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Seva, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan ke

11 SAAL

CBC 17/01/13/0015/2526

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India has world's third largest startup ecosystem,
1.6+ lakh startups across India**ARREST REPRESENTATIVES OF RCB, KSCA, EVENT MANAGEMENT FIRM: SIDDARAMAIAH**

CM suspends top cop, orders judicial probe; police book RCB, state cricket association

Day after 11 died in stampede, HC takes suo motu cognizance, seeks report by June 10

AKRAM M,
KIRAN PARASHAR &
ARNAV CHANDRASEKHAR
BENGALURU, JUNE 5

KARNATAKA CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday ordered the suspension of Bengaluru City Police Commissioner B Dayananda and several other senior officers in connection with Wednesday's stampede near the Chinnaswamy stadium that left 11 people dead.

A day after the stampede, which occurred when lakhs of people gathered to celebrate Royal Challengers Bengaluru winning the IPL, police booked RCB, event management company DNA and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) administration. CM Siddaramaiah later asked police to arrest representatives of RCB, DNA, and KSCA.

Earlier on Thursday, the Karnataka High Court took suo motu cognizance of the stampede and directed the state government to provide a status report by June 10.

Briefing the media after a Cabinet meeting, Siddaramaiah

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



The grieving grandmother of 14-year-old Divyanshi B S, who was among those killed in Wednesday's stampede, in Bengaluru on Thursday. AP

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EXPRESS NETWORK

'Will give ₹50 lakh. Can they bring my son back?'

Schoolgirl to engineering student, the 11 who died



PAGE 9

From OTT to air & train travel portals: Ministry eyes new data sources to calculate inflation

AANCHAL MAGAZINE &
SIDDHARTH UPASANI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

THE INDIAN statistics ministry is looking to use a host of alternative data sources such as over-the-top (OTT) platforms and online portals for air and rail travel as part of the new Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation series and other official statistics, Secretary Saurabh Garg told *The Indian Express* in an interview.

At the same time, Niti Aayog Vice Chairperson Suman Bery wondered if the statistics

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

E Move to get more robust data

ALTERNATIVE DATA sources such as online platforms for air and rail travel, data from OTT platforms and fuel price numbers could add to the efficiency and comprehensiveness of price data collection. The possibility of collecting price data from e-commerce websites is also under consideration, according to the statistics ministry.

EXPRESS NETWORK



PRAN PRATISHTHA OF RAM DARBAR IN AYODHYA PAGE 11

KASHMIR RAIL LINK: PM TO INAUGURATE CHENAB BRIDGE TODAY PAGE 14



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THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW
ATISHI
AAP LEADER, FORMER DELHI CM

Made-in-India Rafale fuselage from 2027-28: Tata, Dassault ink pact for Hyderabad facility

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

IN A boost to defence and aerospace manufacturing in India, the country is set to become the first nation outside France where the fuselage of the Rafale fighter aircraft will be manufactured.

Under a partnership between Dassault Aviation and Tata Advanced Systems (TASL), the latter will set up a "cutting-edge" production facility in Hyderabad for the manufacture of key structural sections of the Rafale, including the lateral shells of the rear fuselage, the complete rear section, the central fuselage, and



Rafale fighter aircraft. File

the front section.

The first fuselage sections are expected to roll off the Hyderabad assembly line in the financial year 2027-28, with the facility expected to deliver up to

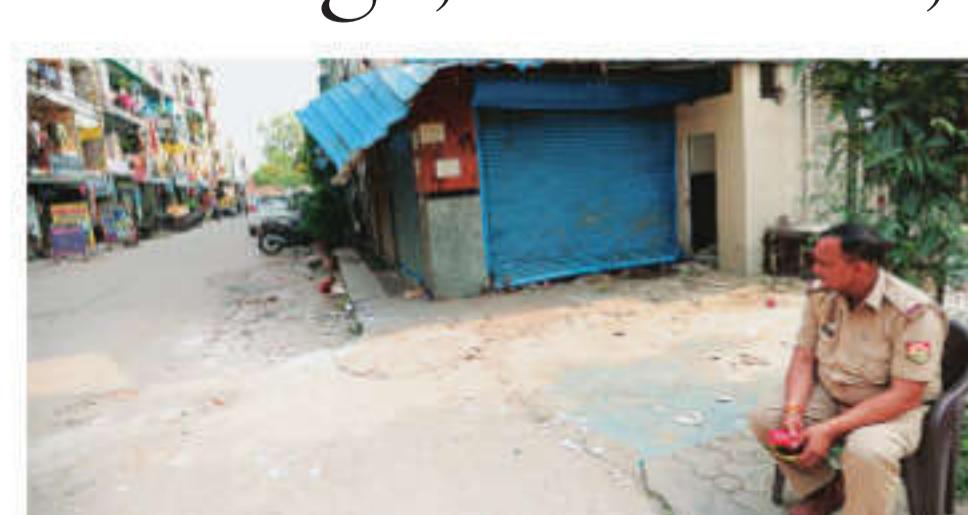
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

In Ghaziabad, an interfaith love story interrupted after three years of marriage, with FIR, arrests

were reduced to their only identity – their faith.

On May 25, Sonika's father, Laxman Singh Chauhan, went to the Indirapuram police station in Ghaziabad district of UP and accused Akbar of kidnapping his daughter and wrongfully confining her. A day later, the Ghaziabad Police first arrested Akbar's two sisters, a sister-in-law, a neighbour and then, him. While Akbar and his two sisters are now in judicial custody, the others were released a week later.

The couple's friends and Akbar's family members say the "two were together all the time"



Akbar Khan's shops in Indirapuram were vandalised on May 26, a day after his arrest. Gajendra Yadav

so the relationship didn't come as a surprise.

"It was a colony romance. Sonika and Akbar grew up at Nay Khand in Indirapuram and went to the same school in Khoda (Ghaziabad). Later, when Akbar joined Shyam Lal College in Shahdara, Sonika shifted to Vigyan Vihar School in Indirapuram," says Ashish Bisht, 23, a common friend of the couple.

After college, Akbar, along with his brother Mohammad Arif, ran a couple of Jan Sewa Kendras (community centres that provide essential public

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

NEETIKA JHA
GAZIABAD, JUNE 5

THEY WERE neighbours, went to the same school, and fell in love six years ago. On August 29, 2022, the couple went to the office of the District Magistrate in East Delhi and married under the Special Marriage Act.

Yet, on May 24, Akbar Khan, 29, and Sonika Chauhan, 25, by then married for three years,

Tharoor-led group meets US V-P Vance, focus on cooperation in counter-terror

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

SEEKING TO rally support for India against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, the multi-party political delegation led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor met US Vice President J D Vance in Washington DC on Thursday and discussed "cooperation in counter-terrorism domain".

Vance was in India when the Pulwama terror attack took place on April 22; he and his family had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi the previous day. He had later called

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



US V-P J D Vance with the delegation. @IndianEmbassyUS

INSIDE

UNEASE IN INDIA AS PAK PICKED FOR KEY UNSC ANTI-TERROR PANELS PAGE 8

After Trump-Xi phone call, US & China agree to revive trade talks

ANA SWANSON & DAVID PIERSON
WASHINGTON, HONG KONG, JUNE 5

CHINA AND the United States on Thursday agreed to hold more trade talks in hopes of breaking an impasse over tariffs and global supplies of rare earth minerals, a move that came after the leaders of the two countries had a "very positive" phone conversation.

President Trump said in a post on Truth Social that his call



Call with Xi lasted for about an hour-and-a-half: Trump

with Xi Jinping, China's top leader, had lasted for around an hour-and-a-half and had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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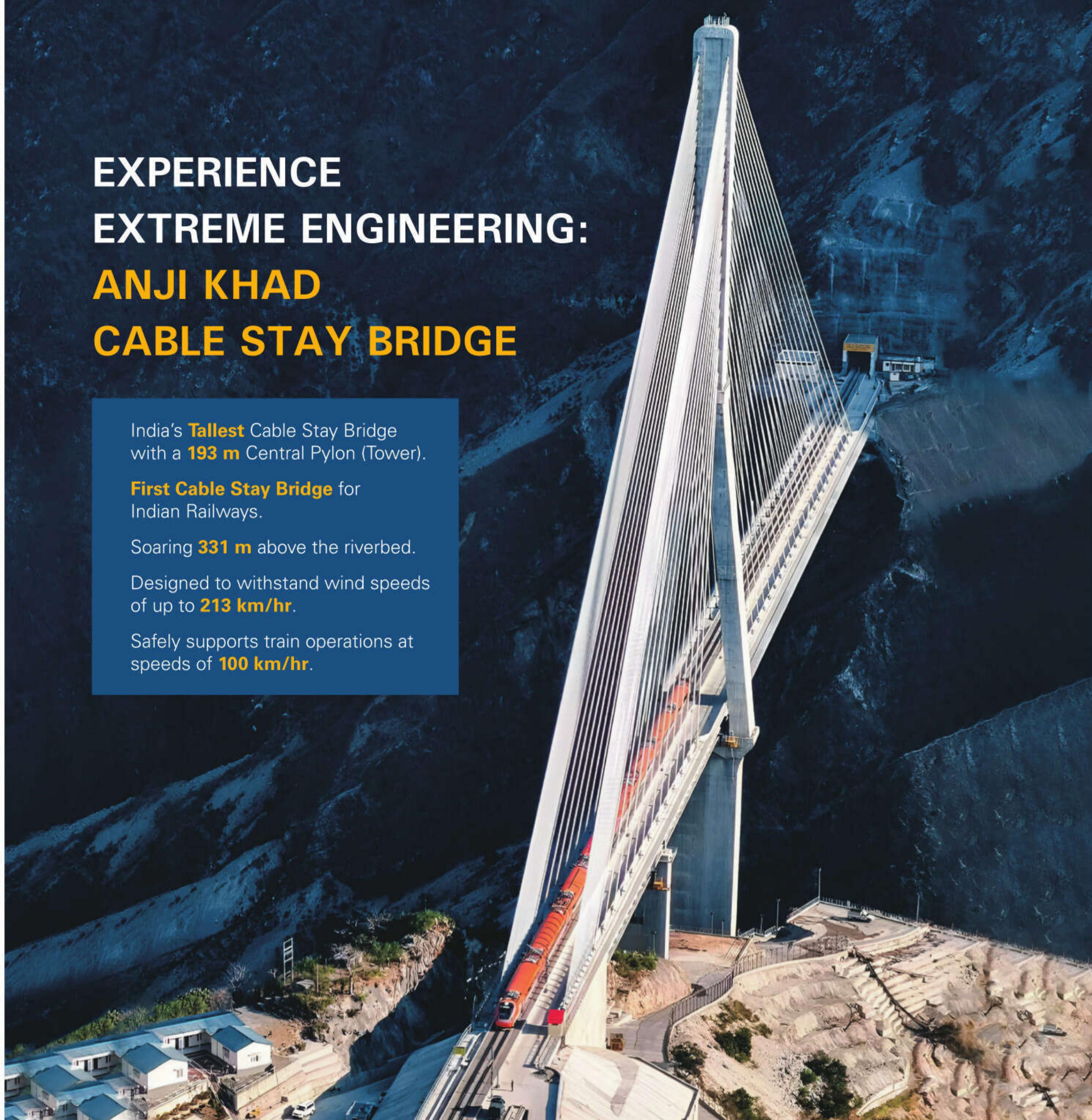
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• Tharoor-led group meets Vance

up Modi to express condolences, after US President Donald Trump had called up the PM.

On May 9, Vance had called up Modi to share intelligence that Pakistan was preparing for a massive attack. So, he has been at the centre of the Trump administration's engagement with India, in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoora launched on May 7, that led to four days of military confrontation between India and Pakistan.

"Excellent meeting with Vice President @JDVance today in Washington DC with our delegation... We had comprehensive discussions covering a wide array of critical issues, from counter-terrorism efforts to enhancing technological cooperation. A truly constructive & productive exchange for strengthening India-US strategic partnership, with a great meeting of minds," Tharoor said in a post on X.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in the US said the Tharoor-led delegation called on Vance in the morning, and the "conversation focused on strengthening the India-US partnership including cooperation in counter-terrorism domain".

India's former Ambassador to the US, Tarunji Sandhu, who is also part of the delegation, said they had "an excellent, comprehensive, constructive & productive interaction".

The delegation travelled to Guyana, Panama, Colombia and Brazil before arriving in Washington for the final leg of the tour. The other members of the team are MPs Sarfaraz Ahmad, Ganti Harish Madhur Balayogi, Shashank Mani Tripathi,

Bhubaneswar Kalita, Milind Deora and Tejasvi Surya.

The Indian precision strikes on Pakistani air bases early on May 10 came hours after Vance called up Modi and shared information about "alarming intelligence" that there was a "high probability for dramatic escalation if the conflict went into the weekend".

The Indian establishment has been facing questions from the Congress-led Opposition on the US announcing the ceasefire.

On Wednesday, the Tharoor-led delegation met the leadership of the House Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in the 119th Congress, the co-chairs Rep. Ro Khanna and Rep. Rich McCormick and the two vice co-chairs Rep. Andy Barr and Rep. Marc Veasey.

"The Congressmen expressed unequivocal and bipartisan condemnation for the terror attack in Pahalgam. They also expressed their support for India's right to respond to terrorism in the spirit of zero tolerance against terrorism. The Caucus members also hailed the strong strategic partnership between India and USA," the Indian Embassy in the US said.

Thereafter, it said, the delegation met the leadership of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) in a meeting hosted by Committee Chairman Rep. Brian Mast and Ranking Member Rep. Gregory Meeks. "The interaction saw a constructive exchange of views on the developments relating to the attack in Pahalgam and India's stand on dealing with such attacks in the future. The Committee leadership condemned the Pahalgam attack unequivocally," it said.

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

CM suspends top cop, orders judicial probe

said retired High Court judge Justice Michael Cunha would probe the incident. The one-man judicial commission, tasked with investigating lapses in planning, coordination and crowd management, has been asked to submit its report in 30 days, the CM said.

Later in the day, IPS officer Seemanth Kumar Singh was appointed the new City Police Commissioner of Bengaluru.

The CM also ordered the suspension of Additional Commissioner of Police (West) Vikash Kumar Vikash, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Shekhar H Tekkannavar, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Cubbon Park) C Balakrishna, and Cubbon Park police station Inspector A K Girish.

The FIR filed at the Cubbon Park police station said the KSCA administration was denied permission to hold the celebrations.

On June 3, after the IPL final between RCB and Punjab Kings, there were celebrations at night at different locations in Bengaluru, and Cubbon Park police personnel were deployed until 5.30 am on Wednesday, the FIR said.

The FIR further said that at around 9 am on Wednesday, senior police officers were informed

about the celebrations. There was also a felicitation event held at Vidhana Soudha, for which security was provided.

By afternoon, lakhs of people started gathering near the Chinnaswamy stadium. However, the stadium has a seating capacity of about 35,000.

At around 3.10 pm, the stadium gates were opened, after which the stampede took place. The FIR accused the RCB, KSCA, and DNA of going ahead with the event without providing safe facilities. Police also blamed RCB for its social media posts saying that free passes would be distributed near the stadium's gates.

The Cubbon Park police registered a case under BNS sections 105 (culpable homicide), 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 118(1) (voluntarily causing hurt using dangerous weapons), 118(2)(voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means) read with 3(5) (joint liability), 190 (unlawful assembly), 132 (assault or criminal force against a public servant to deter them from discharging their duty), 125(a) (endangering life or personal safety of others) and 125(b) (individual's act that endangers the life or personal safety of others, resulting in hurt).

The court said it was taking cognizance of the incident "to ascertain the reasons which led to the tragedy" and to establish "whether the tragedy could have been prevented (and) what remedial measures need to be taken to prevent such tragedies in future".

The next date of hearing in the matter will be June 10, by when the court has directed the state to submit a status report. It directed the court registry to register the matter as a suo motu writ petition.

The Advocate General made several submissions in the court regarding the incident, noting

that 1,318 police personnel and 325 personnel from the Karnataka State Reserve Police were deployed for the RCB victory celebrations. Other details regarding the arrangements that were in place, such as ambulances, water tankers and fire tenders, were also provided. He said, "More than 2.5 lakh persons gathered around Chinnaswamy stadium, resulting in the total death of 11 persons at various gates."

The government has taken the issue seriously and is exploring the option of issuing a fresh SOP to regulate public gatherings... of every kind," he said. He noted that while facilities like ambulances were deployed, they were not sufficient owing to the large number of people who gathered at the stadium, which normally seats 34,600 people. He said people had come from all parts of the state and beyond.

"We have given notices to the Royal Challengers, DNA... FIR has also been filed against them... We are as much concerned as anybody else. It is not that we are hiding. The first statement that the honourable Chief Minister made was giving compensation, medical treatment, (and) coming up with new SOPs..." the Advocate General said.

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• Ministry eyes new data sources to calculate inflation

ministry should even be working on such alternative data sets, asking if the work should instead be left to think-tanks.

Garg told *The Indian Express*: "For the new CPI series, MoSPI (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation) is expanding its approach by exploring alternative data sources, such as online platforms for airfare, rail fare, OTT platforms and administrative records for price data of petrol, diesel and LPG. Discussions are ongoing with IRCTC, under the Ministry of Railways, and the PPAC under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for direct transfer of data for integration in CPI."

The MoSPI is also exploring the use of scanner data and web scraping with an aim to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and comprehensiveness of price data collection, Garg said. "The possibility of collecting price data

from e-commerce websites is also being considered," he said.

Among other alternative datasets being tapped by the Ministry, Garg said data of Goods and Services Tax (GST), e-Vahan portal, UPI transactions from National Payments Corporation of India are going to be used for GDP calculation by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in addition to data from Controller General of Accounts, MCA-21, and the Reserve Bank of India. MoSPI has also used the GSTN (GST Network) database for its new service sector survey, Annual Survey of Service Sector Enterprises.

New Delhi-based think-tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) set up a National Data Innovation Centre in 2017 to serve as a "laboratory for experiments in data collection", among other objectives.

Meanwhile, speaking at the same workshop, Garg said alternate data sources and frontier technology have "reached a stage that we can actually use it for official statistics" and that this augured well for the future of data analysis.

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran, also speaking at the workshop, pushed for the use of alternative data in official statistics, saying that while surveys, administrative, and national accounts data remain indispensable as inputs while making decisions, the pace, complexity, and granularity required by modern policymaking and the challenges attached to them "have exposed limitations in both the periodicity and dimensionality of such data".

According to Nageswaran, alternative data such as satellite-based night-time luminosity – used as a proxy for economic activity in areas with delayed or weak statistical reporting – and other satellite data can help policymakers monitor industrial activity, road connectivity, and cropping patterns, among others.

However, he did say that using new data sources and technologies is "very powerful" as it helps give a sense about the direction in which the economy is moving in a fast-moving world for real-time interventions.

"These insights can inform timely decisions on input provisioning, crop insurance payouts, and regional procurement strategies," he said, adding that these new types of data capture

"I would also make the point that to some extent the issue of whether all of this should be going on in MoSPI and in the statistical infrastructure or whether it should be going on in our rich network of think tanks is, I think, an appropriate issue. For example, NCAER... has a centre for data analytics," Bery said.

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• In Ghaziabad, an interfaith love story interrupted after three years of marriage

services such as Aadhaar, PAN etc) in Indirapuram, and Sonika, after working at an established salon chain in Delhi, set up her own beauty parlour next door to Akbar's shop.

In 2022, the two got married under the Special Marriage Act. Akbar's family shared photographs, which they claimed were taken after the wedding, in which Sonika's brother, 23-year-old Ishrat, is seen with the couple.

Sonika's father, however, says he has no idea of their relationship or that they were married. "I only knew of Akbar as Sonika's acquaintance. I got to know of the marriage only on May 24," he says.

While Sonika's father didn't reveal the circumstances which led him "finding out" about her relationship or marriage to Akbar, Praveen Nagar, an "active member" of the Bajrang Dal and RSS in Indirapuram, says, "On May 23, we got to know of this interfaith couple and went to the police around 8.30 pm. I was among those at the police station." The FIR was registered the following day.

Akbar's family says they always knew the two were a couple.

"We were not even surprised when they told us they wanted to get married," says Akbar's

brother Arif, 31, the eldest of four siblings.

Akbar's family originally belonged to Bihar's Purnia district and had shifted to UP's Ghaziabad almost 40 years ago, while Sonika's family hailed from Uttaranchal's Pauri Garhwal.

"It was sometime in 2013 or 2014 that we got to know about their relationship. They have been together since childhood – first in the same colony, then the same school. We never objected... Sonika was like our family," says Arif.

In 2014, Akbar's mother died of asthma. Five years later, his father died during a hernia operation. "That was a tough time for our family, and Sonika stood with Akbar throughout," says Arif.

He says both families celebrated all festivals together as they lived merely a kilometre apart in Indirapuram.

"They would be at our house every Eid, and we would be at their house every Diwali. There was never an issue of religion, until some dharma ke thekedar (contractors of religion) found out about their relationship now. For three years after they got married, there was no trouble," Arif says.

The FIR lodged by the Indirapuram police, however, presented a different picture.

In his complaint, Sonika's fa-

ther Chauhan claimed, "On Saturday (May 24), at 6 pm, my daughter, who works at a salon, was kidnapped by Akbar and his brother Maksad Khan, who confined her inside their shop next door. When my wife and I reached Akbar's shop, four to five women of his family caught hold of us while Akbar and Maksad told us to get our daughter married to Akbar or they would kill us."

Chauhan further alleged that Akbar then ran away with his daughter from the shop. "My daughter is scared of Akbar's threats and is under pressure from him," Chauhan told police.

On May 25, the Ghaziabad Police registered an FIR under Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita sections related to, among others, wrongfully confinement, kidnapping and rioting against Akbar, Maksad Khan, and four to five unidentified women.

Police then raided Akbar's house in Indirapuram and arrested four women. They later arrested Akbar and "handed over" Sonika to her parents. Neighbours say the family, along with Sonika, have since moved to their house in Pauri Garhwal.

Policemen then recovered Akbar's house in Indirapuram and arrested four women. They later arrested Akbar and "handed over" Sonika to her parents. Neighbours say the family, along with Sonika, have since moved to their house in Pauri Garhwal.

Before Akbar's arrest, a video of the couple shot inside a moving car surfaced. In the video, Sonika is seen saying, "...he is my

husband, Akbar... For the last nine years, we have been together. Three years ago, we got married under the Special Marriage Act. Though my parents had an inkling about it, today... they thrashed me. I am scared, this is why I am leaving to live with my husband."

She says no action should be taken against Akbar's family or her own. "No action should be taken against my husband's family. I don't want any action against my family either. I am going with my husband of my own accord."

When contacted on May 27, ACP (Indirapuram) Abhishek Srivastava had said they acted promptly once the FIR was lodged. "We recovered Sonika from Ghaziabad and handed her over to her parents after due process. We also arrested Akbar and his two sisters based on the complaint from Sonika's father.. The woman (Sonika) has been sent for a medical examination. She will record her statement before the magistrate in the next two to three days."

Arif, however, says, "Police never recovered Akbar and Sonika. They surrendered to the police."

Speaking to The Indian Express, DCP (Trans-Hindon), Ghaziabad, Darashar Nishim Patil said that though 10 men were identified in the case related to the attack on Akbar's shop, there were no arrests. "They will be arrested soon," DCP Patil said.

A day after his arrest, Akbar's

• Made-in-India Rafale fuselage

two complete fuselages per month. The facility will cater to India as well as other global markets of the multi-role combat aircraft.

The fuselage is the outer body or shell of the aircraft and holds all the pieces of the aircraft together.

The Indian Air Force already operates 36 Rafale. The Indian Navy will induct 26 Rafale Marine aircraft by 2030 as part of the Rs 63,000-crore deal between India and France inked in April this year. The deal included provisions for technology transfer and the establishment of maintenance and production facilities in India.

Apart from France and India, the Rafale is deployed in or on order from various countries including Egypt, Qatar, the UAE, Greece, Indonesia, Croatia and Serbia.

Dassault Aviation and TASL have signed four production transfer agreements to manufacture the Rafale fuselage in India, marking a significant step forward in strengthening the country's aerospace manufacturing capabilities and supporting global supply chains.

This partnership represents a significant investment in India's aerospace infrastructure and will serve as a critical hub for high-precision manufacturing, Dassault and TASL said in a joint statement.

India has been pushing for local defence and aerospace manufacturing and TASL is a key private sector player in the sector, with presence in segments including aerostuctures and aero-engines, airborne platforms and systems, defence and security, and land mobility.

The company has a strong portfolio of partnerships and joint ventures with leading global aerospace and defence firms. Among its key projects is the final assembly line for Made-in-India Airbus C295 tactical airlift aircraft for the IAF.

• US, China to revive trade talks

focused entirely on the trade relationship between the two nations, which has been souring in recent months amid a growing dispute over the export of critical minerals used in a wide array of industries.

"I just concluded a very good phone call with President Xi of China, discussing some of the intricacies of our recently made, and agreed to, trade deal," Trump said. The call, he added, "resulted in a very positive conclusion for both countries." Trump also implied that the two leaders had resolved issues surrounding the exports of rare earth minerals that China had recently halted to the US, though he did not elaborate. He said his trade team would meet again soon with Chinese officials, in a yet-to-be-determined location, and he said that both he and Xi had invited each other and their spouses to visit.

Chinese state media confirmed the call in a report Thursday, which said that the exchange had happened at Trump's request. According to the Chinese readout, Xi called for greater cooperation and respect between the countries, and welcomed Trump to visit China. Trump and Xi were last known to have spoken to each other on January 17, days before Trump was inaugurated as President.

Chinese state media confirmed the call in a report Thursday, which said that the exchange had happened at Trump's request. According to the Chinese readout, Xi called for greater cooperation and respect between the countries, and welcomed Trump to visit China. Trump and Xi were last known to have spoken to each other on January 17, days before Trump was inaugurated as President.

Trump said Thursday's discussion did not touch on matters beyond trade, including the Russia-Ukraine war and the Iran nuclear negotiations.



