



Viksit Bharat ka Amrit Kaal
Seva, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan ke
11 SAAL

01/01/13/009/2526



Respecting Every Grain, Rewarding Every Effort

With a historic rise, MSP now 150% of the cost

₹18 lakh crore given to farmers for wheat and paddy procurement at MSP in the last decade; 3 times compared to 2004-2014



A Vande Bharat train crosses the newly inaugurated Chenab rail bridge in J&K's Reasi district, Friday. This is the first rail link between the Valley and Jammu region. PTI

Opening key rail bridge to Valley, PM targets Pak: Pahalgam terror was also attack on J&K livelihood

Chenab bridge is all-weather link from Udhampur to Baramulla

ARUN SHARMA
KATRA, JUNE 6

ACCUSING PAKISTAN of attacking "insaaniyat and Kashmiriyat" by targeting tourists in Pahalgam, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Friday that the intention of the attack was "to engineer communal clashes across the country and deprive people of Kashmir of their livelihood".

Modi was speaking after he flagged off two Vande Bharat trains between Katra and Srinagar and inaugurated the world's highest railway arch bridge over the Chenab as well



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Tricolour on the Chenab bridge in Reasi district, Friday. PTI

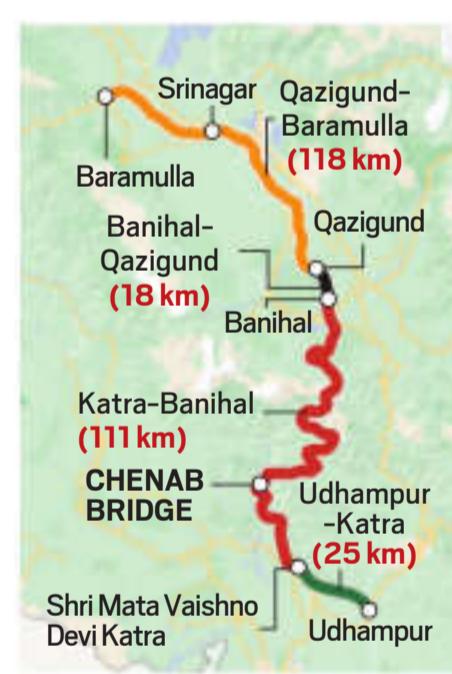
GOVT & POLITICS

PAK WRITES AGAIN, OFFERS TO RENEW IWT TALKS; INDIA NOT READY YET

PAGE 6

as the country's first cable-stayed bridge of the Indian Railways over Anji Khad. The 272-km Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla railway link (USBRL) Project is designed to provide all-weather connectivity by eventually linking the Kashmir Valley

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



INSIDE
PAGES 7, 15, 17

How it was done: 'For 12 years, we ate, lived, breathed the Chenab'

RINKU GHOSH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

"IN THE beginning, there were no roads. We would go by foot, on mules and ponies, perch ourselves on a ledge and even camp on cliffs at night as we surveyed how we could build roads to move the equipment to the

bridge site. I knew the Sahyadris. I was just a boy from Mysore and here I was, high on the Himalayas, so very different, terrifyingly high and so very alien."

The "boy from Mysore" is LPrakash who, as Chief Engineer of the Konkan Railways' Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, was responsible for laying the roads.

Now an Executive Director, he recalled the early days when

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Konkan Rly CMD S K Jha; (right) its ED L Prakash

BUSINESS AS USUAL

BY UNNY



Bengaluru stampede: RCB head of marketing among 4 arrested, CM's political secretary sacked

KIRAN PARASHAR
BENGALURU, JUNE 6

TWO DAYS after the stampede in Bengaluru which left 11 people dead, police on Friday arrested four people, including the marketing head of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and the vice-president of the event management firm, DNA.

The Karnataka government also removed Chief Minister Siddaramiah's political secretary K Govindaraju from his post, and replaced the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) of state intelligence, Hemant M Nimbalkar. On Thursday, the Chief Minister had ordered the suspension of senior police offi-



RCB marketing and revenue head Nikhil Sosale (in black) being taken to court after his arrest in Bengaluru, Friday. PTI

cers, including City Police Commissioner B Dayananda.

The stampede took place Wednesday afternoon when

lakhs of people gathered to celebrate the RCB winning the IPL. A day later, police registered a case

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

WITH THE WORLD Bank raising its threshold poverty line to \$3 a day (daily consumption of less than \$3) from the earlier \$2.15 a day, the extreme poverty rate for India declines sharply to 5.3 per cent in 2022-23 from 27.1 per cent in 2011-12. In absolute terms, people living in extreme poverty fell from 344.47 million to just 75.24 million, latest data from the World Bank shows.

At \$2.15 daily consumption – the earlier poverty line based on 2017 prices – the share of Indians living in extreme poverty is 2.3 per cent, which is significantly lower than 16.2 per cent in 2011-

12, according to the World Bank's estimates. The number of people living below the \$2.15-per-day poverty line is recorded at 33.66 million in 2022, down from 205.93 million in 2011.

Despite the World Bank revising its extreme poverty line to adjust for global inflation in 2021 prices, India seems to have fared

well, with the poverty numbers holding good. At \$3 a day threshold, India's extreme poverty rate for 2022-23 rises from 2.3 per cent (at a poverty line of \$2.15 a day) to 5.3 per cent, the World Bank estimates.

Adjusting the earlier \$2.15-per-day line for domestic inflation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

First thaw in chill: Canada's Carney calls PM, invites him to G7 Summit

Look forward to our meeting, will work together with renewed vigour: Modi

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

INA dipomatic outreach towards mending bilateral ties after a year-and-a-half of acrimony and hostility, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney Friday invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the G7 Summit on June 15-17.

Following a phone call from Carney, Modi, in a post on X, said, "Glad to receive a call from Prime Minister Mark J Carney of Canada. Congratulated him on his recent election victory and thanked him for the invitation to the G7 Summit in Kananaskis this month."

"As vibrant democracies bound by deep people-to-people ties, India and Canada will work together with renewed vigour, guided by mutual respect and shared interests. Look forward to our meeting at the Summit," he said.

Carney said, "I spoke with @NarendraModi today on the longstanding relationship between Canada and India, includ-

ing deep people-to-people ties and significant commercial links. Importantly, we agreed to continued law enforcement dialogue and discussions addressing security concerns."

The invitation, less than 10 days before the Summit, is a major breakthrough after the chill in ties. The two countries downgraded diplomatic ties after Justin Trudeau, the then Canadian Prime Minister, set off a political storm in 2023 when he alleged "potential" involvement of Indian government agents in the killing of a Canada-based Khalistan separatist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. India rejected the charges as "absurd" and "motivated".

India has been invited to every G7 Summit since 2019.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE

TRUMP-MUSK RELATIONSHIP FLAMES OUT PUBLICLY PAGE 12

STARLINK GETS SATCOM LICENCE FROM INDIA PAGE 13

RBI surprises with 50 bps cut in key rate to boost growth

CRR slashed by 100 bps for liquidity; interest rates on loans, deposits to fall



RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra with Deputy Governors Poonam Gupta, M Rajeshwar Rao, T Rabi Sankar and Swaminathan Janakiraman in Mumbai, Friday. Amit Chakravarty

However, depositors and savers can expect lower returns on their bank deposits in the coming months as banks revise their deposit and savings bank rates.

The 50 bps reduction in the policy repo rate, taken in a 5:1 majority, was against the market consensus of a 25 bps cut and marks the third consecutive rate cut and a total reduction of 100 bps since February 2025. One basis point (bps) is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

The reduction in the CRR – the percentage of a bank's total deposits that it is required to maintain in liquid cash with the RBI as a reserve – would release primary liquidity of about Rs 2.5 lakh crore to the banking system by December 2025. The cut in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE NEW POVERTY LINE AT \$3 A DAY

Poverty line (2021 prices) Poverty line (2017 prices)

Extreme (\$3/day)	LMIC* (\$4.2/day)	Extreme (\$2.15/day)	LMIC* (\$3.65/day)
27.10%	57.70%	16.20%	61.80%
5.30%	23.90%	2.30%	28.10%

*Lower-middle-income category; Source: The World Bank

Devas Antrix deal: US SC reverses order giving relief to Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JUNE 6

INA setback for the Government of India and Antrix Corporation – a commercial arm of ISRO – the US Supreme Court has rolled back a reprieve given in 2023 by a US appeals court in a legal battle over a compensation claim of \$1.2 billion by a startup firm Devas Multimedia for a failed satellite deal from 2005.

The US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit had ruled on August 1, 2023 that Antrix Corp, as an alter ego of India, must have some amount of business in the US to be subjected to the jurisdiction of US courts under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act of the US.

The order was expected to end efforts by Devas Multimedia to enforce in the US a \$1.2-billion compensation award made by an arbitration tribunal of the International Chamber of Commerce on September 14, 2015.

The award had been confirmed by the US court for the Western District of Washington on October 27, 2020.

Following a plea by Devas Multimedia against the August 2023 appeals court order, the US Supreme Court in its June 5, 2025 order has ruled that the appeals court had erred in its rul-

ing that a firm must have some minimum business in the US for it to be liable to be sued in US courts.

The US Supreme Court, which reserved its orders in the matter on March 3, 2025, stated in its order that US courts have jurisdiction over foreign entities “when an immunity exception applies and service is proper”.

“The FSIA does not require proof of ‘minimum contacts’ over and above the contacts already required by the Act’s enumerated exceptions to foreign sovereign immunity,” the US Supreme Court has ruled and referred the case back to the ninth circuit for fresh consideration of the matter.

“Antrix’s alternative arguments – that the Fifth Amendment itself requires a showing of minimum contacts, that the claims at issue do not fall within the FSIA’s arbitration exception, and that the suit should be dismissed under forum non conveniens – were not addressed below by the Ninth Circuit.

This Court declines to address them in the first instance,” the order said.

Earlier during the hearing of the case in the US SC, India had asked the court to respect the comity of nations by upholding the August 2023 order for setting aside the \$1.2 billion arbitration award against Antrix Corp.

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Opening J&K rail bridge, PM targets Pak

with the rest of the country.

On April 22, terrorists killed 25 tourists and a local resident in Pahalgam.

In his speech Friday, Modi described tourism as an important mode of employment generation and said it was “unfortunate that our neighbouring country is not only opposed to humanity, harmony and tourism, but it is also against the livelihood of the poor”.

“What happened in Pahalgam on April 22 is an example of it,” he said. “Pakistan targeted tourism, which had been witnessing an upward trend with the arrival of a record number of tourists during the past 4-5 years. It attacked tourism to destroy the livelihood of the poor in Jammu and Kashmir – including ponywallas, porters, guides, gashouse and dhaba owners.”

The Prime Minister, who began his address in Dogri, also paid tribute to Syed Adil Hussain

Shah, a pony ride operator who was among those killed in the attack, in his speech: “Adil, who had gone there [to Pahalgam] to earn his livelihood and who challenged the terrorists was also killed by them,” he said.

Modi lauded the people of Jammu and Kashmir on their “spontaneous protests” over the terror attack.

“By standing up to the conspiracy of Pakistan and showing their strength, the people of Jammu and Kashmir have given a stern message to not only Pakistan but against the terrorist mindsets across the world. The youth in Jammu and Kashmir have made up their mind to give a befitting reply to terrorism, which has burnt school buildings and hospitals and destroyed the future of two generations,” he said.

There was so much destruction that for years, people had stopped having dreams and accepted their fate, he said. “It was

necessary to bring them out of this situation and we have done it.”

Referring to ‘Operation Sindoor’ – India’s military response to terror emanating from Pakistan – Modi said whenever Pakistan hears of the operation, “it will be reminded of its humiliating defeat”.

“The Pakistan army and the terrorists had never thought of India attacking them hundreds of kilometres inside their territory in such a manner that the terror infrastructure raised by them over the years will turn into dust within minutes,” he said. “This baffled Pakistan and it started targeting civilians in Pooh and other districts by damaging houses, schools and hospitals. It also targeted temples, mosques and gurdwaras.”

Referring to the rail link, Modi said several generations had died even before seeing it, quoting Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as saying that he was

in Class 8 when foundation stone of the project was first laid in 1983-84.

While talking about the Chenab and Anji bridges, he said these were not mere structures of steel and concrete but “living symbols of India’s strength and its roar of a bright future in hosiery Pir Panjal ranges”.

“While walking on the Chenab and Anji bridges, I saw the determination and talent of our engineers and workers,” he said.

In addition to flagging off the Vande Bharat trains and inaugurating the bridges, Modi also laid the foundation stone and inaugurated Rs 46,000 crore-worth of development projects at Katra – the base camp for pilgrims visiting the Vaishno Devi shrine atop Trikuta hills in Reasi district.

Significantly, the 272-km US-BRL project that was constructed at a cost of around Rs 43,780 crore has 36 tunnels spanning 119 km and 943 bridges.

•For 12 yrs, we breathed the Chenab’

he supervised the 30 km-long road stretch and 350-m-long tunnels to reach the bridge site.

“We would break through the rocks and advance by a few metres in a whole day. Finding the light at the other end of the tunnel took months. Frequent landslides meant that we would have to abandon the site and find a new tunnel site. It was a classic case of one step forward and two steps backward.”

But Prakash drew inspiration from local residents who rappelled up and down the steep cliffs, tethered to a simple rope, to help survey teams analyse the rocks. “I learnt a lot from the locals. They opened their homes to us, cooked food because we would be stranded up there for days. The rain would slap us almost every afternoon. And then we would huddle around the campfire. Without the road, it would take a day to come down to Reasi town. The locals walked, used ponies and crossed rope-bridges. They would carry down the sick on charpoys, strapped to their backs,” he said.

Once the survey was done, he would travel downstream by boat. “The river currents are strong. But the upstream currents are stronger.”

Prakash was responsible for laying the foundation plinths that would hold up the pylons and girders. “Each foundation was the size of a football field. And constant rain meant that they would be washed out and seasoned all over again,” he said.

The earth was something that Santosh Kumar Jha, CMD of Konkan Railway, thought the could understand given his background in geology. “The Himalayas are young fold mountains. You are cutting through strata which are maturing and have not become rock yet. And each stratum is different and shifting all the time. The Chenab Valley is a Grade V seismic zone, so any design had to have the swing feature to move with the rocks. There was no template. Everything was on-site innovation,” he said.

As a result, most engineers would go back to their quarters only to sleep a few hours. “We ate, lived and breathed the Chenab. There was such spontaneous camaraderie that we would have meals and a game of basketball or chess together. Most of us stayed away from our families for 12 years. Now when they take the first ride, hopefully my children will understand why I had missed their growing-up years,” Prakash said.

In terms of technology, Jha remembers that the site units were completely automated. “We had self-climbing cranes, and had to crunch, flip, twist and extend their antlers to do the job. We talk about 3D printing today but a long time ago our CNC machines cut the steel sheets into various shapes, sizes and designs, according to the drawings fed into the computer attached to it,” he said. Each pre-fabricated part, no matter how tiny, was lab-tested for air leaks and lastability, cleared and then moved to make a bit of the giant curve.

Beating nature was the biggest challenge. The team tested the rocks with pinhole boring and then filled up the loose gaps in the strata with concrete. Then they inserted the rock bolts, each of them about 30-40 m long to reinforce the holding layer. “We would just finish one rock face over several hours. Then we pumped in water jets at a pressure of 300 bars so that the bolt rods expanded inside and could pack the layers even closer. We used a polyurethane grout which increases the standing time of the water to avoid flooding in the tunnel,” Jha said.

The arch bridge design, he said, was done over one-and-a-half years. “It is made up of interlocking beams and girders. A suspension bridge would have been lighter but it would not have borne the weight of a 300-tonne railway coach or withstand wind speeds of 266 kmph. So we built hollow girders so that they could be moved up by boats, then filled them up with concrete at the site so that they became weighty and sturdy,” said Jha, who had supervised many such improvisations on the site.

So the day the two ends of the arch were joined in the middle, he was a happy and tense man.

•Stampede: 4 held

and booked RCB, DNA and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) administration.

In one of the FIRs registered Friday, C Venu (21), a B.Com student and resident of Vijnanapura, alleged that he had come across RCB marketing head Nikhil Sosale, DNA vice-president Sunil Mathew, and two other DNA employees Sumanth and Kiran Kumar. They were produced before a magistrate and were sent to judicial custody for 14 days.

A police officer said RCB’s Sosale was accused of sharing social media posts about the victory parade and free passes before police had given permission. The three arrested DNA employees were responsible for security inside the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, where the event was to be held, the officer said.

Sosale and Mathew were arrested Friday morning at Kempegowda International Airport, while they were trying to board a flight to Mumbai, officials said.

Searches were conducted at the residences of KSCA members, but none of them were arrested.

The Karnataka High Court on Friday, in an interim order, directed police not to take any coercive action against the KSCA office-bearers in connection with the stampede. KSCA officials had approached the court seeking to quash the FIR filed against them. Justice S R Krishna Kumar, who heard the case, granted interim relief to the officials. The hearing was adjourned to June 16.

Two more FIRs have also been registered based on the state-

Happy that the arch bridge was ready, tense because even a millimetre-long misalignment in the joints could destabilise the bridge. “We had to make thousands of calculations and recalculations at each stage of launching the bridge to fit the nuts, bolts and grooves to fit into each other,” he said.

Prakash recalled how the team used Mi-26 helicopters of the Army to lift the machinery in the initial days. “But there was a lot of human or superhuman effort. At the tallest piers, workers soared across on an open platform, tethered to girder rails to dodge the winds and rain. Once on the girder, they would have to stay there for 12 hours before they could be hauled down. They would carry their tiffin in their suits. We even had a disposable, mobile toilet which we sent up and parked on the girder through the shift. There were days when the cranes malfunctioned and we would send up our men in cage lifts to repair them. It took some acrobatics from the crew,” he said.

Prakash rarely left the site. “All of us were mostly from the southern states, toiling hard to build a megastructure in the Himalayas which we were not familiar with. So there was this pressure of leaving a legacy. Steel expands and contracts easily with temperature and for the most effective interlocking, needs a perfect temperature after sunset. So whenever we would install a portion of the bridge, we did that in the evening. Mornings were about making the girders,” he said.

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Commenting on the policy, State Bank of India’s Chairman C S Setty said, “The MPC has broadly addressed any concerns on slowdown in growth on account of global uncertainties and fully capitalised on the softening domestic inflation to deliver a frontloaded rate cut, staggered durable liquidity injection yet conserving the space for future action.”

During the December 2024 policy, the RBI had reduced the CRR to 4 per cent in two equal tranches of 25 bps each.

On inflation, the Governor said the inflation has softened significantly over the last six months from above the tolerance band in October 2024 to well below the target with signs of a broad-based moderation.

The consumer price index (CPI) inflation moderated to a nearly six-year low of 3.2 per cent in April from 3.3 per cent in March.

The near-term and medium-term outlook now gives us the confidence of not only a durable alignment of headline inflation with the target of 4 per cent, as expected in the last meeting but also

“this suggests that, unless there are major economic surprises, the RBI will be on hold in August and beyond,” it said.

“The policy is definitely positive for all sectors of the economy, particularly for banking and finance. In particular lower cost of borrowing will act as a counterbalance to any uncertainty,” Setty said.

Brokerage firm Nomura, in a report, said that the combination of a 50 bps cut, a shift in stance to neutral and the CRR cut signals that the RBI’s MPC believes the existing space for policy easing has been largely exhausted, and they will be in a wait-and-watch stance now, with policy transmission the key objective.

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•RBI surprises with 50 bps cut in key rate to boost growth

CRR and repo rate will bring down equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home, vehicle and personal loans, boosting demand in the economy.

While the RBI revised downwards the inflation outlook for FY2026 to 3.7 per cent from an earlier forecast of 4 per cent, the growth projection for the current fiscal was retained at 6.5 per cent.

Unveiling the monetary policy, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted that the growth remains lower than the central bank’s aspirations amidst a challenging global environment and heightened uncertainty.

“It is imperative to continue to stimulate domestic private consumption and investment through policy levers to step up the growth momentum. This changed growth-inflation dynamics calls for not only continuing with the policy easing but also frontloading the rate cuts to sup-

port growth. Accordingly, the MPC voted to reduce the policy repo rate by 50 bps to 5.50 per cent,” Malhotra said.

He also indicated that further rate cuts will depend on incoming data on inflation and growth parameters, hinting at the uncertainty on the interest rate front.

“After having reduced the policy repo rate by 100 bps in quick succession since February 2025, under the current circumstances, monetary policy is left with very limited space to support growth. Hence, the MPC also decided to change the stance from accommodative to neutral,” he said.

He said the neutral stance means that the policy rate can either move up or down from the present level, but the direction will depend on the incoming data.

“The statute does not mandate a voting (on policy stance). There was a discussion on it (stance) because we need to give guidance to market participants and so, all the six MPC members were of the view that we should change it (stance) to neutral,” he said.

Going forward, the MPC, he said, will be carefully assessing the incoming data and the evolving outlook to chart out the future course of monetary policy in order to strike the right growth-inflation balance. The fast-changing global economic situation too necessitates continuous monitoring and assess-

ment of the evolving macroeconomic outlook.

To further provide durable liquidity to the system, the RBI reduced the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 100 bps to 3 per cent of net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) in a staggered manner during the course of the year.

This reduction will be carried out in four equal tranches of 25 bps each with effect from the fortnights beginning September 6, October 4, November 1 and November 29, 2025.

Besides providing durable liquidity, it will reduce the cost of funding of the banks, thereby helping in monetary policy transmission to the credit market,” Malhotra said.

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FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND SCHEME, SAYS MINISTER

Rs 5,000 as aid to those caring for differently abled likely soon

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

A FINANCIAL assistance of Rs 5,000 to caretakers and attendants of people suffering from over 80% or above disability is likely to be provided soon by the Delhi government in a first-of-its-kind initiative, officials have said.

"This is going to be the first such scheme in the Capital where the caretakers will also receive financial assistance from the government..." Delhi Social Welfare Minister Ravinder Indraj Singh said. "A proposal has been prepared in this regard, and it was already discussed in the Cabinet meeting once... Some changes are being made. Once it is ready, the proposal will be presented before the Cabinet again for approval and further implementation," he added.

The Capital, the Minister said, has 1,000 such families with people having 80% or above disabil-

KEY POINTS**NUMBER OF FAMILIES LIKELY TO BENEFIT:**

Around 1,000

EXISTING SCHEME:

₹2,500 monthly aid to people with 40% disability

1.35 LAKH: Number of persons availing pension scheme

scheme provides persons with over 40% disability a monthly aid of Rs 2,500. As per official data, about 1.5 lakh specially-abled people are availing this pension scheme. However, no assistance is provided to their caregivers.

"The aim behind this scheme is to ensure that there is no negligence in the care of such persons with disabilities, especially those from economically weaker sections. Also, the attendants receive some financial support...because well-to-do families have separate nurses or caretakers to take care of such persons...But the case is different in poor families, so this scheme will help them financially," the senior official added.

Officials said the caretakers can be parents, siblings, or anyone who is taking care of the differently abled.

Meanwhile, on Friday, the Social Welfare Minister also inspected the under-construction building for mentally challenged individuals in Narela on Friday.

ity, and who are completely dependent on their family members and others. For an accurate figure, however, the department is also planning to conduct a survey so that only those eligible can avail the benefits under the proposed scheme.

"This is a first-of-its-kind proposal not only in Delhi but across the country," a senior official said.

The Social Welfare Department's existing pension

Delhi CM's security stepped up after death threat call via PCR in Ghaziabad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

A DEATH threat to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was made via a call to the Ghaziabad Police Control Room (PCR) late on Thursday, said police.

Following the incident, the Delhi Control Room was informed, and efforts were made to identify the caller and trace the location. However, the phone number was switched off shortly, said police.

Ghaziabad Assistant Commissioner of Police (Kotwali), Ritesh Tripathi, said, "We received a call on the 112 control room number around midnight between Thursday and Friday. The caller stated that the Chief Minister of Delhi would be killed. We immediately informed the Delhi Police and also formed a team to trace the caller."

Tripathi added, "Efforts are underway to trace the caller."

Meanwhile, on receiving the information, the Delhi Police increased the chief minister's security detail and security outside her residence in Northwest Delhi.

This comes a few days after senior officials received emails threatening to blow up two major government buildings in the city — Udyog Bhawan and Nirman Bhawan — which later proved to be a hoax after security agencies checked the premises.

**Delhi CM Rekha Gupta**

The Delhi Police has accorded 'Z' category security cover to Gupta.

As per the 'Yellow Book' of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which contains guidelines regarding security arrangements for VIPs and VVIPs, a Z category protegee gets around 22-25 personnel, including personal security officers (PSOs), escorts, watchers, and eight static arm guards.

According to protocol, the Delhi Chief Minister is entitled to Z-category security, which can be enhanced after an assessment, sources said.

"Assessment of threat perception of VIP or VVIPs is conducted by the security agencies on the direction of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)," a senior officer had said earlier.

Okhla landfill reduced to 28 metric tonnes: CM

New Delhi: L-G VK Saxena and Delhi CM Rekha Gupta launched a bamboo plantation drive at land reclaimed after biomining of legacy waste at Okhla landfill on Friday. The L-G said that the agency doing biomining work at the landfill said work will be completed by December.

The landfill site is now stretched over an area of 62 acres; earlier it had a height of 60 metres, which has been reduced to 40 metres.

The garbage mountain of 60 metric tonnes is reduced to 28 metric tonnes, which in itself is a praiseworthy deed. The previous government made a false

promise to the citizens to remove these garbage mountains, but in the end citizens removed that government... Now there is a functional government in Delhi, and the credit for which goes to the citizens of Delhi," Gupta said.

Around 11,000 tonnes of garbage is generated daily in Delhi, but the processing capacity stands at 7,000 tonnes of per day.

Gupta announced that in order to deal with the 4,000-tonne gap, the government is going to set up two new waste-to-energy plants and the capacity of the existing waste-to-energy plants is also going to be increased. ENS

MCD's Standing Committee polls: BJP, AAP file nominations

New Delhi: With the elections for the two key posts of MCD's Standing Committee slated to be held on June 12, the AAP and the ruling BJP named their candidates for the posts of chairperson and deputy chairperson on Friday.

The Standing Committee is an 18-member body, which gives the go-ahead for civic services costing Rs 5 crore and above. Due to a tussle between the AAP and the BJP, its formation was in limbo since the December 2022 MCD elections. However, this week, with the election of all 18 members, the formation process inched closer to completion.

The BJP has filed the nominations of councillors Satya Sharma and Sunder Singh for the posts of chairperson and deputy chairperson. Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh and Leader of the House Parvesh Wahi, were present.

From the AAP, Praveen Kumar has filed nominations for the posts of chairperson and Mohini Jeenwal for the post of deputy chairperson. Leader of Opposition Ankush Narang said that they have given preference to their senior-most councillors for the nomination.

The BJP has 11 councillors in the standing committee, the AAP has 7. ENS

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Immediate Former President, PHDCCI

Dr. Ranjeet Mehta
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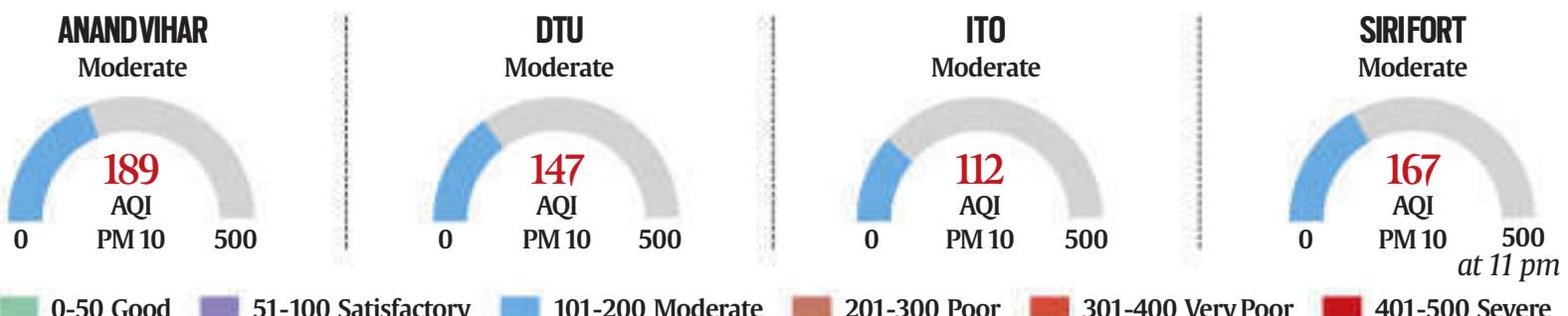
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BRIEFLY

Court extends Rana's judicial custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court Friday extended the judicial custody of Tahawwur Rana, the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack conspirator and mastermind, till July 9. The Pakistani-Canadian was arrested in Chicago in 2009, the year after the terror attacks in which 166 people were killed. He arrived in Delhi on April 10 following his extradition from the US. ENS

Prohibitory orders in Gautam Buddha Nagar

Noida: The Gautam Buddha Nagar Police Commissionerate has imposed Section 163 of the BNS, which prohibits unauthorised assemblies of five or more individuals, across the district. This comes in the wake of festivals, with Eid ul-Adha being celebrated on Saturday, and the anticipation of protests by various organisations. Police said the order will be in place for two days, June 7-9, to tighten security. ENS

34 digital courts shifted: Lawyers to abstain from work in protest

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

LAWYERS ACROSS Delhi's lower courts have decided to abstain from work on Monday following a decision to shift judges of 34 digital NI Act (Negotiable Instruments Act) courtrooms, which hear cheque bounce cases, to the Rouse Avenue court complex. Court staff (readers, *ahilmads* and stenographers) will continue to operate from their respective districts.

In an emergency meeting, the Co-ordination Committee has taken a serious note of unrest amongst advocates against the shifting of digital courts to Rouse Avenue Court, and it has been resolved to register strong griev-

ance/resentment against the same. Accordingly, it is unanimously decided to abstain from judicial work in all district courts on Monday i.e., 09.06.2025, in protest..." read a circular issued by the Coordination Committee (of all lower Courts) dated June 6.

Advocate Dhir Singh Kasana, former Saket Bar Association Secretary, said: "When we have sufficient courtrooms in Saket, why are our courts being shifted...? We are being told only judges have been moved... but a circular outside a courtroom states that all matters will be physically taken up at Rouse Avenue." Of the 34 courtrooms, 9 are from Dwarka, 7 from Tis Hazari, 6 from Saket, 5 from Karkardooma Court, 4 from Rohini, and 3 from

Patiala House Court.

Last Friday, HC Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya announced the 34 digital courts.

In a May 30 notification, the HC cited "optimal utilisation of available infrastructure and resources" and "inadequate space" to justify the move. "However, these courts shall continue to be under the administrative control/supervision/jurisdiction of the districts concerned to which these courts belong. Readers, *ahilmads*, and judicial records of these Digital NI Act Courts would also continue to function from their original districts to avoid inconvenience to litigants, lawyers..." it added.

All rooms have been allotted on the seventh floor of the Rouse Avenue court complex.

HC sets aside appointment of NCISM chairperson

SOHINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

THE DELHI High Court Friday set aside the appointment of Vaidya Jayant Yeshwant Deopujari as the chairperson of National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM), holding that he does not fulfil the "requisite qualification" as is required under provisions of the NCISM Act, 2020.

The NCISM lays down policies for maintaining the quality and standards in education of the Indian System of Medicine and makes regulations to that effect.

Two petitions were filed in the HC, challenging Deopujari's appointment. It was highlighted that as per the statutory requirement, a person possessing a post-graduate degree in any discipline of Indian System of Medicine from a recognised university and

having experience of not less than 20 years in any field of Indian System of Medicine, out of which at least 10 years shall be as a leader in the area of healthcare delivery, growth and development of Indian System of Medicine or its education, shall be eligible to be appointed as chairperson.

