

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2022, MUMBAI, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

Fear reduces number of Pandit pilgrims for annual mela to a trickle

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, JUNE 7

ONLY 250 pilgrims from Jammu Tuesday left for Central Kashmir's Kheer Bhawani temple in a heavily-protected government convoy — a sharp drop in footfall that comes amid the targeted killings in the Valley.

The annual mela at the revered temple, also known as the Ragnya Devi temple, is among the most significant religious programmes for the Kashmiri Pandit community.

In 2019, around 2,500-3,000 pilgrims had left for the temple

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SERVICE RULES AMENDED, AGE CAPPED AT 62

Govt widens CDS selection pool: Retired, serving 3-star officers now also eligible

Announcement imminent; Chiefs who retired after Sept 2021 out of reckoning

KRISHNA KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

SIX MONTHS after General Bipin Rawat, India's first Chief of Defence Staff, died in a helicopter crash, the government has amended service rules of the armed forces, making all serving and recently retired three-star

officers — Lt General, Air Marshal and Vice Admiral — under the age of 62 eligible for the post of CDS, according to notifications

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EXPLAINED
E Can be tricky

THE NEW rules widen the CDS appointment pool, making retired three-star officers eligible. But this can be tricky given that the chiefs, who are four-star officers, may have to report to a retired three-star officer if he is named CDS.

New Tour of Duty for recruitment likely today

KRISHNA KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

THE GOVERNMENT is all set to announce on Wednesday a key change in how soldiers will be recruited for the Armed Forces. *The Indian Express* has learnt. Under the new Tour of Duty sys-

tem, likely to be named "Agnipath", soldiers or "Agniavir" will be recruited for a period of four years at the end of which they will get over Rs 10 lakh tax-free and certificates or diplomas for their service.

The move aims to recruit about 45,000-50,000 personnel

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AHEAD OF RAJYA SABHA POLLS

MVA allies hold show of strength, also present legislators of smaller parties, Independents



Top leaders of MVA at Trident Hotel. Photo courtesy: NCP social media cell

MVA, and the Opposition BJP, are moving their MLAs to the resorts.

Apart from the Sena, NCP and Congress MLAs, sources said the 12 legislators from smaller parties and Independents also attended the meeting at Trident. The MVA had held a similar show of strength in 2019 during

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As testing increases, Mumbai records 1,242 cases, jump of 84%

RUPSA CHAKRABORTY
MUMBAI, JUNE 7



A man gets tested at APMC market in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday. Narendra Voskar

WITH A two-fold jump in testing, the number of Covid-19 cases reported in Mumbai on Tuesday increased by 83.72 per cent, with the city recording 1,242 new cases. Maharashtra, overall, recorded 1,881 cases.

Mumbai: Municipal Corporation (MBC) conducted 6,897 tests, of which 676 had tested positive for Covid-19. The test positivity rate (TPR) — the number of positive cases out of the total tests conducted — had then stood at 9.8 per cent. On Tuesday, as the civic body increased the number of tests to

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SEXUAL OVERTONES: COMPLAINT

Coach threatened me, said he wants me as wife: Cyclist complains to SAI

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, JUNE 7

SAYING THAT she feared for her life, a top Indian cyclist has accused the chief national team coach, R K Sharma, of allegedly

forcing himself into her room, offering a "post-training massage", "forcefully" trying to pull her towards him, and asking her to "sleep with him", during a camp in Slovenia last month, according to her complaint emailed to the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The complaint states that Sharma allegedly told the cyclist that he "wants" her "to be his wife". When she resisted, the coach threatened to destroy her career by "removing her from the

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'Astonishing' result in drug trial: First time, cancer vanishes in every patient

GINA KOLATA
JUNE 7

IT WAS a small trial, just 18 rectal cancer patients, every one of whom took the same drug.

But the results were astonishing. The cancer vanished in

every single patient, undetectable by physical exam, endoscopy, PET scans or MRI scans. Dr Luis A Diaz Jr of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, an author of a paper published Sunday in the New England Journal of Medicine describing the results, which were spon-

sored by the drug company GlaxoSmithKline, said he knew of no other study in which a treatment completely obliterated a cancer in every patient.

"I believe this is the first time this has happened in the history of cancer," Dr Diaz said.

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



MECC and VENOBIA recommended today's Eggs and Broiler Chicken rates
Ex Farm Broiler Chicken Rate: ₹ 118 per kilo
Retail Sale Rate*: Live ₹ 146 per kilo
Dressed (with skin): ₹ 181 per kilo
Retail Rate Per Dozen of Eggs ₹ 68 per Dozen

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Premium

New Tour of Duty for recruitment likely today

The move aims to recruit about 45,000-50,000 personnel below officer rank in the three services every year through a biannual exercise with a six-month gap.

Written by [Krishn Kaushik](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:01:51 am



At the end of their tenure, 25 per cent of these recruits will be inducted back into the services, although the modalities for this process are yet to be finalised.

The government is all set to announce on Wednesday a key change in how soldiers will be recruited for the Armed Forces, [The Indian Express](#) has

learnt. Under the new Tour of Duty system, likely to be named “Agnipath”, soldiers or “Agniveer” will be recruited for a period of four years at the end of which they will get over Rs 10 lakh tax-free and certificates or diplomas for their service.

The move aims to recruit about 45,000-50,000 personnel below officer rank in the three services every year through a biannual exercise with a six-month gap. At the end of their tenure, 25 per cent of these recruits will be inducted back into the services, although the modalities for this process are yet to be finalised.

Sources said that candidates between the ages of 17-and-a-half years and 21 years will be eligible to apply, and recruitment will be conducted under existing qualification criteria. The recruits will undergo training for six months and serve for the remaining period. Currently, a soldier serves for nearly 17-20 years.

Under the new scheme, the starting salary will be Rs 30,000, which will go up to Rs 40,000 by the end of the fourth year. However, 30 per cent of the salary will be held back as savings, and an equal amount contributed by the Government per month, under the Seva Nidhi scheme. The total amount, between Rs 10 lakh to Rs 12 lakh, will be given to the soldier at the end of four years, and will be tax-free.

Sources said that based on skills acquired during training and tenure, the soldiers are likely to be awarded either a diploma or credits that could be used for further education. There will be a “whole of government approach” to help rehabilitate these soldiers after the four-year period, they said.

SERVICE ROUTE

Recruitment age:
17-and-a-half
to 21 years

Number: 45,000-
50,000 personnel
each year

Tenure:
Four years

Training:
6 months

**Made up of 30% of saved salary and equal
govt contribution*

Salary:
₹30,000-
₹40,000



**Payout at
service end:**
₹10-12 lakh, tax free*

The move is expected to address several issues related to the Armed Forces, and bring relief to lakhs of youth aspiring to join the Army and navy and Air Force Armed Forces.

There has been almost no recruitment of soldiers for the three services over the past two years. More than 1 lakh positions for Junior Commissioned Officers of Other Ranks are vacant in the Army, according to data shared by the Defence Ministry in Parliament on March 28. More than 90 recruitment rallies were held each year in 2017, 2018 and 2019, but only 47 in 2020-2021 and just four in 2021-2022 due to the pandemic, it stated.

The new system is also expected to bring an “all India, all class” recruitment process to the services, allowing anyone from any region and background to become part of all regiments, some of which currently have certain demarcations.

For the Government, a key advantage would be savings in pension. It had allocated nearly Rs 1.2 lakh crore for pension to the Defence Ministry and the Armed Forces in the current fiscal year — about a quarter of the total defence budget and larger than the capital acquisition allocation.

According to one of several projections under the plan that was first proposed about two years ago, the comparison of costs incurred by the Government for one soldier under the existing and proposed systems would

lead to a lifetime saving of Rs 11.5 crore. Sources said “there are likely to be immense financial benefits to the organisation due to reduction in pay and gratuity payouts”.

However, sources acknowledged that there are concerns as well, as most of the soldiers will now serve for only four years without pension compared to the nearly 20 years of service with pension under the current system.

There are also apprehensions over whether the training and tenure will be enough for some of the operations that these soldiers may need to carry out.

The initial proposal, made by the Army, had said the idea was to open up recruitment for youth who do not want to make the services their permanent vocation but still want to experience the adventure of military professionalism — without entry criteria being relaxed.

The original plan was to shift from the concept of “permanent service” to an “internship or “temporary service” — and to implement the plan on a “trial basis for both officer and other ranks...initially for a limited number of vacancies and then expanded later, if found successful”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/armed-forces-new-tour-of-duty-for-recruitment-likely-today-7957797/>

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Fear reduces number of Pandit pilgrims for annual mela to a trickle

The annual mela at the revered temple, also known as the Ragnya Devi temple, is among the most significant religious programmes for the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Written by [Arun Sharma](#) | Jammu |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:44:20 am



Kashmiri Pandits leave for Kheer Bhawani mela from Jammu Tuesday.
(PTI)

Only 250 pilgrims from Jammu Tuesday left for Central Kashmir's Kheer Bhawani temple in a heavily-protected government convoy — a sharp drop

in footfall that comes amid the [targeted killings in the Valley](#).

The annual mela at the revered temple, also known as the Ragnya Devi temple, is among the most significant religious programmes for the Kashmiri Pandit community.

In 2019, around 2,500-3,000 pilgrims had left for the temple in Ganderbal district's Tulmulla village from Jammu in government-arranged buses, a senior official said. There was no [yatra](#) in 2020 and 2021 owing to the pandemic.

On Tuesday, a day before Ashtami — considered the most auspicious day at the temple — only 400-500 pilgrims were present, said sources. In 2019, a total of 20,000-25,000 pilgrims had arrived, said a Kashmiri Pandit leader, King C Bharti.

Initially, 1,400 pilgrims had got themselves registered with the Jammu and Kashmir administration's Relief and Rehabilitation Department for Migrants. The department accordingly arranged 50 buses to take them to Kashmir under security cover.

Many of them later cancelled their registration. And on Tuesday, only 14 buses left from Nagrota on the outskirts of Jammu city— two of these vehicles were spares in case of a breakdown.

Some officials attributed the decreased footfall this year to the targeted killings as well as the resultant boycott calls by protesting Kashmiri Pandit employees.

Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) Ashok Pandita, however, said more pilgrims will arrive on Ashtami. "We have kept 25 buses at different locations in the Valley for transportation of Kashmiri Pandits," he said, adding that two buses carrying pilgrims were coming from Delhi as well.

But the official source mentioned above said the number of pilgrims having a darshan at the shrine during the mela is not likely to go beyond 1,000-1,500.

Militants have killed eight people from the minority community in Kashmir since May 1 — five of them were civilians and three were off-duty policemen.

Asked about the low turnout amid the killings, Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar, who flagged off the buses, told reporters: “The government has facilitated the pilgrims who registered for the yatra... The pilgrims will not face any difficulty in performing the yatra. Security will be ensured en route and at the shrine.”

Kumar said the pilgrims will have ‘darshan’ at the temple on Wednesday and return to Jammu a day later. “The government has made all necessary arrangements for the pilgrims for safe and secure pilgrimage,” said the Divisional Commissioner.

Most Kashmiri Pandit employees posted in the Valley under the Prime Minister’s employment package will likely not participate in the mela amid the protests over their security.

Kashmiri Pandit organisations that usually organised langars at the temple and en route from Jammu had already announced their decision to stay away in order to express solidarity with the agitating migrant Pandits and other minority community employees working in the Valley.

The Ramakrishna Mahasamelan Ashram in Achabal area of Anantnag, which has been organizing langar for visiting pilgrims inside the temple for over two decades, has decided not to do so this year.

“We had procured ration and made arrangements for providing food to 20,000-25,000 pilgrims and had even sought permission from Dharmarth Trust which manages the temple and the district administration as well,” said B L Bhat, chairman of the administrative council of the mission. “However, in view of the incidents of targeted killing of minorities following a sense of fear and protests by them, we have decided to cancel our programme this time.”

Police officials said a three-tier security system, comprising J-K Police, army and paramilitary forces, has been placed around Tulmulla, the village

that houses the temple. There will be heightened security on the road leading to the temple as well.

Officials said local residents have also been taken into confidence to give a sense of security to the pilgrims.

Kheer Bhawani melas are organised at five shrines across Kashmir — Ragnya Bhagwati in Ganderbal, Manzgam in Kulgam, Devsar in Kulgam, Logripora in Anantnag and Tikkar in Kupwara. Among these temples, the Tulmulla temple, nestled in the shade of mammoth Chinar trees, witnesses massive gatherings of Pandits from Kashmir and different parts of the country.

A number of minority community employees, including Kashmiri Pandits posted in the Valley under the PM's employment package, have returned to Jammu for safety reasons.

Between 30-40 families returned to Jagti township near Nagrota on Thursday night following the killing of two minority community people, including Vijay Kumar of Rajasthan, who worked as a bank manager in Kulgam.

“Do you think we can stay there when we are getting killed at point blank,” asked a migrant Kashmiri Pandit employee who also returned to Jammu from the Valley.

Meanwhile, those leaving Jammu for darshan at Kheer Bhawani temple said that though targeted killings have caused fear among the community, they were going there as they could not during the past two years. One of them said: “We will pray for peace in Jammu and Kashmir.”

(With inputs from Basharat Masood in Srinagar)

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Op-Ed

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Let's face it. Lettuce is out of place in fast food, a celebration of sodium-heavy, deep-fried goodness

The only food in which lettuce can be said to have a rightful place is a BLT sandwich because, well, it's in the name. From everywhere else, the sad, sodden leaf could be banished without really being missed.

By: [Editorial](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 9:03:55 am



KFC Australia announced that it is replacing at least some of the lettuce in its offerings with cabbage.

Few things in this world have their purpose as clearly laid out as lettuce. The whole point of it — specifically, the most widely used iceberg variety — is to add a veneer of virtue to the fast-food eater's experience. Place a pale green leaf between the mustard-slathered bun and thick, juicy patty, and you've gone some way towards mitigating the artery-hardening qualities of a burger. Almost anyone who eats burgers — and rolls, sandwiches, tacos, nachos — knows that the first step towards an enjoyable meal is taking out the soggy leaf.

Clearly, this knowledge did not inform KFC Australia's recent attempt to grapple with the lettuce shortage in the country. The fast food chain announced that it is replacing at least some of the lettuce in its offerings with cabbage. Cabbage may have its supporters, who will likely tom-tom its superior nutritional profile, crunchier texture and more robust flavour. But the fact remains that nobody eats fast food for health — it is supposed to be purely a celebration of sodium-laden, deep-fried goodness that one may or may not regret eating in the distant future, but which is sure to satisfy one in the immediate term. Why ruin the experience for the mere appearance of virtue?

Indeed, the only food in which lettuce can be said to have a rightful place is a BLT sandwich because, well, it's in the name. From everywhere else, the sad, sodden leaf could be banished without really being missed.

This editorial first appeared in the print edition on June 8, 2022 under the title 'The lettuce ruse'

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/the-lettuce-ruse-7957901/>

Government's move to do away with service charge in restaurants defies logic. Surely, it has bigger challenges on its plate

It's unclear what provoked this government intervention, where exactly are consumers being made to pay service charge kicking and screaming.

By: [Editorial](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 9:05:52 am



Attempt to intrude and micro-manage that which the government should leave well alone, continues to be all too frequent.

There is the challenge of rising [inflation](#), slowing growth, sputtering reforms, collapse of consumer spending, not to talk of geo-political uncertainties, and the mighty Indian sarkar is playing mai baap for the consumer, seized of a pressing issue: Paying tips. No less than the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, who is working hard to revitalise exports, has called the levying of service charge on a restaurant bill an act of deceit. Officials have held meetings with restaurant associations and called for a “robust framework” to ensure compliance with guidelines that forbid the levy of service charges by hotels and restaurants. According to the government, levying charges for anything other than “prices displayed on the menu card along with the applicable taxes”, without “express consent” of the customer, constitutes “unfair trade practices”. Such nonsense would be laughable — had it not been for the seriousness of its implications.

For, this is a throwback to the licence permit raj when ill-thought through and heavy-handed government interventions marked economic policymaking. Clearly, that attempt to intrude and micro-manage that which the government should leave well alone, continues to be all too frequent. Representatives of restaurant associations are right to stand their ground. Collecting service charge is neither illegal nor in violation of law. Restaurants pay GST on the entire bill, including service charge, so the government doesn’t lose anything. In one form or another, service charges exist across sectors: Government transactions have processing fees; food-delivery services have “restaurant charges”; ticketing platforms charge a “convenience fee”. The restaurant sector has been battered by the pandemic — as per latest GDP estimates, value added by trade, hotels, transport and communication at the end of 2021-22 is much lower than its 2019-20 levels. Few would object to a charge designed to help the countless men and women employed in the sector. Moreover, as this is not uniform across restaurants, the presence of alternatives implies no restrictions on choice — there is no coercion of the consumer. Restaurants clearly mark the service charge as such and waive it if the consumer does not wish to pay. Most collections from service charge go to the staff and are often seen as an incentive in lieu of tips.

Of course, the levy of the service charge should be — as it is in most cases — clearly communicated to the consumer. It’s unclear what provoked this government intervention, where exactly are consumers being made to pay

service charge kicking and screaming. The official action mirrors the arbitrariness with which a domineering state continues to wield power in economic matters. Considering the challenges the economy faces as it emerges out of the long Covid shadow, the finest financial minds in North Block should work on matters more pressing than how a restaurant tip should be paid — or not.

This editorial first appeared in the print edition on June 8, 2022 under the title ‘Service charge, please’.

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Addressing learning deficits calls for pedagogical changes, making school a centre of healing

There are indications that government school teachers in Delhi are alive to the need for letting students recover lost ground at their own pace. The teacher is doubling up as a counselor, even as a friend who is sensitive to the needs of students requiring special attention.

By: [Editorial](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 9:08:20 am



In the last week of May, the National Achievement Survey (NAS), shone a light on the worrying regression in the learning capabilities of students

across subjects and grades.

As students return to schools after the lifting of the pandemic-enforced curbs, it's increasingly becoming evident that classrooms will have to be re-imagined to address the disruption caused by the public health emergency. Survey after survey has confirmed the worst fears of educationists — the switch to online classes in the past two years has had negative impacts on children's ability to read, comprehend texts and do simple sums. In the last week of May, the National Achievement Survey (NAS), shone a light on the worrying regression in the learning capabilities of students across subjects and grades. Now [a series of reports in this paper](#) shows that each child returning to a Delhi government school poses a unique challenge to the teacher — the students not only have varying levels of competencies and learning, but almost every one of them has been scarred differently by the pandemic.

Most educational policy documents — including the New Education Policy 2020 — have talked of student and teacher-centric approaches. However, the syllabus has continued to exercise a strong hold on pedagogic practices. This will have to change in the post-pandemic classroom. There are indications that government school teachers in Delhi are alive to the need for letting students recover lost ground at their own pace. The teacher is doubling up as a counselor, even as a friend who is sensitive to the needs of students requiring special attention. The improved learning environment also owes much to the Delhi government's initiative to strengthen the foundational skills of children during the summer vacations. But these are early days and plugging the learning gaps is likely to demand more innovative approaches from teachers, school administrators and policymakers.

For a large number of children in the country, a school is not only a centre for education, but it's also a place where they get nutrition through the mid-day meal scheme (MDMS). During the school shutdown, the Centre directed states to substitute these meals with dry rations or cash for students. But, by all accounts, the implementation of the scheme was patchy during the pandemic years. Now a report in this paper has shown that the Delhi government did not budget for the increased demand for mid-day meals during the pandemic when government school enrollment increased, most likely because of the economic distress suffered by a section of the parents.

The post-Covid educational recovery will hinge not only on pedagogic practices but also on how the health and nutritional requirements of the child are catered to. The MDMS — lauded by educators for incentivising parents to send their children to schools — will be critical to the endeavour. The Delhi story holds valuable lessons for educators and school administrators in the rest of the country. They would do well to learn lessons in classroom autonomy from Delhi government school teachers. At the same time, they must recognise that there cannot be a uniform template for recovery.

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Dhiraj Nayyar writes: The problem with putting the civil services on a pedestal

Dhiraj Nayyar writes: All civil servants operate in a system of limited accountability with few incentives to perform and plenty of opportunities to use and abuse their powers.

Written by [Dhiraj Nayyar](#) |

Updated: June 8, 2022 8:47:20 am



To help such budding civil service aspirants pursue their dream, many private and government led/funded institutions provide free civil services coaching to aspirants. (Express File Photo: Abhinav Saha)

India has a complicated, love-hate relationship with its bureaucracy. Recently, two babus of the elite IAS were the subject of widespread public derision when [an investigation by this newspaper](#) revealed that one of them had ordered that a government stadium in the national capital be emptied in order to walk their pet dog. A week later, the media and the public feted those who had successfully cracked the UPSC examination in order to become bureaucrats of the future. Most countries in the world have a cadre of professional civil servants but nowhere are new entrants to the system of government celebrated like in India. It's like the public itself hasn't overcome the colonial legacy of the civil service being the grandest of professions. This has consequences.

The fact is that, 75 years after independence and 30 years after liberalisation, there is still an overhang of the all-powerful, all-pervasive state. The fact also is that despite grumbling and complaining about the difficulty of dealing with the government, the people of India put on the highest pedestal the very personnel responsible for it. Dissatisfaction is channelled towards politicians who can be voted out of office every five years. But the bureaucracy is permanent. Interestingly, most ordinary people don't aspire for themselves or their children to join politics which is viewed as murky, the domain of the less-educated non-professionals. But the civil services are highly aspirational.

There are good reasons for a favourable view of the civil services. For one, candidates are selected on merit based on an open examination and interview. One cannot inherit a position in the civil services, like in politics. Then there is the job security that comes with gaining entry. Unless a civil servant does an extraordinary wrong, she has a job for life, and steady, time-bound promotions which ensure that everyone retires at the top irrespective of performance. However, in the perceived strengths of the civil services lie its weaknesses.

The single UPSC examination, which most candidates take in their early or mid-20s, is treated as gospel. Often, it is used as an argument against lateral entry because unless people have passed that examination, they are deemed to not be meritorious or deserving of being in government. It is also used to determine career trajectories. Those who stood first or second in their batch while in their 20s are more likely to rise to important positions such as

cabinet secretary or foreign secretary thirty years later when they are in their late 50s. Merit and competence cannot be judged by a single exam.

The permanence of the job is a problem too. Punishment for over-reach or misuse of power is a transfer, either from a weightier ministry to a lighter one or from high-profile capitals to geographically remote ones. The two IAS officers responsible for the stadium episode have not lost any seniority, salary or status for their transgression. They have just been moved out of the public eye. Eventually, they will find their way back. Some years ago, there was a widely reported case of an Indian Foreign Service officer based in New York who had “misbehaved” with a flight attendant. His punishment was being recalled to the headquarters in Delhi. Now, presumably exonerated of any serious offence, he is an ambassador to a foreign country. Punishments for such transgressions are more severe and long lasting in the private sector. Even in politics, scandal-hit ministers don’t get transfers; they get the sack.

The result is that all civil servants, never mind their ability or competence, operate in a system of limited accountability with few incentives to perform and plenty of opportunities to use and abuse their powers. Those who do good work do so despite the system.

The civil services system needs to be brought down from its pedestal and placed at par with every other profession like elsewhere in the world. This will not happen via political diktat. It requires the weight of public opinion. The system must be manned by capable, competent individuals. This cannot be decided on the basis of one exam. The bad eggs need to be separated which cannot happen when the job is for life. It may sound radical for India’s civil services but that is the way the rest of India and the world function, including the UK from where we inherited the structure. The best and brightest will be celebrated. They will be given Padma and other awards. And there will be no high-handed babus to deride. India will get the government it needs for the 21st century.

This column first appeared in the print edition on June 8, 2022 under the title ‘No incentive to perform’. The writer is chief economist, Vedanta and was formerly OSD & Head, Economics, Finance & Commerce, NITI Aayog.

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JS Rajput writes: The path towards greater religious tolerance and social harmony

JS Rajput writes: India's great dialogic tradition could be rejuvenated and trusted.

Written by [J.S. RAJPUT](#) |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:55:22 am



J S Rajput writes: Religion has been used unashamedly to divide people, though there have been several other factors like colour, race, caste, untouchability etc that have been a divisive influence in the society.
(Representational image)

India is the beloved home for practitioners of all major religions in the world. Indian culture accepts diversity of faiths and beliefs. Religious harmony and social cohesion are two core elements for progress and

development. In the words of K M Munshi: “Indian culture is a living force. It absorbs alien elements when necessary but transmutes them into a new pattern of homogeneous richness. It is, therefore, a tremendous force of power and beauty, which made us what we are in the world today; and will make us what we want to be in the world tomorrow.”