Viksit Bharat ka Amrit Kaal

Seva, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan ke

11 SAAL

CBC 17/10/13/01/06/256

Finally, a house for the Delhi CM – in Civil Lines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

AFTER ALMOST four months of taking charge as Chief Minister, Rekha Gupta is likely to move into a government bungalow in North Delhi's Civil Lines area, said officials.

Officials said that official communication regarding the allotment has been moved, and repair and renovation work has also started at the two houses in the area.

At present, Gupta lives in Shalimar Bagh with her family.

"An allotment letter has been issued... There are four bungalows in this part of Civil Lines where the Deputy Speaker and Social Welfare minister have been allotted houses. The remaining two bungalows have been allotted to the CM – one residence and another as a camp office," said a source.

"PWD has started repair work, which is a routine process.



On World Environment Day, Delhi CM Gupta plants a sapling at AIIMS New Delhi on Thursday. Abhinav Saha

Whenever a new house is allotted, the new allottee requests renovation and repair, including whitewash, window, terrace cleaning, and other works... once it is done, the CM will move in," said the official.

PWD has also floated multiple tenders for renovation of ministers' bungalows and senior government officials, and construction of a camp office.

The estimated cost of the up-

grade is Rs 47 lakh, and the work is likely to be completed in two months, said officials. Another tender for similar work for Rs 90 lakh has also been issued.

Sources said the CM was looking for a house in Lutyens Delhi but since these are under the Centre, an exchange has to be made with the Delhi government. At present, officials said, the exchange is taking time because appropriate houses are not available for now.

During the second half of his 10-year tenure, former CM Arvind Kejriwal was living at 6 Flagstaff Road, also in Civil Lines, with his family. The house became the centre point of the BJP's campaign against the AAP with the former calling the house 'Sheesh Mahal', alleging several crores were spent when it was rebuilt. The expenditure and role of officials is under investigation.

Most of the cabinet ministers in the new BJP government have already been allotted official residences in the city, said officials.

Bouncers at school to block entry of students reprehensible: High Court pulls up DPS Dwarka

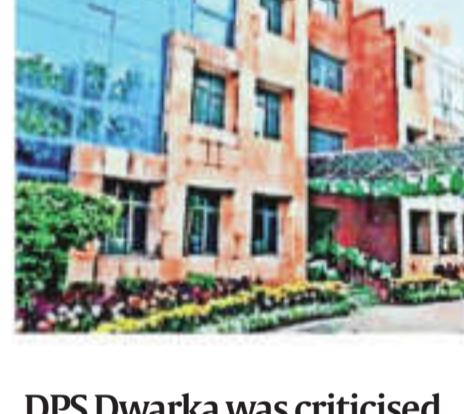
SOHINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

A REPREHENSIBLE practice like deploying bouncers to block entry of students has no place in an institute of learning, the Delhi High Court said on Thursday as it pulled up DPS Dwarka for disregarding the dignity of a child, and expressed "dismay" amid a row over the fee hike issue. "Public shaming or intimidation of a student on account of financial default, especially through force or coercive action, not only constitutes mental harassment but also undermines the psychological well-being and self-worth of a child," the High Court underlined.

Justice Sachin Datta recorded the observations in a verdict while deciding an application moved by parents of 32 students who were expelled by the school over non-payment of pending dues.

Noting that DPS Dwarka had subsequently withdrawn the expulsion order and had reinstated the students, making the application moot, the court observed, "This court is also constrained to express its dismay at the alleged conduct of the petitioner school in engaging bouncers to physically block entry of certain stu-



DPS Dwarka was criticised on Thursday by the HC. File

inculcate values, not to operate as a business enterprise... The school, no doubt, is entitled to charge appropriate fees, especially given the financial outlay required to sustain infrastructure, remunerate staff and provide a conducive learning environment. However, the school is different from a normal commercial establishment, since it carries with it fiduciary and moral responsibilities towards its students," the court recorded.

The bench further underlined that in case the school decides to take any action in future under Rule 35 of the Delhi School Education Rules, 1973, which deals with striking off of students from the school's roll, it will issue a prior communication – specifically putting the students concerned or their parents or guardians to notice – as to the date on which the students are proposed to be struck off the rolls. The school is bound to give a reasonable opportunity to show cause against such action, the court said.

Disposing of the application, the High Court emphasised that the parents concerned are obliged to adhere and comply with the orders passed by this Court as regards payment of requisite fees to the school."

"The primary objective of a school is to impart education and

transaction details to the department to date.

COD is issued to the owners of ELVs for getting their vehicles scrapped from a registered scrapyard. Last year, the government approved a tax rebate scheme, under which the owners get a discount on purchasing new vehicles after getting their old petrol and diesel vehicles, which have completed 15 years and 10 years, respectively, scrapped from government-authorised units.

The vehicle owners have also accused the RVSFs of not issuing Certificate of Deposit (COD) despite repeated communications, said officials.

"Despite repeated reminders, they did not submit the amounts/scrap value of the unclaimed vehicles to the government's treasury... As per the guidelines for handling ELVs, the RVSFs should submit the scrap value to the government within 15 days without deducting any charge..." said a senior official from the transport department.

Officials said these RVSFs have continuously violated the ELV guidelines and have not submitted data regarding COD and

FOLLOWING MULTIPLE complaints from vehicle owners, the transport department has issued show cause notices to at least nine Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) in the Capital. The complaints range from non-payment or underpayment of scrap value for impounded vehicles to scrap value paid not being in accordance with government guidelines, said officials.

Besides, the department said the RVSFs have also not submitted the scrap value of unclaimed vehicles to the government.

These scrapping units were authorised by the transport department during the drive against "end of life" vehicles (ELVs) or overage vehicles launched in October last year. The engagement of these units with the department has been put on hold for the time being, said officials.

Sources said that following the complaints, the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) has issued notice to all zones of Municipal Corporation of Delhi

Skilled Youth, Prosperous India

1.6+ crore youth empowered with new-age skills under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana



25-YEAR-OLD PH D STUDENT OF IIT-DELHI FOUND DEAD IN HIS HOSTEL ROOM ON CAMPUS

IIT Delhi stares at a challenge: 12 students died on campus since 2006, show its records

VIDHEESA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5



The deaths span across different academic programmes at IIT Delhi – from undergraduate and PG to PhD students.

AN AMBULANCE sat parked outside Dronagiri hostel of IIT Delhi in the afternoon sun as a 30-year-old PhD student hurried past on Wednesday. He had spent another grueling day in the lab, the familiar rhythm of research and deadlines filling his mind. But the sight of the emergency vehicle outside made him stop and look. "That is when I realised something had happened," he would later recall.

What he didn't know yet was that inside the hostel, another student was found dead – the body undiscovered for days.

Ayush Singh, a 25-year-old student pursuing a PhD in Biomedical Engineering, had not been seen or heard from since Monday night. When his body was finally discovered on Wednesday, it marked yet another pointer to what appears to be a pattern of students disappearing into their rooms, cut off from the world, until the smell of a decomposing body alerted their neighbours. The cause of death of the student is yet to be declared.

According to official records, at least 12 students have died on the IIT Delhi campus between 2006 and 2024, with 10 of them being male students and two female. The deaths span across different academic programmes – from undergraduate, postgraduate to PhD students. But they share common threads: isolation, delayed discovery, and rooms locked from the inside. About six out of 12 students belonged to the Scheduled Caste Communities, two from the OBC background, and four from the General category.

Five of these deaths were suicides that took place in 2023 and 2024, with the most recent in October 2024. Two were reported in the year 2021. All students were campus residents.

In September 2023, a 21-year-old BTech student from the SC community was found hanging in his hostel room in a de-

composed state. Just months earlier, in July 2023, another 20-year-old BTech student was discovered hanging after his family traveled to Delhi when he stopped responding to calls and texts for two days.

"The life of a PhD student is completely different in an IIT," explains the 30-year-old student who saw the ambulance on Wednesday. "We are in our own world and more isolated than the rest of the MTech or BTech students. Our social circles are small, and mostly our peers in the labs would know more about what is happening with us than the ones in the hostel or other friends on campus."

On Wednesday evening, B.K. Panigrahi, Dean of Student Affairs, wrote an email to students: "While we try to deal with the terrible pain and sorrow, the loss to his family and friends is unimaginable. This challenging time reminds us of the constant need to be there for each other. You are also requested to reach out to the multiple counselling avenues in our system if you need help in coping with this tragedy. Of course, all faculty and administration are also there for you support."

At Dronagiri hostel, one of the newest facilities on campus, students said safety protocols designed to protect both male and female students have created an unintended consequence: friends from other hostels cannot visit rooms, limiting interactions to common areas or outside spaces. "How would a

friend check if the student is not picking up their phone or has not been responding?" asked a 27-year-old fifth-year PhD student who formerly lived at Dronagiri.

PhD students face a different kind of pressure, he added, and said, "We have to stay in good terms with the supervisor. Grading and campus support depend on that."

"This is not the first time a student death has happened," said the 30-year-old. "And it's not the first time it takes a day or more to realise someone's missing. Everyone assumes they're just dealing with their workload in their own way."

The gender gap, too, plays a role in loneliness. A day scholar in his fifth year of PhD said, "Female students have stronger social groups. They check on each other. But for male students, it's harder. We don't talk about pressure, we cope alone."

Students believe the solution lies not just in mental health resources but in campus culture. "The administration needs to promote more social interaction within hostels," the scholar added.

"Just because we got into IIT, it's expected we'll manage the pressure," the 30-year-old student added.

The Indian Express reached out to Public Relations Officer Shiv Yadav and Director Rangan Banerjee for comment, but received no response.

PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH

e-TENDER NOTICE

Panjab University, Chandigarh invites Online Tenders for printing of Answer Books (with OMR) from reputed manufacturer under two bids system i.e. "Technical Bid" and "Financial Bid". Interested Parties/Firms, who wish to participate in online tender can download the tender document specifications/items and terms & conditions from the e-procurement website Chandigarh Administration. The bidders have to submit "Technical Bid" and "Financial Bid" complete in all respect in the website <http://etenders.chd.nic.in> on or before 27.06.2025 up to 04.30 p.m.

Sr. No.	Items	Earnest Money Deposit (Refundable)
1.	(A) Approximately 26 Lac Answer Books with 36 pages (B) 4 Lac Answer Books with 40 pages, both having OMR front cover containing 3 barcodes.	Rs. 6,40,000/- (Rupees Six Lac Forty Thousand Only)
		Note:- The EMD should be deposited in the office of the Registrar, Panjab University, Chandigarh within the stipulated period of submission. The tender will be accepted through e-tendering only.

REGISTRAR

GIC Reg
06.06.2025

FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi-110002

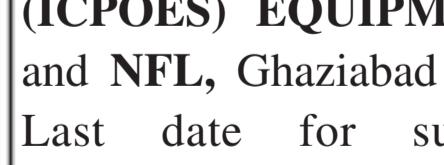
NOTICE

FSSAI has invited bids for the procurement of "INDUCTIVELY COUPLED PLASMA OPTICAL EMISSION SPECTROSCOPY (ICPOES) EQUIPMENT" for NFL, Kolkata and NFL, Ghaziabad through GeM portal. The Last date for submission of Bids is 28.06.2025(1800hrs). For detailed advertisement, please visit GeM Portal or FSSAI website.

www.fssai.gov.in/tenders.php

CBC- 17163/12/0011/2526

ED(HR)



Trusted Heritage Smart Future

The locker customers of the Bank with details as under have not paid the locker rent despite notices issued to them. This publication is to intimate the customers to immediately contact the Branch and pay the locker rent arrears within 90 days of this publication failing which the Bank will proceed to break open the locker and deal with the contents of the locker, without any further intimation/notice, as per the terms of the locker agreement and the customer's will be liable for all costs and consequences thereof.

S./
(BALWINDER KUMAR MIDDA)

Place: New Delhi Date : 06.06.2025

CSB Bank

S. No.	Branch	Locker No.	Customer Name	Locker rent arrears
1	NEW DELHI	32NEW	V.R. RAJENDRA	12500
2	NEW DELHI	26NEW	K. R. M. NAIR/LATHA NAIR	12500
3	FARIDABAD	63	SATYENDER SHARMA	16000
4	FARIDABAD	38	NIDHI SHARMA	16000
5	FARIDABAD	13	MADHU ..	16000

CSB Bank

'He had studied to be dentist, wanted to be biomedical scholar'

UPASAKA SINGHAL

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

were due soon, even as the doctors had indicated to them that his death was not unnatural.

Singhal is survived by his mother and a younger sister.

His father, who was a dentist, had passed away in 2002, his relatives said. After that, his mother, also a dentist, brought up the children. After his BDS from Dera Bassi, he went to IIT Ropar. He had begun his doctoral studies at IIT-Delhi last January.

During the police probe, his batchmates said that Singhal was last seen on Monday while eating dinner before he went to his room, after which no one saw him.

His family members, who came to Safdarjung Hospital for the postmortem on Thursday, emphasised that they do not suspect that he died by suicide.

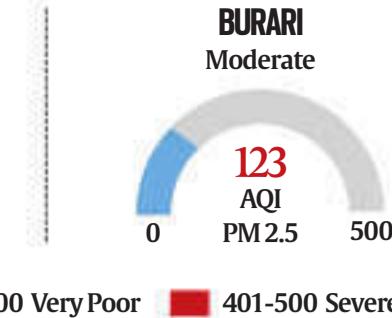
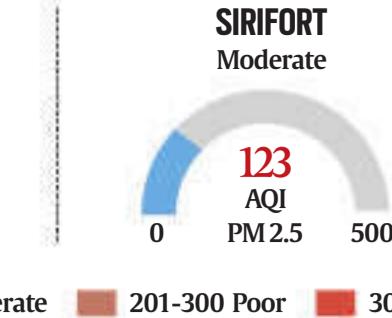
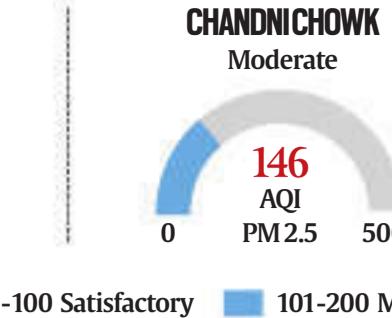
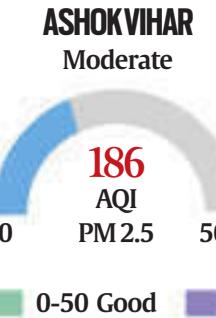
"He went to AIIMS to work on his PhD project and came back to the hostel," said Harish Garg, his maternal uncle, explaining that while Singhal's PhD was being pursued in IIT, the project's lab work was generally carried out in AIIMS. "When we went to his room (on Wednesday), there were no visible external injuries found on the body. However, some vomit was observed on the floor, indicating possible health-related complications.

The Crime Team and Forensic Team were called to the spot for further investigation and examination," said a police officer on Wednesday.

The Tata Power Company Limited Corporate Identity No. (CIN): L28920MH1919PLC000567 Regd. Office: Bombay House, 24, Hornby Road, Mumbai 400 001. Tel: +91 22 6665 8282 e-mail: tatapower@tatapower.com Website: www.tatapower.com

NOTICE OF THE 106TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is hereby given that the 106<sup



S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: June 6
Mainly clear sky.
Mist/shallow fog in the morning

MAX: 38-40 | **MIN: 24-26**
1.6° below normal

BRIEFLY

Minister takes stock of prep for monsoon

New Delhi: Ahead of monsoons, Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh inspected five critical points in Mehrauli and directed officials to complete desilting work by June 15. Deploy rapid response teams during heavy rain, monitor the drainage cleaning operations through GPS, and send the daily coordination reports from different departments to the central control room, he said. **ENS**

Three arrested weeks after businessman shot dead

New Delhi: The case of a businessman's murder in Mehrauli was closed after police arrested two shooters and one conspirator after a shootout late on Wednesday night. Both the accused sustained gunshot injuries to their legs during the exchange of fire, said police. A third conspirator was later arrested with an illegal firearm. Arun Lohia, a businessman from Aya Nagar who owned several godowns in the area, was shot on May 15. Lohia's father was also present on the scene during the incident, but he escaped the bullets. The accused had a history of criminal activity, said officers. **ENS**

Ankit Chauhan, DCP, South,

'Definitely a sentiment among many that they've made a mistake (by voting for BJP)'



THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW
WITH
ATISHI
FORMER DELHI CM

not allowed to be held, the standing committee was not allowed to be formed... If we had control on the officers in the MCD, work would have been done.

How did this impact your showing in the Assembly elections?

In the last two-three years, there was a concerted effort to stop work. Residents with overflowing sewers outside their homes were certainly impacted. A doubt comes in their mind about whether this government is working at all, or is it just engaged in confrontation. This gave rise to the possibility that if the BJP came to power, and there is no confrontation, governance would be better... I believe that the people are now seeing the reality. There is definitely a sentiment amongst many groups that they have made a mistake.

How does the AAP view its role in the MCD now?

Just as in the Delhi government, I think we are a strong opposition voice.

Are we going to see AAP contesting the Mayor election next year?

We are not going to go down this road... promise someone a position or money... Let the BJP have all the levers of power, all institutions, let the people of Delhi see...

Kejriwal ji and Manish Sisodia ji are only in Punjab. Manish ji is the prabhami of the state. So, obviously he's going to be there... Both in Punjab and Gujarat, you have elections coming. If he (Sisodia) had been in charge of Goa, he would have been there. Kejriwal was not just the Delhi CM, he has also been the face of the party since he is also the National Convener.

Is there a sense of disappointment in the party with the people following the loss in Delhi elections?

Of course, there's disappointment when you lose... especially because there was no effort spared in terms of delivering to the people. But I also feel that this election has not been won fair and square... governance, delivery was stopped for the last three years using the office of the L-G, the bureaucracy, the Chief Secretary. Even in the election process... This kind of administrative bias in the elections has never been seen before. But despite all this, there is a two percentage point difference in vote share of the AAP and the BJP... We do appreciate that the people of Delhi have shown faith in us despite all of this.

Complete cooperation – from the Centre to the bureaucracy to the L-G's office – has been on display during the first 100 days of the BJP government. What is the difference between your administration and this one, in this respect?

In a democracy, a government is accountable to its voters and the people... So, the question is not whether we are best friends or enemies; it is about who is able to deliver. Okay, there is cooperation, there is bonhomie; but what is the outcome of that?

All ongoing projects in Delhi have come to a standstill.

Following the AAP's loss in Delhi, there has been a clear shift by the top two leaders towards Punjab. What is the party's plan for the Capital, given the fact that AAP in Delhi and Arvind Kejriwal are synonymous?

I don't entirely agree that

MCD win have in the party's defeat in the Assembly elections?

The problem was that MCD was also fully controlled by the central government. The fact that the Mayoral elections were

held in Punjab's Zirakpur, the Gurgaon cyber police arrested a former banker from Andhra Pradesh and four others in connection with the

case.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Inspector Sandeep, who led the operation, said, "We are investigating their role in cyber-

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

From Tihar to Saket court lockup to Safdarjung Hospital



9:25 AM: Aman escorted to Saket Court from Tihar for hearing in a 2017 murder case



9:30 AM-10:00 AM: He is then taken to a cell where dozens of prisoners like him are waiting for their hearings



10:00 AM: Jitender allegedly kicks Aman, his head is smashed into a wall and then a commode. With his friend, Jitender allegedly stomps on Aman, strangulates him



10:30 AM-11:00 AM: A policeman then rescues him, and he is rushed to a hospital.
11 AM: Doctors at Safdarjung Hospital declare him dead due to head injury

Illustration: Komal Mathur

said, "Jitender and Aman had old animosity between them due to an assault incident that happened in 2024 when they both were outside the jail. Aman allegedly assaulted Jitender and his brother with a knife at the time."

The two accused, Jitender

and Jaidev, were questioned inside the lockup block of the Saket court till after noon -- with prison guard officials and Saket police station personnel both taking turns while analysing the CCTV footage in the duty officer's room. A case of murder has been registered at the Saket police sta-

tion against them, the police said.

The two-floor lockup block of the Saket court has multiple khajras (cells) to hold undertrials. There are different khajras for VIPs and high-risk prisoners. The cell holding Aman and the two accused, Khajra number 5, had a

total of 37 prisoners at the time of the incident.

"Usually, when it is known that two prisoners have some enmity, they are kept in separate Khajras. But it was not known that Aman and Jitender were at loggerheads, so they were in the same cell," a police officer said.

Subsequently, in October 2021, the Delhi Police told the HC that security of all the seven District Courts in the city was taken over by the Security Unit, a specialised unit, and that necessary security arrangements were being made and more police personnel were being deployed.

In November 2021, the HC had issued directions to the

SIMILAR CASES IN THE PAST

IN APRIL 2023: shots rang out for close to a minute in the court complex as a suspended lawyer chased a woman and allegedly fired multiple times at her, before fleeing on his scooter.

IN MAY 2024: a 29-year-old Tihar inmate was stabbed to death after an altercation broke out between him and another inmate over food.

IN OCTOBER 2021: an inmate, Mahesh, 39, was found dead inside Mandoli jail after allegedly being stabbed by two prisoners

IN AUGUST 2021: a Tihar inmate, Ankit Gujar, 29, was found dead inside his cell

SOHINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

IN 2021, WHEN gangster Jitender Gogi was gunned down in the Rohini court complex allegedly by rivals, the Delhi High Court had initiated a public interest litigation (PIL) on suo motu cognisance. While the PIL continues to be pending before the HC, police gave repeated assurances of heightened security measures each time a shooting incident was reported from a court.

Here is an overview of the HC's remarks in recent years on security in courts.

September 2021

A division bench of the High Court, on September 30, 2021, took suo motu cognisance of a firing incident at the Rohini court complex on September 24, 2021, with three lives lost, and recorded that "there is an imminent and urgent need to take effective measures to ensure that such incidents do not recur" and to ensure "safety and security" of the "advocates, litigants, court staff, witnesses as well as the judges and judicial officers."

Subsequently, in October 2021, the Delhi Police told the HC that security of all the seven District Courts in the city was taken over by the Security Unit, a specialised unit, and that necessary security arrangements were being made and more police personnel were being deployed.

In November 2021, the HC had issued directions to the

Delhi Police Commissioner to constitute a team of experts to undertake a security audit of the court complexes.

Based on the audit, the Delhi police chief was also directed to undertake a "periodical review" of the security arrangements.

April 2023

In April 2023, another shooting took place at the Saket District Court complex, where an advocate had shot at a woman and injured her. Taking note of the incident, on April 26, 2023, the HC recorded that "security personnel deployed in various court premises, including the High Court, are facing some resistance in the matter of frisking and checking of cars."

The court had then suggested that joint meetings be held between bar associations and senior police officers, while counsels for the Delhi government and the union government had assured the court that they would ensure "proper security arrangements are in place to avoid any such incident in the future."

July 2023

On July 5, 2023, another firing incident between two groups of lawyers took place at the Tis Hazari court complex.

Taking note of the incident, Delhi Police's Sandeep Byala, DCP, Security Courts, had told the HC that the Delhi Police "is beefing up the security arrangements in all the Court complexes, including the High court of Delhi."

CAQM draws up 17-point plan for management of legacy waste at landfills in city

SOPHYIA MATHEW

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

THE CENTRE for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas has issued a 17-point action plan for the management of legacy waste at sanitary landfill sites and waste dumpsites to prevent fire, and for the management of fresh Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to ensure prevention of fire incidents due to open burning.

The directions issued for Delhi and the NCR state governments on Tuesday mandate the installation of CCTV cameras at the sites and dumpsites, including appropriate fencing arrangements along the boundary of the landfills, as well as methane gas detectors to identify high concentrations of the harmful gas.

For the management of fresh generation of MSW, the Commission has directed the state governments to ensure collection, segregation, transportation and processing of the MSW as per the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. It has also asked the governments to improve surveillance mechanisms at vulnerable sites.

The directions issued for Delhi and the NCR state governments on Tuesday mandate the installation of CCTV cameras at the sites and dumpsites, including appropriate fencing arrangements along the boundary of the landfills, as well as methane gas detectors to identify high concentrations of the harmful gas.

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PM Modi flags off 200 e-buses on World Environment Day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi, on the occasion of World Environment Day on Thursday, flagged off 200 electric buses in Delhi to promote green and clean urban transport, said officials.

After inaugurating the bus, the PM stated that the initiative will contribute to building a clean and green Delhi.

He further underlined that this step will also improve the 'Ease of Living' for the people of Delhi, according to an official statement from the PM's office. In a post on X, the PM said, "Building a clean and green Delhi! Flagging off electric buses under an initiative of the Delhi government aimed at



PM Modi flags off the buses with CM Rekha Gupta. Express

boosting sustainable development and clean urban mobility. Additionally, this will also improve 'Ease of Living' for the people of Delhi."

The event was also attended by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena,

and Union Minister of Environment Bhupender Yadav.

Thanking the PM, the Delhi CM said, "Your encouragement for Delhi's efforts in promoting electric mobility strengthens our resolve to build a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable Capital."

GREATER NOIDA

3 labourers working at a construction site die as adjacent building's wall collapses

Noida: At least three labourers working at a construction site in Greater Noida died and two were seriously injured after a wall of an adjacent building of a private firm collapsed on Thursday afternoon, said officials. One person has been apprehended in the matter.

EX-BANK MANAGER, 4 OTHERS ARRESTED

Woman lured into share-trading with fake documents, loses over Rs 5 lakh: Police

case. Police said the accused ran a share-trading racket through which they had duped multiple people.

The accused have been identified as Chinta Manoj Kumar, 38, a former HDFC Bank manager from Guntur; Gurvinder and Ravi from Jind, Haryana; Rohit Kumar from Hisar, Haryana; and Akshay from Una, Himachal Pradesh.

Police said they duped the complainant by luring her into share-trading investments with promises of high profits using fake Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)-registered company documents. The accused also provided mule bank accounts to cyber fraudsters, according to the police.

