only known remains of the murdered Congolese independence hero Patrice Lumumba, to his family during a ceremony in Brussels on Monday.

Mr. Lumumba became

the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) first democratically elected PM after independence from Belgium in 1960, but alarmed the West with overtures to Moscow. His government lasted just three months before he was overthrown and assassinated.

'Same-sex marriage ban constitutional'

REUTERS
TOKYO

An Osaka court on Monday ruled that Japan's ban on same-sex marriage was not 'unconstitutional', dealing a setback to LGBTQ rights activists in the only Group of Seven nation that doesn't allow people of the same gender to

marry. Three same-sex couples - two male, one female - had filed the case in the Osaka district court, only the second to be heard on the issue in Japan. In addition to this, the court also threw out their demands for 1 million yen (\$7,414) in damages for each couple.

"This is awful, just awful," an unidentified female plaintiff said outside the courthouse in footage shown on public broadcaster NHK after the ruling, her voice cracking.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the plaintiffs planned to appeal.

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MARKET WATCH

	20-06-2022	% CHANGE
Sensex	51,598	0.46
US Dollar	77.98	0.08
Gold	50,735	-0.13
Brent oil	113.9	-

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	663.15	-5.80
Apollo Hosp	3811.70	110.45
Asian Paints	2660.70	80.50
Axis Bank	628.30	-6.90
Bajaj Auto	3615.95	-13.00
Bajaj Finserv	11709.65	-45.20
Bajaj Finance	5470.45	50.90
Bharti Airtel	640.90	-2.75
BPLCL	296.05	-4.95
Britannia Ind	3378.60	46.50
Cipla	925.85	11.10
Coal India	176.85	-5.80
Divis Lab	3533.55	51.60
Dr Reddys Lab	4151.80	5.10
Eicher Motors	2623.25	18.45
Grasim Ind	1316.00	25.95
HCL Tech	960.05	1.30
HDFC	2135.25	82.55
HDFC Bank	1322.15	32.40
HDFC Life	553.15	2.35
Hero MotoCorp	2452.55	-14.85
Hindalco	321.50	-12.20
Hind Unilever	2195.90	85.45
ICI Bank	685.95	-0.90
IndusInd Bank	784.05	-22.85
Infosys	1414.15	25.30
ITC	264.10	0.80
JSW Steel	550.35	-4.25
Kotak Bank	1679.20	5.60
L&T	1471.80	-18.15
M&M	982.70	-14.95
Maruti Suzuki	7660.95	-27.20
Nestle India Ltd.	16967.10	324.70
NTPC	137.25	-3.20
ONGC	134.40	-7.05
PowerGrid Corp	208.25	-3.10
Reliance Ind	2543.05	-46.95
SBI Life	1075.95	-6.15
State Bank	434.70	-6.30
Shree Cement	18414.00	368.25
Sun Pharma	805.30	11.90
Tata Consumer	716.85	5.20
Products Ltd.	382.70	-6.25
Tata Motors	860.70	-81.30
Tata Steel	3112.40	23.50
TCS	979.35	14.30
Tech Mahindra	979.35	14.30
Titan	1961.70	25.25
UltraTech Cement	5333.30	156.00
UPL	640.45	-24.70
Wipro	414.65	9.45

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 20

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	77.78	78.10
Euro	81.92	82.27
British Pound	95.31	95.71
Japanese Yen (100)	57.67	57.91
Chinese Yuan	11.63	11.68
Swiss Franc	80.77	81.14
Singapore Dollar	56.00	56.32
Canadian Dollar	59.82	60.09
Malaysian Ringgit	17.66	17.75
Australian Dollar	54.37	54.60

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Ashok Leyland unveils new ecomet CNG truck

CHENNAI Ashok Leyland Ltd. has rolled out ecomet STAR 1115 CNG truck in the 11.44 T gross vehicle weight category. The truck is powered by 144 HP turbocharged engine and comes with multiple CNG cylinder capacities. With this product, Ashok Leyland has strengthened its ICV CNG portfolio in the 11T CNG segment, the firm said.

ICICI Pru Life declares ₹968.8-cr. annual bonus

MUMBAI ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Ltd. has declared an annual bonus of ₹968.8 crore for FY2022 to all eligible participating policyholders. "This is the 16th consecutive year of bonus payment and also the highest-ever by the company till date, exceeding the FY2021 bonus by 12%," the company said in a statement. "We believe this bonus will enable our participating policyholders to move a step closer to their financial goals," said MD & CEO N.S. Kannan.

India faces near-term challenges: FinMin

Ministry flags upside risks to fiscal deficit target following cuts in excise duties on diesel, petrol

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India is facing near-term challenges in managing its fiscal deficit, sustaining economic growth, reining in inflation and containing the current account deficit but the country is relatively better placed to weather these headwinds compared with other nations, the Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic report.

Near-term challenges need to be managed carefully without sacrificing the hard-earned macroeconomic stability, the ministry said. "Many countries around the world, especially developed countries, face similar challenges. India is relatively better placed to weather these challenges because of its financial sector stability



Trying times: India must manage its fiscal deficit, curb oil-led inflation and contain the current account deficit. ■K.V.S. GIRI

and its vaccination success in enabling the economy to open up," it added. India's medium-term growth prospects remain bright as pent-up capacity expansion in the private sector is expected to drive capital formation and employment generation in the rest of this decade, it added. Observing that the capex budget for 2022-23 was expected to underpin growth, the ministry said an upside risk to the budgeted level of gross fiscal deficit had emerged following cuts in excise duties on diesel and petrol.

An increase in the fiscal deficit may cause the current account deficit to widen, compounding the effect of costlier imports, and weaken the value of the rupee thereby further aggravating external imbalances, creating the risk (low at this time) of a cycle of wider deficits and a weaker currency, it said. "Rationalising non-capex expenditure has thus become critical, not only for protecting growth-supportive capex but also for avoiding fiscal slippages. Depreciation risk to rupee, however, still remains as long as net Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) outflows continue in response to the increase in policy rates and quantitative tightening in advanced economies as they wage a prolonged battle to calm inflation," it said. The imported components of high retail inflation in India have mainly been elevated global prices of crude and edible oil, it said, adding the onset of the summer heat wave has also contributed to the rise in food prices domestically. However, going forward, it said, crude prices may be tempered as global growth weakens and the OPEC nations increase supply. The momentum of economic activities sustained in the first two months of the current financial year augurs well for India to continue to be the quickest growing major economy in 2022-23, the ministry added.