According to the petitioners, Deopujari neither possessed a post-graduate degree nor had 10 years experience as a leader in the area of healthcare delivery, growth and development of Indian System of Medicine or its education, as required.

Defending the appointment, the Union government had told the bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela that Deopujari was the head of R&D and F&D departments of Shivayu Ayurved Limited, Nagpur, for more than 11 years, thus making him a leader

with over 10 years as required.

It was also stated that he has a bachelor's degree in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery and a PhD in 'Kayachikitsa' from University of Pune, which is a post-graduate degree obtained after graduation, and is in fact a higher degree than a post-graduate degree. It was also highlighted that the appointment was made upon recommendations of a search committee, chaired by a cabinet secretary.

The bench, in its verdict, noted that the Act defines 'leader' as the 'head of a department' or the 'head of an organization' and that it is "indisputable" that he does not have a master's degree in any discipline of Indian System of Medicine.

Drawing a distinction between postgraduate degree and PhD as per the Act, the court recorded, "...we are of the opinion that the Postgraduate Degree in

this provision shall mean a degree awarded after completion of certain period/course of study undertaken by a person who already has a graduation degree for the reason that PhD is not an educational qualification; rather it is a research qualification...We are of the considered opinion that every degree awarded by a university after graduation can't be termed to be a 'post-graduation qualification' for the reason that in the domain of higher education in our country 'PostGraduate Degree' has acquired a special meaning and significance and postgraduate degree means a Master's Degree like MA, MSC, MD, LLM or Med."

The court went on to hold that Deopujari "lacks the requisite qualification for being appointed to the office in question" in the absence of a masters degree. The court also observed that the experience as a leader too did

not hold in Deopujari's case.

"The NCISM Act, 2020 has been framed to provide for a medical education system and to improve access to quality and affordable medical education...

Accordingly, in our opinion,

'Head of a Department' or 'Head of an Organisation' has to be necessarily associated with medical education in Indian System of Medicine...we find ourselves unable to agree with the submission that experience of working in a drug manufacturing company will qualify (Deopujari) to hold the requisite experience of a 'Leader'."

The court directed the Centre that the process of selection and appointment of NCISM chairperson shall be completed with expedition and while conducting the process of selection, observations in the verdict be taken into account.

This was the second time that the man, Golu alias Mukesh alias Sachin, had given police the slip.

In February, sources said Golu was spotted in Northeast Delhi's Jaffrabad but got away. "We had inputs about his presence, and several teams rushed to the location, but we were not able to find him. Then we scanned CCTV footage and saw a man with a helmet on a scooter. The physique matched that of the suspect," an officer had said at the time.

On May 30, the Special Cell gunned down Golu's accomplice in the murder, a sharpshooter of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang named Naveen Kasana, in a shootout in Hapur.

Golu allegedly killed the businessman, Sunil Jain, after mistaking him for someone else.

According to a police officer, a tip-off was received that Golu would come to Lal Kuan in Ghaziabad around 10 pm on May 14. The informant, as per police, said Golu would be in a white WagonR. "Golu planned to go to Hapur to meet some associates. They were planning on executing a robbery in Delhi's Shahdara," the police officer said.

Kasana (38), a resident of Ghaziabad, was shot dead by the Delhi Police Special Cell and Uttar Pradesh Police's Special Task Force (STF). A senior police officer said Kasana was spotted on a motorcycle in Hapur. Following this, a joint team of UP STF and Delhi Police Special Cell laid a trap and asked him to stop.

"Kasana opened fire at the police, and in retaliation, the team members also fired at him, injuring him. He was taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead," the officer said.

Police said that the first robbery took place on May 31; Javed booked an Uber bike service from New Delhi Railway Station (NDLS) to Gandhi Vihar. His modus operandi was to ask the driver to cancel the ride and take him to the destination offline under the pretext that the driver could keep the fare commission, police said.

According to the police, the accused, Javed Khan (23) from Rajasthan, allegedly committed the thefts at gunpoint on two occasions by taking the drivers to isolated spots at Gandhi Vihar and then fleeing with their mobile phones, and cash.

Khan has been staying at a cramped location in Mukherjee Nagar since 2024, along with other aspirants. He told police he decided to rob Rapido and Uber drivers to repay a debt of Rs 35,000 that he owed a friend.

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"The accused then robbed him of the motorcycle, a mobile phone, and Rs 2,000 in cash at gunpoint and fled on the stolen bike," Raja Bantia, DCP (North), said.

Tracking CCTVs from NDLS to Gandhi Vihar, police traced Khan to Samkali Bhavan area Wednesday and nabbed him. ENS

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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



MISSION POSSIBLE

MOST MULTI-PARTY delegations sent abroad as part of India's diplomatic outreach after the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoar are back in the Capital, but they have not been able to go back to their states. The MPs after their return have had meetings with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during which they are learnt to have candidly expressed their views on what needs to be done. Jaishankar, sources said, was happy that every delegation accomplished their mission without any major hitches. The MPs are now waiting for their meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is likely to be held on June 10, sources said.

FILM FESTIVAL

UNION MINISTER of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale was in New York this week as one of the guests to inaugurate the Indie Film Festival Awards. The event, organised by producer Mukesh Modi, was also attended by New York's Mayor Eric Adams, Indian Consul General in New York Binay S Pradhan and Prasad Bharati chairman Navneet Kumar Sehgal. Athawale is known to be a film enthusiast. He also acted in a Marathi film — *Anyayacha Pratikar* — in 1993 and did a cameo in another Marathi movie — *Joshi ki Kamble* — in 2008.

MORE STATUES

WITH AN eye on 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday promised that when his party will come to power in the state, a statue of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj sitting on a "golden chair" will be installed at the Gomti riverfront. He made the promise at a function organised by the SP to mark the anniversary of the Maratha King's coronation. Earlier last month, he had promised to install the statue of Raja Suheldev at the same Gomti riverfront. He also promised that the sword in the hand of the Shrawasti King will be made of "ashtadhatu" (alloy made of eight metals) mixed with gold". Akhilesh's promises of installing statues has surprised many in the party as SP leaders in the past were critical of former CM Mayawati's decisions of building memorials and installing marble statues in Lucknow and Noida.

Modi remains silent on Trump ceasefire claim: Rahul in Bihar

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JUNE 6



Rahul Gandhi in Bihar on Friday. PTI

LEADER OF Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Friday while targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that US President Donald Trump has repeated "11 times that he compelled him (the PM) to surrender", referring to a ceasefire understanding with Pakistan after four days of hostilities.

Addressing a Constitution-themed meeting in Rajgir, Nalanda, Gandhi said, "Whenever we use little pressure on PM Modi, he caves in easily. You know he has the habit of surrendering. Trump has said at least 11 times that he compelled Narendra Modi to surrender. Narendra Modi did not say that Trump is not speaking the truth."

This was Gandhi's fifth visit to Bihar in the last five months. Regarding the caste census,

Gandhi again batted for the Telangana model and vowed that the 50% quota cap "barrier will be broken" in whichever part of the country his party came to power, and cited examples of Telangana and Karnataka, where his party is in power.

Contrasting the "two models of caste census", Gandhi said, "In the BJP model, officers prepare the questionnaire from their offices. In the Telangana model, we took questions from over 3 lakh people belonging to SCs, STs, EBCs and OBCs." Attacking the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led government, he said Bihar has become "crime capital" of India from being the land of "truth, justice and non-violence".

Secondly, the last decade has seen a dramatic turnaround. All of them spoke respectfully and fondly of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and had a positive impression. He has worked towards it and visited these countries multiple times, during which he has developed a rapport with some of their top leadership. Some of these countries have bestowed their highest honours on our PM.

The surprises were only pleasant ... These countries are literally in Pakistan's backyard and being Islamic nations, Pakistan has cultivated them

over decades. However, two things go in the other direction. One, these nations have had historical and civilisational ties with India, which they truly value ... When we spoke of India not having invaded other countries, they were already aware. They talk with pride about how their grandfathers were dependent on India in the pre-oil era and spoke about how they used Indian currency till the 1960s.

All these things went in our favour. Moreover, these countries understand Pakistan very well and have been on the receiving end of terrorism. So, it was a bit surprising for us that we found ourselves on the same page as them even before we put our points across.

What about the OIC? It has not taken a strong position...

That in itself is a good sign as the OIC in the past has been completely one-sided. Now, some of the member nations of the OIC are in the UN Security Council and a few others are a part of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Some nations have been party to proscribing terrorists and terror organisations that operate in Pakistan and some mem-

ber nations have said the OIC must take up a path of deradicalising some of these countries.

The trajectories of these countries and Pakistan have diverged over the last two decades ... All these countries are reforming and are now very strictly against radicalisation, and do not allow jihadi elements to use their soil but Pakistan has taken a different direction. Pakistan has also taken funding from some of these countries and not used it for the right purpose.

Who did you meet in these countries?

The meetings were at government level, Deputy PM level. Some of these countries have bicameral representative bodies, while some are unicameral. Some meetings were at the chairman level, which is equivalent to our Speaker or Vice President. Then, we held meetings with think-tanks. Some of them are very impressive.

What type of questions was your delegation asked? Did Kashmir come up?

Everybody understands the Kashmir issue and knows that many portrayals of India are inaccurate. For instance, if you look at minorities, they understand that their percentage in India has grown. Minorities in India are not looking to make a dash to the exit door, unlike in neighbouring countries where they have been decimated.

The paradigm has been same for years. Pakistan has a set copybook that they will send proxy terrorists across the border, execute an attack, and immediately claim innocence. They have done it repeatedly: Mumbai, Pulwama, everywhere. Six months later, they get caught and acknowledge it but do not take any action.

If India retaliates, they scream bloody murder and try to get the world involved. They also resort to nuclear blackmail, while we

India's two run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir — was carried out after the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. The operation aimed to clear sediment that had been hindering power generation.

Government sources also said that once the monsoon subsides, India plans to scale up flushing and desilting operations at its hydroelectric reservoirs on the Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus rivers to enhance their storage capacity. "These reservoirs need thorough desilting. In some, silt and sediment have hardened into rock. At least five per cent of the reservoir beds have turned rocky," an official said.

As reported by *The Indian Express* last month, the first flushing exercise at Baglihar and Salal—

SC gives nod, NEET-PG in one shift on Aug 3

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

NEET-PG 2025, a national-level entrance examination for admission to PG medical courses, will be held in a single shift on August 3.

The Supreme Court Friday allowed the National Board of Examination in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) to reschedule the exam, which was originally scheduled to be held in two shifts on June 15.

A bench of Justices P K Mishra and A G Masih, which initially questioned the over two-month window sought by the NBEMS for holding the examination, said the board's plea appeared to be "bona fide".

The court, however, made it clear that "no further extension shall be granted".

"Having gone through the papers annexed with the interlocutory application, we are satisfied that the prayer for extension of time to hold the examination on August 3 is bona fide. Accordingly, the time allowed by our order dated 30.05.2025 for holding the NEET PG 2025 examination is extended and the respondent No.1 (NBEMS) is permitted to hold the examination on August 3, 2025," the bench said in its order.

Hearing petitions challenging the plan to conduct the test in two shifts, the top court had

on May 30 asked the NBEMS to hold it in one shift as two shifts created "arbitrariness" in its opinion.

Questioning the decision to hold it in two shifts, the court had rejected the argument by the NBEMS that there were not enough centres to accommodate all the candidates for NEET-PG.

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Justice Masih added, "You haven't even started the process. The order was passed on May 30. What have you done after that? This is delaying. Why do you need two months?"

The NBEMS said that August 3 "is the earliest possible available date" given by its technical partner, TCS. Appearing for the Centre, Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj said that they had arrived at the August 3 date after several rounds of high-level meetings.

Pak writes again, offers to renew IWT talks; India not ready yet

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

PAKISTAN HAS once again reached out to India, expressing its willingness to address New Delhi's concerns over the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), which India has kept in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

As reported by *The Indian Express* on May 15, Pakistan's Water Resources Secretary, Syed Ali Murtaza, had earlier responded to India's formal communication regarding the Union Cabinet's decision to suspend the treaty. In his letter, he offered to discuss the specific provisions

of the treaty that India objects to — marking the first time Islamabad formally indicated a readiness to engage on the treaty's terms. That outreach came even before Operation Sindoar and included suggested dates in May for holding talks.

Since then, Pakistan is learnt to have written again to the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, renewing its offer for dialogue. Sources said at least two additional letters have been received from Pakistan following Operation Sindoar.

According to top government sources, India is currently not interested in engaging in talks with Pakistan on the issue, and the treaty will continue to remain in abeyance. The letters, sources

said, have been referred to the Ministry of External Affairs.

Pakistan's multiple offers to discuss India's objections are significant because — despite two prior notices from India, in January 2023 and again in September 2024, seeking a "review and modification" of the IWT — Islamabad had not explicitly indicated any willingness to engage. It is only after India suspended the treaty with immediate effect following the terror attack in Pahalgam that Pakistan began pushing for talks.

Meanwhile, sources said the government has drawn up a plan to construct a canal to divert water from the Indus river system to various Indian states. In the first phase, a 130-km stretch is

expected to be completed in just over two years to carry water from the Beas river to Sri Ganganager in Rajasthan. The second phase, spanning 70 km, will extend the canal to the Yamuna river, thereby making water available to Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi.

Although the projected timeline for the first phase is three years, senior officials said it could be completed in two, with water diversion likely to begin within two and a half years.

Sources said the suspension of water flow to Pakistan could create challenges during the Rabi crop season. "If water remains unavailable for over a month during the Rabi season, it could lead to crop damage. Drinking

water supply may also be affected. However, Pakistan's Kharif crops may not face much of an issue, as that season coincides with the monsoon," a senior government official said.

Government sources also said that once the monsoon subsides, India plans to scale up flushing and desilting operations at its hydroelectric reservoirs on the Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus rivers to enhance their storage capacity. "These reservoirs need thorough desilting. In some, silt and sediment have hardened into rock. At least five per cent of the reservoir beds have turned rocky," an official said.

As reported by *The Indian Express* last month, the first flushing exercise at Baglihar and Salal—



Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla welcomes Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in Shimla on Friday. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is also present. ANI

If there was crime, a culpable act, why wasn't it punished, asks V-P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, JUNE 6

A MORE than three-decade-old judicial order has rendered the government of the day "handicapped" and "provides a virtually impregnable cover" to HC judges against whom an FIR cannot be lodged, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar Friday said.

Dhankhar's remarks came on the Justice Yashwant Varma episode during an interaction with a delegation of the Punjab and Haryana HC Bar Association.

"The government of the day is handicapped. It can't register an FIR because there is a judicial order, which is more than three decades old. It provides a virtually impregnable cover. Unless permission is accorded by a functioning judge at the highest level in the judiciary, an FIR can't be regis-

tered... why was that permission not given? That was the minimum that could have been done at the earliest occasion," Dhankhar said, as per an official statement issued after the interaction.

The Centre has reached out to all political parties to build a consensus before bringing a motion of impeachment against Justice Varma during the monsoon session of the Parliament.

Dhankhar, however, asked if bringing a motion to remove a judge, is the answer. "If a crime was committed, a culpable act shaking the foundations of democracy, why wasn't it punished? We have lost more than three months, and the investigation has not even been initiated. Whenever you go to court, they ask why the FIR was delayed," he said.

In an apparent reference to the SC-appointed committee in the matter, he asked, "Does the com-

mittee of judges have a constitutional sanction? Does it have statutory sanction? Can its report result in any outcome? Can the report, by itself, be actionable? The Constitution says mechanism to remove a judge can be initiated either in Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha... this committee cannot substitute for a FIR investigation".

Without naming Justice Varma, he said a "very painful" incident happened mid-March in Delhi when "there was a cash haul, obviously tainted, unaccounted, illegal and unexplained" at the residence of a sitting judge. The incident appeared in the public domain after 6-7 days, he said.

"... We don't know if it was an isolated incident. Whenever such a cash haul is made, the system has to find out whose money was it. What was the money trail? Are big sharks (involved)? Did the FIR was delayed?" he said.

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mittee of judges have a constitutional sanction? Does it have statutory sanction? Can its report result in any outcome? Can the report, by itself, be actionable? The Constitution says mechanism to remove a judge can be initiated either in Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha... this committee cannot substitute for a FIR investigation".

According to the joint statement, "They stressed that perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of terrorist acts must be held accountable and brought to justice. In this context, they called for early adoption of the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism," it said.

"They stressed the need to strengthen UN-led global counter-terrorism cooperation and fully implement the relevant UNSC resolutions, Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and FATF standards," it said.

The ministers, as per the statement, reiterated their "strong support for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan which is free from

terrorism, war and drugs... The Ministers agreed to continue close coordination and consultations on matters related to Afghanistan".

Earlier in the day, Jaishankar appreciated the Central Asian nations that "stood by India and condemned the heinous terrorist attack" while reaffirming that it would be a "trusted development partner" for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. He said the cooperation between India and Central Asia received a "quantum boost" following the PM's visits to all five countries in the region in 2015.

Jaishankar said both India and the Central Asian nations are committed to advancing mutually beneficial cooperation in areas of

trade and investment, defence, regional connectivity, security and new and emerging technologies.

According to the joint statement, "The ministers emphasized optimum usage of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to enhance connectivity between India and the Central Asian countries" while "India reiterated its support for the membership of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in INSTC".

The ministers also appreciated the First meeting of the India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Chabahar Port held in Mumbai in April 2023. India welcomed the interest of Central Asian countries to utilize the services of Shahid Beheshti Terminal at the

Chabahar Port for facilitating their trade with India and beyond.

As per the statement, they also "expressed interest in joint exploration of rare earth and critical minerals".

Appreciating the outcomes of the first India-Central Asia Rare Earth Forum held in September 2024 in New Delhi, they called upon the relevant authorities to hold the second India-Central Asia Rare Earth Forum meeting at the earliest convenience.

The ministers also encouraged exchange of delegations to explore new areas of cooperation in critical minerals".

They also agreed to prepare ground to hold the second India-Central Asia Summit at a mutually convenient date in 2025.

While the delegations were abroad, political differences emerged back home with the Congress slamming the government. Did this come up in your discussions?

Not at all. The leaders we met have high regard for our PM and high respect for India. They have pinned hopes on India as an economic and military partner. All countries told us they want to increase economic and military cooperation.

This (contrarian) narrative has come only from two or three individuals. I will not blame the Congress entirely as several of its members were a part of the delegations. It all boils down to the same three or four individuals. They are so frustrated that they stoop to the extent of taking a stand against India's foreign policy in the garb of attacking the PM.



0119/13/2025/1250

Murshidabad violence: Police file chargesheet, name 13 in murder of father and son

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, JUNE 6

THE SPECIAL Investigation Team (SIT) of the West Bengal Police, probing brutal murders of father-son duo during the communal violence that broke out in Murshidabad district in April, on Friday filed a 983-page chargesheet against 13 individuals.

Hargobind Das (72) and his son Chandan Das (40) were hacked to death by a mob in Jaffabab village on April 11, amid protests over the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 in the district, which left at least three people dead and many injured, besides forcing hundreds to flee their homes.

In the aftermath of the violence, police had arrested over 300 suspected miscreants in connection with over 60 FIRs at various police stations in Murshidabad.

"Charges have been framed against 13 individuals," Syed Waqar Raza, DIG, Murshidabad, who heads the SIT told *The Indian Express*.

Additionally, the SIT has also reportedly named 50 individuals as witnesses to provide testimony in the matter.

Out of the 13 accused named in the chargesheet, 11 had already been arrested by the police in connection with the case.

The 13 accused persons have been charged under various BNS Sections, including Section 191(1)(2)(3) (rioting), Section 332 (trespass), Section 331 (house breaking), Section 310 (2) (dacoity), Section 334 (mischievous), and Section 103(2) (murder) / 3 (5), along with Section 25/27 of the Arms Act.

-WITH PTI INPUTS

Gujarat Cong general secy held over post on Op Sindoor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JUNE 6



Gujarat Congress Gen Secy Rajesh Soni

credit for the bravery they have shown and the money from the public treasury should not be used for publicity... political gains should not be taken in the name of Operation Sindoor." Soni had uploaded around three to four posts on social media platforms on Operation Sindoor.

Cyber Crime Cell SP Dharmendra Sharma told *The Indian Express*, "Sonu was booked under BNS Sections 152 (endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India) and 353 (making, publishing or circulating statements that could lead to public mischief) for demoralising the army." SP Sharma confirmed that earlier in the day, Soni was detained from his home in Ahmedabad and subsequently placed under arrest. He was produced before court and the sent to judicial custody.

Demanding 'immediate bail' from CM Bhupendra Patel for 'social leader and political activist' Rajeshbhai T Soni, GPCC president Shaktisinh Gohil said, "Last night, just like a terrorist is being caught, Rajeshbhai T Soni was arrested by Gandhinagar Cyber Crime. If we look at the post, the only thing that is clear is that the soldiers... should get

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, JUNE 6

THEY SAY one cannot erect a great building on a weak foundation. And definitely not, when it's the world's highest railway bridge — now a distinction given to the Chenab Railway Bridge — inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday.

The Chenab bridge remains one of the highest points in the career of Madhavi Latha G, a professor of civil engineering at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. Latha worked on the project for 17 years — from 2005, shortly after joining IISc, to 2022, when she took her family to the site to have a look at the almost-completed bridge.

"Working on this project has been an experience of a lifetime," Latha, 54, told *The Indian Express*. A civil engineering graduate from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University in Kakinada, Latha went on to pursue her MTech from NIT Warangal and a PhD from IIT Madras, before landing a job as assistant professor at IIT Guwahati in 2003. After a year, she moved to IISc, where she was assigned to this project.

The Chenab Railway Bridge is a steel-and-concrete structure extending 1,315 m across the river gorge. It consists of a 530-metre-long approach bridge and a 785-metre-long deck arch bridge (the part on which vehicles ply). The steel structure can endure extreme weather conditions, including temperatures as low as -20 degrees Celsius. It can also withstand wind speed of 220 km/hr, which is equivalent to winds associated with a super cyclone.

The region falls under seismic zone IV and the proposed bridge had to have the ability to withstand

Magnitude of bridge hits when you see it in real: IISc expert



Madhavi Latha G, a civil engineering professor at IISc, Bengaluru, worked on Chenab bridge project for 17 years

stand earthquakes of magnitude up to 8 on the Richter scale. Young mountains with rocky and steep slopes, fractures and joints meant that the civil engineers had to first prepare the ground so that the strong foundation could be laid.

"The region is geotechnically and geologically challenging and close to the boundary where the Himalayas started forming," Latha said.

As the joints were found dipping towards the valley, the possibility of potential rock slides and slope slides were high, so her design was to fix these from sliding.

"Any slope is standing against gravity and it will always be vulnerable to slide off. This is the major instability in such terrains. Mountain formation is an outcome of tectonic activities and since these mountains are still young and continuously evolving, there are inherent discontinuities, joints, separations," she said, describing the site where the bridge now stands.

Stitching together loose rock fragments, fixing slopes into the deep Chenab valley and stabilizing the ground in a highly active seismic zone to lay the bridge's foundation was the task at her hand. She was primarily responsible for designing protection for the bridge's foundation.

While designing, we had to consider the many joints present within the slopes which posed a threat of making the ground unstable, in particular if there was seismic activity. In order to make the bridge quake-resistant, we had to first stabilize these slopes where I was intensely involved," Madhavi Latha said.

"To stabilize the slope we used cement grouts, so that loose rock fragments, if any, could be bonded together. In addition, we used steel rock anchors to stitch all these joints and connect these fragments," she explained.

Madhavi Latha said at one point her professional skills were required nearly 24x7, giving her no time to rest or sleep.

"At a particular slope cutting, I remember spending sleepless nights as my inputs were required at every stage. Ferrying people and machinery to such altitudes makes the everyday work very expensive," she said.

Her last visit to the site with family in 2022 was a big revelation. "Images cannot do justice, the magnitude of the bridge hits when one sees it in real," she said.

The former state was split into two union territories on August 5, 2019 after the scrapping of Article 370 by Parliament. The issue of restoration of both Article 370 and statehood were major election issues in the J&K Assembly polls held last year after a six-year hiatus and Central rule.

The J&K cabinet in October last year had also passed a resolution for restoration of statehood "in its original form".

Following this, Omar had met the PM in New Delhi and pre-

sented him with the government's resolution.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with L-G Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at Katra in J&K, Friday. PTI

'L-G promoted, I was demoted': Omar rakes up statehood

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, JUNE 6

JAMMU AND Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday raked up the issue of restoring statehood to the Union Territory, saying it was through PM Narendra Modi that "J&K's status will be restored".

Omar was speaking at the inauguration of the rail link between Katra and Kashmir. His speech on the statehood restoration will soon be a reality came after the PM inaugurated the rail link.

The former state was split into two union territories on August 5, 2019 after the scrapping of Article 370 by Parliament. The issue of restoration of both Article 370 and statehood were major election issues in the J&K Assembly polls held last year after a six-year hiatus and Central rule.

Omar said that it would be a mistake not to remember former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on this event. "The project was now completed but this happened because (former) PM Vajpayee gave it the status of Project of national importance and gave it budgetary allocation... Tourism as well locals will benefit from the rail link," he said.

E-comm firm gets legal notice for selling Tirupati laddu

NIKHILA HENRY &
SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, JUNE 6

NO TRAVEL across the globe, no long queues for darshan and no crowds. All that one had to do to get 'Tirupati Laddu' in the US was log on to the e-commerce website PushMyCart and place an order.

The Texas-based Mahita LLC, the owner of PushMyCart, is among those that have received a

legal notice from the management of the Sri Venkateswara temple — the first-of-its-kind move by a temple in India to safeguard the sanctity and intellectual property of the 'Tirupati Laddu'.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the temple, initiated legal action against many unauthorised entities that it claims was found selling products under 'Tirupati Laddu' in violation of its registered Geographical Indication (GI).

The notices were served for unauthorised commercial exploitation of the 'Tirupati Laddu' name and falsely associating their offerings with the temple, the TTD said Friday. The legal notice to

PushMyCart, a copy of which is with *The Indian Express*, revealed how the platform was unauthorisedly using the GI. The platform had linked themselves to TTD by listing the body as a "vendor".

In response, PushMyCart acknowledged receipt of the legal notice and suspended its product listings pending legal review.

TTD EO Syamala Rao said the 'Tirupati Laddu' is not a product, "but a sacred prasadam with spiritual and cultural value".

The sale of prasadam for commercial purposes by any third party is "illegal", the notice read. The notice also said that the Tirupati Laddu is a protected GI under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

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PushMyCart, a copy of which is with *The Indian*

Cong asked me about special session, told them not the right time, says Sule

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

HAVING BROKEN ranks with the opposition on their demand for a special session of Parliament to discuss the developments following the Pahalgam terror attack, NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule on Friday said the Congress had contacted her when she was abroad heading the all-party delegation and she told them to wait as it was "not the right time to ask the government hard questions". "It was time for the country to show a united face," she said.

"While I was abroad as a part of the delegation, the Congress contacted me. I said I cannot join them as I am away and told them to wait till all the delegations return. I told them, let's have a meeting and decide after I return, but it happened before I returned. That is why I could not sign the letter to the Prime Minister," Sule told *The Indian Express*.

Earlier this week, 16 Opposition parties led by the Congress wrote to Modi demanding a special session, saying "there are serious questions facing the nation about the terror attack, killing of civilians in Pooh, Uri and Rajouri, the ceasefire announcements, and the implications on our national security and foreign policy".

"We have supported the government's efforts to engage with



The all-party delegation led by NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule leaves after meeting External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi, Friday. Praveen Khanna

the international community on India's position. The government has briefed foreign nations and the media, but not Parliament – keeping the people of India and their elected representatives in the dark," the Opposition parties said. The NCP (SP) was not a signatory to the letter.

Asked whether that was the reason for her party not signing the letter, Sule said, "That's exactly because... you have to understand the factual situation. I was out. (Shradh) Pawar sahab had already made the statement that till the entire operation is over that the NCP will stand by the government. We will not say a word against the government. This is not the time to do petty politics.

This is an issue of India's larger interest. So country comes first, then state, then party and then family."

Sule said the country comes first and India must send a mes-

sage to the world that we are united against any terror attack. "Pawar sahab had made it very clear. We were expecting that when the July session comes, hopefully everything will be settled by then, then we can definitely debate it. Because in a vibrant democracy, every issue must be debated, but there has to be a right time for it."

Saying that Pawar had made it clear that Operation Sindoora was ongoing and no special session was required till it finishes, Sule said her party was with the government on sensitive issues. "Once the operation is over, we will ask the government hard questions, but not now. This is not the moment, especially when we were all out of India. We were telling the world more information, giving the facts to the world. Then we cannot ask questions.

See, it's country first, then the state, then the party and then your family," she said.

Sule and the members of her delegation – they travelled to Egypt, Qatar, Ethiopia and South Africa – met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday and provided him with feedback about their interactions. "It's a lot of learning and we have come with a lot of feedback for the government. The countries which we visited were very, very supportive, and stand united and very strongly with the government of India or any terror attack anywhere in the world," she said.

Sule said her party would "definitely ask" the government questions during the Monsoon session. "Of course, I think India will ask questions, not just the NCP (SP). India will ask questions. India wants to know a lot of answers. It is not just about the NCP (SP). India wants to know."

'What Maharashtra wants will happen': Uddhav confirms discussions with MNS

VALLABH OZARKAR
MUMBAI, JUNE 6

AMID GROWING talks over a possible reconciliation with cousin Raj Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Friday confirmed that discussions – at least informally – are underway with the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), saying that the party is now looking into "minute details" of a potential alliance.

"There is no confusion in my mind or that of my Shiv Sainiks.

Even MNS workers are in touch with us, and there is no confusion in their minds either," Uddhav told reporters at his residence, Matoshree.

When asked directly about the status of the talks, he replied, "Let us contemplate some minute details." He added, "I will not give a message – I will give news. And what is in the hearts of the people of Maharashtra – that will happen."

He revealed that it was Raj who had taken the initiative to start talks, not just during the Covid-19 pandemic when he called



Uddhav Thackeray Raj Thackeray

Asked about his own views, Amit said, "Whatever Raj Thackeray wants is what I want," but reiterated that "two brothers should talk – others talking won't help."

On Friday, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut added to the momentum, saying that the "process has begun". "We Sainiks are positive because the two leaders – the brothers – are positive. When we talk about phone calls between them, who knows? Maybe they have already spoken. How would we know?" Raut told reporters.

"Alliances are not formed through media sound bites or newspaper headlines. Direct dialogue is necessary," Amit had said on Thursday, adding that the two leaders have each other's phone numbers.

Raut also quipped that he may soon visit Raj's residence. "I may drop by Raj Thackeray's house for tea. After all, it is my house too."

The growing signals of rapprochement between the once-bitter rivals have now triggered responses across the political

spectrum.

The Congress, a key ally of the Shiv Sena (UBT) in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), extended support to the development. "If two brothers are coming together, we welcome it," said party spokesperson Atul Londhe.

However, Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar offered a more guarded view. "If the two brothers are coming together or not, it is their lookout. What and how can we comment on that?"

Despite the continued exchange of goodwill from both camps, political observers, however, remain cautious. "Unless there's a face-to-face meeting between Uddhav and Raj, the rest is conjecture. But Uddhav's remark today is the closest we have seen to confirmation," a senior analyst said.

Raj Thackeray had split from the undivided Shiv Sena in 2005 and launched the MNS in 2006, following a bitter succession dispute in the Thackeray family.