The woman approached the police on March 18, and on Sunday, following a raid at a hotel in Punjab's Zirakpur, the Gurgaon cyber police arrested a former banker from Andhra Pradesh and four others in connection with the

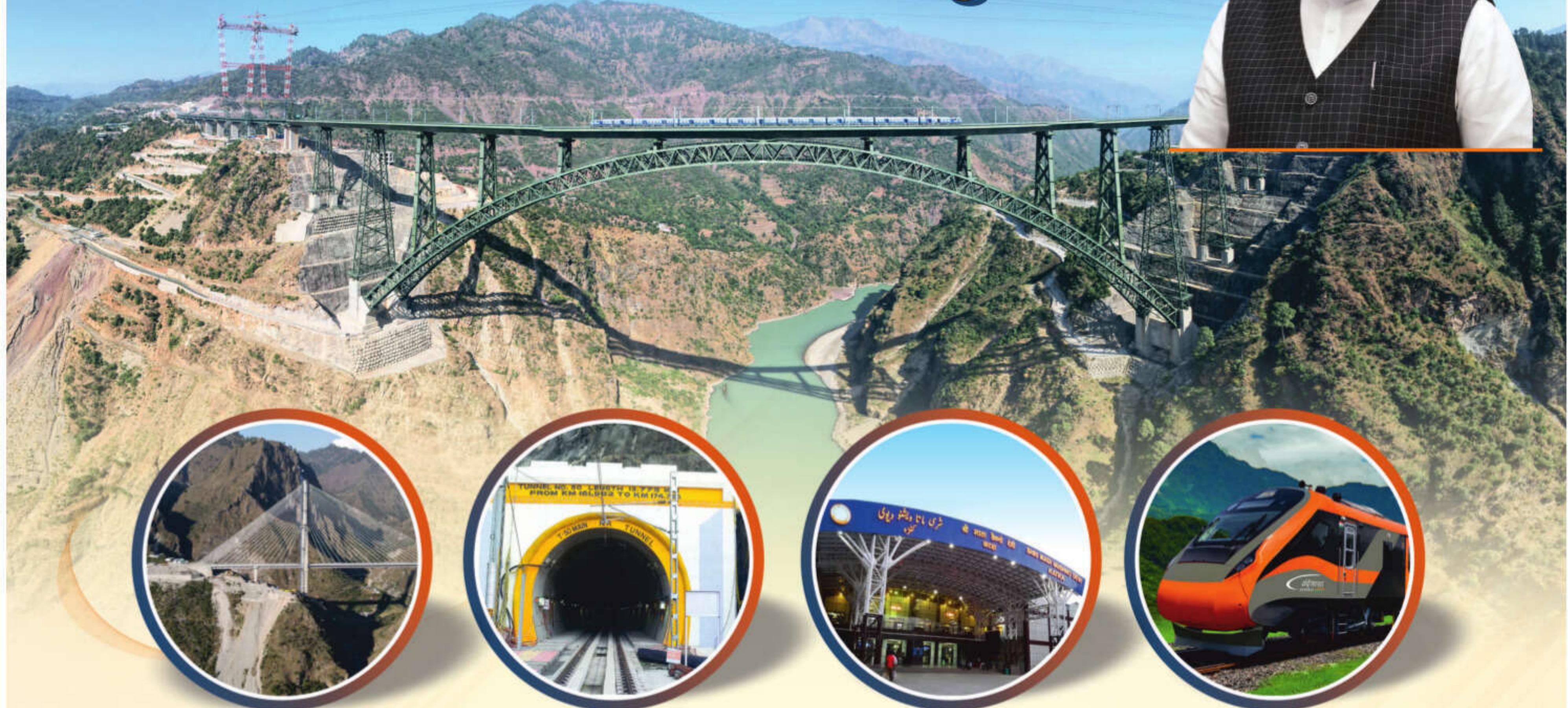
frauds in other states as well."

Sandeep said it took time to nab the accused as they would frequently change their base of operation to evade authorities. "He (Manoj) had hired the other accused through a social media site," added the inspector.

Police said Manoj had quit his bank job early in 2024, citing work pressure.



Jammu and Kashmir's New Era of Progress



**Gifts of Railway Projects worth about
₹ 44,000 Crore**

INAUGURATION OF

Chenab Bridge (World's Highest Rail Arch Bridge)

- 359 meter height, 1,315 meter length and 467 meter arch span
- Bridge connecting Kauri and Bakkal areas of Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir

Anji Bridge (India's First Cable Stayed Rail Bridge)

- 725 meter length, 290 meter main span
- Bridge connecting Katra and Reasi districts of Jammu and Kashmir
- 96 cables attached to a single giant pylon, 193 meter high

DEDICATION TO THE NATION OF Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramula Rail Link Project (USBRL)

- Advanced all-weather rail connectivity linking Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India
- Total length 272 km with 36 tunnels including T-50 (Longest operational tunnel in India) and 943 bridges

FLAGGING OFF OF

2 Vande Bharat Trains Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Srinagar & Srinagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra

- First semi-high-speed train to Srinagar
- Boost to tourism and regional connectivity
- The journey from Katra to Srinagar is possible in about 3 hours

by

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister

In the august presence of

Nitin Jairam Gadkari
Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways

Ashwini Vaishnaw
Union Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics and Information Technology

Dr. Jitendra Singh
Union Minister of State (IC) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Minister of State for Prime Minister Office, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension, Deptt. of Atomic Energy & Deptt. of Space

V. Somanna
Union Minister of State for Railways & Jal Shakti

Ravneet Singh
Union Minister of State for Railways & Food Processing Industries

Manoj Sinha
Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Chairman, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Jammu & Kashmir

Omar Abdullah
Chief Minister, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

Surinder Kumar Choudhary
Dy. Chief Minister, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

Jugal Kishore
M.P., (Lok Sabha), Jammu

Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi
M.P., (Lok Sabha), Srinagar

Gulam Ali
M.P., Rajya Sabha

Friday, 06th June, 2025



11:00 A.M.



Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex Katra (Stadium)



INDIAN RAILWAYS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



STRIKING A CHORD

LEGENDARY SINGER Asha Bhosle, who was invited to the RSS's Sangh Shiksha Varg concluding ceremony held in Nagpur on Thursday, wrote to Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat expressing her inability to attend the event due to her health condition. Bhosle said she felt honoured to have been personally invited by Bhagwat who visited her home. In the letter, Bhosle appreciated RSS's work as a "ray of hope for the glorious future of India" and assured her cooperation in future for their work. Bhagwat responded to this saying he would come to meet her again soon.

TRAVEL CHALLENGES

SOME OF the all-party delegations that went abroad to convey India's message on cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan have returned after extensive travel. The trips to foreign nations had different kinds of challenges — from holding back-to-back meetings with a cross-section of people to logistical issues. One member said while the discourse on social media was that it was a "pleasure trip", in reality it was a "pressure trip" with several engagements scheduled through the day. Another MP said finding vegetarian meals was an issue that some members faced, but they managed. An MP said he survived mostly on cornflakes, fruits and once he ordered a "veg-pizza". Some MPs belonging to rival parties are also learnt to have "bonded" during the tour.

GANGA CONNECTION

WITH BIHAR Assembly polls months away, LJP (Ram Vilas) chief and Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Thursday gave a call to save the Ganga river, at an event organised by party vice president A K Bajpai at India International Centre in the Capital. Chirag said that to achieve the objective of saving the Ganga and Himalayan glaciers, society will have to collectively hit the streets. Notably, Chirag has been saying off late that he wishes to return to Bihar politics and would even contest the Assembly polls.

WEEK AFTER REVAMPED PORTAL LAUNCH

92% UPSC applicants opt for Aadhaar check

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

A WEEK after the UPSC launched its revamped exam portal with Aadhaar-based authentication, over 92% of those who registered have opted to use their Aadhaar for identity verification, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The new portal, launched on May 28, is part of a broader push to streamline the application process for exams conducted by the UPSC. Candidates are now required to register through a four-step process — account creation, universal registration, common application form, and exam application — on upsconline.nic.in.

As of Wednesday, UPSC said 2.65 lakh accounts had been created on the new platform. Of these, 1.13 lakh users completed the universal registration, and 1.05

lakh of them chose Aadhaar authentication. About 60,000 had filled the common application form, while 55,000 forms were still under process.

"The focus is on eliminating duplication — candidates won't have to enter their information multiple times. Once submitted, it can be reused for various exams, improving their convenience," UPSC Chairman Dr Ajay Kumar told *The Indian Express*.

This is the first time UPSC is implementing biometric-based authentication for its exams. Though Aadhaar had been accepted as one of several ID documents earlier, the Commission did not previously carry out biometric authentication. In August last year, the Department of Personnel and Training authorised UPSC to conduct Aadhaar authentication, on a voluntary basis, to verify candidates' identity.

"Frankly, when one is doing the nation's service, I don't think one needs to worry too much about these things," Tharoor said here in an interview with *PTI* Videos Wednesday. "I think anybody who sort of considers that working in the national interest is some sort of anti-party activity really needs to question themselves rather than us," he said when asked what his message would be to his detractors upon his return to India.

On social media being abuzz on whether Tharoor would remain in Congress or join BJP, he said: "I am an elected MP. I have four years left of my term. I don't know why there is any question to be asked."

In response to a question on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

PTI

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"It's an incredible cross-section reflective of India's diversity. And yet we've come up with a united message. So there is unity in diversity as well, in this group, and to my mind, our focus has to be on that unified message, because when it comes to the national interest, national security, honestly, I think by and large, the nation is united."

Responding to a question on Trump's claims of mediating in the conflict between India and Pakistan, Tharoor said: "I'm not necessarily having to address it because I'm not here to stir up any sort of complications in our relationship with the White House... We have enormous respect for the American presidency and for the American President. And I think we don't know exactly what his folks said to Pakistan... We didn't need persuading by anybody, because our signal from day one was, if Pakistan hits back, we will hit them even harder. If they stop, we will stop. We said that from the first day. We said it on the last day."

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

CBC 17/10/17/13/06/17/25/26



Opening New Doors to Knowledge

**490 new Universities and
8,100+ new colleges established**



ECSTATIC FANS JOINED THE CELEBRATIONS FOR RCB's FIRST IPL TITLE: FOR 11, IT ENDED IN TRAGEDY

'Will give ₹50 lakh. Can they bring my son back?'

A schoolgirl, a teenager who was in city for transfer certificate, and engineering student were among those killed; all victims under 30

DIVYANSHI B, 14
A fan who wanted to see Kohli



me to Vydehi Hospital. There were unidentified dead bodies, and the doctors told me to see them. Hoping that it would not be my son, I entered, and then my life shattered... The government killed my son," Pavithra said.

POORNA CHANDRA, 26
An engineer with a marriage plan

POORNA CHANDRA, who hailed from KRPet taluk in Mandya district, worked as a civil engineer in Mysuru and was a big RCB fan. On Wednesday, he was in Bengaluru as his family asked him to meet a woman to discuss marriage. "I had asked him to visit the woman's house. After that, he went to the stadium. We were not aware of it. By 6 pm, we received a call that he was dead," Poorna's father, RB Chandru, told the media.

MANOJ KUMAR, 20
A father's hopes dashed

His body was taken to his village Thursday for the final rites.

CHINMAYI SHETTY, 19
Last trip with classmates

CHINMAYI SHETTY was not an avid cricket fan, but decided to join her classmates as they made their way to the Chinnaswamy stadium. An engineering student who also studied Yaksagana, Chinmayi was a resident of Doddakallasaandra and hailed from Mangaluru.

"She called me at about 1.30 pm and said that she was heading to the stadium. She did not have a craze for cricket, but went there with her classmates. At 5.30 pm, I received a call and I was told she was dead," Chinmayi's father Karunakara Shetty said. "I have lost my daughter. What will I do with the compensation? I want my daughter back," Karunakara said.

Kumar's family shifted to Bengaluru 22 years ago. A native of Tumakuru, Kumar stayed with his parents in Yelahanka.

"The police called me and asked me to come to Bowring Hospital. I did not have the courage to see my son's body," Devaraj said. "He went to the event with two of his friends. He had told me he would only go to Vidhana Soudha. I did not know he had gone near Chinnaswamy stadium," he said.

Reacting to the government announcing compensation of ₹10 lakh, Devaraj said, "I am ready to give ₹50 lakh... ₹1 crore. Will they give my son back?"

SHIVALINGUCHANDAPPA, 17
Was in Bengaluru to get his TC

SHIVALINGUCHANDAPPA, who hailed from Yadgir, was in Bengaluru to receive his transfer certificate. After collecting his documents, he decided to visit Chinnaswamy stadium.

"I was watching TV and was blaming the public, wondering why they needed to go to the stadium and Vidhana Soudha in such large numbers. I was unaware that my son was also there," Shivalingu's father, Honappa, a labourer in Honigeri village in Yadgir district, said. "By evening, we received the call that Shivalingu was no



(Top) Workers remove footwear near Gate No. 7 of Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, Thursday. Home Minister G Parameshwara with B Dayananda, who was suspended as city police commissioner, near the stadium. PTI

more," he said.

BHOOMIK LAKSHMAN, 19
A fateful outing with friends

BHOOMIK LAKSHMAN visited the Chinnaswamy stadium with his friends, said his father, Lakshman D H, a resident of M S Ramaiah Layout. "He did not inform me, but around 3 pm, he made a video call to his mother and showed her the celebrations. Later, I heard that there was a stampede. I tried reaching him on the phone, but he did not answer," Lakshman said.

"My son could have been saved if there were proper medical facilities. My son was killed due to the apathy of the civic agencies and the government," he said.

Speaking to reporters, he said that Shivalingu had been saved if there were proper medical facilities. His son was killed due to the apathy of the civic agencies and the government, he said.

On Thursday, an emotional Shivakumar said that he had seen the young who died in the stampede. "No family can digest such an incident." He said he did not have plans to attend the event despite an invitation by the KSCA. "I took the KSCA president and other members of the management in my car and we closed the programme in 10 minutes. I was not aware of the deaths until I reached the stadium... I went there and told them not to hold any function."

According to a source in the

government, city police commissioner B Dayananda had informed the CM they would not be able to hold the event at a short notice.

However, another "influential politician" convinced the CM that the event would result in "positive vibes", the source said.

The issue was discussed with new DGP M A Saleem and directions were given to the police to organise the event. The city police were of the opinion that celebrations must be held on Sunday which would give them some time to arrange security.

"We had only around three hours to arrange security at four to five places. Since the cricket stadium security is handled by RCB and KSCA, the concentration of the police was on the government event at Vidhana Soudha which went off peacefully," police sources said.

A senior police officer said that one of the reasons cited by RCB for holding the Victory Parade Wednesday itself

According to a source in the

was the fact that the team's foreign players were scheduled to depart for their homes and a full felicitation would not have been possible later in the week.

"The event (at the stadium) was organised on behalf of RCB by DNA Event Management. KSCA is in charge of the stadium. All the security is provided by them in the stadium. All the deaths happened at the entry gates of the stadium.

The problem is that 33,000 people were expected, which is the capacity of the stadium, but 2.5 lakh people turned up," state Advocate General K M Shashikiran Shetty told the High Court Thursday.

A statement from the RCB after the tragedy stated: "Immediately upon being made aware of the situation, we promptly amended our programme, and followed the guidance and advice of the local administration." — WITH KIRAN PARASHAR & SANATH PRASAD



her two friends suffered a leg and hand fracture and had a narrow escape," Selvan said.

He said Devi was brought dead to Bowring Hospital by 5 pm. "We had a cousins' get-together two days ago, and Devi was also with us. It is so shocking to learn that she is no more after two days," Selvan said.

SAHANA RAJESH, 23
An engineer's dreams shattered

SAHANA RAJESH had been working as a software engineer at Bosch for the last two years. She participated in the Chinnaswamy stadium event along with eight friends. Her parents didn't know about this. Her relatives described Sahana as studious who wanted to help fulfil her younger sister's dream of becoming a doctor.

Speaking to reporters, her father Rajesh said, "Nobody should meet this tragic fate. She was someone who never breached our (parents') trust. She had very big dreams, and now everything has been shattered."

AKSHATA PAI, 26
'Fell down, lost grip on her hand'

TECHIE ASHLEY RANJAN and his wife, Akshata Pai, a 26-year-old chartered accountant, had taken half a day's leave from work to reach M Chinnaswamy stadium. On Wednesday morning, the couple, who hail from the coastal Uttara Kannada district and reside in Kammanahalli in Bengaluru, saw RCB's Instagram post on a victory parade and decided to attend.

"He was a huge RCB fan and loved cricket. He did not inform his family about his decision to go to the event. If he had informed them, they would not have allowed him to go. They were always very protective of him," his classmate and close friend, Vinuth, told *The Indian Express*. A reserved person, Shravan's grandparents wanted him to become a doctor, but he could not crack it, and eventually took up dental studies.

"His family earned fame and respect in Chintamani for their extensive social work and goodness. They have always fed people in need and ensured nobody goes hungry," Vinuth said. Shravan has an elder brother who is a final-year BSc Agriculture student at Gandhi Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

KIRAN PARASHAR & SANATH PRASAD

Photo op when people were dying: Opp slams Dy CM; we are hurt, city image hit, he says

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JUNE 5

THE JD(S) and the BJP Thursday targeted Deputy CM D K Shivakumar and the Congress government after a stampede around Bengaluru's Chinnaswamy stadium left 11 dead as jubilant fans gathered in large numbers to celebrate RCB's first-ever IPL victory.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Union Minister and JD(S) MP H D Kumaraswamy alleged that Shivakumar had been "insensitive" and was "craving for publicity even when people were dying." "What was the necessity to hold the (felicitation) event on the grand stairs of Vidhana Soudha? The entire state government made it their family event... Even after knowing people had died, he participated in the event held inside the stadium," Kumaraswamy said.

"Even after four people died, Shivakumar went to the stadium," he said.

Addressing reporters in New Delhi, BJP's national spokesperson Sambit Patra termed the incident a "clear failure of the state government". "Cricket is a religion. Everybody knows that cricket fans will hit the streets to celebrate... such events should be organised only after proper arrangements are in place," he said.

"But in Karnataka, just because D K Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah wanted a photo op, they forced this event to be organised within 12 hours (of the team's victory)," he said. "... the worst part was that felicitations continued while the deaths

Shivakumar, however, said he did not have any plan to attend the programme at the stadium after the tragedy despite the invitation extended by the KSCA. "I took the KSCA president and other members of the management in my car and we closed the programme in 10 minutes. I was not aware of the deaths until I reached the stadium... I went there and told them not to hold any function," he said.

Patra also alleged that the "fight and rift" between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar led to the state "government-manufactured stampede" and demanded they both step down. Hitting out at Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Patra said, "Will Rahul Gandhi pose questions to D K Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah's tweets (posts on X) on this issue and summon them to Delhi? Will he ask them to resign?"

"But in Karnataka, just because D K Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah wanted a photo op, they forced this event to be organised within 12 hours (of the team's victory)," he said. "... the worst part was that felicitations continued while the deaths

Shivakumar, however, said he did not have any plan to attend the programme at the stadium after the tragedy despite the invitation extended by the KSCA. "I took the KSCA president and other members of the management in my car and we closed the programme in 10 minutes. I was not aware of the deaths until I reached the stadium... I went there and told them not to hold any function," he said.

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FROM PAGE ONE

Terror conspiracy: NIA raids 32 locations in J&K

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JUNE 5

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out searches at 32 locations across Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday to probe a conspiracy hatched by Pakistan-based terror outfits, the agency said.

The raids were conducted in Shopian and Kulgam in south Kashmir and Sopore and Kupwara in north Kashmir.

The NIA said that its sleuths

searched 32 premises as "part of the crackdown" against the "hybrid terrorists and overground workers".

Early Thursday morning, the sleuths of the central agency, accompanied by J&K Police and paramilitary forces, simultaneously raided multiple premises.

In south Kashmir's Shopian, the raids were conducted at Reban, Nidoora, and Check-e-Choland villages while in neighbouring Kulgam, the sleuths of the central agency searched

premises in Devsar, Bugam, Sonigam and Manzgam villages. Several places in Kupwara and Sopore in north Kashmir and a few places in south Kashmir's Pulwama were also searched.

"The locations were residential premises of hybrid terrorists and overground workers associated with these Pakistan based offshoots such as TRF, ULF&K, MGH, JKFF, Kashmir Tigers, PAAF and others, which are affiliated to proscribed terrorist organisations such as LeT, JeM, Al-Badr etc,"

the NIA said.

An official said that the raids were conducted in a case registered by the central agency in Jammu in 2022.

The NIA said that its sleuths raided the premises of suspects who were "under the NIA's scanner for their involvement in supporting terrorist activities such as facilitating terrorists, collection and distribution of sticky bombs/magnetic bombs, IEDs, funds, narcotic substances, and arms/ammunitions".

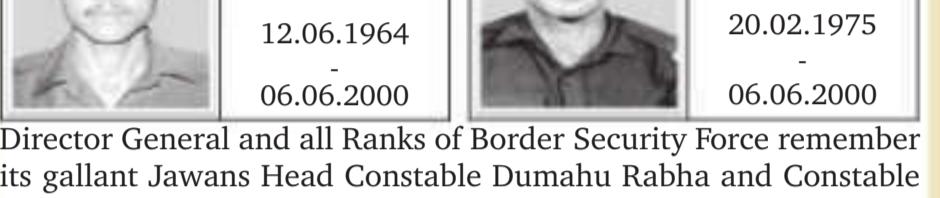
SALUTE THE SOLDIER

LATE SEP JAI PRAKASH

01 Jul 1979-6 Jun 2004

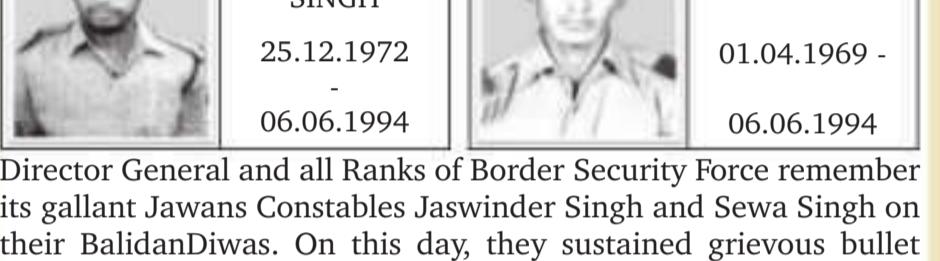
In proud memory of Sep Jai Prakash of 6th Battalion The Dogra Regiment, who made the supreme sacrifice while serving the Nation at Kishtwar (J&K) on 06 Jun 2004. Your act of valour, raw courage & devotion to duty will always remain a source of inspiration and motivation to all of us.

Remembered by Commanding Officer & All Ranks 6 Dogra



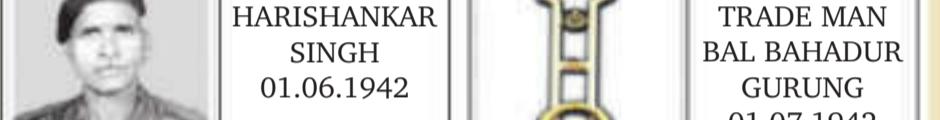
HEAD CONSTABLE
DUMANURABHA
12.06.1964 -
06.06.2000

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawans Head Constable Dumanurabha and Constable Udayapoojary on their Balidan Diwas. On this day, they sustained grievous injuries in cross border firing in area of Manjakot, Jammu and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.



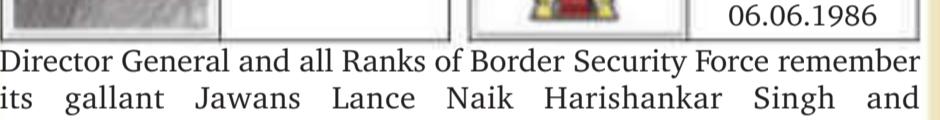
CONSTABLE
UDAYAPOOJARY
20.02.1975 -
06.06.2000

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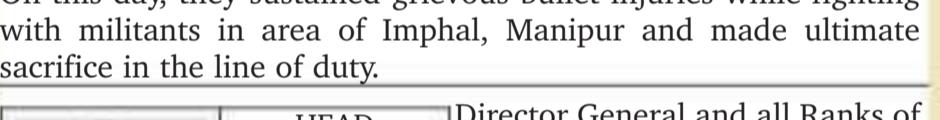
CONSTABLE
JASWINDER
SINGH
25.12.1972 -
06.06.1994

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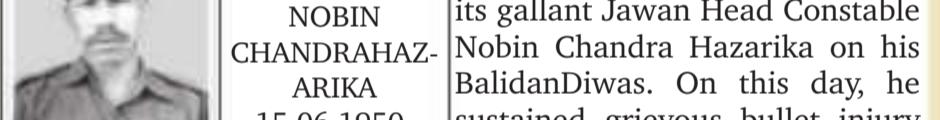
CONSTABLE
SEWA SINGH
01.04.1969 -
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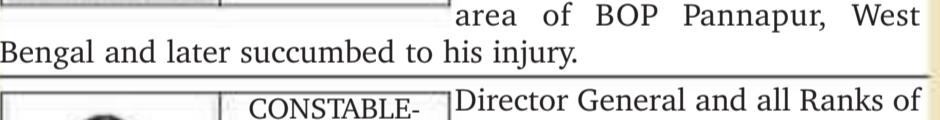
LANCE NAIK
HARISHANKAR
SINGH
01.06.1942 -
06.06.1986

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawans Lance Naik Harishankar Singh and Constable Bal Bahadur Gurung on their Balidan Diwas. On this day, they sustained grievous bullet injuries while fighting with militants in area of Imphal, Manipur and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.