There are, however, some worrisome developments emerging on sustaining religious amity. From time immemorial, human beings have practised divisiveness continuously on one ground or the other. Religion has been used unashamedly to divide people, though there have been several other factors like colour, race, caste, untouchability etc that have been a divisive influence in the society. Over the last three decades, the most sufferings were inflicted on humanity in the name of religion. Nani Palkhivala, a brilliant mind of the 20th century wrote: “A man may study or practice religion. But if he is a fanatical fundamentalist, he deserves to rank as a religious illiterate, whatever his formal education may be. The words of T S Elliot come to one’s mind: ‘We had the experience, but missed the meaning.’ A religious bigot may have made a study of theology but, by definition, he has not understood the true meaning of religion. ‘Fanatics have their dreams,’ said Keats, wherewith they weave a paradise for a sect.” Every true religious person understands, based on the principles of his own professed religion, that the ultimate goal of all religions is the same, that only the paths are articulated in varied ways. Hatred and violence against other religions is generated and created through misinterpretations and misinformation by ill-equipped minds who have smaller gains in sight and who could be called religion illiterates. Such persons are severely devoid of that basic human instinct of compassion. His Holiness Dalai Lama refers to his mother as his teacher of compassion — a simple, uneducated, village farmer, with unconditional kindness. Most of us could recall such experiences in life, which have sustained religious amity all along.

Compassion is at the heart of every religion. In 1954, as an 11-year old, I joined a new school in Kannauj, UP. My new school had two drinking water tanks, the bigger for Hindu children and the smaller one for the Muslims. Totally unaware of this division, I opted for the smaller one. The moment I finished, some 20 students surrounded me: “Muslim tanki men paani piya!” I was very upset. I was brought up in a village, and had seen Hindus and Muslims working and socialising together. My mother appreciated a Maulavi

sahib coming home to teach me, prepared snacks for him every day, but served in special utensils, which she would clean herself without any hesitation. That evening, my father could guess from my ashen face that something must have gone wrong. I denied it initially, but when my mother was not within hearing distance, I told him everything. He narrated the story of a lady throwing garbage on Hazrat Muhammad Sahib every day and being looked after by him when she fell ill, which led to the end of the daily routine. My father, a devout Hindu and no scholar of Islam, said that such a person who helps even his tormenters could only be a divine person, and deserves every respect. All practices of separation are a consequence of ignorance, and will vanish as education expands, he told me. My horizons were extended that day.

No one could deny that external elements, pursuing the policy of inflicting a thousand cuts on India, are active and exploiting vulnerable elements. The basics of Indian culture are acceptable to every community, even the illiterate Hindus and Muslims are equally convinced that every temple and mosque deserves equal respect. True scholars of every religion must rise to the occasion; go to people, and educate them on essential unity of all religions. Once they are convinced, the black sheep will become visible even in the darkest corners. For global peace, social cohesion and religious amity are core requirements. One would like to recall what Chhatrapati Shivaji wrote in his famous epistle to Emperor Aurangzeb: “Islam and Hinduism appear as contrasted terms; but they are diverse pigments used by the divine painter to fill in his picture of the whole human race. If it be a mosque, the call is chanted in remembrance of Him; if it be a temple, the bell is rung remembering Him alone. To show bigotry towards any man’s creed and practices is tantamount to altering the words of the holy book. To draw new lines on a picture is to find fault with the painter.”

We, the people of India, must strive hard to generate compassion, strength, sincerity and commitment to ensure the safety and security of India. The great dialogic tradition could be rejuvenated and trusted. A way out would certainly not be far away.

This column first appeared in the print edition on June 8, 2022 under the title ‘Conversation and compassion’. The writer is former director NCERT and works in the field of education and religious cohesion

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Premium

Nalini Singh writes: What would Lord Shiva want?

Nalini Singh writes: As the Gyanvapi dispute picks up, there is a need to make new unities of old fractures.

Written by [Nalini Singh](#) |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:53:42 am



Security is heightened outside the Gyanvapi mosque. (PTI Photo/File)

In the Gyanvapi mosque/temple clash, the “Hindu side” seems to be winning the perception battle. Claiming their sovereign religious right to offer daily Shringar Gauri prayers on the mosque premises, the petitioners have also demanded that the domes of the structure as well as a wall be demolished. The latest petition prays that Muslims not be allowed in the mosque since it

was constructed after destroying the Gyanvapi temple 350 years ago on the orders of the ruthless Mughal ruler, Aurangzeb.

Knock-off demands for altering centuries-old practices of worship at mosques in Mathura, Pune, Goa, Madhya Pradesh and Mehrauli are ringing across the country. The Taj Mahal's foundations have also felt the first tremors of Hindu victimhood. In Delhi the needle has been pushed back 800 years, with a demand to excavate the truth about the Qutub Minar and the "belief" that its mosque was built after destroying 27 Hindu and Jain temples. For the moment, in an exceptional show of bravery, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has rejected these demands, but some sentiments are waiting to be offended at the ASI's mulishness.

By comparison, the "Muslim side's" counter-arguments in the Varanasi courts (and in the Supreme Court), appear subdued and astringent, as if intimidated by the people's court of the media. In fact the flames of Hindu "hurt and pain" have reached Aurangzeb's grave in Aurangabad, where the government has ramped up police bandobast.

At Varanasi's Gyanvapi, the hurricane of Hindu entitlement to the mosque has gathered such heft that it appears likely that long before Varanasi's district judge forwards his findings regarding the "religious nature" of the mosque/temple to the Supreme Court in July, an unofficial delegation of Hindu devotees will have found a way to worship at the "shivling" which, they claim, has been waiting stoically for over three centuries in the septic pool of the "wuzu khana".

So, as a Hindu, I ask myself, "What will we make of what we see when we get a darshan of this 'shivling'?" In the Hindu understanding, since the deity is present in the image or stone idol, the darshan will be charged with religious meaning. The darshan is as much to see as to be seen by the deity. Ideally, the devotees will also touch the "shivling" with their hands (sparsh) and will then touch their own limbs to sanctify the presence of the various deities that Shiva embodies (nyasa).

The Hindus' "vibrant capacity for image-making" (Diana Eck) will also pivot to the 500-year old grand temple which would have housed this "shivling" and other powerful deities, the remnants of which have been

purportedly found in the basement of the mosque. On a moonless night centuries ago, a ritually purified priest would have established the “breath of life” in the deities (pran pratishtha), and then in the last ritual, the deity’s eyes would have been opened with a golden needle, for it to mount a perpetual watch over Gyanvapi.

The “Hindu side” asserts that it was this consecrated and revered Gyanvapi temple that the iron-fisted Aurangzeb purportedly jackbooted to build a mosque. But today, 350 years after the temple was laid to waste, at least two niggling questions are simmering in the “vibrant imagination” of devout Hindus. One, while Aurangzeb had the highest number of Hindu mansabdar high officials in his government in key decision-making positions, what caused these notables to stand by and allow this temple (and 3,000 others) to be vandalised and destroyed by his raiders? When a ruler manufactures an air of invincibility accompanied by a weaponised ecosystem, does it immobilise even those at the apex of the food chain?

The second question that must be answered by the “Hindu side” petitioners who are in various courts today is this: Why did Aurangzeb’s Muslim marauder-sycophants not smash and destroy the stone shaft of the “shivling” any time during the last 350 years? Is it because they could not summon the seething rage required to destroy it (a rage which the karsevaks summoned easily when they destroyed the Babri Masjid)? Or for twelve generations have the Muslims considered the “shivling” as more than just stone and slabs and sticks?

The Varanasi lanes leading to the holy Kashi Vishwanath temple and Gyanvapi mosque and the entire sacred geography of the ghats have possibly the highest density of renouncers in the world, the respected perpetual pilgrims who have left home and family for a homeless life. At the same time, the sacred triangle defined by the river Ganga, the ghats encrusted on its banks and the temples that run up the old city like civilisational islands of religiosity, also has the highest density of persons waiting calmly to die here to attain mukti (liberation) from this world.

Karma, tolerance, renunciation and liberation are the leitmotifs of the Varanasi of Hindus. And yet, bafflingly, it is in this other-worldly setting,

where the soul drifts into view in the embers of the cremation pyres, that the Gyanvapi real estate fights are being waged.

Varanasi is said to be the permanent earthly home of Shiva, and the city is often called Avimukta, the “Never-Forsaken”. Then and now, Shiva thrives in binaries — carrying a snake as an ornament on his arm and yet with the life-giving Ganga latticed in his hair; a fearful demon pressed under his foot and yet with his hand raised in blessing; dancing in frenzied swirls and yet with a countenance that is absolutely serene. Freighted with these binaries, it is therefore easy to imagine that Shiva himself placed a mosque in a temple, urging us to ooze through the barbed wire of bygone centuries and present-day toxins, and to make new unities of old fractures, not only for the next 500 years, but into perpetuity.

This column first appeared in the print edition on June 8, 2022 under the title ‘What Shiva wants’. The writer is a senior journalist

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Roger Bannister to Rafael Nadal: The triumphs of the greats may not be possible without the pain

Sandeep Dwivedi writes: They have all looked the bull in the eyes and said, 'What's pain?'

Written by [Sandeep Dwivedi](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:51:01 am



Spain's Rafael Nadal holds the trophy after winning the final match against Norway's Casper Ruud in three sets, 6-3, 6-3, 6-0, at the French Open tennis tournament in Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France. (AP)

But for a singular moment while on the train to Oxford for an important athletic meet, Roger Bannister had a rather uninspiring start to what eventually would be the most memorable day of his life. It would get marked

forever as a seminal date in track and field history, some would also consider it a milestone run that redefined the limits of human endeavour.

The story goes that on May 6, 1954, the amateur runner and full-time medical student from London had his usual breakfast of warm porridge, attended to patients in the OPD, sharpened his spikes on the grindstone at the hospital lab and, after his shift, joined the crowd of daily commuters at Paddington tube station.

Bannister, 25 then, had plans to give his all over a mile that evening. For the athlete keen to pursue advanced neurology, this was to be his final shot at breaking the 4-minute barrier. The weather, however, was in no mood to make it easier for him.

With the winds howling and rain drops getting larger, Bannister, while on the train, was tempted to postpone his attempt at making history. It was then that his Aussie coach Franz Stampfl cleared his clouded mind. “If there is only a half-good chance, you may never forgive yourself for missing it,” he said before uttering the magical words that would ring through time. “You will feel pain, but what’s pain?”

For a species that is wired to chase comforts and spends most of its waking hours thinking of ways to make life easy, Stampfl’s matter-of-fact dismissal of physical suffering, a cold handshake with pain, sounds unreal. It’s an emotion alien to the majority — the mortals inclined to wince much before the pin-prick of the vaccination needle, pop pain-killers to deal with a minor sprain and fuss over a honeybee sting.

Away from the world of the mollycoddled, are sporting arenas, the home of hardened men and women. Their idea of a satisfying day of training would mean coughing blood after a workout and getting dizzy with pain in the limbs. On top of their pyramid are those with higher pain-thresholds and the capacity to keep returning to these torture chambers with unbridled enthusiasm. They are those for whom life is an unending 24-hour cycle of first getting their bodies battered and recovering in time to get battered. All done willingly, with gusto. While on this punishing schedule, they log those proverbial 10,000 hours to be masters of their craft and get hailed as gifted geniuses by the world.

Men like Rafael Nadal, [Sachin Tendulkar](#), Diego Maradona haven't let fragile ligaments, damaged elbow and mangled ankle — all tear-inducing painful, career-threatening setbacks — downsize their ambitions. They have all looked the bull in the eyes and said, "What's pain?"

When just 18, Nadal was told that he had an inherent weakness, his ligaments weren't strong enough to hold his ankle. It was a heart-breaking diagnosis. It was something that couldn't be rectified, the young Spainard would have to manage pain all his life. There were those who advised him to tone down the physicality of his tennis. Nadal doesn't glide around the court like a Roger Federer. His is the "scampering on the baseline" hustle and he wasn't giving up on the only way he played the game. Legends of the game are too sure about themselves, they don't listen to advice easily, even if it's the medical kind.

Till date, Nadal's calling card remains the relentless pursuit of the ball. Fourteen French titles means he has run the full course on the toughest Slam several times over. It was said that the weak ligaments would cause excruciating pain, or get snapped, because of the twists, turns and torque the red clay puts on the ankle. Roland Garros is no posh serve-and-volley Wimbledon-like affair. It's the working man's Slam: No sweat, no silverware.

Nadal's quarter-final against Djokovic this year started on Friday and ended on Saturday. Before the tournament he had spoken about pain, at the end of it, he shared how he dealt with it. He numbed his ankle, risked damage to ligaments — all to be on the podium alone and bite the wings of the sparkling bowl.

[In a recent interview to The Indian Express](#), Tendulkar had spoken about pain and the phase of his career when he was operated virtually every year. "In 2003, I had a left finger injury, In 2004, I had the tennis elbow and had an operation in 2005. Around 2006-07, shoulder and right bicep also needed to be operated upon. I also had a couple of groin surgeries. Then, there was another wrist surgery later in my career." The elbow recovery was most painful. Tendulkar said he couldn't lift a coffee mug. If locked in a room, he couldn't turn the knob. Holding his extra heavy bat was out of the question.

That Tendulkar expression of helplessness when he hit rock bottom could be seen on Maradona's face when he got injured or was brought down after a rough tackle. The Asif Kapadia docu-feature film on the greatest footballer ever has a private moment of despair.

It's from Maradona's days at Napoli, where his backers, underworld bosses and dodgy owners, wanted him on the field for every match at any cost. He's lying on a doctor's table with face down, and a pair of amateur hands are drilling holes with a micro-slim long needle on his back. Maradona writhes in pain, but says that the agony is a little less than last time. The man with the needles says, without any guilt, last time it was without anesthesia. In the background, his wife Claudia Villafane, says, "He would get five different injections in different places, and he would play the next day. Diego would bite the pillow because of pain." Cut to Maradona's face, who lets out a heart-breaking groan.

Before that, while at Barcelona, he had got caught in a diabolical lunge from a defender called Andoni Goikoetxea aka Butcher of Bilbao. Of his trauma, Maradona would say, the blow to the ankle was followed by a sound "like a piece of wood splitting".

Like a true friend, in thick and thin, pain accompanies those driven to succeed.

Go back to the iconic frame of Bannister breasting the tape to check the coach Stampfl's pain prognosis. If pain had a face, the photographer had captured it beautifully. The English runner's lungs seem to have given up, the mind looks tired asking the limbs to stop. Bannister's body on that rainy summer evening stayed stubborn, it kept flying towards the finish line.

He would later say that the final few seconds seemed like an eternity. Bannister was conscious that in case the clock would win the race, there would be no arm to hold him beyond the finish line and "the world would seem a cold, forbidding place." His final leap for the line was to save himself from being remembered as an also-ran, a valiant trier and a sorry figure. The effort took its toll.

“I collapsed, almost unconscious, with an arm on either side of me. It was only then that real pain overtook me ... I felt like an exploded flashbulb,” was Bannister’s recollection of his euphoric moment. It could well be Rafa sprawled on red clay.

Science says that pain has the power to enhance pleasure. Experts talk about a phenomenon called “the runner’s high” — the pleasant feeling of lightheadedness after an exhaustive workout. It’s attributed to the flow of opioids, a chemical triggered by the body when it experiences pain.

It’s that heady feeling only the greats would have experienced. As for the mortals and the mollycoddled, for want of a better parallel, it’s like the beer tasting better after a long hard day or a shikanji being sweeter after being out in the sun.

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Pritam Singh writes: Sidhu Moosewala's music transcended regional boundaries

His music, rooted in his village and Punjab's agrarian culture, touched a chord with the South Asian diaspora.

Written by [Pritam Singh](#) |
June 7, 2022 5:47:43 pm



Pritam Singh writes: Public grief was exacerbated by the fact that Moosewala, who symbolised bravery and talent, was cut down in his prime.

Ferocious storms, overlapping as well as self-contradictory, seemed to blow over Punjab and the world of music when the news came that Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu (popularly known as [Sidhu Moosewala](#)) had died in a brutal, yet

cowardly, shooting near his village in the Mansa district. The scale of the outpouring of grief over his death in India generally, but especially in Punjab was massive; no other individual death in living memory in Punjab has provoked such mass grief.

Public grief was exacerbated by the fact that Moosewala, who symbolised bravery and talent, was cut down in his prime. Such tragic losses evoke many powerful emotional responses. The sense of loss and grief over his death went beyond Punjab and India; it brought about a global response that no observer of Punjab's cultural life could have imagined. When I sat down that evening to watch the BBC news bulletin, I did not expect to see any news about the death because the BBC in the UK rarely reports events from India, certainly not in depth. To my complete surprise, the bulletin covered the news of Moosewala's death with the sensitivity and respect it deserved.

UK print media also gave extensive coverage to the news. In 2020, the Guardian had described him as one of the top 50 new artists. This achievement for the 26-year-old Moosewala was especially stunning as he had truly started his musical career only three years ago when his track So High topped the 2017 charts — the track now has 500 million views. He was also popular in Pakistan.

Punjab has produced many talented singers with huge fan-following in India and in the Indian/South Asian diaspora, but Moosewala crossed all boundaries. He was a global phenomenon of exceptional talent especially in relating to the younger generations. A Punjabi neighbour of mine involved in the construction business told me that while he was driving recently with two young English workers he played them one of Moosewala's tracks. His companions told him that they did not understand any of the lyrics but that the beat was mesmerising, and they insisted on repeating the same track for the next hour.

His collaborations with rappers in the UK and the US put him in a different league. He was apparently in the process of making albums with some of the most influential musicians in the genre — the Canadian rapper Drake and the Nigerian singer Burna Boy. Such collaborations would have been unique and would have raised the international profile of Bhangra, as well as of Punjabi language and culture.

Both Drake and Burna Boy have publicly mourned his death. Burna Boy, a Grammy award-winning musician, shared the unfinished collaboration with Moosewala. “We will complete our mixtape in heaven,” he captioned a photo, and posted commemorative messages on Twitter.

There were two distinct phases in his short and meteoric career (despite occasional overlaps). He seemed to be moving towards a thematic break. The earlier phase appeared to glorify guns and the gun culture, and his lyrics were typically casteist and macho. This aspect of his work has rightly attracted criticism. However, critical evaluation of his musical journey based entirely on the earlier phase would be flawed because it does not capture his thematic shift. He was dynamic and very perceptive. In the latter phase, he wrote thoughtful songs about social, cultural and political issues and sang them with great passion. Most well-known of these is his track 295 which has attracted 145 million viewers. His track Panjab (My Motherland) was released as an anthem for the farmers’ protests in 2020-21, which he actively supported.

Another sensitive track that displays his softer side is Dear Maa which pays respect to his mother. It displays an understated but very feminine style in which he expresses total identification with his mother: “Mom, I always feel as if I am exactly like you. I want to write your name, Charan Kaur, on my chest.”

What was uniquely admirable about him was that along with being an international star, he was deeply rooted in his village and its lands. Unlike other Punjabi singers who move to Chandigarh or Mumbai when they become rich, he stayed in his village. The ecology of his village was the source of his passion, inspiration and creativity. This is captured in his beautifully haunting track Tibeyan Da Putt (son of the sand dunes) where the sand dunes signify the landscape of his beloved semi-arid Malwa. His strong relationships with his village and the farming community have inspired many young men not only in Punjab but in Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh also to re-engage with the agricultural life they had abandoned in the pursuit of a false urban identity.

He was constantly growing and looking at the future direction of his career. I have no doubt that he would have taken Punjabi music to new heights, both

internationally and thematically. His legacy is worthy of preservation. There could not be another Moosewala. A true tribute to him would be to construct an imaginatively-conceived museum of music in the village of Mussa which could contain a collection to commemorate his life. Such a museum would become a shrine to music-lovers all over the world. Accompanying this museum should be a generously-funded music academy of the highest international standards to encourage the musical talent of Punjab. Punjab, bruised as it is, needs musical therapy for its cultural and spiritual rejuvenation.

(The writer is Professor Emeritus Oxford Brookes Business School)

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Premium

Rama Kant Agnihotri writes: The post-Covid learning challenge

Rama Kant Agnihotri writes: There can be no quick fixes to addressing post-Covid learning deficits. Teachers must be enabled to give attention to each student

Written by [Rama Kant Agnihotri](#) |

Updated: June 8, 2022 8:44:15 am



Several post-pandemic studies have shown that students lag behind in all the school subjects. It has also been shown that online classes have not proved helpful and education cannot continue in this faceless inactive mode. (File Photo)

In addition to several other damages, the [coronavirus](#) pandemic has caused a major educational breakdown. Students whose academic levels, particularly in the rural and semi-urban areas, were already far below the target feel completely lost. Teachers who went through a traumatic spell in dealing with the Covid crisis in their families, while negotiating unfamiliar online classes, associated technical glitches and endless online meetings are also at a loss as they meet, say, a Class VII student who has completely missed Classes V and VI. A recent series of articles in this paper has highlighted the challenges posed by the educational emergency in classrooms in Delhi. The student, in several cases, could be from a family of first-generation learners; she is not likely to have any smart device or connectivity to attend the sporadic online classes. It's also not unlikely that her parents may have lost their jobs.

Several post-pandemic studies have shown that students lag behind in all the school subjects. It has also been shown that online classes have not proved helpful and education cannot continue in this faceless inactive mode. A recent survey conducted by Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur showed that in 2021, the proficiency levels of middle school students in Hindi and English were dismal. This happened because of a comprehensive breakdown in studies during the pandemic, particularly in the case of underprivileged students who lacked digital devices, connectivity, books and a dedicated space to learn. A much larger survey carried out by the National Achievement Survey (NAS) of 34 lakh students of Classes III, V, VIII and IX reports a striking dip across subjects and grades (IE, May 26). The dip was far sharper in rural areas compared to urban areas. The nature and acuteness of the crisis will vary from place to place and no homogenous solution is likely to be pragmatic.

Deficits in reading comprehension and basic mathematical abilities inevitably impact learning in all other school subjects. All states have been trying to address this issue in their own way. However, what seems common to their efforts is a desire to identify “learning gaps” and address them quickly to create a sense of “all is well”. We need to appreciate that there are no shortcuts in education. It demands suitable teachers, teaching-learning materials and time. A major crisis in education is not just a question of identifying and addressing some learning gaps. Nor is it a question of quickly creating some capsule programmes in terms of linear and additive

learning outcomes. It would be wrong to treat education in the doctor-patient model based on diagnostic, prognosis and remedial intervention.

Those who were closely involved in the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) of the 1990s would recollect that the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, state committees on educational research and training and district institutes of education and training worked in perfect sync for five years or so. It was also possible at that time to establish district, block and cluster resource centres (DRC, BRC, CRC). The academic model adopted was one of a cascade type of training where a cadre of state-level master trainers (MTs) was created through a series of workshops, often conducted by college or university faculty. MTs were supposed to train the primary school teachers using the DRC, BRCs and CRCs. As the five-year mission came to a close, the whole edifice crumbled like a house of cards. The DPEP was implemented in 273 districts of 18 states. The mission was supposed to “overhaul the primary education system in the country”. Did anything significant happen in DPEP in terms of academic growth and conceptual clarity of primary school students? Did our primary school system get overhauled? One wonders whether anybody would stick her neck out for an affirmative answer.

The response to the educational breakdown in the post-pandemic period is again being made in the same framework of “diagnosis, prognosis and treatment”. “Crack teams” are being created to examine learning gaps and outcomes and reconfigure and reduce the syllabus. A small group of MTs will train lakhs of teachers in a short period with a guide. Suitable teaching-learning materials will also be prepared to match this whole exercise. All this will be reportedly done at breakneck speed to address the learning gaps. But can such an effort prove effective when the DPEP failed to achieve anything substantive over a period of more than five years?

The fact that education is about ensuring rational inquiry and enriching cognitive capacities needs to be recognised. This cannot be done in a hurry. Why should we always look for medical or managerial solutions to educational crisis which demand a long-term intervention? There is no way one can bring the lost years back. But there is also no way that you can use some quick fix solutions — online, offline or a combination of the two — to recover the learning that has been lost.

Our schools officially run for about 180 teaching days or so; the real teaching days vary enormously in different contexts. Can we think of running the school for 240 days or so? The present teachers who are already overworked and traumatised should not be asked for any more work. We should fill in all teacher vacancies. Thousands of trained graduates have been waiting for years to teach. Appoint them as temporary teachers with immediate effect. Let's invite our recently retired teachers and pay them well. Some college and university teachers may volunteer to teach in schools, say, once a week. Can we devote, say, 60 days per year for a period of two years to cover the syllabus students have missed? Rather than opting for short cuts and addressing "hard spots" or "learning gaps", we should ensure a comprehensive response to an acute emergency in education. Students must go through the whole syllabus originally planned for them and they should do so by engaging in conceptually challenging tasks. Let's not forget that students love to go to school and engage in peer-group activities, sports, and cultural programmes. Good teachers are their lifeline. They begin to avoid school when it gets boring.

The author retired from Delhi University and is Professor Emeritus, Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur

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Musk's Twitter deal threats put new financing on ice: Report

Musk has been threatening to walk away from the deal unless the social media company provides him with data to back up its estimate that false or spam accounts comprise less than 5% of its user base.

By: [Reuters](#) |
June 8, 2022 9:39:21 am



The pause in financing activities offers the first clear sign that Musk's threats are interfering with steps that would help complete the deal.(Image credit: Reuters)

Elon Musk's efforts to arrange new financing that will limit his cash contribution to his \$44 billion acquisition of Twitter Inc have been put on

hold because of the uncertainty surrounding the deal, people familiar with the matter said.