Our country's every language fully connected with other languages: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

INDIA'S EVERY language is completely connected with other languages and the development of all languages is not possible without each other, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Friday.

Launching the 'Bharatiya Bhasha Anubhag' (Indian Languages Section) in New Delhi, Shah said only by strengthening all the local languages of the country, "we can take India to its eternal glorious position".

"Every language of ours is completely connected with other languages and the development of all languages is not possible without each other. All our languages are like rivers combining together to form the Ganga of Indian culture," he said.

The home minister said Indian languages are the soul of the country's culture and the culture is the soul of India.

Shah said that with the establishment of the Indian Languages Section, the department of official language has now become a complete entity.

Medium of instruction to be Indian, local languages in the future: Pradhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

UNION EDUCATION Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday said that in the coming years, the medium of instruction in educational institutions will primarily be Indian and local languages.

The minister made the remarks while chairing a meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament on the theme of promotion of education in Indian languages, officials said.

"In the coming years, the medium of instruction will be primarily Indian and local languages. Higher education institutes such as IITs are introducing courses in local languages, including technical courses such as engineering. The priority remains to provide books in Indian languages," Pradhan said.

The minister also emphasised the use of technology in translating content and leveraging artificial intelligence for language translation.

"For students coming from rural areas or economically weaker sections, technology can help in understanding the content in their preferred language," he added.

MPs, who attended the meeting, appreciated the material prepared by the Ministry of Education on Bhasha Sangam, which will help students learn 100 sentences in 22 languages.

After complaint with CVC, TISS pro-VC told to step down

PALLAVI SMART
MUMBAI, JUNE 6

THE TATA Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has relieved its Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Shankar Das of his administrative responsibilities with immediate effect, following an alleged complaint of financial misappropriation lodged with the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

He will, however, continue as professor until final inquiry report.

According to a notice issued by TISS Registrar Narendra Mishra on June 5, "Consequent upon approval of the Competent Authority, Prof. Shankar Das, Pro-Vice Chancellor, is hereby relieved from the charge of Pro-Vice Chancellor with immediate effect. This is issued with the approval of the competent authority."

While Das will no longer hold the administrative position, he will continue to serve as a professor at the institute until the inquiry is concluded.

While TISS administration was unavailable for a comment, according to sources within the institution, the action follows preliminary findings by an internal committee formed after the

CVC forwarded a complaint submitted by a whistleblower. The complaint reportedly pertains to alleged financial irregularities.

A committee was constituted by the TISS administration after the CVC forwarded the whistleblower's complaint.

During the preliminary phase of the investigation, the committee found merit in the allegations, prompting the decision to relieve Prof Das of his administrative duties to avoid any potential influence on the ongoing inquiry," a source familiar with the matter said.

Das was also unavailable for comment.

Former Kerala PCC chief T Balakrishna Pillai dies

A gentleman politician known for his selfless nature rooted in Gandhian principles throughout his political career, Pillai was popularly known as "Thennala" in the party circles.

A staunch loyalist to the grand old party, he always tried to keep a low-profile and kept himself away from the race for power positions while leading a dignified personal and political life.

Thiruvananthapuram: Congress veteran and former president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Thennala Balakrishna Pillai, known for his gentlemanly demeanour, simplicity and consensus-oriented leadership, died at a private hospital in Thiruvananthapuram Friday, following age-related ailments, party sources said. He was 95.

Pillai, who had been away from active politics for some years, was a two-time MLA and three-time Rajya Sabha MP. He also served as the president of the KPCC in two terms.

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No. 45221/PB RTP-61/25

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PTI

Thennala

Shankar Das



Viksit Bharat ka Amrit Kaal
Seva, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan ke
11 SAAL

Easy and Affordable Credit Access for Farmers

Over ₹10 lakh crore disbursed via Kisan Credit Cards to over 7.7 crore farmers



BRIEFLY



Sharmistha Panoli at Alipore Women's Correctional Home, in Kolkata, Friday. PTI

WEST BENGAL
Influencer walks out of jail, day after getting bail

Kolkata: Social media influencer Sharmistha Panoli was released from prison on Friday after the Calcutta High Court granted her interim bail in a case involving alleged communal remarks made in a video uploaded on social media. Panoli, a 22-year-old law student, was arrested from Gurugram in Haryana last week after the FIR was registered. Panoli walked out of the prison dressed in blue denim and a round neck t-shirt, wearing a surgical mask. She was greeted by her family members, who took her inside the car and drove off. PTI

UTTAR PRADESH
Bikers hit by BJP leader's convoy car, say police

Bareilly: A car, purportedly part of UP Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak's convoy, had a collision with two motorcyclists on the Budaun Road in Bareilly city on Friday. Sushil, 30, suffered severe injuries to his head, face, hands, and legs and was rushed to the Mission Hospital, where his condition remains critical. Yashpal, 28, was given first aid, Subhash Nagar Police Station SHO Dharmendra Singh said. Both are Etawah natives. According to eyewitnesses, the incident took place in front of the Kargana police outpost. PTI

Delhi court acquits former coal secy, two officials in Jharkhand coal 'scam'

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

A DELHI court Friday acquitted former coal ministry officials H C Gupta (secretary), K S Kropsha (joint secretary) and K C Samaria (coal allocation director) in a case linked to alleged irregularities in the allocation of the Mahuaigarhi coal block in Jharkhand to the

company M/s Jas Infrastructure Capital Pvt Ltd (JICPL).

While the three men – represented by advocates Rahul Tyagi and Mathew M Phillip – were acquitted, Special Judge Sanjay Bansal of Rouse Avenue Court convicted the firm JICPL and its director Manoj Kumar Jayaswal.

Arguments on their sentence will be heard on July 8.

The allegations in the case

showing an increasing trend. However, this number for the pandemic years has been missing in the CRS data.

The death registration data is now available for all the three years of the pandemic, and the numbers clearly show that the official count of deaths caused by Covid-19 was a severe under-reporting of the actual situation. According to the official count, about 5.3 lakh people died due to Covid-19 in India in the three-year period of 2020 to 2022.

The CRS data for these years shows that the actual number could be anywhere between 20 lakh and 25 lakh, or may be a little more, about four to five times the

official count. However, in the absence of information about the proportion of deaths getting registered, a more realistic estimate of the deaths caused by Covid-19 still remains elusive.

But it is also clear now that estimates of several research studies, which had been putting India's Covid-19 death count in the range of five to six million, or even higher, were grossly exaggerated.

The CRS-2022 also shows a reversal of trends in birth registrations. The years 2020 and 2021 had seen a drop in registrations of births compared to 2019, the year before the pandemic. In 2019, 2.48 crore births were registered in the country, but this number dropped

to about 2.42 crore in 2020 and 2021. In the year 2022, more than 2.54 crore births were registered, the maximum ever. The 86.5 lakh deaths registered in 2022 is also the highest number of registration for deaths ever, apart from 2021. Past data from 2007 to 2019 shows that about 83.5 lakh people die in India every year, on an average. The estimate for actual number of deaths during these years has varied from 81.17 lakh in 2017 to 85.89 lakh in 2012. During these years, the proportion of deaths getting registered increased from 69% to 92%. If it is considered that the registered deaths in India now closely approximate the actual number of

deaths, then the 86.5 lakh deaths for 2022 does not appear to be a major deviation from the normal range. It could fall just outside the upper bound of the range seen in data from 2007 to 2019. This is very unlike the data for 2021, when 1.02 crore deaths were registered, and clearly reflected the impact of the second wave of the pandemic in the middle of 2021.

A separate set of data, about the medical cause of deaths, released simultaneously, shows that 25,393 deaths in 2022 were attributed to Covid-19. For 2021, this number was 41,358.

But barely a quarter of the registered deaths in India get a medical certification.

CBI: Hisar man raped multiple kids, used them for pornography

Arrange counselling for kids: Panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, JUNE 6

THE HISAR district Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Friday asked the CBI to arrange counselling sessions for the victims of an alleged sexual predator who has been arrested by the central agency for raping and circulating explicit child sexual abuse material on the internet.

The CBI arrested the 40-year-old physically challenged bachelor from his Hisar residence on June 3, days after a case was registered on May 29 on charges of rape and sexual assault on multiple minor victims.

The man was arrested following searches at his residence. The agency said it has seized electronic gadgets containing incriminating material, which showed that he allegedly raped, sexually assaulted, and threatened multiple children for pornography. Sources within the agency said that the accused, who operated a common service centre (CSC) in a rural area, had been exploiting the victims over the past few years.

Two of the minor victims Thursday recorded their statements with the Hisar Child Welfare Committee. A member of

the Committee, Manoj Kaushik said that the panel will ensure protection and welfare of the victims apart from financial assistance to them.

The committee is established under the Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act), 2015, to handle cases of children in need of care and protection. They have the powers of a first-class magistrate and are responsible for providing care, protection, treatment, development, and rehabilitation for these children.

According to the CBI, none of the victims or their families had approached police with the complaint before the agency charged the accused for creating, browsing, collecting, possessing, exchanging, and uploading child sexual abuse material. The agency identified the accused and the victims using the Interpol's International Child Sexual Exploitation (JCSE) database and Cyber Tipline Reports, generated by Google and submitted it to Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (ICCC). "The analysis of the images and videos using cyber forensic tools revealed the location of the incidents to Hisar in Haryana, depicting multiple victims of sexual assault and abuse by the accused," said the CBI.

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EMERGENCY LANDING

An Indian Air Force Apache helicopter made "precautionary landing" at Chilkana area in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday due to a technical issue during a routine sortie. After checks, the pilots flew it to the Sarsawa airbase in UP. PTI

CHHATTISGARH

Another senior Maoist leader killed in Indravati National Park encounter

JAYPRAKASH NAIDU
RAIPUR, JUNE 6

A DAY after security forces recovered the body of a senior Maoist leader after an encounter in Indravati National Park in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, the body of yet another leader from the banned outfit's Telangana state committee has now been found.

The body was recovered from the encounter that broke out in Indravati National Park in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Thursday morning, officials have said. This is the third encounter this year in the national park and brings the total gunned down in them to 45.

"The deceased Maoist is identified as 45-year-old Bhaskar @ Mailarapu Adellu. He is a Special Zonal Committee

(SZC) Member of the Telangana State Committee," Bastar range Inspector General of Police Sundarrajp said.

A resident of Urumadla village in Telangana's Adilabad district, Bhaskar was the secretary of the Mancherial-Komarambheem (MKB) division of the Telangana State Committee of the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit. He had a bounty of Rs 45 lakh – Rs 25 lakh in Chhattisgarh and 20 lakh in Telangana.

"An AK-47 rifle along with other explosives, weapons, and ammunition have been recovered from the encounter site," Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said.

This is the second significant death in this encounter after central committee member Thentu Laxmi Narasimha Chalam Alas Sudhakar, 66, was killed Thursday.

"Keeping in mind the totality of circumstances, this court is of the considered opinion that the bail granted to the respondent (Kulkarni) ought to be cancelled. Consequently, the bail granted to accused No. 15, i.e., the respondent, is hereby cancelled," the bench said.

It also directed Kulkarni to surrender before the concerned trial court or jail authority within one week from Friday. PTI

SC cancels bail to former Karnataka minister in 2016 murder case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday cancelled the bail granted to former Karnataka minister Vinay Kulkarni in connection with a 2016 case related to the murder of BJP worker Yogesh Gowda. A bench of justices Sanjay Karol and Satischandra Sharma passed the order while noting that there was sufficient material on record to suggest that attempts were made by Kulkarni to either contact the witnesses or alternatively influence them.

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Bihar: 5 boys paraded naked for 'stealing' chocolates; 3 arrested

Patna: Police arrested a shopkeeper and two of his associates for parading five minor boys naked in Bihar's Sitamarhi district on Thursday. The men accused the boys of stealing chocolates from the former's grocery store in Malahi village, police said.

Providing details of the incident, SDPO Sadar-1, Sitamarhi, Shri Ram Krishna said, "On June 5, a grocery shopkeeper and his

associates stripped five minor boys, smeared lime on their faces, garlanded them with slippers and beat them... accusing them of stealing chocolates. The incident was captured in a video that went viral on social media. The shopkeeper had not informed the police.

(WITH INPUTS FROM MANANYA SHUKLA)

associates stripped five minor boys, smeared lime on their faces, garlanded them with slippers and beat them... accusing them of stealing chocolates. The incident was captured in a video that went viral on social media. The shopkeeper had not informed the police.

"If her recovery is stable, she is likely to be discharged within 7 to 10 days, though further surgery may be needed later," a senior doctor told The Indian Express.

Meanwhile, the victim underwent surgery at a hospital in Lucknow on Friday.

According to the police, two criminal cases of physical assault were pending against him – one registered in 2021 and another in 2024, at different police stations in the city.

Meanwhile, the victim underwent surgery at a hospital in Lucknow on Friday.

"Further, during the year 2021, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 was introduced by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Surrogacy Rules were notified in 2022. The Surrogacy

Rules permitted surrogacy only for Indian nationals and OCI cardholder parents. However, in the instant case, surrogacy was commenced... before commencement of Surrogacy Regulation/law in India in violation of MHA guidelines," the government told the high court.

It added, "Considering the peculiar circumstances of the case and in the interest of the child, the matter was examined in this Ministry. It has been decided to grant exit permit to the Petitioner No.1 after regularising his overstayed period by charging appropriate financial penalty." Taking the MHA's submission on record, Justice Datta thus directed that following payment of the necessary dues, the exit visa be granted to the child expeditiously, and disposed of the matter.

RELIEF AFTER INTERVENTION BY 2 MINISTRIES, DELHI HIGH COURT; AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN AND BOY EXPECTED TO FLY OUT LATER THIS MONTH

6 years on, Australian child born in India through surrogacy gets exit visa nod

SOHINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

IT TOOK six years and multiple back-and-forths between two key Union ministries, and the Delhi High Court to ensure an exit visa for a six-year-old child born through surrogacy to Indian-origin Australian citizens in 2019, before the Surrogacy Act came into force in 2022.

In the absence of clarity among the two ministries – Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) – and after several "procedural hurdles", the MHA on May 21 directed its Bureau of Immigration to issue an exit visa to the child, subject to payment of late fees for overstaying beyond 90 days. The MHA then informed the

high court of its decision, recorded in an order by Justice Sachin Datta on May 26.

An exit visa is permission granted to a foreigner to leave India in the absence of a valid visa or entry into a country. In the case of the child, born in India and staying here since his passport as an Australian citizen had no entry stamp to India, as the child's passport was obtained while the child and his guardian were in India, thus requiring an exit visa to leave the country.

The MHA's decision came after the child's father, an Australian citizen, moved the Delhi High Court earlier this year seeking directions to issue an exit visa for his child, which he had applied for nearly two years ago on April 28, 2023. A single father, he is expected to fly out later this month

to Australia with his son, say his lawyers Rakesh Kumar and Puneet Kumar.

The child's parents are Australian citizens with Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) registration. Born in 2019 in India, the child obtained Australian citizenship while residing in India, in January 2023 following a DNA test establishing parentage of an Australian parent (the child's father), a Mumbai civil court order, and after complying with the necessary processes.

The child's mother, who suffered from Crohn's disease, and the father, had moved to India in 2018 and decided to go for a gestational surrogacy in 2019 in compliance with Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Guidelines, 2005, which required the execution of a surrogacy

agreement with the surrogate mother and intended parent.

This was prior to the Surrogacy Regulation Act, 2021, which only came into effect in January 2022. The boy was born in Indore in June 2019, and while his mother died in 2021 due to COVID-19, by January 2023, the boy's father obtained the child's Australian citizenship along with a Mumbai civil court order granting him permission to take the minor from India to Australia.

Days after issuing an Australian passport to the child in April 2023, his father applied for an exit visa on behalf of his son through the e-portal of the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO). In June 2024, the application was shown as 'completed' on the portal but with directions to "wait for further instructions."

However, on August 14, 2024, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) issued an office memorandum (OM), informing the MHA that as per provisions of the Surrogacy Act 2021 and its Rules 2022, foreign nationals are not eligible to avail surrogacy services in India and, for a couple of Indian origin (OCI cardholders), they have to obtain a certificate of recommendation from the National Board formed under the Act before availing such surrogacy treatment. The office document also sought documents from the father with respect to the surrogacy, by way of clarification.

In further bureaucratic back and forth, in November 2024, the MHA sought that the father submit a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) from the MoHFW, and days later, the MoHFW telephonically informed the father that they are not responsible for issuing any such NOC.

The petitioners – father and son – argued that the Surrogacy Act and its Rules cannot apply retrospectively as it was not in place when the child was born, and had termed the MoHFW's office memorandum of August 2024, directing them to submit proofs of requisite permissions as per the Act, as "illegal".

When the case was first taken up by Justice Datta in April, it was argued by Justice Datta that with the child obtaining admission in a school in Sydney for academic year 2025, the delay in the grant of visa is disrupting the child's education and prolonged absence from regular classes at school has led to issuance of absentee notice by the school, making him likely to suffer cancellation of his admission.

The child's admission to the school in Sydney, Australia, was facilitated remotely from India. At the time of the court hearing, the Union government was granted time to obtain instructions.

On May 26, informing the court, the Union government submitted that "during the year 2015, since there was no regulation on surrogacy in India, MHA had imposed restriction on grant of exit permit to children born through surrogacy to foreign national parents (including OCI cardholders)." "Further, during the year 2021, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 was introduced by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Surrogacy Rules were notified in 2022. The Surrogacy



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IN PURSUIT OF GROWTH

Muted inflation has given RBI space to lower rates. Policy will now hinge on how economy navigates global uncertainties

THE JUNE MEETING of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee contained many surprises. As against expectations of a 25 basis point cut in interest rates, the committee lowered the benchmark repo rate by 50 basis points. This brings the cumulative cuts since February to 100 basis points. The repo rate now stands at 5.5 per cent. The rationale for doing so seems straightforward. As RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said, "It is imperative to continue to stimulate domestic private consumption and investment through policy levers to step up the growth momentum." And muted inflation provides the central bank the space to lower interest rates to do so.

Inflation had edged lower to 3.16 per cent in April and is likely to stay subdued. A favourable monsoon bodes well for farm output and there are expectations of major commodities such as crude oil witnessing moderation. Forecasts by the RBI and most analysts do indicate softness in prices. As per the central bank's latest forecast, retail inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, is expected to average 3.7 per cent in 2025-26 (3.15 per cent in the first half of the year and 4.15 per cent in the second half). This is lower than its earlier estimate of 4 per cent. Alongside the rate cut, the RBI has also unexpectedly cut the cash reserve ratio by 100 basis points to boost liquidity. As per the central bank, this measure could release primary liquidity of Rs 2.5 lakh crore by December 2025. This will aid in policy transmission.

However, at the same meeting, the RBI also unexpectedly announced a change in its policy stance from "accommodative" to "neutral", after having shifted it only in the last meeting. In the April policy meeting, the RBI Governor had said that the "stance of monetary policy signals the intended direction of policy rates going forward". This sudden decision is being viewed by some as signalling a pause in the rate cut cycle. In his comments, Malhotra did say that "monetary policy is left with very limited space to support growth". And though the central bank has retained its estimate of GDP growth for 2025-26 at 6.5 per cent, there does remain considerable uncertainty over the growth momentum. In fact, it has noted that "spillovers emanating from protracted geopolitical tensions, and global trade and weather-related uncertainties, pose downside risks to growth". Thus, taken together, the various announcements in the June meeting do suggest that the central bank will probably adopt a wait-and-watch approach over the coming months as it assesses the impact of the measures it has announced so far. Policy action in this period will depend on how the trajectory of growth and inflation evolves.

A SPLIT FORETOLD

Trump-Musk spat signals fresh volatility. Delhi must get used to working with a much more temperamental Washington

ITHAS BEEN less than six months (of a 48-month tenure) since Donald J Trump assumed the office of the President of the United States for a second time. In that time, he has upended the US's relationship with its Western allies and engaged in a start-stop tariff regime based on questionable assumptions. He has also injected elements of uncertainty into the US's ties with countries, including India, that have been growing and deepening steadily for nearly three decades. The public spat between President Trump and Elon Musk — beyond the barbs and the almost reality TV style of the "breakup" — must be seen in this context. Drama and uncertainty mark both US domestic politics and how the superpower engages with the world.

The world's richest man played a significant part in the Trump campaign and the administration. Musk contributed about \$250 million to Trump's election fund and, after the election, led the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). The differences over the Trump administration's "One Big Beautiful Bill", emerging a day after Musk left DOGE, quickly spiralled into an all-out social-media war between the two billionaires, replete with name-calling. While Musk claimed that he won Trump the election and echoed conspiracy theories about his connections with deceased financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the President raised questions about government contracts for the Tesla and SpaceX founder's companies.

Given their egos, perhaps it was a split foretold. That said, the Trump-Musk spat sends out the message that it is not necessarily institutions and interests that determine the course of politics and policy in Washington. Till recently, the "bromance" between the two men made Musk's companies all but de facto national champions and the tech entrepreneur was seen across capitals as an extension of the White House. SpaceX, for example, has deep ties to NASA and its vessels ferry US astronauts to the International Space Station. The uncertainty around the future of that collaboration will make things more complicated for Delhi as it tries to deepen cooperation in space with the US. Deals with Tesla and Starlink, while made by private players, may take on a different colour. The Trump administration's domestic policies have already had reverberations in India, especially its attitude to visas for foreign students and workers. The immature insistence that the White House mediated the ceasefire after Operation Sindoor went against the grain of 30 years of the bilateral relationship — through Republican and Democrat administrations — of de-hyphenating India and Pakistan. As India tries to manage the US relationship over the next three years, it must keep in mind that it is working with a partner that is much more temperamental — today's Trump loyalist might be tomorrow's persona non grata.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Edmund White, pioneer of gay literature, boldly told his story — and that of an America coming of age

IN HIS 2005 autobiographical book, *My Lives*, Edmund White recalls being shamed as an adolescent by a psychologist and family friend, writing, "Foolishly, I had imagined I could transform the dross of homosexuality into the gold of art, but now I saw I could never be a great artist." Starting in 1973 with *Forgetting Elena*, to his relief and that of a world in which he is today known as the "the pioneer of gay literature in America", he repeatedly proved himself wrong.

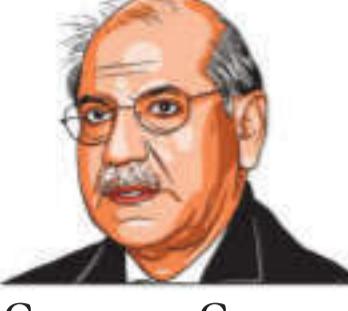
White, who died on Tuesday at the age of 85, belonged to a generation of "gay writers" who were not writing for a straight readership. He came to prominence at a time when homosexuality was illegal and publishing houses would routinely get sued for pornography over a "kiss between two men". White's visceral writing style and autobiographical works forced readers to get up close and personal with the grief of being "different" in a cold and cruel world. White's father was ashamed of his son's sexuality, and his mother, a psychologist, saw him, as a "guinea pig". From trying to "cure himself" to becoming one of the leading voices responsible for the explosion of queer writing in the mainstream was a long journey. White's *The Edmund Trilogy* — a coming-of-age tale of a gay man's life from childhood to middle age — tells this story. The first in the series, *A Boy's Own Story*, became an instant classic.

At a time when queer writers often had to work in isolation, White, along with six of his contemporaries, formed The Violet Quill — a club with "a mixture of gay male friends, lovers and enemies" — to build a network for writers like himself. Four of the seven founders died in the AIDS epidemic. Through all this grief and love, White wrote 30 books, each bold in its own way, leaving a legacy of freedom.

WORDLY WISE

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN OUR INTIMATE LIVES CAN'T BE DISCUSSED WITH STRANGERS, EXCEPT IN BOOKS. — EDMUND WHITE

After Sindoor, calculate



SHYAM SARAN

India must look at China-Pakistan axis, develop strategic ambiguity, keep ties on an even keel with America

WRITING A POSTSCRIPT to a military engagement that is barely four weeks old may seem premature, more so since Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared that Operation Sindoor has only been paused. It may, therefore, erupt again. Picking through the smoke-and-mirrors accounts of the four-day clash of arms, one may still reach tentative conclusions and derive some lessons for the future.

The aftermath of the four-day "war" should be read together with the observations I made post-Pahalgam on the strategic calculus driving Pakistani actions, especially the intent of the remarks made by Pakistan Army Chief Asif Munir ('Desperate steps in desperate times', IE, April 24).

Irrespective of which side caused more losses to the other, Pakistan has succeeded, at least temporarily, in "re-hyphenating" itself with India in the international arena, the great lever being its nuclear status. There were heightened external concerns following the Indian attack on Pakistan's Nur Khan base, which is reportedly located near a nuclear command and control centre. Nuclear brinkmanship, implicit or explicit, will always be present in any India-Pakistan war or threat of war. One should also be cautious in claiming to have found "space" for conventional retaliation under the nuclear overhang. No two military events are the same. The danger of nuclear war will persist as long as atomic weapons are deployed by both sides. The so-called "space" is notional. In a different war scenario, it may evaporate without warning.

A robust Indian response to a cross-border terrorist attack, which India wants to keep limited and non-escalatory, may be interpreted (though not intended) as India acknowledging Pakistan's capacity to hit back and raise the ante. India being committed to "non-escalatory" action suits Pakistan fine. Is it necessary to make such a declaration? Perhaps India needs to adopt its own version of "strategic ambiguity" in relation to Pakistan on the lines of the US posture in relation to Taiwan. We should also stop making repeated assertions that the next terrorist attack will invite Indian military retaliation. We should reserve the right to choose whatever may be the most appropriate response. Why tie our hands in advance? Creating a public expectation of a military response limits the op-

tions available to a leadership. There should be a whole suite of possible options to choose from — coercive, diplomatic, economic and financial, and combinations thereof. The pursuit of deterrence may be better served by keeping the other side guessing.

Operation Sindoor has made it amply clear that China will keep upgrading Pakistan's military capabilities to serve as an effective proxy against India. China was instrumental in enabling Pakistan to acquire a nuclear deterrent even before India and Pakistan became declared nuclear weapon states. But it had been coy about this. With its enhanced military and economic capabilities, it is no longer defensive about its military alliance with Pakistan. The two-front challenge, which India has always been concerned about, is already here. Our strategic calculations and defence preparedness must reflect this reality. Operation Sindoor has provided valuable insights into the technological capabilities of Chinese weapons, the effectiveness of Indian weaponry in outsmarting some Chinese systems deployed by Pakistan and the battle tactics that Pakistan has learnt from its "iron brother". These lessons must be internalised in our military strategy and tactics.

Credibility is the indispensable asset in handling the diplomatic and domestic fallout from any such crisis. Credibility, in turn, is a function of transparency. What the CDS very sensibly said recently about losses suffered by India in the military exchanges could have been conveyed in the earlier briefings by the Ministry of External Affairs and the armed forces. The "appropriate" time for such information to be released is before the inevitable deluge of misinformation takes hold. The question also arises: Did the all-party delegations sent out to various countries to present India's case have the same brief as the CDS? India still has a lot to learn about information management. One's own learning from several years of diplomatic work is that credibility is indispensable to good diplomacy. This applies to friend and adversary alike.

There are some other points to consider. US President Donald Trump's unpredictability is a reality, as is his narcissist penchant for self-adulation. There is no need to rise to the bait and keep denying his role in brokering a

ceasefire. A polite refutation having been made, one should move on. The partnership with the US remains important for India's economic and technological capacity building. Indications are that this partnership remains largely intact.

One may have views about the efficacy of sending all-party delegations to various countries to present India's case, but it is a surprise that no such demarche was thought necessary for our immediate subcontinental neighbours. This contradicts the Neighbourhood First Policy. Engagement and a structured dialogue must be part of India's Pakistan policy. If nothing else, such dialogue may provide useful insights into the thinking of its rulers. Reliance on coercive instruments alone has not worked so far and is unlikely to in the future.

Domestic politics will influence foreign policy but foreign policy should not become a tool to be used in domestic politics. Diplomacy is outward-oriented. Its audience is the international community, including friends and adversaries alike. Inward-oriented diplomacy, seeking validation from a domestic audience, will undermine the pursuit of national interests. Pakistan has become an issue not just in, but of, domestic politics. It has become entangled with the politics of communalism. Pakistan should be dealt with as just another state that poses a foreign policy and security challenge to India. Its identity as an Islamic state should be irrelevant.

Finally, while punishing Pakistan over cross-border terrorism, should there not be accountability for the security lapses that made ordinary Indian citizens vulnerable to the violent outrage in Pahalgam? Retaliation against Pakistan must not deflect attention away from the urgent need to plug the gaps that give our adversaries the opportunity to deliver such humiliating blows against us.

The writer is a former foreign secretary



KAMINI WALIA

VACCINES ARE CRITICAL tools for the containment and elimination of infectious diseases. They work not merely by protecting individuals, but by reducing community transmission. There have been several global pushes to improve vaccine uptake over the years, but one major coordinated effort occurred in 2021 in response to the Covid pandemic, which saw the most rapid vaccine introduction in history.

Globally, the years with the most vaccine introductions have typically coincided with public health initiatives, funding boosts, or as a response to pandemics. The 1980s and 1990s saw WHO's Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) with DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis), polio, measles, BCG (tuberculosis) vaccines and Hepatitis B and Hib vaccines introduced in the late 1990s. The 2000s saw accelerated introductions of Hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib), and yellow fever vaccines in low-income countries, marking a shift in global access to routine vaccines. The introduction of new and underused vaccines like pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), rotavirus vaccine, HPV and Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine marked the next decade.

The United States is currently experiencing a significant resurgence of measles, with 1,046 confirmed cases as of May 27. This marks a sharp increase from previous years, with the majority of cases occurring among unvaccinated individuals in regions with declining

A SHOT AGAINST DOUBT

US measles spike shows how vaccine hesitancy threatens public health progress

Measles is often regarded as the "canary in the coalmine" — if cases spread, it is a warning that other disease outbreaks might spring up where there are gaps in vaccination coverage. Its resurgence in the US is a global warning that even advanced health systems are vulnerable without consistent immunisation.

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immunisation rates. Measles was officially eliminated from the US in 2000. This implies that new cases occur only when someone contracts measles abroad and returns to the country. A new study from Johns Hopkins points out that the significant drop in childhood vaccination rates is concerning because herd immunity requires at least 95 per cent vaccination coverage.

The MMR vaccine is probably one of the most effective vaccines. A single dose gives 93 per cent protection from infection, and two doses up to 98 per cent. Measles, which can be deadly for unvaccinated children, is highly contagious. Factors like post-pandemic vaccine hesitancy, non-evidence-based fears of the association between the MMR vaccine and autism, and the complacency of populations who may not remember the long-term sequelae of measles infection are behind the dwindling measles vaccination rates in the US.

Measles is often regarded as the "canary in the coalmine" — if cases spread, it is a warning that other disease outbreaks might spring up where there are gaps in vaccination coverage. Its resurgence in the US is a global warning that even advanced health systems are vulnerable without consistent immunisation. Globally, only 83 per cent of children received the first dose of the measles vaccine in 2023; 74 per cent received the second dose. These figures fall short of the 95 per cent coverage needed to prevent outbreaks.

India has made significant strides in its immunisation efforts, particularly under the UIP. India achieved a national immunisation coverage of 93.5 per cent in 2023-24, indicating that the majority of children received all recommended vaccines by the age of two. Since its inception, Mission Indradhanush, focused on areas with low immunisation rates, has completed 12 phases, vaccinating 5.46 crore children and 1.32 crore pregnant women across 554 districts. However, the measles surge in the US shows one cannot ignore increasing vaccine hesitancy, particularly since it threatens to throw away the gains made in the containment of infectious diseases. In resource-limited settings, this can lead to health-care systems being overwhelmed and a general delay in uptake of new vaccines.