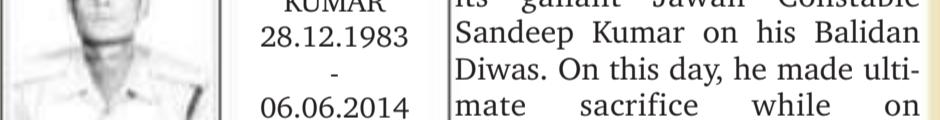
CONSTABLE/
TRADE MAN
BAL BAHADUR
GURUNG
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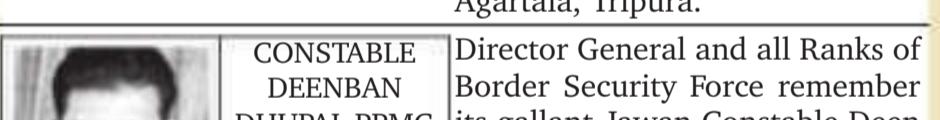
CONSTABLE
NOBIN
CHANDRAHAZ-
ARIKA
15.06.1950 -
06.06.1995

Bengal and later succumbed to his injury.



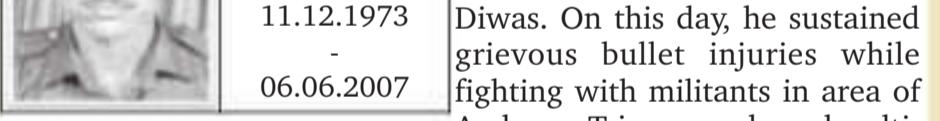
CONSTABLE
SANDEEP
KUMAR
28.12.1983 -
06.06.2014

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Sandeep Kumar on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he made ultimate sacrifice while on operational duty in area of Agartala, Tripura.



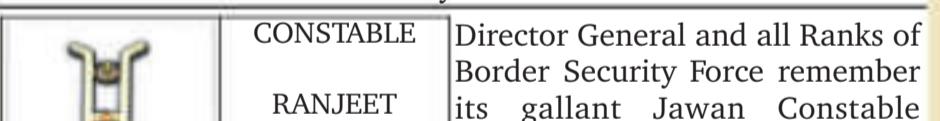
CONSTABLE
DEENBAN
DHUPAL, PPMG
11.12.1973 -
06.06.2007

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Deen Bandhu Pal, PPMG on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained grievous bullet injuries while fighting with militants in area of Ambasa, Tripura and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.



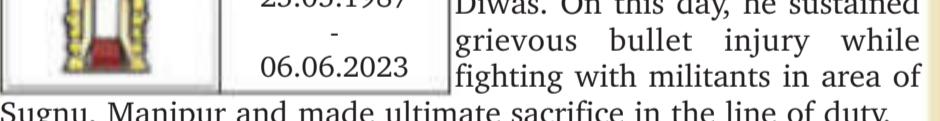
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06.06.2023

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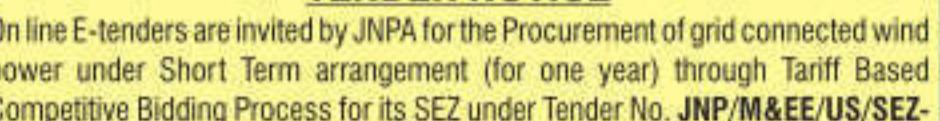
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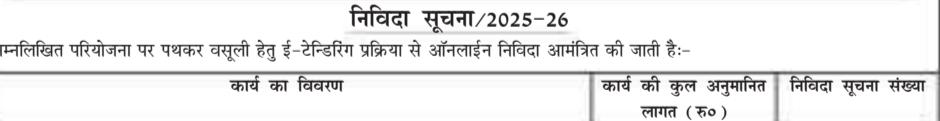
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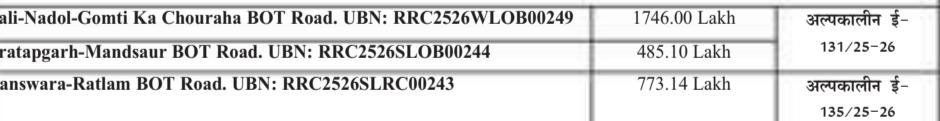
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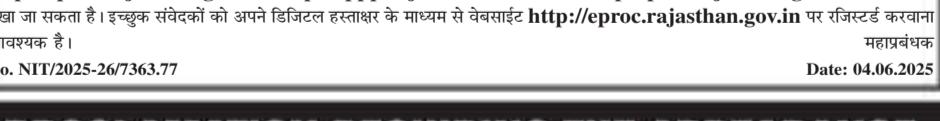
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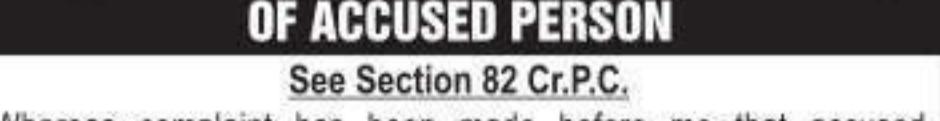
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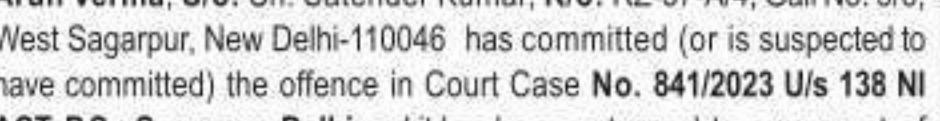
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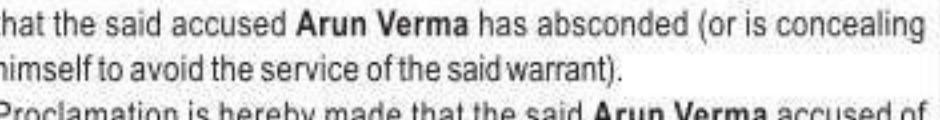
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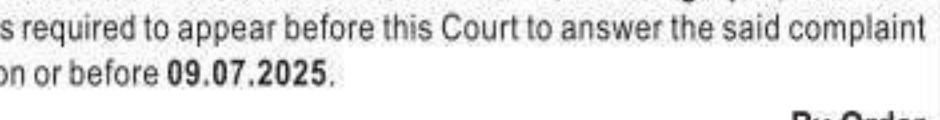
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Unprecedented Opportunities for Youth in Medical Sector

India now has 23 AIIMS and 780 Medical Colleges
MBBS seats increased to 1.18 lakh and PG seats to 74,000



CAG holds horizontal audit of JJM, reports soon

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

THE COMPTROLLER and Auditor General of India (CAG) is conducting an extensive performance audit of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), the government's flagship scheme aimed at providing tap water connections to all rural households, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

According to sources, the JJM audit exercise is in an advanced stage and reports are expected soon. The process began about one and a half years ago after the CAG included the subject in its audit plan. It is covering the implementation of the JJM in states from the financial year 2019-20 to 2023-24.

The CAG is conducting a horizontal audit of the Mission, through its field offices led by Principal Accountant Generals (PAGs) or Accountants General (AGs), across all states. The fieldwork in most states is over, while in some of the states, the exercise is at the report-writing stage, said a source. Reports of two states have already reached the CAG headquarters, the source said.

Once the reports are finalised, they will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly of respective states, said the source.

The audit is conducted at state level and not at the national level as the state governments are at the forefront of implementing the JJM. All aspects of JJM implementation, including planning and financial performance, are covered under the au-

E **EXPLAINED** Why audit after 5 years?

ACCORDING TO sources, the CAG picks up a scheme for audit usually after 70-80% expenditure is over. The JJM started in 2019-20. In the initial years, the expenditure was low. Therefore, the CAG selected it for audit after the first phase was completed in 2023-24, said the source.

dit. The reasons behind cost escalations will also be examined across the states, said a source.

Along with JJM, the CAG is

also conducting a horizontal audit of MGNREGS across states and these reports are also expected to be finalised soon. The last time CAG conducted a nation-wide audit of the NREGS was in 2013.

This is the first major audit of the JJM since its launch in 2019. The CAG had conducted a performance audit of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) of which a report was presented in 2018. It covered the period from 2012 to 2017. In 2019, the Centre subsumed the NRDWP to launch the JJM. Since then, this is the first audit exercise conducted by the CAG.

The Centre has deployed over 100 teams of Central Nodal Officers (CNOs) for "ground inspection" of the JJM schemes across the country. The move fol-

lowed a meeting chaired by the Cabinet Secretary on May 8 to review the JJM schemes.

Since the launch of the Mission in 2019, around 6.4 lakh water supply schemes with total estimated cost of ₹8.29 lakh crore — more than double of the scheme's original outlay of ₹3.6 lakh crore (Centre: ₹2.08 lakh crore, States: ₹1.52 lakh crore) — have been approved by the states.

To meet the additional requirement of funds, the Jal Shakti Ministry had approached the Expenditure Finance Committee, headed by the Expenditure Secretary, to approve ₹2.79 lakh crore additional Central funding over and above ₹2.08 lakh crore.

However, the EFC recommended only ₹1.51 lakh crore as the Central share, which is 46% lower than ₹2.79 lakh crore sought by the Jal Shakti Ministry, as reported by *The Indian Express* on April 21, 2023.

On May 21, *The Indian Express* reported that an investigation of the data uploaded by states and UTs on the Jal Jeevan Mission dashboard showed that a crucial change in tender guidelines three years ago lifted the check on expenditure, and led to cost escalations. This resulted in additional costs totalling ₹16,839 crore for 14,586 schemes, an increase of 14.58% from their estimated cost.

The sources said the CAG has also initiated a horizontal audit of several other central schemes like Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan, Welfare of Building and other Construction Workers, Green India Mission and Smart City Mission. The JJM audit will be similar to that.



Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Aralekar at an event in Raj Bhavan in front of the image of Bharat Mata

Row over Bharat Mata image, Kerala govt moves event out of Raj Bhavan

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 5

took up the matter with CPI leader and Agriculture Minister P. Prasad. As a result, the department held its own function at the darbar hall of the state secretariat.

Prasad told the media that the government changed its venue after an impasse with the Governor over the photo. "The picture of Bharat Mata displayed at the venue (central hall of the Raj Bhavan) is one that is used by RSS... Constitutionally, it is not proper to use that picture at a government function. The Governor insisted on using that picture... could not agree with that decision. So, the government function was shifted out of Raj Bhavan."

This is the first time that the CPI(M)-led Kerala government openly expressed its displeasure with the Raj Bhavan after the current Governor, Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, assumed office early this year.

The agriculture department planned the state-level inauguration of the environmental day celebration with the governor as the chief guest. The agriculture department officials, who reviewed the preparations of the function, noticed that the Bharat Mata picture to be used was similar to the one generally used by the Sangh Parivar and subsequently, they

will be no compromise whatsoever on Bharat Mata."

"When a function is being held at Raj Bhavan... the minister has no right to say which picture of Bharat Mata should be used," a Raj Bhavan source said.

Meanwhile, Opposition Leader V. S. Satheesan said it was "not proper" to use that picture of Bharat Mata at Raj Bhavan.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Thursday. Express

Pran Pratishtha performed at Ram Temple

MAULSHREE SETH
AYODHYA, JUNE 5

THE SECOND Pran Pratishtha at Ayodhya's Ram Temple, in which a statue of Lord Ram in the form of a king at Ram Darbar was consecrated, concluded on Thursday in a simple ceremony. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was present on the occasion.

Nearly a year and a half ago, the Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Lalla idol was done in a grand ceremony at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and hundreds of VIPs.

The 15-minute final consecration rituals started at 11:25 am with the chanting of mantras

by acharyas from different parts of the country, including Kashi, Ayodhya, Basti, Delhi, Kolkata, Dehradun, Haridwar, Jammu among others. The main acharya leading the rituals was Jai Prakash Tripathi from Kashi, and next to him was Acharya Chandra Banu Sharma from Delhi. Ram Temple Trust member Anil Mishra and his wife were the main 'yajman'.

Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra president Nritya Gopal Das, Swami Awadheshanand Giri as well as Trust secretary Champat Rai were also present.

The rituals were held on the first floor of the Ram Temple where the Ram Darbar has been established as darshan of the Balak Ram continued as regular on the ground floor.

While the consecration of idols of Ram, Sita, Bharat, Laxman, Shatrughan and Hanuman at the Ram Darbar along with the idols of Surya, Hanuman, Ma Annapurna, Shiva, Goddess Durga at six other temples on the temple premise was completed, the pilgrims will have to wait for some more time before these temples and the Ram Darbar is open for public.

Officials of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust said the decision to delay the darshan was taken because of space constraints.

The Ram Darbar and the new temples will be opened to the public only after a set mechanism for entry, exit, timing, and number of pilgrims is properly worked out. A meeting of the Trust is

likely to take place in the next few days to discuss these plans with the experts. Till then, pilgrims will be allowed entry only on the ground floor of the main temple," said an official of the Trust.

Officials said that at present, about 60,000 to 70,000 pilgrims are visiting the Ram Temple on average daily, with some increase on weekends or some special auspicious days. However, unlike the Garba Griha on the ground floor, there is a space constraint on the first floor. Just in front of the entrance of the Garba Griha, there are staircases on either side going to the first floor. Officials said that while all the pilgrims cannot be allowed entry to the first floor, a mechanism is being worked out, where an online pass system is made available.

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
दृष्टि गम मनोरं लोकिया अस्ताल एवं
अटल विहारी वाजपेयी आयुर्विज्ञन संस्थान, नई दिल्ली
DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA HOSPITAL
ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, NEW DELHI-110001
NURSING SECTION
E-mail: nursing.section@rmlh.nic.in
No. NS/34/2023-Nursing Section-Dr. RMLH/2711

Sd/-

Dy. Director (Admn)

Ms. Prabhat Kaur, Nursing officer of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi is continuously on unauthorized absence since 11.11.2023. She did not join duty despite of two OM issued to her on 30.11.2023 and 10.07.2024 and show cause notice on 15.01.2024. Through this advertisement she is once again informed that extraordinary leave cannot be sanctioned to her neither her post can be kept vacant in the interest of patient care and she is once again directed to join duty within 15 days from the advertisement date of this notice failing which disciplinary proceedings under CCS(CCA) rules 1965 will be initiated against her.

CJI: In age of algorithms, human touch matters in realm of justice

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

UNDERLINING THAT rule of law remains humanity's oldest and most dependable algorithm even in the age of computer algorithms, CJIB R Gavai has said that "the moment we let technology take the driver's seat in the legal system, we begin to erode the public's faith in us and with it, the foundations of the rule of law."

During his keynote address

Wednesday at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law, London, on 'Courts, Commerce & the Role of Law', the CJIB said, "Today, we live in an age where computer algorithms increasingly shape our daily choices, from advertisements we see to people we employ. In these times, it is easy to forget that the human touch still matters immensely in the realm of justice. Unlike computer algorithms, the law isn't meant to blindly follow historical trends, optimise for engagement, or serve judgments based on pref-



Chief Justice of India Justice BR Gavai with others in London on Wednesday. PTI

erences of the audience. It is rooted in principles, in reason, and above all, in fairness. The rule of law stands resolute as humanity's oldest and most dependable algorithm which has evolved alongside humanity."

The CJIB said that there is a "delicate new tension" in the evolving landscape of commercial dispute resolution. "The rule of law risks being overshadowed by an overemphasis on autonomy and an absence of adequate oversight of non-human entities and on humans acting vicariously through them."

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He said, "while autonomy remains a cornerstone of commercial justice, it must never eclipse the courts' fundamental duty to uphold the rule of law for ordinary citizens of the land".

The CJIB said that "in the realm of global commerce, we (courts) have the power to ensure that freedom... sustains the integrity of efficient and dependable commercial dispute resolution systems... The rule of law in the digital age requires... our attention... active and thoughtful engagement guided by commercial pragmatism".

The CJIB said that as the world stands "at the crossroads between tradition and innovation, the courts... are both guardians of ancient wisdom and architects of future justice." He said that "courts... serve a crucial gap-filling function through interpreting commercial legislation. A judge's vantage point on the issues being faced by the public is often... diverse than... the legislative or executive branches. And thus, our interpretations of statutory provisions must be pragmatic".

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'Only the first round to resolve dispute': Anbumani calls on father Ramadoss after fallout

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

IN A dramatic turn, Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, president of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), paid a surprise visit to his father and party founder Dr S Ramadoss at the family's ancestral home in Thaliparampam near Tindivanam Thursday morning, marking the first interaction since their highly publicised fallout over party leadership.

During the 45-minute visit, Anbumani was accompanied by his younger daughter Sanjithra. The meeting has sent ripples through PMK ranks and the state's political landscape, triggering speculation of a potential rapprochement.

Insiders, however, insisted that this was only the "first round" in the reconciliation process. "It will be resolved only when Anbumani... respects, and promises to take care of his sister Gandh-

ing president", resulting in uncertainty about the PMK's future.

Thursday's meeting also comprised subtle but significant gestures. As Anbumani met his parents inside, his sister Gandhimathi — whose son Mukundan was recently made youth wing president and is said to have resigned shortly after — arrived at the residence. Anbumani left soon after her arrival, fuelling speculation that the family's unresolved sibling dynamics may be as central to the stand-off as political control.

In what appeared to be a parallel effort at mediation, RSS and AIADMK have also held talks with Ramadoss. The role being played by the BJP and the AIADMK in the negotiations are significant in view of PMK's stability. Loyalty towards the AIADMK and the BJP was also a question between the father and the son. When Anbumani preferred to enter the state alliance through NDA, Ramadoss insisted they should see the AIADMK as the prime ally.

For details login to website
<https://pesb.gov.in>

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CBC-03111/12/0006/2526

11 TOO MANY

Deaths at victory party stain on IPL governance, state government.

Ensuring accountability is the fitting tribute to fans' memory

KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER Siddaramaiah has announced an inquiry into the stampede that claimed 11 lives and left more than 40 Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) fans injured Wednesday. If the probe is to fix accountability for the horrific incident in Bengaluru, it needs to take an unsparing look at the role of the state government, the cricket association, the team management, and the Board — all of whose job it was to ensure that the city could celebrate safely and the champion cricketers were adequately shielded. It's hard to be convinced by the logic of these authorities that they didn't anticipate the crowd to swell to many times the 35,000 capacity of Chinnaswamy Stadium. For, no special intelligence was needed here.

The RCB fans had waited for 18 years to see their team on the winner's podium. The emotive power of the victory was heightened by the fact that team superstar Virat Kohli is in the twilight of his career. As soon as the game ended, Bengaluru's streets echoed with "Ee sala cup namde" (this time the cup is ours). The political class rushed in to own the triumph, glint in its reflected glory. To this, add the early announcement by RCB on free passes that would never have been enough, police alerts going unnoticed, the on-off open-top bus parade cancelled at the last minute — the perfect storm for an accident. No wonder when the stampede happened, missing was someone in charge, someone to help, even as the felicitation ceremony, attended by the entire state government, including CM Siddaramaiah and his Deputy, D K Shivakumar, seemed to be happening in another world altogether.

The BCCI has been quick to sidestep its responsibility. Technically, it has a point — the state and local administration were responsible for the event. But since every IPL player, Indian or foreign, signs a contract with BCCI as one of the parties, along with the franchise, the Board can't distance itself from this tragedy. In a polarised discourse, the deaths acquire a political colour: Stampede under BJP vs stampede under Congress. Let social media warriors fight that out. What needs to be underlined is that the many triumphs of Indian cricket have many claimants: Players; those who bid for them; those who crowd the dug-out; sport bodies; the political class and, of course, Mr Mallya, the fugitive, too. But who is responsible and accountable for the welfare of the fan, ecstatic one time, crushed at another, always vulnerable? From the 14-year-old schoolgirl to the 19-year-old college student, the 26-year-old engineer to the accountant who took a day off with her husband to mark the victory — the 11 lives lost are 11 too many. The world's richest cricket tournament can't cut corners when it comes to fans' safety. A fitting tribute to those dead, therefore, is not merely signing a cheque but holding those in charge accountable. Ensuring that those who dropped the ball Wednesday are made to pay — and face the full force of the law.

MORE THAN STATS

Announcement of dates of much-delayed Census is welcome.

Exercise will make policymaking more informed

IN THE RECENT past, the Centre has taken several steps to fill the gaps in data availability in the country. For instance, it has conducted two rounds of household consumption expenditure surveys for 2022-23 and 2023-24, which provide granular data on household spending patterns, and also allow for the estimation of poverty and inequality in the country. The government has also announced that the revamped sample design of the labour force surveys will allow for the generation of monthly estimates of key labour market indicators, which will aid policymaking. On Wednesday, it took another step, announcing the dates for the much-delayed Census. This is a welcome development. Census 2021 had been postponed due to the Covid pandemic and has not been conducted since. This had meant that the last Census conducted provided estimates of India's population as of March 2011. Considering that timely and accurate data forms the basis of policymaking, the continuing absence of the Census data has only hindered policymaking in the country.

Census 2027 will be conducted in two phases. As per a report in this paper, the house listing phase is likely to begin by March-April 2026, while the enumeration exercise will take place over 21 days in February 2027. As per the Ministry of Home Affairs, "the reference date for population Census-2027 will be 00:00 hours of the first day of March, 2027". For the UT of Ladakh and the non-synchronous snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the reference date will be 00:00 hours of the first day of October, 2026. Alongside, the exercise will also involve the enumeration of castes. This will be the first time since 1931 that the Census will gather detailed data on caste beyond Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. But the announcement of the Census has also raised questions on the possibility of delimitation — the process of reconfiguring the Lok Sabha and state assembly seats — and the implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament.

In addition to providing population estimates, the Census also collects data on several household socio-economic indicators. This provides vital information on the changes in the country over the decades. Alongside, the Census data is also used in various surveys, and by both government agencies and private entities in the formulation of policies and strategies. It thus serves an invaluable purpose, aiding policymaking in India.

PART OF THE FAMILY

Australia's law declaring pets as more than just property in family disputes sets an example

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, THE man who all but broke Philosophy, would likely have appreciated Australia's Family Law Amendment Act, which comes into force next week. A singular mind, Wittgenstein showed how many of the most intractable problems of metaphysics — and life, really — are rooted in misunderstandings of language. For example, the questions "who gets the house" and "who gets the dog" follow the same syntax. But that doesn't mean they should be addressed in the same way. Fortunately, in Australia at least, the law will no longer treat the family dog like any other piece of property. After a breakup or divorce, the best interests of the pet and who the primary caregiver is, among other considerations, will determine custody — not an archaic idea of "ownership".

To be fair, the idea of pets as "fur babies" — especially in urban and well-to-do households — is relatively recent. Animals have been domesticated for three purposes: Food, transport and labour, and as companions for hunting, guarding and pest control. But some animals, even when they are working, are part of the family. A dog feels, even when she guards, and a cat has moods, even when she catches mice. They have an inner life, likes and dislikes. Dogs, especially, need care, and give it back in return and, unlike children, are always grateful for a meal, a hug and a walk.

Australia's law is, then, both a correction and an admission. It ensures the well-being of an animal, emotional and physical, as it would of a dependent. It also acknowledges that the anthropocentric view of ethical and legal systems leaves out some of the most important members of a family, that when a home is broken, the pet isn't just a part of the furniture. Hopefully, lawmakers in the rest of the world will take a leaf out of Australia's book.

THE EDITORIAL PAGE**WORDLY WISE**

WE CAN JUDGE THE HEART OF A MAN
BY HIS TREATMENT OF ANIMALS.

— IMMANUEL KANT

Reimagining the classroom

AMEETA MULLA WATTAL

CBSE mother tongue policy should be implemented through dialogue, not diktat

AS OF MAY, the Central Board of Secondary Education has released approximately 30 academic circulars and numerous examination, affiliation and miscellaneous documents. These include assessment guidelines, teacher training programmes, student enrichment activities, curriculum updates and policy implementation. Educators are now grappling with the latest, mandating the implementation of mother tongue-based instruction in the foundational and preparatory stages of schooling.

From the Kothari Commission (1964 to 1966) to the National Policy of Education (1968), the Yashpal Committee (1993), National Curriculum Framework (2005, NCF) along with UNESCO, NCERT and numerous global developmental psychologists and even the National Education Policy (2020) have all highlighted the importance of mother tongue-based learning in foundational years (three-eight years). The NCF 2023 directed schools to make the process more structured and explicit, and align it with global best practices.

Several studies show that children learn best when taught in their home language because it brings emotional security and concept retention. In fact, it has been argued that learning in an unfamiliar language disconnects the child from real-world experiences, reduces classroom participation and often delays understanding. In places where tribal languages or dialects have been set aside, this step can pave the way towards linguistic equity and educational justice. This is an aspirational policy, but the learning ecosystem is fragmented. In order to implement it in letter and spirit, all stakeholders will have to be involved.

Schools can create a language policy after surveying the home languages of their students. With schools mapping language groups and deciding on bridge programmes by allocating resources and teachers accordingly, parents can make an informed choice. In heterogeneous schools, using the mother tongue is not about enforcing one language, it's about embracing linguistic plurality and making children visible. In order to respond through a balanced strategy, parents have to be informed

that both the NEP and the NCF support additive bilingualism with strong foundations in the home language along with systematic learning of English. If the mother tongue is positioned as the foundation and English layered in contextually, it will become a bridge.

Across socio-economic strata, Indian parents see English-medium education from the foundational years as the key to success.

For some, mother-tongue instruction feels regressive. There will be an aspirational mismatch because the mindset behind English-medium education has been driven by media, advertising and peer pressure. Teachers will be left to mediate between parental anxiety and policy mandates, without support or community engagement.

Teachers may themselves feel overwhelmed by the push towards mother tongue-based multilingual instruction, especially in heterogeneous English medium schools. Most teachers are trained to teach in English or Hindi, or their regional language and English, not in pedagogical strategies or multilingualism. Handling multiple languages without lesson plans can be difficult for them. Assessment also offers challenges in evaluating learning across languages, especially when tools are monolingual. Teachers are expected to manage language equity, curriculum delivery and concept clarity without training, material, or time. Support, not imposition, is the way forward, if we want multilingualism to become a strength, not a burden.

A teacher may speak the mother tongue fluently but may not be able to explain concepts pedagogically in that language. He or she may lack academic vocabulary or age-appropriate phrases. They may not know how to create learning materials or assess learning in the language. Unless they are trained to teach the language, the instruction will not succeed. Parents, too, need to be made partners in this transition. It is important to give them a roadmap of how children will transition in reading and writing fluently in both their mother tongue and in English.