SEBI fines RIL for delayed Facebook deal disclosure

Levies fine of ₹3 mn on RIL, 2 officials

REUTERS
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Monday fined Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) and two of its compliance officers for violating fair disclosure norms during Facebook's \$5.7 billion investment in its digital unit. In April 2020, Meta's Facebook invested \$5.7 billion in RIL's Jio Platforms, aiming to allow WhatsApp to offer payments services to millions of small businesses. The deal helped billionaire Mukesh Ambani's RIL slash its heavy debt load.

Reliance abdicated its responsibility to verify and come clean on the information floating around

2020 published price-sensitive details about the imminent investment that led to a spike in its shares. "When the bits of (unpublished price-sensitive information) that then became selectively available the company abdicated its responsibility to verify and come clean on the unverified information that was floating around," SEBI said in its order late on Monday. The regulator imposed a penalty of ₹3 million (\$38,522) on Reliance and the two compliance officers.

Will buy stakes in IndiGo only from Bhatia: Qatar Air CEO

Al Baker's remarks cause as IndiGo's Gangwal looks to exit

JAGRITI CHANDRA
DOHA

Qatar Airways is not interested in buying a stake in IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation Ltd. from its co-promoter Rakesh Gangwal, who plans to sell his holdings in the budget Indian airline over the next five years, the Doha-based carrier's CEO Akbar Al Baker said on Monday.

"We will only buy something from Rahul [Bhatia], not from anyone else," Mr. Al Baker told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the International Air Transport Association's AGM in Doha.

'Good friend' The comments make it clear that Mr. Al Baker, who has



had an abiding interest in IndiGo, is not inclined to take advantage of the feud between the Indian airline's two promoters, Mr. Bhatia and Mr. Gangwal. The Qatar Airways' CEO is known to be close to Mr. Bhatia whom he has previously termed a "good friend".

In February, Mr. Gangwal resigned from InterGlobe Aviation's board and said

that he would be gradually offloading his stakes over the next five years.

Promoters' holdings

Mr. Gangwal, his wife Shobha and their family trust together hold 36.6% stake in the parent entity and Mr. Bhatia and his related entities own almost 38%.

Last year, InterGlobe Aviation's shareholders approved a change in the company's Articles of Association, which had until then offered the promoters the right of first refusal during a stake sale. The move paved the way for Mr. Gangwal to sell his holding without his co-founder's approval.

(The writer was in Doha at the invitation of IATA)

'Auto part firms' revenue may grow 8-10%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Auto ancillaries' revenues are expected to grow 8-10% in 2022-23 on the back of stable demand and likely easing of supply-chain concerns in the second half of the year, ICRA said.

At the same time, the sector's coverage metrics is also likely to remain comfortable in 2022-23, benefiting from healthy accruals and relatively low incremental debt funding requirements, ICRA said.

In FY22, 31 auto-part firms with cumulative revenue of more than ₹1.75 lakh crore grew 23% y-o-y in revenue, driven by original equipment manufacturers, replacement, export volumes and pass-through of commodity prices.

Maruti opens bookings for new Brezza at ₹11,000

New version to be unveiled by June end

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki on Monday opened bookings for the new version of its compact sport utility vehicle (SUV) Brezza, slated to be unveiled by month end, at ₹11,000.

The new Brezza will come with an electric sunroof, 6-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters, six airbags and ESP, and will be powered by the Next-Gen Smart Hybrid K-Series Engine, the carmaker said. "Maruti Suzuki Brezza took the Indian market by storm with its launch in 2016," said Shashank Srivastava, senior executive director (Marketing & Sales).

"With over 7.5 lakh units sold in just 6 years, Brezza commands a strong market



Shashank Srivastava

share in the compact SUV segment in the country," Mr. Srivastava added.

The entry of the new Brezza is expected to disrupt the already competitive compact SUV segment, which saw the unveiling of the Venue facelift from Hyundai last week.

Other strong competitors in the segment are Kia Sonet and Mahindra XUV 300.

DBS Bank buys 9.9% stake in Svakarma Fin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

DBS Bank India Ltd. said it had acquired a 9.9% stake in Svakarma Finance, a non deposit taking, non-banking finance company, for boosting the delivery of relevant financial solutions to micro enterprises.

"DBS Bank India's strategy for its expanded franchise across over 300 locations and over 500 branches envisages significant growth in SME and consumer businesses," the bank said in a statement.

DBS Bank India said it would continue to identify opportunities to support lending to micro enterprises in a cost-efficient manner through its own expanded franchise as well as through partners.

SRL Diagnostics charts ₹400-cr. growth plan

Firm to focus on tier-II, tier-III cities

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

SRL, the diagnostics arm of Fortis, has earmarked ₹400 crore for organic and inorganic growth, according to a top official.

"Currently, SRL has over 425 labs and 2,500 customer touchpoints and the plan is to set up another 70 labs and 1,000 touchpoints in tier-II and tier-III towns," CEO Anand K. said in an interview. "It would call for an investment of about ₹200 crore," he added.

While the new customer touchpoints are expected to come up before end FY23, it would take at least one more year to set up its own labs. Most of the funds for these activities would be met through internal accruals.

SRL is also setting aside another ₹200 crore for acquisitions. "We are actively



Anand K

scouting for firms and are presently evaluating about 20-25 firms," he said.

Asserting that preventive health check up would play a major role in the future, he said that the diagnostic firm would focus on setting up new labs and touchpoints in tier-II and tier-III cities, so as to be nearer to the patients.

"We are already present in major cities and towns across India. Moving to tier-II and tier-III cities is the next logical step," he said.