Misinformation has contributed significantly to the declining uptake for vaccines. The flu vaccination rates among NHS staff in the UK, for instance, dropped to their lowest in nearly 15 years in 2024-25. So far, India has remained immune to vaccine hesitancy. Previous experience with successful vaccination campaigns and government endorsements have played an important role in creating a positive perception of vaccines. However, we must remain alert and actively consider putting in place a multi-pronged, culturally nuanced plan to address vaccine hesitancy.

The writer is senior scientist, ICMR



JUNE 7, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

CLASHES IN NORTHEAST

AT LEAST 25 police personnel were killed and several injured in a continuous exchange of fire for the past three days between Assam and Nagaland police at Merapal on the inter-state border. Official sources said that 20 of those killed were Assam policemen. In Guwahati, Assam Home Commissioner Jatin Hazarika confirmed the death of 10 state policemen and indicated that the casualties might be higher.

PM IN FRANCE

PRIME MINISTER RAJIV Gandhi arrived in Paris to a warm and affectionate welcome and

straightaway went into talks with President Francois Mitterrand. The French government rolled out the red carpet for Gandhi and the PM, Laurent Fabius, set aside protocol to personally greet Gandhi at Orly Airport on his arrival from Cairo on a five-day official visit.

COLOMBO'S OUTREACH

A THREE-MONTH truce with separatist Lankan guerrillas is being worked out behind the scenes by politicians in Colombo, New Delhi and Madras as a direct result of last week's Indo-Lankan summit, well-informed sources said. At the summit meeting between Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene and

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, an agreement had reportedly been reached that violence of any sort should end as a pre-condition for any political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic violence.

CURFEW IN LUDHIANA

THE CALM WHICH was prevailing in Punjab for the last two days was disturbed when a curfew was clamped in the industrial town of Ludhiana as a precautionary measure after a fire broke out in the Society Cinema hall there. According to official reports, the fire broke out in the cinema hall due to a short circuit. It has been controlled and there was no loss to life or property.

THE IDEAS PAGE

Match-fixing Maharashtra

Voter rolls and CCTV footage are tools to be used to strengthen democracy, not ornaments to be locked up. The people of India have a right to be assured that no records have been or will be trashed



RAHUL GANDHI

IN MY PARLIAMENT speech on February 3, and in a subsequent press conference, I had expressed my disquiet about the conduct of the November 2024 Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections. I have doubted the fairness of Indian elections, not every time, not everywhere, but often enough. I am not talking of small-scale cheating, but of industrial-scale rigging involving the capture of our national institutions.

But if some earlier election outcomes seemed odd, the outcome of the 2024 Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections is glaringly strange. The scale of rigging was so desperate that, despite all efforts to conceal it, telltale evidence has emerged from official statistics, without reliance on any nonofficial source, revealing a step-by-step playbook.

Step 1: Rig the panel for the appointment of umpires

The 2023 Election Commissioners Appointment Act ensured that Election Commissioners are effectively chosen by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister by a 2:1 majority since the third member, the Leader of the Opposition, can always be outvoted. These gentlemen are also the top contestants in the contest whose umpires are being chosen. The decision to place a cabinet minister instead of the Chief Justice on the selection committee does not pass the smell test. Ask yourself, why would someone go out of their way to remove a neutral arbiter in an important institution? To ask the question is to know the answer.

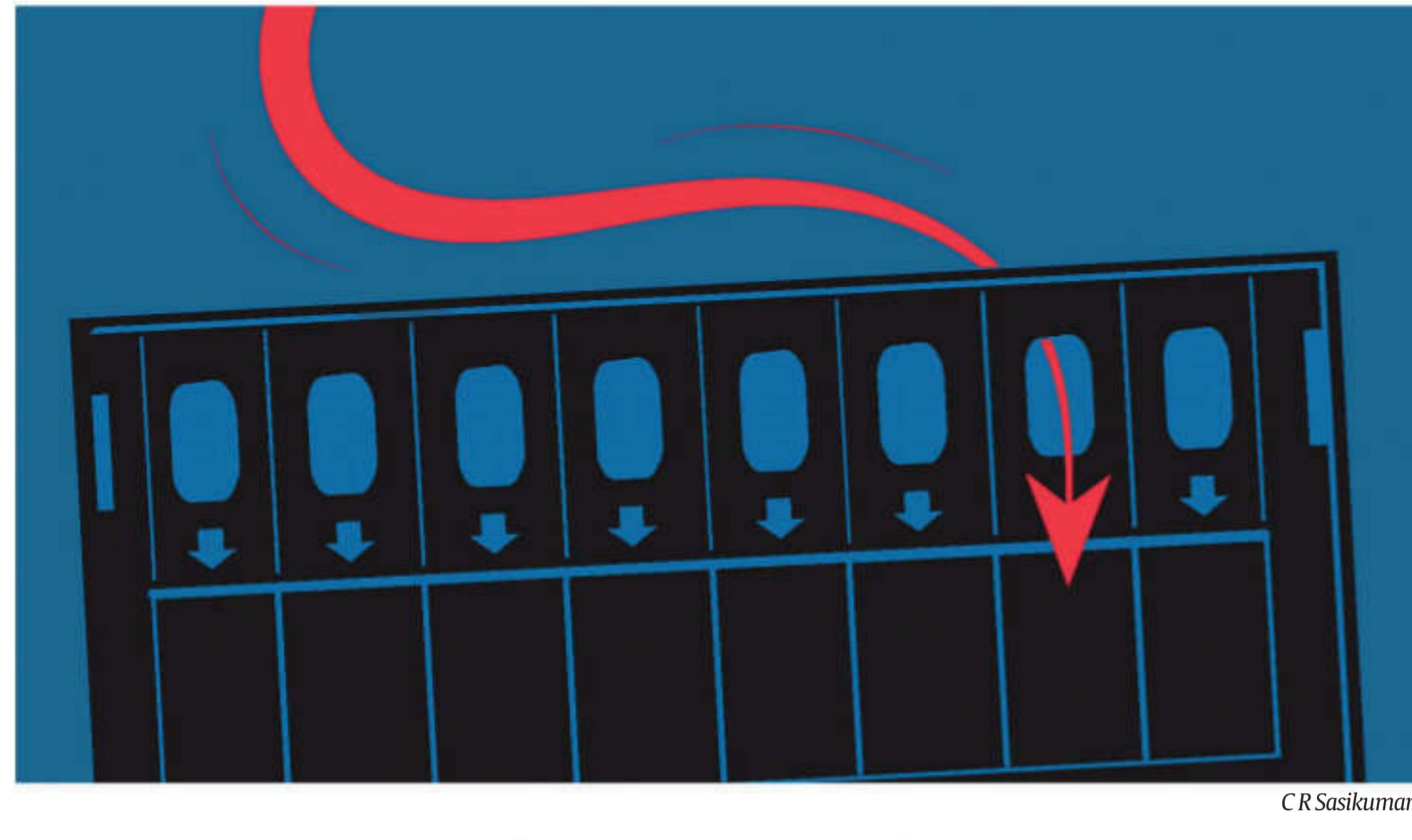
Step 2: Inflate the voter register with fake voters

Election Commission (EC) data show that the number of registered voters in Maharashtra in the 2019 Vidhan Sabha elections was 8.98 crore, which rose five years later to 9.29 crore for the May 2024 Lok Sabha elections. But a mere five months later, by the November 2024 Vidhan Sabha elections, the number had leaped to 9.70 crore. A crawl of 31 lakh in five years, then a leap of 41 lakh in just five months. So incredible was this leap that the registered voter total of 9.70 crore was even greater than the 9.54 crore adults in Maharashtra according to the government's own estimates.

Step 3: Inflate voter turnout figures on top of an inflated voter base

To most participants and observers, voting day in Maharashtra appeared to be completely normal. As they do elsewhere, voters queued up, voted and went home. Those voters who had entered polling booths by 5 pm were permitted to stay until they had voted. There were no reports of unusually long queues or crowding at any voting booth.

But according to the EC, voting day was far more dramatic. The polling turnout at 5 pm was 58.22 per cent. Even after voting closed, however, turnout kept increasing more and



CR Sasikumar

more. The final turnout was reported only the next morning to be 66.05 per cent. This unprecedented 7.83 percentage point increase is equivalent to 76 lakh voters — much higher than previous Vidhan Sabha elections in Maharashtra (see table).

Step 4: Pinpoint targeted bogus voting turned BJP into Bradman

There are yet more anomalies. There are about 1 lakh booths in Maharashtra, but most added voters were targeted in only about 12,000 booths across 85 constituencies in which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had performed poorly in the last Lok Sabha elections. That's an average of over 600 voters at each booth after 5 pm. Optimistically assuming that each voter needs a minute to vote, voting would need to continue for 10 hours. Since this never happened, it begs the question — how were the extra votes cast? Not surprisingly, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won most of these 85 seats.

The EC described the sharp increase in voters as "a welcome trend in participation of youth". Apparently, the welcome trend was restricted to 12,000 booths and not the remaining 88,000. This would be an amusing joke, if it were not tragic.

One such seat — Kamthi — serves as a typical case study. In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the Indian National Congress (INC) polled 1.36 lakh votes in Kamthi while the BJP polled 1.19 lakh votes. In the 2024 Vidhan Sabha elections, the INC polled 1.34 lakh, a roughly similar number to its earlier performance. But the BJP's score jumped to 1.75 lakh, an increase of 56,000. This jump came from the bank of 35,000 new voters added in Kamthi between the two elections. It appears almost all voters who had not voted in the Lok Sabha and almost all the 35,000 new additions were magnetically drawn to the BJP. It is not hard to discern the lotus shape of the magnet.

Consequent to steps one to four above, the BJP bagged 132 out of the 149 seats it contested in the 2024 Vidhan Sabha elections, a strike rate of 89 per cent, far beyond what it has scored any time or anywhere. In comparison,

MAHARASHTRA POLLS TURNOUT

Year	Provisional turnout %	Final turnout %	Difference %
2009	60.00	59.50	-0.50
2014	62.00	63.08	1.08
2019	60.46	61.10	0.64
2024	58.22	66.05	7.83

The polling turnout at 5 pm was 58.22 per cent. Even after voting closed, however, turnout kept increasing more and more. The final turnout was reported only the next morning to be 66.05 per cent. This unprecedented 7.83 percentage point increase is equivalent to 76 lakh voters — much higher than previous Vidhan Sabha elections in Maharashtra.

the BJP's strike rate in the Lok Sabha elections only five months earlier had been 32 per cent.

Step 5: Conceal the evidence trail

The EC has met all Opposition queries with silence and even aggression. It summarily dismissed requests to make available voter rolls with photos for the 2024 Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.

Even worse, only one month after the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections, and following a High Court order directing the EC to share videography and CCTV footage of voting in a polling station, the central government — after consulting the EC — amended the 1961 Conduct of Election Rules Section 93(2)(a) to restrict access to CCTV footage and electronic records. The amendment itself, and its timing, are both giveaways. The recent exposure of identical/duplicate EPIC numbers has heightened concerns about bogus voters, although this is likely the tip of the iceberg.

Voter rolls and CCTV footage are tools to be used to strengthen democracy, not ornaments to be locked up while democracy is violated. The people of India have a right to be assured that no records have been or will be trashed. There exists an apprehension in many quarters that evidence of other fraudulent practices like targeted voter deletion and/or booth displacement may emerge from the examination of records. There is apprehension that this election rigging playbook has been in play for years. Doubtless, the examination of records will also throw up the modus operandi and the cast of complicit characters. However, the Opposition and the public are blocked at every turn from accessing these records.

It is not hard to guess why rigging in Maharashtra in November 2024 took on such desperate proportions. But rigging is like match-fixing — the fixing side might win a game, but irreparable damage is done to institutions and to people's faith in the result.

Match-fixed elections are a poison for any democracy.

The writer is Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha

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To \$5 trillion, and beyond

For economy's next great leap, India must embrace cutting-edge technologies

—

RAM RAJYA

BY RAM MADHAV

THE INDIAN ECONOMY is on the threshold of crossing another milestone and becoming the fourth-largest in the world. It is a commendable achievement for a country that began its journey as an independent nation in 1947 with a meagre \$33-billion economy. Decades of British exploitation left it significantly weakened and poor. The Jawaharlal Nehru government's Soviet-style central planning, while promoting heavy industries and the public sector, led to low economic growth of 3-4 per cent, pejoratively described as the "Hindu rate of growth". In 40 years, it could only reach the \$266 billion mark.

The first major leap came in 1991 when the Narasimha Rao government introduced economic liberalisation and unleashed the potential of Indian entrepreneurs. The opportunity offered by the digital revolution with the introduction of the internet was quickly seized by some of India's brightest tech entrepreneurs. The Indian economy grew manifold in the next two decades on the strength of its services economy, which contributed 60 per cent of the nation's GDP. The economy crossed \$2 trillion by the time the Narendra Modi government came to power.

The last 10 years have seen the Modi government giving greater emphasis to faster economic growth through programmes like Stand-Up India, Start-Up India and Make in India. The results are there to see. IMF data from May has projected that the Indian economy will overtake Japan this year,

reaching the \$4.19 trillion mark. Japan was once a \$5.8 trillion economy but has shrunk to \$4.18 trillion due to stagnation and slow growth rates since the 1990s.

As India demonstrated promising growth, naysayers rushed forward to raise the hollow bogey of per capita income. Per capita income is determined by factors like the size of the population. India is the world's most populous country. As a result, whatever may be the size of GDP, its per capita figures are bound to remain low. No country's growth can be measured on the criterion of per capita income alone. Although the US is the world's largest economy with a \$28 trillion GDP, it ranks seventh in per capita. China, the second-largest economy with \$18 trillion, ranks 69. The per capita argument is worthless because even if India becomes the world's largest economy with \$30 trillion, it will still be ranked 55th in terms of per capita.

The only merit of this argument is that the country should be able to provide better living standards to all its citizens.

In democracies, the fruits of economic growth percolate to all sections of society. This is reflected in the consumption patterns. Surveys indicate that the monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) has increased in India by more than 2.5 times in the last 10 years. Interestingly, most of this expenditure was on travel, health and education, indicating healthy growth parameters.

Tourism has seen remarkable growth in the last 10 years. China still occupies the

first rank in the number of domestic and international travellers. India lagged in this sector for decades due to a lack of disposable income and tourism infrastructure.

But today, with the incomes of the middle class growing substantially, Indians have started travelling more. Data indicates about 2.5 billion domestic tourist visits last year. Figures for 2024 indicate that almost 29 million Indians travelled abroad marking a 30 per cent growth.

All this indicates healthy economic growth, which has led to the near eradication of baseline poverty and the creation of a strong middle class with disposable income. The Modi government aspires to take the economy to further heights with targets ranging from \$5 trillion in 2027 to \$10 trillion in 2035. The current impressive growth is a result of corrective measures taken by the government. It removed parallel economy, allowed proper distribution of wealth and encouraged greater consumption.

But the path from here needs to be calibrated carefully. Economies grow on the strength not just of consumption but also trade and technology. Quality, quantity and speed are the main determining factors. India and China were leading economies until the middle of the 18th century. But when the industrial revolution occurred first in England and later in America, those two countries surged ahead and became leading economic powers by the dawn of the 20th century. When automation and

digitisation progressed in the last decades of the last century, China moved ahead of the curve, emerging as the second-largest economy by 2008.

We are now in the post-manufacturing and post-digital era. Growth in frontier technologies will determine a country's economic future. A country of India's size and capability cannot just think perpetually in terms of catching up with the developed West and the rest. It has to, instead, think in terms of moving ahead of the curve.

We missed the first two industrial revolutions as we were a slave nation at that time. We benefitted partially from the third, digital revolution of the 1980s and '90s and became a leader in sectors like IT services. But the Fourth Industrial Revolution, led by Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum technologies, robotics, space, defence, crypto and bio-engineering calls for new thinking and new priorities. The impressive growth of the Indian economy in the last decade was largely due to the unleashing of its basic potential. The trajectory from here should be more strategic, with greater emphasis on deep-tech R&D, an area in which we lag. It is important to create a climate of hassle-free access to investments in these areas. Only then can India aspire to achieve its goal of becoming a \$10 trillion economy in the next 10 years.

The writer, president, India Foundation, is with the BJP

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Mr Putin set out to conquer Ukraine and install a puppet government, and he has failed. Instead, Ukraine's young democracy has survived and sent a message to other would-be conquerors: Wars of aggression rarely result in the thorough victories that aggressors like to imagine."

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

When ecstasy became agony

Bengaluru stampede, like all others, is a lesson: Respect the crowd and its emotions



PARTHA SINHA

What happens next is equally predictable: "Unfortunate incident", "the crowd swelled unexpectedly" "ex-gratia compensation of Rs 5 lakh per family", "Mourning, efficiently filed under 'miscellaneous'". There are no villains. Only velocity. No ideology, no terror, just the unbearable weight of unmanaged joy.

But if you had paused, just for a moment, in that Bengaluru crowd, you would have seen the opposite of chaos. You would have seen care. A child on a father's shoulders. A street vendor who closed shop early because he thought tonight would be special. A girl who just wanted to be near Kohli-shaped hope. They didn't die because they were careless. They died because we treat emotion like an afterthought, something to be tolerated until the data is in.

India is built on the crowd. We don't just gather — we perform our existence in multitudes. We mourn in hundreds. We bathe by the millions. We queue in hope. We rally in rage. But we still design our cities like we expect everyone to stay politely indoors until further notice. Our architecture is rational. Our emotions are not. The result is tragedy in high definition. We prepare for protest. We do not prepare for delight. Joy, in our infrastructure, is treated like a soft-war bug — unexpected, avoidable, probably user error. We build flyovers, not flow. We install CCTV, not empathy. Our crisis management begins only after the crowd becomes a headline. And even then, the solutions are spectacularly literal: Deploy more barricades. Install better speakers. Raise compensation. But the question remains: How do we plan for collective ecstasy in a country where ecstasy is always assumed to be private?

A few undeniable truths, then. A crowd is not a danger. But pretending it isn't one. Joy is the most underestimated variable in public policy. We don't design for feelings. We clean up after them. In a stampede, no one chooses to run. They just forget how to stop. The infrastructure of emotion is the first thing we forget and the last thing we mourn. The crowd will return. It always does. The Kumbh will swell again. RCB will rise or collapse (or both in the same year), and people will pour into the streets again. Because we are a species that needs to be near others when we feel the most. The impulse is ancient. Sacred, even. But perhaps the saddest part is this: The next time a child asks to go see the crowd, someone will pause. Not because they're afraid of the dark. But because they've learned that joy, in our cities, can be just as lethal as fury.

So, let's not kill the instinct to gather. Let's respect it enough to plan for it. To give it lanes, exits, care. Let us not wrap feelings in red tape, but at least anticipate its footprint. Because the 11 people in Bengaluru didn't go out looking for headlines. They went looking for magic. They found music and lights and shared wonder. And then, they found silence. And for that, they should've been able to come home.

The writer is an advisory professional and an alumnus of IIT Kharagpur

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AFTER THE TRAGEDY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, '11 too many' (IE, June 5). A stampede outside Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium during Royal Challengers Bangalore's (RCB) IPL victory celebrations took as many as 11 lives and injured 33. This led to the event being cut short, with only captains Rajat Patidar and Virat Kohli delivering speeches and displaying the trophy to a packed crowd. The scene was saddening. We need to be sympathetic to those who were injured and the ones who lost their lives.

Blaming any one cannot bring them relief or bring back their lives. Except Virat Kohli, who expressed grief, no other player has come forward. It is especially dispiriting that the country's richest sporting body, the BCCI, has washed its hands of the tragedy.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, '11 too many' (IE, June 5). When the entire nation was glued to the TV to watch the big victory bash in Bengaluru, the tragic news of the stampede in which 11 visitors to the stadium lost their lives came, plunging everyone into sorrow. It was a cruel twist of fate that a celebration turned into a tragedy. Overcrowding and poor crowd management were responsible for the stampede outside the Chinnaswamy Stadium. The organisers are to blame for the failure to ensure basic crowd management. Enough thought has not gone into organising the hastily-arranged event. Crowd accidents have almost become a recurring

nightmare in our country.

G David Milton, Maruthancode

A GREENER COMMUTE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'On the greener track' (IE, June 5). Cars, trucks, buses and planes are major sources of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that cause global warming. Developing railways through its electrification; thereby using it as an alternative mode of transport could play a significant role in reducing pollution by becoming less dependent on fossil fuels. Along with the government, people also have to change their priorities and promote safer environments for the coming generations. The Railways are also important because it is the mode of commute for a large section of the population which migrates across the country in search of livelihood.

Amandeep Bains, Sirsa

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'CUET, a barricade' (IE, June 5). Entrance tests were already conducted at Delhi University at the post graduate level. The School of Open Learning also conducts entrance tests for its PG courses. CUET must not be seen as the reason for vacant seats. Rather, the endeavour should be to improve students' performance. Lakhs of students participate in NEET and JEE every year. Does that mean NEET and JEE entrances lower the importance of board exams? Not at all.

Amit Kumar Maibhan, via email

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RAM RAJYA

BY RAM MADHAV

—



People await updates on lunar lander in Tokyo on Friday. AP

JAPAN
Private lunar
lander crashes
in failed mission

Tokyo: A private lunar lander from Japan crashed while attempting a touch-down Friday, the latest casualty in the commercial rush to the moon. The Tokyo-based company ispace declared the mission a failure several hours after communication was lost with the lander. Flight controllers scrambled to gain contact, but were met with only silence and said they were concluding the mission. Communications ceased less than two minutes before the spacecraft's scheduled landing on the moon with a mini rover. CEO and founder Takeshi Hakamada apologized to everyone who contributed to the mission, the second strikeout for ispace. AP

THAILAND
Cambodia border
row: Forces ready
for stronger ops

Bangkok: Thailand's military said it is ready to launch a "high-level operation" to counter any violation of its sovereignty, in the strongest words yet in a simmering border dispute with Cambodia that re-erupted with a deadly clash last week. The army said its intelligence gathering indicated Cambodia had increased military readiness at the border while diplomatic efforts were ongoing. Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra held a meeting of the National Security Council Friday and said that while the military was ready to defend sovereignty, it understood the situation and when an escalation would be required. REUTERS

MYANMAR
6-yr-old among
group held for
killing ex-General

Bangkok: Myanmar's military has arrested a six-year-old child as part of a group it labelled "terrorists" for the daytime killing of a retired military officer and diplomat last month, a junta-run newspaper reported Friday. Cho Htun Aung, 68, a retired brigadier general who also served as an ambassador, was shot dead in Yangon on May 22, in one of the highest profile assassinations in Myanmar. "A total of 16 offenders - 13 males and three females - were arrested," the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported. REUTERS

SATELLITE IMAGES SHOW THE UNCONVENTIONAL STRATEGY ENGINEERS USED TO GET THE 5,000-TON VESSEL AFLOAT

Balloons and human strength: How North Korea righted toppled warship

alysts and satellite images.

On Thursday, two weeks after

the accident, the 470-foot-long

vessel was visible in an upright

position in the harbor of Chongjin

on North Korea's northeastern

coast. It was floating about 580

feet away from the ramp where it

had failed to launch properly.

In most developed countries,

including South Korea, engineers

would have used a barge with a

gigantic crane to lift the ship and

set it right, said Hong Min, an ex-

pert on the North Korean military

at the Seoul-based Korea Institute

for National Unification.

Lacking the machinery to easily

lift the 5,000-ton ship, a Choe

Hyun-class destroyer, they used

big balloons and deployed hun-

dreds of workers, according to an

alysts and satellite images.

On Thursday, two weeks after

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on North Korea's northeastern

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feet away from the ramp where it

had failed to launch properly.

In a report published by 38

North, a research institute at the

Stimson Center, a US think tank,

analysts said the effort was a

"manual process."

The process apparently

worked. Satellite imagery from



Satellite images show the capsized ship before and after it was righted. Airbus DS; Planet Labs/NYT

May 29 shows hundreds of people on the quay lined up alongside rows of what appear to be cables connected to the vessel, suggesting they used brute force to begin pulling the ship upright. There were also more than two dozen blimp-shaped balloons, each around 16 feet long, surrounding the top of the vessel to help increase its buoyancy.

Analysts said the rubber inflatables may also have been used to keep cables afloat when engineers wrapped them around the ship.

A major obstacle, the experts said, was how the ship was positioned after its failed launch, with its bow still stuck on the launch

ramp. Rolling it over on land could have further damaged the destroyer, the pride of Mr. Kim's ambitious plan to modernize and expand his Soviet-era naval fleet, and engineers most likely factored this risk into their salvage plans.

Mr. Hong said a floating crane may have lifted the ship's bow while humans pulled the rest of the vessel to get it upright. Satellite imagery of the floating warship shows a crane barge near where the ship's bow had been.

On Friday, North Korea said the ship was under inspection and would be taken 42 miles up the coast to Rason, where it would be repaired in a dry dock for seven to

ten days. "The perfect restoration of the destroyer will be completed without fail" before a ruling Workers' Party meeting late this month, state media said.

South Korean experts questioned the ship's seaworthiness. When a warship is launched, it normally goes through months of testing before being formally handed over to a country's navy.

But when North Korea successfully launched its first Choe Hyon guided missile destroyer from a shipyard on its west coast in April, it began test-launching missiles from the ship a few days later for propaganda purposes. NYT



Bangladesh Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus. Reuters File

TRUMP TO SELL HIS TESLA CAR, WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL SAYS

Trump and Musk relationship flames out, GOP urges them to reconcile

NANDITA BOSE
WASHINGTON, JUNE 6

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump is not interested in talking with Elon Musk, a White House official said Friday, signaling the president and his former ally might not resolve their feud over a tax-cut bill any time soon. In interviews with several US media outlets, Trump said he was focused on other matters. "I'm not even thinking about Elon. He's got a problem, the poor guy's got a problem," he told CNN.

Trump may get rid of the red Tesla Model S that he bought in March after showcasing Musk's electric cars on the White House lawn, the official said. Musk, for his part, did not directly address Trump but kept up his criticism of the massive Republican tax and spending bill that contains much of Trump's domestic agenda.

The White House statements came one day after the two men battled openly in an extraordinary display of hostilities that marked a stark end to a close alliance. During the exchange, Trump suggested he would terminate government contracts with Musk's businesses.

Tesla shares rose on Friday, managing to claw back some steep losses from the previous session when it dropped 14% and lost \$150 billion in value. Musk's high-profile allies have largely stayed silent during the feud.

Musk, the world's richest man, bankrolled a large part of Trump's 2024 presidential campaign. Trump named Musk to head up an effort to downsize the federal workforce and slash spending.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said he has been texting with Musk and hopes the dispute is resolved quickly. "I don't argue with him about how to build rockets and I wish he wouldn't argue with me about how to craft legislation and pass it," Johnson said on CNBC.

In a sign of a possible detente, Musk subsequently wrote: "You're not wrong" in response to billionaire investor Bill Ackman saying Trump and Musk should make peace. REUTERS

FROM BROS TO FOES: HOW IT IMPLDED

TRUMP: I'm very disappointed in Elon... I've helped Elon a lot

MUSK: Without me, Trump would have lost the election, Dems would control the House and the Republicans would be 51-49 in the Senate... Such ingratitude

MUSK

■ Time to drop the really big bomb: @realDonaldTrump is in the Epstein files. That is the real reason they have not been made public. Have a nice day, DJT!

■ In light of the President's statement about cancellation of my government contracts, @SpaceX will begin decommissioning its Dragon spacecraft immediately. The trump tariffs will cause a recession in the second half of this year.

MUSK BANKROLLED
MUCH OF TRUMP'S 2024
CAMPAIGN, AND WAS ONE
AMONG HIS TOP ADVISORS

For India, one friend less in Trump orbit

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

WHILE THE Trump-Musk relationship lasted only about four and a half months in the Trump 2.0 administration, their relationship led to some very consequential changes and will have a deep and lasting impact.

For India, Musk was an important and influential voice when it came to skilled professionals entering the US. He had been a staunch votary of the H1B visa-holders, of which 70 per cent are Indians. Musk had taken up the cudgels and the fight against the far-right MAGA base on this issue early on, much to Delhi's comfort. That support has disappeared, though Trump is supportive of visas to skilled professionals.

For Delhi, the side to be chosen is clear: the US President is the most powerful person in the world. And Trump, with over three and a half years left, has the levers. Several global leaders had been engaging with Musk as a proxy to Trump. He had Zoom calls with Nepal PM K P Sharma Oli, calls with Bangladesh interim government's chief advisor Muhammad Yunus, and not to forget the famous meeting of Musk with his kids and partner, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February this year.

Since Trump had disrupted the institutional structures in the White House and the administration, global leaders were engaging with Musk, with the hope to break into Trump's orbit and gain some influence. With Musk's departure, those investments and the influence has gone.

From a trade deal to ward off high tariffs, a better and easier immigration process for Indian students, Delhi's priorities will be guiding its choice. But without Musk, it will be one friend less in Trump's orbit.

Bangladesh to hold polls by next April, says Yunus

Goal is to prevent future crises through institutional reform, says Chief Advisor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA, JUNE 6

BANGLADESH INTERIM government chief Muhammad Yunus on Friday said national elections will be held by the first half of April 2026 amid demands from major political parties to hold polls by December.

"Based on this announcement, the Election Commission will provide a detailed roadmap for the elections at an appropriate time," he said during a televised address to the nation on the eve of the Eid-ul-Adha festival.

Yunus, who took charge after the ouster of the former premier Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government in August last year, said that the government's key responsibility is to hold a clean, peaceful, festive, and inclusive election.

"Our goal is to prevent future crises. That requires institutional reform. Without ensuring good governance in the institutions directly linked to the electoral process, all the sacrifices made by students and citizens will be in vain," the 84-year-old Nobel Laureate said.

Yunus said his administration took over to carry out three mandates "justice, reform and elections".

"I have repeatedly said that this election will be held between December and June next year. The government is doing whatever is necessary to create an environment conducive to elections in the country during this period," he said.

Yunus said he expected the reforms and justice issues would reach an "acceptable stage" ahead of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan next year, which is to be observed from mid-February to mid-March 2026. The interim government refers to the "justice" issue as the trial of leaders and officials of deposed prime minister Hasina's now disbanded Awami League.

Yunus, who was in Paris at that time, flew to take charge of the interim administration as its chief adviser three days later. A large part of the leadership of the SAD floated the National Citizen Party with Yunus's blessings in February this year.

Hasina, who now lives in India, and most of her senior colleagues in the party and government are in jail or fled the country as the interim government accused them of committing crimes against humanity, which may lead to capital punishment.

Do not be surprised if they make up again days from now

DAVID STREIFELD
SAN FRANCISCO, JUNE 6

THE SPAT between Musk and Trump was revelatory, epic and historic, at least according to the thousands of excited commentaries that were instantly published. It was also well-timed.

Musk and Trump did not have a feud five days ago and might not have a feud five days from now. Until proved otherwise, all of this is theater. For a few hours, everyone was diverted by the spectacle of a brawl between the world's richest man and its most powerful person.

The episode illustrated yet again the principle that if you

were going to get into a fight, it helps to own a powerful social media platform. Musk's post about Trump and Epstein drew 132 million views as of Thursday night, according to X.

The only real thing to happen Thursday afternoon was that Tesla's stock fell 14%. Investors were worried that the episode would prove damaging. Dan Ives of Wedbush Securities wrote: "It's not good for either side." Unless, of course, it is good for both sides.

What if, only days or hours from now, the president and Musk reconcile? It will be like Trump tariffs all over. The story must change so the show can go on.