Musk [has been threatening to walk away](#) from the deal unless the social media company provides him with data to back up its estimate that false or spam accounts comprise less than 5% of its user base. This culminated in a letter from Musk's lawyers to Twitter on Monday warning he may walk away unless more information is forthcoming.

Musk is on the hook to pay \$33.5 billion in cash to fund the deal after arranging debt financing to cover the rest. His liquidity is limited given that his wealth, which is pegged by Forbes at \$218 billion, is largely tied to the shares of Tesla Inc, the electric car maker he leads.

Musk has been in discussions to arrange \$2 billion to \$3 billion in preferred equity financing from a group of private equity firms led by Apollo Global Management Inc that would further reduce his cash contribution, according to the sources. These conversations are now on hold until there is clarity about the future of the acquisition, one of the sources said.

The pause in financing activities offers the first clear sign that Musk's threats are interfering with steps that would help complete the deal. Twitter has insisted thus far that Musk has been performing his obligation under their contract, including helping to secure regulatory approval for the deal.

Spokespersons for Musk and Twitter did not respond to requests for comment. Apollo declined to comment.

Musk sold \$8.5 billion worth of Tesla shares in April after he signed his deal to buy Twitter, and it is not clear how much cash he has available to meet his obligation. He has raised \$7.1 billion from a group of equity co-investors to reduce his contribution. Musk also sought to reduce this exposure further by arranging a risky \$12.5 billion margin loan tied to the shares of Tesla, but then scrapped it last month.

Preferred equity would pay a fixed dividend from Twitter, in the same way that a bond or a loan pays regular interest but would appreciate in line with the equity value of the company.

BUYER'S REMORSE

The deal uncertainty has also weighed on the plans of banks to get \$13 billion of debt they have committed to the acquisition off their books through syndication. While still preparing to syndicate the debt, the banks plan to wait until there is clarity on the deal to launch the process, the sources said.

The banks do not believe credit investors will buy into the debt as long as the uncertainty lingers, the sources said. The banks have also found Musk's disparaging public comments about the company unhelpful, and were hoping he would be helping them by now with investor presentations to syndicate the deal, the sources added.

To be sure, the halt of these activities does not affect the commitments made by Musk and the banks to fund the deal. Twitter can take them to court to force them to comply with their financing obligations under the deal contract if they come short.

The syndication of the debt could emerge as a major issue for the banks were Musk's dispute with Twitter to escalate in litigation and they were forced by a judge to fund the deal. In that scenario, they could struggle to get investors to buy the debt if Musk were unwilling to own the company.

That possibility, however, is seen as remote. Most investors are trading Twitter's stock on the assumption it is far more likely for the company to reach a settlement with Musk or let him walk away, rather than go through protracted litigation.

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Twitter gears up for most ambitious quarter of user growth

Twitter is gearing up for its most ambitious quarter of user growth, leaders of the social media company's consumer products division told staff

By: [Reuters](#) |

June 8, 2022 9:33:54 am



Twitter is preparing for its most ambitious growth ever. (Image credit:AP)

Twitter is gearing up for its most ambitious quarter of user growth, leaders of the social media company's consumer products division told staff on Tuesday. Twitter is aiming to grow its monetizable daily active users, or users who see advertising, by 13 million this quarter, according to an internal meeting that was heard by Reuters.

It is the highest goal the team has ever set, leaders told staff.

They added that Twitter is on track to reach the goal and has currently achieved 8.5 million in user growth, one of the best growth quarters to date.

Shares of Twitter rose 1% in afternoon trading.

The San Francisco-based company is maintaining its ambition to attract new users even as its deal to be acquired by billionaire Elon Musk remains uncertain.

Musk in a filing on Monday warned Twitter that he might walk away from the \$44 billion deal if the company does not provide data to allow him to independently verify the proportion of spam and fake accounts on the social media platform.

The company has said in public filings that spam and fake accounts represent fewer than 5% of quarterly monetisable daily active users.

A spokesperson for Twitter declined further comment.

The war in [Ukraine](#) boosted user activity on Twitter late in the first quarter, but time spent on the platform has declined 4% in the current quarter, leaders said.

Twitter added 20 million users during the second quarter of 2020, its highest quarterly sequential growth since at least 2019, as users flocked to the platform for news at the beginning of the pandemic.

Since then, the company has struggled to stay on track to reach its longer-term targets for both user growth and revenue, prompting a hiring freeze and cost-saving measures.

Twitter's internal goal of 13 million in user growth exceeds Wall Street's expectations, as analysts on average were projecting growth of 9 million, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

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Apple to launch mixed-reality headset in Q2 2023, analyst predicts

For Apple, the launch of its mixed-reality headset could open new market opportunities.

By: [Tech Desk](#) | New Delhi |
June 8, 2022 9:32:01 am



Apple's mixed reality headset could be capable of doing both AR and VR on a single device.

Apple's WWDC 2022 delivered new Macs with the M2 chip alongside [iOS](#) 16 and WatchOS 9 but sadly there was no mention of the long-rumoured mixed-reality headset at the developer conference. Looks like Apple has delayed the announcement of the headset, with the company launching the device in the second quarter of 2023. That's according to well-known analyst Ming-Chi Kuo.

Kuo took to Twitter to reveal that Apple will make its debut in the AR/VR market with a release of a mixed-reality headset in 2023. The analyst believes Apple will begin engineering validation testing (EVT) with its headset in the next three months. If the headset passes the test, there is a chance to see Apple launching the headset in early 2023. Kuo also predicts Apple will avoid a long gap between the announcement and the launch to stay ahead of the competition. Apple is expected to hand over the units to developers weeks after the announcement.

Apple has been working on its mixed-reality headset for the past few years. For Apple, the launch of its mixed-reality headset could open new market opportunities. The headset, even though is not out yet, is seen as a new product category for Apple, which hasn't launched a breakthrough product after the Apple Watch.

Bloomberg describes the headset as a mixed-reality device, meaning it will allow users to experience both AR and VR tech on a single device. It will reportedly use multiple cameras to beam images to high-resolution displays inside the headset. Insiders say, Jony Ive, the star designer at Apple who left the company in 2019, is still involved with the project. Some reports suggest the headset could cost north of \$3000, making it limited to developers and enthusiasts.

Apple isn't the only company working on a mixed-reality headset. Meta (formerly [Facebook](#)) is also aiming to release a mixed-reality headset. Earlier this year, the company previewed a virtual reality headset called "Project Cambria," which uses a technique called pass-through augmented reality.

On the augmented reality side, Apple will reportedly bring AR glasses to the market as soon as 2025. That glasses will offer an "optical see-through AR experience." Kuo predicts Apple plans to release contact lenses with AR capabilities sometime in 2030.

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Motorola launches Moto G82 5G: Price, specifications

The Moto G82 5G will come with Android 12 out-of-the-box and will have a 50 MP primary camera.

By: [Tech Desk](#) | Thalassery |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:27:59 am



The phone comes in two colours: Meteorite Gray and White Lily. (Image credit: Motorola)

[Motorola](#) has announced its Moto G82 5G for India. The smartphone will come with [Android](#) 12 and starts at Rs 21,499. However, the effective price with a bank offer is Rs 19,999. Here is everything you need to know about the device that will launch on 14.

Motorola Moto G82 5G: Specifications and details

The phone will be powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon 695 5G chipset. It also comes with a 120 Hz pOLED display that supports DC Dimming, a DCI-P3 colour gamut and comes with SGS Blue Eye certification. It comes with either 6GB or 8GB of LPDDR4X memory and 128GB of built-in storage. It supports expandable storage with microSD cards up to 1TB.

Its sensors include a fingerprint reader, proximity sensor, ambient light sensor, accelerometer, gyroscope and eCompass. It comes with a 3.5mm headphone jack. The Moto G82 5G is rated IP52 water-repellent.

The Moto G82 5G will come with a 50MP primary camera with optical image stabilisation. There is an 8MP secondary camera, which acts as an ultrawide camera and is also a depth sensor and a 2MP macro camera.

Some of the camera features include Burst Shot, Auto Smile Capture, Portrait Mode, Panorama, HDR mode, Night Vision, and a Pro Mode. It can shoot full HD video up to 60 fps.

Motorola Moto G82 5G: Pricing, availability and offer

The 6 GB RAM+128 GB variant starts at Rs 21,499. The effective price is Rs 19,999 with a Rs 1,500 instant discount on SBI credit cards. The 8GB+128 GB variant starts at Rs 22,999 but is available at Rs 21,499 with a Rs 1,5000 discount on SBI debit cards. The phone will go on sale on [Flipkart](#), Reliance Digital and leading retail stores on June 14.

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Surfshark VPN shuts down India servers

Prior to Surfshark, ExpressVPN removed its servers from India following the cybersecurity directive released by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). This may not be the last one, as at least one more VPN provider in NordVPN too is contemplating removing its India servers.

By: [ENS Economic Bureau](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 8:38:04 am



Surfshark said its physical servers in India will be shut down before the new law comes into power on June 27.

After [**ExpressVPN**](#), Surfshark became the second major virtual private network (VPN) provider to shut down its servers in India in response to the country's new cybersecurity directive which requires VPNs to store user data for a period of five years. The company said that VPN providers leaving India "isn't good for its burgeoning IT sector".

"In response to the new Indian data regulation laws, Surfshark is shutting down its servers in India. The new laws require VPN providers to record and keep customers' logs for 180 days as well as collect and keep excessive customer data for five years," the company said in a blog post on Tuesday. "Surfshark proudly operates under a strict 'no logs' policy, so such new requirements go against the core ethos of the company".

Prior to Surfshark, [**ExpressVPN removed its servers from India**](#) following the cybersecurity directive released by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). This may not be the last one, as at least one more VPN provider in NordVPN too is contemplating removing its India servers.

Surfshark said its physical servers in India will be shut down before the new law comes into power on June 27. After the rules kick in, the company will introduce "virtual" Indian servers, which will be physically located in Singapore and London. "Users in India who don't use Indian servers will not notice any differences – they will still be able to connect to whichever server outside the country they please," it said.

"VPN suppliers leaving India isn't good for its burgeoning IT sector. Surfshark's data shows that since 2004, the year data breaches became widespread, 14.9B accounts have been leaked and a striking 254.9M of them belong to users from India," the company said.

Surfshark is based out of the Netherlands and, as of April 2022, had over 3,200 servers in more than 65 countries.

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Xiaomi's 'Level Up' sale 2022: Here are all the offers on Mi, Redmi laptops

With sales commencing on 8 June 2022, consumers can avail discount upto INR 10,500 across all platforms.

By: [Tech Desk](#) | Pune |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:40:04 am



Xiaomi's Mi Notebook Ultra is available for discount as part of a new sale.

[Xiaomi](#) has announced its “Level Up” sale across Mi.com, Mi Home, [Flipkart](#), Amazon and all offline partners starting June 8 to June 17 2022. The company is offering discounts on its Mi and Redmi laptops. Here's a look at the offers and discounts that Xiaomi has for interested buyers.

Mi, Redmi laptops on discount

Xiaomi's Mi NoteBook Ultra ([Intel](#) core i5 + 8GB RAM) and Mi NoteBook Ultra (Intel core i5 + 16GB RAM) will be available for a discounted price of Rs 57,999 and Rs 59,999, respectively. While Mi NoteBook Pro can be purchased at Rs 55,999 for the Intel core i5 + 8GB RAM version. The 16GB RAM version will be available for Rs 57,999.

Meanwhile, the RedmiBook can be purchased at an additional discount of Rs 6000. Consumers can grab the Intel core i3 + 256GB variant for Rs 32,999 and the Intel core i3+ 512GB variant for Rs 35,999. Additionally, the RedmiBook Pro with the Intel core i5 processor can be purchased for Rs 42,999.

HDFC card holders can also avail of an additional discount of up to Rs 4,500, coupled with no-Cost EMI for 9 months. The campaign offers across all the e-commerce platforms (Mi.com, Mi Home, Flipkart, Amazon) will also include the following.

Product offers

S No.	Product	Selling price	Discount	Offer price
1	RedmiBook i3/256G	38,999	6,000	32,999
2	RedmiBook i3/512G	41,999	6,000	35,999
3	RedmiBook Pro i5/512G	49,999	7,000	42,999
4	Mi NoteBook Pro i5/8G/512G	56,999	1,000	55,999
5	Mi NoteBook Pro i5/16G/512G	61,499	3,500	57,999
6	Mi NoteBook Ultra i5/8G/512G	59,999	2,000	57,999
7	Mi NoteBook Ultra i5/16G/512G	65,499	5,500	59,999

Bank offers

Sno.	Product	Bank offers	EMI duration
1	RedmiBook i3/256G	3,000	3, 6 months (9 months during

			event)
2	RedmiBook i3/512G	3,000	3, 6 months (9 months during event)
3	RedmiBook i5/512G	3,500	3, 6 months (9 months during event)
4	Mi NoteBook Pro i5/8G/512G	3,500	3, 6 months (9 months during event)
5	Mi NoteBook Pro i5/16G/512G	3,500	3, 6 months (9 months during event)
6	Mi NoteBook Pro i7/16G/512G	4,500	3, 6 months (9 months during event)
7	Mi NoteBook Ultra i5/8G/512G	3,500	3, 6 months (9 months during event)
8	Mi NoteBook Ultra i5/16G/512G	3,500	3, 6 months (9 months during event)

In other news, Xiaomi India announces its partnership with YouTube to offer extended free trials of YouTube Premium to eligible users on select current devices. Eligible customers will receive up to three months of YouTube Premium free of charge, in a move to give users access to the best content ad-free and offline, wherever available.

Xiaomi 12 Pro, Xiaomi 11i, Xiaomi 11i Hypercharge, and Xiaomi 11T Pro users will get 3 month extended free YouTube premium trial. Users who have the Xiaomi Pad 5, Redmi Note 11 Pro+, Redmi Note 11 Pro, Redmi Note 11, Redmi Note 11T, and Redmi Note 11S users will enjoy a two month extended free trial.

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EU agrees single mobile charging port in blow to Apple

Brussels has been pushing for a single mobile charging port for more than a decade, prompted by complaints from iPhone and Android users about having to switch to different chargers for their devices.

By: [Reuters](#) |
June 7, 2022 6:12:38 pm



Apple, which has warned the proposal would hurt innovation and create a mountain of electronic waste, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. (Illustrative image) (File photo)

[Apple](#) will have to change the connector on iPhones sold in Europe by 2024 after EU countries and lawmakers agreed on Tuesday to a single mobile charging port for mobile phones, tablets and cameras in a world first.

The political intervention, which the European Commission said would make life easier for consumers and save them money, came after companies failed to reach a common solution.

Brussels has been pushing for a single mobile charging port for more than a decade, prompted by complaints from iPhone and [Android](#) users about having to switch to different chargers for their devices.

iPhones are charged from a Lightning cable, while Android-based devices use USB-C connectors.

Half the chargers sold with mobile phones in 2018 had a USB micro-B connector, while 29% had a USB-C connector and 21% a Lightning connector, according to a 2019 Commission study.

“By autumn 2024, USB Type-C will become the common charging port for all mobile phones, tablets and cameras in the EU,” the European Parliament said in a statement.

EU industry chief Thierry Breton said the deal would save around 250 million euros (\$267 million) for consumers.

“It will also allow new technologies such as wireless charging to emerge and to mature without letting innovation become a source of market fragmentation and consumer inconvenience,” he said.

Apple, which has warned the proposal would hurt innovation and create a mountain of electronic waste, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

“We are proud that laptops, e-readers, earbuds, keyboards, computer mice, and portable navigation devices are also included,” said lawmaker Alex Agius Saliba who steered the debate at the parliament.

Laptops will have to comply with the legislation within 40 months of it entering into force. The EU executive will have the power in future to harmonise wireless charging systems.

The fact the deal also covers e-readers, earbuds and other technologies will impact [Samsung](#), [Huawei](#) and other device makers.

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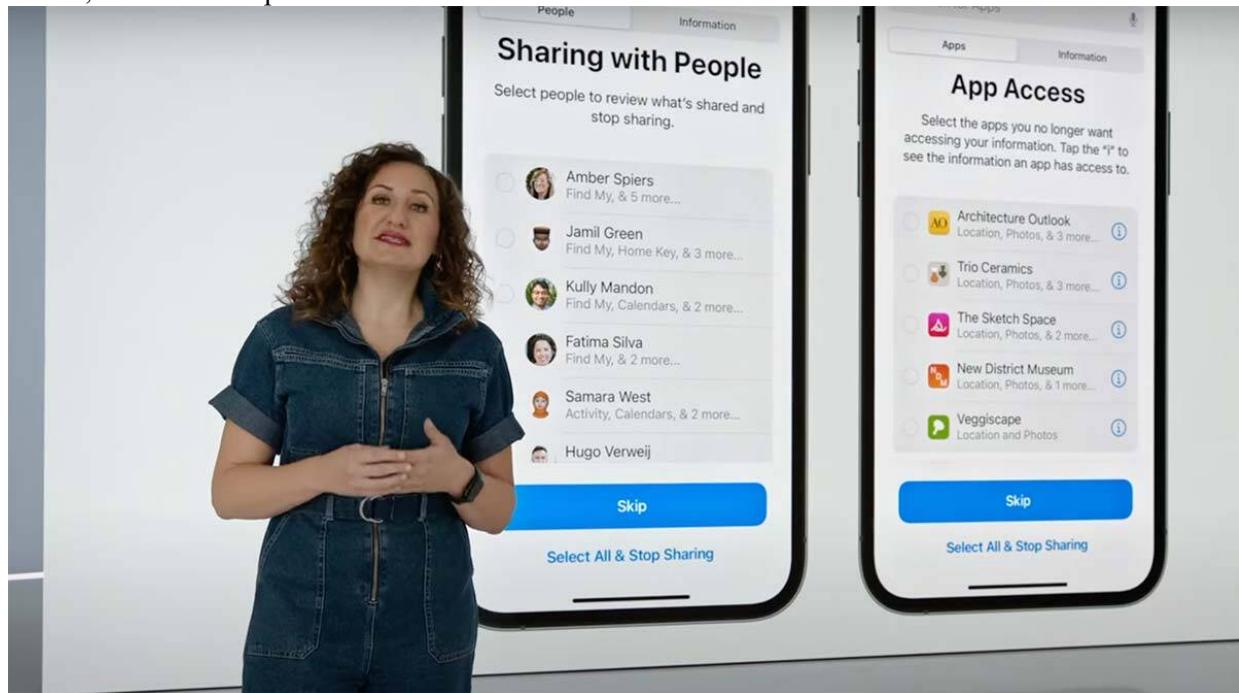
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Why Apple iOS 16's Safety Check feature is a departure, and an acknowledgement

When Apple talked about ‘Safety Check’, it was also an acknowledgement... that our smartphones can pose a safety risk for women in abusive relationships.

Written by [Shruti Dhapola](#) |

June 7, 2022 5:45:19 pm



Apple's Safety Check feature is designed to help women who are escaping abusive relationships. (Image credit: Apple WWDC livestream)

Typically when companies talk about privacy and security for their software, their focus is geared toward most users. So when [Apple](#) talked about ‘Safety

'Check' it was certainly a departure. It was also an acknowledgement... that our smartphones can pose a safety risk for women in abusive relationships.

Apple's feature comes at a time when there's a rather tumultuous debate about who constitutes the 'perfect domestic abuse' victim thanks to the [Depp-Heard defamation trial](#). There's also been concern that Apple's own [AirTags are being used to stalk women](#). But debates aside, there's no doubt that women in abusive relationships, who are trying to break away are at risk. At times, the risks might even be life-threatening.

In such instances, a smartphone can then become an easy tracking tool, it can also become a tool to carry out other forms of abuse. There are several reports of 'stalkerware' apps being used by abusive partners to keep a track of their partner's digital habits. The information can often be used to control victims further.

So in comes Safety Check, which ensures that when a woman does decide to break away, at least her phone cannot be used against her. The idea here is to reduce any control or advantage the abuser might enjoy by accessing the victim's device. According to Apple, Safety Check will ensure that victims can quickly review their settings and reset the access they might have granted others.



Apple iOS 16's Safety Check feature is designed to help women to get safety quickly, and ensures their device cannot be used to track them.

This could include shared passwords to the iCloud account, which does contain access to a lot of information such as photos, messages, etc. Most importantly Safety Check will also disable location sharing via Find My. This bit is really important because an abuser could use this information to track a victim's last known location and find them. Apple in its presentation said the idea was to ensure that victims can quickly cut ties and get to safety.

Apple says "Safety Check stops sharing location with others via Find My and resets the system privacy permissions for all apps." Further, it will sign the user out of iCloud on all other devices and restrict "messages and FaceTime to the device in your hand." The user would also be able to audit permissions granted to apps and see which ones need to be revoked.

Of course, how this feature actually rolls out still remains to be seen. The effectiveness can only be determined once it is made available on all iPhones. It would have been interesting if Apple had also extended this to its macOS, though it might eventually do this as well. Of course, even with these steps, there's no guarantee that abusers won't find other ways to extract information from a victim's device. But still, this is an important first step taken by Apple. And hopefully, other smartphone makers, including [Google](#) will take note and offer something similar.

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Cryptoverse: The early birds betting bitcoin's bottoming out

Overall flows into such funds turned positive last month, with a weekly average inflow of \$66.5 million, a reversal from a dismal April when they saw a weekly average outflow of \$49.6 million, according to data provider CryptoCompare.

By: [Reuters](#) |
June 7, 2022 3:48:54 pm



Bitcoin is seen in this picture illustration taken October 19, 2021.
(REUTERS)

As the crypto winter creeps into June, the first signs of a thaw are emerging. Some investors are now betting that bitcoin is bottoming out, judging by the

money heading into listed cryptocurrency funds, which represent just a slice of the market yet are popular among institutional and retail players alike.

Overall flows into such funds turned positive last month, with a weekly average inflow of \$66.5 million, a reversal from a dismal April when they saw a weekly average outflow of \$49.6 million, according to data provider CryptoCompare.

“It’s largely institutional, and to a degree retail investors, recognizing that the pain is already endured, and we’re closer to the bottom than we are to the top,” said Ben McMillan, chief investment officer of Arizona-based IDX Digital Assets.

“If you’re getting into crypto at these levels, a little near-term volatility could be worth a long-term payoff,” he added. “A lot of institutional investors are starting to look at crypto as a source of longer-term growth potential.”

It’s hard to know whether the tentative flows will last, though, or if the nascent trend will be replicated across the wider market.

Many people will also think twice before piling into the market again, having been mightily clobbered as crypto was buffeted by worries over global monetary tightening and rising [inflation](#). Bitcoin has lost roughly half its value since a November peak, it is down by a third in 2022 and has been languishing at around \$30,000 for a month.

The data from funds nonetheless indicate some investors are returning to crypto, albeit into the perceived safety of exchange-traded products (ETP) with their promise of greater liquidity and security.

The assets under management of several bitcoin-futures ETFs have risen in the past week, according to Kraken Intelligence. The assets of the ProShares Bitcoin Strategy ETF’s have grown 6%, while those of the Global X Blockchain & Bitcoin Strategy ETF and VanEck Bitcoin Strategy ETF have climbed over 3%.

BY comparison, ProShares’ bitcoin fund saw outflows of over \$127 million in April.

The bullish trend has extended into June, with global bitcoin ETP holdings jumping to an all-time high of 205,008 bitcoin in the first two days of the month, Norway-based crypto research firm Arcane Research found.

“This is a promising sign for what’s to come,” said Arcane analyst Vetle Lunde.

In an indication investors are being selective and cautious, only bitcoin funds have received inflows while funds focused on ethereum and other crypto still experienced outflows.

Still in the red

But let’s not forget, while the fortunes of some funds may potentially be turning up, most have posted poor returns this year as the crypto market has tanked.

U.S. digital assets funds have lost 46% on average so far in 2022, posting losses of 22% in May, according to Morningstar.

All listed digital asset investment products tracked by CryptoCompare lost money in May, with the worst performer being Grayscale’s Digital Large Cap Fund product, with a 38.5% fall.

“Bitcoin has been rangebound in concert with the broader market activity of late, investors are looking for a bottom and are uncertain where that is,” said Jack McDonald, CEO of PolySign, which specializes in digital asset custody solutions for institutional investors.

Shares of the Grayscale Bitcoin Trust one of the biggest bitcoin funds with over \$19 billion in assets, are trading at a 29% discount to net asset value, around its steepest discount since inception and indicative of low demand for the product.

And despite the pick up in May, many market watchers expect inflows to crypto funds to remain subdued until macroeconomic and regulatory risks become more clear.

“We’re waiting for a high conviction bid to come back into the markets,” added McMillan at IDX. “There’s still a lot of wood to chop on the macro front.”

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Solana wants Bitcoin to adapt Proof-of-Stake. But is it working well for Solana?

Solana blockchain stopped creating new blocks due to something called a run-time bug.

By: [Tech Desk](#) | Pune |
June 7, 2022 3:42:08 pm



Solana network is incredibly energy efficient. (Snapshot: Solana)

Solana's co-founder in an interview with CNBC asserted that Bitcoin needed to change to [**Proof-of-Stake \(PoS\)**](#) to remain relevant. However, it looks like PoS is not working very well for Solana. The Solana blockchain has been experiencing multiple outages since May. As a result, validators in the network were not processing new blocks for several hours. Applications built on Solana's blockchain were also taken offline multiple times.