VIL may raise ₹500 cr. from Vodafone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Debt-ridden Vodafone Idea's board is scheduled to meet on June 22 to consider a proposal for raising funds of up to ₹500 crore from the Vodafone Group.

The fundraising will be through the issuance of equity shares or convertible warrants on a preferential basis to one or more entities belonging to Vodafone Group (one of the promoters of the company).

Over the last few months, Indian telecom operators have been adding more firepower to their arsenal as the market gears up for the roll-out of 5G services.

In March this year, Vodafone Idea's board had approved raising up to ₹14,500 crore, including ₹4,500 crore from the promoter entities - Vodafone and Aditya Birla Group.

Airline profitability within reach in '23, says IATA

Cites easing of travel curbs, strong pent-up demand, expanded personal savings

JAGRITI CHANDRA
DOHA

Profitability across the airline industry is "on the horizon" in 2023 due to the easing of travel restrictions, strong pent-up demand for travel, and expanded personal savings, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in its annual forecast. Airlines would, however, have to guard against a higher cost environment in the face of rising fuel prices, the industry group said.

Worldwide losses for the industry are expected to narrow to \$9.7 billion in 2022, an 'upgrade' from the earlier forecast of \$11.6 billion. The losses stood at \$137.7 billion in 2020 and \$42.1 billion in 2021.

"As the industry returns to more normal levels of pro-



Clear skies: Asia-Pacific will be the fastest growing region over the next two decades, says IATA's Walsh. ■REUTERS

duction, and with high fuel costs likely to stay for a while, profitability will depend on continued cost control. And that encompasses the value chain," said Director General Willie Walsh. "Our suppliers, including airports and air navigation service providers, need to be as focused on controlling costs as their customers to

support the industry's recovery," Mr. Walsh stressed at IATA's AGM in Doha, where CEOs of almost 108 global airlines had gathered.

'Asia-Pacific lags' Profitability around the world would be led by North America, which was expected to clock \$8.8 billion profit in 2022. For Asia-Pacific air-

lines, recovery had been lagging due to strict and enduring travel restrictions, particularly in China, along with an uneven vaccine roll-out, he said.

The demand in 2022 in this region was expected to reach 73.7% of 2019 levels, and aircraft capacity would reach 81.5%. Losses were likely to narrow down to \$8.9 billion, said Mr. Walsh.

Despite the slow recovery, Asia-Pacific would be the fastest growing region over the next two decades due to the favourable income growth and demographic factors and was expected to add about 2.5 billion additional passenger journeys per year by 2040, at an average annual rate of 4.5%, he added.

(The writer was in Doha at the invitation of IATA)

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Verstappen tightens grip on title race

The Dutchman pips Sainz in a riveting contest to widen his lead; Hamilton finishes on the podium

CANADIAN GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MONTREAL
Max Verstappen increased his lead in this year's Formula One title race on Sunday when he drove his Red Bull to a thrilling victory in a closely-fought Canadian Grand Prix.

The 24-year-old Dutchman controlled a tactical race from pole position through three safety car interventions and resisted intense late pressure from Ferrari's Carlos Sainz to win by under a second.

Seven-time World champion Lewis Hamilton, who on Friday declared his car as "undriveable", came home third for Mercedes to claim his second podium of a difficult season ahead of teammate George Russell in fourth.



Thrilling climax: Verstappen fended off Sainz to take the chequered flag for the first time in Canada. ■ AFP

46 points clear

It was Verstappen's first Canadian victory in his 150th career start, his sixth this year and 26th overall, hoisting him 46 points clear in the championship. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who started at the back of the grid after taking a penalty for a new engine, finished fifth ahead of Esteban Ocon of Alpine.

Valtteri Bottas and his Alfa Romeo teammate Zhou Guanyu were later promoted to seventh and eighth after Fernando Alonso, in an Alpine, was penalised five seconds for his defending against Bottas. The Spaniard slipped to ninth with Lance Stroll 10th for Aston Martin.

Sergio Perez suffered ill-luck on lap nine when, battling in midfield after starting 13th, his Red Bull lost drive at Turn 13. "I've lost the engine, man," he told the team as a Virtual Safety Car (VSC) was deployed.

A second VSC was deployed on lap 20, when Schumacher pulled up and retired at Turn 13 after his highest ever grid position of sixth. It appeared his Haas car had suffered a power failure.

Sainz also pitted, re-joining third ahead of Hamilton — with Verstappen back in the lead ahead of Alonso, who did not pit. Alpine's reluctance to pit Alonso, still on his original mediums, re-

sulted in Hamilton making an easy pass for third on lap 25. The two-time champion finally came in after 29 laps and re-joined eighth behind Leclerc, who was struggling on old tyres to pass Ocon.

By mid-distance, Verstappen led Sainz by 7.5 seconds with Hamilton third, a further nine seconds adrift.

Crash
With 20 laps to go, Yuki Tsunoda crashed his AlphaTauri at Turn Two and a full Safety Car was deployed.

Verstappen regained the lead, but faced a close scrap with the Spaniard when the action resumed, after a 10-minute delay, with a final dash to the flag.

THE RESULTS

1. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) 1:36:21.757s; 2. Carlos Sainz (Ferrari) at 0.993; 3. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 7.006; 4. George Russell (Mercedes) 12.313; 5. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 15.168; 6. Esteban Ocon (Alpine) 23.890; 7. Valtteri Bottas (Alfa Romeo) 25.247; 8. Zhou Guanyu (Alfa Romeo) 26.952; 9. Fernando Alonso (Alpine) 29.945; 10. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin) 38.222; 11. Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren) 43.047; 12. Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin) 44.245; 13. Alexander Albon (Williams) 44.893; 14. Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri) 45.183; 15. Lando Norris (McLaren) 52.145; 16. Nicholas Latifi (Williams) 59.978; 17. Kevin Magnussen (Haas) 1:08.180.

Fastest lap: Sainz 1:15.749s.

DNF: Sergio Perez (Red Bull), Mick Schumacher (Haas), Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri).