A greater load has been added without reducing academic responsibilities. Planning for a multilingual class requires more time, in ad-

dition to the regular work that teachers do. If we want children to learn with joy and meaning, then their teachers must be supported with empathy, time and trust. The policy has to be a dialogue, not a diktat.

Mother tongue-based education is a vital tool in addressing the global learning crisis. In order for it to succeed, the CBSE and state education departments must move beyond circulars and compliances to systemic support, or the gap between policy and practice will widen.

Schools should be given a two-to-three-year transition window starting with oral exposure, creating classroom levels for language mapping, developing multilingual lesson plans, differentiated assessments, resource kits and teaching aids. Oral and non-verbal rubrics that measure conceptual understanding need to be created. Experienced multilingual resource persons should conduct workshops for teachers of foundational years because they need to be partners in reform. A common instructional language should be chosen, while the mother tongue can be taught through songs, stories, language activities, traditional games, audio libraries and AI-driven technologies.

Urban schools, especially in metros, are an example of India's internal migration and cultural plurality. Classrooms include children who speak a variety of mother tongues — Malayalam, Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada and others — within the same learning space. This linguistic landscape calls for context-sensitive handling rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

The policy has great potential but without clarity in execution, it will become merely symbolic. The benefit of the mother tongue in the foundational years can only be realised with the help of supportive parents and trained teachers, who will design it not merely as a linguistic shift but a reimaging of childhood and learning.

The writer is chairperson and executive director, Education, Innovations and Training, DLF Foundation Schools and Scholarship Programmes



SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

THERE IS A deep and beautiful connection between our inner world and the outer world. Today, we speak of climate change, sustainability, and conservation. But we often overlook an invisible thread that binds all these efforts together — the human mind. If one in every three persons on our planet is depressed, how do we expect the world to be a better place? How can one truly care for nature if one is struggling mentally or emotionally? A mind clouded with stress, fear, or greed cannot be sensitive to the needs of the planet.

Any policy made without taking the mental health of people into account is unlikely to work. We can have sound policies in place, but to implement those policies, you need to build consensus and inspire people. And here, faith-based organisations can make a big difference. When people are mentally strong, when their hearts are open and they are spiritually awakened, they will naturally become more sensitive to the environment. Faith, spirituality, and inner peace are the foundations that can inspire climate action, and bring together millions of people towards this sacred cause.

Throughout history, faith has guided humanity to walk the path of righteousness. Ancient cultures across the world saw nature as sacred. Rivers were not just water bodies; they were goddesses. Trees were not just wood; they were sacred beings. Even mountains and the wind were revered as divine. People didn't protect the environment because of some policy; they did it out of love and devotion. That spirit needs to be rekindled.

Faith leaders can play a pivotal role here to

FAITH FOR CLIMATE ACTION

When people are empowered, they care for nature

rekindle the sense of connection with the planet, with nature, and create a sense of urgency in people for its preservation. Individually we may be able to do less, but when everyone comes together, communities can create a bigger impact in environmental conservation.

In India, the Art of Living has worked closely with communities at the grassroots level in this direction. We began by teaching people how to breathe, how to meditate, how to find joy and clarity within. Only a heart that has opened up can choose to serve others. When the mind becomes peaceful and content, it becomes sensitive, too. And from that sensitivity, action springs. Across five states, we rejuvenated more than 72 rivers that had dried up or existed only on paper. With the support of local communities, we built thousands of groundwater recharge structures, conducted land surveys, and planted over 100 million indigenous trees — not fast-growing or water-draining species but trees like peepal and mango that replenish the soil. We saw the birds started coming back.

When the Earth starts healing from reduced use of chemicals on the soil, farmers are among the greatest beneficiaries. In Vidarbha, an area that often made headlines for tragic farmer suicides, our volunteers trained thousands of farmers in natural farming methods, in meditation, breathing and being happy. The impact was such that last year, 1,000 farmers flew down to our Bengaluru ashram to express their gratitude. Many of them now earn four times more, free from the burden of toxic chemicals.

This goes to show that when people are mentally and spiritually empowered, they become the true custodians of the Earth.

In our ashram, after introducing permaculture and multi-layer farming, we've seen astonishing results — papayas that normally grow to 2 kg now grow to over 5 kg, or ash gourds weighing as much as 30 kilos, and you can grow the yield of a five-acre plot in just a single acre. All you need to do is take heed of nature's intelligence, and work with it instead of against it.

Another powerful example of community action comes from a temple in Nepal where thousands of birds were sacrificed annually. We approached the priests with love and reason. We reminded them that the Divine does not ask for the sacrifice of these innocent animals but the animalistic tendencies in our own hearts. Within a few years, that practice stopped. Today, they feed birds instead of sacrificing them. When change is rooted in faith, it lasts.

We need to ask ourselves: How much do we want to exploit the Earth? And how much do we want to preserve it? We have to honour, respect and take utmost care of our planet. We must encourage chemical-free farming and ensure we don't pollute the earth with plastic, poisonous fertilisers and chemicals. Taking steps so that we collectively become environmentally conscious will be our greatest offering.

The writer is a spiritual leader and founder of The Art of Living Foundation

**JUNE 6, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO****INDIA BACKS PALESTINE**

INDIA AND EGYPT supported the Palestinians' struggle for a homeland and called for Israel's withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. This was among the major international issues on which PM Rajiv Gandhi and President Hosni Mubarak were in agreement at the talks they held soon after Gandhi's arrival in Cairo on a two-day official visit on the first leg of his four-nation tour. Speaking later at an Iftar banquet hosted by Mubarak, Gandhi said, "We have consistently and uncompromisingly supported the Arab cause. We support the struggle of the Palestinian people led by the PLO as their sole representative."

INDIRA MURDER TRIAL

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS JUDGE Mahesh Chandra dismissed an application by Kebar Singh, one of the three accused in the Indira Gandhi murder case, seeking open trial of the case. The judge, however, said he would "not be averse or disinclined" to allowing public men, besides the press and the relations of the accused, to attend the proceedings in the Tihar jail, depending upon the space available.

AMRITSAR VIGIL

ABSOLUTE CALM PREVAILED in Punjab, Haryana and the Union Territory of

Chandigarh today on the fifth day of the "Operation Bluestar Week" being observed by the Akalis. No untoward incident was reported from any part of Punjab and the neighbouring states.

60 TAMILS KILLED

AT LEAST 60 people were killed and more than 1,500 houses burnt when Sri Lankan security forces attacked a number of Tamil villages in the Muttur area near Trincomalee in the eastern province, reports reaching Colombo said. More than 6,000 people had been rendered homeless and sheltered in schools, temples and churches, the reports added.

DIS/AGREE

THE BEST OF BOTH SIDES

A weekly column, which offers not this-versus-that, but the best of both sides, to inform the debate

CR Sasikumar

From Operation Sindoar to Spider's Web, new technologies have changed the battleground. What does this mean for the future of conflict?

Infantry needs an upgrade

Advances in autonomous systems should be matched by integration of ground forces with robotics, AI

individuals, is hazardous.

A new and deadly innovation has been the use of fibre optic cables to guide the drones without being jammed. It can only be taken out if you kill the operator. But detecting him or her is a monumental task. All this has led to greater emphasis on concealment, dispersed formations and anti-drone measures like jamming, smoke screens, or netting.

Infantrymen have now begun operating in small teams, which try to penetrate deeper across the battlefield from a distance in the battlefield. Combined with barbed wire and mines, it made movement across open land difficult and dangerous. The 21st-century equivalent of the machine gun seems to be drones, small and large, which have caused more casualties in the Ukraine war than any other weapon. Their widespread use spans reconnaissance, strikes, and logistics.

Drones have not only altered the tactical battlefield but have had a strategic impact as well. This was demonstrated by Operation Spider's Web, through which Ukraine launched an attack across the geographic spread of Russia, destroying some dozen aircraft including strategic bombers. The real impact of the operation has been psychological. The calls in Russia for nuclear retaliation are a measure of the shock.

Spider's Web can be compared to an earlier operation when Ukraine sank the Russian guided missile cruiser *Moskva* in the Black Sea in 2022. The ship was sunk by anti-ship missiles. But a Bayraktar TB2 drone played a key role as a spotter to aid the Ukrainian effort. Subsequently,

the Ukrainians have used aerial and maritime drones to push Russian naval power out of much of the Black Sea.

Just as the machine gun was used in combination with artillery, trenches, mines and barbed wire in WWI, so too are drones being used in combination with other elements like armour, artillery, air power and information as force multipliers. First Person View (FPV) drones, which give the operator a driver's view from the camera, have made the battlefield more transparent. The movement of infantrymen and armour across the battlefield has become very difficult.

The use of drones and associated loitering munitions in the recent 80-hour conflict between India and Pakistan marks a new beginning for the Subcontinent. Their employment was nowhere as extensive as in the Ukraine war, but it certainly is a pointer to their future use in the region.

FPV drones enable a concentration of fire with the use of swarms, even while your own forces remain decentralised. Their effectiveness is due to their low cost and enormous accuracy, and their ranges, which can be anywhere from 10 to 30 kilometres. This has made an area of 20 km on either side of the battlefield a zone of death. Movement, whether by tanks or

units, initiative and adaptability are crucial. High-quality junior and non-commissioned officers are, therefore, essential. In fact, the arrival of FPV drones should encourage the Army to reduce the size of the infantry, but make it more effective through higher training levels.

The future of drone warfare needs to be seen along with the advances in autonomous systems, which will integrate the infantry more closely with robotics and AI. Human soldiers, however, will still be needed to hold the terrain, make decisions and deal with complex situations that machines won't know how to engage with.

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The writer is distinguished fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi



MANOJ JOSHI

Ground force still first line of defence

Despite emerging technologies, physical presence and perseverance will continue to define success.

Forces should be made smarter, not obsolete



MANOJ K CHANNAN

AS THE CHARACTER of warfare evolves under the influence of emerging technologies, debates often intensify over the continued relevance of traditional arms of warfare – particularly the infantry and the Armoured Corps.

The proliferation of stand-off weapons, precision-guided munitions (PGMs), drones, and AI-enhanced surveillance systems has altered the battlefield's shape, speed, and reach. However, while the tools of combat change, the fundamental truths of holding ground, establishing control, and projecting power remain unchanged. Recent operations, including Operation Sindoar and Spider's Web, offer critical lessons that reaffirm the indispensability of the infantry and the Armoured Corps.

The Ukraine-Russia conflict has become a testing ground for 21st-century military technology. Ukraine's innovative use of low-cost drones to strike high-value targets deep within Russian territory has illustrated the disruptive potential of unmanned systems.

Armed drones, kamikaze UAVs, and even commercial drones modified for tactical use have exposed vulnerabilities that were previously unthinkable. The line between war and a computer game is increasingly blurring, with targets neutralised at the push of a button.

In India's own context, Operation Sindoar has highlighted how PGMs can deliver decisive outcomes from a distance. It demon-

strated the efficacy of surgical strikes without mass troop deployment, reducing casualties and diplomatic blowback. The takeaway is clear: Warfare is increasingly sensor-fused, data-driven, and remotely executed. Yet, this technocentric warfare cannot substitute for the physical presence and psychological dominance that infantry and armour bring to the theatre of war.

Beyond traditional threats, India faces hybrid and asymmetric challenges – most notably narco-terrorism, especially along its western border. Pakistan's alleged support to narcotics-based destabilisation seeks to finance insurgency and undermine internal stability. While drones and surveillance can detect movement, interdiction requires physical patrols, border domination, and search-and-destroy missions.

Civil administration, likewise, cannot function in a vacuum. It requires a secure environment that only ground forces can ensure. From counter-insurgency in Kashmir to anti-Naxal operations in the Red Corridor, infantry has been the bulwark of India's internal-security architecture. This role cannot be supplanted by technology.

The key takeaway is that technology and traditional combat arms must not be seen as mutually exclusive.

The future lies in convergence, not replacement. The narrative that the infantry and Armoured Corps are relics of a bygone era is flawed and dangerous. While it is true that warfare is undergoing a transformation driven by technology, the essence of conflict – human will, physical control, and strategic presence – remains the same. No drone can hold a ridge. No missile can win hearts and minds.

As India prepares for potential conflicts in an uncertain neighbourhood, it must modernise its ground forces while respecting their enduring value. Their role is not diminishing; it is evolving. The future lies in making them smarter, not obsolete.

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The writer is a lieutenant colonel (retired), former Armoured Corps officer, defence analyst and strategic thinker

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"So far as the Indian threat to Pakistan's water security is concerned, this battle will have to be fought and won at the multiple dispute-resolution forums provided under the treaty if New Delhi tries to implement its... plan — at its own peril."

—DAWN, PAKISTAN

Cagey about the House

Centre's skittishness about calling a special session is of a piece with its attitude to parliamentary precedents and principles



ZERO HOUR
BY DEREK O'BRIEN

THIS WEEK, LEADERS from 17 political parties wrote to the Prime Minister urging him to call a special session of Parliament in June. Within hours of doing so, a skittish government hurriedly announced the dates for a regular monsoon session starting July 21, seemingly turning down the demand for a special session. Normally, the lead time to announce a Parliament session (the number of days between announcement and commencement) has been around 20 days or less. The upcoming monsoon session has been announced 47 days in advance!

At the time of going to press, another 250 MPs from the Opposition are endorsing the letter already dispatched by their party leaders to the Prime Minister. The demand for a special session was first raised by Kapil Sibal, eminent jurist and Independent MP, three days after the tragedy in Pahalgam. Opposition parties took the cue from there.

Convening Parliament sessions: Let us start with the rulebook. Article 85(1) of the Constitution stipulates, "The President shall from time to time summon each House of Parliament to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit..."

The letter signed by the Opposition parties has been addressed to the Prime Minister. Yes, calling a special session is a decision of the Union government takes. In practice, when MPs ask for a special session, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, after assessing the situation, (and accepting the need for a session) prepares a note, proposing the dates and duration. This is placed before the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs. If the proposal is approved by the Prime Minister, the ministry then forwards it to the President, who formally approves and announces the session dates. It is another story if the government has what could be called, "Parliament-o-phobia" (noun) – the acute condition that is a morbid fear of facing Parliament.

In the past 15 years, many parliamentary precedents have been ignored. Just three examples: One, the position of the Deputy Speaker in Lok Sabha has lain vacant since 2019. Two, from seven out of 10 bills being sent for scrutiny to committees, now only about two out of 10 bills go. Three, Opposition MPs were denied their right to electronic voting during the passage of crucial bills like the farm laws.

This Union government's tendency to cock a snook at the legislature has a history. Look at the track record of the legislative assembly of Gujarat from 2001 to 2012. The state assembly, under the then Chief Minister, sat for fewer times than it did under any previous CM of Gujarat. In this period, the average number of sittings of the Gujarat Assembly was less than 30 a year. Beat that!

Are we surprised that this government has all but ducked out from calling a special session? I am not surprised. But I am reminded of my civics teacher in middle school. It was he who first told me: "The government is answerable to Parliament. Parliament is answerable to the people." So when Parliament is sidelined, who is the government answerable to?

Precedents for special sessions: Even though there is no mention of a special session in the rulebook, there are numerous precedents. In 1972, a sitting was convened to celebrate 25 years of Independence. In 1992, Parliament held a midnight session to mark 50 years of the Quit India Movement. In 1997, a special session was called to commemorate 50 years of the Republic.

Since 2014, three special sessions have

been convened. One, in 2015, a two-day session, to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution in 1949. Two, in 2017, a midnight session, to introduce the Goods and Services Tax. In 2023, a five-day session, to mark the inauguration of the new Parliament building. The Women's Reservation Bill was also passed in the same session.

These sessions to mark celebratory milestones are welcome. But the great halls of Parliament have to go beyond symbolism and anniversaries.

There have been the odd occasions where governments have shown no urgency to break the routine. In 2006, over 180 people were killed in the Mumbai train bombings. Parliament waited for its next scheduled session before responding. After the 2008 Mumbai attacks, Parliament reconvened only when the pre-scheduled session resumed.

Parliament must urgently deliberate and discuss the events that unfolded in Pahalgam, Poornch, Uri, Rajouri, and their aftermath. Here is the most convincing precedent. During the 1962 Sino-Indian War, the Leader of the Opposition, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then a first-time Rajya Sabha MP, demanded a special session. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to this request, and the session was held when the active conflict was still on: 165 members participated in the debate – an open discussion on the war and government policy.

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The writer is MP and leader, All India Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party. Additional research: Chahat Mangatani, Ayashman Dey

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LADAKH PROMISE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'First steps in Ladakh' (IE, June 5). Ever since the creation of Ladakh as a separate UT following the bifurcation of the state of J&K, the people have been waiting for the central government to fulfil its promises. These include bringing about constitutional protections for land ownership, economic and employment opportunities while keeping intact the region's tribal identity, and a fair representation in the government. After the central government's slew of notifications, whoever has resided in Ladakh for 15 years shall earn a right of domicile to own a property in the UT, which right was not available earlier. It speaks volumes of the good augury for the development of the UT and fulfilment of peoples' aspirations as promised.

Ravi Mathur, Noida

TASTE AND HEALTH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A taste of joy' (IE, June 5). Kudos to Kerala women and child development minister Veena George who paid heed to a viral video of a toddler fed up with upma, demanding his favourite egg biryani and fried chicken, and included the same to food menus at anganwadis. It is heartening as it illustrates the state government's seriousness in providing nutritious food to children, keeping in mind their likes and dislikes. Her counterparts in other states, drawing a leaf out of Kerala's book, should also involve the little ones in deciding menus at anganwadis and schools. Ultimately, in terms of both nutrition and children's

satisfaction, their input is critical.

SH Quadri, Bikaner

WHAT THAW?

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Chill in windows closing for Canada invitation to G7 summit' (IE, June 4). It is shocking that India has not been invited to attend the prestigious G7 meeting, slated for June 15 in Alberta, Canada. No doubt, it is a great blow to the foreign policy and diplomacy followed by the current dispensation. The myth created by the BJP that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has won the goodwill of all countries with his frequent visits overseas, of course, at a huge cost to our exchequer, stands shattered now. Isn't it time India reviewed its foreign policies in consultation with the experts in this domain?

Tharcius S Fernando, Chennai

DHAKA'S POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'What Dhaka needs' (IE, June 5). The situation prevailing in Bangladesh after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina and the beginning of her trial by the International Crimes Tribunal shows that under the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh has turned its back on the nation's founding fathers. They symbolised the democratic hopes and aspirations of a newly born nation. This regime, however, strangely blames India for instigating violence. Amidst global uncertainties, Delhi should continue to support Hasina while keeping channels open with Dhaka. This will require some deft diplomacy. But it is the best course of action.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh

HATE POSTS
HC grants interim bail to influencer, asks police to provide her protection

TANUSREE BOSE
KOLKATA, JUNE 5

THE CALCUTTA High Court on Thursday granted interim bail to 22-year-old law student and social media influencer Sharmistha Panoli, who was arrested for hurting religious sentiments by her alleged communal posts.

Granting the interim bail on a security bond of Rs 10,000, Justice Raja Basu Chowdhury of the vacation bench noted "the gravity of the offence" and said that "she is a law student and of a tender age", and "ready to cooperate" with the investigation. The court said she would not be allowed to leave the country, and in case of educational requirement, she has to seek permission from the chief judicial magistrate. The Investigating Officer (IO) should not "unnecessarily summon" her since she is pursuing her law studies."

After getting relief from the court, Panoli's father, Prithviraj, said he was happy. "As a parent, I am very happy. We had full faith in the judiciary. She can now lead a normal life and not be in jail... Like any parent, we would want security for our child. She is a very intelligent girl and will learn. I had not asked her, but she deleted the videos."

Panoli is expected to be released from jail on Friday.

Former BJP functionary, her partner held over gangrape of minor daughter

AISWARYA RAJ
DEHRADUN, JUNE 5

A FORMER Bharatiya Janata Party functionary and her partner have been arrested for allegedly orchestrating the gangrape of her minor daughter multiple times, police said.

According to a complaint filed Wednesday by the father of the child, the mother had taken the minor in January under the pretext of an outing, accompanied by her partner and another suspect, who is absconding. At BHEL Stadium, the men allegedly consumed alcohol and, with the woman's consent, allegedly threatened and raped the girl. She was then taken to hotels in Agra, Vrindavan, and Haridwar, where the sexual assault continued multiple times.

According to the complainant, the mother was allegedly present at all occasions when the accused raped her daughter. The woman was also running a hotel in Haridwar on lease, police said.

An FIR was registered for gangrape and criminal intimidation of the BNS, and provisions of the POCSO Act. The child's medical examination was conducted after which the two accused were arrested from Hotel Yug Residency near Shiv Murti Chowk.

BJP unit in Haridwar said the accused woman was relieved of her duties in August last year and was expelled from the party on Wednesday. Congress spokesperson Surya Kant Dhasmana said the case has exposed the reality behind BJP's much-touted slogans.

'Don't like women wearing skimpy clothes': MP minister kicks up row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal, JUNE 5

MADHYA PRADESH Cabinet Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya has stirred up the hornet's nest yet again. At a recent public event held in Indore, Vijayvargiya said he didn't "like girls who wear skimpy clothes".

In a speech he made at the event, Vijayvargiya, a senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Madhya Pradesh's minister for urban development and parliamentary affairs, drew comparisons between Indian and Western culture, saying: "Here in India, we consider a girl beautiful



MP minister
Kailash
Vijayvargiya

when she dresses well, wears jewellery, and adorns herself gracefully. In the West, a woman wearing fewer clothes is considered beautiful. I don't agree with that". There's a saying in Western countries that a woman who wears fewer clothes is considered very beautiful, just as a leader who speaks less is considered good. But I don't believe in that. I believe a woman is a form of the goddess."

She should wear nice clothes. I don't find women in revealing clothes attractive".

He then went on to say: "Sometimes girls come to take selfies with me. I tell them - Beta, come in proper clothes next time, then we'll take a photo!"

The Congress said the comments "showed the BJP mentality". Their mentality has been exposed," Congress spokesperson Abhinav Barolia said.

While attending a Hanuman Jayanti event in Indore in 2023, he remarked: "Girls these days wear such filthy clothes... We call women goddesses, but they don't appear that way... They look like Shurpanakha."

According to a statement by the Ministry of Defence, the relief

Rescuers rappel deep into Meghalaya gorge for missing MP bride, groom's body brought home

ANAND MOHAN J
BHOPAL, JUNE 5

THE SEARCH for Sonam Raghuvanshi, the missing honeymooner from Indore whose husband was found murdered in a gorge in Meghalaya days earlier, has been hampered by what rescue officials described as some of the most challenging terrain they have encountered in India.

Meanwhile, the body of Raja Raghuvanshi has been brought back to his home in Madhya Pradesh, where his grieving family members intensified calls for a CBI investigation into his death.

In Meghalaya, rescue workers looking for Sonam found a black raincoat with stains, the significance of which has not yet been established.

The NDRF deployed rappelling equipment at the Weisawdang viewpoint near where Raja's body was discovered, with personnel descending approximately 200 metres into the gorge before operations had to be suspended due to poor visibility and dangerously slippery conditions.

"This steep gorge at Weisawdang is very challenging

for the NDRF. It has low visibility and is characterised by its undulating terrain. The soil is wet and the stones are slippery. We have managed to descend 200 metres, but we still can't reach the ground," said Inspector Lalringasan of the 1st Battalion, NDRF.

The veteran rescue officer, whose teams have operated in Kashmir's sub-zero temperatures and Rajasthan's searing heat, said the Sohra terrain presents unique difficulties. "The terrain in Sohra is very different from others in India and abroad. We have tried our best using rappelling equipment to reach the ground in this steep gorge," Lalringasan said.

A 17-member team has been attempting to locate Sonam for several days, but the 300-foot gorge's final 100 feet remain inaccessible due to weather conditions. The dense forest cover, coupled with low visibility and wet, slippery rocks, has prevented ground-level access, while drones cannot fly effectively due to rains.

The search operation involves 50-60 personnel from multiple agencies, including a Special Operations Team (SOT), the NDRF, the SDRF, and the Fire and Emergency Services. Sonam's



Raja Raghuvanshi and his wife Sonam

brother, Govind, has also been at the site.

New video, raincoat

A potential breakthrough came with the recovery of a black raincoat near the viewpoint, though its significance remains unclear. "There are some stains, but we can't confirm whether they are blood stains. Only forensics will be able to say whether they are blood stains. We will compare it with available footage to see whether it was (worn by) the female," said Vivek Syiem, Superintendent of Police, East Khasi Hills.

Meanwhile, new CCTV footage of the couple emerged, showing them checking out of

their hotel on May 22. The couple was also seen checking in Shillong. In the video, Sonam, who has now been missing for 13 days, is seen interacting with her husband with the registry book in front of them.

The investigation has revealed the couple's final known movements. On May 22, Raja and Sonam arrived at Mawlkhat village on a rented scooter and hired local guide Bha Wansai, who took them to Shipara Homestay at Nongriat village. The following morning, they checked out and returned to Mawlkhat village without the guide. Their whereabouts after leaving Mawlkhat remained unknown. Raja's body was spotted by a police drone on June 2 at 11.48 am in the gorge below Wei Sawdang Falls.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma called the incident unprecedented for the state. "This is a very unfortunate incident, and it is something that we have not seen in Meghalaya before. In fact, it has taken all of us by surprise and shock. Local residents and stakeholders are surprised. We know that Meghalaya has always been a tourist-friendly area," Sangma said.

Soon after, the police found a rented scooter, used by the couple, lying abandoned. Officials found Raja's decomposed body deep inside the gorge.

In April, the body of a Hungarian tourist, who had been missing since March 29 after checking into a Shillong hotel, was found on a steep slope in the East Khasi Hills district.

The CM assured the victim's family that authorities were working intensively on the case.

On Wednesday evening, when Raja's body arrived at his hometown in Indore, his grief-stricken father collapsed. Now, a large, striking poster is on display outside Raja's Indore home, featuring photos of the couple. The poster reads: "The soul of Raja appeals to the central and state governments — I didn't die, I was killed. Let the CBI investigate."