But, how did the outage happen?

Solana blockchain stopped creating new blocks due to something called a run-time bug. As a result crypto-miners or ‘validators’ were not able to mine new blocks and earn rewards. Run time bug causes a situation where validators process failed transactions twice, leading to a complete stoppage of the network.

Mining is essentially a verifying game. Every transaction that occurs on any blockchain has to be verified by crypto miners. If a failed transaction gets verified by miners, the whole blockchain is disrupted. This is the disadvantage of the PoS consensus mechanism.

Unlike Proof-of-Work (PoW) used by Bitcoin, Ethereum, etc where every miner is independently verifying transactions, PoS chooses one miner from the mining pool. So, if the miner verifies a false transaction, the whole blockchain becomes non-functional. This also causes blockchain to split into two parts, ultimately stopping blockchain for hours altogether.

Explaining the issue, a Solana blockchain developer on Twitter said, “Chain splits occur when two parts of the network compute a different state given the same transactions for any reason. They are a class of bugs that are hard to prevent entirely, even with large test coverage, and affect any chain.” Every transaction that happened during this time was nulled by the Solana team. The network was restored after over four hours and the news was shared via the blockchain’s official Twitter handle.

It is worth noting that PoW blockchains do not get affected by run-time bug issues. This is because unlike PoS crypto miners use specialised devices to validate every transaction.

Solana says that it has addressed the issue with ‘double processing power’. But, we cannot be sure whether outages will continue to happen. Notably, this was the eighth time Solana blockchain stopped, causing investors fortune and their time.

Meanwhile, Solana claims that a single [transaction on its network consumes less energy](#) than two [Google](#) searches and 24 times less energy

than charging your phone, according to a report by the Solana Foundation.

In other news, Ethereum is also **switching to PoS**, in a bid to go eco-friendly. However, a lot of research is yet to be done to understand the risks associated with PoS and then mitigate them. For now, it seems more cryptocurrencies are likely to follow PoS in the future.

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NASA and SpaceX stand down from scientific cargo resupply mission after issue

CRS-25 is supposed to carry NASA's Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation (EMIT) and other important scientific cargo.

By: [Tech Desk](#) | Thalassery |
Updated: June 7, 2022 4:35:49 pm



A portion of the SpaceX Cargo Dragon vehicle is pictured as the space station orbited above northern France in September of 2021. (Illustrative image) (Image credit: NASA)

NASA and SpaceX are standing down from the Falcon 9 launch of the CRS-25 cargo mission to the International Space Station. SpaceX's 25th

commercial resupply services mission is supposed to carry NASA's Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation (EMIT) and other important scientific cargo. Officials from NASA and SpaceX met yesterday to discuss in issue identified over the weekend and what would be the best path forward.

SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft was supposed to lift off from Launch Complex 39A at the space agency's Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 10.22 AM EDT (7.52 PM IST) on June 10. The mission is supposed to deliver new science investigations, supplies and equipment for the international crew, including a new climate research investigation.

EMIT will identify the composition of mineral dust from Earth's arid regions and analyse dust carried through the atmosphere from deserts to see what effects it has on the planet as part of NASA's data contributions to monitoring climate change.

During propellant loading of the Dragon spacecraft ahead of launch, elevated vapour readings of mono-methyl hydrazine (MMH) were measured in an isolated region of the Draco thruster propulsion system. MMH is used as a propellant in bipropellant rocket engines. After detecting the elevated readings, the propellant and oxidiser were offloaded from that region of the thruster to support further inspections and testing.

The joint NASA and SpaceX teams will only determine and announce a new target launch date after identifying the elevated readings' exact source and determining the cause.

Meanwhile, flight Engineers Jessica Watkins (NASA) and Samantha Cristoforetti (European Space Agency), who are on the ISS, will be getting up to speed with the Dragon cargo craft's rendezvous and docking procedures. Both of them trained on a computer on Monday to prepare for their roles as they monitor Dragon's automated arrival and docking.

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Complete list of compatible devices for iOS 16, watchOS 9, iPadOS 16 and macOS Ventura

iOS 16, watchOS 9, macOS Ventura, and iPadOS 16: Let's take a look at the full list of compatible devices for the Apple's new software and which older devices will no longer get an upgrade.

By: [Tech Desk](#) |

Updated: June 8, 2022 9:29:22 am



Apple's new software was announced during the WWDC keynote. Here's a look at compatible device. (Image of macOS Ventura from Apple website)

[Apple](#)'s WWDC keynote took place yesterday with the company revealing its [latest software and hardware products](#). But each software upgrade cycle

also means the end of the line for older products and so is the case with [iOS](#) 16, watchOS 9, macOS Ventura and iPadOS. Let's take a look at the full list of compatible devices for Apple's new software and which older devices will no longer get an upgrade.

iOS 16: List of compatible iPhones

[Apple's iOS 16 is compatible with all devices](#) from [iPhone 8](#) and above. So the full list includes iPhone 13, 13 mini, iPhone 13 Pro, iPhone 13 Pro Max, the entire iPhone 12 and 11 lineups as well as the iPhone Xs, Xs Max and XR. The older [iPhone X](#) and iPhone 8 and [iPhone 8 Plus](#) are also supported. The iPhone SE second and third-gen are supported as well.

Apple is no longer supporting iPhone 7, iPhone 7 Plus, iPhone 6s, iPhone 6s Plus and the iPhone SE (1st generation). For these devices, iOS 15 will be the last update. The iPod touch 7th generation is also no longer supported and will remain at iOS 15. Apple [discontinued the iPod this year](#), so it is not surprising to see this.

watchOS 9: List of compatible watches

Just like iOS 16, watchOS 9 is also limiting support for older Apple Watches. For one, the Apple Watch Series 3 is no longer supported and will remain at watchOS 8. Apple will support Series 4 and above with watchOS 9. Users will need to be on an iPhone 8 or higher (iPhone SE 2 and higher) running iOS 16 to get watchOS 9.

Series 3 has been one of the best-selling and long-supported watches by Apple. It was launched back in September 2017. Apple is still selling the older watch on its website for Rs 20,900.

macOS Ventura: List of compatible Macs

The macOS Ventura support list includes run macOS Ventura iMacs from 2017 and later, Mac Pro from 2019 and later, the iMac Pro from 2017, and the Mac mini from 2018 and later. For laptops, MacBook Air from 2018 and

later, the MacBook from 2017 and later, and MacBook Pro from 2017 and later are supported. Obviously, the new MacBook Air 2022 and MacBook Pro 2022 support the new macOS.

In MacBook Air, the full list of supported models are:

MacBook Air (M1, 2020) Model identifier: MacBookAir10,1.

MacBook Air (Retina, 13-inch, 2020) Model Identifier: MacBookAir9,1

MacBook Air (Retina, 13-inch, 2019) Model Identifier: MacBookAir8,2

MacBook Air (Retina, 13-inch, 2018) Model Identifier: MacBookAir8,1

In MacBook Pro, the full list of supported models includes:

MacBook Pro (14-inch, 2021) Model Identifier: MacBookPro18,3,

MacBookPro18,4

MacBook Pro (16-inch, 2021) Model Identifier: MacBookPro18,1,

MacBookPro18,2

MacBook Pro (13-inch, M1, 2020) Model Identifier: MacBookPro17,1

MacBook Pro (13-inch, 2020, Two Thunderbolt 3 ports) Model Identifier:

MacBookPro16,3

MacBook Pro (13-inch, 2020, Four Thunderbolt 3 ports) Model Identifier:
MacBookPro16,2

MacBook Pro (16-inch, 2019) Model Identifier: MacBookPro16,1,
MacBookPro16,4

MacBook Pro (15-inch, 2019) Model Identifier: MacBookPro15,1,
MacBookPro15,3

MacBook Pro (13-inch, 2019, Four Thunderbolt 3 ports) Model Identifier:
MacBookPro15,2

MacBook Pro (15-inch, 2018) Model Identifier: MacBookPro15,1

MacBook Pro (13-inch, 2018, Four Thunderbolt 3 ports) Model Identifier:
MacBookPro15,2

MacBook Pro (15-inch, 2017) Model Identifier: MacBookPro14,3

MacBook Pro (13-inch, 2017, Four Thunderbolt 3 ports) Model Identifier:
MacBookPro14,2

MacBook Pro (13-inch, 2017, Two Thunderbolt 3 ports) Model Identifier:
MacBookPro14,1

With the older macOS Monterey, Apple was still supporting iMacs as far back as late 2015, the later 2013 Mac Pro, the 2014 Mac mini, and the MacBook Air and Pro from early 2015 and MacBook from early 2016. Effectively it has pulled support for some of these older devices with the new OS.

iPadOS 16 : List of compatible iPads

The new iPadOS 16 is compatible with the following models: iPad Pro (All models), iPad Air (3rd generation and later), iPad (5th generation and later) and iPad mini (5th generation and later). Last year's list of supported devices included the iPad Air 2 and the iPad mini 4th gen, which are no longer supported.

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Don't believe everything you read about the man in this photo

“Bernie” was a so-called crisis actor, employed by the left to drum up sympathy for causes like gun control.

By: [New York Times](#) |
June 7, 2022 1:08:53 pm



Jordie Jordan, who has been tagged on social media platforms with the name Bernie in what started as a mean prank but has devolved into cyberbullying, on June 3, 2022. A picture of Jordan has been attached to a fake name and numerous bogus reports of his death, including from the mass shootings in Uvalde, Texas. (Madeline Gray/The New York Times)

Written by Tiffany Hsu

In the outpouring of grief immediately after the recent school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, posts appeared on Twitter and other social media platforms about a man named “Bernie.” He was a teacher at Robb Elementary School who died sheltering his students from gunfire, the posts said. Many of the posts included a picture of a grinning, bearded man in glasses.

Some commenters piped up, saying they had seen that face, and that name, before.

On that point, they were right. “Bernie” and the photograph had appeared before on some Twitter accounts that looked as if they were from news organizations like CNN, Fox News and the BBC. One of those accounts said the man was a journalist executed in Kabul by the Taliban. A second one said he was an activist killed in [Ukraine](#) by a mine planted by Russian-backed separatists. A third said he was murdered in last month’s massacre at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York.

For those inclined toward conspiracy theories, the conclusion was obvious: “Bernie” was a so-called crisis actor, employed by the left to drum up sympathy for causes like gun control. His repeated appearances were used to prop up theories that major tragedies were hoaxes and that the mainstream media was complicit.

On all those points, the conspiracy theorists were wrong. There is no “Bernie,” he’s not a crisis actor and news organizations are not behind the posts. And the photo? It is of a 36-year-old online gamer, Jordie Jordan. He’s alive, and he had nothing to do with the posts.

Instead, the posts are part of a yearslong harassment campaign against him, taking place on online platforms like Twitter, Reddit and Discord. The posts have over time spread bogus information about high-profile tragedies to the delight of many of those sharing the joke.

“I have nothing to do with it,” Jordan said. “They just take a picture I put up on the internet, and they just put me into everything.”

“Bernie” — the full version sounds like a racial slur when spoken aloud — has appeared more than 8,700 times on Twitter, according to an analysis

conducted last week by Zignal Labs, a media insights company. The name has been mentioned more than 1,200 times on Twitter since the shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde, a nearly 6,000% increase from the prior two weeks, according to Zignal Labs.

The harassment seems to have started as a racist inside joke at Jordan's expense. As the campaign has continued, misinformation researchers say, it has shown how mass shootings and other tragedies have become an amusement for a certain subset of the online world — a chance to sow confusion and then revel in it. The initial posts, intended to troll, sometimes fuel rumors that the massacres are false-flag operations or staged propaganda events carried out by actors.

The falsehoods add to the trauma suffered by survivors and victims' families, tarnishing the memories of their loved ones. Sometimes, as was the case after the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, the falsehoods lead to harassment from conspiracy theorists.

"It really dehumanizes the events, the consequences of shootings, and makes it all into a joke," said Whitney Phillips, a longtime disinformation researcher.

Jordan, who streams himself playing video games on YouTube under the Wings of Redemption handle, has nearly 440,000 subscribers. He began playing Call of Duty for an online audience in 2008, after losing a job at a steel mill. Before that, he regularly appeared on a podcast, where he attracted some criticism for his statements, including some homophobic and racial slurs, and comments in support of lowering the age of consent. "I have apologized profusely for the error of my juvenile thought process and live with the ramifications of that every day," he said, attributing the comments to his "shock jock" routine.

He said he had first learned of the "Bernie" meme from Reddit posts in 2020. The photo that is used is a selfie he took on his front porch in 2018 and posted on Twitter.

He said he had barely been troubled by the campaign initially, calling it "such a small thing" compared with the multiple times, he said, that he was

subjected to more dangerous trolling, including so-called swatting pranks, in which people place hoax phone calls to report fake crimes in an attempt to compel a response from law enforcement.

Jordan said he believed he had first became the target of serious trolling in 2018, after he raised tens of thousands of dollars from followers to undergo weight-loss surgery and then dragged his feet before undergoing the procedure. Photos that he posted from a hospital bed as proof that he had completed the operation were later used in fake reports of “Bernie’s” death.

In online chat rooms and livestreams, other gamers have suggested that the harassment began earlier, after Jordan’s displays of frustration and offensive comments during gaming sessions and podcast episodes.

“I think this gives them a form of power,” he said of the people posting his photo, often under accounts intended to look as if they belong to news organizations. “Messing with somebody or making somebody feel bad, or saying that is just horrific that they’re so desensitized to, that gives them a feeling of belonging.”

But what happens next is the even more insidious danger, Phillips said: The joke is taken at face value by the sizable portion of people who are already primed to distrust society’s institutions.

“It just exacerbates all the conspiratorial stuff that we have swirling around and sets us on a dangerous course,” she said. “It further corrodes our ability to be grounded in the same empirical reality.”

Such pranks have a long historical precedent, researchers said. One man, a comedian, has been falsely named as the gunman in several mass killings, including a shooting in San Bernardino, California, in 2015.

“I don’t think you can find an event of significant magnitude where this doesn’t happen in the aftermath — it’s almost a reflex at this point,” said Mike Caulfield, a research scientist at the Center for an Informed Public at the University of Washington. “Nowadays, people are promoting false-flag and crisis-actor theories 20 minutes after the event, and in very formulaic ways.”

Caulfield described the cycle as “almost factory production, happening like clockwork.”

In Jordan’s case, his photo resurfaces in social media posts from accounts that mimic news outlets and even copy their logos. A report last year that “Bernie” had been executed by Taliban soldiers in Kabul was posted on Twitter from [@CNNAfghan](#), a fake account that Twitter suspended, and then amplified by [@BBCAfghanNews](#), another suspended account, which cited “multiple reports” of the death.

“Bernie” has also been described as a victim of a tornado in Kentucky in 2021 and an explosion in Beirut in 2020. [@FoxNewsUkraine](#), a fake account with 17 followers that has also been suspended, claimed this year that he was “a right-wing journalist” who had been killed in Mariupol, Ukraine, while [@RussiaCnn](#), which has two followers, said he was a pilot who had been shot down while flying toward Russia.

[@CnnZim](#), in its only post, said “Bernie” was a journalist who had been caught in the crossfire between Russian and Ukrainian forces. The account, which has no followers, describes itself in its profile as a “fake account,” adding, “Could delete later to prove how easy it is to dupe people.” Several replies to the post chastised CNN, which is not affiliated with any of the fake accounts, for faulty journalism.

In response to an inquiry from The New York Times, Twitter said in a statement that it had suspended most of the accounts for violating its policy against misleading and deceptive identities.

“In line with our abusive behavior policy, we prohibit content that denies that mass murder or other mass casualty events took place, where we can verify that the event occurred, and when the content is shared with abusive intent,” Twitter said.

George Galloway, a former member of the British Parliament who hosted a program called “The Mother of All Talk Shows” on the Russian-owned news outlet Sputnik, said falsely on the air in February that “Bernie’s” online appearances were an example of disinformation spread by the mainstream media. As proof, Galloway cited a tweet from an account called CNN

Ukraine, which posted the photo and described “Bernie” as “the first American casualty of the Ukraine crisis.” The account, which is not affiliated with CNN, has been suspended.

“None of the liars that lied, the sewers that carried their lies, all the poor idiots who believed it all — none of them will face any consequences for it,” Galloway thundered. The show now streams from his YouTube account, which has nearly 200,000 subscribers.

He said in a direct message on Twitter last week that it was an “honest mistake in a fast-moving live show” and that he was “sincerely sorry” and had apologized the night of the broadcast.

Around the same time, Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia’s representative to the United Nations, used two reports about “Bernie” from fake CNN accounts to criticize the mainstream media.

“Colleagues, beware, the main battle is not in #Ukraine, it’s with lies and fakes of MSM,” Polyanskiy wrote on Twitter. CNN later debunked his claims, noting that “the ‘CNN Ukraine’ and ‘CNN Afghanistan’ accounts behind the tweets are both phonies that have been suspended by Twitter for violating its policy against impersonation.”

Asked this week about the post, Polyanskiy said in direct message that he had forgotten about it in the three months since he put it up and had “no idea” who “Bernie” was.

“But if you imply that I wrongfully criticized MSM and because of these bogus accounts my criticism lacks credibility, I will not agree with it,” he wrote.

This article originally appeared in The New York Times.

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Sony's former chief, who pushed content but missed iPod wave, dies at 84

Nobuyuki Idei, who was 84, took the helm in 1995 to drive Sony into entertainment from hardware.

By: [Reuters](#) |
June 7, 2022 12:40:32 pm



Known for his charisma and frank manner, Idei had been handpicked by predecessor Norio Ohga but his push into content opened a rift between Japan-based engineers and foreign movie and music executives. (File photo)

Nobuyuki Idei, the urbane former chief executive of [Sony](#) Group Corp, who spearheaded the Japanese conglomerate's push into content but missed the shift to MP3s that led to the iPod, died on June 2, the company said on Tuesday.

Idei, who was 84, took the helm in 1995 to drive Sony into entertainment from hardware, but under his leadership the company behind the Walkman was slow to embrace MP3s and flat-panel TVs.

Known for his charisma and frank manner, Idei had been handpicked by predecessor Norio Ohga but his push into content opened a rift between Japan-based engineers and foreign movie and music executives.

“When I was in charge of Sony, I was criticised for saying we shouldn’t make panels,” Idei told Reuters in 2012. “But when Toyota builds cars it buys the steel from Nippon Steel. The value is in the car, not the steel.”

Under Idei, Sony ceded its lead in the portable music industry it had created to [Apple](#), with the company also outmanoeuvred by domestic rivals and Korean companies in televisions.

In 2000, Sony’s valuation was seven times that of Apple and Ohga had considered a takeover of the California-based firm during the early 1990s, Reuters has reported.

Idei stepped down in 2005 to take responsibility for slumping earnings and was replaced by Britain-born Howard Stringer, who became the first foreigner to lead the company.

The drive away from fabrication accelerated after Idei’s tenure as Sony sold off loss-making hardware operations to focus on entertainment, such as the PlayStation games business.

“The prescience and foresight with which (he) predicted the impact of the internet, and engaged proactively with digitalisation across Sony, amazes me to this day,” Sony’s chief executive, Kenichiro Yoshida, said in a statement.

Idei died of liver failure. After his departure from Sony, he had continued to play a role in corporate Japan as an adviser and director on company boards.

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Amazon Monsoon Carnival: Top deals on smartphones, Echo devices, TVs and more

Here are some products customers can choose from on Amazon.in Monsoon Carnival with up to 60 per cent off and additional deals from sellers.

By: [Tech Desk](#) | Pune |
Updated: June 7, 2022 12:08:07 pm



Amazon.in has announced its 'Monsoon Carnival' kickstarting from June 07, 2022. (File Photo)

Amazon.in has announced its 'Monsoon Carnival' kickstarting from June 07 to June 12, 2022. The shopping event will provide customers with exciting deals and additional cashback on thousands of products across waterproof

smartphones and gadgets, consumer electronics, TV, home & kitchen appliances, groceries, beauty & fashion essentials, and much more.

Here are some products customers can choose from on Amazon.in Monsoon Carnival with up to 60 per cent off and additional deals from sellers.

Smartphones, gadgets and mobile accessories

Redmi Note 11 is available on amazon. in for Rs 12,999 approx. [Samsung Galaxy M32](#) (Light Blue, 6GB RAM, 128GB) is now available for Rs 16,999.

On the wearable front, Boat Airdopes 141 42H Playtime is now available for Rs 1,499. Fastrack Reflex VOX Smartwatch with Alexa Built-in can be bought for Rs 4,995, and Chumbak Squad 2.0 Smartwatch is available for a discounted rate of Rs 2,499.

Home appliances & TV

IFB 6 kg 5 Star Fully Automatic Front-Loading Washing Machine is now available for Rs 22,490.

Redmi 80 cm (32 inches) HD Ready Smart LED TV for Rs 14,999 approx. And Mi 125.7 cm (50 Inches) 4K Ultra HD [Android](#) Smart LED TV 4X for Rs 35,999 approx.

Amazon devices

Echo Dot (4th Gen, 2020 release) (Black) is available at the discounted price of Rs 3,999 approx.

Fire TV Stick (3rd Gen, 2021) with an all-new Alexa Voice Remote (includes TV and app controls is available at Amazon for Rs 3,999 approx.

Kindle 10th Gen features a glare-free touchscreen display that reads like real paper, even in the direct sunlight. The product is priced at Rs 7,999 approx.

Additionally, customers can save more and opt for a wide range of affordable finance options such as a 10 per cent instant bank discount on Bank of Baroda Credit Cards and Citi Bank Credit and Debit Cards, Credit/Debit EMI transactions; no-cost EMI on Debit & Credit cards, exchange offers and more. Amazon Pay users can also enjoy an additional benefit of earning exciting cashback rewards, on June 11 and 12, 2022.

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Apple dives deeper into autos with software for car dashboard

Apple said it was in talks with automakers such as Ford Motor Co , Nissan Motor Co, Mercedes-Benz and Honda Motor Corp.

By: [Reuters](#) |

June 7, 2022 11:55:31 am



The announcements at Apple's annual developer conference showed a company that was once an outsider working its way firmly into the mainstream of nearly every screen in day-to-day life. (Image credit: Apple)

[Apple](#) Inc on Monday announced it would more deeply integrate its software into the core driving systems of cars, while the iPhone maker rolled out a slew of features for payments and business collaboration and a pair of new laptops.

The announcements at Apple's annual developer conference showed a company that was once an outsider working its way firmly into the mainstream of nearly every screen in day-to-day life.

The company whose late 1990s turnaround meant branding itself for rebels and troublemakers spent Monday talking up how to use iPads to collaborate on business presentations and how its software will eventually help display fuel economy on car dashboards. Notably absent were any hints of Apple's expected next big product, a mixed-reality headset that can overlay digital objects on a view of the real world. Hopeful fans got only a few tidbits of new augmented reality technology at a technical talk.

And Apple announced Apply Pay Later, a service that lets users make interest-free installments. The business, which will work over the MasterCard Inc network wherever Apple Pay is accepted, puts Apple in direct competition with payment providers like Affirm Holdings Inc and PayPal Holdings Inc.

But mostly Apple doubled down on existing products. A MacBook Air laptop was redesigned around a new M2 silicon processor, which it says is 35% faster than the previous M1 chip. The new laptop will be 2.7 pounds (1.2 kg) and have a 1080p high-definition camera to provide better images on video calls. The MacBook Air will start at \$1,199, Apple announced at its WWDC 2022 conference.

The M2 chip will also power the 13-inch MacBook Pro, which will start at \$1,299 and be available next month. Both chips will use a second generation of 5-nanometer chip manufacturing technology. Apple did not say who would make the chip, but likely manufacturers include longtime Apple partner Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co, which is struggling with delays of newer technology.

"They have to do volume" with the new laptops, said Bob O'Donnell of TECHnalysis Research. "That's the safe choice," he said of the 5-nanometer chips.

But Apple did break with its tradition of not tipping its hand about future technology when it showed off a new car dashboard that it said would be

able to display data from major instruments such as speed, fuel levels and gas mileage. Apple said it was in talks with automakers such as Ford Motor Co , Nissan Motor Co, Mercedes-Benz and Honda Motor Corp. Vehicles with the software will not be announced until late next year.

The software connects more deeply into core driving systems than prior versions that were limited to the vehicle's infotainment displays for playing music and showing maps. While Apple's car software has been in vehicles since 2014 is currently available in more than 600 models – even including a few motorcycles – it is largely separate from the vehicle's own operating systems. Vehicles owners must leave the system for even basic functions like adjusting a car's climate controls, a shortcoming the updated system is designed to address.

Polestar, the premium electric vehicle maker owned by China's Geely and Volvo Cars, is installing the current version of Apple CarPlay into its Polestar 2 cars through an over-the-air update later this month, Polestar spokesman JP Canton said. Which Polestar cars will get the newer version Apple announced on Monday are under discussion and no further information was available, he said.

A spokeswoman for Ford, which announced a software deal with Alphabet's [Google](#) last year, declined to comment on Apple's announcement. Automakers remain wary of allowing the tech giants unfettered access to the data generated by connected cars, or to allow them to displace the automakers' brands with their own in dashboard displays.