Standings: Drivers: 1. Verstappen 175 points, 2. Perez 129, 3. Leclerc 126, 4. Russell 111, 5. Sainz 102, 6. Hamilton 77, 7. Lando Norris 50, 8. Bottas 46, 9. Ocon 39, 10. Alonso 18, 11. Gasly 16, 12. Magnussen 15, 13. Ricciardo 15, 14. Vettel 13, 15. Tsunoda 11, 16. Guanyu 5, 17. Albon 3, and 18. Stroll 3; Schumacher, Hulkenberg and Latifi yet to score a point.

Constructors: 1. Red Bull 304 pts, 2. Ferrari 228, 3. Mercedes 188, 4. McLaren 65, 5. Alpine 57, 6. Alfa Romeo 51, 7. AlphaTauri 27, 8. Aston Martin 16, 9. Haas 15, and 10. Williams 3.

Lanka squad for India series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DAMBULLA

Sri Lanka on Monday announced a 19-member women's squad for the white-ball series, comprising three ODIs and as many T20Is, against India starting here from June 23.

Skipper Chamari Athapaththu will lead both the squads, which include vital players like Hasini Perera, Nilakshi de Silva, Oshadi Ranasinghe and Inoka Ranaweera.

Vishmi Gunaratne, who is yet to make her ODI debut for Sri Lanka, also finds a place in both squads.

The T20I series will be played between June 23 to 27 in Dambulla, followed by the ODI series, a part of the ICC Women's Championship

2022-25, in Pallekele between July 1 and 7.

The ODI series will see India play in its first match of the current ICC Women's Championship cycle.

It will be the beginning of a new era in ODIs for India, which will mark its first series after the retirement of influential skipper Mithali Raj.

The squad: Chamari Athapaththu (Capt.), Hasini Perera, Kavisha Dilhari, Nilakshi de Silva, Anushka Sanjeevani, Oshadi Ranasinghe, Sugandika Kumari, Inoka Ranaweera, Achini Kulasuriya, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Vishmi Gunaratne, Malsha Shehani, Ama Kanchana, Udeshika Prabodhani, Rashmi de Silva, Hansima Karunaratne, Kaushani Nuthyapanga, Sathya Sandeepani, and Tharika Sewwandi.



Athapaththu. ■ FILE PHOTO

Serena skips practice

She is scheduled to play doubles today

ASSOCIATED PRESS
EASTBOURNE

Serena Williams skipped her scheduled practice session at Eastbourne at late notice on Monday as the 23-time Grand Slam champion prepares to make her return to competition after a year away.

Serena trained at a nearby club over the weekend and was expected to have an onsite session at Devonshire Park ahead of playing doubles with Ons Jabeur.

Their first match is set for Tuesday against Sara Sorribes Tormo and Marie Bouzkova.

The 40-year-old Serena, who hasn't competed after getting injured in the first



Serena. ■ FILE PHOTO

round of Wimbledon last year, was awarded a wild card for singles at the All England Club.

Jabeur said it was "unbelievable" to have been asked by Serena to be part of her journey back to competition.

Daruvala to test McLaren F1 car

It will be part of the Testing of Previous Cars programme

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Indian racer Jehan Daruvala will realise his long-cherished dream of getting behind the wheel of a Formula One car when he tests the 2021 McLaren F1 car later this week at the Silverstone circuit in England.

The racer from Mumbai is part of the Red Bull Racing academy but will test for rivals McLaren with the blessings of the former.

"I am incredibly grateful to be getting this opportunity. Testing in Formula 1 is extremely limited and opportunities like these are not easy to come by, especially with a championship-winning team like McLaren. It will be my first experience in a Formula 1 car, which I'm sure will be special," said Daruvala.

This will be part of McLaren's Testing of Previous Cars (TPC) programme which is used to evaluate young drivers.

The McLaren test will give him a chance to show his potential behind an F1 car and marks an important step in the India racer's career.

Goal and preparation
Speaking about his goal and preparation, Daruvala explained, "My main aim is to learn as much as I can. It's tempting to go flat out from the beginning, but we have a programme to run through with short and



Dream-come-true: Daruvala will get behind the wheel of an F1 car for the first time in his career. ■ TWITTER@DARUVALAJEHAN

■ The 23-year-old is now competing in the F2 championship for Prema Racing. He is third in the standings and the top-placed Red Bull junior driver in the category

long runs. At the end of the day, I am a racing driver so I want to go as fast as possible and really enjoy myself."

"I have already had a few days in the team's simulator to get used to the switches and buttons on the steering wheel," he added.

The 23-year-old currently is competing in the F2 championship driving for Prema Racing. He is currently third in the drivers' standings and the top-placed Red Bull junior driver in the category.

Apart from Red Bull Racing, the energy drinks company runs another F1 team — AlphaTauri, where it usually places its young drivers if they are worthy of

a place on the F1 grid. However, it is unlikely that AlphaTauri is going to change its current drivers Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda, and there will be limited chances for Daruvala in F1 at the moment.

When asked if he would open for a third/reserve driver's role in F1 instead of competing in another championship, Daruvala said, "If I have a reserve role for next year with the possibility of a lot more seats opening up for 2024, then I will take it. I don't think it's that easy to get a full-time drive in a championship next year, so I think my sole focus is still trying to get into F1."

Delhi HC dismisses Manush and Swastika's petitions

TABLE TENNIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Manush Shah and Swastika Ghosh's writ petitions challenging their exclusion from the table tennis squads for the Commonwealth Games were dismissed by the Delhi High Court on Monday.

The two had approached the court after the Committee of Administrators (CoA), running the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI), had excluded them from the final CWG squad announced earlier this month.

"I was told by our lawyer that our case has been dismissed," said Manush's father

Utpal. The selectors did not include Manush in the men's team although he was in the top-four as per the criteria set by the CoA.

The squad included veteran Sharath Kamal, G. Sathyan, Harmeet Desai, and Sanil Shetty, with Manush on standby.

Swastika, 19, was named as a standby with the revised women's squad comprising Manika Batra, Diya Chitale, Reeth Rishya, and Sreeja Akula.