NYT

Russia launches air attacks across Ukraine, three killed in Kyiv

REUTERS
KYIV, JUNE 6

RUSSIA LAUNCHED an intense missile and drone barrage at the Ukrainian capital Kyiv in the early hours of Friday and three people were killed, Ukrainian officials said, as powerful explosions reverberated across the country.

The attacks followed a warning from Russian President Vladimir Putin, conveyed via US President Donald Trump, that the Kremlin would hit back after Ukrainian drones destroyed several strategic bomber aircraft in attacks deep inside Russia.

Kyiv's military said three people were killed in the missile and drone salvo against the capital. They were first responders who had rushed to the scene of one of the strikes. Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. "Overnight, Russia responded"



The site of a Russian strike in Kyiv on Friday. Reuters

to its destroyed aircraft... by attacking civilians in Ukraine... Multi-storey buildings hit. Energy infrastructure damaged," Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha wrote on X.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had carried out the strike on military and military-related targets in response to what it called Ukrainian "terrorists" against Russia.

In a day of confusing messaging, the GHF first announced its distribution sites in southern Gaza were closed, then it revealed that it had actually handed out food, before saying that it had had to

close its gates as a precautionary measure.

"The distribution was conducted peacefully and without incident; however, it was paused due to excessive crowding that made it unsafe to proceed," it said in a statement.

As Palestinians across the war-ravaged Gaza Strip marked



ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES HIT BEIRUT SUBURBS: After Israeli strikes in Beirut's southern suburbs on Friday. Reuters

Eid al-Adha, Israeli forces continued military operations that they say are needed to root out and destroy Hamas militants. The Israeli military was rocked by the deaths of four soldiers in a booby-trapped building, which brought the army death toll to eight since the start of June.

The army statement came hours after the Israeli military struck several buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs that it said held underground facilities used by Hezbollah for drone production.

The strikes, preceded by an Israeli warning to evacuate several buildings, came on the eve of Eid al-Adha, a Muslim holiday. The US-led committee has been supervising the ceasefire that ended the Israel-Hezbollah war in November.

Israeli strikes can endanger truce: Lebanon Army

Beirut: The Lebanese army condemned on Friday Israel's airstrikes on Beirut suburbs, warning such attacks are weakening the role of Lebanon's armed forces that might eventually suspend cooperation with the committee monitoring the truce that ended the Israel-Hezbollah war.

The army statement came hours after the Israeli military struck several buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs that it said held underground facilities used by Hezbollah for drone production.

The strikes, preceded by an Israeli warning to evacuate several buildings, came on the eve of Eid al-Adha, a Muslim holiday. The US-led committee has been supervising the ceasefire that ended the Israel-Hezbollah war in November.

South Korean experts questioned the ship's seaworthiness. When a warship is launched, it normally goes through months of testing before being formally handed over to a country's navy.

SENSEX: 82,188.99 ▲ 746.95 (0.92%) NIFTY: 25,003.05 ▲ 252.15 (1.02%) NIKKEI: 37,741.61 ▲ 187.12 HANG SENG: 23,792.54 ▼ 114.43 FTSE: 8,809.47 ▼ 1.57 DAX: 24,277.93 ▼ 45.65

Note: Gold, silver rates at Mumbai spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) per barrel as of June 5

International market data till 1900 IST

15

E. EXPLAINED

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

OHIO BILLS THAT CAN CURB PROPERTY RIGHTS OF GREEN CARD HOLDERS

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6The Ohio Statehouse in Columbus.
Wikimedia Commons

OHIO LAWMAKERS last month introduced two Bills seeking to prohibit foreign nationals and certain categories of Green Card holders from buying land near military installations and critical infrastructure.

This came amid a larger trend in recent years of Republican-controlled US states moving to restrict the property rights of non-citizens citing concerns over national security and the necessity of controlling "foreign influence".

A growing trend

The Permanent Residency Card, more commonly known as the Green Card, gives holders the right to permanently live and work in the United States. As such, Green Card holders enjoy the same property rights as US citizens.

But growing national security and economic concerns have prompted both federal and state lawmakers to scrutinise the ownership of American land by non-citizens.

Between January 2023 and July 2024, at least 22 states enacted legislation restricting or regulating the purchase of agricultural land, critical infrastructure, and in some cases, residential or commercial property by foreign nationals, entities, or governments, said Sukanya Raman, country head, India of US-based immigration firm Davies & Associates LLC.

Broader in scope

The Republican-sponsored House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 88 in Ohio propose a 25-mile (roughly 40 km) restriction zone around military bases, power stations, water treatment plants, gas pipelines, and transport facilities. This list is broad enough to "effectively blanket the entirety of the state of Ohio," one Republican senator told local media.

The Bills are also broader in scope

than similar legislation enacted in states like Florida, Texas, Montana, and Utah. These states' laws have targeted designated "foreign adversary" nations such as China, Iran, Russia, or North Korea, unlike the Ohio Bills which propose restrictions on all Green Card Holders, regardless of their country of origin.

That said, provisions in previous drafts of the Bills requiring existing landowners from "foreign adversary" countries to sell their property within two years have now been dropped.

Legal challenge likely

The Ohio Bills are still in their early stages, and could change significantly as they are put to vote in the state legislature over the coming months. But if passed in their current, maximalist form, they would restrict land ownership by all non-citizens, including legal permanent residents.

This would be unprecedented in the US. To date, no federal law prohibits Indian Green Card holders from purchasing or owning land in the country. Under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, Green Card holders are entitled to due process and equal protection under the law.

Any law or policy that discriminates against them based solely on immigration status may face constitutional challenges and be struck down, Raman says.

USED IN COVID-19 SHOTS, mRNA MAY HELP DEFEAT HIV, SUGGESTS STUDY

THE TECHNOLOGY that powered Covid vaccines may also lead scientists to a cure for HIV. Using mRNA, Australian researchers said they were able to trick the virus to come out of hiding, a crucial step in ridding the body of it entirely.

The research, published last week in the journal *Nature Communications*, is still preliminary and so far has been shown to be successful only in a lab. But it suggests that mRNA has potential far beyond its use in vaccines as a means to deliver therapies against stubborn adversaries.

Short for messenger RNA, mRNA is a set of instructions for a gene. In the case of Covid vaccines, the instructions were for a piece of the coronavirus. In the new study, they are for molecules key to targeting HIV. Dr Sharon Lewin, director of the Cumming Global Center for Pandemic Therapeutics in Melbourne, Australia, who led the study, called mRNA a "miraculous" tool "to deliver things that you want into



PAPER
CLIP

NEW RESEARCH



places that were not possible before".

Vaccines deploying mRNA instruct the body to produce a fragment of the virus, which then sets off the body's immune response. In the United States, the shots were initially hailed for turning back the pandemic, then viewed by some with suspicion and fear. Some officials, including US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr, have falsely said that they are highly dangerous and even deadly.

"The fear right now is not rational," Lewin said, adding that "mRNA vaccines have been given to millions of people around the world, so we have a very good understanding of their risks".

The new study describes the use of mRNA as a tool to flush HIV out of its hiding places. Other uses could involve providing proteins missing from those with certain diseases or correcting genetic errors.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE NEW YORK TIMES

X f
@ieExplained
#ExpressExplained

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

EXPLAINED INFRASTRUCTURE

THE TRAIN TO KASHMIR

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link is an engineering marvel that connects the Kashmir Valley to the rest of the country by train; a gamechanger that can revolutionise trade, tourism, and the economy of J&K

VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

FROM SMVD KATRA	AT SRINAGAR
8.10 am	11.10 am
2.55 pm	6 pm
FROM SRINAGAR	AT SMVD KATRA
8 am	11.05 am
2 pm	5.05 pm

* Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station; train to be extended to Jammu Tawi later this year

FARE

Chair Car	₹715
Executive Class	₹1,320

FEATURES

■ ALL-YEAR service, will run even at minus 20 degrees Celsius. Snow-removal train will lead the Vande Bharat in severe winter.

■ HEATED windshields, advanced heating systems, insulated toilets.

■ SEISMIC DAMPERS to absorb tremors, offering safer, smoother journey in high seismic risk zone.

The Vande Bharat Express to Katra, Jammu, crosses Qazigund in Anantnag district on Friday. PTI. (Inset) Vande Bharat loco pilots in their cabin at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station, ahead of the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to flag off the train to Kashmir on Friday. ANI

ARUN SHARMA

JAMMU, JUNE 6

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi flagged off two specially designed Vande Bharat trains between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar on Friday. The inauguration of a direct rail link to the Valley is a historic milestone that is likely to have a far-reaching impact on the development, trade, and tourism of Kashmir, and its closer all-round integration with the rest of the country.

A very long journey

The first railway line in the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was built by the British in 1897 over a distance of 40-45 km between Jammu and Sialkot in the plains.

In 1902 and 1905, a railway line was proposed between Rawalpindi and Srinagar along the course of the Jhelum, which would have connected the Kashmir Valley with the railway network of undivided India. But Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jammu and Kashmir was in favour of a Jammu-Srinagar line via Reasi, and neither project progressed.

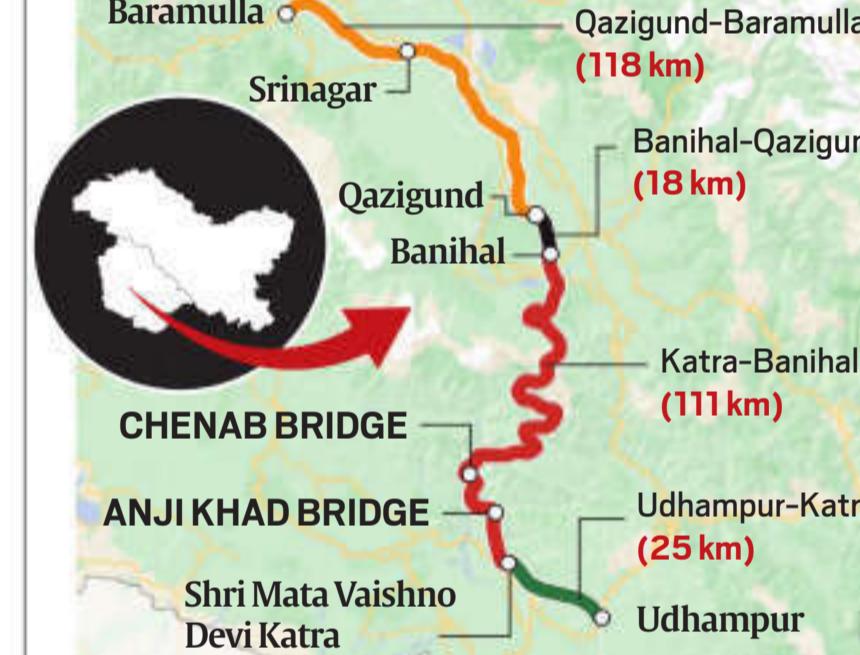
After Partition, Sialkot went to Pakistan, and Jammu was disconnected from the rail network of India. Until the inauguration of the Pathankot-Jammu line in 1975, the railway station nearest to Jammu and Kashmir was Pathankot in Punjab.

In 1983, work began on a railway line between Jammu and Udhampur. This 53-km line was supposed to be completed in five years, but ultimately took 21 years. With work still underway, the central government announced, in 1994, the extension of this line from Udhampur to Srinagar, and onward to Baramulla.

This was the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project, which was approved in March 1995 at an estimated cost of Rs 2,500 crore. In 2002, the USBRL was declared a national project, and sections of the line became operational over the years that followed.

The USBRL is finally complete now – 272 km of tracks built at a cost of Rs 43,780 crore, passing through 36 tunnels and over 943 bridges, bringing Katra and Srinagar within

272 KM | 4 SECTIONS | 943 BRIDGES | 36 TUNNELS



Route Length	Udhampur-Katra	Katra-Banjhal	Banjhal-Qazigund	Qazigund-Baramulla
Bridges	50	49	33	811
Total length	1,488 m	7,035 m	275 m	4,210 m
Highest	85 m	359 m	15.75 m	22 m
Longest	154 m	467 m	45.7 m	45 m
Tunnels*	10	25	1	0
Total length	11 km	97 km	11.21 km	0
Longest	3.15 km	12.77 km	11.21 km	—

*Main tunnel. Tunnels longer than 3 km have escape tunnels. Source: Indian Railways

ICONIC BRIDGES

■ CHENAB BRIDGE (above), the highest railway arch bridge in the world, soars 359 metres above the Chenab riverbed, its central arch spanning 467 metres.

■ 29,880 TONNES of structural steel went into its construction.

■ BUILT TO WITHSTAND earthquake forces of Zone V and wind speeds up to 266 km/hr, and to last for 120 years.

■ ANJI KHAD BRIDGE is India's first cable-stayed railway bridge.

3 hours of each other.

An engineering feat

The Himalayas are young, and the geologically unstable Shivalik Hills and Pir Panjal mountains lie in the seismically most active Zones IV and V. The terrain is difficult and sees heavy snow in winter, and presented serious challenges in the construction of bridges and tunnels.

Among the several firsts of this remarkable achievement of railway engineering are the world's highest railway arch bridge, its arch rising 359 metres above the bed of the Chenab in

Reasi district; the first cable-stayed bridge of the Railways on the Anji Khad, also in Reasi district; and the country's longest transport tunnel, 12,77 km long, in Ramban district.

Development benefits

Two Vande Bharat trains in each direction will cover the distance between Katra and Srinagar in about three hours, halving the time taken by the road journey. The trains will run even in deep winter, providing round-the-year all-weather connectivity to the Valley.

The train will be extended soon to Jammu Tawi, which will make it possible

to roll into Srinagar directly from almost anywhere in the country.

The potential of the train in revolutionising tourism in Jammu and Kashmir has been repeatedly stressed. Over time, the USBRL is expected to have a major impact on the economy of the Union Territory, facilitating hassle-free transport of goods such as apples, dry fruits, pashmina shawls, handicrafts etc., to other parts of the country in the shortest possible time and at lower costs. The cost of transporting items of daily use to the Valley from elsewhere in the country is also expected to go down significantly.

How Trump-Musk break-up can severely affect NASA's future space missions

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

THE DRAMATIC falling out between United States President Donald Trump and the world's richest person, Elon Musk, could put America's space plans at risk. Given that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has become heavily reliant on SpaceX in recent years, a decoupling could delay the space agency's programs by several years.

It could also jeopardise space missions such as the Axiom-4, being executed by Axiom Space, a private US company. The mission, set to lift off next week, will take four astronauts, including India's Shubhanshu Shukla, to the International Space Station (ISS). The astronauts will travel in a Crew Dragon spacecraft, which will be launched by a Falcon 9 rocket. Both

the spacecraft and the rocket are built by SpaceX. The mission has been enabled by NASA.

The argument between Musk and Trump was triggered by the billionaire's strong criticism of a Congressional tax bill that he claimed would lead to a massive increase in the national debt. Trump hit back saying the easiest way to save government money was to terminate government contracts with Musk's companies. SpaceX already had contracts worth \$ 22 billion, according to a Reuters report.

In response, Musk said SpaceX would decommission its Dragon spacecraft used by NASA. However, he said later that the decoupling would not happen.

The Trump-Musk feud has revealed the vulnerability of NASA which is now dependent on private companies for many critical systems in the space programme. The reliance on private companies has

been encouraged by NASA so that it could focus on more ambitious planetary exploration activities, leaving the more routine jobs such as transportation to companies like SpaceX.

NASA's reliance on SpaceX
SpaceX's Crew Dragon spacecraft is currently the only reliable vehicle that NASA has to transport astronauts to and from the ISS — a permanent laboratory in space, about 400 km from Earth, that is manned throughout the year. The ISS is used primarily by American and Russian astronauts, but occasionally astronauts from other countries also make short visits on NASA-enabled missions.

The astronauts on the ISS are typically changed twice a year. Also, three to four cargo missions are sent to the ISS every year. Russian astronauts usually travel in the

Soyuz spacecraft built by the Russian agency Roscosmos. NASA discontinued its space shuttle programme, which included vehicles such as Atlantis and Endeavour, in 2011 primarily on cost considerations. These space shuttles used to be launched by NASA's rockets. The discontinuation of the space shuttle programme stopped the production of these rockets as well.

NASA used Soyuz for travel to the ISS between 2011 and 2020. Subsequently, it began to hire Dragon spacecraft, which launches exclusively on the Falcon 9 rocket.

NASA has also contracted other companies, notably Boeing, to transport astronauts and cargo to the ISS. Boeing's Starliner has carried out a few cargo sorties but its first crewed mission last year, carrying Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, ran into trouble. While Starliner dropped the astronauts

at ISS, it could not bring them back to Earth due to a technical glitch. The two astronauts were stranded at the ISS for nine months, until a SpaceX mission brought them back in February 2025.

The crewed missions under the Artemis programme — NASA's ongoing effort to get humans back to the Moon — are also expected to use SpaceX's Starship spacecraft. The first crewed mission is scheduled for 2027.

SpaceX is involved in NASA's other programmes as well, like planetary exploration missions to Saturn. In many segments, the company has developed superior technologies that have increased NASA's dependence on it.

The fallout of the feud
Musk may have tried to avoid an immediate crisis, but the feud can escalate at any time, given that the billionaire has

opened a public battle and made personal attacks against Trump. Therefore, the possibility of the President suspending government contracts of Musk's companies cannot be ruled out.

If that happens, the Artemis programme would almost certainly be delayed, and the schedule for the

THE LIFE OF CHUCK ★★

Director: Mike Flanagan **Cast:** Tom Hiddleston, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Benjamin Pajak, Jacob Tremblay, Mark Hamill, Karen Gillan, Annalise Bass, Mia Sara

Warm Light in a Dark World

SHUBHRA GUPTA

BASED ON a slim Stephen King novella, *The Life Of Chuck* is a near-faithful cinematic adaptation which aims at giving us warm fuzzies in this dark-and-dismal-world, and succeeds, more or less.

Just like the story, the film starts backwards, where we see Marty (Chiwetel Ejiofor) reconnecting with his ex-wife Felicia (Karen Gillan) even as the world is coming to an end.

Flanagan, an old horror-and-Stephen King hand, gives us apocalyptic, small-town America style, in which cars are drawing to a standstill, roads are emptying out, cellphones and laptops have stopped working, and life-saving monitors in hospitals are acting out of whack.

One of the most King-ian conceits is in when his characters hit the road in search of self. Marty bumps into an old man who runs the undertaking outfit in town, to have, yes, the wise talk, which touches upon life and all its oddities and finalities. And then he walks to find Felicia in a street whose lights have gone out, and then they wait, for that final blip.

The mysterious Chuck, whose life we are being invited to witness, and who shows up here only as a digital hieroglyphic, is met with in flesh only in the second act. Pondering over his dull accountant's life, Chuck (Tom Hiddleston) walks down to the town square where a drummer girl is toying with her sticks. Of course, he breaks out into a dance, drawing in a pretty young woman (Annalise Bass) who's just been dumped, and they swirl and twirl, till the blues are gone, at least for a while.

The third act takes us back further in time, where we see Chuck as a boy (Benjamin Pajak) and an adolescent (Jacob Tremblay), living with his grandparents (Mark Hamill and Mia Sara), in an old house with a locked room 'on the cupola'. That room, grandpa has decreed, is never to be opened, even as grandma teaches little Chuck to shuck and jive so well that he charms not only his dance teacher but an older girl. The two burn up the floor, naturally, on a prom night, and it's where our Chuck learns what it is to have 'multitudes within oneself', looking out at the night sky.

It's just the kind of stuff that can turn hokey and bumper sticker-y, and there are moments that threaten to flatten the sentiment, espe-



cially under the film's deliberate voiceover that sounds like a too-pleased-with-his-voice radio-jockey explaining something so simple that it never really needed an explanation in the first place. Some threads aren't teased out enough, the chief one being that locked room, which could have given us a little more of a

jolt than the film manages. But having read the story and liked it (huge King fan here), I think I was primed to enjoy this film, which dives into its wares minus any pretence, and a bunch of effective acts, especially Ejiofor as a man who circles back to his one true love, Flanagan regular Hamill, with

a great scene in which he explains the magic of numbers, Sara whom you might remember from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, and who really lights up the screen here, Pajak as the youngest Tom who is such a natural twinkle-toes, and, yes, Hiddleston himself, who shows off some really cool moves.

THUG LIFE ★★
Director: Mani Ratnam **Cast:** Kamal Haasan, Silambarasan, Trisha Krishnan, Joju George, Pankaj Tripathi, Abhirami

Wide of the Mark

SHALINI LANGER

YOU EITHER die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain," Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart) warned the world in *The Dark Knight* (2008). However, not everyone has received the memo or grasped the implications of that line. Illustrating its meaning loud and clear, Mani Ratnam has delivered what is arguably his weakest film to date, the Kamal Haasan-starrer *Thug Life*. Worse still, the only way one could even identify it as a Mani Ratnam film is the grandiosity of its visuals and the occasional brilliance of its long shots.

A story of a gangster based in Delhi, Rangaraya Sakthivel (Kamal Haasan), and how the people he considered his own, particularly his adopted brother/son/protégé Amaran (Silambarasan), backstab him, *Thug Life* is essentially a game of thrones. While this core idea has been adapted in countless forms over the years, with traces even in ancient epics, the Mani Ratnam directorial is plagued by extremely subpar writing, making the movie an endurance test.

Chase scenes with the car bouncing along sand dunes and *lathi*-clad men on motorcycles add to the run time, but not one of these characters has a face. By the time the stakes get truly high is towards the third act, in which the trio finds themselves in a dusty village, running for their lives. The question of who the victim is, and who the aggressor, one of the themes that the film wants us to think about, comes into play here, where the privilege of wealth and flashy cars and clothes recedes in the face of mob fury: this is where Gautam, terrified and helpless, rises to the occasion.

Stripped of his shields, he is as vulnerable as anyone else, and it is only then that he sees the young woman for who she really is, and you know that this is where the film was heading, to this urban saviour finding his conscience. Going by his previous roles, Banerjee is most effective when playing vile or silly; here, his character finding redemption becomes the lens through which the larger societal injustice is viewed, making it narrower and not as impactful. And I wasn't left as shaken as I'd expected to be.

We're soon introduced to a slew of characters, but none of them leave a lasting impression due to weak development and even weaker character arcs. Even Sakthivel and Amaran come across as underdeveloped. Unlike Nayakan, where Sakthivel Nayakkar (Kamal Haasan) assumed a lone-wolf persona, *Thug Life* unfolds through bonds, both familial and chosen. Yet even these dynamics remain underexplored. Though Mani and Kamal, credited as screenwriters, attempt to bridge the gaps through 'heavy' (read as, shoddy) and long dialogues, the substandard quality of the writing prevents the film from establishing the bonds, particularly the one between Sakthivel and Amaran, despite their friction being crucial



to the later part of the narrative.

Funnily enough, the confrontation and subsequent fight scene between Sakthivel and his friend-turned-foe Pathros (Joju George) is far more gripping and exhilarating than the cumulative impact of all the other moments in the film.

If the male characters are underwritten, the women fare even worse. Their presence, particularly in the cases of Sakthivel's wife Jeeva (Abhirami) and his mistress Indrani (Trisha Krishnan), is largely limited to being felt up by the man. And the other few women, well, they don't matter even that much to the makers.

While the film briefly hints at Amaran's interest in Indrani and later shows him forcibly taking her away after dethroning Sakthivel, this track is clumsily handled. "You turned the beast in me into a human being," he tells her towards the end. But how? Mani and Kamal leave it to the already-confused and tired audience to fill in the blanks.

As the narrative moves along, Kamal Haasan's performance seems to run on an entirely different track, rarely intersecting. There are multiple instances in *Thug Life*

where it feels like Kamal is unsure of which film he's in, as his performance is out of sync with the tone of the movie.

Another major disappointment in *Thug Life* is AR Rahman's music, especially the jarring and often senseless background score. At several points, the BGM is so tonally off that it makes the viewers feel like they are watching a spoof of a gangster film. If there's anything as bad as Rahman's music on the technical front, it's Anbariv's action choreography.

Amid all these shortcomings, *Thug Life* is ultimately saved, though only to some extent, by cinematographer Ravi K Chandran. From start to finish, Ravi does an exceptional job with the visuals, richly capturing the ethos of the city and the characters. Sreekan Prasad's editing, while salvaging these visuals to a great extent, never manages to rescue the film from its dull and disjointed storytelling.

In short, *Thug Life* is a lot like watching a never-ending Kamal Haasan interview, where he keeps delivering long-winded lectures on things he already knows, without ever bothering to listen to the actual question.

parts and fluids (how can they not be there) abound, and yes, there's that classic climactic human chain, where the entire cast is yelling and screaming and shouting and...

Brain: Stop, I'm hurting.

Me: You asked for it, so shut it, and listen.

Brain: You mean there's more?

Me: Well, it did get to the point where it's all a blur, and I managed a nap, and WHY ARE THESE FILMS SO TERRIBLE? And oh, Akshay roams around the ship's hallway with a long tail.

Brain: Wait, what?

Me: It's plastic, and a prop, and all the Jollys are in bed with women who are not their wives, suggestive of a night-long orgy. One turns out to be a man...

Brain: No more. I'm exhausted. How did you survive?

Me: The only thing that kept me going was the knowledge that it will all get over, everything does, right? And oh, Nana Patekar has a Marilyn Monroe moment, and the *Khalnayak* theme song keeps getting played, and Baba and Bhidu keep smirking and skulking, and...

Brain: QUIT RIGHT NOW. I feel for you.

But serves you right, right?

Me: Right.

STREAMING WATCH LIST

BY ALAKA SAHANI



GINNY & GEORGIA S3

NETFLIX
AFTER THE second season ended with Georgia (Brienne Howey) being escorted into the back of a police car, the new season explores how the scrappy young mom will wiggle her way out of this jam. The show follows the Miller clan — Georgia and her children Ginny (Antonia Gentry) and Austin (Diesel La Torraca) — as they brace themselves for Georgia's murder trial.



CHHAL KAPAT: THE DECEPTION

ZEE5
SET AGAINST the beautiful backdrop of a village near Burhanpur, the story unfolds at an intimate destination wedding. Bride-to-be Alisha Dixit has chosen her ancestral *haveli* for the celebration, bringing together her childhood best friends — Mehek, Ira, and Shalu — under one roof for the first time in years. What begins as a joyful reunion soon takes a dark turn.



THE ACCOUNTANT 2

PRIME VIDEO
THE SEQUEL to *The Accountant*, the film follows Christian Wolff, who has a talent for solving complex problems. When an old acquaintance is murdered, leaving behind a cryptic message to "find the accountant", Wolff is compelled to solve the case. Realising more extreme measures are necessary, Wolff recruits his estranged and highly lethal brother, Brax, to help.



GET AWAY

JIOHOTSTAR
THIS 2024 British comedy horror film revolves around the Smith family's much-needed vacation to the remote Swedish island of Svalta. The vacation takes an unexpected turn when they arrive during preparations for a mysterious local festival that celebrates a dark history. Unsettled by the unfriendly locals and strange rituals, they try to make the best of their trip, until something far more sinister unfolds.



HIGH FORCES

LIONSGATE PLAY
IN THIS Hong Kong-Chinese action film, security expert Gao Haojun (played by Andy Lau) faces a nightmare when the first A380 flight is hijacked. Unbeknownst to him, his blind daughter is trapped among the hostages. With lives on the line at 30,000 feet, Gao must overcome impossible odds to save them. *High Forces* promises to be gripping,



HOUSEFULL 5 ★

Director: Tarun Mansukhani
Cast: Akshay Kumar, Abhishek Bachchan, Riteish Deshmukh, Nana Patekar, Jacqueline Fernandez, Chunky Panday, Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff, Ranjeet, Fardeen Khan, Nargis Fakhri, Sonam Bajwa, Chitrangda Singh, Shreyas Talpade, Dino Morea, Johny Lever, Nikitin Dheer

Akshay. Each has a wife slash girlfriend, can't give you their names because they are all wispy and leggy and silly. There's a fourth son (Fardeen Khan) from a second wife. There's Aakhri Pasta, no need to tell you who plays him, because by now the poor fellow must have forgotten his real name. There's Johny Lever being Johny Lever, and Sanjay Dutt and Jackie Shroff playing Bhidu and Baba or is it Baba and Bhidu? There's also a hulky ship captain. And a doctor who's allergic to peanuts. And Nana Patekar in a *dhoti* and *kurta*. Oh, and Nana Patekar in a *dhoti* and *kurta*.

there's a killer loose.

Brain: And?

Me: Memory-loss inducing drugs coloured a virulent blue. DNA test labs. Masked murderers. And a rainbow-coloured parakeet.

Brain: The same one which got sucked into a vacuum hose?

Me: Who knows? All I know is that the bird has a bigger speaking part than some of the ladies, but what can you do? There are

so many characters, the writers must have had a hard time handing out an equal number of lines to each. But then they must have thought, oh, they're all birds, so that's okay.

Brain: Phew.

Me: Right. Actually I have to say that compared to the previous *Housefull*, this one has a slightly fuller house, but because no one expects anything else, it's pretty much like the older ones — characters tumbling over each other, crass jokes about body

parts and fluids (how can they not be there) abound, and yes, there's that classic climactic human chain, where the entire cast is yelling and screaming and shouting and...

Brain: Stop, I'm hurting.

Me: You asked for it, so shut it, and listen.

Brain: You mean there's more?

Me: Well, it did get to the point where it's all a blur, and I managed a nap, and WHY ARE THESE FILMS SO TERRIBLE? And oh, Akshay roams around the ship's hallway with a long tail.

Brain: Wait, what?

Me: It's plastic, and a prop, and all the Jollys are in bed with women who are not their wives, suggestive of a night-long orgy. One turns out to be a man...

Brain: No more. I'm exhausted. How did you survive?

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Brain: QUIT RIGHT NOW. I feel for you.

But serves you right, right?

Me: Right.

Cognitive Dissonance

SHUBHRA GUPTA

ME: OH brain, braaaain. It's that time again.

Dead Silence

Me: Don't suck. You know the drill.

Brain: mmmmmph

Me: Oh there you are, gtg, brb.

Brain: I thought it's been six years, maybe

they had forgotten about the fifth edition of

Housefull. Didn't you have enough after the

fourth? What kind of a masochist are you?

Don't you know when to stop?

Me: Who asked for a speech? Just doing my job. Bfn.

Groan, minutes later.

Brain: So?

Me: Mmmmmph.

Brain: Hahaha. Spill it.