Vipin Raghuvanshi, Raja's brother, said, "My brother's body was found around 25 km from his Scooty. We want the CBI to investigate the case."

The couple went missing near Osara Hills in the Cherrapunji area on May 23. After failing to establish contact with them, family members travelled to Shillong.

Soon after, the police found a rented scooter, used by the couple, lying abandoned. Officials found Raja's decomposed body deep inside the gorge.

This comes nearly a fortnight after Nambala Keshava Rao, alias Basava Raju, the general secretary of the CPI (Maoist), was gunned down in an encounter along with 27 others in the jungles of Abujhmad region in Narayanpur district on May 21.

Sudhakar, as he's widely known, was killed in a joint operation after the security forces received intelligence inputs on the presence of some senior leaders. Several teams from the Special Task Force (STF), District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Central Reserve Police Force's elite unit, Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) were part of the operation.

According to officials, Sudhakar was the person in charge of outlawed outfits ideological training ground, the Revolutionary Political School (RePOS) as well as its Central Regional Bureau (CRB). Anafave of Pragadavaram in West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, Sudhakar was promoted into the ranks of the outfit's Central Committee in 2021 and had a bounty of Rs 40 lakh in Chhattisgarh.

"He was a senior Maoist leader responsible for various violent incidents that resulted in the deaths of numerous innocent tribal civilians and the martyrdom of security personnel. Moreover, as the in-charge of the Maoist ideological training school (RePOS), Gautam was involved in misleading security forces.

Back in August 2023, sources in the security forces had told The Indian Express that Maoists were recruiting new cadres in the national park, Abujhmad, and the Kanker-Narayapur inter-district border near Maharashtra. The fresh recruits are also being trained in the national park, the sources had said, adding that they had been using drones to track security forces.

In Dravav National Park has seen two other major encounters this year between Maoists and security forces. On February 9, two security forces personnel and 31 Maoists were killed in an encounter at the national park. Before that, on January 12, five Maoists, including two women, were killed in an encounter with security forces.

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Operation Kagar is completely different from Operation Sindoor.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
www.indianexpress.com

Top Maoist leader killed in national park encounter in Chhattisgarh

JAYPRakash NAIDU
RAIPUR, JUNE 5

A CENTRAL committee member of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) was killed in an encounter that broke out Thursday morning between security forces and Maoists at the Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district.

The Central Committee member has been identified as 66-year-old Thentu Laxmi Narasimha Chalam, who also went by the names Gautham, TLNChalam, Sudhakar, Anand, Chanti Balakrishna, Rama Raju, R. Aravind and Somantha.

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FULL INTERVIEW ON
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Vehicle torched in retaliation

Raipur: Hours after security forces gunned down a central committee member of banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Thursday, a group of Maoists stopped a transport vehicle and set it on fire in retaliation. The incident took place on Thursday night on a two lane road between Karmarkar and Behramgarh in Bijapur. A group of four to five Maoists stopped a private transport truck and set it on fire after dousing it in petrol. One lane of the road was stopped for vehicular movement and the truck was guarded by security personnel wielding rifles with passenger buses passing by from the opposite lane.

ENS

ing and radicalising the youth with violent and anti-national ideologies," Bastar's Inspector General of Police Sundaraj Psaid.

An AK47 rifle, as well as some explosives and ammunition, has been recovered from the spot, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said.

Dravav National Park has seen two other major encounters this year between Maoists and security forces. On February 9, two security forces personnel and 31 Maoists were killed in an encounter at the national park. Before that, on January 12, five Maoists, including two women, were killed in an encounter with security forces.

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www.indianexpress.com

Chhattisgarh) is concerned? The Congress will not support terrorism if it comes either from the Naxal side or the government side. The Congress party's fundamental rule is Ahimsa (non-violence).

So now, my request to the Union government is to go for peace talks because any person who is ready to surrender himself, surrender his weapons and is ready to join the mainstream should be given an opportunity to do so. Why is the government hesitating to hold peace talks?

Why should peace talks be held with the Maoists?

Right to life is a fundamental right. No one has the right to curb the right to life. What is happening as far as Operation Kagar (anti-Maoist offensive carried out by the central and state security personnel around the Karategutti hill range straddling Telangana and

My concern is that there are many civilians inside the forests, there are civilian tribals inside the forests, thousands of security personnel are deployed. What if we lose civilians in the shoot-out or encounter?

What is your concern over the anti-Maoist offensive?

Landslides and flash floods caused by heavy rain since May 29 have left thousands of tourists stranded. According to officials more than 1,800 tourists have been rescued from Sikkim till now and two batches were evacuated on Thursday.

'Muslim ban' to US security: Trump's no-entry signs, 2017-25

ANAGHA JAYAKUMAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump signed a proclamation on Wednesday banning citizens from 12 countries from entering the United States, effective June 9. Similar restrictions were instituted during Trump's first term (2017-21), but were subsequently challenged in the courts.

The move comes on the heels of an attack by an Egyptian man in Colorado that left 12 people injured. "The recent terror attack in Boulder, Colorado, has underscored the extreme dangers posed to our country by the entry of foreign nationals who are not properly vetted, as well as those who come here as temporary visitors and overstay their visas," Trump said while announcing the ban. "We don't want them."

Which countries are included in the ban?

Citizens of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea,

Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen will be banned from entering. The proclamation also partially restricts the entry of people from Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

A White House Fact Sheet said the country-specific bans would "encourage cooperation with the subject countries in recognition of each country's unique circumstances". Countries could seek talks with the US to ease

the restrictions — similar to how trade deals are being negotiated after Trump's tariff announcements. The countries were identified based on:

- A perceived threat to US national security from their limited vetting processes;
- A "disregard" for US immigration laws through high visa overstays rates;
- Presence of terrorist actors (some even state-sponsored);
- Unwillingness to accept their "removable nationals".

The fact sheet termed Iran and Cuba "state sponsors of terrorism", and Somalia a



Trump called for a "Muslim ban" while campaigning for the 2016 elections. AP

ity threats". During his election campaign last year, Trump made unsubstantiated claims about immigrants "eating pets" in Springfield, Ohio. His running mate and now Vice President, JD Vance, repeated those claims and mentioned the Haitians.

The ban exempts certain categories of individuals, including those holding visas, permanent residents, and dual nationals.

Is there a precedent to the ban?

In the run-up to the 2016 US elections, Trump repeatedly expressed his desire to impose a "Muslim ban" and a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States". This was accompanied by incendiary rhetoric, with Trump saying "Islam hates us", and that the US was "having problems with Muslims coming into the country".

He enacted the first travel ban on January 27, 2017, a week after his inauguration, barring citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries — Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — for 90 days. A federal judge overturned it the next month.

A second attempt was made in March, with a ban that exempted people with a green card or a valid visa. This was overturned by two federal judges, who ruled that it was illegal to ban travel from half a dozen countries.

A third travel ban was announced in September, barring entry to most citizens of Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen. Notably, Chad was removed from the list after its government reached out to the US. In 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the ban, saying the President has authority over national security concerns stemming from immigration.

In January 2020, the entry of immigrants from Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tanzania was banned.

Upon assuming the presidency in 2021, Joe Biden repealed the bans, calling them "a stain on our national conscience".

How is Trump's current ban different?

For one, it must be viewed in the context of Trump's larger, systematic crackdown on immigration — a significant aspect of his po-

itical platform. Since January, he has imposed a national emergency at the country's southern border, denied entry to asylum-seekers, and authorised nationwide immigration raids.

In an executive order signed on his first day, Trump authorised national security agencies to conduct "a robust assessment of the risk that countries posed to the United States, including...terrorism and national security."

Legal experts told *The New York Times* that the ban could withstand legal scrutiny. "They seem to have learned some lessons from the three different rounds of litigation we went through during the first Trump administration," Stephen Vladeck, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, told *The NY Times*. It would also depend on the chosen method for applying the ban, and the legality of that procedure.

Vladeck noted that the ban comes several months after the inauguration, indicating deliberations within the administration to strengthen their case. Further, it does not single out Muslim-majority nations, but focuses on a range of administrative issues.

EXPLAINED POLITICS

IN JHARKHAND, WHERE PM LAUNCHED AYUSHMAN BHARAT IN 2018, THE SCHEME HAS STALLED: HERE'S WHY

SHUBHAM TIGGA
RANCHI, JUNE 5

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi launched the ambitious Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) in Ranchi in 2018. Seven years later, the ambitious health insurance scheme seems to be unravelling in Jharkhand.

Behind the crisis are Rs 190 crore in pending payments to hospitals which has led to many hospitals pulling out — and others threatening to pull out — of the scheme.

What is PM-JAY?

Billed as the largest health insurance scheme in the world, PM-JAY provides beneficiaries — India's poorest 40% families — a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for hospitalisation expenses in empanelled hospitals. The scheme was extended to all citizens more than 70 years old last year.

Eligible beneficiaries are issued insurance cards, using which they can avail healthcare services in empanelled hospitals. These hospitals are then reimbursed by the government.

Why are reimbursements stalled in Jharkhand?

Officials have confirmed to *The Indian Express* that there is no shortage of PM-JAY funds in Jharkhand. Hospitals are not getting paid due to one of two reasons:

■ **Aspects of corruption:** Last year, the National Anti Fraud Unit (NAFU) flagged 212 hospitals for alleged irregularities in the implementation of PM-JAY. Disbursement of funds to these hospitals was halted until the Enforcement Directorate (ED) completed its investigation. The ED in April raided 21 locations linked to alleged fraud, which included the creation of ghost beneficiaries under the scheme. The investigation is ongoing.

Earlier this year, however, even the remaining 538 empanelled hospitals stopped receiving PM-JAY reimbursements — a development that came under scrutiny in many quarters. "The ED is investigating 212 hospitals, till then the



BJP's Marandi (top) has blamed Soren's govt.
x/@yourBabul/
@HemantSoren/JMM



remaining hospitals also have to suffer," Dr Sayeed Ahmad Ansari, president of the Association of Healthcare Providers of India (AHSPI), Jharkhand, said.

■ **A new, glitchy portal:** Dr Anant Sinha, senior surgeon and president of the Jharkhand chapter of the Indian Medical Association-affiliated Hospital Board, blamed non-payments on the introduction of HEM 2.0 which replaced the older Health Entitlement Management portal earlier this year.

HEM 2.0 is a platform to identify, verify, and manage beneficiaries under health schemes like PM-JAY. Payments are currently held up due to procedural changes and technical shifts in the new portal, officials and doctors say. These include HEM 2.0 lacking essential filters, causing backlogs and missing data, and following a rigid fund flow that has slowed claim settlements.

Why is this a major problem in Jharkhand?

In Jharkhand, around 28 lakh families are enrolled under PM-JAY, officials say. As are 750 hospitals, according to IMA and AHSPI. This means that the non-payment of dues potentially affects lakhs of people.

Dr Sinha said that he has not paid his staff since March, and that if payments did not come in soon, he would pull out of the scheme. AHSPI and IMA claim that 60 of the 212 NAFU-flagged hospitals have shut down under financial duress. More closures may be on the way.

Last week, Babulal Marandi, the state BJP chief and the LoP, blamed Hemant Soren's government for hospitals "shutting Ayushman Bharat services" and patients "being left in the lurch". "Ayushman Bharat is now barely functional in the state," he said.

The JMM-led government, on the other hand, has focused on the corruption allegations which it has linked to BJP leaders. Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari said: "Let me be clear — those misusing the Ayushman scheme for corruption will not be spared," he said.

On Tuesday, after a meeting with the representatives of at least 200 hospitals, Ansari announced that funds would soon be released to hospitals that are not under the ED's scanner.

EXPLAINED WATER RESOURCES

Hydrology of the Brahmaputra

Could Chinese dams affect the flow of the Brahmaputra in India? How much of the river's water in Assam comes from Tibet? A top water resources expert and a researcher on transboundary river systems explain



NARESH K MATHUR & DEBARSHEE DASGUPTA

TO COUNTER "Pakistan's scare narrative" about Chinese dams on the Brahmaputra, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has pointed out that "65-70% of the Brahmaputra's flow is generated within India, and "even if China were to reduce water flow... it may actually help... mitigate the annual floods in Assam..."

The Brahmaputra, lifeline of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, originates near Yarlung Tsango in Tibet and enters India near Geling in Arunachal Pradesh. The river, which is called Siang in Arunachal, is joined by many tributaries in Assam as it flows down the plains before entering Bangladesh, where it is called Jamuna.

What interventions does China plan? India has been monitoring Chinese infrastructure interventions on the river. Most are hydropower projects with minimal storage, and are located far upstream of Arunachal Pradesh, with no significant impact in Arunachal or Assam.

A major concern is the planned Medog (or Motuo) Hydropower Project, a massive dam in Medog County near the 'Great Bend' where the river makes a U-turn and plunges into a canyon before entering Arunachal Pradesh.

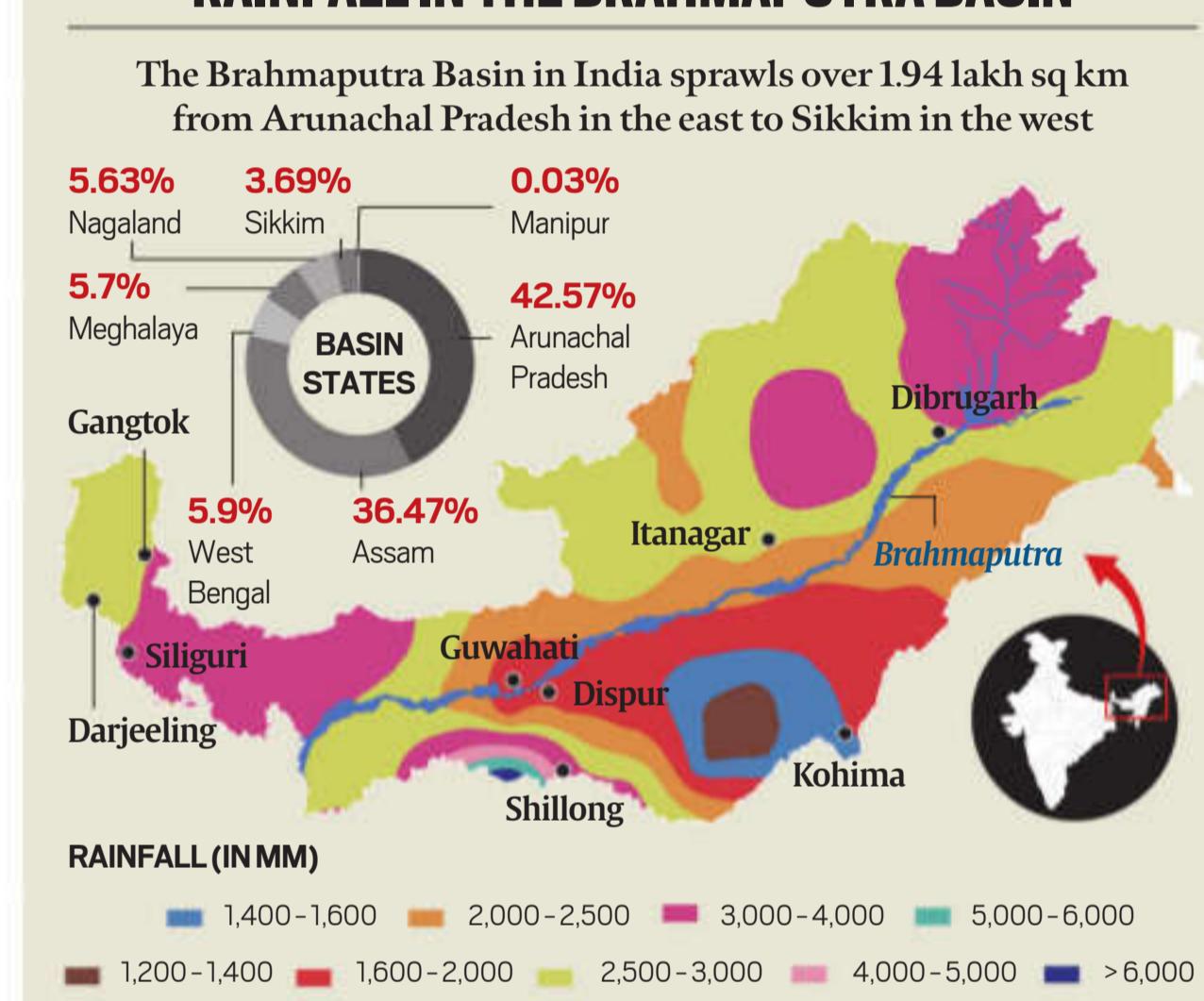
According to reports, the planned 60,000-MW Medog project will be the world's largest hydropower facility, with a generation capacity three times that of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze, currently the world's largest hydropower station.

Not many details of the Medog project are available, but it is unlikely to have a large storage component that would have a major impact downstream.

Concerns have also been raised over China's massive, multi-decade South-North Water Diversion (SNWD) project, the Western Route of which apparently involves diverting water from the Yarlung Tsango (and other rivers) to the country's dry northern regions. However, no official sources or studies are available on these reported plans.

How much of the Brahmaputra's water yield is generated in India?

Official Indian estimates suggest that although the portion in India constitutes only 34.2% of the total basin area, it contributes to more than 80% of the Brahmaputra's yield,



RIVERS SWOLLEN BY THE MONSOON

No part of the Brahmaputra basin in India receives less than 1,200 mm of rain annually. This is four times the average rainfall over the Tibetan Plateau, where the Brahmaputra flows before entering India in Arunachal Pradesh.

Source: The River Basin Atlas of India prepared by CWC and ISRO National Remote Sensing Centre under the Water Resources Information System (India-WRIS) project.

making the Tibet Autonomous Region a minor contributor to the basin's overall yield.

This is because the Tibetan Plateau is a region of scanty rainfall, of the order of 300 mm annually. By contrast, the southern part of the river basin in India receives 2,371 mm of rain on average every year, and very few places receive less than 1,200 mm. (See figure)

Also, the Brahmaputra receives a number of tributaries at both its northern and southern banks. The yield of the river system is increased significantly by the annual monsoon from June to September. Many of the Brahmaputra's tributaries also receive considerable contributions from snowmelt, mostly in the Indian catchment area.

To what extent can upstream interventions reduce the Brahmaputra's flow?

Based on available information, and given the contributions from the Brahmaputra's tributaries and the monsoon rain in Indian territory, no significant impact is expected overall.

However, changes in the river's flow patterns can impact hydropower projects

planned on the Siang during the lean period and during peak power production.

As a mitigation strategy, India could plan storage on rivers of the Brahmaputra system to absorb the variations in flows (periods of flooding and reduced flows). The Upper Siang Project, for example, will not only generate power, its storage can also serve as a buffer against variations in flows.

Risks of flooding may also arise from intentional or unintentional operation of reservoirs in Tibet, as well as unforeseen events such as dam failure, landslides, or earthquakes.

Upstream interventions have the potential to affect the river morphology, with consequences for riverine flora and fauna.

How is India using the water potential of the Brahmaputra system?

The Brahmaputra and its tributaries carry more than 30% of the country's total water resources potential, and 41% of the total hydropower potential, as per estimates in the CWC-ISRO Brahmaputra Basin Atlas.

However, hydropower in Arunachal Pradesh is the only significant planned use. The utilisation of potential has been slow due to difficulties of land acquisition and concern over the submergence of forest lands, etc.

The National Water Development Authority has proposed two links to connect the Brahmaputra and its tributaries to the Ganga basin with the aim of transferring surplus water to water-scarce regions.

These are (i) the Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link, joining the Manas, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, to the Ganga via the Sankosh and Teesta; and (ii) the Jogighopa-Teesta-Farakka Link, joining the Brahmaputra at the planned Jogighopa Barrage to the Ganga at the Farakka Barrage.

Neither of these proposed river-linking projects is expected to be impacted in any significant way by upstream intervention in the Brahmaputra in Tibet.

Going forward, what should India do in regard to China and the Brahmaputra?

It is important for India to assess the effects by conducting detailed multi-disciplinary scientific studies, and prepare an adaptive strategy. It needs to use diplomatic channels to actively seek detailed hydrological and project-related data to continuously assess the downstream impact of Chinese infrastructure interventions.

India should also work to develop comprehensive data sharing protocols with China for advance warning and disaster preparedness.

Could Chinese dam-building activity interfere with flows in the Indus river system, specifically the flow of the Sutlej?

Both the Sutlej and Indus originate in Tibet, and China has planned and executed hydropower projects on these rivers in Tibet.

The large reservoir at Bhakra (Gobind Sagar) in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, can absorb variations in the flow of the Sutlej, even though there can be some impact on the generation pattern of hydropower projects such as Nathpa Jhakri.

On the Indus, India does not have significant consumptive use. However, there may be some impact on the run-of-the-river Nimoo Bazgo hydropower plant in Ladakh.

Naresh Kumar Mathur is former Member, Central Water Commission (CWC) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. These are his personal views, based on publicly available data, and do not represent the views of organisations with which he is associated.

Debarshee Dasgupta is Senior Research Associate with the Transboundary Rivers, Ecologies, and Development Studies program of the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

State of the ungulates: why health of tiger is dependent on that of its prey

NIKHIL GHANEKAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5



Zia Yousuf. Reuters file

UNITED KINGDOM
Chairman of Reform UK party resigns

London: Zia Yousuf, the chairman of Britain's right-wing Reform UK party, resigned on Thursday. Reform, led by Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage, won five parliamentary seats in a breakthrough result at last July's national election, and last month performed strongly in local elections. The party currently leads national opinion polls. "I no longer believe working to get a Reform government elected is a good use of my time, and hereby resign the office," Yousuf said. The move comes after Yousuf said Reform lawmaker Sarah Pochin's question to PM Keir Starmer in parliament, asking whether the government would consider banning the burqa, was "dumb".

REUTERS

DENMARK
'Won't bend to Trump pressure over Greenland'

Oslo: Denmark will not yield to "unacceptable" pressure from the United States for control of semi-autonomous Greenland, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Thursday, warning Greenlanders' right to self-determination was at stake. President Donald Trump has said he wants the United States to take over the minerals-rich and strategically-located Arctic island for reasons of national and international security, and has not ruled out the use of force to do so. "The world order we've built through generations is being challenged like never before," Frederiksen said in a speech for National Day.

REUTERS

PHILIPPINES
Joint maritime drills with US held for 7th time

Manila: The Philippines and United States militaries have sailed together in the South China Sea for a seventh time to boost interoperability between the two sides. Manila's armed forces said on Thursday. The exercises, held on Wednesday in waters off the provinces of Occidental Mindoro and Zamboanga and away from contested features, included joint operations near shorelines as well as fire support. "The MCA (maritime cooperative activity) is a demonstration of both nations' resolve to deepen cooperation and enhance interoperability in line with international law," the Philippine armed forces said.

REUTERS

ITALY
Quake damages parts of Pompeii historical site

Rome: A minor earthquake in southern Italy has caused the partial collapse of a wall and a portion of a vault at the Pompeii archaeological site, authorities said on Thursday. The quake with a magnitude of 3.2 on Thursday morning was the latest in a series of tremors centred on the nearby Campi Flegrei super volcano close to the city of Naples. The affected area had been damaged in a major quake that hit southern Italy in 1980 and had been shored up and restored.

REUTERS

LIST CAN BE REVISED, NEW COUNTRIES CAN BE ADDED: PRESIDENT

Trump bans travel to US from 12 countries, visa restrictions on 7

'Move necessary to protect against foreign terrorists'

JEFF MASON & NANDITA BOSE
WASHINGTON, JUNE 5

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump signed a proclamation Wednesday banning the citizens of 12 countries from entering the United States, saying the move was needed to protect against "foreign terrorists" and other security threats.

The directive is part of an immigration crackdown Trump launched this year at the start of his second term, which has included the deportation to El Salvador of hundreds of Venezuelans suspected of being gang members, as well as efforts to deny enrollments of some foreign students and deport others.

The countries affected by the travel ban are Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The entry of people from seven other countries - Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela - will be partially restricted. He said the list could be revised and new countries could be added.

The proclamation is effective on June 9, 2025 at 12:01 a.m. EDT.



President Donald Trump on the South Lawn of the White House on Wednesday. AP

During his first, 2017-21 term in office, Trump announced a ban on travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations, a policy that went through several iterations before it was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018. Trump said the countries subject to the most severe restrictions were determined to harbor a "large-scale presence of terrorists," fail to cooperate on visa security, have an inability to verify travelers' identities as well as inadequate record-keeping of criminal histories and high rates of visa overstays.

Somalia immediately pledged to work with the US to address se-

curity issues. Venezuelan Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello responded on Wednesday evening by describing the US government as fascist. A spokesperson for Taliban-led Afghan foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Meanwhile, US is pushing Serbia and other Balkan countries to take in migrants deported from the US, Bloomberg News reported Thursday. The requests to countries in the region form part of a broader US strategy to find foreign governments willing to receive deportees, the report said.

REUTERS

TRUMP DIRECTS PROBE INTO BIDEN, HIS AIDES

Washington: President Donald Trump directed White House counsel Wednesday to investigate if former President Joe Biden's aides covered up alleged mental decline and unlawfully used an autopilot on his behalf to sign policy documents. Biden said he was responsible for his decisions and suggested the move was to distract people from the tax cuts for the rich.

REUTERS

Trump, Musk take their feud public, hurl personal attacks at each other



Without me, Trump would have lost the election, says Musk

TYLER PAGER & THEODORE SCHLEIFER
WASHINGTON, JUNE 5

PRESIDENT TRUMP and Elon Musk's alliance dissolved into open acrimony on Thursday, as the two men hurled personal attacks at each other after the billionaire had unleashed broadsides against the president's signature domestic policy bill.

While meeting with Friedrich Merz, Germany's new chancellor, in the Oval Office, Trump broke days of uncharacteristic silence and unloaded on Musk, who until last week was a top presidential adviser. "I'm very disappointed in Elon," Trump said. "I've helped Elon a lot."