Archana's case
Archana Kamath, the second highest-ranked Indian player at 66th after Manika Batra (39th), too, has moved

the court after being dropped from the team for the Birmingham Games.

Her case is coming up for hearing on June 22 at Karnataka High Court.

Archana was initially included in the squad as an 'exception' as she did not meet the selection criteria laid down by TTFI, but was dropped by the CoA and Diya Chitale was brought in her place.

Interestingly, Chitale had also moved the court after being initially excluded from the squad.

The CWG is scheduled to be held between July 28 and August 8.

Player avoids Russia ban at Wimbledon

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

A women's doubles player who was born in Moscow will be able to get around the ban on Russians at Wimbledon this year because she now represents the country of Georgia.

Natela Dzalamidze, a 29-year-old who is currently 44th in the doubles rankings, is listed as being from Georgia on the WTA Tour website — and in Wimbledon's entry list for the tournament, which begins June 27. Dzalamidze will play with partner Aleksandra Krunic of Serbia.

"Player nationality, defined as the flag they play under at professional events, is an agreed process

that is governed by the Tours and the ITF (International Tennis Federation)," an All England Club spokeswoman said in an email to *The Associated Press* on Sunday.

The All England Club said in April it would not allow players from Russia or Belarus to compete at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament this year because of the war in Ukraine.

Russia, with help from Belarus, began attacking Ukraine in February.

The WTA and ATP professional tennis tours responded to the All England Club's ban by announcing they would not award ranking points to any players for results at Wimbledon.



One player, two nations: Dzalamidze, born in Moscow, has been listed as a Georgia player on the WTA website.

Fitzpatrick makes a spectacular finish

The Englishman wins his first Major; Scheffler, Zalatoris share second spot

US OPEN GOLF

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BROOKLINE

England's Matt Fitzpatrick captured his first Major title on Sunday by winning the US Open in dramatic fashion, making spectacular shots as rivals crumbled under final-round pressure.

After a thrilling three-man fight down the back nine at The Country Club, Fitzpatrick fired a two-under 68 to finish on six-under 274 and defeat Americans Scottie Scheffler and Will Zalatoris by one stroke.

After birdies by top-ranked Masters champion Scheffler on the 17th and Zalatoris on the 16th, Fitzpatrick clung to a one-stroke lead on the 18th.

The Englishman sent his tee shot into a left fairway bunker, but blasted a magnificent approach to 18 feet and two-putted for par. Zalatoris had a 14-foot birdie putt to force a playoff but when he missed, the record \$3.15 million top prize went to Fitzpatrick.

Matching Nicklaus

World No. 18 Fitzpatrick, who won the 2013 US Amateur here, matched Jack Nicklaus as the only US Open and US Amateur winners on the same course.

"It means the world," Fitz-



Sensational shot: Fitzpatrick blasts his way out of a bunker in the final round. ■ AFP

patrick said of the achievement.

Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, the 2021 Masters champion, fired the best round of the week, a bogey-free 65, to finish fourth on three-under 277.

Four-time Major winner Rory McIlroy and two-time Major champion Collin Morikawa shared fifth on 278, while second-ranked Spaniard Jon Rahm, the defending champion, shared 12th on 281 after a closing 74.

Scheffler fired a final-round 67 while Zalatoris, now a three-time runner-up in nine Major starts, and third-ranked McIlroy each closed on 69 and seventh-ranked Morikawa, the reigning British Open champion, shot 66.

Johnson best 'rebel'

From the 15 LIV Series players, only four made the cut. Two-time Major winner Dustin Johnson led the way, firing a 72 to finish on 284.

England's Richard Bland fired a 74 to finish on eight-over 288 with 2018 Masters winner Patrick Reed on 290 after a 74 and 2020 US Open winner Bryson DeChambeau on 293 after a 75.

Top scores: 274: Matt Fitzpatrick (Eng, 68, 70, 68, 68); 275: Scottie Scheffler (USA, 70, 67, 71, 67); Will Zalatoris (USA, 69, 70, 67, 69); 277: Hideki Matsuyama (Jpn, 70, 70, 72, 65).

278: Collin Morikawa (USA, 69, 66, 77, 66); Rory McIlroy (NIR, 67, 69, 73, 69).

A 'gorilla' off his back!

Caddie Foster a Major winner finally

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BROOKLINE

Billy Foster grabbed the flag on the 18th green, pulled it toward his face and gave it a kiss. Finally, that flag belongs to him.

After four decades of caddying for some of the greatest in the game, Foster has his Major title.

Matt Fitzpatrick's U.S. Open win Sunday also marked a breakthrough for one of the most popular loopers in the game. Among others, Foster has carried for Seve Ballesteros, Lee Westwood, Thomas Bjorn — even for Tiger Woods at the Presidents Cup one time — but had never been on the bag for a Major winner.

"Normally, people have a monkey on their back. I

had a gorilla," Foster said. "I can't even think about being excited. It was just 'pfffff.' What a relief!"

He'll get a nice cut of the winner's cheque. Winning caddies also traditionally bring home the flag on the 18th green.

"I can't tell you how much it means to Billy. It's unbelievable," Fitzpatrick said. "I know it's something he's wanted for a long, long, long time. To do it today is incredible."

Foster and Fitzpatrick connected shortly after the caddie and Westwood split in 2018. "He kept telling me the first time on the job, I'll just do 25 weeks and maybe get a fill-in for the others," Fitzpatrick said. "I think he's had about two weeks off in four years."