Me: Well, if you insist. There's this lux-

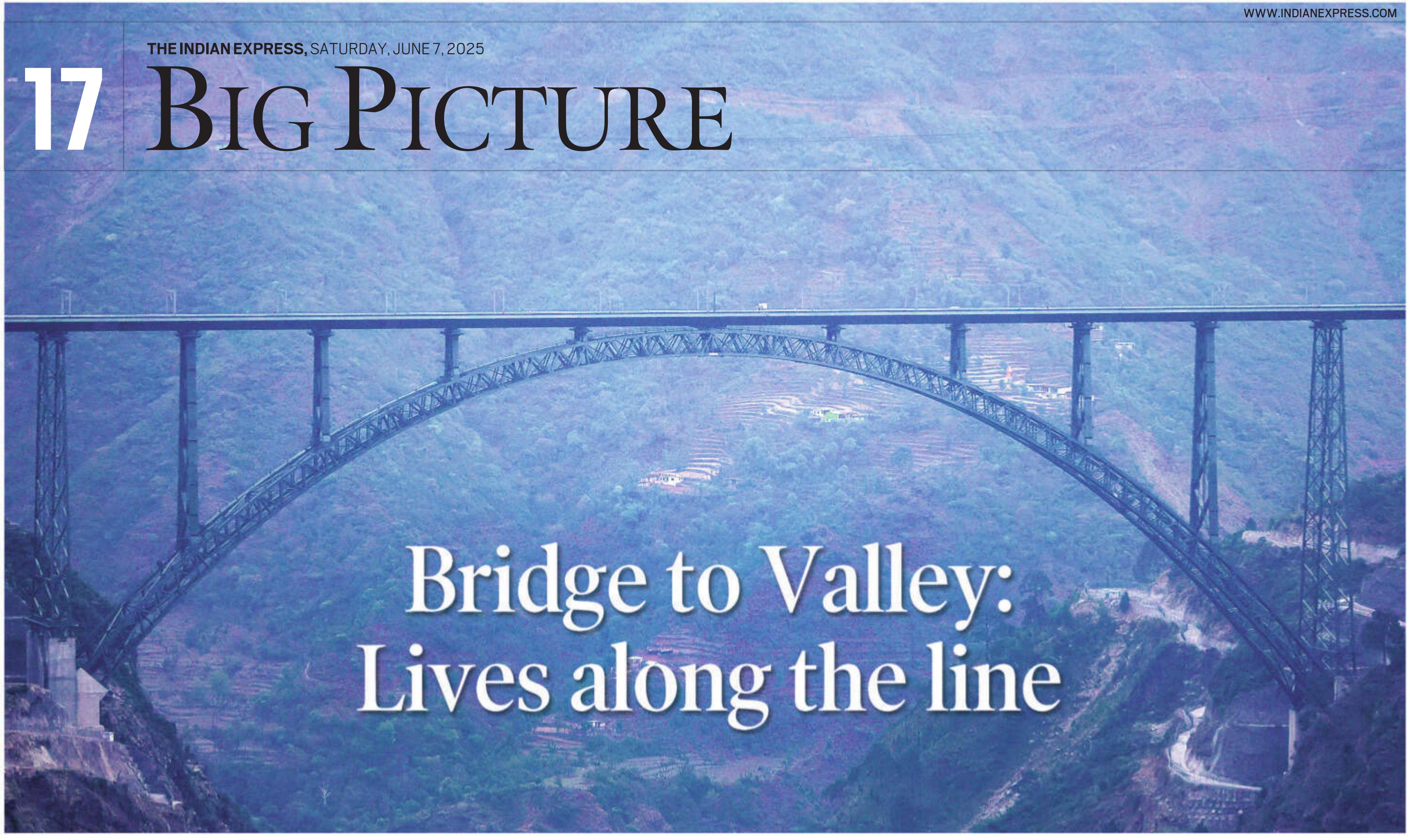
ury liner, and that old lusty fellow, played

by who else but Ranjeet, pops it, and leaves

his billions to his son, called Jolly. Three

Jollies show up, Riteish, Abhishek and

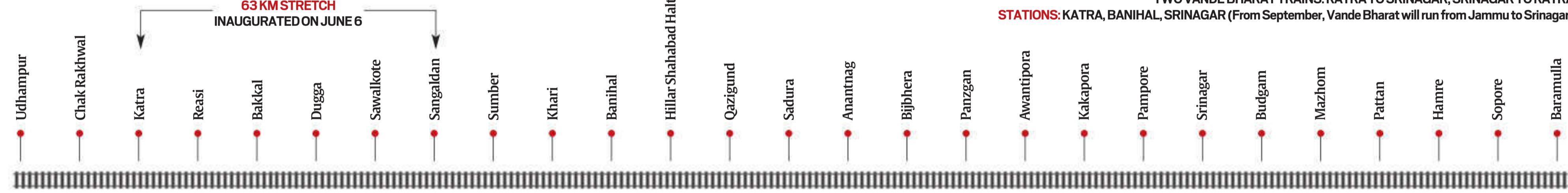
Bridge to Valley: Lives along the line



272 km, 27 stations, 38 tunnels, 931 bridges — and a gap closed. With the PM inaugurating the Katra-Sangaldan stretch of the Kashmir rail link, trains can, for the first time, travel between Jammu and Srinagar. DHEERAJ MISHRA travels to stations new and old, from Katra to Baramulla, to see what changes when a train makes a stop

Photographs: GAJENDRA YADAV

27 STATIONS ON THE 272-KM UDHAMPUR-SRINAGAR-BARAMULLA RAIL LINK (USBRL)



THE PIR PANJAL range surrounds the village of Sumer in Jammu's Ramban district. Once a hotbed of militancy and untouched by development, its people led hardscrabble lives. And then, last year, Sumer got a railway station — a quaint, whitewashed structure with slanting green roofs. And with it, a road, an electricity line and piped water.

It took another year for Mohammad Shafi, 54, to gather the courage to step inside a train. He and his eight-year-old granddaughter had boarded the passenger train from Sumer, sat side by side on the blue, worn-out seats, and watched bewildered at the rugged landscape that sped past their window.

"The train ride happened because of my granddaughter. She is in Class 3 and wanted to get some books from Banihal town. We reached Banihal in 35 minutes and that too for Rs 10," says Shafi.

Until then, for Shafi, travelling to Banihal meant a 91-km road journey for four hours, changing three vehicles and spending at least Rs 500.

Sumer is one of 27 stations on the 272-km Kashmir line, also called Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL). On June 6, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 63-km Katra-Sangaldan section of the USBRL and flagged off two special Vande Bharat trains (Katra to Srinagar and Srinagar to Katra). With that, the tracks have managed to finally connect two regions joined at the hip by more than an ampersand — Jammu & Kashmir.

The 272-km USBRL is broadly divided into three parts: the 25-km Udhampur-Katra stretch, 111-km Katra-Banihal and 136-km Banihal-Baramulla. While the line has been operational in phases — with the earliest stretch, the 118-km Qazigund to Baramulla link in Kashmir, inaugurated in 2009 — there was one missing link: between Katra and Sangaldan. It was this stretch that was inaugurated by the PM on June 6.

For the engineers and workers who developed the Kashmir rail link, this was the most arduous of stretches. In the end, they pulled off several technological feats — the world's highest railway arch bridge (the 359-metre-high Chenab Bridge); the Indian Railways' first cable-stayed bridge (the 725.5-metre-long Anji Bridge); 97 km of tracks that cut through tunnels; and bridges spanning 7 km. Given the high level of engineering involved, over 80 per cent of the project funds (Rs 35,000 crore of the estimated cost of over Rs 43,000 crore) were spent on this stretch.

Sandeep Gupta, who was Chief Engineer of USBRL for over 10 years and retired as Chief Administrative Officer of the project in February 2025, said the Katra-Banihal stretch faced several challenges — from alignment to inclement weather, the frequent blockage of National Highway-44, the unrest following the Burhan Wani encounter (July 2016) and the Pulwama terror attack (February 2019).

Now, he says, "It really feels good, es-



(Clockwise from top) The 359-metre-high Chenab Bridge is the world's highest railway arch bridge; the train from Sangaldan to Baramulla is a lifeline for those travelling to cities in Kashmir for medical aid; Mohammad Shafi recently took a train for the first time in his life when he travelled from Sumer to Banihal

specially when you consider where we started in the early 2000s, when we used to go for surveys on horses and mules. We would often stay back in the villages and eat what the locals gave us. We have come a long way since then. This is a big achievement for the Indian Railways and the country."

Before the train came roads

In these parts, some of the remotest in the country, much before the tracks were laid, came other 'wonders' — approach roads and small bridges. While these were built by the Railways to supply materials for developing the stations and tracks, something else changed in these parts: lives.

Over the last decade, the Railways says, 215 km of approach roads and 320 small bridges have been built under the project.

At Sumer village market in Ramban, the road opened up possibilities for Ratan Singh, 27, who runs an electronics shop.

During the days of militancy, Singh says, he dropped out after school and the family left the village for the district headquarters in Udhampur. They later returned to Sumer and, in 2024, when the station came up, Singh decided to start his business.

"In 2009-10, the access road was built and now we can go to Jammu and other towns, from where we buy at cheaper rates. Though it still takes almost six hours to reach Jammu by road, it is better than those days when we had to travel on horses and mules," says Singh.

Though the Vande Bharat train will speed past Sumer (the only stop on the route is at Banihal), Singh is excited about the train.

"The train will not only make it easier to travel from Jammu to Srinagar, but will open new avenues for education, health-care, and jobs."

At his home on the outskirts of Sumer, Mohd. Nazeer Ahmed, a 40-year-old driver, remembers his childhood days when he

would go down the mountain to where the Chenab flowed. "It would take us four to five hours to come back. We were not just physically cut off from the mainland, we were deprived of education as well."

In 2010 came a road linking his village to Dharamkund, which connected it further to Ramban town. People started travelling out of the village and with that came a demand for vehicles. "I had no particular skill. But I learnt driving," says Ahmed. He now has an SUV that he uses to ferry people to Ramban.

While the access road changed his life, he sometimes worries if the train will take his customers away. But he is also excited. "For the last 10 years, I have been wanting to visit Delhi... Someday, I will take the Vande Bharat to Delhi," says Ahmed.

The new stations

Gran Bayotran village lies on the banks of the Chenab, adjacent to the Reasi railway station, the second halt on the Katra-Sangaldan stretch that was inaugurated on June 6.

Takan Das Sharma, 78, a resident of the village, vividly remembers the day he saw a "railway station, a train and a ticket for the first time". That was in 1973, when Sharma, then a clerk with the Revenue Department in Katra, travelled to Jammu for his boss who wanted him to book a ticket on board the Jammu-Patankot Srinagar Express.

According to data available with the Ministry of Railways, 14,069 people were employed through contractors on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link — over 9,000 of them from J&K. The Railways employed those who gave up more than 75

Jammu is only 66 km from Reasi. They had railway lines even in those days; it took another 50 years for us to get a station in Reasi," says Sharma, who retired as Mohasib (Senior Land Revenue Accountant).

He says the train to Kashmir is a "childhood dream" come true. A member of the RSS since 1960, Sharma says it was a BJP leader from Udhampur, the late Chaman Lal Gupta, who sought a station in Reasi. "After that, they conducted a survey in our village. But some issues of alignment came up and the project ended there," he says.

Metres away, standing on the rooftop of his house, Harish Kumar, 34, beams as he proudly

points to Bridge-39 (called the Reasi Bridge) in the distance. With a diploma in civil engineering, Kumar was one of the supervisors for the bridge. "Out of the eight slabs on this bridge, we built four. When the construction of the (Reasi) railway station began, around 300 people from our village got jobs. The good thing is, the project trained people who otherwise had no skills. That was helpful, but now they are without work," he says.

According to data available with the Ministry of Railways, 14,069 people were employed through contractors on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link — over 9,000 of them from J&K. The Railways employed those who gave up more than 75

per cent of their land for the project.

Raj Kumar, 58, sarpanch of the village, says property prices have shot up since word spread of the Vande Bharat passing through Reasi.

"A kanal (0.05 hectare) cost Rs 2 lakh around 10 years ago; now it's Rs 15-20 lakh," he says.

On board train to Baramulla

It is 6 am and Train no 74619, a passenger train from Sangaldan to Baramulla, is at Platform Number 2. Outside the gates of Sangaldan station is a long queue of passengers waiting to board the train — daily wagers and students, but most noticeably, patients.

The eight-coach diesel train is run-down with broken windows, grimy chairs and with many of the passengers squatting on the floor. Yet, the Sangaldan-Baramulla line has been a lifeline in these parts, especially for people in the hilly areas who go to Banihal, Anantnag and Srinagar for medical emergencies. The 160-km road journey from Sangaldan to Srinagar used to take an entire day; but now, the train takes people to Srinagar in three hours.

As the whistle goes off, Parvez Ahmad, 35, hurriedly takes a seat. A resident of Sangaldan, Ahmad is headed to Khari, the second station on the Sangaldan-Banihal stretch, to fix a tilling implement. "I run a shop in Sangaldan that sells spare auto parts. At times, I travel to people's homes to fix their machines. Earlier, it used to take me more than two hours by road to reach Khari, now it takes just 35 minutes. Because of this train, I can manage both my shop and these visits," says Ahmad.

Minutes later, the train crosses Sumer station and enters Tunnel No. 50, India's longest transportation tunnel.

Amina, a 54-year-old farm worker who identifies herself only by the first name, boards the train at Khari. She had walked for around four kilometres from her village

Trigam, boarded a shared vehicle and travelled another hour to reach the station. On her way to Srinagar to visit an ophthalmologist for a niggling eye condition, Amina says, "If I miss this train today, the next train will only be available tomorrow. Or else, I will have to spend Rs 2,000 to go to Srinagar by road. I paid only Rs 40 for this train ticket. There is no hospital in my area. If people in the hills fall ill, it is only luck that can save them. There are villages where people have to travel an entire day on foot to reach the station."

Past Banihal, the train enters 'T-80' — the Pir Panjal tunnel. When it was made operational in 2013, the 11.2-km tunnel was considered the "backbone of USBRL" since it linked Jammu region to Kashmir by railway for the first time.

At the other end of the tunnel is the first station of Kashmir-Hiller Shahabad Halt. The train now passes through a landscape of breathtaking beauty — mustard and saffron fields, apple orchards and poplar trees, with the peaks of the Himalayas as a constant backdrop.

At Anantnag station, a 28-year-old, who works as a nurse at a private hospital in Srinagar, boards the train. Standing by the door, he says, "The local train service is good, but for people like me who have to go to work every day, it is not very reliable. It's slow and gets delayed often. That is why people travel by bus."

The new Vande Bharat trains are an easy conversation starter, but he has a grouse: "What is the point of having a train from Jammu to Srinagar if you don't stop for people on the way?"

A line to connect hearts?

Though the Indian Railways has overcome the toughest of challenges — from militancy to the complex geology of the Himalayas — to link Jammu to Kashmir by rail, what does it mean for a region that has lived in turbulence and distrust for decades?

"There is this fascination that we have for Kashmir," says Raj Kumar, the sarpanch of Gran Bayotran village in Jammu's Reasi. "Though we are part of the same state, very few people have seen or gone to Srinagar. I hope this train bridges not only the distance between the two regions, but also hearts in Jammu and Kashmir. Whether it is terrorism or politics, the common public has nothing to do with it."

RSS worker Takan Das is not so sure. He says the train may address employment and tourism, but "healing wounds" won't be that easy. "The gap will not be bridged until Pandits are rehabilitated," he says.

At Srinagar station, a constable of the Government Railway Police (GRP) boards a near-empty coach and takes a seat by the window. He is on his way home to Baramulla and has heard of the Vande Bharat train.

"The distrust between Jammu and Kashmir is very deep. If the two regions can be brought together by a railway line, what can be better than that?"

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, hitherto known as MANIKA alias MANIKA PATEL D/O ASHOK KUMAR W/O HIMANSHU PATEL, R/O/B-2 1101 The Romano Supertech, Sec-116, Noida, U.P.-201307, have changed my name & shall hereafter be known as MANIKA PATEL for all purposes.

00130052662-1

I, Nikhil Goel S/o Rakesh Goel R/o H.No.69, Pushpanjali Enclave, Vikas Marg Extension, East District, Delhi-110092, have changed my minor daughter's name aged about 9 years from Aadya Goel to Aadyhaa Goel.

00050267804-1

I, Raj Kumar S/O Late Sh. Durga Das R/O H.No. G-405-P149 Raj Nagar II Palam Colony New Delhi-110077 shall henceforth be known as Raj Kumar Kapoor affidavit No IN-DL91369557246565X sworn before notary Prabharami dated 28 May 2025. 00050267804-1

We Vinod Kumar S/o Dr. R. Singh & Vandana Singh W/o Vinod Kumar Union Bank of India, 1st Floor, 1 Faiz Road, Jhandewalan, New Delhi-110005 inform that original BBA (Agreement to Sell) dated 28.03.2025 between Tand T and Vinod Kumar & Vandana Singh is lost some where. It is requested to kindly notify the same, if somebody find it at the address of Vinod Kumar & Vandana Singh. 0040793372-1

My name has been mistakenly recorded as Brijesh Kumar in my service record instead of Brijesh Kumar. It should be corrected in the record.

Brijesh Kumar son of Shri Priya Singh Residence of R-2/B-1, Purani Janki Puri, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 0040793198-1

I, Samir Kumar Biswas,S/o-Sasthi Charan Biswas,R/o,WZ-2508,Gali, No.8,Sadhan Nagar,Near-Ram Chander Public School,Palm Colony,PO,Palam,Distt.South West,Delhi-110045,have changed my name to Samir Biswas S/o Sasti Biswas.

0040793414-4

I, SHABNAM,W/o Baleshwar Kumar,R/o C-937,Madangir,Dr.Ambedkar Nagar,Delhi-110062,have changed my name to PRIYANKA,for all,future purposes.

0040793392-1

I, RAVINDER PAL,S/o MAHI PAL SINGH/MAHIL SINGH RATHORE,R/O Y-536,PLOT NO.748 &-749,KH.NO.5/17,GALLI NO.15,NEAR SITTU CHOWK,SWAROOP-NAGAR, DELHI-110042,have changed my name to RAVINDER PAL RATHORE 0040793028-2

I, Priyadarshan iyappan S/o Iyappan,R/o A-57,Malka Ganj, Delhi-110007,have changed my name to Priyadarshan,for all purposes. 0040793414-3

I, Praveen Sehgal,w/o,Anil Sehgal R/O E-138, Second Floor, Preet Vihar, Delhi-110092,have change my name to Pinki Sehgal permanently

0040793392-6

I, Pramod Kumar Mishra,S/o Ram Dular Mishra,R/o-154,Double, Rajat-Vihar Sector-62,Noida-201301,Have Changed My Name To Pramod Mishra. 0040793393-6

I, PREETI TANWAR,D/o-Suresh Tanwar R/o,R-2, 59A,SF,Mahendra Park,Uttam Nagar,DK Mohan Garden,Delhi-110059,have changed my name to PREETY TANWAR,for all,future purposes. 0040793392-5

I, INITIN PURBA,S/o RAMESH PURBA,R/o 1707A,F/F,Near Hanuman Mandir,Sector-29, Faridabad,Haryana-121008,have changed the name of my-father name RAMESH PURBA to RAMESH CHAND PURBA,for all,future purposes. 0040793393-2

I, Vijay Kumar S/o-Bharat Singh Sahni,R/o C-56/A,Chattarpur Enclave Phase-2,Delhi-110074,Have Changed My Name To Vijay Kumar Sahni. 0040793393-7

I, Manavi Singh D/o Raju Singh R/o B-44, Sector-50, Noida (U.P.-201301) have changed my name to Manvi Singh for all purposes. 0040793200-1

I, MOHAMMAD SALEEM,S/o MOHAMMAD FAKUR,R/o-258 GALI GARHAIYYA BAZAR MATIA MAHAL JAMA MADJID,DELHI-6,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MOHAMMAD SALEEMSIDIQI. 0040793392-7

I, KOMAL GOYAL,W/o-Dhiraj Goyal,R/o-55,scheme-No.-04, Rajendra-nagar,alwar,rajasthan-301001,have changed my name to KOMAL JAIN,for all,future purposes. 0040793414-2

I, ASHA VASHISHT,ASHA KUMARI, W/O KRISHAN GOPAL R/O H.NO. 654, SAINI MOHALA, NANGLOI, DELHI-110041 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHA DEVI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0070971865-1

I, ARUN SINGH S/o Shri Anoop Singh Verma,R/o 01248/70 Civil Line Dekshni-15 Rishab Vihar,Muzaffarnagar,pargana & Tehsil & Dist.Muzaffarnagar have changed my Name from Arun Singh to Arun Kumar Singh for All Future Purposes. 0040793205-1

I, Raju Giri S/O Ram Shankar Goswami, R/o E-2/142, Astha Vihar, Prem Nagar-3, Kirari Suleman Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110086, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Damodar Prasad. 00407917190-1

I, Rajendra Kumar S/O Punnavasi Lal R/O B/225 Gali No.12 Tomar Colony, Burari, Delhi-84 declare that Rajendra Kumar and Rajender are both one and the same person and shall henceforth be known as Rajendra Kumar for all purposes. 0040793191-1

I, Rachel Neena Gokavi W/O Utkarsh Khatri, R/o A-21, Anand Niketan, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi, Delhi-110021, I have changed the name of my minor Son Zion Khatri aged about 5 Years and He shall hereafter be known as Zion Khatri Gokavi 0070971794-1

I, RAJBIR SINGH DAHIYA, S/O MR RAM KISHAN DAHIYA, R/O B-39, SARAI PIPAL THALA, ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI-110033, that my father's name is mentioned in my Passport as RAM KISHAN, but his correct name is RAM KISHAN DAHIYA for all purposes. 0040793393-1

I, CHIRAG JAIN,S/O-SACHIN JAIN R/O/A-1/160 B, LAWRENCE ROAD, KESHAV PURAM, DELHI-110035, have changed my name from Dinesh Chandra Singh to Dinesh Singh, for all purposes. 0040793393-4

I, Bhawna Bhardwaj,W/o-Manoj Sharma,R/o 905,Tower-J, Prateek Laurel, Sector-120,Noida, G.B.Nagar-201307, have changed my name to Bhawana Bharadwaj. 0040793392-2

I, Neelam C/o Anand Kumar R/o-Khasra-No-299-300, Gali-No.4, Block-B, Keshav Nagar, Burari, Delhi-84 have changed my name to Neelam Baluni 0070971825-1

I, Inglesh W/O Vikas, R/o Flat 05, Gupta Residency, Gali No.5, Kapashera, Gurgaon Road, South West Delhi, Delhi-110037, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Shreya Mahi 0040793392-9

I, Ankush S/o,Rajendra R/o H.No.69,Street No.16,Ambedkar Colony,Adhyatmik-Nagar Ghaziabad,UP-201015, have changed my name to Ankush Kumar. 0040793392-8

I, Anju Rani Jain,D/o-Satish Chand Jain,Vimla Jain,W/o,Sushil Kumar Jain,R/o-157,Rajdhani Nikunj,Plot No.94,Patparganj,Delhi-110026, have changed my name to Anju Jain, for all,future purposes. 0040793392-8

I, ASHA NAIK,D/o HIRA SINGH GOSWAMI,R/o,H.NO.RZ-91,FIRST FLOOR,MAHINDRA PARK,UTTAM NAGAR DELHI-110059, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHA GOSWAMI. 0040793392-4

I, Shivam Singh Chauhan S/o. Har Govind Singh Chauhan R/o,A1/72,B/Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, my given name shivam singh surname is chauhan 0040793196-1

I, Vanya Dhamija R/o 1766-B/7, Govindpuri Extn., Kalkaji, Delhi-110018 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KANIKA GUPTA. 0070971817-1

I, Dorcus Johnson D/o Shri Kishore Bahadur & Wife of Johnson R/o, 72, Anand Gram, Tahirkpur, Delhi-110095, we have declared that I have changed the name from Dorcus K Bahadur to Dorcus Johnson for All future purposes vide affidavit No. IN-DL88013596782377X dated 21 May-2025 & Dorcus K Bahadur are Dorcus Johnson is same person. 0040793196-1

I, Dev Ji Kumar S/o, Adhik Lal Singh R/o 494/25 1st Floor Mcd Flats Sec. 20 Rohini Sultan Puri C New Delhi-110086 have changed my name to Dev Kumar for all purposes. 0040793195-1

I, CICILIYAMMA K S/W OBIJU THOMAS R/O H.NO 70, BLOCK-J/G, DILSHAD COLONY DELHI-110095 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO CICILIYAMMA BIJU FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0070971835-1

I, CICILIYAMMA KS W/O NO 15303798 RANK EX NK BIJU THOMAS R/H NO 70, BLOCK-J/G, DILSHAD COLONY DELHI-110095 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO CICILIYAMMA BIJU VIDE AFFIDAVIT DATE 9.6.25 BEFORE DELHI. 0070971832-1

I, Sameem Alam S/o Abdul Rashid R/o A-156, New Panchwati Colony, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Shamim Alam 0040793199-1

I, SUNITA, W/O MR RAJBIR SINGH DAHIYA, S/O MR RAM KISHAN DAHIYA, R/O B-39, SARAI PIPAL THALA, ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI-110033, have changed my name from SUNITA to SUNITA DAHIYA forever 0070971795-1

I, Ruchie Kumar D/o Late Lt. Col. Sushil Kumar Roberts, R/o 121,Second Floor, Sukhdev Vihar, New Friends Colony, Delhi-110025, inform that Ruchie Kumar, Ruchie Roberts and Ruchie Camille all are one and the same person. 0070971840-1

I, Ankita Kumari alias Ankita Kumari Jaiswal, near nazar bag railway station, Morbi, Gujarat 363642 have changed my son's Name from DIVYANSH to DIVYAM PARMAR vide Affidavit dated 10/05/2025 before Tehsil Dadri. 0070971830-1

I, Aman S/o Hasmullah Khan R/o 886/43, Flat No-1, 3rd Floor, Ward No-8, Mehrauli, Delhi-30 have changed my name to Aman Khan. 0070971798-1

I, SANJANA SANKARARAMAKRISHNAN D/O SANKARARAMAKRISHNAN, R/o Flat NO IND 115/PARSAVATH EDEN ALPHA-2, Greater Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar UP 201310, have changed my name to SANJANA SANKAR for all future purposes. 0070971827-1

I, ARUN SINGH S/o Shri Anoop Singh Verma,R/o 01248/70 Civil Line Dekshni-15 Rishab Vihar,Muzaffarnagar,pargana & Tehsil & Dist.Muzaffarnagar have changed my Name from Arun Singh to Arun Kumar Singh for All Future Purposes. 0040793205-1

I,KM Archana Upadhyay,W/o Pramod Mishra,R/o-154 Duplex, Rajat Vihar Sector-62,Noida-201301 (U.P.),Have Changed My Name To Archana Mishra. 0040793393-5

I,Gireesh kumar Batra,S/o Jagdish Lal Batra,Add-1662, sector-57,near Indian oil petro pump(Akash brothers), Gurugram,wazirabad (75), Gurgaon,Haryana-122003,changed my name to Girish Batra. 0040793392-3

I,Dinesh Kumar, S/O Sadhu Ram Gupta, R/o 52, Raj Nagar Enclave, Tipatpura, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Dinesh Kumar Gupta. 0040793197-1

I,Vansh Sharma S/o Rakesh Kumar Sharma/R/o B-176, Sector-50, Noida, UP-201301, have lost 10th Class Marksheets/Certificate of UP Board Certificate No.1220237191 of year 2022. 0040793197-1

LOST & FOUND

Lost original Plot Buyer Agreement Dated-16 June 2010 against my Plot No.E2031, Aans Esencia, Sector-67, Gurgaon. Finder may Contact Krishna Devi Darbarpur Road Badshahpur Gurgaon. 0040793349-1

I, Vanish Sharma S/o Rakesh Kumar Sharma/R/o B-176, Sector-50, Noida, UP-201301, have lost 10th Class Marksheets/Certificate of UP Board Certificate No.1220237191 of year 2022. 0040793197-1

PROPERTY FOR SALE

Flats for Sale:i. 3 BHK 1762 sft.ii. 3 BHK+ 1940 sft. Ansals Highland Park, Sector-103, Dwarka Xway, Gurugram-122006, HaryanaCont: 981157862 0040792910-2

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my client SUJINDER SINGH (ALIAS SUJINDER SINGH HAPPY) son of late Shri Harbhajan Singh, resident of A-189, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024 has duly revoked/cancelled the General Power of Attorney dated 03.06.2023 (certificate of Section 03.06.2023) with respect to property No. A-189, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024 thereby my client, constituted, appointed and authorized Mr. RISHI BATRA son of late Shri Satish Batra resident of B-26, South Extension, Part-I, New Delhi-110019, vide by serving Legal Notice through counsel of dated 21.04.2025. It is further put knowledge of general public that though a Legal Notice has also been duly served upon attorney through Advocate N.K. Kukreja for even of returning the original General Power of Attorney of dated 03.06.2023 (Certificate issued under Section 60) by the registrar concerned and till date Attorney has not returned the original and is holding the executed attorney illegally and unauthorisedly.

It is further put to the knowledge of general public that if any body deals in any manner whether wholly/partly with the revoked/cancelled attorney with the earlier constituted attorney, with respect to the property of my client, will do so at his/their own cost, risk, peril and consequences resulting thereof and my client shall not be responsible in any manner under whatsoever the circumstances, it may be.

New Delhi
Date: 07.06.2025
N.K. KUKREJA (Advocate)

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my client A.G.M. State Bank of India Home Loan Comer A.C. Pearl Best High-1, Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 is the Mortgagor of Flat No.125, First Floor, Group-II, Pocket-23, Sector-24, Rohini Delhi-110085, that he has sold his House Loan S.H.I. Mortgaged to a third Party Chain of Documents. During the scrutiny of Original property documents regarding the above said property, Bank has found that (1) Allotment Demand Letter Dated 13.03.1974, (2) taken over possession letter Dated 22.05.1974, (3) Allotment Letter Dated 04.03.1974, (4) Allotment Power of Attorney Dated 14.03.1974, (5) Agreement to Sell Dated 02.06.1997, (6) Agreement to Sell Dated 05.09.2001 (7) General Power of Attorney Reg No 27635, Dated 06.09.2001, (8) Regd. Agreement to Sell Dated 17.04.2002, (9) Regd. General Power of Attorney Dated 27/09/2004, (10) Regd. Sale Doc. Regd. Sale Reg No 35923 Dated 13.09.2004, (11) Regd. Sale Regd. Sale Reg No 35923 Dated 13.09.2004 from his custody. State Bank of India has tried its best to find all possible places the aforesaid original Documents, but yet not traceable and lodged online lost property in the Central Computerized Lost Property System. Please contact us at 011-24628000 or 011-24628001 or 011-24628002 or 011-24628003 or 011-24628004 or 011-24628005 or 011-24628006 or 011-24628007 or 011-24628008 or 011-24628009 or 011-24628010 or 011-24628011 or 011-24628012 or 011-24628013 or 011-24628014 or 011-24628015 or 011-24628016 or 011-24628017 or 011-24628018 or 011-24628019 or 011-24628020 or 011-24628021 or 011-24628022 or 011-24628023 or 011-24628024 or 011-24628025 or 011-24628026 or 011-24628027 or 011-24628028 or 011-24628029 or 011-24628030 or 011-24628031 or 011-24628032 or 011-24628033 or 011-24628034 or 01

यू.पी. प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि.
 (संगठित संस्था का उत्तम) CIN : U16209UP1976SC004285
 वार्षिक -मासिक बजार, नं. 5-3, जयली इकाय, चौक, गोदानपुर, लखनऊ - 226010
 पत्रक : 388 पैकेजिंग/स्प्रिंग/कॉन-5-वै-निवेदा-24
 विवाह : 06.06.2025
अंति अल्पकालीन ई-निवादा सूचना
 राजसीधी भेड़िकल कालजी मासी में 17 सीढ़ी सीटों की छुड़ी के साथ 64 सीढ़ी पैदी और घरायास के नियमों का एवं देख इस कार्यालय की ई-निवादा सूचना सूचना सूचना 24/7/GM-5/UPCL/2025-26 दिनांक 06/06/2025 द्वारा ई-निवादा अनावशीली जाती है। उक्त निवादा <http://etender.up.nic.in> की सेवाओं पर दिनांक 09/06/2025 से दिनांक 16/06/2025 के अपराह्न 15:00 बजे तक डाउनलोड अपलोड करने की जा सकती है। डाउनलोड विड उसी दिन अपराह्न 16:00 बजे आपोस्टलोनी के तापोकार्यालय में खाली जानी प्रस्तुति है। ई-निवादा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण, नियम एवं शर्त कारपोरेशन की वेबसाइट www.uprojects.org पर दिनांक 09/06/2025 से देखी जा सकती है।
 महाराष्ट्र व्यवस्था जोन-5, लखनऊ

Municipal Corporation, Bharatpur
 Near Mathura Gate Bharatpur - 321001
 Telephone: +91-0564-222170 email: -bharpt.jaipur@gmail.com, bsfodar@gmail.com
 No.: B/MC/Technical/Drainage/2025-26/4192 Dated:- 04.06.2025

NOTICE INVITING NIB NIB No.: 04/2025-26

Online Bids are invited from 06.06.2025 to 30.06.2025 time 6.00 PM and Pre-Bid Meeting 18.06.2025 time 11.00 AM Technical Bid Opening date 01.07.2025 time 4.00 PM Construction of C1D Drain from Stadium to Anan GATE (CFCD) and C2D drain from Jaswant Pradhan T-Junction to Anah GATE (CFCD), Nagar Nigam Bharatpur. Estimated cost of Rs 1438.23 lacs. The Last date of for applying bid and making Payment RTGS/NEFT favour Commissioner Nagar Nigam Bharatpur up-to 3.00 PM of 24.06.2025. Details may be seen in the Bidding Document at our office and the State Public Procurement Portal website www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in and www.ajc.rajasthan.gov.in (UBN No.)-DLB2526WLOB00687

To participate in the bid/bidder has to deposit:

1. Tender Cost and Processing Fees through RTGS/ NEFT in the account of Commissioner Municipal Corporation Bharatpur having account number 685601701018 with ICICI Bank, Mathura Gate Kannigurcharaupayable at Bharatpur, Rajasthan (IFSC Code IIC0006856)
2. The bidder should be Registered on e-Procurement Portal of Government of Rajasthan www.ajc.rajasthan.gov.in for online e-Bid submission.