As the president criticized Musk, the billionaire responded in real time on X, the social media platform he owns.

"Without me, Trump would have lost the election, Dems would control the House and the Republicans would be 51-49 in the Senate," Musk wrote. "Such ingratitude," he said, taking credit for Trump's election in a way that he never has before.

Musk had been careful in recent days to train his ire on the council immediately before the vote, said the resolution would undermine the security of Israel, a close U.S. ally, and diplomatic efforts to reach a ceasefire that by the wayside.

What started as simply a fight over the domestic policy bill sharply escalated in just a few hours. Within minutes of one another, Trump was making fun of Musk's unwillingness to wear makeup to cover a recent black eye, and Musk was raising questions about Trump's competency as president.

NYT

States because, in my judgment, Harvard's conduct has rendered it an unsuitable destination for foreign students and researchers," Trump wrote in the proclamation.

Jason Newton, a spokesman for Harvard, said Trump's proclamation was "yet another illegal retaliatory step taken by the administration in violation of Harvard's First Amendment rights."

"Harvard will continue to protect its international students," Newton said.

It was unclear how exactly Trump's directive would be put in place to stop Harvard students with valid visas from entering the United States.

NYT



Displaced Palestinian children waiting to receive food from a charity kitchen in Gaza City. Reuters

US vetoes Security Council demand for Gaza ceasefire

Fifth US veto since the start of war

ASSOCIATED PRESS
UNITED NATIONS, JUNE 5

THE UNITED STATES on Wednesday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza because it was not linked to the release of hostages, saying it would empower Hamas.

All 14 other members of the council voted in favor of the resolution, which described the humanitarian situation in Gaza as "catastrophic" and called on Israel to lift all restrictions on the delivery of aid to the 2.1 million Palestinians in the territory.

The resolution before the U.N.'s most powerful body also did not fulfill two other U.S. demands: It did not condemn Hamas' deadly attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, which ignited the war, or say the militant group must disarm and withdraw from Gaza.

Acting U.S. Ambassador Dorothy Shea, speaking to the council immediately before the vote, said the resolution would undermine the security of Israel, a close U.S. ally, and diplomatic efforts to reach a ceasefire that by the wayside.

What started as simply a fight over the domestic policy bill sharply escalated in just a few hours. Within minutes of one another, Trump was making fun of Musk's unwillingness to wear makeup to cover a recent black eye, and Musk was raising questions about Trump's competency as president.

NYT

reflects the realities on the ground." US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the resolution would only have empowered Hamas. "Hamas could end this brutal conflict immediately by laying down its arms and releasing all remaining hostages," he said in a statement.

Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon thanked the United States for refusing to abandon the hostages. He said the resolution's failure to make the release of hostages a condition for a ceasefire would have put all the pressure on Israel and handed Hamas "time, leverage and political cover."

But the US veto of the resolution — its fifth since the start of the war — was roundly criticized by other members of the council, who accused the United States of prodding Israel with impunity.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel has armed some local clans of Palestinians in Gaza in the fight against Hamas. The announcement came hours after a political opponent criticised him for arming unofficial Palestinian groups.

WITH REUTERS INPUTS

Israel recovers bodies of 2 Israeli-American hostages from Gaza

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEL AVIV, JUNE 5

ISRAEL HAS recovered the bodies of two Israeli-American hostages taken in Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli strikes overnight and into Thursday meanwhile killed at least 13 people, including three local journalists, according to health officials in the territory.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the remains of Judith Weinstein and Gad Haggai were recovered and returned to Israel in a special operation by the army and the Shin Bet internal security agency. "Together with all the citizens of Israel, my wife and I extend our heartfelt condolences to the dear families. Our hearts ache for the most terrible loss. May their memory be blessed," he said in a statement.

Kibbutz Nir Oz declared the deaths of Weinstein, 70, and Haggai, 72, both of whom had Israeli and US citizenship, in December 2023. Weinstein was

also a Canadian citizen. Israel has recovered the bodies of two Israeli-American hostages taken in Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war in the Gaza.

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NYC Mayor polls: Mira Nair's son, Zohran, among top Democratic contenders



This is the first time Trump has tried to directly use the power of the Presidency against Harvard. NYT file

personal the effort to inflict distress on the Ivy League universi-

ty has become for him.

The school, which is all but certain to challenge the legality of Trump's action, has become a focal point of the administration's effort to align higher education with Trump's political agenda. That effort began as one focused on addressing allegations of antisemitism on college campuses, but has moved beyond that issue to include targeting universities over diversity, equity and inclusion programs and support of transgender athletes.

"I have determined that the entry of the class of foreign nationals described above is detrimental to the interests of the United

States because, in my judgment, Harvard's conduct has rendered it an unsuitable destination for foreign students and researchers," Trump wrote in the proclamation.

Jason Newton, a spokesman for Harvard, said Trump's proclamation was "yet another illegal retaliatory step taken by the administration in violation of Harvard's First Amendment rights."

"Harvard will continue to protect its international students," Newton said.

It was unclear how exactly Trump's directive would be put in place to stop Harvard students with valid visas from entering the United States.

NYT

Russian strike kills 5 in Ukraine, hours after Trump-Putin call



AP Site of a Russian strike in Pryluky, Ukraine, Thursday

house." The attack came just hours after US President Donald Trump spoke by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

According to Trump, Putin said "very strongly" that Russia will retaliate for Ukraine's weekend stunning drone attacks on Russian

military airfields.

On Thursday he downplayed prospects for any immediate peace. "Sometimes you see two young children fighting like crazy, they hate each other and they're fighting in a park," Trump said. "Sometimes you're better off letting them fight for a while and then pulling them apart."

US declares pick for NATO top commander

President Donald Trump's administration announced on Thursday US Air Force Lieutenant General Alexus Grynkevich as his nomination for the next top U.S. general in Europe and said the officer would also assume the traditional role of Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

16TH STRAIGHT YEAR OF DECLINE, DROP OF 5.7% ON PREVIOUS YEAR, FIRST TIME NUMBER OF BIRTHS FALL UNDER 7,00,000
Annual births fall to record low in Japan as population emergency deepens

As many as 686,061 babies were born in Japan in 2024. AP

It's about one-quarter of the peak of 2.7 million births in 1949 during the postwar baby boom.

The data in a country of rapidly aging and shrinking population adds to concern about the sustainability of the economy and national security at a time it seeks to increase defense spending.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has described the situation as "a silent emergency" and has promised to promote more flexible working environment and other measures that would help married couples to balance work and parenting, especially in rural areas where family val-

ues tend to be more conservative and harder on women.

Japan is one of a number of east Asian countries grappling with falling birth rates and an aging population. Similar concerns arise from Italy to the United States: working-age populations outnumbered by the elderly; towns emptying out; important jobs unfilled; business innovation faltering. Immigration could be a straightforward antidote, but in many of the countries, accepting large numbers of immigrants has become politically toxic.

South Korea and China have fought for years to encourage families to have more children.

The younger generation are increasingly reluctant to marry or have children due to bleak job prospects, a high cost of living and a gender-biased corporate culture that adds extra burdens for women and working mothers, experts say.

A growing number of women also cite pressure to take their husband's surname as a reason for their reluctance to marry. Under Japanese law, couples must choose a single surname to marry.

Japan's population of about 124 million people is projected to fall to 87 million by 2070, with 40% of the population over 65.

SENSEX: 81,442.04 ▲ 443.79 (0.55%) NIFTY: 24,750.90 ▲ 130.70 (0.53%) NIKKEI: 37,554.49 ▼ 192.96 HANG SENG: 23,906.97 ▲ 252.94 FTSE: 8,823.86 ▲ 22.57 DAX: 24,385.84 ▲ 109.36



GOLD

₹99,690



USD RATE

₹85.79



OIL

\$65.06



SILVER

₹1,04,100

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) per barrel as of June 4

International market data till 1900 IST

CONSUMER LOAN DEMAND RISING: GLOBAL FINTECH REPORT 2025 BY BCG, QED INVESTORS

'Unsecured loans by fintech firms key to meeting retail credit demand in India'

SIDDHARTH UPASANI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

UNSECURED LOANS given by fintech firms will be instrumental in meeting demand for retail credit in India over the coming years, with the absence of collateral for many households that are in the "early stages of the asset formation cycle" making it unlikely that secured loans will be able to completely fulfill the rising demand.

"Today, only 65 per cent of India's personal bank credit is secured, compared to 90 per cent in the US. Fortunately, India's robust credit bureau data ecosystem has enabled unsecured lending to thrive in recent years," Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and QED Investors said in their Global Fintech Report 2025, released Monday.

As per the report, Indians' demand for consumer loans is rising rapidly due to robust economic growth — India's GDP expanded by a faster-than-expected 7.4 per cent in the final quarter of 2024-25 — and "changing cultural attitudes to-

'LENDING REMAINS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY'

LENDING "REMAINS a significant opportunity" for fintechs as they only account for around 3 per cent of global lending revenues of \$2 trillion, according to the report

IF UNSECURED personal loans are excluded, the penetration by fintechs is less than 1 per cent, with banks at an advantage due to the access they have to low-cost funds in the form of deposits

ward debt". Demand for loans from the middle class is also expected to rise in tandem with the segment itself, which is projected to make up 40 per cent of the population by 2031 from 31 per cent at present, the report said. This is already reflected in data — according to credit information company TransUnion CIBIL, 61 per cent of fintech customers were less than 30 years of age compared to 36 per cent for the rest of the industry.

Tempering unsecured growth

To be sure, growth in unsecured loans has slowed appreciably in the last couple of years following tightening of regula-

tions by the Reserve Bank of India. As on April 18, while overall bank credit was up 10.3 per cent year-on-year, credit card outstanding and the 'other personal loans' category — both of the unsecured variety — were 10.6 per cent and 9.0 per cent higher, respectively. These figures are sharply lower than where they were before the RBI took action on November 16, 2023 to dampen what it termed as "very high growth" in certain segments: as on November 17, 2023, banks' credit card outstanding was 34.2 per cent higher and 'other personal loans' were up 24.3 per cent.

Amid the tightened regulatory norms that asked lenders to

set aside greater capital than before for consumer loans, excluding certain types such as housing and education, among others, Indian fintechs have continued to grow, albeit at a slower pace.

In terms of live unique customers, fintech firms saw a growth of 40 per cent in 2023 and 15 per cent in 2024 compared to 16 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively, for the industry, TransUnion CIBIL data showed. These firms are particularly dominant when it comes to small loans and were responsible for nearly nine out of every 10 loans of less than Rs 50,000 that were made in October-December 2024.

Growth prospects

While BCG and QED Investors said in their report that "demand for unsecured credit remains" in India, the latest quarterly results for some of the country's most prominent players in the space are not encouraging.

In the quarter ended March 2025, Paytm distributed personal loans to the tune of Rs

1,422 crore, down 19 per cent from October-December 2024, as its lending partners tightened risk policies. "Personal credit, unless something bigger changes, we will not see much larger growth," founder and chief executive officer Vijay Shekhar Sharma said in a post-earnings analyst call on May 6, 2025. Paytm is not alone, with MobiKwik posting a 41 per cent fall in digital lending disbursals in FY25 after it discontinued its Zip buy-now-pay-later product in December 2024 "due to low lender appetite".

According to BCG and QED Investors' report, lending "remains a significant opportunity" for fintechs as they only account for around 3 per cent of global lending revenues of \$2 trillion. And if unsecured personal loans are excluded, the penetration by fintechs is less than 1 per cent, with banks at an advantage due to the access they have to low-cost funds in the form of deposits.

"...very few fintech lenders have truly weathered a complete credit cycle; in that sense, the industry is still untested," the report said.

China's rare earth magnet export curbs: Suzuki suspends Swift production in Japan

ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

NEW RESTRICTIONS on rare earth magnets and related materials imposed by China are starting to bite. Hamamatsu-based small car maker Suzuki Motor's plans to suspend the production of its flagship Swift compact hatchback due to China's rare earth restrictions, becoming the first Japanese automaker to be impacted by the export curbs.

Suzuki halted production of the Swift, excluding the Swift Sport version, from May 26 citing a shortage of components, Reuters said in a report, adding that plans to resume output have been pushed back several times. Suzuki now expects a partial restart of production on June 13 with full resumption after June 16, as the "prospect of parts supply is clearer" now, the carmaker said in a statement.

China's trade curbs

The restrictions on rare earth magnets and related materials imposed by China kicked in from April 4, as a direct response to US imposing tariffs. This is beginning to impact automakers across the world, including electric vehicle manufacturers in India. Maruti, Suzuki's subsidiary in India, said earlier this week that there was no immediate impact of China's restrictions on rare earth magnets, and that the industry was in discussion with the government on the matter, which has been "receptive" and "supportive".

EV makers are particularly impacted by the Chinese restrictions, facing potential shortage of the critical components, which raises concerns of price hikes and production delays in a nascent, cost-sensitive segment of the auto market.

At present, the e-commerce giant offers personal loans to customers through tie-ups with lenders such as Axis Bank, IDFC Bank and Credit Saison.

Flipkart, last valued at \$37 billion in 2024 when it raised \$1 billion in a funding round led by Walmart, is shifting its holding company from Singapore to India. Walmart also aims to take the 17-year-old company public.

Walmart bought a controlling stake in Flipkart in 2018, which also gave it ownership of PhonePe, a fintech firm also preparing for an IPO. Earlier this year, Flipkart's rival Amazon acquired a Bengaluru-based non-bank lender Axio, but the deal is yet to be cleared by the central bank.

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Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Kamaljit S/o Avtar Chand, holder of Indian Passport no. Y3860618, R/o Vpo. Garhdhara tehsil Nawanshahr, SBS Nagar, Pin 14451, Punjab, India have changed my name Kamaljit and surname Singh.

0040792850-1

I, Radhey Shyam Sharma, S/o dinanath, ADD-C-403, baasthi apartment bhagat zirakpur p o Zirakpur distt SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab-140603, changed my name to Radhey Shyam

0040793028-4

I, Mohan Singh-14436165 Rank Ex. Gunner S/o Late Sh. Kironi Lal, R/o-Village-Anandpur, Tehsil-Mandhan, Distt-Kotputli, Behror, Rajasthan inform that in my service record my daughter's name and D.O.B.19.05.2005 wrongly mentioned Aarti Bai instead of Aarti Kumari and her right D.O.B. is 16.09.2006. That Aarti Bai and Aarti Kumari both are same and one person.

0040792854-1

I, GOVIND BALABH SANWAL S/O RAMESH CHANDRA SANWAL R/O 08B, FIRST FLOOR, BLOCK 13, SECTOR-117, NOIDA, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO GOVIND SANWAL.

0070971564-1

I, Harshvardhan, S/o Sunil Kumar R/o, VPO Pota, District: Mahendergarh, Haryana-123027, have changed my name to Harshvardhan Singh

0040793025-1

I, Deepak S/o Sh. Arjun Lal, R/o Flat No. 1205, Tower-4, Pyramid Heights, Sector-85, Village-Badha, Gurugram, Haryana-122004. My name is mentioned as DEEPAK KANWARIA in my 10th Class marksheet (Serial No. 0232049, Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Year 2001) & ITR (AKN: 752673950170724) whereas in other documents, such as my PAN (ATTPD5640F) my name is mentioned as DEEPAK I hereby declare that Deepak Kanwaria and Deepak refer to the same person, and I am known as DEEPAK

0040792856-1

I, Anuradha W/O Kandarp Kant R/O 619, Niti Khand-3, Indirapuram, Shipra Sun City, Ghaziabad U.P.-201014, have changed my name from PAYAL to ANURADHA. Henceforth hereafter be known as ANURADHA for all future purposes.

0070971563-1

I, hitherto known as JYOTI alias JYOTI KHICHI d/o Lt. SHRI PUKHRAJ And w/o SHRI VISHAL KUMAR GOYAL employed as Manager(Accounts) in the Food Corporation of India, permanent resident of F-41,U.I.T. Colony, Pratap Nagar, Jodhpur, Rajasthan-342001 and presently residing at Flat 501 Block B, NHAI Residential Enclave, Sector 17 Dwarka, New Delhi-110078, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JYOTI KHICHI.

0040793018-1

I, Yogeshwar Kumar Kaushik S/o Late L.N.Sharma R/o C-51B, Block-C, Rama Park, Uttam Nagar, Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Yogeshwar Kaushik for all purposes.

0040792853-1

I, Vijay Kumar S/o Late Sh. Naresh Kumar R/o A-502/2, Shastri Nagar, Delhi -110052 have changed my name to Vijay Mathur for all purposes.

0040792853-2

I, Sagina W/o Shri. Rajesh Kumar R/o H.No. 50-51, 1st Floor, Pocket-i-11, Sector-16, Rohini, North West Delhi-85 have changed my name to Sagina Narang to Sagina for all future purposes.

0040792998-1

I, Sachin S/O Ranveer Singh R/o H.No. 50-51, 1st Floor, Pocket-i-11, Sector-16, Rohini, North West Delhi-85 have changed my name to Sachin Singh.

0040793003-1

I, Raji Gwalani D/o Gordhanas Moolchand Walani and W/o Annel Nichaani R/o Flat No-B1 304, Vaishnavi North-24, 6th Cross Road, Ranna Road, Pampa Extension, Hebbal Kempapura, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560024, have changed my name to Archana Nichani

0070971638-1

I, Deepak Chandra s/o Trilok Chandra Punetha, R/o A-501, Pandav Nagar, Shadipur Depot, Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008, have changed my name to Deepak Chandra Punetha.

0040793019-1

I, Renu Gopal S/o Rajesh Kumar and W/o Ajnani Radou, Challakere,Challakere, DIST: Chitradurga, Karnataka-577522, have changed my name to R Venugopalashetty

0070971625-1

I, Jyoti Jhala D/o Mohan Lal Carpenter and W/o Rajesh Jhala R/o 196, Chankayapuri Colony, VTC-Dhar, Madhya Pradesh-454001, have changed my name to Jyoti Bala Carpenter

00407971651-1

I, HARISH KUMAR S/o HAV NO. 13957719-F LAST SHRI BHAGWAN, R/o 1/2008 2nd FLOOR, HARI SINGH BUILDING, SADAR BAZAR, DELHI CANTT-110010 have changed my name from HARISH KUMAR to HARISH SHARMA and Date of Birth from 03/01/1991 to 12/06/1992.

0130052644-1

I, PRADEEP SINGH,S/O RAM CHANDRA SINGH,R/O 1206 URVASHI-1,AMRAPALI ROYAL 2B VAIBHAV KHAND, INDIRAPURAM GHAZIABAD,U.P.201014, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PRADEEP KUMAR SINGH,FOR ALL,FUTURE PURPOSES

0040792857-8

I, Manoj Kumar S/o Late Ram Khilwan Singh R/o D-1/B/774, Sangam Vihar, New Delhi-110062, have changed my name to Manoj Kumar Singh, Manoj Kumar and Manoj Kumar Singh both are same and one person.

0040792850-1

I, Radhey Shyam Sharma, S/o dinanath, ADD-C-403, baasthi apartment bhagat zirakpur p o Zirakpur distt SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab-140603, changed my name to Radhey Shyam

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I, Mohan Singh-14436165 Rank Ex. Gunner S/o Late Sh. Kironi Lal, R/o-Village-Anandpur, Tehsil-Mandhan, Distt-Kotputli, Behror, Rajasthan inform that in my service record my daughter's name and D.O.B.19.05.2005 wrongly mentioned Aarti Bai instead of Aarti Kumari and her right D.O.B. is 16.09.2006. That Aarti Bai and Aarti Kumari both are same and one person.

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0040792854-1

Public Health Engineering Department Public Health Engineering Division, Jamui						
SORT TIME TENDER NIT No -03/R1/LOT/PRD/SBD/PHED/JAM/2025-26 (Retender of NIT No-37/LOT/PRD/SBD/PHED/JAM/2024-25)						
National Competitive Bidding (Through e-procurement mode on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)						
1	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Jamui				
2	Date of issue of Tender Notice	04.06.2025				
3	Period of sale (downloading) of tender Bid Document	13.06.2025 to 19.06.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in				
4	Date, time & place of pre-bid meeting	14.06.2025 at 11.30 hrs. hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer of concerned P. H. Division, Jamui				
5	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	19.06.2025 up to 17:00Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in				
6	Date and time of opening of technical bid	20.06.2025 at 15:00Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in				
7	Date and time of opening of financial bid	To be informed later after the approval of technical bid.				
8. Details of works: Name of Work: Design, Construction, Supply of Materials, Testing and Commissioning of Piped Water Supply Schemes (Ward level Schemes) for habitations left out under "HarGharNalKala" NischayYojna in Panchayats where "HarGharNalKala" was executed by the "Panchayati Raj Department" with Electric Driven Pumps in the District of Jamui Bihar on turn-key basis with 3 months Trial Run Period. Under P.H. Division, Jamui						
Sl. No.	Group No.	Block	Estimate d Cost (in Lakh)	Amount of Earnest Money (in Lakh)	Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in Rs.	BSED Bid Processing Fee (in Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
01	PRD (LOT)-17	Jamui	460.874	9.218	10000.00	As Applicable
02	PRD (LOT)-19		592.939	11.92	10000.00	As Applicable
Executive Engineer Public Health Division, Jamui						
PR. No. 005340 (PHED) 2025-26						
For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar						
गर्भवत्ता की पहली तिथि में माँ की एच.आई.डी. और सिफारिस की जाँच जरूर करायें।						

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE, 2025

E-Auction programme for sale of Railway scrap material under the Jurisdiction of Lumding Division for the month of JUNE, 2025 is hereby fixed as under.

SN	MONTH	DATE FIXED
1.	JUNE, 2025	12-06-2025, 19-06-2025 & 26-06-2025

Interested bidders are advised to bid through IREPS website (www.ireps.gov.in) for participation in e-auction.

Sr. DMM, Lumding

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जिला स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण समिति, सोनीपत एनचयपे के अंतर्गत On call (जरूरत अनुसार) आधार पर 31.03.2026 तक (जो कि आवश्यकता अनुसार आगे बढ़ाया जा सकता है) C-Section के लिए विषेशज्ञ हायर करने हेतु निम्न विज्ञप्ति आमंत्रित किया जाता है।

Sr. No.	Name of	Hired for Facility	Rate
1.	Gynaecologist	SDCH Gohana	Rs. 3500/- per case

आवेदक 31 मार्च 2026 तक सासाह के प्रतिदिन प्रात 11.00 बजे Civil Surgeon Office, Sonipat or SMO SDCH Office, Gohana में संपर्क करे। अधिक जानकारी के लिए मोबाइल नं 9588118895 पर संपर्क करे।

सिविल सर्जन
सोनीपत।

No. 35393/HRY

NBCC (INDIA) LIMITED

CIN: L74899DL1960GOI003335

NBCC Bhawan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

NBCC/CPG/CUO/Korapat/Retender/2025/490 Dated: 05.06.2025

NBCC (India) Ltd. invites online open e-tender for "Construction & Development of various buildings i.e. Academic Building, Hostel Building, Auditorium, Gym & Indoor Sports Building, Shopping Centre Building, Student centre & Cafeteria Building, Guest House, Sub-station, AC Plant Room, Engineers & Estate Building, Water Tank and External Development works at permanent campus of Central University of Odisha, Sunabeda on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC Mode-L) Basis". The tender document can be downloaded from website <https://nbcc.enivida.com> and www.eprocure.gov.in.

Estimated Cost : Rs. 4,06,47,00,000, EMD: Rs. 4,06,47,000. Last date & time of submission: 30.06.2025 by 11:00 AM (IST).

Corrigendum, if any, would appear only on the website and not to be published in any News Paper.

CGM, CPG

District Child Protection Unit

Room No. 407, Fourth Floor Mini secretariat, Panipat

Phone No. 0180-2641574 E-Mail: icpsnpn.wcd@gmail.com

1. बालिका का नाम - अजात बालिका

वर्तमान तस्वीर



विवरण- एक अजात मंदवृद्धि बालिका, उम्र - लगभग साढ़े सतरह वर्ष जोकि दिनांक 14.05.2025 को थोड़ेबाल माझी बस अड्डा नजदीक पट्टीकल्पणा तरसील - समानस्था (पानीपत) के पास घुमती हुई पायी गयी। जिसकी GD-007 दिनांक 14.05.2025 को थाना - समालखा में दर्ज है बालिका अपना नाम, माँ-बाप का नाम, पता बताना में असमर्थ है तथा वालाना बाल कल्याण समिति, पानीपत के आदेशानुसार अपना आशिकाना (जन सेवा दल) लेवर कॉलेनी, नजदीक किन्नर भवन, पानीपत में हर रही है।

विवरण नोट:- यदि उपरोक्त अजात बालिका का कोई संरक्षक / माता- पिता / परिजन / संरक्षक ही जो यह सुनना पड़ रहा है तो वह 15 दिन के अंतर्गत निम्न पते पर सम्पर्क करे यदि 15 दिन तक कोई सम्पर्क नहीं करता है तो वह बालिका को तक ग्रहण प्रक्रिया हेतु बाल कल्याण समिति, पानीपत द्वारा आवश्यक कार्यवाही अम्ल में लायी जायेगी।

पता:- यदि उपरोक्त अजात बालिका का कोई संरक्षक / माता- पिता / परिजन / संरक्षक ही जो यह सुनना पड़ रहा है तो वह 15 दिन के अंतर्गत निम्न पते पर सम्पर्क करे यदि 15 दिन तक कोई सम्पर्क नहीं करता है तो वह बालिका को तक ग्रहण प्रक्रिया हेतु बाल कल्याण समिति, पानीपत द्वारा आवश्यक कार्यवाही अम्ल में लायी जायेगी।

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PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE

Gill plays with a dead bat

New Test skipper refuses to give much away as new era dawns amid uncertainty over Bumrah's workload

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, JUNE 5

THE INSCRUTABLE Mr. Gill has taken guard. Dead-batting everything thrown at him, staying poker-faced and giving absolutely nothing away as India depart for one of their most consequential red-ball series in recent times.