Joy unbound: A four-decade-long wait ends for Foster. ■ AFP

LIVE TELECAST

Sri Lanka vs Australia: 4th ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD) & Sony LIV, 2.30 p.m.
FIH Pro League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 10.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Hurkacz beats top-ranked Medvedev

HALLE
Hubert Hurkacz upset top-ranked Daniil Medvedev to win the Halle Open and underline his credentials as a contender for Wimbledon two years running. The big-serving Polish player needed just 64 minutes to beat Medvedev 6-1, 6-4 and win his first grass-court title. AP



Berrettini retains Queen's title

LONDON
Italy's Matteo Berrettini retained his ATP Queen's Club title with a straight sets win over Serbia's Filip Krajinovic on Sunday. Berrettini won the final of the Wimbledon warm-up event 7-5, 6-4. The world No. 10 will now be aiming to go one better this year at Wimbledon, after losing to Novak Djokovic in the 2021 final. AFP



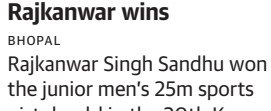
Jabeur wins title as Bencic retires

BERLIN
Top seed Ons Jabeur won the final of the WTA tournament in Berlin on Sunday after Olympic champion Belinda Bencic was forced to retire after twisting her left ankle. Bencic slipped at the end of the first set and despite receiving treatment, she eventually retired with Jabeur leading 6-3, 2-1. AFP



Usyk-Joshua re-match on Aug. 20 in Saudi Arabia

LONDON
World heavyweight boxing champion Oleksandr Usyk will defend his titles in a re-match with Britain's Anthony Joshua in Jeddah on August 20, promoters said on Sunday. AFP



Rajkanwar wins

BHOPAL
Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu won the junior men's 25m sports pistol gold in the 20th Kumar Surendra Singh shooting championship at the Madhya Pradesh Academy on Monday. He shot 586, and equalled the record set by Vijayveer Sidhu in 2019.
The results:
25m sports pistol: Junior men: 1. Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu 586; 2. Unish Holinder 581 (19x); 3. Udhayveer Sidhu 581 (11x).



Doyle is first woman to win French Classic

PARIS
Hollie Doyle became the first woman jockey to win a French Classic when she rode favourite Nashwa to victory in the French Oaks (Prix de Diane) at Chantilly on Sunday. The 25-year-old English jockey had finished third on Nashwa in the Epsom Oaks earlier this month. AFP

Correction: In the caption for the picture published with the Bengaluru race results on June 20 (Monday), the trainer of Philosophy is S. Padmanabhan and not S. Ganapathy as mentioned. The error is regretted.

Dressel grabs his 15th Worlds gold

Maiden major titles for Martineghi, Walsh and Huske; Sajan Prakash disappoints

SWIMMING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BUDAPEST

American Caeleb Dressel grabbed his 15th World championship gold medal and his second in two days as he won the 50m butterfly final in Budapest on Sunday.

The other three winners on Sunday night were all collecting their first major-championship golds - Italian Nicolo Martinenghi in the 100m breaststroke and American women Alex Walsh in the 200m medley and Torri Huske in the 100m butterfly.

Dressel took just 18 strokes and 22.57s for his latest gold.

Santos does it again!

At 42, runner-up Nicholas Santos broke his own record as oldest World championship medallist. The Brazilian edged Andrew Michael of the United States by one hundredth of a second to claim



No stopping him: Dressel celebrates his 50m butterfly success. • GETTY IMAGES

silver. "I'm 42 years old, it's not so easy to stay here competing with these guys," Santos said.

"It's really painful to stay training hard to get to compete with these guys."

Martinenghi made the most of Adam Peaty's absence to grab the 100m

breaststroke title. Martinenghi, the bronze medallist at last year's Olympics, finished in 58.26s to edge Dutchman Arno Kamminga, with American Nic Fink third.

Walsh collected her first gold at a major championships in style as she powered away from the field to win

the 200 medley. The American, the Olympic silver medallist, beat Australian Kaylee McKeown, winner of two backstroke golds in Tokyo, by 1.44s.

Another American, 16-year-old, Leah Hayes set a world junior record in third. Hungarian 33-year-old Katin-

ka Hosszu, the defending World champion, was seventh, 4.24s back.

Meanwhile, India's Sajan Prakash finished 25th overall in the men's 200m butterfly. The 28-year-old clocked 1:58.67s to finish eighth in his heat.

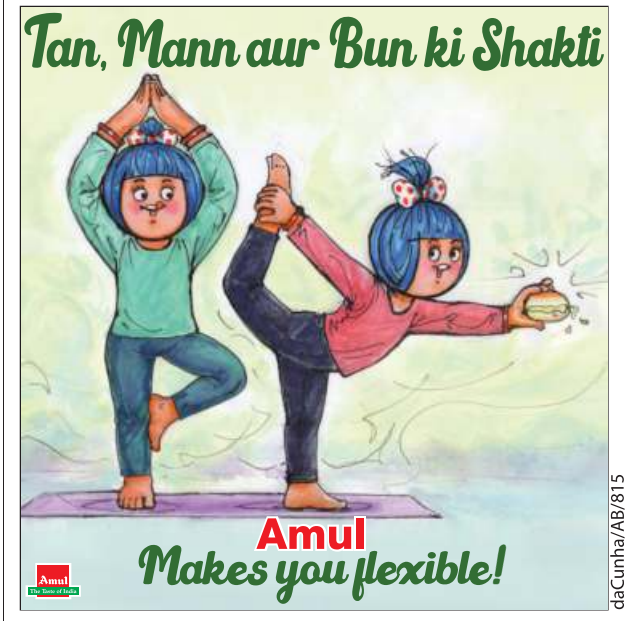
In the men's 800m freestyle, Delhi swimmer Kushagra Rawat finished 23rd. The 22-year-old clocked at 8:15.96s to finish fifth in his heat.

The results:

Men: 50m butterfly: 1. Caeleb Dressel (USA) 22.57s; 2. Nicholas Santos (Bra) 22.78; 3. Nic Fink (USA) 22.79s.

100m breaststroke: 1. Nicolo Martinenghi (Ita) 58.26s; 2. Arno Kamminga (Ned) 58.62s; 3. Nic Fink (USA) 58.65s.

Women: 100m butterfly: 1. Torri Huske (USA) 55.64s; 2. Marie Wattel (Fra) 56.14s; 3. Zhang Yufei (Chn) 56.41s; **200m medley:** 1. Alex Walsh (USA) 2:07.13s; 2. Kaylee McKeown (Aus) 2:08.57s; 3. Leah Hayes (USA) 2:08.91s.