Apple's iPad also received a revamp to make it easier for users to juggle multiple applications and displays and to collaborate on business-centric documents such as presentations. The company also previewed an app called Freeform, which will act as a virtual whiteboard that multiple users can tap to share ideas during video meetings over Apple's FaceTime service. The productivity features put Apple in more direct competition with [Microsoft](#), whose Surface tablet computers are popular among business users.

Apple also added an edit button to iMessage for sent messages, beating Twitter to a long-requested feature.

The tech giant is also adding a tool called “Safety Check” to turn off access to sensitive information for people in abusive situations.

Apple introduced a new technology called Passkeys to replace passwords on websites. Apple said Passkeys are safer than traditional passwords because Passkeys are never stored on a web server. The company said it is working to enable the use of Passkeys with non-Apple devices.

Apple shares closed up less than 1%, similar to their level at the start of the presentation.

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The most unexpected surprises from Apple's WWDC 2022 event

From the debut of the next-generation CarPlay to the ability to use your iPhone as a Mac webcam, these are the most unexpected announcements at Apple's WWDC 2022.

Written by [Anuj Bhatia](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 8:23:41 am



Apple's WWDC keynote: Here's a look at 5 surprising announcements. Yes, you can now use the iPhone as a web camera for your MacBook. (Image credit: Apple)

The first day of [Apple](#)'s annual WWDC developer conference is over, with the company announcing [iOS 16 for the iPhone](#), as well as software updates for the Apple Watch, Mac and iPad. The developer conference is off to an

interesting start with a long list of features coming to the iPhone and other Apple products later in the year. Although Apple didn't reveal or tease the mysterious mixed-reality headset, it did announce the revamped [MacBook Air with the M2 processor](#). Many of the announcements that were part of this year's WWDC were already leaked or known in tech circles. But there were still a few surprises in store – ranging from the debut of the next-generation CarPlay to the ability to use your iPhone as a webcam on a Mac. Here's everything we weren't expecting at WWDC 2022.

Use your iPhone as a Mac webcam

Not sure why this wasn't announced during the height of [Covid-19](#), but yes, we liked the idea of turning our iPhone into a webcam. After all, laptop webcams are still terrible. Apple's announcement that we will soon be able to plug our iPhones into Macs for webcam use was exciting no doubt. The best part is you don't have to connect the iPhone to the Mac; the computer will instantly recognise the unit. You will, of course, need to update your iPhone to [iOS](#) 16 and Mac to the latest macOS Ventura to turn an iPhone into a webcam.

Hold on, there's more. The feature will also let you use two of the iPhone camera lenses at the same time. One will be on the speaker, while the other can focus on something else. Apple calls it "Desk View," to simultaneously show the user's face and an overhead view of their desk. It's great for doing unboxing videos. But to make this all work, Apple recommends getting a holder which is made by the accessory company Belkin.



Apple's plans to introduce the updated in-car system CarPlay at this year's WWDC tell a lot about its grand plans to make future cars "connected" through intelligent software. (Image credit: Apple)

All-new CarPlay

Nobody thought that Apple would preview the next generation of its in-app car mirroring tech at WWDC. The all-new CarPlay takes the in-car interface beyond just displaying the information on your iPhone to the actual hardware integration with your car. The best part of the new CarPlay experience is how it adapts to multi-display dashboards and screens, depending on what car you own. The level of customisation features and the way you control your radio, adjust your AC and view car data like fuel level or speed shows how serious Apple is thinking about getting the software right on cars.

The first cars that support the next-generation CarPlay will be announced late next year. We still don't know many details, but one thing is clear: Apple seems to be interested in proving its in-car OS to the leading automakers. Maybe someday Apple might want to make a car on its own. But for now, Apple is happy making the future cars from major manufacturers "connected" and "intelligent" with the help of CarPlay.

Freeform is Apple's take on digital whiteboard apps

Whiteboard applications are hot right now, given so many people these days use a whiteboard for remote meetings, online collaboration and presentations. While we were expecting the iPadOS to get a big update, we weren't aware that Apple was quietly developing a whiteboard app. It's called Freeform, and it'll be available on iOS 16, iPadOS 16 and macOS Ventura later this year.

Freeform is essentially a note-taking app with collaboration features and native FaceTime integration. Users can drop-in notes, photos, doodles or PDFs and view others' contributions as they add content or make edits. The best part: Free Form supports Apple Pencil when using the iPad.



With the new \$1200 MacBook Air hitting stores next month, the era of a sub-\$1000 Mac notebook is over it seems. (Image credit: Apple)

A \$200 price increase on the new MacBook Air

Let's be frank: the refreshed MacBook Air looks stunning. A chunkier, squared-off look, a fanless body, a new 13.6-inch Liquid Retina Display and the second-generation M2 chip makes the new MacBook Air the coolest notebook in town. But the starting price of \$1200 is arguably higher for an entry-level machine even if we add all the improvements by Apple.

That's a lot more than you'd spend on the M1 MacBook Air that comes in at just \$999. The \$1200 price tag on the new MacBook Air kind of hints at the demise of a sub-\$1000 Mac notebook that made the Air hit among students and average consumers. It's a reminder that Apple has different plans for a MacBook Air.



Apple has been lazy about getting AAA games to Mac, but it looks like things are finally changing. (Image credit: Apple)

Mac and AAA gaming

Perhaps the biggest surprise (and the least expected announcement) was Apple's push to make its Macs true AAA gaming machines. At WWDC 2022, Apple discussed news regarding the Metal 3 update for Macs. The

presentation clearly focused on letting developers know how they can take advantage of the Metal 3 and MetalFX Upscaling tools to optimise graphics, textures, frame rates, and loading times for the M1 and M2 architectures, offering a smooth, immersive gaming experience for Mac users.

It may look like a small step for Apple to dip its toes into the gaming world, but its impact could be huge if developers start supporting AAA titles for Macs. With No Man's Sky, Grid Legends, and Resident Evil Village coming to Mac this year, "it's a new day" for gaming on Mac. That being said, Apple still needs to figure out a way to make it worth it for developers to bring their games to the Mac.

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Explained: European Union's common charging port norms, and why it could hit Apple

From the autumn of 2024, mobile manufacturers will have to include a USB-C charging port in devices sold across Europe. What do the new norms state, and why have they been introduced? What impact are they going to have, especially on iPhone maker Apple?

Written by [Pranav Mukul](#), Edited by Explained Desk | New Delhi |
June 8, 2022 11:11:38 am



USB-C to Lightning Cable adapters are seen at an Apple store in Chicago.
(Reuters Photo/File)

European Union lawmakers [**have reached a provisional agreement**](#) to mandate mobile device makers include a standard USB-C charging port for devices sold in the region starting autumn 2024.

On Tuesday, the European Parliament announced that it reached a deal that would amend the Radio Equipment Directive and compel manufacturers to adopt the USB-C as the common charging port for a variety of devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and cameras.

What had the European Commission proposed?

In October last year, the European Commission had proposed USB-C as a common charging port to allow consumers to charge their devices with the same USB-C charger, regardless of the device brand.

It also proposed unbundling the sale of chargers from the sale of electronic devices to limit the number of “unwanted chargers” purchased or left unused. The proposal, however, only covers wired chargers and excludes wireless charging from its ambit, meaning that only if a device uses a cable to be charged will it need to have a USB-C port. In case the device is only to be charged wirelessly, there is no compulsion to have a USB-C port in the device.



European Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry Breton speaks during a media conference on a common charging solution for mobile phones at EU headquarters in Brussels, Thursday, Sept. 23, 2021. (AP Photo/File)

Why was this proposal made?

The European Commission had said earlier that on average, consumers in the EU own around three mobile phone chargers, of which they use two on a regular basis. Despite this, 38 per cent of consumers reported having experienced problems at least once. They said they could not charge their mobile phones because the available chargers were incompatible.

The Commission added that consumers spend approximately €2.4 billion annually on standalone chargers that do not come with electronic devices.

In addition, disposed of and unused chargers are estimated to pile up to 11,000 tonnes of e-waste every year.

What could be the impact of the new rules?

Most prominently, the new rules would force iPhone maker [Apple](#) to introduce USB-C ports on its devices. Given the value that Apple derives from uniformity in its production lines for markets across the globe, this could potentially result in Apple devices being changed for other jurisdictions as well.

It is noteworthy, though, that over the years Apple itself has been moving away from the Lightening cable. It has already introduced MacBooks and iPads that use USB-C charging ports.

Also, it is rumoured that Apple has been working on a port-less iPhone that would be exclusively charged using a wireless charger.

When would the rules become applicable?

According to *Gizmodo*, the new requirements will apply to only those products that are released after the law becomes applicable.

Manufacturers will be given a grace period of 24 months after the law is published in the EU Official Journal.

The European Parliament and Council are expected to formally approve the agreement after the summer recess.

Gizmodo also reported that the common charger requirement will also apply to laptops, but manufacturers will be given 40 months to adapt their devices to the new standards.

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Explained: Delhi HC ruling on liquor shops and public sentiments

The Delhi High Court has ruled on petitions challenging the location of liquor vends in residential areas. What was the case, and what has the court said? Why was there controversy over the issue? What do the rules state?

Written by [Sofi Ahsan](#), Edited by Explained Desk | New Delhi | June 8, 2022 10:34:44 am



The board of a liquor store is erected in Jangpura, New Delhi. (Express Photo: Praveen Khanna, File)

The Delhi High Court in a ruling has said that the public opposition to a liquor vend's location cannot be the sole ground for cancellation of an excise

licence. Public opinion or sentiment **is not a factor relevant** under the Delhi Excise Act for locating a liquor vend, said Justice Yashwant Varma while upholding the Financial Commissioner's order on restoring licence to a restaurant in June 2019.

Soon after **the new liquor policy** came into force in November last year, a number of petitions both by residents and licence holders reached the court in connection with the disputes over location of liquor vends. People also held protests against the location of liquor vends.

What was the case?

In January 2018, the excise licence of 2 Bandits Restaurant was cancelled by the department of excise considering the apprehension of disturbance of law and order and public sentiments. The order on appeal was set aside by the Financial Commissioner in June 2019 and the licence of the restaurant was restored. The Department of Excise before the Delhi High Court last month challenged the restoration, saying it has ample powers under the Delhi Excise Act to cancel a licence for any reason whatsoever.

The Delhi HC ruling

Justice Varma said such a submission cannot be countenanced as the department has to act fairly and not whimsically. The grant of licence under the Act and rules is not subject to 'public sentiment', ruled the bench.

"Unless the licence of the liquor vend is shown to fall foul of any statutory provision or otherwise established to be in violation of any rule or regulation, the same cannot possibly merit cancellation merely because "public sentiment" may be opposed to its location. Public opinion or sentiment is not a factor relevant or germane under the Act for locating a liquor vend," said the bench.

It also said that the apprehension of a law and order situation is clearly a different issue altogether, which must necessarily be looked into by the police authorities. The court dismissed the petition filed by the Department of Excise on day one of its hearing.

What is the controversy?

The ruling is important in context of the controversy which erupts every time a liquor vend opens at a new place, especially around a residential area. When the Delhi government's excise policy came into force last year and new vends opened for the first time in certain areas, residents approached the court stating the vends are located in residential areas or near religious places or schools. Some licensees also approached the court saying they were not being allowed to open their vends due to the public.

The grievance of the residents' welfare associations usually is that liquor shops attract bad elements who may quarrel with the residents. In some cases, it was also argued that women and children frequent the market or place where the liquor vend has been opened.

While few of the cases are still pending, the court mostly either asked the government to take a decision on the representations of residents or directed the police to provide security to the vends.

But, what are the rules?

According to Rule 51 of the Delhi Excise Rules, 2010, no retail vend can be located within 100 metres of major educational institutions, religious places and hospitals with 50 beds and above. One of the pending petitions before the court also argues that in case of consumption 'on the premises' or any premises which were not licenced in the preceding year, the Deputy Commissioner, under Rule 24, before granting a licence, is required to take all reasonable steps to ascertain the opinion of persons, who reside or have property in the neighbourhood and are likely to be affected by the proposal.

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The Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 states that retail vends can be opened in any of the markets, malls, commercial roads/areas, local shopping complexes and other such places as long as the standard rules and regulations of opening a new vend are followed, particularly Rule 51 of the Delhi Excise Rules. Maintenance of law and order in the vicinity is an important parameter for the decision on renewal of the licence, as per the government policy. One of the conditions also states that the licensee will

ensure no dry snacks or cooked food outlet gets opened right outside the shop as it may “encourage people to drink and loiter around the shop itself”.

“Licensee shall be responsible for law and order and security around their shop. In case the shop causes nuisance for the neighbourhood and a complaint is received by the government, the licence of that particular vend will be cancelled,” the policy states.

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Explained: What are the draft amendments to IT Rules, 2021?

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has floated a fresh draft of amendments to the Information Technology Rules, 2021. What are the proposed amendments? What prompted them? What are the concerns?

Written by [Soumyarendra Barik](#), Edited by Explained Desk | New Delhi | June 8, 2022 8:05:30 am



India's IT Rules came into effect last year. (Source: Pixabay, File)

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) [**has published a fresh draft of amendments**](#) to the Information Technology Rules, 2021, which proposes the creation of [**government-appointed appeal**](#)

committees that will be able to veto content-moderation decisions taken by social media intermediaries like [Facebook](#), Twitter and YouTube.

Last week, the ministry had issued a draft with the same proposal, but withdrew it within hours. The fresh draft, floated by MeitY late on Monday night, however, is largely the same as the earlier proposal.

What are the proposed amendments to the IT Rules, 2021?

The draft proposes to create government-appointed appeal committees that will be empowered to review and possibly reverse content moderation decisions taken by social media companies. “The Central Government shall constitute one or more Grievance Appellate Committees, which shall consist of a Chairperson and such other Members, as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint,” MeitY said in the draft.

What it essentially means is that in case a user is not satisfied with the content moderation decision taken by a company’s grievance officer, they can appeal that decision before the proposed government-appointed appeals committee. “Every order passed by the Grievance Appellate Committee shall be complied with by the concerned intermediary,” the ministry said in the draft. Currently, the only recourse a user has against companies’ content decisions is to approach the courts.

Apart from this, the new proposal also suggests placing additional responsibilities on grievance officers appointed by social media companies. It says that if a user complains about content which is “patently false”, infringes copyright, and threatens the integrity of India, among other things, a grievance officer will have to expeditiously address it within 72 hours. Under current rules, grievance officers have 15 days to act on and dispose of users’ complaints.

Explained

Draft up for discussion

The draft, which is up for public consultation for 30 days, triggered concerns about the government overriding the decisions of social media platforms.

What prompted the amendments?

In a press release issued late on Monday, MeitY said the proposed amendments will ensure that “Constitutional rights of Indian citizens are not contravened by any big tech platform by ensuring new accountability standards”. The new draft, it said, will ensure “actual enforcement of requirements in IT Rules, 2021 in letter and spirit”.

“The IT Rules, 2021 provide for a robust grievance redressal mechanism. However, there have been many instances that grievance officers of intermediaries either do not address the grievances satisfactorily and/or fairly. In such a scenario, the need for an appellate forum has been proposed to protect the rights and interests of users,” MeitY said in the press release.

According to a senior government official, de-platforming of users by social media companies without allowing them an opportunity to explain their actions is a recurring complaint that the government has received from users. This, as per the official, suggests there are gaps in the rules that were implemented in May last year and the proposed amendments would fill those gaps.

As per the IT Rules, 2021, that came into effect last year, social media companies like Facebook and Twitter are mandated to appoint India-based resident grievance officers as part of their due diligence as ‘intermediaries’ who enjoy legal immunity from third-party content on their platform. These officers are responsible for overseeing the grievance redressal mechanism of complaints from the people who use their services.

Have there been concerns raised around the proposals?

The proposal to set up government-appointed committees has triggered concerns about the government overriding social media platforms’ content

decisions.

Reacting to the proposal while it was made in the last draft, Delhi-based digital rights group Internet Freedom Foundation had said, “The proposal, without any legislative basis, seeks to subject content on social media to the direct scrutiny of the government by permitting users to appeal decisions of social media platforms to a Grievance Appellate Committee constituted by MeitY”.

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Premium

Kolkata, centuries before Job Charnock: What newly excavated finds tell us

The excavations were carried out by the Kolkata Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at a mound outside Clive House in March-April.

Written by [Santanu Chowdhury](#) | Kolkata |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:41:09 am



Site of the excavation outside Clive House at Dum Dum.

Recent archaeological excavations in Dum Dum, some of them dating back as far as the first century CE, have provided further evidence of human habitation in Kolkata from centuries before the time British administrator

Job Charnock was said to have founded the city. The excavations were carried out by the Kolkata Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at a mound outside Clive House in March-April.

Documented history

Charnock, who worked for the East India Company, has historically been credited with founding the city in 1690 when the Company was consolidating its trade business in Bengal. Calcutta comprised Kalikata, Gobindapur and Sutanuti villages, which the British bought from local landlords. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, the area was under the rule of the Bengal Sultanate of the Mughals.

The view about Charnock being the founder was challenged, and in 2003, Calcutta High Court declared that Charnock ought not to be regarded as the founder. It ordered the government to purge his name from all textbooks and official documents containing the history of the city's founding.

Based on a report from an academic committee, the court found that a "highly civilised society" and "an important trading centre" had existed on the site long before Charnock established his settlement. The committee found that a place called Kalikatah was an important religious centre adjacent to Kalighat village with its Kali temple. The site is mentioned in Bipradas Pipilai's *Manasa Mangala* (1495) and Abul Fazl's *Ain-I-Akbari* (1596). In 1608, Emperor Jehangir granted the jagirdari of Kalikatah to a zamindar family, known as the Sabarna Roy Choudhury family.

What's been excavated

The new finds include 12 cultural layers of habitations over virgin soil, various types of potteries belonging to various periods (Gupta, post-Gupta, Kushan, Islamic, early mediaeval, mediaeval); coins including some with punch marks and some of copper; broken parts of terracotta figurines; copper antiquities such as hairpin and iron nail; fish hooks, stone beads etc. Soil samples, charcoal and pottery have been sent for scientific dating, and a report will arrive in 6 to 8 months.

“There is definitely a history of this place which predates the colonial era,” said Subha Majumdar, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI Kolkata Circle, who is heading the excavation. “Even before the zamindari of Sabarna Roy Choudhury and others, the place had settlements. After preliminary examination of the findings, we can say that there was human settlement in this area dating back to first and second centuries CE. Once we get the report, we will be able to say clearly when the first settlement took place,” Majumdar said.



The new finds include 12 cultural layers of habitations over virgin soil, various types of potteries, coins, broken parts of terracotta figurines etc.

Why Clive House

Majumdar said Clive House and the mound outside were selected for excavation for the site’s historical significance.

In 2001, an excavation by the ASI at Clive House had found some evidence indicating that the city could have had a history predating the colonial era. Those finds, however, were not scientifically dated. “In 2019, further

excavation began. However, the work was suspended due to the pandemic. In March-April, the work resumed," Majumdar said.



Soil samples, charcoal and pottery have been sent for scientific dating, and a report will arrive in six to eight months.

Clive House, which itself stands on a mound, is one of the oldest buildings in Kolkata. Some portions of it have been encroached. It is named after Robert Clive, the first British Governor of Bengal Presidency, who used it as a country house. Details are vague as to who built it and when: Some records mention a treaty between Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah and Robert Clive in this building on February 6 or 9, 1757.

It is close to a site called Chandraketugarh, where excavations in the 1950s and 1960s revealed an almost continuous sequence of habitations from six periods from the pre-Mauryan to the Pala periods. “The house was built at a strategic position given it stood en route to Chandraketugarh which once thrived with settlements. And the house was on a mound, which provided a strategic view of the area. After moving in, Clive modified the building,” Majumdar said.

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Premium

Explained: How are Rajya Sabha MPs elected?

On June 10, the Assemblies of 4 states will elect 16 MPs to Rajya Sabha. What is the process for conducting such an election, how are the votes counted, and why do Rajya Sabha numbers matter to all parties?

Written by [Manoj C G](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 10:25:21 am



For both the ruling party and the Opposition, every Rajya Sabha seat counts as any Bill, barring those designated as Money Bills by the Lok Sabha Speaker, needs the assent of the second chamber to become law.

Ahead of Rajya Sabha elections in four states on June 10, various parties have accommodated legislators from at least three states [in resorts](#), away from potential poaching by rival parties. A practice frequently seen before Rajya Sabha elections, this underlines the importance parties give to seats in the Upper House.

Why are Rajya Sabha elections important?

For both the ruling party and the Opposition, every Rajya Sabha seat counts as any Bill, barring those designated as Money Bills by the Lok Sabha Speaker, needs the assent of the second chamber to become law.

Rajya Sabha, or the Council of States, has 245 seats. Leave aside reaching the halfway mark of 123, no ruling party has ever touched the 100 mark in the last three-and-a-half decades. The [BJP](#)-led NDA fleetingly touched 100 in April but its strength is down to 95 now after the retirement of five of the nominated members who had taken BJP membership.

The NDA government has so far managed to get crucial Bills — farm laws, the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, or the Citizenship Amendment Act — passed with the help of allies and support of other parties such as AIADMK, Biju [Janata Dal](#), and YSR Congress.

Rajya Sabha has a limited role in the case of Money Bills. It cannot amend a Money Bill, but can recommend amendments within a stipulated time, and Lok Sabha may either accept or reject all or any of these.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman files her papers for the Rajya Sabha elections in Bengaluru. (PTI, file)

How often are Rajya Sabha elections held?

Rajya Sabha is a permanent House and cannot be dissolved. To ensure continuity, one-third of its members retire after every second year, under Article 83(1) of the Constitution, and “biennial elections” are held to fill these vacancies. The term of a member is six years.

Out of the 245 members, 12 are nominated by the President and 233 are representatives of the States and Union territories of Delhi and Puducherry. Vacancies arising due to resignation, death or disqualification are filled up through bypolls, and those elected serve out the remainder of their predecessors’ term.

Under Article 80(3), the 12 nominated members should have special knowledge or practical experience in matters like literature, science, art etc. A nominated member may join a party within six months of taking a seat.

Rajya Sabha polls: Who votes, and how?

Rajya Sabha MPs are elected by MLAs through an indirect election. Article 80(4) provides that members shall be elected by the elected members of state Assemblies through a system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote.

The Fourth Schedule to the Constitution provides for allocation of Rajya Sabha seats to the states and Union Territories, on the basis of the population of each state. For instance, there are 31 Rajya Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh and 1 in Goa. Elections are held there are more candidates than vacancies; otherwise, candidates are elected unopposed.

How are the votes counted?

The number of votes a candidate requires depends on the number of vacancies and the strength of the House. If there is only one vacancy, the required quota under the Election Commission's Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, is calculated by taking the number of votes polled, divided it by 2, and adding 1. For example, if 100 votes are polled in an Assembly, the Rajya Sabha candidate would need:

$$100/2 + 1 = 51 \text{ votes}$$

If there is more than one vacancy, the equation is based on an assigned value of 100 for every first-preference vote. The values of the votes credited to all candidates are totalled. The total is divided by 1 more than the number of vacancies, and 1 is added to this quotient.

For example, if 100 members of an Assembly vote for 3 Rajya Sabha vacancies, the required quota by any candidate would be

$$(100 \times 100)/(3 + 1) + 1 = 2501$$

If for any seat, candidates fail to get the specified number, the second-preference votes will be taken into account, but with a lower value.

How many seats are being contested in the current elections?

Biennial elections are being held for 57 seats across 15 states. But elections were necessitated only in 16 seats from four states – Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka. The remaining 41 candidates were declared elected unopposed last week. These include Congress leader P Chidambaram, former Congress leader Kapil Sibal, RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary, and RJD's Misa Bharti.

Elections in Haryana (two vacancies) have become necessary with the entry of a third candidate, media baron Kartikeya Sharma, and in Rajasthan (four vacancies) with the entry of a fifth candidate, Subhash Chandra, the founder of Zee and the head of Essel Group, as an independent with the support of the BJP.

In Karnataka, the ruling BJP, the Congress and the JD(S) have put up candidates for the fourth seat, forcing an election. In Maharashtra too, there are seven candidates for six seats.

To what extent can the results affect the strengths of the NDA and Opposition?

Out of the 57 retiring members, 24 are from the BJP. The party has already won 14 seats, and has the strength to win six of the 16 seats to decided by voting. Not counting its extra candidates in Karnataka and Maharashtra, the BJP's strength after the polls will be 91. Adding to that will be the seven nominated seats that fell vacant, which the BJP could count on.

The Congress has 29 members. Seven of its members are retiring and four of its candidates have been elected unopposed. The party is sure to win four more while there is uncertainty over the fate of two others. So its strength will go up to 30-32.

The biggest gainer will be the AAP, whose strength has gone up from 3 to 10 because of the clean sweep of Punjab. The strength of YSRCP will also go up from 6 to 9.



Congress leader P Chidambaram files papers for the Rajya Sabha elections, in Chennai. (PTI, file)

Beyond passing Bills, why do Rajya Sabha numbers matter?