Commissioner
 Raj.Samad/C/25/378

Municipal Corporation Bharatpur

: 7110

NORTHERN RAILWAY
 E-TENDER NOTICE

No. 256 SIG-SPL-TKJ-IPMLPS-2025 Dated:- 05.06.2025

Chief Signal And Telecom Engineer/Project/West, Baroda House, Northern Railway, New Delhi acting for & on behalf of President of India invites E-tenders in Two packet system from the experienced & established contractors having sufficient experience in similar work and satisfying minimum eligibility criteria for the under noted work:

1. Name Provisioning of IP-MPLS network for Unified Communication of work Backbone and VOIP based control communication over Northern Railway.
2. Approximate cost of the work Rs. 140,78,69,621.09/- (Rs. One hundred and forty crores seventy eight lakhs sixty nine thousand six hundred and twenty one and nine paise only)
3. Earnest money/Bid security (INR) Rs. 71,89,400.00/- (As on www.ireps.gov.in)
4. Completion period 12 Months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance.
5. Website address and Date and Time where tender available www.ireps.gov.in
6. Pre-Bid conference 25.06.2025 at 11:30 hrs on <https://railent.007.com/railnet701.php?MTID=m508bd07e03c3ac4533823ae65b861d8>. Meeting Number 2517559036 Password: 112233
7. Closing date 11.00 Hrs on date: 22.07.2025.
8. Date of Opening of tender 11.30 Hrs. on date: 22.07.2025.
9. Validity of offer 90 days from the date of opening of tender.

(Tenders without earnest money will be summarily rejected)
 Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date & time only. Bids are to be submitted online only. Manual bids/offers are not allowed against this tender, and any manual offer received shall be ignored.

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. Necessary changes, Corrigendum / addendum, if required, would be posted on this web site only.

1672/25

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

File No: C/JHS/341/STBA/PA Advertisement No.: 03/NSG-4, NSG-5 & NSG-6/2025 Date: 03.06.2025

Advertisement for Appointment of Station Ticket Booking Agent

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Jhansi for and on behalf of the President of India, invites applications from eligible candidates for selection of Station Ticket Booking Agent (STBA) at 46 different "NSG-4, NSG-5 & NSG-6" category stations, one at each station, of Jhansi Division on commission basis for issue of unreserved rail tickets through computerized Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS):-

S.N. Station Name Stn. Code Cat. Vacancy

1. Dafla DAA NSG-4 1

2. Dabra DBA NSG-4 1

3. Orai ORAI NSG-4 2

4. Ishanagar ISHN NSG-5 1

5. Niwari NEW NSG-5 1

6. Pokhrayan PHN NSG-5 2

7. Khargapur KHGP NSG-5 2

8. Tikamgarh TKMG NSG-5 1

9. Ata ATA NSG-6 1

10. BharatKup BTKP NSG-6 1

11. Chauraha CNH NSG-6 1

12. Jora Alapur JPO NSG-6 1

13. Jakhiluan JLN NSG-6 1

14. Khairai Jn. KID NSG-6 1

15. Khol KHOH NSG-6 1

16. Malanpur MLAR NSG-6 1

17. Paman PMN NSG-6 1

18. Patara PTRE NSG-6 1

19. Agasod AGD NSG-6 1

20. Anant Peth AEH NSG-6 1

21. Antri ARI NSG-6 1

22. Bhua BHUA NSG-6 1

23. Bijauli BJI NSG-6 1

24. Bijrotha BJA NSG-6 1

25. Burhipura BPW NSG-6 1

26. Baripura BPRA NSG-6 1

27. Charkhari Road CRC NSG-6 1

28. Chithlari CHIT NSG-6 1

29. Dingwai DWI NSG-6 1

30. Ghutai GTI NSG-6 1

31. Hetampur HET NSG-6 1

32. Karari KRO NSG-6 1

33. Karonda KOA NSG-6 1

34. Matitalia MZX NSG-6 1

35. Malasa MLS NSG-6 1

36. Nandikhas NDK NSG-6 1

37. Paraura PRN NSG-6 1

38. Rasulpur Gogamau RPGU NSG-6 1

39. Sank SANK NSG-6 1

40. Saroski SSKI NSG-6 1

41. Sikroda Kwanri SIKD NSG-6 1

42. Sithouli STLI NSG-6 1

43. Ushargao URG NSG-6 1

44. Dariyaganj DAYG NSG-6 1

45. Bamour Gaon BMZ NSG-6 1

46. Dallwara DWA NSG-6 1

NSG-4, NSG-5 & NSG-6 category 46 stations

Note- The proposed working hours (shift) at the stations mentioned in the above table are 08 hrs from serial number 01 to 05, 12 hrs from serial number 06 to 08 and 24 hrs (Round the Clock) from serial number 09 to 46.

Candidate may obtain the prescribed format of the application form along with all terms & conditions on payment of Rs. 1180/- (Rs. One thousand one hundred eighty only) through money receipt issued by Railway Booking Office from the office of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Jhansi on any working day from date of publication of notification to 01.07.2025 from 10.00 AM to 05.00 PM. The application form along with term & condition shall be made available On the North Central Railway website www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in and the same can be downloaded and used as application form for submitting the offer. However, the cost as stipulated for application form will have to be submitted along with application form while submitting the application. Application submitted by the applicant without stipulated cost of the application form shall be rejected. The cost of application form amounting Rs. 1180/- (Rs. One Thousand One Hundred Eighty only) & refundable EMR of Rs. 1000/- for NSG-4 (Rs. Ten thousand only), Rs. 500/- for NSG-5 (Rs. Five thousand only) and Rs. 200/- for NSG-6 (Rs. Two thousand only) should be paid in the form of Demand Draft of nationalized / Schedule Bank / Money receipt (Railway Booking Office) in favour of "Central Finance Manager, North Central Railway, Jhansi (Sr. DFMR, NCR, JHS)." Application will be received in the office of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Jhansi upto 15.00 hrs. of 02.07.2025 in the sealed box. Applications received after due date & time will not be entertained. Sealed envelope with clearly mentioned applicant name, address and station name of the application forms will be opened on 02.07.2025 at 15.30 Hrs in the office of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Jhansi. Applicants may be present at the time of opening of the sealed box.

Divisional Railway Manager (C)
 North Central Railway, Jhansi

981/25 (A) f North central railways | @cprncr | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

JAIPUR VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED
 Office of the Superintending Engineer (RDSS) Old Power House Premises,
 Near Ram Mandir, Jaipur-302006, TEL/FAX 0141-2201022
 Regd. Office: Vidyal Bhawan, Jyoti Nagar, Jaipur 302005
E-TENDER NOTICE
 Online bids are invited from eligible bidders for Segregation of 1244 Nos. 11 KV mixed feeders at 15 circles of Jaipur Discom of Rajasthan State under Revamped Reforms-Based and Reforms-based Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) on turnkey basis against TN-594 to TN-608. Participating bidders can download complete set of bidding documents from e-procurement portal <http://www.ajc.rajasthan.gov.in> from 05.06.2025 at 11:00 AM onwards. End Date/Time for receipt of online bids through e-procurement portal is 25.06.2025 up to 11:00 PM. For further details regarding Works, Tender Notifications & Specifications please visit website <http://www.ajc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in> & <http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jvnl> (UBN Nos : VVN2526WLOB00064, VVN2526WLOB00065, VVN2526WLOB00066, VVN2526WLOB00078, VVN2526WLOB00079, VVN2526WLOB00076, VVN2526WLOB00075, VVN2526WLOB00074, VVN2526WLOB00073, VVN2526WLOB00072, VVN2526WLOB00071, VVN2526WLOB00070, VVN2526WLOB00069, VVN2526WLOB00067)

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (RDSS)
 Raj.Samad/C/25/3714 JPR-2998 (2025)
 For Electricity Complaints Toll Free No. 1800 180 6507

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD.
 ANPARA THERMAL POWER PROJECT

E-Tender Notice

1. E-Tender Notice No: N-ANP/D/BD/1/600008599. Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Online setting of safety valves of boiler drum, Super heater, CRH and HRH line by TREVTEST method, of 500MW unit 6/8.7, DTPS, Anpara." E-Tender Has been uploaded on **02.06.2025** on <http://etender.up.nic.in>, Estimated cost: **Rs. 10,41,600.00 only**, Period: **02 Years**, E.M.D cost: **Rs. 11,000.00**, Last date of Tender: **27.06.2025 at 17:00 Hrs.**

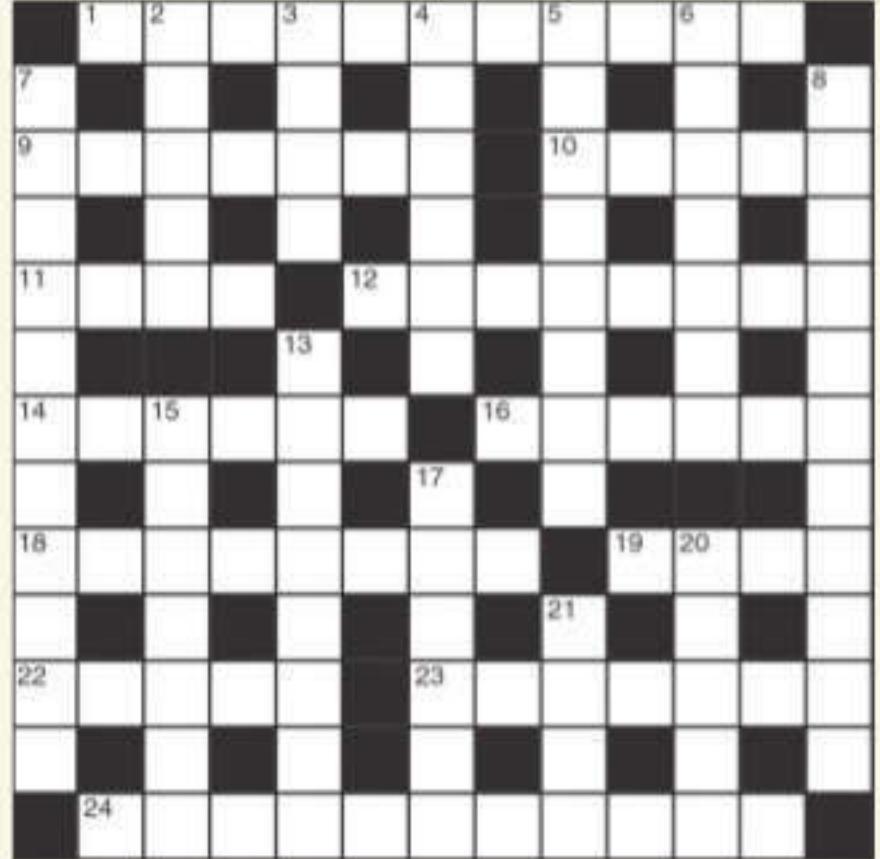
2. E-Tender Notice No: N-ANP/D/BD/1/600008600. Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Mechanical of ESP along with external cleaning of boiler." E-Tender Has been uploaded on **02.06.2025** on <http://etender.up.nic.in>, Estimated cost: **Rs. 36,56,258.00 only**, Period: **02 Years**, E.M.D cost: **Rs. 39,00,00.00**, Last date of Tender: **27.06.2025 at 17:00 Hrs.**

Total quality of work/supply, Tender specification and other term & condition is as per tender document available on the E-tender portal. Concerned Officer reserves the right to cancel the e-bids without assigning any reason. Corrigendum, Addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.

Concerned Officer reserves the right to cancel the e-bids without assigning any reason. Corrigendum, Addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.

Concerned Officer reserves the right to cancel the e-bids without assigning any reason. Corrigendum, Addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.

CROSSWORD 5696



ACROSS

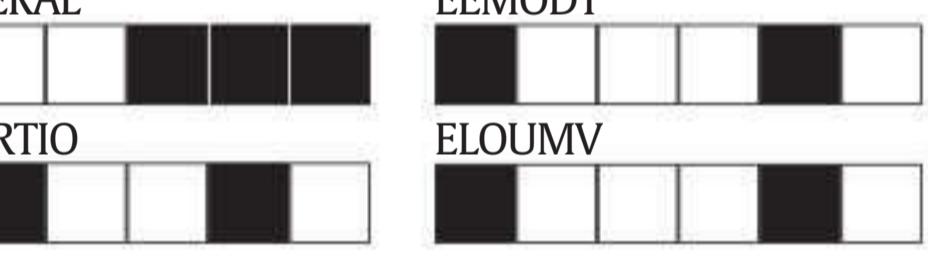
- 1 A precaution against being fired (6,5)
9 Part company with philosopher – there's no comeback (7)
10 Girl causes no end of a minor riot (5)
11 Amy's out getting vegetables (4)
12 A banker's order in mid-America (8)
14 Nothing further on Rome strangely enough (2,4)
16 Barker is a fool to back the outsider (6)
18 A good one can always grow better (8)
19 We take turn and turn about on the vessel (4)
22 Cross country (5)
23 Rose let down by her boyfriend (5,2)
24 How things may be bought for cash (2,1,8)

Solutions Crossword 5695 Across: 1 Arrays, 4 Officers, 9 Oracle, 10 Organist, 12 Echo, 13 Japan, 14 Here, 17 Legal charges, 20 Burning fever, 23 Bear, 24 Arbor, 25 Talc, 28 Cash sale, 29 Final, 30 Sentinel, 31 Bonnet Down: 1 Above all, 2 Road hogs, 3 Yale, 5 Fire at random, 6 Iran, 7 Exited, 8 Sitter, 11 Bathing belle, 15 Album, 16 Delft, 18 Aviation, 19 Bracelet, 21 Abacus, 22 Damson, 26 Asti, 27 Dido

JUMBLED WORDS

Below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Get _____ then get over it - Colin Powell (3,4,2)



Solution: FEAR, EMBODIMENT, ROTTEN, VOLUME
Answer: Get mad, then get over it - Colin Powell

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Ajay @ Pankaj, S/o Vinod, R/o H.No. G-2nd - 214, Madangir, Ambedkar Nagar, Delhi has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 988/2014, U/S 451/511 IPC, P.S. Ambedkar Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Ajay @ Pankaj cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Ajay @ Pankaj has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Ajay @ Pankaj of FIR No. 988/2014, U/S 451/511 IPC, P.S. Ambedkar Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said case on or before 11.07.2025.

By Order

Ms. Nidhi Singh
Judicial Magistrate First Class-03
South District, Room No.: 212
Saket Courts, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Person Mukesh Kumar, S/o: Ashok Kushwaha R/o: T-4/603, ACE Divino, SEC-1, Greater Noida has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 293/2024, U/S: 420/468/471/34 IPC, PS: I.P. Estate, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Mukesh Kumar, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Mukesh Kumar, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person Mukesh Kumar, of FIR No. 293/2024, U/S: 420/468/471/34 IPC, PS: I.P. Estate, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 11.07.2025.

By Order

Preeti
Judicial Magistrate First Class-03 (Central)
Central District Room No. 150
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

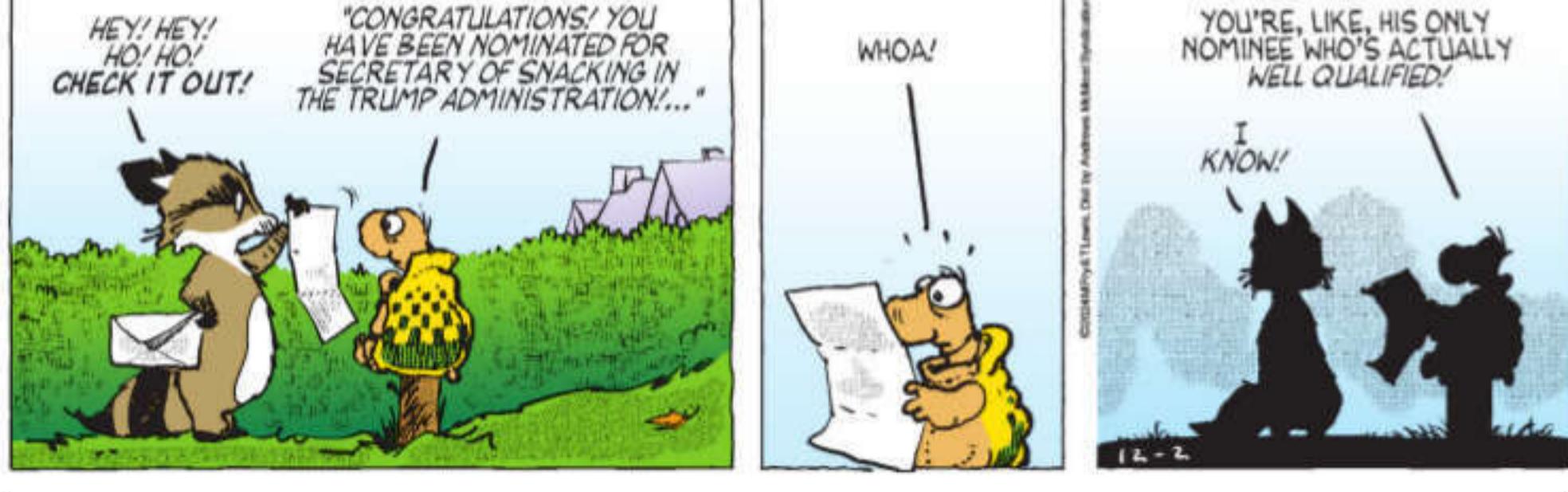
See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Yunus @ Ganga S/o MD. Yusuf, R/o: Near Bismil Masjid Mustafabad Loni Ghaziabad, UP has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 1158/2021, U/s: 392/397/34 IPC, P.S.: Kotwali, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Yunus @ Ganga, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Yunus @ Ganga, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Yunus @ Ganga, of FIR No. 1158/2021, U/s: 392/397/34 IPC, P.S.: Kotwali, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 07.07.2025.

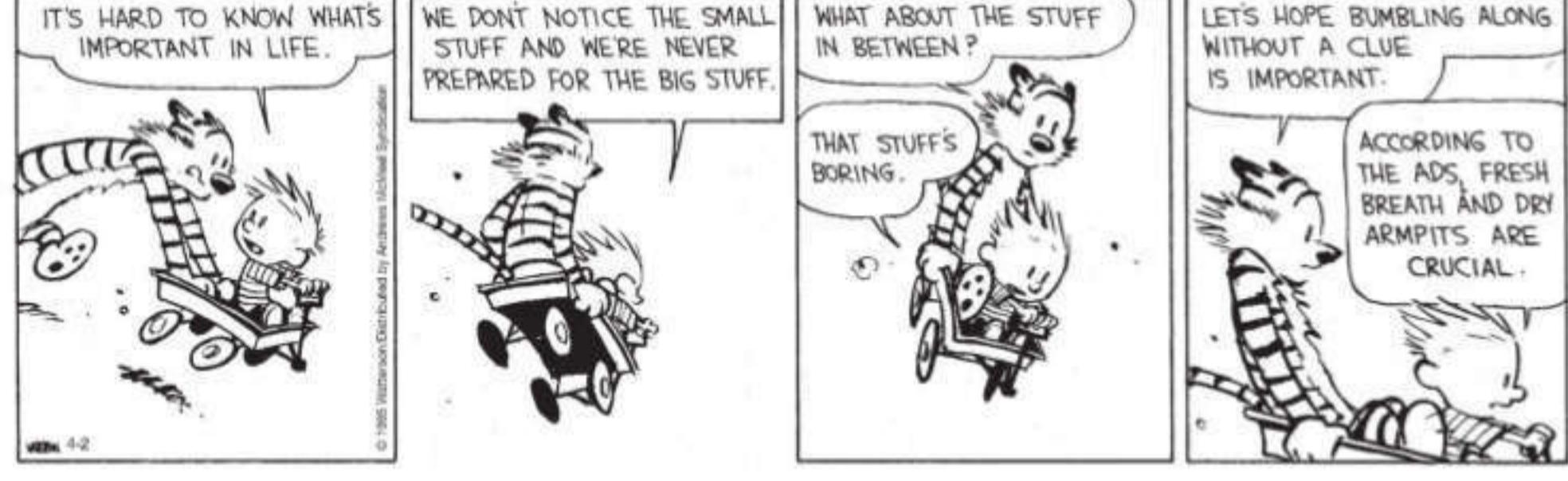
By Order

Ekta Gauba Mann
Judicial Special Court, NDPS (Central)
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

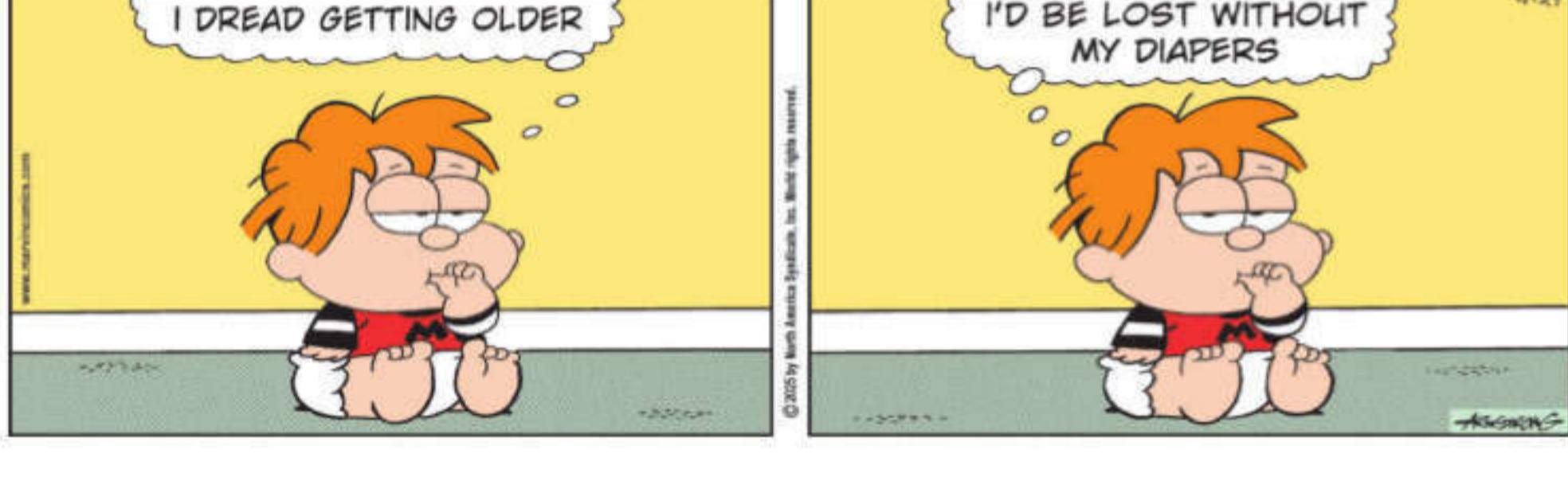
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



Difficulty Level 4s

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

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 5977



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Whatever the rights or wrongs of a current personal dispute, both you and partners should realise that the causes lie in the past, and that the future should be approached with an open mind. This is easier said than done, of course, but you can still try your best.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

You may sit down, talk to partners and listen very carefully to people who may have different ideas and a fresher perspective than you. You should accept criticism, no matter how much it may hurt your pride. After all, even you can be wrong sometimes.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

There is plenty of room for extra effort. If you are to safeguard your material security, you should work as hard as possible. In other words, there's no point in hoping that something will turn up! It is also a useful moment to get your physical condition into shape, by the way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

There is so much security around, and you may be keeping certain feelings close to your chest. Partners may be equally reluctant to come into the open, but then there is no reason why they should – is there? Devote time to a charitable activity.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Your social stars are good, if a little intense. The heaviest astrological pull is towards home and family life, but it may be a good idea either to get out and mix, or to invite other people around. A new acquaintance may get the tonic you need.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

It's an ambitious moment, and even leisure activities should be designed to attract prestige and respect. If family matters are on the agenda it could be parental connections which pre-occupy you, rather than responsibilities for children.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Passions run high, and it's an adventurous moment. Overseas travel could be an attractive option, as could the thought of improving yourself through study. A side issue concerns legal matters, so keep an eye on your rights. But, above all, you need to make your own voice heard above the collective clamour.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Financial issues are about to shoot up the agenda, so stay on your guard, and don't make rash commitments. Also, don't make the mistake of underestimating or under-valuing people who need your sympathy and support. Keep potential allies on your side.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
You seem to have the upper hand today, even though this may come as something of a surprise. Please don't waste too much time wondering about what you should do next, but throw yourself in with gusto. At the very least you will learn from your mistakes.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

There is plenty of room for extra effort. If you are to safeguard your material security, you should work as hard as possible. In other words, there's no point in hoping that something will turn up! It is also a useful moment to get your physical condition into shape, by the way.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Your tendency today will be to believe that only fresh creations are worthwhile, but don't throw out the baby with the bath water. You may swing into action socially, and make plans to test out your skills as a hostess or host. Your generous gestures will be repaid in full.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Home affairs and family commitments may consume most of your emotional energy, so you may have little enthusiasm left for romantic adventures or leisure activities which excite you. There's a little extra tension at work.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Short trips are in order, which is convenient, but a psychological reading of your chart reveals that what is most important is dialogue and discussion, so take great efforts to make yourself understood. An exchange of ideas could even set you off on a new course.

SUDOKU 5978

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

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 5977



PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 84 BNSS)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Faizan @ Faizan Ali @ Faizan Bhai S/o Daulat Ali R/o H.No. C-4, 456/293, LNJP Colony Ranjit Singh Marg, Guru Nanak Hospital, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No.148/2025 u/s 74/75/76/351(3)/ 127(2)/115(2)/3(5) BNS, P.S. IP Estate, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Faizan @ Faizan Ali @ Faizan Bhai cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Faizan @ Faizan Ali @ Faizan Bhai has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Faizan @ Faizan Ali @ Faizan Bhai of FIR No.148/2025 u/s 74/75/76/351(3)/ 127(2)/115(2)/3(5) BNS, P.S. IP Estate, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 15.07.2025.

By Order,
Ms. Preeti
Judicial Magistrate First Class-03 (Central)
Room No.150, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Azmat Parwana, S/o Aslam Alam R/o H.No. H-337, Khadda Colony, Jaitpur Extension, Part-II, New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No.451/2023, Dated 18.08.2023 u/s 323/341/506/34 IPC, P.S. Kalindi Kunj, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Azmat Parwana cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Azmat Parwana has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Azmat Parwana of FIR No.451/2023, Dated 18.08.2023 u/s 323/341/506/34 IPC, P.S. Kalindi Kunj, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 09.07.2025.

By Order,
Sh. Azad Sehrawat
Judicial Magistrate First Class-10, Room No. 307
Third Floor, South-East District
Saket Court, New Delhi

DP/6637/SE/2025

IMPLEMENTATION OF CYBER SECURITY MEASURES

Tender Notice No.: EL_TRD_17_25-26. Dated: 02-06-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: EL_TRD_17_25-26. Name of Work : Implementation of cyber security measures in the existing supervisory Control and data Acquisition System under Kathiar division, N.F. Railway (B) Upgradation of Scada System for Cyber security Implementation (Kathiar Division) by ASHIDA. Tender value: ₹2,20,50,000/- Earnest Money: ₹2,60,300/- Date & time of closing of tender: At 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 30-06-2025. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 30-06-2025 in the website www.reps.gov.in

Mr. DEE/TRD, Katihar

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a Smile

MODIFICATION/TECHNICAL UP GRADATION OF HIGH OUTPUT TAMPING EXPRESS
Tender Notice No.: TMC/TEX-3965-DTE/2025; dated: 03-06-2025. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works. SN. 1. Tender No.: TMC/TEX-3965-DTE/2025. Brief Description of the Work: Modification/ Technical up gradation of 01 (one) no. of existing Plasser high Output Tamping Express (HOT-3X) no. 3965 into High Output Dynamic and Stabilizing Machine (HOTS-3X) of NFR. Estimated Cost: ₹15,81,20,000/- Date & Time of closing of tender: Upto 15:30 Hrs. of 25-06-2025. Date & Time of opening of tender: Upto 15:30 Hrs. of 25-06-2025. The complete information along with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:30 hrs. of 25-06-2025 in website www.reps.gov.in. By. Chief Engineer/TMC. Maligaon

NORTHEASTERN RAILWAY
Open Tender Notice No.: ETender-GSU-TRD-L04-25-26

Dte: 25-06-2025. Approx. Cost (in Rs.): ₹ 64,72,175.46. Earnest Money (in Rs.): ₹ 1,29,500/- Cost of Tender documents (in Rs.): Nil. E-Tender closing date and time: 27-06-2025 upto 14:45 Hrs. on date 27-06-2025. For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the Official website of Indian Railways i.e. www.reps.gov.in. Sr. Divl. Electrical Engineer/GS CPRO/Vidyut-56 Varanasi

Never travel on roof and foot boards.



लदाख संघराज क्षेत्र का प्रशासन कार्यालय जिला समाज कल्याण अधिकारी, लेह, लदाख स्थायी पहाड़ी विकास परिषद, लेह।

THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, LEH Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh.

dswole@gmail.com

Subject: Implementation of SMILE sub-scheme "Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons engaged in the Act of Begging" in District Leh, UT Ladakh

Notification

In pursuance of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's initiative under the SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) Scheme, sub-scheme "Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging", proposals are hereby invited from eligible Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, for implementation of the scheme in District Leh, UT Ladakh. Interested and eligible organizations may download and refer to the detailed scheme guidelines available on the official website of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment: <https://socialjustice.gov.in>. Proposals must be prepared strictly as per the norms given in the guidelines and submitted on or before 18th June 2025 in the office of District Social Welfare Office, Leh, near Polo Ground, UT Ladakh and soft copies via- <a href="mailto

FRENCH OPEN

All aboard Carlos rollercoaster

Spaniard comes back from a set down to beat Lorenzo Musetti but can't afford such swings in momentum in the final

NAMIT KUMAR
JUNE 6

THERE ARE clear reasons why tennis's governing bodies salivate at the prospect of promoting Carlos Alcaraz as the face of the sport's new, rising generation. The way he blends his raw power and clean baseline play with moments of ingenuity and variety is unique. It creates a style of play that is perfect for crafting bite-sized highlight-reel packages for today's relentless content-consumption era.