Shubman Gill found the news of his captaincy 'overwhelming'. Facing England's Bazballers would be 'exciting'. And India, without Jasprit Bumrah for all five Tests, still has a 'good mix of experience and talent'. There was no emotion, not even a faint smile until he left the room, in this 15-minute cliche-thon.

Perhaps, Gill was simply settling into this highly-scrutinised role. Or maybe, it was by design to keep all the cards close to the chest ahead of India's biggest red-ball series of the year. For, seated next to him, head coach Gautam Gambhir remained equally guarded.

India leave for England on the back of two consecutive Test series defeats, against New Zealand at home and Australia away. It feels like a lifetime since the twin debacles and the ICC Champions Trophy triumph in the interim may have healed some of the pain. But Gambhir acknowledged the pressure ahead of the first Test in Leeds starting on June 20.

"I am always under pressure. I was under pressure after losing to New Zealand and Australia, I was under pressure after winning the Champions Trophy," Gambhir said. "You want results in every match as a coach. It is not about winning or losing. The pressure is always there."

This will be India's first Test series after the retirements of former captains Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, as well as ace spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. And with an unfit Mohammed Shami omitted, India's 18-man squad looks thin on experience. Sai Sudharsan, Arshdeep Singh and Abhimanyu Easwaran are yet to play a Test while Karun Nair, Shardul Thakur and Prasidh Krishna are returning to the side after long layoffs.

It might feel like the start of a new era, under a new captain. But Gambhir didn't see it like that. The players were in a 'good space', he said. "(But) It really doesn't matter if it is a clean slate or not. What's important is that we have a talented squad who are willing to go out there, express themselves and do something special."

Bumrah conundrum

The first big puzzle Gill and Gambhir will have to solve is the utilisation of Bumrah. The pace spearhead will miss at least one of the five Tests due to workload management, to avoid a repeat of the back injury suffered in Australia. Gambhir said the team hasn't yet decided which matches Bumrah will play. "We are going to have a discussion with him and depending on the series as well. A lot will depend on the results of matches, where the series is heading. That is something which I am sure he (Bumrah) is very well aware of as well," he said.

Mohammed Siraj is expected to lead the bowling attack in Bumrah's absence, like he did in Australia. Apart from him, Gill will have Krishna, Akash Deep and Arshdeep as the other pace-bowling specialists with all-rounders Nitish Reddy and Thakur too as options. "I think we have picked enough pace battery and a lot of fast bowlers are in a great space to be able to win us Test matches from any situation or any position," Gill said. "Obviously, when you have someone like Jasprit Bumrah, depending on how many matches he would play, whenever he would come back and play a match for us, it would be a great sight for us. But I think we have a great mix of bowlers who can get the job done for the team."

Gambhir was quick to back his captain.



India Test captain Shubman Gill (L) and head coach Gautam Gambhir at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai. AP

Lives of people more important than team roadshows: Gambhir slams RCB fan event

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, JUNE 5

SAYING THAT human lives are more important than celebrations, India coach Gautam Gambhir said there should not be any roadshows going forward if we are not prepared to handle that kind of crowds'.

Gambhir was speaking a day after 11 people died and 47 were injured in a stampede outside the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, where Royal Challengers Bengaluru IPL title celebrations took place.

"I was never a believer that we need to have roadshows. When I was playing, I had the same statement even after winning the 2007 (World T20)."

GAUTAM GAMBHIR
HEAD COACH, INDIAN TEAM

Thursday ahead of the team's departure for England, where they will play a five-Test series starting June 20.

Gambhir suggested conducting celebrations in a closed-door environment or a stadium in the future. "What has happened is very tragic. My heart goes out to the families who have lost their loved ones," he said. "I hope in the future nothing like this happens because I think we are all responsible citizens. We should take care of all this."

Led by Rajat Patidar, and with Virat Kohli as their talisman, RCB ended their 18-year wait to win the Indian Premier League, beating Punjab Kings in Tuesday's final. The win triggered scenes of pandemonium in the streets of Bengaluru, and on Wednesday afternoon, approximately 3 lakh people turned up to enter the stadium, which has a seating capacity of 35,000. Tens of thousands

also packed the roads to watch the open bus parade from Vidhana Soudha to the stadium, less than 2 km away.

On Thursday, the Cubbon Park police registered a case against RCB, DNA Entertainment Private Limited, and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) administration under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had distanced themselves from the incident, saying they had 'no control' over the private celebration of a franchise. However, the board's secretary Devajit Saikia called the stampede an 'eve-opener' and added that 'we have to learn, so in future, no identical incident takes place.'

Gambhir, however, was unequivocal in his criticism of the idea of holding a road show. "Winning and celebrations are important but what is more important is someone's life. If we are not prepared to handle that kind of crowd then (we) might as well not have these road shows. We are responsible citizens of this country and we need to show that in all of our actions," he said.

The first big puzzle Gill and Gambhir will have to solve is the utilisation of Bumrah. The pace spearhead will miss at least one of the five Tests due to workload management.

"I said it before the Champions Trophy (which Bumrah didn't play) as well, it will give someone the opportunity to put his hand up and we have got enough talent there. I know

that he (Bumrah) is quality but we have got enough quality apart from him as well in the squad," Gambhir said.

'Clear communication'

The captain and coach chose not to give away much on the batting order and team combinations either, saying they'd study the conditions in England before taking those calls. Gill did give some insights, though. He hinted that he'll take a cue from Rohit's captaincy model, wherein the focus was on 'clear communication'.

"There is no particular style. With time and experience, my personal style will flour-

ish," he admitted candidly. At the same time, the 25-year-old – India's youngest Test captain after Sachin Tendulkar – wanted to make everyone feel 'secure'. "I prefer to have communication with the players regarding their strengths and weaknesses, and help them out. It's important for the captain to make sure players feel secure," Gill said.

He wouldn't give away much when asked specifically about the England tour, which he said would be like 'any other series' in terms of pressure. "As such, there is no different pressure. All the players and teams are used to how to play in pressure situations and how to win," he said.

Initially, there were reports that pitches might be even a touch dry, considering the heat in the last couple of months. But things have turned, weather-wise, and it's been raining of late.

In England, as Gautam Gambhir said in the departure press conference, much will depend on overhead conditions as they will determine if the ball will swing or not. England have Woakes and Cook to bend the ball in the air, but it will be interesting to see if they can function as a cohesive unit. England's batting can be expected to continue their attacking 'Bazball' way, and the interesting choice they have to make is between Bethel and Pope.

Chief selector Luke Wright said "He's very

close to it," when asked if Bethell had been picked to play.

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INDONESIA SUPER 1000

Despite error-prone game, Satwik-Chirag survive thriller to reach last 8

SHIVANI NAIK
JUNE 5

IT IS perhaps Abhinav Bindra's favourite mantra – 'seeking perfection on an imperfect day'. It's the sort of match where their Indian coaches in Hyderabad won't hesitate to call to the level of their errors throughout the match 'rubbish' to Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's faces - before gushing about how the denouement wound up being 'bloody brilliant'.

Chirag himself spoke of the pair 'playing stupid', before a Satwik service at 19-20 ended up being 'phenomenal' and how his own serve was 'quite good' at 20-20 in the decider, after an hour of nightmarish serves from.

Coch Tan Kim Her even told them at some point that it's OK if you lose. They never looked like winning, until they did.

Out of these far-from-ideal moments in a 68-minute cliffhanger, full of landslides, hatched out a 16-21, 21-18, 22-20 win that put the Indians into the quarterfinals of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 - one of the four biggest Tour events in badminton.

As Satwik-Chirag beat Danish Rasmus Kjaer and Frederik Sogaard, who had evicted

World No 3 Aaron-Wooi in the previous round, some jarring notes were hit, before the last 3 minutes of the game suddenly turned magical. It was bad badminton all-round, but none more winching for those watching that the two Indians clanged their rackets twice, going for the same shuttle in shuddering moments of confusion.

Chirag was faulted on his serve multiple times; Satwik's service was plain pulped and smothered by Kjaer-Sogaard, and that wasn't even the worst of the sorry statistics. The Danes deployed tumble serves freely and fiendishly, and were under strict orders to inflict maximum damage on the Indians via a known vulnerability – Satwik-Chirag's tentative return of serves that has blighted their past two seasons.

The Indian attack, which is always so cohesive, lacked any sting and was drowning in scratchy shot-making and cacophonous exchanges. Chirag was mighty cagey at the net initially, and Satwik a tad unsure of whether to fill in on the front court or control from the back. All this meant, the Danes, unusually upbeat and bouncy, led through the first set, and took it on a canter.

At the change of ends, the Indian nerves settled. And though they remained mismatched in their tempo and prone to errors



with their tame lifts, the basic serve and receiving in the first three shots got calmer. Chirag - as happens so often - forgot about trying to make his net-job seem perfect and precise, and allowed his instinct to rule as he started getting in winners, freeing up Satwik to send his pushes and curling lifts to scatter the Danes. They went from 14-14 to 19-14 in a jiffy with smarter interceptions, and pushed the decider.

FOCUS ON RAHUL

K L Rahul would look to make the most of his first red-ball outing in months ahead of the Test series against England while the fringe players will be desperate for impactful performances when India face England Lions in their second and final unofficial Test beginning in Northampton on Friday. PTI



SRIRAM VEERA
MUMBAI, JUNE 5

THE ENGLAND media's reaction to the announcement of the Test squad for the first Test against India at Leeds said much. Be it *The Times*, London or *The Guardian*, or even the tabloids, they all led with the news that Jofra Archer was expected to be fit to play the second Test.

The bowling attack for the first Test looks thin with injuries to Archer, Mark Wood and Gus Atkinson – who has taken 55 wickets in 12 Tests – so much so that they have brought in 36-year old Chris Woakes, a good bowler in home conditions but one whose battling a battered body and has restarted bowling just recently.

The injuries have almost balanced out the two teams, leaving an intriguing prospect on the cards for the first Test – and even beyond that. India won't have Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma as they have retired, but it has to be noted that both struggled a lot in Test cricket on their final leg.

More than their batting, their presence, guidance, and energy will probably be missed more. India will also be without Mohammed Shami, but will take heart from England's bowling line-up as it presents an untested and inexperienced Indian batting line-up with a decent opportunity to shine. At least better than if the main three English bowlers were present.

Two teams with a certain sense of iffiness and uncertainty would go against each other on June 20.

England's batting certainly seems to be their stronger suit, especially with the inclusion of the attacking Jacob Bethel and the return of attacking wicketkeeper-batsman Jamie Smith.



Chris Woakes, with 57 Test matches under his belt, will be England's most experienced fast bowler. Reuters

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The racquets clashing at 8-8, a Kjaer flick serving looping over them and shoddy high lifts made them look like a pair that was World No 22. But of course, at a cellular, fundamental level, these are World No 1s, with an ability to win in their sinewy muscle memory. So the match rumbled on to 19-19.

It was here that Satwik went for broke with a risky flat drive serve that no analyst might find a precedent off against his name. "Maybe it was game awareness," he told BWF. "No one in the stadium will expect me to do a flat service. I never practice those. I told Chirag, OK, I want to try. Because nobody will expect it. For sure, even if they watch videos, they won't find me shooting it. They will find Chirag shooting it. I don't have the feeling of doing a short serve and catching the next one... so I just tried," he mused.

Chirag errors always are followed by 3 winners he takes it upon himself to compensate.

sate with. The last rally was scrappy, but Satwik scooped one that fell on the sideline at the back. In the quarters, they play the Malaysians Man-Tee.

Satwik accepted the win was scrappy. "Today we were not at our best... we only gave away points... 15-20 points. They didn't do anything. We made mistakes. I felt we were not focussed enough. We were not there today. But we kept on believing in one point at a time. Coach kept telling us to calm down. Relax. He said it's OK if you lose also. We said let's play our game. See how it goes. That's why I pointed to the coach (after the win) to indicate, yes, we listened to you."

Sindhu knocked out

PV Sindhu fought hard, but four errors from round the head smashes and drops at crucial moments dragged her down, as she lost 22-20, 10-21, 18-21 to Pornpawee Chochuwong.

From 16-13 up in the decider, the Indian just couldn't get the shuttle across as she fell back 16-18, and ceded advantage after having played

Best ever faces best in the world

Djokovic takes apart Zverev to set up showdown against Sinner, the ultimate test in tennis at the moment

NAMIT KUMAR
JUNE 5

DOWN A break point in the fourth set of his French Open quarterfinal against Alexander Zverev late on Wednesday, Novak Djokovic produced one of the points of the tournament.

In a 41-shot rally, Djokovic put on his best show – rallying resolutely, peppered in drop shots, defending overhead smashes, thundering forehands and finally landing the punch with an accurate passing shot. As the Serb stood stoically, heaving heavily while catching his breath, taking in the applause of the Parisian crowd he had just sent into raptures, two vital things became clear.

The first: even at 38 years old, Djokovic is no slouch. More injuries may have been creeping in and recovery may have become tougher, but his match fitness and sharpness remain as good as ever – in the decisive moments, if a marathon is what he is called upon to do, he can still do so with aplomb.

The second, and perhaps most important: the familiar steeliness with which Djokovic marches through the early rounds of Majors and prepares himself to face the very best in the world is very much alive.

As the 24-time Major winner rolled over Zverev 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in over three hours on Wednesday night, the Serb was not at his glorious best, but the way he slowly moved up gears and cleverly solved problems may serve a cautious reminder to his next opponent. For World No. 1 Jannik Sinner in Friday's semifinal, it may not be the same cakewalk that the Italian has had in his last 19 matches at Grand Slam level – each of which he has won with ease.

"My game is based on a lot of running. I am 38 years old, it is not easy to keep running like that but, okay, it works," Djokovic said wryly on court after the win. With it, he became the oldest man to reach the Roland Garros semifinals since 1968 and reached a staggering 51st Major semifinal.

35 drop shots

The Serb started the match loosely, giving away his serve in the very first game and Zverev stayed solid enough for the rest of the set, serving phenomenally and riding that to win.

But as the match wore on, Djokovic did what he does best – he improved in incremental, almost imperceptible, yet decisive ways. He started taking bigger cuts on shots



With his win on Wednesday, Novak Djokovic, 38, became the oldest semifinalist at the French Open since 1968. AP

WAY AHEAD

51

Novak Djokovic reached his 51st Grand Slam semifinal in Paris this week, the most for any player in Open Era men's tennis history. Next best on the list is Roger Federer with 46.

sponse, the German duly capitulated.

After losing 12 of the next 17 games since the first set, Zverev would look over at his box quizzically, as if to ask what he might be doing wrong and how this match had changed. However, his inability to adjust and adapt has plagued him throughout his career, and so too has his passiveness in approaching potentially decisive moments. Both ended up costing him on Wednesday, no comeback was found after he went behind.

Djokovic had been playing solidly in the opening rounds, and that's all he had to be against Zverev too, but in terms of a challenge, it still was a step up that needed to be met.

The next hurdle will be the largest in the sport right now. Sinner is by far the world's best tennis player and is yet to drop a set at



Jannik Sinner is yet to drop a set at Roland Garros, and has won 46 of his last 48 matches on tour. AP

Jannik is in tremendous form, and he has been the best player for the last couple of years. But these kind of matchups and challenges extract the best out of me. Playing best of five, late stages of a Grand Slam against No. 1 in the world, you can't get more motivated than that for me at this age.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC
ON THE UPCOMING SEMIFINAL (VIA AP)

Roland Garros. But even for him, Djokovic will be a massive test; as the best, most complete player in the history of the men's game, the Serb does have the tools to counter him. He has got a strong backhand to contain the crosscourt exchanges, can stick close to the baseline and take the ball early to avoid being blown away by Sinner's power, is a clever returner, and has variety to boot. But for all the finer analysis, this match may boil down to Djokovic's baser abilities.

His mental and physical preparedness has passed the test, but can he raise his game technically enough to contend with a player in such fine touch that he has won 46 of his last 48 matches? If not, can he rely on his problem-solving to mentally wear him down? It will be a contest of intrigue as much as it will be one of high stakes.

Sabalenka finds top gear under pressure to dethrone Swiatek

NAMIT KUMAR
JUNE 5

AS ARYNA SABALENKA came out to serve in the deciding set of her French Open semifinal on Thursday, her head may have been clouded by doubt.

She had been in control for much of the opening part of this match, only to see her opponent find a way back and have the momentum go her way. Iga Swiatek, a four-time champion in Paris, had performed plenty of miracles and comebacks in her 26-match winning streak at Roland Garros.

However, the most telling aspect of Sabalenka's rise up the rankings, as she established herself as the No. 1 player in the world and a multiple Major champion, has been her composure under pressure. No longer susceptible to the mental lapses of her youth, she now knows how to raise her game and go through the gears to win on the biggest stages.

That's exactly what she would do. In an enthralling, two-hour-19-minute battle under the roof at Court Philippe Chatrier, the Belarusian would dethrone the best clay-courtier of the modern era, and decisively so, inflicting on Swiatek her first defeat in four years at Roland Garros. With the 7-6(1), 4-6, 6-2, Owin, Sabalenka entered her first French Open title clash and her fifth Major final overall.

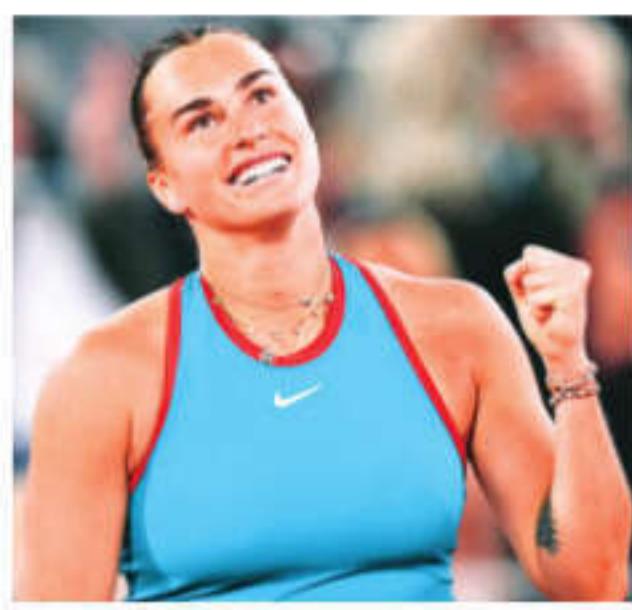
"She's the toughest opponent, especially on clay, especially at Roland Garros. It was a tough match, a tricky match, but I managed," the 27-year-old winner said after the contest.

Sabalenka's pure hitting, power from the baseline, and serving class were enough to outplay Swiatek, but in reality, it was her composure in the final set that allowed her to pick up what is arguably the most significant victory of her Grand Slam career so far, given the opposition. It acted as the perfect build-up for Saturday's final, where she will face Coco Gauff, who ended the French wildcard entry Lois Boisson's fairytale, beating her 6-1, 6-2 in the other semifinal on Thursday.

Return vs return

Following the 75-minute first set, the broadcasters would display a telling statistic. They have been rating return quality out of 10. In the first set, they rated Sabalenka's as 9.8 and Swiatek's as 9.4. The average in the women's draw so far had been 6.5.

As the match started, Swiatek's serve was simply appalling; for her to not get blown away by her opponent's power and accuracy, she had to step up on her returns and put equal



Aryna Sabalenka will face second seed Coco Gauff in the final on Saturday. AP

pressure on Sabalenka's serve, which she did.

In the opener, Swiatek lost 21 of 35 points on serve, her winning rate on her second serve standing at a dismal 31 percent. Call it a combination of clever, first-strike returning from Sabalenka, who leathered her shots straight back, and the Pole's utterly ineffective serve.

Down a double break at 1-4, Swiatek responded with aggression of her own, returning close to the baseline and taking bigger cuts, sometimes going for broke and hitting winners while returning thunderous first serves.

The result was a marathon first set full of momentum shifts, both players getting out of trouble by getting crucial breaks, trading three each as it went into the breaker, where Sabalenka's superior serve blew the four-set champion away.

But as she returned for the second set, Swiatek knew she had found her feet in the match and the right strategy. She stayed true to it, turning up the aggression on return and taking a slender lead, following which it was the Pole who was more composed, incrementally improving her serve to level the match.

While the momentum had gone Swiatek's way, Sabalenka's superior power and serve did not desert her. In this topsy-turvy match, it was now her turn to bounce back. She came up with two immaculate service games, in between which she found the decisive moment to rain down massive groundstrokes and find the break to take a 3-0 lead in the decider. She would not drop a single game from there as Swiatek crumbled, her focus wavering in front of Sabalenka's newfound clean hitting.

"It (the third set) could not be more perfect than that," Sabalenka would say. "I'm super proud right now, I'm glad I found my serve."

BRIEFLY

Athletics: Varsha banned for 3 years

New Delhi: Indian long-distance runner Varsha Tekam was on Thursday handed a three-year suspension for evading a dope test by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU). Varsha, who had finished second in the Pune Half Marathon last year with a time of 1:26.22, was provisionally suspended on May 26. According to the AIU, Varsha was suspended for "evading, refusing or failing to submit to sample collection by an athlete" under Article 2.3. "The AIU has banned Varsha Tekam (India) for 3 years from 20 May 2025 for Evading, Refusing or Failing to Submit to Sample Collection by an Athlete. DQ results from 15 December 2024," the AIU posted on X.

Indian archers draw blank in team events

Antalya: Indian archers failed to replicate their successful run from the previous World Cup as they returned empty-handed from the team events, both in compound and recurve sections, at Stage 3 of the Archery World Cup here on Thursday. The compound teams, who had won a gold (men) and a silver (women) in Stage 2 at Shanghai last month, faltered in their respective medal hunts this time. The men's compound team, comprising Rishabh Yadav, multiple World Cup gold medalist Abhishek Verma, and reigning world champion Ojas Deotale, suffered a shocking first-round exit. They went down 241-242 to lower-ranked Chinese Taipei by a solitary point in a nail-biting finish.

Senanayake indicted for match-fixing

Colombo: Former Sri Lanka off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake has been indicted by the Hambantota High Court for attempting to lure a fellow player for match-fixing during the 2020 Lanka Premier League (LPL). The Attorney General's Department said this becomes the first such indictment of a national level cricketer for match-fixing under the country's recently-introduced anti-corruption law. He was arrested and released on bail in 2023. The 40-year-old played one Test, 49 ODIs and 24 T20 Internationals for Sri Lanka between 2012 and 2016 for a combined haul of 78 wickets.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

'Sport goes on': Anand unfazed if Carlsen quits

AMIT KAMATH
STAVANGER, JUNE 5

THE WORLD of chess has been left pondering about what would happen if stars like Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura call it a day and stop playing classical chess, as indicated by the Norwegian world no 1 recently. Five-time world champion Carlsen has anyway reduced his classical appearances to a bare minimum – the ongoing Norway Chess is likely the only classical tournament he will be competing in this year as he trains his focus on playing in faster time control events, freestyle events and events like the Esports World Cup. Nakamura too has spoken more frequently in recent years about dialling down on the longest – and the purest – format of the game.

But former world champion Viswanathan Anand, who is also a Deputy President in FIDE, the global governing body of the sport, believes that the sport can endure even when the most popular crowd-pullers like Carlsen and Nakamura walk away.

"In a sense, we can't ask what's the future every time somebody decides to dial it down. I mean, nobody asked me. I also dialed it down (reduced playing in tournaments). So what's going to happen? So the sport goes on. There are hundreds of new talents. 11-year-olds, 80-year-olds. It's coming at both ends. It's a normal part of life, I think," Anand told journalists from India during the ongoing Norway Chess tournament.

"Magnus and Hikaru have advertised this for some time (them not playing classical chess). I mean, Hikaru doesn't play very much anyway, he is really quite busy with his other commitments, streaming and so on. And the same with Magnus. He has mentioned this many times that he wants to work on this and that. And in this case, we had a lot of warning. I mean, Magnus has been talking about it for at least six years. Then this kind of came into focus in 2022, during the Madrid Candidates tournament. And it's the same with Hikaru. So it's not at all unexpected."

Carlsen made global headlines recently after slamming a balled fist on the chess board after an uncharacteristic error from him resulted in a defeat to Gukesh, his first loss to the reigning world champion from India. Carlsen later said that classical chess was not "fun at all" for him. He mentioned that at some point during the game against Gukesh he was asking himself why he was playing the format at all, and later also mentioned that he should "maybe totally stop playing classical chess."

Nakamura too had said that there was a good chance (about 80 percent) that the world had seen them playing against each other at Norway Chess for the last time.

Carlsen had told Norway's TV2, "I don't think that (the game against Gukesh) was

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VISWANATHAN ANAND

ON CARLSEN AND NAKAMURA'S FUTURE

fun. I have to consider how to avoid it... maybe I should totally stop playing classical chess. It was not fun for me at all. In general I feel I have played well in the tournament but I don't feel it is fun playing. I am not worried about my level."

Meanwhile, Anand also praised the 19-year-old Gukesh, who currently occupies the world champion's throne. Gukesh started Norway Chess in the worst way possible, losing to Carlsen and then Arjun Erigaisi in the first two games, before stabilising his tournament with some big wins, including the one against Carlsen and Arjun as well.

"He's tough, quite tenacious, copes pretty well with setbacks. Obviously, this (Norway Chess) is a higher test, more intense tournament, so he seems to be under pressure every day, but several days he came out (and played well). I think yesterday (against Nakamura), he flipped a little bit. something was off with him. But that's also normal. You have big off days after a good run," Anand said about his protege.

Asked if Gukesh should take a break from tournaments rather than playing non-stop, Anand said: "It depends what you want to try. And I also think you have to grab opportunities. Maybe going forward, careers won't be as long. You have to schedule some timeouts, do some (few) tournaments. After this (Norway Chess), he gets a break. But I guess he will play Zagreb. So he's got to enjoy the moments of break as well, because there's no use if the brain refuses to come along."

(The writer is in Stavanger at the invitation of Norway Chess. Matches are live-streamed on Sony LIV.)



Magnus Carlsen (L) and Viswanathan Anand during a broadcast. Amit Kamath

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