Rajya Sabha enjoys some special powers. If it passes a resolution by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting, saying that it is “necessary or expedient in the national interest” that Parliament should make a law on a matter enumerated in the State List, Parliament becomes empowered to make a law on the subject. Such a resolution remains in force for a maximum of one year but this period can be extended by one year at a time by passing a similar resolution.

A similar route can be adopted for recommending creation of one or more All India Services common to the Union and the states. Parliament becomes empowered to create such services.

Also, Rajya Sabha has a role to play if the President, as empowered by the Constitution, issues proclamations in the event of national emergency, in the event of failure of constitutional machinery in a State, or in the case of financial emergency”. Every such proclamation has to be approved by both Houses of Parliament within a stipulated period.

Under certain circumstances, however, Rajya Sabha enjoys special powers. If a proclamation is issued at a time when Lok Sabha has been dissolved or the dissolution of Lok Sabha takes place within the period allowed for its approval, then the proclamation remains effective, if the resolution approving it is passed by Rajya Sabha within the period specified under Articles 352, 356 and 360 of the Constitution.

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Explained: Who are the Proud Boys, now facing sedition charges in the US?

Members of the Proud Boys have been charged with seditious conspiracy for a “coordinated attack” on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. What is this far-right group, and what does the latest development mean?

Written by [Saurabh Kapoor](#), Edited by Explained Desk | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:37:49 am

**EVERYDAY
GLOBAL**



Proud Boys leader Henry "Enrique" Tarrio wears a hat that says The War Boys during a rally in Portland. (AP/File)

Members of a far-right group, the Proud Boys, [have been charged with seditious conspiracy](#) for a “coordinated attack” on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. The charges, which have come in an amended indictment by the US Justice Department, are the most aggressive action against the group as part of the ongoing investigation into alleged attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 US presidential election.

Who are the Proud Boys?

Formed in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential polls, the Proud Boys are a far-right extremist group, as classified by the FBI. The group was created by Gavin McInnes, Vice Media co-founder and former commentator. McInnes argued that the group’s existence was necessary because of the society’s inability to let men be proud of Western culture. An all-male group, the ‘brotherhood’ would soon go on to have chapters in 46 US states. This, however, has not stopped women from supporting the outfit, which its founder once described as a “gang”.

According to the US-based Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish civil rights organisation, there are 119 active Proud Boys chapters across 46 American states that are recognised by the national Proud Boys outfit.

Standford University’s Center for International Security and Cooperation says that the Proud Boys “attend events with far-right organisations that advocate white supremacist and anti-government ideologies, though the Proud Boys leadership deny ties to white supremacy and neo-Nazism....it (the group) advocates violence in readiness for civil war in the United States. Most of the group’s public activity involves protesting or attending political rallies and events, typically with the intent to provoke violence.”

The Canadian government had designated the Proud Boys as a terrorist entity after the US Capitol breach.



Rioters seen climbing the US Capitol Hill during the January siege. (AP Photo/File)

What was the US Capitol riot of 2021?

After the 2020 elections that then US President Donald Trump lost, the Proud Boys started what was termed as a “Stop the Steal” campaign.

With a series of events across American states, the campaign culminated in the [January 6 US Capitol riot](#). On that fateful day in 2021, members of the group, some of them wearing orange hats, stormed the US Capitol building. The attack was aimed at preventing the certification of the 2020 election that Democrat candidate Joe Biden had won. A mob, over 2000-strong, occupied parts of the premises for several hours, while vandalising property and assaulting law enforcement officers. Before the attack and during the time it unfolded, more than 60 Proud Boys were reportedly communicating with each other through an encrypted messaging channel – “Boots on the Ground”.

What is the latest development?

The latest indictment has been brought against five members of the group. These include its former chairman Henry Tarrio.

It has been alleged that the Proud Boys conspired to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power. Apart from Tarrio, the others who have been charged are Ethan Nordean, Joseph Biggs, Zachary Ruhl and Dominic Pezzola. According to a CNN report, Nordean headed a local chapter, while Biggs was an self-proclaimed “organiser” of the outfit’s events. Ruhl ran its Philadelphia chapter and Pezzola was a “New York Proud Boy”.

The seditious conspiracy charges are among the most serious filed so far.

Earlier in January, 11 members or associates of the anti-government Oath Keepers militia group, including its founder and leader Stewart Rhodes, were indicted on seditious conspiracy charges in the case. This Civil War-era charge calls for up to 20 years in prison.

The present development in the case has come when the US House committee investigating the Capitol riot is getting ready to begin public hearings in the matter.

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Explained: History and significance of Mela Kheerbawani for Kashmiri Pandits, being held today

Legend has it that the water of the temple's spring changes colour from white to red and black. The colour of the water is said to predict the impending future.

By: [Express News Service](#) | Srinagar |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:47:00 am



**EXPRESS
explained.
CULTURE**

Migrant Kashmiri Pandits leave in a Kashmir bound bus for the annual 'Kheer Bhawani Mela' from Jammu, Tuesday, June 7, 2022. (PTI Photo)

On Wednesday (June 8), Kashmiri Hindus, locally known as Pandits, will celebrate the Zystha Ashtami at the Mata Kheerbawani temple at Tulmulla

in central Kashmir's Ganderbal. The temple is dedicated to the goddess Ragnya Devi. Situated 30 km from Srinagar city, it is one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites for Kashmiri Hindus. The temple gets its name from kheer, or milk and rice pudding, that pilgrims pour into the spring inside the temple complex as an offering to the goddess.

Legend has it that the water of the temple's spring changes colour from white to red and black. The colour of the water is said to predict the impending future. If it changes to black, it is seen as inauspicious or an impending disaster. Kashmiri Pandits say that the water had turned black before they were forced to flee Kashmir during the militancy of 1990.

Every year, a mela or festival is held at the temple. The festival, known as Mela Kheerbawani, is the largest gathering of Hindus in Kashmir after the annual [Amarnath Yatra](#). While only a handful of devotees visited the temple in the 1990s, the festival was revived over a decade ago when large numbers of Kashmiri Hindu pilgrims resumed visits to the temple on Zystha Ashtami from Jammu and New Delhi as well. In 2018, the then PDP-[BJP](#) government facilitated the annual festival by providing free transportation to the pilgrims living in Jammu and Delhi. Sevaks at the temple say that over 10,000 pilgrims visited the temple during the festival.

Hundreds of local Muslims, too, traditionally join the celebrations.

Over the last two years, gatherings at the temple during the annual festival were limited because of the pandemic. While the pandemic is over, this year's festival would be celebrated under the shadow of fear because of the recent targeted killing of Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley.

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2006 Varanasi blasts explained – incident, probe and the recent court verdict

On March 7, 2006, a blast rocked the Varanasi cantonment railway station, and minutes later another bomb exploded inside the Sankat Mochan Mandir. In the two blasts, as many as 20 persons were killed and several got injured.

Written by [Manish Sahu](#), Edited by Explained Desk | Lucknow |

Updated: June 8, 2022 8:22:28 am



**EXPRESS
explained.**

The blast site at Sankat Mochan temple. (Express/File)

A local Ghaziabad court Monday **awarded capital punishment** to the prime accused in the 2006 Varanasi serial blasts case. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 4.05 lakh on Waliullah (47), who is lodged at the Dasna jail in Ghaziabad. The court ordered that the death sentence will not be carried out till it has been upheld by the Allahabad High court.

In 2006, bombs had exploded at Varanasi's cantonment railway station and Sankat Mochan temple in which at least 20 lives were lost and several others were injured. A third bomb, which was recovered from Godaulia area of Varanasi, did not explode.

Waliullah's lawyer Mohammad Aarif Ali said: "Three separate cases were lodged after the serial blast. The court acquitted Waliullah in the blast that took place at the railway station. In the blast that took place at Sankat Mochan temple, the court awarded him capital punishment. In the recovery of bomb at Godaulia, the court sentenced him to life imprisonment."

Ali said that they would file an appeal against Waliullah's conviction in the High Court.

The case

On March 7, 2006, a blast rocked the Varanasi cantonment railway station, and minutes later another bomb exploded inside the Sankat Mochan Mandir.

Police teams immediately began searches across the district, and soon found a bomb at the Godaulia locality. In the two blasts, as many as 20 persons were killed and several got injured. Police said, all three bombs were made by packing explosives in pressure cookers.

The probe

During the probe, the Uttar Pradesh Police initially claimed that blast was a handiwork of terrorist group Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HuJI).

On April 5, 2006, UP Police's Special Task Force (STF) led by then Additional Superintendent of Police Vijay Bhushan, arrested Waliullah, who apart from running a small wooden-works shop also served as imam at a local mosque in Phoolpur, from Gosaiganj area of Lucknow.

Waliullah, an alleged HuJI operative, was declared the mastermind in the case. Police also claimed to have recovered detonators, RDX and a .32 bore pistol from his possession.

The bombs, the probe revealed, were kept in a cooker with ammonium nitrate and aluminum being used to make them.

Police alleged that the blasts were carried out by Waliullah's three associates with whom he had studied at the Darul Uloom at Deoband in Saharanpur.

The three persons – who are still absconding — were identified as Bashiruddin, Mustafiz and Zakaria, all residents of Bangladesh.

Police stated that Waliullah provided logistical support to the three absconding persons.

As per the police, Waliullah took the three to Varanasi and helped them purchase cookers used for carrying out the blasts, and later they fled to Bangladesh.

In May 2006, Mohammad Zubair, a native of UP who was also alleged to be involved in the blasts, was gunned down in Jammu & Kashmir while attempting to cross the border.

Further probe also revealed involvement of one Shamim Ahmed alias Sarfaraz, a resident of UP's Chandauli district. Police claimed that Shamim had planted a bomb at Godaulia area. He was never arrested.

In 2013, the then Akhilesh Yadav government ordered for withdrawal of case against Shamim. The move was stayed by the Allahabad High Court, after which the state government filed an SLP in the Supreme Court, contesting the HC order, which is still pending.

Case transfer to Ghaziabad

On May 3, 2006, lawyers in Varanasi court roughed up Waliullah when he was produced in the court for trial. Lawyers also did not spare policemen accompanying Waliullah to court. The Varanasi Bar Association then decided that no lawyer would argue for the accused. After the incident,

Waliullah pleaded in the Allahabad High Court that his case be transferred to another district. The court agreed and shifted it to Ghaziabad.

Two years later in August 2008, a Lucknow court sentenced Waliullah to 10 years imprisonment after he was found guilty of offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

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Counter claims

After an Indian Mujahideen terror module was busted after the Batla House encounter in September 2008, a few arrested IM members purportedly claimed responsibility for the Varanasi blasts.

Advocate Aarif Ali said, “I have submitted a statement of Asadullah Akhtar in the Ghaziabad court. In his statement recorded before Chief Judicial Magistrate, Hyderabad, Asadullah Akhtar admitted carrying out 2006 Varanasi blasts along with Mirza Shadab Beg, Mohammad Sarvar, Ariz, Atif and Saif. He also stated that the IED was assembled by Sadik Sheikh.”

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Explained: What are 'green jobs', mentioned by PM in his Environment Day speech?

'Green jobs' refer to a class of jobs that directly have a positive impact on the planet, and contribute to the overall environmental welfare.

New Delhi |
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'Green jobs' aimed at reducing the negative environmental impact of economic sectors and furthering the process of creating a low-carbon economy. (Representational)

Written by Manya Shiel

At an [event to mark World Environment Day](#) recently, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) spoke about India's consistent efforts to combat climate change. During his speech, he also mentioned India's efforts to create 'green jobs', and said: "There is another aspect of these efforts of India (in fighting climate change) which is rarely discussed and that is the subject of green jobs. The way India is taking decisions in the interest of the environment and implementing them rapidly, is also generating a large number of green job opportunities. This is also a topic that should be thought about."

What are 'green jobs'?

'Green jobs' refer to a class of jobs that directly have a positive impact on the planet, and contribute to the overall environmental welfare. Jobs involving renewable energy, conservation of resources, ensuring energy efficient means are categorised under the same. In all, they're aimed at reducing the negative environmental impact of economic sectors and furthering the process of creating a low-carbon economy.

The idea behind a low-carbon economy or decarbonisation is fairly simple — it is about maintaining a sustainable economy, one that doesn't lead to vast emissions of greenhouse gasses, especially carbon dioxide.

India and 'green jobs'

The Skill Council for Green Jobs was launched by the Union government on October 1, 2015. Aligned to the National Skill Development Missions, it was set up to be a not-for-profit, independent, industry-led initiative. Promoted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the council aims to help manufacturers and other service providers in India's 'green business' sector to implement industry-led, collaborative skills push the country on the path to truly realising the real potential and significance of 'green jobs'.

According to the Skill Council for Green Jobs, awareness and training individuals regarding green jobs skills will ensure limiting greenhouse gas emissions, minimising waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems, support adaptation to the effects of climate change.

Scenario across the world

The United Nations Environment Programme's 2019 Emissions Gap report dictates that it is essential for greenhouse gas emissions to reduce by 7.6% per annum between the years 2020 to 2030 in order to reach the target that was set during the Paris Agreement. Failing to meet the same would consequently result in a failure to effectively combat global warming. Consequently, a decarbonised economy plays a key role in ensuring a greener, safer, healthier and more sustainable planet to inhabit. Globally too, there have been multiple initiatives to further the 'green jobs' sector. The International Labour Organisation, the International Trade Union Confederation, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Employers Organisation collectively launched the Green Jobs Initiative in 2008, aimed at bettering placements, training and creating opportunities for individuals to work in 'green jobs'.

The United Kingdom is likely to have nearly 694,000 green jobs by the year 2030, projecting an overall 11% increase per year in the green economy.

According to Eliot Whittington, the director of policy at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), the move to normalising 'green jobs' and making them an unquestionable, inherent part of the economy can only be achieved through systemic shifts, where multiple organisations work in harmony and that isolated innovations do not go a long way in ensuring the same.

The way forward

According to the ILO, India moving to a green economy by the next decade would alone create about 3 million jobs in the renewable energy sector. The renewable energy sector created about 47,000 new jobs in 2017 accounting for a 12% increase in just the span of a year, they said.

For India 'green jobs' can prove immensely useful to the country with sectors like renewable energy, waste management, green transport and urban farming all having great potential to employ a trained workforce. An integrated, systematic approach, experts believe, is crucial to ensuring this.

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Explained: What are ‘carbon bombs’, why environmentalists want them defused?

The usage of the term ‘carbon bombs’ picked up after an investigative project of The Guardian this year. The project reported the plans of countries and private companies all over the world to engage in 195 ‘carbon bomb’ projects.

Written by [Rishika Singh](#), Edited by Explained Desk | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 8:25:58 am



In total, around 195 such projects have been identified world over, including in the US, Russia, West Asia, Australia and India. (Credit: Pixabay)

A group of environmentalists, lawyers, and activists have come together to identify and ‘defuse carbon bombs’ – coal, oil and gas projects that have the potential to contribute significantly to global warming.

The usage of the term ‘carbon bombs’ picked up after an investigative project of The Guardian from May this year. The project reported the plans of countries and private companies all over the world to engage in 195 ‘carbon bomb’ projects. Each such project, it is believed, will release huge amounts of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere.

What are carbon bombs?

Defining the term in its report, *The Guardian* said that it is “an oil or gas project that will result in at least a billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions over its lifetime.”

Whenever coal, oil, or gas is extracted it results in pollution and environmental degradation. Further, carbon emissions take place in particularly large amounts when fuel is burned.

In total, around 195 such projects have been identified world over, including in the US, Russia, West Asia, Australia and India. According to the report, they will collectively overshoot the limit of emissions that had been agreed to in the Paris Agreement of 2015.

The agreement was to contain the global rise in average temperature to 2 °C and strive for the target of 1.5 °C as compared to pre-industrial levels – when the widespread use of coal for industry in the beginning in the mid-19th century led to a rapid rise in average global temperatures.

What does the investigation say?

More than 60% of these carbon bomb projects are already underway, according to the investigation. Apart from coal, oil, and gas operations, the report highlighted the threat of methane, which “routinely leaks from gas operations and is a powerful greenhouse gas, trapping 86 times more heat than CO₂ over 20 years”.

It also put the blame on the companies conducting these operations, pointing to present time where multiple factors, especially the Russia-Ukraine crisis, have led to a reduction in supply and rise in the demand for fuel.

As Russian oil has been banned by countries in the West, prices have risen to the benefit of oil and gas producing companies.

The report criticised reliance on fuel from conventional sources and not making use of emerging, green sources of energy. Energy companies such as ExxonMobil, Total, Chevron, Shell and BP (British Petroleum) are all mentioned as having coal bomb projects.

“Under the IEA net zero emissions scenario, and all Paris-aligned scenarios, all energy sources remain important through 2050, and oil and natural gas remain essential components of the energy mix,” an ExxonMobil spokesperson told *The Guardian*.

This in reference to the International Energy Agency, an international organisation which put together a road map to reduce global carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible by 2050.

Net zero emissions means that all carbon emissions into the atmosphere must be absorbed by methods like increasing the forest cover, and decreasing man-made emissions.

A spokesperson for Shell said: “As a result of [our] planned level of capital investment, we expect a gradual decline of about 1-2% a year in total oil production through to 2030, including divestments.”

In response to the third Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report this year, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had spoken of the need to maintain global temperatures: “...We are on a fast track to climate disaster...we are on a pathway to global warming of more than double the 1.5-degree limit agreed in Paris...but high-emitting governments and corporations are not just turning a blind eye; they are adding fuel to the flames. To keep the 1.5-degree limit agreed in Paris within reach, we need to cut global emissions by 45% this decade, but current climate pledges would

mean a 14% increase in emissions. Investing in new fossil fuels infrastructure is moral and economic madness.”

What is the plan for ‘defusing’ carbon bombs?

The network working towards this goal is called Leave It In the Ground Initiative (LINGO). Its mission is to “leave fossil fuels in the ground and learn to live without them.” It believes the root of climate change is the burning of fossil fuels, and the 100% use of renewable energy sources is the solution.

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On its website, it has listed carbon bomb projects from all over the world. This includes the Carmichael Coal Project owned by the Adani Group, Gevra Coal Mines in Chhattisgarh owned by Coal India, and Rajmahal Coal Mines in eastern Jharkhand owned by Eastern Coalfields.

LINGO aims to organise ground support for protesting such projects, challenge them through litigation, and conduct analysis and studies for the same.

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Explained: The ‘Physician’s Pledge’ in new draft code of ethics for doctors, and how it differs from Charak, Hippocratic oaths

The National Medical Commission has released draft regulations for the professional conduct of doctors, in which it has included 'The Physician's Pledge'. What is this?

By: [Explained Desk](#) | New Delhi |

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Even earlier regulations by the Medical Council of India, that predated the NMC, had no mention of the Hippocratic Oath.

Months after it **triggered a row** by suggesting that the traditional Hippocratic Oath in medical colleges should be replaced by a “Charak Shapath”, the National Medical Commission has released draft regulations for the professional conduct of doctors without including either of the two oaths. Instead, the draft – National Medical Commission Registered Medical Practitioner (Professional Conduct) Regulations, 2022 – has included ‘The Physician’s Pledge’ as per the World Medical Association’s Declaration of Geneva. Even earlier regulations by the Medical Council of India, that predated the NMC, had no mention of the Hippocratic Oath.

What is the Physician’s Pledge in the draft NMC resolution?

The Physician’s Pledge that is part of the WMA’s Declaration of Geneva was adopted by the Second General Assembly of the World Medical Association, Geneva, in September 1948. There were minor revisions over the years and the last amendment took place during the 68th WMA General Assembly in Chicago, in October 2017. NMC’s draft regulations, released on May 23, mention this Physician’s Pledge from the “Declaration of Geneva 2017” as an inclusion at the end of its 14-point code of ethics. The Pledge reads, “as a member of the medical profession”:

- * I solemnly pledge to dedicate my life to the service of humanity
- * The health and well-being of my patient will be my first consideration
- * I will respect the autonomy and dignity of my patient
- * I will maintain the utmost respect for human life
- * I will not permit considerations of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political affiliation, race, sexual orientation, social standing, or any other factor to intervene between my duty and my patient
- * I will respect the secrets that are confided in me, even after the patient has died

- * I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity and in accordance with good medical practice
- * I will foster the honour and noble traditions of the medical profession
- * I will give to my teachers, colleagues, and students the respect and gratitude that is due.
- * I will share my medical knowledge for the benefit of the patient and the advancement of healthcare
- * I will attend my own health, well-being, and abilities in order to provide care of the highest standard
- * I will not use my medical knowledge to violate human rights and civil liberties, even under threat
- * I will make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon my honour.

About the code of ethics, the draft says that it will serve as the set of commitments of the registered medical practitioner towards patients, society, professional colleagues, and self. “NMC Code of Ethics is framed as a self-regulatory set of guidelines reflecting professional as well as social expectations,” it adds.

What was the controversy over the Charak Shapath?

The controversy began after the National Medical Commission (NMC), the regulator for medical education and practices (which replaced the Medical Council of India in 2020) suggested to medical colleges on February 7 that the Hippocratic Oath should be replaced by a “Charak Shapath”.

While some medical practitioners welcomed the proposal, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), the national representative platform of doctors of modern medicine, took up the matter with Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

In a letter published in IMA News, the IMA's official publication, the association's national president Dr Sahajanand Prasad Singh said that at an "interactive meeting" with an IMA delegation on February 21 this year, Mandaviya had "assured that Charak Shapath will be optional and will not be forced to replace the Hippocratic Oath".

Subsequently, on March 29, replying to an unstarred question by several MPs on "whether Government intends to replace the Hippocratic Oath with the Charak Shapath", "whether it is a fact that the National Medical Commission has proposed replacing the Hippocratic Oath with Charak Shapath", and "whether Government has met with the representatives of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) to discuss their opposition to this proposal", Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar told Rajya Sabha: "As informed by the National Medical Commission (NMC), there is no proposal of replacement of Hippocratic Oath with Charak Shapath."

Days later, however, on March 31, the NMC issued a circular on "Implementation of new Competency Based Medical Education for Undergraduate Course Curriculum", in which it said: "Modified 'Maharshi Charak Shapath' is recommended when a candidate is introduced to medical education".

Interestingly, as *The Indian Express* reported in February, undergraduates at the country's premier health institute, AIIMS, have been taking the Charak Oath during their annual convocation for several years now.

Dr M C Misra, former director of AIIMS, had told The Indian Express earlier that the Charak Shapath was already part of the annual convocation when he took charge in the post in 2013.

The AIIMS Charak Shapath is: "Not for the self; Not for the fulfilment of any worldly material desire or gain, but solely for the good of suffering humanity, I will treat my patient and excel well."

Who was Charaka and what is the Charak Samhita?

Like several other sages mentioned in the literature of ancient India, the historicity of Charaka is uncertain. The compendium of medicine that carries his name is unlikely to have been the work of a single individual, and not all of it is likely to have been written at the same time.

The Charak Samhita is a medical pharmacopoeia and collection of commentaries and discussions on medical practices that is historically dated to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.

Along with the compendium of Susruta (c. 4th century AD), which is about surgery, the Charak Samhita is considered the foundational text of ancient Indian medicine, which was an evolved system of understanding and treating disease that was in several ways ahead of the Greeks.

The ancient Indian interest in physiology is understood to have been drawn from yoga and mysticism, and to have been enriched by the growth and spread of Buddhism to new lands, the arrival of the first Christian missionaries, and the contact with Hellenic practitioners of medicine.

What are the medical ethics of the sage Charaka?

The physician was an important and respected member of ancient Indian society, and medical practice followed rules of professional conduct and ethical principles.

A L Basham ('The Wonder That Was India', 1954) quotes from a part of the sermon that Charaka instructs a physician to preach to his pupils at a ceremony at the end of their apprenticeship.

“... You must strive with all your soul for the health of the sick. You must not betray your patients, even at the cost of your own life... You must not get drunk, or commit evil, or have evil companions... You must be pleasant of speech...and thoughtful, always striving to improve your knowledge.

“When you go to the home of a patient you should direct your words, mind, intellect, and senses nowhere but to your patient and his treatment... Nothing that happens in the house of the sick man must be told outside, nor

must the patient's condition be told to anyone who might do harm by that knowledge to the patient or to another."

This ethical code of Charaka is universal, and remains just as relevant and applicable today.

What is the Hippocratic Oath?

The Hippocratic Oath is attributed to Hippocrates of the island of Kos, a Greek physician of the classical period (4th-5th centuries BC), broadly corresponding to the period from the death of the Buddha (486 BC) to the rise of the Mauryas (321 BC) in India.

Among the great contemporaries of Hippocrates, the so-called "father of modern medicine", were the Athenian philosopher Plato and his teacher Socrates, and Plato's student and a tutor of Alexander the Great, Aristotle.

The Oath is a charter of ethical principles that physicians over the ages have sworn to uphold in the practice of their profession. The earliest available fragments of what is understood to be the original oath date back to the late 3rd century AD, and a millennium-old version is kept in the library of the Holy See.

To Hippocrates is attributed a collection of 70 books on medicine called 'The Corpus Hippocraticum'; most scholars, however, agree that the Hippocratic Oath itself may not have been the work of the individual identified as the historical Hippocrates.