For all his talent and brilliance, though, turbulence and inconsistency have become just as big a part of his game: the great mismatch between his best level and his worst often showing up in the very same match. It is not unusual for crowds to be gushing over his impeccable point construction, thunderous forehand, and creativity before being sent into an amused sense of befuddlement over a routine error on a rally ball the next point.

The former is how Alcaraz has won four Majors by the age of 22, and the latter is how, midway through the highly enjoyable, captivating semifinal against Lorenzo Musetti on Friday, he stared down the barrel of a daunting two-set deficit. But he rediscovered his touch to defeat Lorenzo Musetti 4-6, 7-6(3), 6-0, 2-0(ret) and will have the opportunity to defend his French Open title on Sunday.

The former is how the Spaniard became tennis's Gen-Z pathbreaker, becoming the youngest-ever year-end World No. 1 by the age of 19. The latter is likely to cause him and his team some concerns, given the quality of the opponent in the final.

On Friday, Musetti arrived with a brilliant game plan, initially executed with precision. The Italian No. 8 seed, a fine clay counter, used his loopy forehand and a delicious single-handed backhand slice to take the sting out of the baseline exchanges, giving Alcaraz no pace to play from the back of the court. He often elongated the rallies and waited for the right moment to strike with a big groundstroke.

Musetti served phenomenally and played near-perfectly just to keep up with Alcaraz in the first set. The Spaniard had been excellent in flashes but missed his opportunities to go ahead. The first time his opponent put him under serious pressure late into the set, he crumbled, feeble errors from his racquet allowing the Italian to steal the opener with his first break point.

The best-of-five-sets format suits Alcaraz, allowing him to contend with the fluctuations in his level. As he came out in the second, he was calm and gently went up a gear, but once again failed to make good of his chances. Twice, he went up a break, the second giving him the opportunity to serve for the set, and both times he ceded the advantage.

But after a dominant tiebreaker, Alcaraz had the momentum as the scores equalled, and his level went through the roof, playing Musetti totally off the court. The Italian could hardly get a point (he won five, compared to his opponent's 24).

He then called the trainer down 0-5 in the third set and finally threw in the towel down

NUMBER PLATE

2

Carlos Alcaraz is only the second player in the Open Era to win more than one men's singles semifinals at Roland Garros after losing the first set – vs Sinner last year and vs Musetti on Friday. Before him, it was Roger Federer (vs Nalbandian, 2006 and del Potro, 2009)

5 Alcaraz is also the fifth-youngest player in the Open era to reach five men's singles Grand Slam finals. He is older only than Mats Wilander, Bjorn Borg, Rafael Nadal and Boris Becker.

Stats: Opta

0-2 in the fourth. The scores do not accurately justify the kind of scare Musetti gave Alcaraz when the second set had gone into a breaker, with the Spaniard staring at the possibility of having to come back from a two-set deficit for the first time in his career.

"The first two sets were really tough. I had chances but I could not make the most of it," Alcaraz said on court after the win, complimentary of his opponent's clay court expertise. "When I won the second set, I was a little relieved."

Sets dropped in 4 out of 6 ties

Despite having a very favourable route to the title clash, Musetti is not the only player to give Alcaraz a scare. He has dropped sets in four of his six matches at Roland Garros this year. Damiir Dzumur dramatically nearly took Alcaraz to five sets before the Spaniard went up a gear to seal the four-set win in the second round. In the fourth round, Ben Shelton had set points in the first-set tiebreaker before Alcaraz rode his opponent's errors to steal the set; had he not, it could have seriously altered the complexion of another seemingly routine four-set victory.

And it is missed chances and lapses in level, which keep creeping into his game, that Alcaraz can ill-afford in the upcoming final. The 22-year-old does not necessarily need lessons in winning. But it is not always tantalising shotmaking that emerges victorious on the biggest stages of the game, instead, it is solidity through tough moments, being brilliant when required but level-headed in adversity.

It was that quality which proved effective in him beating Sinner at the Masters 1000 event on red clay in Rome before Roland Garros. It was the lack thereof that saw him lose to Djokovic in their Australian Open quarterfinal in January. It is decisive against the very best.

And the very best is who he is up against next. He knows. "Of course, I will watch. Sinner against Djokovic is probably one of the best matchups in tennis right now," he said after wrapping up his victory. "I will watch it and enjoy, but of course, I will also take note of the tactics."

The best-of-five-sets format suits Alcaraz, allowing him to contend with the fluctuations in his level. As he came out in the second, he was calm and gently went up a gear, but once again failed to make good of his chances. Twice, he went up a break, the second giving him the opportunity to serve for the set, and both times he ceded the advantage.

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Carlos Alcaraz hits a tweener during his semifinal win against Lorenzo Musetti at Roland Garros on Friday. AP

Sabalenka vs Gauff: Rare clash for Parisian clay title between the world's top two

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JUNE 6

FOR A while, before Iga Swiatek came along and marked her territory at Roland Garros, the women's draw at the French Open regularly threw up surprises. Fairy tales out of nowhere. One-time surprise winners. Even Swiatek was one such story when she completed her first triumph as an unseeded player, ranked outside the world's top 50 in 2020.

Now, with the Polish star's reign on the Parisian clay over after three straight titles and four in last five years, there will be a new champion on Saturday. But this ain't no surprise story. The title clash between Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff for the 2025 French Open women's singles title at Court Philippe Chatrier is between the world's two best players at the moment, a rare occurrence in itself in Paris. It is the first time since 2013 – when world No.1 Serena Williams defeated No.2 Maria Sharapova – that the top two-ranked players are in the final at this tournament, and it is also only the fifth time in 35 years.

Since 1990, the other such instances featured Steffi Graf and Monica Seles (1990, 1992), Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Steffi Graf (1995) and Serena vs Sharapova (2013). It is already an elite club to be a part of. In fact, not just at Roland Garros, it's been a while since this happened at any Major. The last

time WTA's No.1 and No.2-ranked players played in a Grand Slam final was when Caroline Wozniacki defeated Simona Halep at the 2018 Australian Open.

Head-to-Head

While this is Sabalenka's first French Open final, she has been the most dominant force in women's tennis in the last year and some. For Gauff, this would be a second chance to win the clay Major after reaching the final in 2022 where she was blown away by Swiatek 1-6, 3-6 – an experience she said she is better off for having in the build up to facing the Belarusian this time around.

The past record between Sabalenka and Gauff is tantalisingly poised at 5-5 from 10 matches. At the Madrid final on clay this year, Sabalenka prevailed 6-3, 7-6(3). Gauff's most memorable win against Sabalenka came in the final of the US Open in 2023, the American's only Major to date.

Sabalenka Power

Long considered a hard court specialist, the 27-year-old top seed Sabalenka, the most

powerful player on the tour, will try to establish herself as an all-rounder with her first title in Paris. She has already won back-to-back titles at the Australian Open in 2023-24 as well as the US Open crown in 2024 but she had never before reached the final in Paris with the slower clay not naturally suited to her heavy-hitting game.

Her three-set semi-final victory on Thursday over Swiatek elevated her to a new level. She did not change her power game or adapt it to clay. Instead she used it effectively to forge past her opponent. Despite the closed roof that made the ball even slower, Sabalenka's serve was still a major weapon as she dished out a third-set bagel against Swiatek, who had been on a 26-match winning streak at the tournament and is nicknamed the 'Queen of C'ay'. It is this power that Gauff, a far more natural claycourt player than Sabalenka, will need to overcome.

Gauff's clay game

A finalist here in 2022, Gauff is also looking for her first singles crown in Paris. The American does not have anywhere near the punching power from the serve or baseline that her opponent will bring into the encounter but her athleticism, precision and ability to stay in the rallies will be key. One of the best movers on the tour, Gauff has dropped just one set en route to the final.

(With Reuters inputs)

BRIEFLY

NC Classic: Poland's Konecny replaces Japan's Dean

Bengaluru: Poland's Martin Konecny replaced Asian Games bronze medalist Genki Dean of Japan as the organisers on Friday confirmed the 12-man entry list for the rescheduled Neeraj Chopra Classic international javelin event, to be held on July 5. Apart from Konecny, the confirmed international lineup includes two-time world champion Anderson Peters (Grenada), 2016 Olympic gold medallist Thomas Röhler (Germany), 2015 world champion Julius Yego (Kenya), Curtis Thompson (USA), Luiz Mauricio da Silva (Brazil), and Rumesh Pathirage (Sri Lanka). The Indian contingent will feature Asian Championships silver medallist Sachin Yadav, Kishore Jena, Rohit Yadav, and Sahil Silwal.

Compound archers crash out of WC

Antalya: Indian compound archers disappointed at the Archery World Cup Stage 3 as none of them managed to reach the medal rounds in the individual and mixed categories here on Friday. India, who finished second behind South Korea with two gold, one silver, and four bronze medals at the previous stage in Shanghai, are yet to open their medal account here. Madhura Dhamangaonkar, the fourth seed and winner of the last World Cup, was ousted in the quarterfinals by fifth-seeded Mariana Bernal of Mexico. Madhura lost 152-159 in the women's individual section.

New basketball leagues launched

Mumbai: The Basketball Federation of India and ACG Sports announced a professional league for men and women in 5x5 and 3x3 formats here on Friday. Jeremy Loeliger, the former CEO and commissioner of Australia's National Basketball League will be in charge of development of the league, bringing international standards of governance, competition, and commercial aspects in a new role as director of ACG Sports.

Dabang Delhi, Dempo Goa win in UTT

Ahmedabad: Diya Chitale registered a commanding victory over Ananya Chande in the final match as Dabang Delhi edged past Kolkata Thunder-Blades in the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 6 on Friday. Earlier, reigning champions Dempo Goa Challengers defeated PBG Pune Jaguars, powered by strong performances from power couple Harmeet Desai and Krittika Sinha Roy. Delhi's win over Kolkata propelled them to the top of the table, while Goa moved up to second following their success.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rahul gets ready for long English summer with measured century

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
JUNE 6

BRIEFLY AFTER the drinks break in the post-lunch session, KL Rahul brought up a patient 102-ball half century for India A against England Lions. In the moments following that, there was a rare loss of focus that saw him get beaten on the outside edge in the channel by George Hill. But before the next ball, he took a walk down the pitch, tapped it a few times, and quickly went back to middling a perfect forward defensive stroke, followed by carefully seeing one through to the keeper's gloves... he reset. Then he finished the over with another gorgeous cover drive for four.

In those few moments, it was evident that Rahul had switched on his red-ball mode. After the exertions of the Indian Premier League (IPL), where his Delhi Capitals failed to qualify for the playoffs, he made his way to England early to get some batting time under his belt. And having to face Chris Woakes and Josh Tongue – both in England's squad for the Test series – Rahul went about his business with a certain assurance that will bring calm to an inexperienced Indian batting unit. A 168-ball 116 in Northampton sets him up nicely for the long summer ahead.

If there were any doubts over where Rahul is likely to bat in the five-match Test series, the sight of him opening with Yashasvi Jaiswal ought to have put those to rest. It is the combination that started the series Down Under, and with Rohit Sharma now not in the picture, looks set to be the first-choice again, especially with Abhimanyu Easwaran failing in two of his three innings so far.

Rahul was off to a watchful start with Woakes getting the ball to talk under overcast skies on a green top. The allrounder was



KL Rahul scored 116 runs. AP/File

27th over that squared up Rahul and brought out a big LBW appeal – but that was the exception rather than the norm.

Rahul's shot to go from 40 to 44 was a thing of beauty as he played the perfect textbook cover off Tongue, a shot that he played to good effect right through his knock, meeting the ball right underneath his eyelines. After his half century, he moved through the gears as well. His first came off 50 off 102 balls, while he scored the next 51 runs off just 49 balls.

The driving and cutting were on point, and when he was tested with short balls, he rolled his wrists over nicely to avoid falling for the Lions' trap. There was one shaky moment off Hill when the ball flew in that gap between wicketkeeper and slip for what otherwise would have been a regulation catch with a regulation slip cordon that the Lions had in place previously. Largely, it was a serene day out for the classy opener.

After Woakes accounted for Nair with one that nipped back in the next ball from a good length, Dhruv Jurel joined Rahul for a 121-run stand off 159 balls. Jurel came out playing his shots, reaching a half-century off 66 balls. Unlike Rahul, though, his momentum got halted after the landmark, and he was bowled by a fine delivery by Hill that nipped back in from good length. Hill then ended Rahul's stay.

After a backfoot punch for four to start the over, Rahul looked to continue the tempo going. However, his attempted cover drive caught the outside edge and flew at a comfortable height to Emilio Gay at the second slip. But as he walked back, the Indian management would have most certainly felt a sense of relief.

BRIEF SCORES: India A 319 for 7 in 83 overs (KL Rahul 116, Karun Nair 40, Dhruv Jurel 52; Chris Woakes 3/50) vs England Lions

India prepare for hockey Pro League with lessons from Irish club rugby

MIHIR VASAVDA

MUMBAI, JUNE 6

A WEEKEND watching the Leinster vs Scarlets in the United Rugby Championship must not have been on the bucket list of India's hockey players. But that's how they kicked off their Road to the 2026 World Cup, as spectators at Dublin's Lansdowne Road stadium, witnessing the bruising quarterfinal between two Irish Rugby Championship sides.

It was the most unlikely way to kick-start the one-year countdown to the World Cup. But at least this didn't involve pulling off stunts in the snowy Alps, which coach Craig Fulton made them do just before the Paris Olympics. "They help understand the culture of the country you are in. They take that sport very seriously," says the Indian chief coach, who keeps innovating with his team-building methods.

In early 2024, the start of the Olympic year, the hockey team conquered Table Mountain in Cape Town. Then, just before the Paris Games, where they defended their bronze medal, the players rappelled in the Swiss Alps. If these hikes were designed to prepare the players for the unknown and make them experience 'fear', the trip to Dublin's fabled ground last weekend was to absorb a new culture, but it wasn't just limited to that. There was a tactical element to it, too.

"If you think of the Irish or any team that plays man-to-man, there's a history of being physical. And Ireland is very comfortable being that. It (going to rugby) was just to show the boys another way of a game that is only physical – the more physical you are, the more dominant you are," Fulton said. "It was also to improve our own physical capabilities. We can be stronger on the ball, we can be more aggressive in defence within the rules of hockey. So, it was to share a new exper-



India's hockey players at an Irish rugby league match last weekend. Instagram

ence but also show it's relevant."

The lesson in the physicality of sport was also relevant because India's opponents on Saturday in the FIH Pro League, the Netherlands, play hockey in a manner that Fulton described – man-to-man and physical.

The match against the Dutch on Saturday will kick off a gruelling period for the men's team, which will play six matches in nine days against world hockey's heavyweight sides. Apart from the Netherlands, India will face Belgium, Australia and Argentina.

They can't afford to ease into this leg of matches, too. The Pro League has assumed significance in the last couple of seasons because the competition now doubles up as a World Cup qualifier. India are placed third after the home leg of matches. If they earn enough points from the European leg to finish on top of the nine-team tournament, they will earn a direct berth for the World Cup.

World Cup prep

The matches over the next fortnight are also important because they will give India a

INDIA'S SCHEDULE

vs The Netherlands

June 7 (7.30 pm); June 9 (6 pm)

vs Argentina

June 11 (6.30 pm); June 12 (6.

CHESS RANKING

A first: Four Indians in top 10



Aravindh, India's latest in top 10. FILE

MAYANK

NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

FOR THE first time in history, four Indians are in the top 10 chess rankings. Alongside D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, and R Praggnanandhaa – now regulars among the world's elite – Aravindh Chithambaram has climbed to ninth place with a live rating of 6.575.

The milestone followed Aravindh's victory at the 6th Stepan Avagyan Memorial in Jermuk, Armenia, on Friday, where he edged out his close friend and training partner under coach RB Ramesh, Praggnanandhaa.

Both players tied for first place with 6.5 points each after nine rounds, but Aravindh claimed the title due to a superior Sonneborn-Berger score (tiebreak points), due to his stronger performance against higher-ranked opponents.

The tournament began with a draw between Praggnanandhaa and Aravindh, and the two remained evenly matched until the final round. Entering the last game, both Indians were tied at 5.5 points after eight rounds, needing a win to secure the title. Praggnanandhaa struck first, defeating Armenia's Robert Hovhannisyan, forcing Aravindh to win his game to clinch the event.

Aravindh obliged, overcoming Armenia's Aram Hakobyan with the black pieces to claim the championship. Both players remained undefeated, scoring four wins and five draws each. However, Praggnanandhaa later reflected on a missed opportunity in the second round against Danish GM Jonas Buhl Bjerre, where he had a winning position.

"It was a good tournament for me, but I still missed this one chance in the second round. I could have probably won the tournament had that result gone my way, now it'll probably be tied for the first spot," Praggnanandhaa told Chessbase India, accompanied by his trainer, Vaibhav Suri.

"Overall happy with my performance, I was mostly well prepared for almost all the rounds, just rue that game against Jonas otherwise I would have been on plus five," he added.

Aravindh's win in Armenia mirrored his earlier title win at the Prague Masters, where he outperformed Praggnanandhaa in a star-studded field featuring Wei Yi, Anish Giri, and Vincent Keymer. While Aravindh took the title, Praggnanandhaa's performance was equally impressive. The 19-year-old now sits sixth in the live ratings (2774.2) and leads the FIDE Circuit stands.

With 83.59 points from five events – including wins at the Tata Steel Masters and Grand Chess Tour Romania Classic, a joint-second finish in Prague, third place in GCT Poland Rapid & Blitz, and now second in Armenia – Praggnanandhaa is the frontrunner to qualify for the 2026 Candidates Tournament via the FIDE Circuit. He holds a commanding 42.27-point lead over second-placed Aravindh (41.32 points), who has competed in three events.

Both players will next compete at the Uzchess Cup in Uzbekistan, starting June 18, alongside strong players like Ian Nepomniachtchi, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, and Arjun Erigaisi.

Yamal outshines Ballon d'Or contenders in Spain's win

REUTERS
STUTTGART, JUNE 6

SPAIN'S TEENAGE sensation Lamine Yamal inspired his country to a thrilling 5-4 win over France on Thursday to send the holders through to their third successive Nations League final where they will face Iberian neighbours Portugal.

The European champions dazzled in the first half of the semi-final at the MHP Arena and raced into a 2-0 lead with fine goals by Nico Williams and Mikel Merino inside 25 minutes. Spain's 17-year-old starlet Yamal then got on in the act to coolly add a third from the penalty spot nine minutes into the second half before his Barcelona teammate Pedri clipped a sublime fourth into the net less than a minute later.

The goals continued to flow as France striker Kylian Mbappe also slotted home from the penalty spot near the hour mark before Yamal added Spain's fifth after 67 minutes to cap an exhilarating individual performance.

France then mounted an extraordinary comeback as a stunning strike from Rayan Cherki, Dani Vivian's own goal and a Randal Moju finish caused Spain some late jitters but they held on to book a clash with their Portuguese rivals on Sunday.

"I always say it to my mother, I try to give it all," Yamal told Teleteleport. "It is what motivates me to play football, why I wake up in

the mornings."

"France have world class players. The scoreline after 60 minutes was very big, but they have players who make you suffer."

"We (Spain and Portugal) are two very good teams with world-class players. The best will win. I hope to bring the cup to Spain." Spain have been nearly imperious under coach Luis de la Fuente, losing just once in over two years, a run that helped them take home the European Championship title last year with victory over England in the final.

Key to De la Fuente's system is his lively wide men Nico Williams and Yamal, and after Mbappe had wasted a golden early chance in Stuttgart and Theo Hernandez crashed an effort against the crossbar, Williams' emphatic finish edged Spain in front.



Spain's Lamine Yamal during the Nations League semifinal against France. AP

NORWAY CHESS

Magnus left smarting

Before final round at home event, world No 1 Carlsen reflects on his defeat against India's Gukesh

AMIT KAMATH
STAVANGER (NORWAY), JUNE 6

A LONG queue of fans has been waiting about an hour on Friday to get into the playing hall at Finansparken Bjergsted in Stavanger. They're waiting outside, because today the playing hall is at full capacity at the moment with not even standing room at the back available. 12 of the world's best players – both in terms of rankings and in terms of achievements – are playing the final round at the Norway Chess tournament. But clearly the milling fans are here for a piece of the world's best player of this generation, Magnus Carlsen.

When Carlsen arrives at the playing arena, just two minutes before the start of his game against Arjun Erigaisi, there is a commotion on the 20-metre stretch between his car and the entrance of the Finansparken Bjergsted. Commotions on the streets are uncommon in Norway. But having a chess player of Carlsen's calibre emerging from a population of five million is even more uncommon. Carlsen, who has developed a racewalker's purposeful gait over the years, is 120 seconds away from being late for a game that will decide who will win what could be the last classical tournament of Carlsen's career.

But Carlsen is in no hurry. Not today. He smiles for every photograph seeker. He scribbles on every chess board young fans hold in front of him. Behind him, arrives Gukesh Dommaraju, the 19-year-old occupier of the world champion's throne that Carlsen wilfully abdicated two years ago after falling out of love with the process of preparing – and then playing – the toughest challenge in the sport. Gukesh power-walks into the playing hall past the extended chess boards and cellphone cameras pointed at him without making a single eye contact. His eyes are trained on the task ahead: beating Fabiano Caruana in the final game and snatching the Norway Chess title from under the Norwegian's nose.

It was a game between the two earlier this week that made the rest of the world sit up and take notice, especially after Carlsen had slammed his fist on the chess board after losing to Gukesh for the first time in his career. The loss against Gukesh, Carlsen said on Thursday after surging into tournament standings lead, would dull the lustre of another title at Norway Chess. Right after the loss to Gukesh, Carlsen had indicated that he would take a long hard look at playing classical chess in the future. The Norway Chess, which has been intricately linked with the rise



Magnus Carlsen signing autographs before the final round on Friday. Michal Walusza for Norway Chess

of Carlsen for the past 13 years, is currently the only classical chess event he plays in. But soon even that could be over.

Which explains why chess fans have arrived from everywhere – even from as far away as Bengaluru – to catch a glimpse of Carlsen. There's a camera crew on hand too, shooting a documentary. But for the man in the middle of the melee, the title win would be a victory with a blemish.

"It could have meant a lot to me if I had finished off the game against Gukesh and then played a really good tournament. Now regardless of what happens it would kind of like stumbling into a win. There is a very good chance that I don't win the tournament, but it honestly wouldn't make that big of a difference to me. The dream of playing a really good tournament burst with that game (against Gukesh). Of course I want to win, but it's not that important," Carlsen told Chess24 after beating Caruana.

"I know that I can play (well). There is no doubt about that. I just wanted a score that reflects the fact that I think I'm still significantly better at chess and since I couldn't achieve that then potentially winning the tournament

would not mean as much," he shrugged with his trademark nonchalance that borders on cocky arrogance.

"He's the same cocky young man (he was many years ago). I can say cocky young man, because he's not really (cocky or arrogant). I used to joke that in our family, arrogance is not negative," says Magnus' father Henrik, who has been the closest confidant to the world No 1 over the past three decades. "If you have earned it, it's okay. When Magnus is becoming slightly arrogant, it's because he's earned it. He's not trying to put on a show or anything. He has a certain level of confidence. That can come across as arrogance."

Preparation

Henrik says that these days his son doesn't really prepare for tournaments like he used to. He prefers playing to preparing, which is why he loves Freestyle Chess. It's not uncommon to spot Carlsen and his long-time trainer Peter Heine Nielsen leaving the players' hotel in the mornings with a set of golf clubs to spend hours on the fairway. He's done that before both games against Gukesh at Norway Chess, he's done that before the final round as

well. He's also very involved in other sports, a few years back he was at the top in the world in the football Fantasy Premier League rankings. At breakfast, he can be spotted enjoying an NBA game.

Ask Henrik what his son currently enjoys about chess, and the senior Carlsen says: "He's a chess fan. He loves chess, playing it, the history of chess, and the environment. He has his legacy from chess. He makes his money from chess. Even though it's still kind of a hobby, which turned out to be lucrative and something he could live off. Chess is basically everything to him as an identity. He's also grateful to chess."

To those wondering if Carlsen will walk away from the sport completely, Henrik has some solace to offer: "You can see he goes online to play, even during a tournament like this. Sometimes he will go at night and play Titled Tuesday or similar, because he's a chess player. That's his passion and hobby, whatever you like. Everything, Chess is his life, basically. So he's not done yet."

(The writer is in Stavanger at the invitation of Norway Chess. Matches are live-streamed on Sony LIV)

Olympic champ Khelif skips Eindhoven event

ASSOCIATED PRESS
EINDHOVEN, JUNE 6

OLYMPIC CHAMPION Imane Khelif is skipping the Eindhoven Box Cup in the Netherlands less than a week after World Boxing announced mandatory sex testing for all athletes. The Algerian boxer, who won gold at the Paris Games last summer amid scrutiny over her eligibility, did not register in time for the event before applications closed on Thursday.

"The decision of Imene's exclusion is not ours. We regret it," tournament media director Dirk Renders told *The Associated Press*.

The 26-year-old Khelif had intended to return to international competition at the Eindhoven tournament this weekend before World Boxing announced its new sex testing policy last Friday. The governing body specifically mentioned Khelif, saying she'd have to be screened to be approved to fight at any upcoming events, including the Eindhoven Box Cup. Eindhoven mayor Jeroen Dijsselbloem criticized World Boxing's decision.

"As far as we are concerned, all athletes are welcome in Eindhoven. Excluding athletes based on controversial gender tests certainly does not fit in with that," Dijsselbloem wrote in a letter addressed to the Dutch Boxing Federation and International Boxing Federation. "We are expressing our disapproval of this decision today and are calling on the organization to admit Imene Khelif after all."

Khelif won a gold medal at the Paris Olympics last summer amid international scrutiny on her and Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting, another gold medal winner. The previous governing body for Olympic boxing, the Russian-dominated International Boxing Association, had disqualified both fighters from its 2023 world championships after claiming they failed unspecified eligibility tests.

But the IBA was banned for decades of misdeeds and controversy. The IOC ran the past two Olympic boxing tournaments in its place and it applied the sex eligibility rules used in previous Olympics. Khelif and Lin were eligible to compete under those standards.

World Boxing has since been provisionally approved as the boxing organizer for the 2028 Los Angeles Games and has faced pressure from boxers and their federations to create sex eligibility standards.

Its president, Boris van der Vorst, apologized after Khelif was singled out in the governing body's announcement last week.

Khelif planned to defend her welterweight gold medal at the LA Games, but some boxers and their federations have already spoken out against her inclusion.

Satwik-Chirag harried and blunted by Man-Tee in Indonesia QF defeat

SHIVANI NAIK
JUNE 6

SATWIKSIRAJ RANKIREDDY and Chirag Shetty ended what has been a terrible week for Indian sport, completely in disarray at the Indonesia Open quarterfinals, as they lost 21-19, 21-16 to World No.7 Man Wei Chong and Kai Wun Tee, of Malaysia.

Two rallies, both of which the Indians ended up losing, reached breathless proportions and were extremely watchable because it lured Satwik-Chirag into cross patterns of attack and defense. But they were largely off the boil in the 43-minute match, and looked like they wanted to defer title-winning to mid-western Iowa where they play the US Open next. They just didn't look like the part at Jakarta for this weekend.

That the duo who have had a torrid time dealing with grief, injuries and stop-start form, as well as adjusting to a change of coach, have fetched India's most consistent results in the last few weeks with semis at



Satwik-Chirag lost 21-19, 21-16 to World No.7 Man-Tee. BWF/BadmintonPhoto

Singapore Super 750 and quarters at Indonesia Super 1000, is a reflection of the wretched state the rest of the top names are in.

Having slipped to World No.22 after injury lay-offs due to back and shoulder, the duo are still making the Last 8, fighting with six of their eight combined limbs.

Against the pairing of 25-year-olds from Malaysia, shepherded by the iconic coaching doyen, Henry IP, Satwik-Chirag were rushed and harried and blunted, by the adventurous Man-Tee. Chirag reckoned his best chance was to hit down and straight because the Malaysians scattered themselves and the shuttle into scripted chaos, befuddling the Indians.

The Malaysian attack wasn't bewildering with smashes raining down. They played flat and cross albeit at an altitude and ensured the shuttle got whiffy when dropping at the net or on the midcourt, because of the loopy trajectory they imparted. The shuttle scurried and poked at more jagged angles than a ribbon-wrapped cactus, and

As takeaways go, the doors were simply shattered on them and they were left with gulps of water from their bottles and not much else.

Jr World C'ships in Guwahati to use new 3x15 scoring system

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JUNE 6

THE PROPOSED new 3x15 scoring system will be implemented at the individual events at the upcoming BWF World Junior Championships 2025 in Guwahati in October. A new, updated relay system will also be used in the mixed team tournament that usually precedes the individual events. It will be a best-of-three sets up to 45 points, with each set comprising five matches – one of each event from men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles.

In the individual tournament, the new scoring system will be trialled as part of the wider testing and analysis programme. Earlier this year, BWF announced that the 3x15 system will be tested at selected events. The testing period is approximately April to September/October 2025. "BWF Council will make a final decision whether to propose this new system to the BWF Annual General Meeting 2026," the governing body had said.

The 3x15 is already defined as part of the 'Alternative Laws of Badminton' – in simple terms, a match will consist of the best of three games. The game shall be won by the side that first scores 15 points (instead of the current 21). At 14-14, the game will continue to be

The testing period is approximately April to September/October 2025.

played till one side gains a two-point lead first. The 21st point will be decisive.

BAI Secretary General Sanjay Mishra had said earlier this year that there was a mixed reaction from some of India's top players when he sought feedback in February. "Our players are OK with a different system in leagues, but for the major events on tours, they think the existing system must continue. The feeling is that in a 15-point game, there is not enough time," Mishra had told *The Indian Express*. "My opinion is that other Asian countries like China, Malaysia, and Indonesia may oppose it because it takes away their strengths of fitness and playing long rallies."

BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund praised BAI and the Guwahati organising committee for implementing these rule changes. "This is part of BWF's wider long-term considerations for innovation in events and event delivery," Lund said. "It is necessary to test such innovations in live tournament settings and it is great that we have the endorsement and backing from our Member in India."

them take home the European Championship title last year with victory over England in the final.

Key to De la Fuente's system is his lively wide men Nico Williams and Yamal, and after Mbappe had wasted a golden early chance in Stuttgart and Theo Hernandez crashed an effort against the crossbar, Williams' emphatic finish edged Spain in front.

"We had some bursts of play we haven't had for a long time," France skipper Mbappe said. "But in just 10 minutes of the first half, we conceded two goals – and the same thing happened in the second half."

Another fine, flowing move three minutes later resulted in Merino slotting home the second having been picked out by a pinpoint Mikel Oyarzabal pass. It was only the second time France had conceded twice inside the opening half hour of a match during coach Didier Deschamps' 13-year tenure.

France continued to create openings but could not make their moments count, with their profligacy proving costly as one of the favourites to win the Ballon d'Or award, Yamal, fired in from the penalty spot after the teenager had been fouled.

Yamal, who already has over 100 appearances for Barcelona across all competitions before he has even turned 18, was equally calm for his second, after Pedro's fine fourth and Mbappe's penalty, poking the ball past France goalkeeper Mike Maignan.

The strike from Olympique Lyonnais' Cherki deserved to be more meaningful, before Vivian's intervention gave Spanish supporters some cause for concern.

Substitute Kolo Muani's goal made extra time look a possibility, but it was too little, too late. The striker, however, ensured the enthralling semi-final became the first-ever Nations League match to feature nine goals.

It was also the first time France had conceded five times in a match since 1969.

"We had some bursts of play we haven't had for a long time," France skipper Mbappe said. "But in just 10 minutes of the first half, we conceded two goals – and the same thing happened