Ronaldo Singh wins bronze in time trial

CYCLING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

World junior champion and Asian record holder Ronaldo Singh Laitonjam clocked 1 minute 1.798 seconds to win the bronze medal in the 1-kilometre time trial of the Asian Cycling championship at the Indira Gandhi Velodrome on Monday.

It was the country's first-ever medal in the event. Yuta Obara of Japan (1:01.118) and Mohammad Fadhil (1:01.639) won gold and sil-

ver. The second bronze medal for the host came through Birjit Yumnam in the 10-kilometre Scratch race in the junior men's section.

Hwarang Kim of Korea and Zulfahmi Aiman of Malaysia won gold and silver respectively.

India was fifth in the medals table with three silver and 11 bronze medals.

In the para section, India was third behind Thailand and Japan, with two gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

India names full-strength squad for CWG

Manpreet returns as the captain; Harmanpreet to be his deputy

HOCKEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India on Monday named a full-strength 18-member senior men's hockey squad for the Commonwealth Games with Manpreet Singh returning as captain and dragflicker Harmanpreet Singh as his deputy.

Hockey India (HI) had initially decided to send a second-string team to the CWG due to the short turnaround time between the Birmingham event and the Hangzhou Asian Games, which is a qualifier for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Strong team

However, with the Asian Games now postponed to next year, HI decided to select a strong team for the prestigious event, scheduled



Manpreet... back at the helm.

• FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

from July 28.

India has been grouped in pool B along with England, Canada, Wales and Ghana. The two-time former silver medallist will begin its campaign on July 31 against Gha-

na. Manpreet had led India to a historic bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games last year and he will take over from Amit Rohidas, who was the captain for the FIH Pro League tour of Belgium and Netherlands.

Harmanpreet, who was named the deputy, was the highest goal-scorer of the Pro League.

Tried-and-tested

"We have gone with a tried-and-tested team for the Commonwealth Games.

"These players have the experience of playing top teams in high pressure games in the FIH Pro League which was a good exposure for us ahead of the prestigious quadrennial event," chief coach Graham Reid said in a release.

"After a brief break when we return home from Neth-

erlands, we will resume our camp in SAI, Bengaluru where we will analyse our performance against Belgium and Netherlands."

India had finished fourth at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast.

The team:
Goalkeepers: P.R. Sreejesh, Krishan Bahadur Pathak; **Defenders:** Varun Kumar, Suren-der Kumar, Harmanpreet Singh (vice-capt.), Amit Rohidas, Jugraj Singh, Jarnanpreet Singh.

Midfielders: Manpreet Singh (capt.), Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Shamsheer Singh, Akashdeep Singh, Nilakanta Sharma; **Forwards:** Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Abhishek.

Kupcho wins Meijer Classic in playoff

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BELMONT

After missing a two-foot eagle putt on the first hole of a playoff, Jennifer Kupcho won the LPGA Meijer Classic when Leona Maguire's three-foot birdie try lipped out on the second extra hole.

Kupcho closed with a one-under 71 to match playing partner Nelly Korda and Maguire at 18-under 270. Kupcho birdied both playoff holes.



Kupcho. • AP

Medvedev stays on top

RANKINGS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Russian Daniil Medvedev remained top of the ATP rankings released on Monday despite his loss in the Halle final over the weekend to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz.

Hurkacz's victory saw him jump two spots into 10th place while Italian Matteo Berrettini, who won on grass at Queen's, falls to 11th.

Tunisia's Ons Jabeur jumped to a career-best third in the WTA rankings on the back of her victory in Berlin over the weekend.

The rankings (top-10):



Medvedev. • AP

ATP: 1. Medvedev, 2. Zverev, 3. Djokovic, 4. Nadal, 5. Ruud, 6. Tsitsipas, 7. Alcaraz, 8. Rublev, 9. Auger-Aliassime, 10. Hurkacz.
WTA: 1. Swiatek, 2. Kontaveit, 3. Jabeur, 4. Badosa, 5. Sakkari, 6. Sabalenka, 7. Pliskova, 8. Collins, 9. Pegula, 10. Muguruza.

Payas all set for an encore

TABLE TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
ALAPPUZZHA

Defending champion and World No. 3 Payas Jain (Delhi) will be the star attraction in the under-19 category as the boys' events of the 83rd Junior and Youth table tennis championships get underway at the YMCA TT Arena on Tuesday.

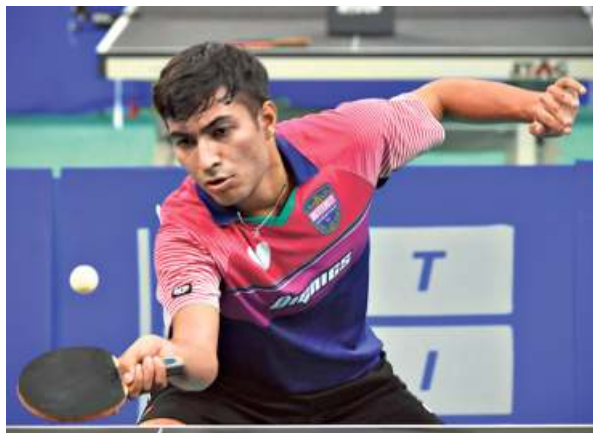
Payas has shown consistent form in the tournaments he has played this season and it will be tough for his opponents to stop him from an encore here.

Payas' teammate and World No. 34 Yashansh Malik is also in the fray, and the two could meet in the final.

Others to watch out for

Rajesh Patil (Maharashtra), Ankur Bhattacharjee (Bengal) and Varun Shankar (Telangana) are the other players to watch out for.

In the under-17 category,



Mr. Consistent: Payas has been on top of his game this season. • FILE PHOTO: S.S. KUMAR

Bengal Ankur Bhattacharjee, the top ranked player, starts as the favourite. UP's Divyansh Srivastava and Maharashtra's Jash Modi, K.J. Akash (Karnataka) and Bengal's Shankhadip Das are other seeds in the pecking order.

As many as 212 players have entered for the under-17 category while 209 will compete in the un-

der-19 section. The players have been divided into 56 groups and the group winners will join the eight ranked players who have been given the direct entry into the main draw.