What does the Hippocratic Oath say?

Two translations of the pagan oath from the Greek original, by WHS Jones ('The Doctor's Oath', Cambridge University Press, 1924) and Ludwig Edelstein ('The Hippocratic Oath: Text, Translation, and Interpretation', Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), are popular with scholars. According to extracts published in the BMJ, October 1998, the Oath says:

“I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but I will never use it to injure or wrong them.

I will not give poison to anyone though asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a plan. Similarly, I will not give a pessary to a woman to cause abortion. But in purity and in holiness I will guard my life and my art.

I will not use the knife either on sufferers from stone, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein.

Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will do so to help the sick, keeping myself free from all intentional wrongdoing and harm, especially from fornication with woman or man, bond or free.

Whatsoever in the course of practice I see or hear (or even outside my practice in social intercourse) that ought never to be published abroad, I will not divulge, but consider such things to be holy secrets.”

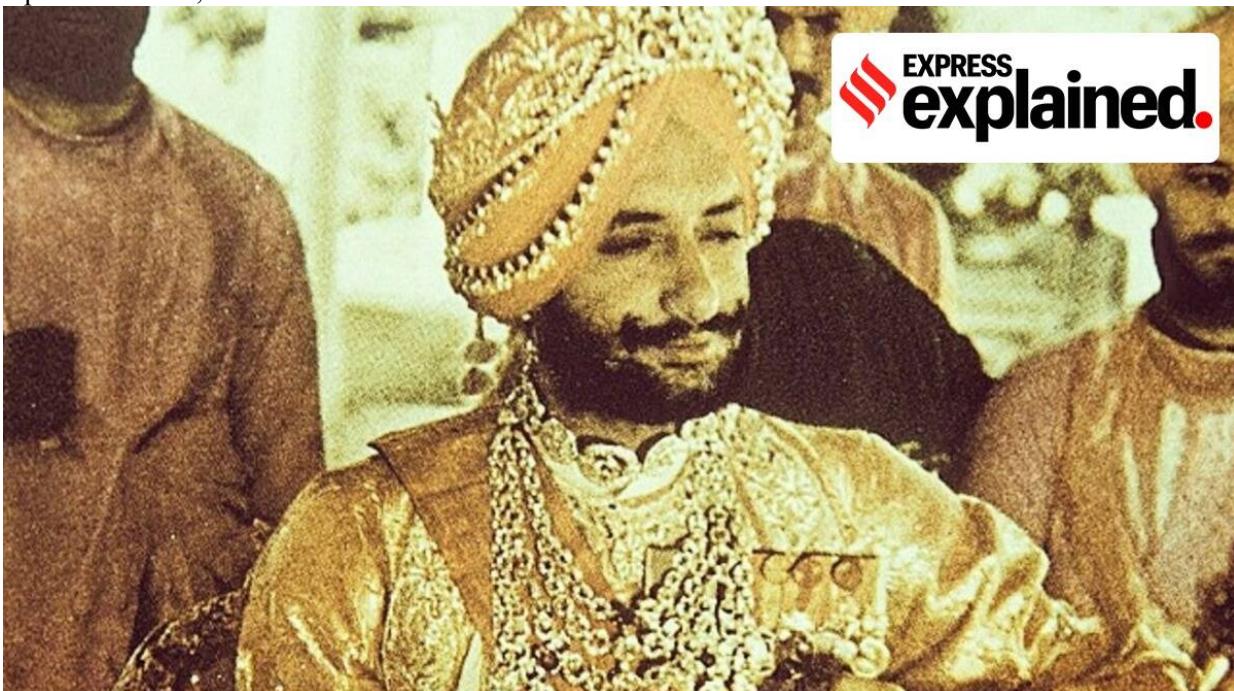
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Explained: The curious case of Patiala Necklace that reappeared at Met Gala

Popular US YouTuber Emma Chamberlain has been facing widespread criticism for wearing a 'choker' similar to the one with the necklace to this year's Met Gala.

Written by [Divya Goyal](#), Edited by Explained Desk | Ludhiana |

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Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's son and successor, Maharaja Yadavindra Singh seen wearing the necklace along with a diamond studded 'choker'. (Express photo/Sourced)

Nearly a century after Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, the erstwhile ruler of the princely state of Patiala, commissioned jewellery giant Cartier to create one of the costliest pieces of jewellery ever made — the Patiala Necklace — the magnificent piece of jewel is back in the limelight. Popular [US YouTuber Emma Chamberlain has been facing widespread criticism](#) for wearing a ‘choker’ similar to the one with the necklace to [this year’s Met Gala](#).

The necklace was said to have disappeared from the Royal Treasury of Patiala around 1948, and parts of it, including the massive De Beers diamond, were later purchased by Cartier.

The grandeur of the necklace can be gauged from the fact that it had taken three years for Cartier to complete the jewellery. Had the original creation existed today, with all its diamonds, it would have been valued at anything between \$30-50 million.

However, the necklace continues to remain a matter of mystery for not just historians but also members of Patiala’s royal household.

The latest controversy

The Patiala necklace was a set of five platinum chains joined together and studded with at least 2930 diamonds, rubies, emeralds and one of the largest diamonds — De Beers — at its centrepiece. However, in most of the available photographs, it is Maharaja Bhupinder Singh’s son and successor, Maharaja Yadavindra Singh — the last ruler of Patiala from 1938 till merger of the princely state with the Union of India in 1948 — who can be seen wearing the necklace along with a diamond studded ‘choker’ (a neckpiece firmly fitting to the neck). It is believed that after 1948, the entire set, including the necklace and the choker, was either ‘stolen’ or ‘went missing mysteriously’ from Patiala’s Royal treasury. Decades later in the 1980s, Cartier traced and purchased some remains of the Patiala Necklace, but found many of its gemstones missing. The luxury brand tried to restore the grand jewel by replacing the diamonds with replicas.



Maharaja Yadavindra Singh and the necklace. (Express photo/Sourced)

Recently, at the Met Gala held in New York, American celebrity and YouTube influencer, Emma Chamberlain, made an appearance wearing a diamond studded choker, similar to what Maharaja Yadavindra Singh was seen wearing in the photos along with the necklace. Soon after the Gala, historians and others had started posting the Maharaja's photos online and questioning if it was the same necklace that was once owned by the Patiala Royals. They questioned how a 'stolen piece of heritage' that 'belonged to India' had reached the West.

Interestingly, Chamberlain also credited Cartier for her jewellery on her official Instagram page, facing massive backlash from Indians for wearing the choker.

The grand ‘Patiala Necklace’ is one of its kind

The 2019 book ‘Untold Story of the Family behind the Jewelry Empire – The Cartiers’ written by Francesca Cartier Brickell, granddaughter of late Jean Jacques Cartier, one of the members of the Cartier family who ran the London branch of the firm, has a dedicated chapter titled ‘Jewelry Spotlight: The Patiala Necklace’ detailing the magnificence of the creation.

Giving the details of how the Maharaja had commissioned Cartier to make the ‘Patiala Necklace’ to ‘update his heirloom into a collection that would put his fellow Indian rulers in the shade’, Brickell writes, “In the summer of 1925, the head Cartier Paris salesman was summoned.. by a very distinguished client. One of the richest men in the world, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala didn’t do things by halves. With five wives and a world-renowned appetite for every conceivable type of luxury, from Rolls Royces to aircraft to diamonds, he personified Eastern Splendor...”



Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, who commissioned the necklace to Cartier, with six of his consorts. (Express photo/Sourced)

Cartier salesman M Muffat, who went to meet the Maharaja at Hotel Claridge of Paris was shown a treasure, several Burmese rubies and ‘a diamond as large as a thumbnail’, writes Brickell, along with ‘white, brown, yellow diamonds with a greenish tint, others with a hint of pink..red rubies, vivid green emeralds. “Muffat, a connoisseur of gemstones, tried hard to hide his awe..”

“The Maharaja told Muffat that he was looking for his gems to be reset in a more modern style.. worthy of a king,” reads an excerpt. But the task wasn’t going to be easy.

“It would take Cartier three years to turn Maharaja’s gems into a collection of jewels that would go down in jewellery history. More than two hundred pearls were drilled to make a single bracelet. But the pièce de résistance was a necklace of such brilliance that it outshone everything else. Containing a staggering 2,930 diamonds and weighing over a thousand carats, it was mounted in platinum and enhanced by Burmese rubies. And at its center was the yellow 234.6-carat De Beers diamond, the size of a golf ball and the seventh-largest diamond in the world,” writes Brickell, describing the making of one of the costliest pieces of jewels ever created.

‘Missing or stolen’ — Patiala royal scion denies both

What continues to amaze historians is how facts related to the ‘disappearance’ of the necklace after 1948 continues to be a mystery even for the members of the royal family.



The ‘disappearance’ of the necklace after 1948 continues to be a mystery even for the members of the royal family. (Express photo/Sourced)

Brickell writes in her book that the necklace had gone ‘missing’: “The Patiala necklace sparkled under the Indian light for two generations, a symbol of power, wealth and exquisite European taste, but in 1948 it sparked controversy when it was reported missing from the Patiala Royal treasury. Nothing was heard of it for a further thirty-four years, at which point the De Beers diamond mysteriously reappeared, without the necklace, at a 1982 Sotheby’s auction (valued at \$ 3 million). Sixteen years after that, part of the necklace appeared in a small antiques shop in London. Obviously, the De

Beers stone was missing but so were all other diamonds. It was bought by Cartier, who replaced missing stones with replicas.”

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh had four wives and hundreds of other consorts, and in all he had 88 children, of which 54 survived. He died in 1938. He was succeeded by Yadavindra Singh who was the last ruler of Patiala till 1947, and died in 1974.

The royal family scion [Captain Amarinder Singh](#), former Punjab Chief Minister and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh’s son, says that though he has some memories of seeing his father wearing the necklace, he has ‘never came across it personally’ and was ‘not even born when his grandfather died in 1938’.



Maharaja Yadavindra Singh wearing the Patiala necklace along with the choker. (Express photo/Sourced)

He adds that ‘according to family elders, the necklace was never stolen’. “I remember that my father wore it on Dussehra darbar. My grandfather had 54 children so probably it was dismantled and distributed as dowries and gifts among the children who sold it further. I never saw it, but it was not stolen. Cartier had tried to reassemble it,” Amarinder told *The Indian Express*.

‘A mystery that will continue to be’

Amarinder's younger brother, Malwinder Singh, however differs from his brother and says that he doubts if the necklace was dismantled and distributed among 54 children of Bhupinder Singh as he had 'other things to give.'

He feels that the mystery of the necklace will continue to be a mystery .

"We were too young, but yes I saw my father wearing it for the last time on April 13, 1948, on Baisakhi Darbar at Moti Bagh Palace. I was just 4 and Amarinder was 6. It was never traced after that. After my grandfather's death in 1938, my father only wore it for a short while. I asked my mother about it but she wasn't aware of it. In those times, wife or children never used to question the head of the family. Around 20 years ago, I met Cartier representatives in Delhi who said that they recovered the necklace in bits and pieces. My father must have been aware that it was sold or gifted or whatever, but we never asked him about it. , " said Malwinder.

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Did Chamberlain wear the choker that once belonged to the Patiala Royals?

UK-based historian, Amar Singh Panesar, says that only an access to Cartier archives could confirm the source of the choker or if it was a replica created by the company. "It remains a mystery who actually sold the necklace or its pieces and to whom, maybe it was someone from within the royal family."



US YouTuber Emma Chamberlain seen wearing a ‘choker’ similar to the one with the necklace at this year’s Met Gala. (Express photo/Sourced)

“But we also don’t know if the choker was also a part of the set when the necklace was sold. So there could be three possibilities: The choker was a loan and returned to Cartier; or it was sold back to Cartier or the one Emma wore was a replica. We cannot verify if the choker was also a part of the Patiala necklace or was commissioned later or maybe it was sold later separately. Only Cartier can verify it from its archives.”

The Indian Express tried to contact Cartier for a comment via mail. The company in its initial reply said that one of their representatives would get back but later no reply was received till the filing of this report.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/curious-case-of-patiala-necklace-that-reappeared-at-met-gala-7957115/>

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Explained: What are the precision guided rocket systems being supplied to Ukraine?

The US and UK will supply to Ukraine precision multiple launch rocket systems. Why does Ukraine want these rocket systems, and how will they give the country an edge over Russia in the ongoing war?

Written by [Man Aman Singh Chhina](#), Edited by Explained Desk | Chandigarh |
Updated: June 8, 2022 12:26:31 am



The M270 MLRS being supplied to Ukraine by UK. (Source: Lockheed Martin)

Ukraine is set to receive the first delivery of precision multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) from the US and UK, after the civilian and military leadership of the country made urgent requests for the hardware.

Why does Ukraine want these rocket systems, and how will they give the country an edge over Russia in the ongoing war? [The Indian Express](#) explains.

Why does Ukraine urgently require MLRS?

The Russians have fielded artillery in great numbers in the war with Ukraine. The lack of precision of Russian artillery systems is offset by the huge numbers that it can deploy in the field. Lately, the Russian artillery has been wreaking havoc on Ukrainian troops in the eastern theatre of war, with artillery salvos of various kinds raining down on Ukrainian forward positions, causing heavy damage and restricting movement of personnel and materials.

In order to counter the Russian artillery onslaught, the Ukrainians need precision artillery weapons which can be used to degrade Russian firepower capabilities. Ukraine's present artillery systems do not allow for a high degree of mobility and firepower which western MLRS can provide. Hence, Ukraine has urgently sought such rocket systems that can offset the Russian advantage at the earliest.

When did Ukraine make the demand for MLRS?

The Ukrainian military has been appealing for the rocket systems for a while now. The US, however, was initially wary of supplying these rocket systems lest Russia escalate the conflict in retaliation.

In the first week of May, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appealed for the MLRS at a virtual G-7 leaders' summit. In his forceful appeal, he said his country needed the M142 HIMARS and M270 MLRS rocket systems from the West.

Given the tactical and strategic situation in the war, the US and UK finally conceded to his demands and agreed to send the systems at the earliest.

What are capabilities of the rocket systems being sent to Ukraine?

The UK has said it will send long-range M270 MLRS to Ukraine. This weapon system can fire 12 surface-to-surface rockets within a span of 60 seconds and hit targets as far away as 80 km. This range of firepower will be significantly more than what the Ukrainian artillery is currently capable of.

The M270 MLRS is a US-origin weapon system and has been used in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years. It is a highly mobile automated system on a tracked platform which is operated by a three-member crew. As per the manufacturer of the system, Lockheed Martin, the M270 can fire 12 Guided MLRS or Extended Range (ER) GMLRS rockets, four Precision Strike Missiles (PrSM) or two Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS).

The US, meanwhile, has committed to supply [**four M142 High Altitude Artillery Rocket System \(HIMARS\) to Ukraine**](#). The HIMARS is a weapon system on a wheeled platform. It gives a very high degree of mobility to the weapons.

The M142 HIMARS also provides for firing precision guided rockets which can degrade concentration of enemy artillery, armour or personnel as far away as 40 km. These can also be used to hit fuel and supply points, and field headquarters with high degree of precision. The shoot-and-scoot capabilities of the system help in protecting it against retaliatory fire by the enemy.

HIMARS has been used successfully in conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

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Delhi Confidential

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- **[Delhi Confidential: Bhupender Yadav to meet officials in Geneva to push for 75 Ramsar sites in India](#)** [Wed, 08

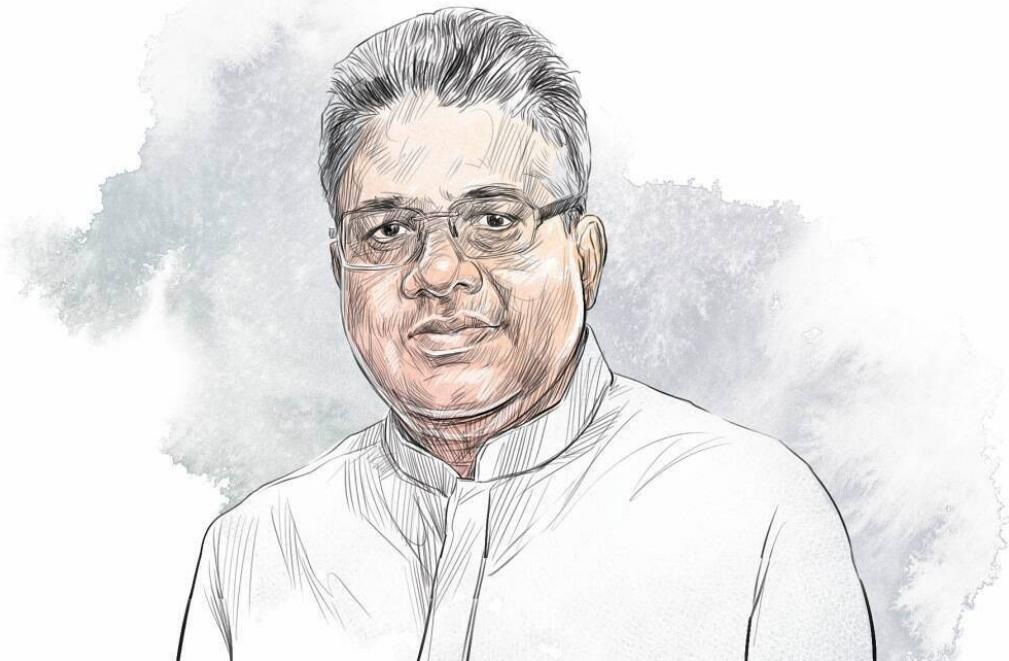
Jun 01:56]

Delhi Confidential: Bhupender Yadav to meet officials in Geneva to push for 75 Ramsar sites in India

The accreditation of a wetland as a Ramsar site marks it as a site of international importance. India currently has 49 Ramsar sites. The Ministry has already sent proposals for 23 more to the Convention, and sent three more on Tuesday.

By: [Express News Service](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:08:16 am



Bhupender Yadav.

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav will leave for Geneva on Wednesday to attend the International Labour Organisation's annual conference. During his visit, the minister will be meeting officials of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. As a part of the Centre's 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', Yadav is looking for 75 Ramsar sites in India by August 15 this year, to coincide with 75 years of the country's Independence. The accreditation of a wetland as a Ramsar site marks it as a site of international importance. India currently has 49 Ramsar sites. The Ministry has already sent proposals for 23 more to the Convention, and sent three more on Tuesday.

Remarkable feat: Minister of State for Railways Raosaheb Patil Dave took to social media to congratulate railway official Shreyas Hosur from the South Western Railway zone for finishing the Ironman Triathlon — one of the gruelling single-day races on the planet. Hosur finished the race, consisting of 3.8 km swimming in open waters, followed by 180 km on bike, and 42.2 km full-marathon distance run, in just 13 hours and 26 minutes. Held in Hamburg, Germany, the Ironman races are the most coveted among the triathletes.

Plea, ponder: An interesting application landed in Delhi Golf Course membership committees' office from a club member, requesting that a live-in partner not be charged guest fee and that the partner be accorded the privileges of a spouse is given. In its examination, the Golf Course Committee has said that the membership sub-committee will examine the case and also seek legal opinion.

"The president was of the view that the Club's Memorandum and Articles of Association be studied and a call may be taken if there is no violation of the norms. Further, it was requested to seek legal opinion in this regard," it noted.

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Economy

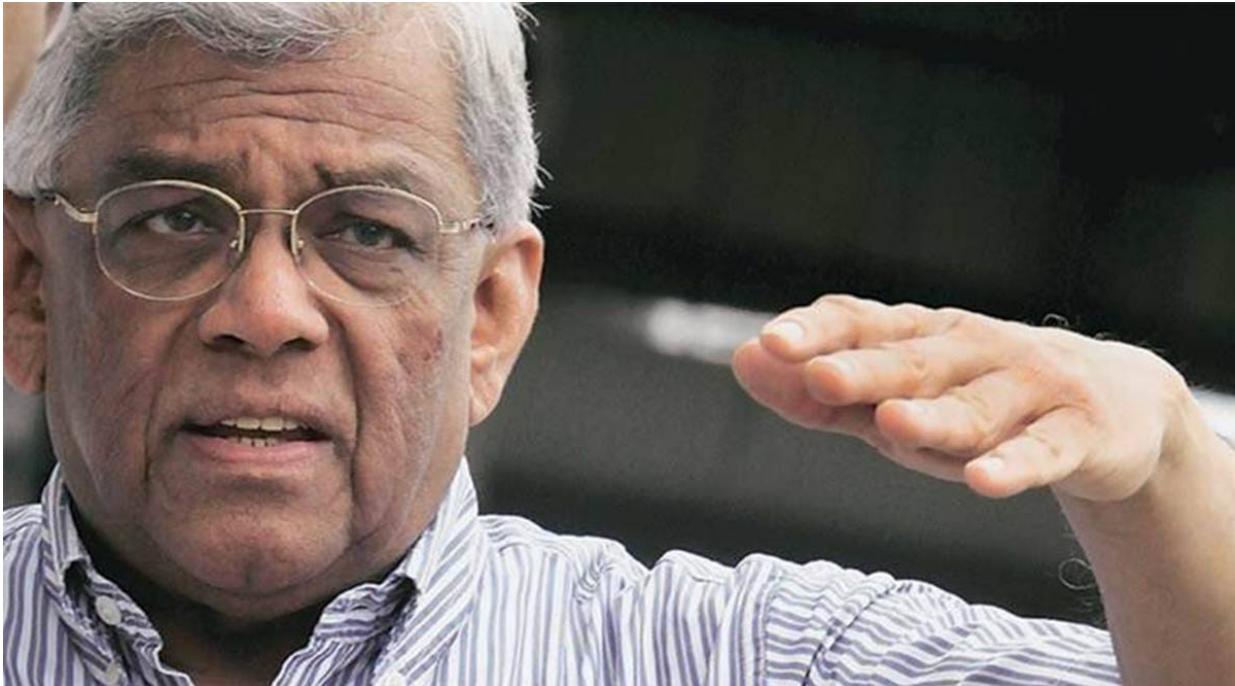
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- **[Home loan market to double to \\$ 600 billion in 5 years: Deepak Parekh](#)** [Wed, 08 Jun 05:58]
- **[UAE-bound Air Arabia flight makes emergency landing in Ahmedabad](#)** [Wed, 08 Jun 02:46]

Home loan market to double to \$600 billion in 5 years: Deepak Parekh

The home loan market in India is estimated at slightly over \$300 billion, which represents a mortgage to GDP ratio of just 11 per cent.

By: [ENS Economic Bureau](#) | Mumbai |
June 8, 2022 5:58:59 am



HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh.

HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh has said India should be able to double its home loans to around \$600 billion (around Rs 46.63 lakh crore) within the next five years.

“This would coincide with the period when India attains its much-aspired goal of being a \$ 5 trillion economy,” he added.

The home loan market in India is estimated at slightly over \$300 billion, which represents a mortgage to GDP ratio of just 11 per cent. “Favourable conditions like rising income levels, improved affordability and fiscal support augur well for the demand for homes. Real estate in India is on an upcycle. Developers are now financially stronger and more disciplined,” he said in his letter to HDFC shareholders.

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Despite the doubling of housing loans, India’s mortgage penetration would still remain low at an estimated 13 per cent of GDP. “Now is the time to ask ourselves what will it take for India’s mortgage to GDP ratio to cross 20 per cent and beyond?” he asked.

“When one looks at comparable Asian economies, the average mortgage to GDP ratios range between 20-30 per cent. This implies that housing loans in India will have an exponential growth trajectory for decades to come,” Parekh said. “The aspiration to own a home in India will only grow further.”

Housing finance products are largely standardised. “The key differentiator between home loan providers is the emotional quotient — empathy and understanding the needs and feelings of customers,” he said.

“We remain committed to offering inclusive and customised housing finance solutions across all income segments, increasing women homeownership, encouraging green housing and extending our reach in deep geographies,” Parekh said.

“Over the past two years, I have been on record several times stating that I have never been as optimistic about the demand for home loans as I am currently,” he said.

“Despite the recent headwinds in the global macro landscape, I continue to maintain this stance. India is on the cusp of an economic transformation. As the pivot of global growth shifts, India is envisaged to remain amongst the fastest growing major economies,” he said.

Much of India's growth will continue to be powered from domestic consumption, he said.

"At HDFC, we know that this is the right time for strategic choices as we prioritise pathways for future growth. Our moment of truth is that the optimum path to scale up housing finance is to be housed within a banking structure," he said.

"The pool of resources for lending will be significantly larger and at lower costs. From a regulatory perspective, it is prudent for all large providers of housing finance to operate on a level playing field, with the same rules. Globally too, the scale of mortgage assets is exponentially larger in banks compared to non-banking financial entities," he said.

"We have at length, already articulated the rationale for the proposed merger, which takes cognisance of the future growth potential of the country, the evolving macro environment and changes in the regulatory architecture," he said.

On the merger of HDFC with HDFC Bank, Parekh said, "at this juncture, we are awaiting regulatory guidance on the path forward. We remain respectful of all our regulators and are confident that the outcome will be judicious and fair at a systemic level."

"My only ask of our stakeholders is for your patience as we navigate through the complexities of this transaction. More than ever before, we need your trust and support," he said.