The performance in this tournament will be the criterion for the selection to the Indian team for the Asian junior table tennis championships.

Olympiad Torch begins its journey

Anand and Barua do the honours in front of the Red Fort

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Friends for nearly four decades, the country's first two Grandmasters Viswanathan Anand and Dibyendu Barua were back to sharing the spotlight as they played their part at the start of the Chess Olympiad Torch Relay here on Monday.

With the historic Red Fort forming the backdrop, Anand held aloft the torch as he arrived at the venue in an open jeep and handed it over Law Minister Kiren Rijiju who passed it on to Barua. Barua then carried it in the jeep for some distance to signal the start of the nationwide Torch relay.

Less than 12 hours after the Torch relay was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich, Rijiju, secretary of the sports ministry Sujata



First move: Anand kickstarted the torch relay on Monday. • PTI

Chaturvedi, director general of the Sports Authority of India Sandeep Pradhan, AICF president Sanjay Kapoor, secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan besides Grandmasters Pravin Thipsay, Abhijit Kunte, Tejas Bakre and N. Srinath were back to witness the start of the relay.

Mr. Dvorkovich, Mr. Rijiju and Mr. Chauhan addressed the gathering after the chess-playing spectators were part

India looks to iron out flaws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ROTTERDAM

With the World Cup just over 10 days away, the Indian women's hockey team will look to utilise its last FIH Pro League double-header tie against lowly USA, starting here on Tuesday, to address its weak areas.

India produced a remarkable performance in its debut FIH Pro League season, occupying the third spot with 24 points from 14 games.

Belgium is close on the heels of India with 22 points from 14 matches and Savita Punia-led India will look to sign off the campaign with wins over USA to finish third. The second match of the double-header will be on Wednesday.

The matches against the USA will provide India a perfect platform to measure its strength ahead of the World Cup beginning on July 1.

Ankita to begin her campaign against Vaidehi

Sahira upsets top seed Farhat Aleen Qamar in the second qualifying round

ITF TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Ankita Raina has been seeded third and will open against compatriot Vaidehi Chaudhari in the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament being played at the Tennis Project, Baliawas.

After having competed in all the four Grand Slams last year in doubles, and the Australian Open qualifying event this season, Ankita has returned to the grind of the ITF professional circuit.

It is in this circuit that players build themselves for the bigger events. Emma Ra-

ducana's biggest title was winning the \$25,000 ITF women's event in Pune in 2019, before she emerged the women's champion at the US Open last year.

Ankita herself had won two titles every year at this level from 2018 to 2020, and would be keen to get back to the higher echelons of the game with a good show in the two weeks at home. Ankita did make the quarterfinals last week in Thailand in a similar event, and had made the quarterfinals of a \$60,000 event as a qualifier early this season in Australia.

Karman Kaur Thandi is the only other Indian player

seeded, at No.8, and will play compatriot Sahaja Yamalappalli in the first round.

With the final qualifying round slated for Tuesday, the top players will get one more day to get acclimatised to the conditions before they step on court for singles.

In the second qualifying round, 15-year-old Sahira Singh, playing her maiden international tournament, beat top seed Farhat Aleen Qamar 6-4, 3-6, [12-10].

The seedings:
1. Diana Marcinkevica (Lat), 2. Peangtarn Plipuech (Tha), 3. Ankita Raina, 4. Victoria Morvayova (Svk), 5. Luksika Kumkhum (Tha), 6. Ekaterina Yashina

(Rus), 7. Misaki Matsuda (Jpn), 8. Karman Kaur Thandi.

The results:
Qualifying singles (second round): Sahira Singh bt Farhat Aleen Qamar 6-4, 3-6, [12-10]; Vineetha Mummadi bt Sudipta Kumar 6-2, 6-2; Elena Pridankina (Rus) bt Anusha Kondaveeti 6-1, 6-0; Avishka Gupta bt Suhani Gaur 6-2, 6-2; Shreya Tatarvathy bt Chandana Potugari 6-0, 6-3; Kundali Majange bt Bela Tamhankar 6-1, 6-4; Nidhi Chilumula bt Apurva Vemuri 6-2, 6-3; Anjali Rathi bt Riya Uboveja 6-2, 6-2; Nandini Dixit bt Jagmeet Kaur Grewal 0-6, 6-1, [10-6]; Mansi Vadyala bt Paavanii Paathak 7-5, 6-4; Shria Atturu (US) bt Himadri Kashyap 6-1, 6-3; Ikumi Yamazaki (Jpn) bt Himaanshika Singh 6-3, 6-0.

Deepika set for India comeback

ARCHERY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PARIS

Sidelined after the Tokyo Olympics debacle, star Indian archer Deepika Kumari is all set to make her India comeback in the Stage 3 of the World Cup beginning here on Tuesday.

Exactly a year after she won an individual gold here in the same tournament, the 28-year-old World No. 3 will look to redeem herself after failing to win a medal at the Tokyo Games.

Having returned empty-handed from her third Olympics campaign last year, Deepika - as well as her husband



Deepika. • FILE PHOTO

and the country's top male archer Atanu Das - saw a slump in form, and failed to make the Indian team.

The duo could also not qualify for the team for the Asian Games which was later postponed as the Archery Association of India conducted a fresh trial of the top-eight archers for the Stage 3 of the World Cup.

Earlier, the same squad was to compete in both the

World Cup Stage 3 and the Asian Games but after the postponement Deepika and Pravin Jadhav, who were in the top-8 of the earlier conducted trial, got a fresh opportunity and made the cut.

Das, however, missed out having finished outside top-8 in the earlier conducted trial.

The team: Recurve: Men: Tarundeep Rai, Jayanta Talukdar, Pravin Jadhav and Neeraj Chauhan. **Women:** Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat, Ridhi Phor and Simranjeet Kaur.

Compound: Men: Abhishek Verma, Aman Saini, Mohan Bhardwaj and Sangampreet Bisla. **Women:** Jyothi Surekha Venna, Priya Gurjar, Avneet Kaur and Muskan Kirar.