"Trust is the foundation for a successful merger. Fortunately, between HDFC and HDFC Bank, there is a natural affinity. Financial and human capital is critical through a merger process, as is a lucid communication strategy on key developments during this period," Parekh said.

"It remains our every endeavour to be available and accessible to all our stakeholders to assuage concerns in an open and transparent manner. Further, both entities stand strongly committed to enhanced environmental, social and governance (ESG) disclosures," he said.

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UAE-bound Air Arabia flight makes emergency landing in Ahmedabad

The official said that the flight, operated on a five-year old Airbus A320, landed safely at Ahmedabad around 9.25pm Monday.

By: [ENS Economic Bureau](#) | New Delhi |
June 8, 2022 2:46:53 am



The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has launched an inquiry.
(File)

An Air Arabia aircraft flying from Chittagong in Bangladesh to Abu Dhabi, UAE, made an emergency landing at Ahmedabad airport after one of its engines failed mid-air, a senior DGCA official said Tuesday.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has launched an inquiry. The official said that the flight, operated on a five-year old Airbus A320, landed safely at Ahmedabad around 9.25pm Monday.

“None of the passengers or crew members were injured and the aircraft landed safely, the official added.

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[QS rankings out on Thursday: India's score up to 35, IISc among top in world, says President Kovind](https://indianexpress.com/article/education/qs-rankings-out-on-thursday-indias-score-up-to-35-iisc-among-top-in-world-says-president-kovind-7957852/)

[70 yrs after extinction in India, 1st batch of cheetahs set to arrive from Africa in August](https://indianexpress.com/article/india/70-yrs-after-extinction-in-india-1st-batch-of-cheetahs-set-to-arrive-from-africa-in-august-7957788/)

[Declared extinct 70 years ago, the first batch of five-six Cheetahs will be translocated from South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. This is the first time that a trans-continental shifting of a large carnivore will take place.](https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/rajya-sabha-polls-ed-opposes-anil-hedgewar-bill-7957791/)

deshmukh-nawab-malik-plea-to-vote-7957833/"><noscript></noscript></div><div class="title">Rajya Sabha polls: ED opposes Anil Deshmukh, Nawab Malik plea to vote, says prisoners have no rights</div><div class="date">June 8, 2022 7:10:59 am</div><p>The central agency said "prisoners do not have voting rights". Malik and Deshmukh, who are both MLAs, had sought to be escorted to the Vidhan Sabha at their own expense for a few hours to vote in the election. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"><noscript></noscript></div><div class="title">Gyanvapi case: Fresh plea in Varanasi court over worship right</div><div class="date">June 8, 2022 1:12:08 am</div><p>The court of district judge AK Vishwesha heard the matter, but did not issue any order on the seer's plea, said District Government Counsel (Civil) Mahendra Prasad Pandey. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"><noscript></noscript></div><div class="title">Hyderabad gangrape: SUV in which teenager was assaulted found</div><div class="date">June 7, 2022 4:08:54 am</div><p>Four of the five accused, including two 18-year-old men and two minors, have been apprehended in the case. Police are searching for the fifth suspect, a minor. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"><noscript></noscript></div><div class="title">AAP is the only cure for BJP: Arvind Kejriwal in Gujarat</div><div class="date">June 7, 2022 9:54:18 am</div><p>The AAP's show of strength

from old bus stand in Mehsana town to market place on Rajmahal road comes months ahead of Gujarat assembly elections scheduled to be held later this year. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Chhattisgarh minister: Left to me, wouldn't have given nod for mining </div><div class="date">June 7, 2022 2:59:47 am</div><p> This comes two days after Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, while standing firm on his decision to allow mining in Hasdeo Aranya, said that "certain people" are trying to spread misinformation on the mining projects. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Govt cracks down on diversion of subsidised urea </div><div class="date">June 7, 2022 6:52:42 am</div><p> With its new special teams, such as the 'Fertilizers Flying Squad', the department has, since May, unearthed several cases where highly subsidised urea was diverted to private industrial units. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Minor raped, forced to sell her eggs to pvt hospitals; Tamil Nadu begins probe </div><div class="date">June 7, 2022 7:59:41 am</div><p> The police, assisted by the state health department, found that the girl was being used for illegal sale of her eggs from 2017 to different private hospitals in the state. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> </noscript> </div>

src="https://indianexpress.com/wp-content/plugins/lazy-load/images/1x1.trans.gif" width="450" /><noscript></noscript></div><div class="title"> Legal framework soon to stop levy of service charge by restaurants: govt </div><div class="date">June 3, 2022 12:19:24 pm</div><p> According to 2017 guidelines, charging for anything other than “prices displayed on the menu card along with the applicable taxes”, without “express consent” of the customer, is “unfair trade practices”, the Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ministry said in a statement on Thursday. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Wary of cross-voting, Congress shifts MLAs to Udaipur resort </div><div class="date">June 6, 2022 6:45:43 pm</div><p> The legislators are expected to remain there till June 9, a before polling for four Rajya Sabha seats is scheduled to be held. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Israel’s Gantz meets Modi and Rajnath, defence ties to deepen </div><div class="date">June 3, 2022 5:40:47 am</div><p> On his first official visit to India, Gantz told Modi, “We have a great opportunity to deepen defence cooperation between our countries and to build on our shared values in order to contribute to global stability.” </p> </div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> US: 4 killed in shooting at Tulsa medical building; shooter dead </div><div class="date">June 2, 2022 9:01:20 am</div><p> The shooting comes eight days after an 18-year-old gunman armed with an automatic rifle burst into Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and killed 19 children and two teachers. </p></div><div class="articles">

<div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Mumbai: ED eviction notice for Eknath Khadse, asked to vacate all attached properties </div><div class="date"> June 2, 2022 8:32:59 am</div><p> The ED has alleged that the land was purchased in Chaudhri's name and money for the deal was allegedly routed through five shell companies. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Shivakumar tried to hide illegal cash: ED tells special CBI court </div><div class="date"> June 2, 2022 3:19:16 am</div><p> The ED had arrested Shivakumar on September 3, 2019, in the case. Delhi High Court granted him bail in October 2019. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Har Ghar Dastak 2.0 begins to propel Covid-19 vaccination </div><div class="date"> June 2, 2022 2:57:55 am</div><p> The two-month long door-to-door campaign will run between June 1 and July 31. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Moosewala murder: Punjab Police to question jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, SIT reconstituted </div><div class="date"> June 2, 2022 7:33:58 am</div><p> According to the police, Bishnoi's gang was

behind the killing. At present, Bishnoi is in custody of the Delhi Police's Special Cell in a case under the Arms Act and other sections related to assault on a public servant.

</p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Developed world should take lead in transition towards net zero: India </div><div class="date">June 2, 2022 7:25:23 am</div><p> “The developed countries with their historical experiences must take lead in the global transition towards net-zero and low carbon industry transition. The green premium associated with zero or low carbon technologies must be compensated to trigger demand at a required scale in appropriate ways,” Bhupender Yadav said.

</p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Amit Shah calls meet on June 3 to review J&K security situation </div><div class="date">June 2, 2022 2:55:20 am</div><p> This year, Kashmir Valley has witnessed at least 16 targeted killings, including of police officials, teachers and sarpanches.

</p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Singer KK’s death: Preliminary autopsy rules out foul play </div><div class="date">June 2, 2022 3:56:21 am</div><p> KK was declared “brought dead” by doctors of a hospital where he was taken after he “fell unconscious” upon his return to a hotel from a concert on Tuesday night.

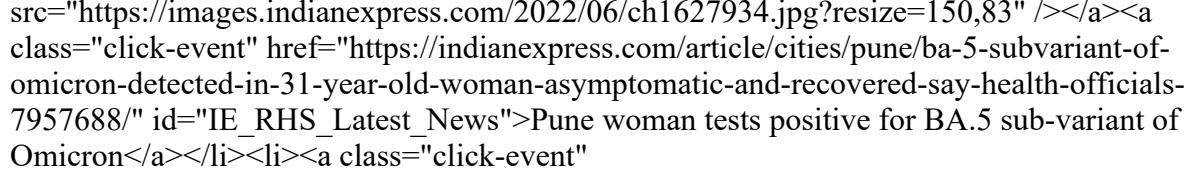
</p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Yogi Adityanath launches second phase of Ram temple construction: '500-year struggle taking shape' </div><div class="date">June 2, 2022 2:27:05 am</div><p> Addressing a gathering of Hindu saints, priests and devotees on the occasion, Adityanath said the Ram temple will be "rashtra mandir" or the national temple of "New India" which will bind the nation in one thread under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' campaign. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> BJP, Congress witness big fall in donations in pandemic year </div><div class="date">June 1, 2022 7:41:25 am</div><p> The BJP received Rs 477.54 crore from various entities, electoral trusts and individuals, down from Rs 785 crore in 2019-20 and Rs 742 crore in 2018-19. </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Ladakh face-off: India, China talk, review situation along LAC </div><div class="date">June 1, 2022 3:03:42 am</div><p> In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the Additional Secretary (East Asia) in MEA led the Indian side at the 24th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><div class="title"> Speculation ends, Hardik Patel to join BJP tomorrow </div><div class="date">June 1, 2022 2:52:00 am</div><p> Ending speculation over Hardik's next move after he walked out of the Congress on May 18, Gujarat BJP media convenor Yagnesh Dave

said, "Yes, he (Hardik) will join the BJP with his supporters at the party's state headquarters Shree Kamalam. Party president C R Paatil will remain present on the occasion." </p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> </div><div class="title"> 39,000 families given Covid death relief, says Dy CM Brajesh Pathak; UP govt says 23,512 dead </div><div class="date">May 31, 2022 7:34:08 am</div><p> The government was replying to a question raised by Samajwadi Party MLA Ravidas Mehrotra about the number of Covid-19 deaths in the state. </p></div> <div class="clear"></div> <div class="pagination"> <ul class="page-numbers"> 1 2 3 ... 1,868 Next > </div> </div> <div class="rightpanel"> <div class="add-first"><div class="ie-adtext">Advertisement</div><div class="" id="gpt_ad_IE_ROS_ATF_300X250"></div></div><div class="rhs-banner-wrapn event-track-class" id="OMIDYAR_HOME_EVENTS"><div class="rhs-banner-carousel"></div><div class="editor-pic"><h6 class="rhs-sub-head">BEST OF EXPRESS</h6>CitiesFear reduces number of Pandit pilgrims for annual mela to a trickleCitiesAl-Qaeda warns of suicide bombings in India over 'insult to Prophet'
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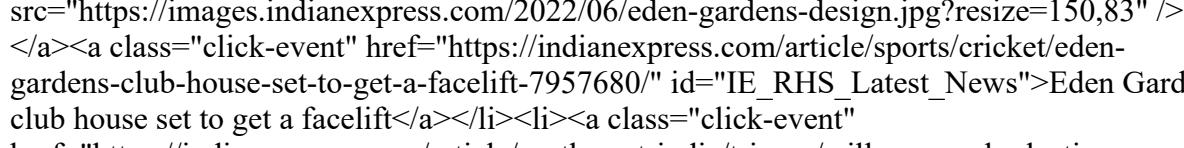
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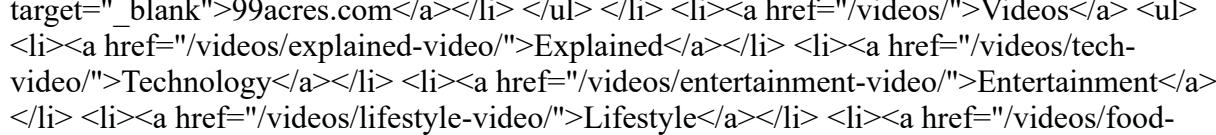
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- **[Udder nonsense or the golden cure: arguments for and against urine therapy](#)** [Wed, 08 Jun 10:46]

Premium

Udder nonsense or the golden cure: arguments for and against urine therapy

According to its supporters, urine therapy is the number one treatment for all medical ailments. Although the centuries old practice is mired in controversy, they argue, don't knock it till you try it.

Written by [Mira Patel](#) | Mumbai |

June 8, 2022 10:46:55 am



While urine therapy remains a medical outlier, the practice dates back thousands of years. (Wikimedia Commons/ edited by Abhishek Mitra)

When the then Indian prime minister Morarji Desai visited the United States in the summer of 1978, he had many important items on his agenda. Desai was the first non-Congress leader of Independent India and was hoping to steer away from the Soviet leaning legacy of his predecessors.

However, his trip was met with little fanfare and headlines from the time focused less on the emerging Janata Party or Desai's attempted statesmanship and more on his sensational interview on the popular daytime show 60 Minutes. In it, Desai revealed his proclivity for a unique and often controversial practice known as urine therapy.

For nearly half an hour, Morarji Desai extolled the many virtues of consuming one's own urine as a catchall cure for medical ailments. Once CBS aired the interview, other broadcasters rushed to follow, cementing the defining moment of Desai's visit, and sparking what was later known as the network urine wars.

For those who may be sceptical about consuming their own waste product, Desai's political successors have an alternate solution. As Om Prakash of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Cow Protection Department argued, 70 to 80 per cent of incurable diseases like diabetes can be treated with cow urine.

For best results, Prakash advises using only urine collected before dawn from a female virgin cow. Acknowledging that everyone may not have access to the same, the RSS even contemplated developing a urine-based soft drink called Gomutra Ark, as a healthy alternative to Western-influenced carbonated drinks.

While urine therapy remains a medical outlier, the practice dates back thousands of years. Many physicians, authors, and ayurvedic practitioners recommend urine consumption, positioning it as a natural and cheap alternative to conventional remedies.

History of urine therapy

Religious use of urine therapy can be traced back to the scripts of Damar Tantra, written nearly 5000 years ago. Known in Hindi as Shivambu, which

translates roughly to water of Shiva, urine was consumed by yogis to enhance meditation and slow down brainwave activity.

The Bible refers to the practice as well, with the Book of Proverbs 5:15 advising, “drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.” Although the verse is contextually believed to refer to monogamy, some interpret it as a reference to urine therapy.

Egyptians, Maoris, and Gypsies are all believed to have practised urine therapy, not only consuming the liquid but also using it as a mouthwash and medicinal balm. Eskimos added urine to shampoo to add extra shine to their hair, and the Chinese used it in the manufacture of gunpowder.

Most famously, in ancient Rome, urine was such a desired commodity that Emperor Vespasianus collected taxes from urine traders who would collect the product from public urinals and sell it for chemical production and other uses. When Vespasianus’ son Titus complained about the disgusting nature of the tax, his father held up a gold coin and asked whether he felt offended by its smell. When Titus responded “no”, Vespasianus pointed out that the coin was not tainted by its origins, giving birth to the now popular phrase, “money doesn’t stink.”

Adding to the popularity of the practice, in 1734, a German publication known as the Healing Dirt Pharmacy concluded that urine can be used to prevent ageing and treat diseases of the lung, and in the 1940s, John W Armstrong released a popular book called Water of Life, which is now considered a seminal text in the history of urine therapy.

It is worth noting that in ancient times, urine was used for lack of better alternatives with some claiming that it no longer holds relevance given the dearth of other, more conventional options. Despite that, the practice is still employed in various shapes and forms.

Modern use of urine therapy

Urine is often used when other substances are either unavailable or impractical. Soldiers stuck in the trenches during World War One consumed their own urine as a substitute for water and adventurers used it as a

disinfectant to treat wounds and sepsis. Ironically, the most accepted use of urine—as a treatment for jellyfish stings—is actually not recommended as its effectiveness is contingent on what the person in question consumed over a 48-hour period.

In terms of practicality, Nasa developed a mechanism to convert urine and sweat into drinkable water due to the shortage of resources and storage on the International Space Station (ISS). Belgian scientists devised a similar energy-saving machine that can be used in sports arenas, rural communities, and airports, going as far as to announce that they would also use distilled urine in beer production, an initiative coined, ‘from sewer to brewer.’

Importantly, however, in these cases, the urine is all but unrecognisable from its natural form, with most of the toxins being distilled out during the conversion process.

In terms of pure urine consumption, people in Nigeria often use cow urine to treat illnesses and in India, the AAYUSH Ministry recently revealed that it was seriously working on the use of cow urine as a treatment for [cancer](#). However, according to Jagdish Bhurani, the author of many [books](#) on urine therapy, cow urine, while sacred, should only be consumed in small quantities. Speaking to indianexpress.com, he stressed that for urine purists, human discharge is still the gold standard.

In an [article](#) written for novices curious about how to get started, Coen Van Der Kroon, bestselling author of The Golden Fountain, has a few helpful tips. He recommends starting with a drop of urine, then a sip of urine, before slowly making your way to a glass per day. If the prospect is still unsettling, Kroon suggests mixing urine in fruit juice or in a combination of honey and water.

The best urine is collected first thing in the morning from the middle stream. The amounts at the beginning and end of urination can be ignored. Bhurani adds that a healthy diet is also key, with substances like chilli and garlic tainting the smell and taste of one’s discharge. Once collected the urine can be stored for up to two days in the open and up to a week once refrigerated, although, if possible, it is best consumed fresh.

Both also state that if drinking urine is not your cup of tea, you can also employ it as a balm, mouthwash, eye drop or skin cream. According to Kroon, massaging fresh urine daily into the skin is recommended and is, in fact, the “secret of many a sex symbol and beauty queens.”

The debate

Put simply, urine consumed in small quantities will neither help nor hurt you. It consists of 95 per cent water, and 2.5 per cent urea, and the rest is a mixture of minerals, salts, hormones, and enzymes. Urea is poisonous only if it enters the bloodstream directly (which it doesn't by drinking urine) and in moderation, is known to neutralise the acid that causes tooth decay and swelling from bug bites.

Urine is produced by the kidneys through the blood filtration process. The kidneys remove all superfluous substances from blood and filter out vital minerals and surplus water. It is the latter that forms urine. The contents of that urine change every time the bladder is emptied, and its efficacy is predicated on an individual's diet.

Proponents for the process claim that a reluctance to drink urine stems from a stigma against human waste while detractors point to the futility of consumption. Leading urine therapy advocate, and author of *The Holy Water*, Harald Tietze, [debunks](#) many of the psychological barriers to the practice.

He argues that urine is perfectly sterile if it is collected properly and is only contaminated when the genital areas are dirty, or the container used for collection is unclean. Furthermore, he states that while some people claim urine stinks, those same people are likely to eat cheese which, to someone who has never been acclimated to it, often smells bad as well. “Some varieties of cheese smell so terrible that you can't understand how some people can eat it, but the taste buds tell us a different story,” he says, adding that people should form their own opinions by consuming urine themselves.

From a medical standpoint, Bhurani claims that he has treated and cured thousands of people with incurable diseases using urine therapy, leaving them with better results than they would find through conventional

treatments. From [Covid-19](#) to cancer, Bhurani maintains that urine therapy is the best solution to all of life's physical ailments.

Many people in Arab countries also actively consume cow urine with one [study](#) suggesting that it contains features that could inhibit the proliferation of cancerous cells. There are ample testimonies to be found from people who swear by their own experiences with the practice.

That being said, there is no scientific evidence to corroborate these claims with the American Cancer Society [stating](#) that “available scientific evidence does not support claims that urine or urea given in any form is helpful for cancer patients.” The WHO has further [advised](#) people against drinking camel urine, noting that they should employ “common sense” measures when it comes to hygiene.

Moreover, in an interview with BBC Three, Dr. Zubair Ahmed [warns](#) that in extreme cases, urine consumption could have adverse consequences.

This is because urine contains waste products that have been filtered out of the bloodstream. Drinking urine reintroduces concentrated waste products into your system which forces the kidneys to filter them out again, causing strain. Additionally, drinking your own urine could alter the dose of medicine you’re already taking and drinking someone else’s urine could introduce a foreign medicine into your bloodstream. Improper collection could also contaminate the urine, leading to bacterial infections.

Those risks aside, Ahmed adds that “there is no evidence at all that ingesting these substances has any health benefits. While drinking a small amount of urine is unlikely to be hazardous to your health, there is not enough modern evidence of its efficacy to suggest drinking it is healthy.”

The belief that it could be good for you can be explained in turn by the naturalistic fallacy, which is the argument that something being natural makes it inherently good. This argument is flawed for a number of reasons, not least because diseases are natural as well, as is the body’s own process of waste elimination.

However, given that our late prime minister, Morarji Desai, died at a ripe old age of 99, perhaps the much-coveted secret for longevity and health is in fact found at the bottom of our toilet bowl.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
<https://indianexpress.com/article/research/udder-nonsense-or-the-golden-cure-arguments-for-and-against-urine-therapy-7957723/>

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UPSC-CSE Key

Latest News, India News, Breaking News, Today's News Headlines Online, English News Top Stories, Coronavirus News, IPL 2022 Updates

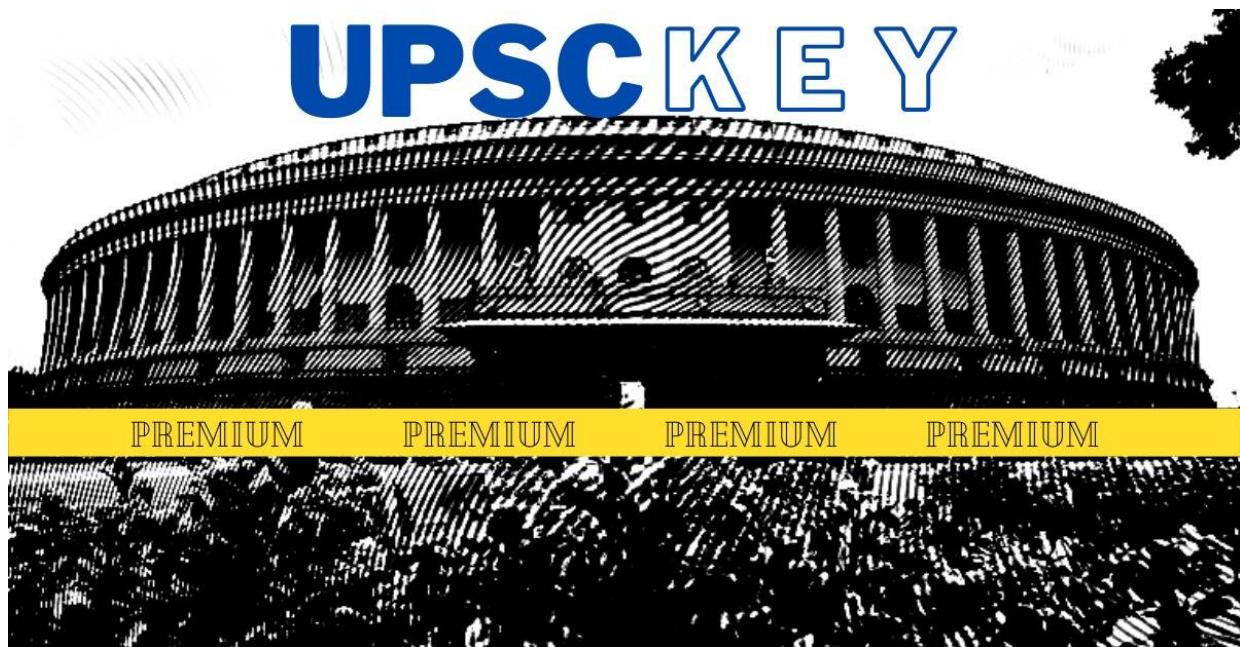
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- **[UPSC Essentials: One word a day- Food safety \(Part 1\)](#)**
[Tue, 07 Jun 16:21]

Premium

UPSC Key-June 7, 2022: Why you should know ‘Blasphemy’ to ‘Corvettes’ to ‘JanSamarth Portal’

Exclusive for Subscribers from Monday to Friday:
The Indian Express UPSC Key June 7, 2022 will help you prepare for the Civil Services and other competitive examinations with cues on how to read and understand content from the most authoritative news source in India. Today the topic ranges from the Hate Speech to Blasphemy to Jan Samarth Portal to Gulf Countries and India and many more. Readers will be able to comprehend each topic holistically after reading today's UPSC Key.

Written by [Priya Kumari Shukla](#) | Hyderabad |
Updated: June 7, 2022 7:44:40 pm



UPSC Key 2022: Here's what you should be reading from the June 7, 2022 edition of The Indian Express.

Important topics and their relevance in UPSC CSE exam for June 7, 2022. [If you missed the June 6, 2022 UPSC key from the Indian Express, read it here](#)

FRONT PAGE

[UAE and Maldives join Islamic world criticism; India hits back at OIC, Pak](#)

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies II: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's Interests.

Key Points to Ponder:

- Who is Nupur Sharma and what is the entire issue?

- Why Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, Libya, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation joined Qatar, Kuwait and Iran, had summoned Indian envoys?
- What is ‘Hate Speech’
- What is Blasphemy?
- Blasphemy and Hate Speech-Compare and Contrast
- How Hate Speech is impacting India’s Bilateral Relations with other countries?
- What is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)?
- Who founded Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)?
- Why was Organisation of Islamic Cooperation OIC established?
- Is India Member of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation?
- What is the Status of India’s relationship with Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)?
- What does the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) do?
- Which countries include in Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)?
- Why is the Gulf and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) important for India?
- How much trade does India do with Gulf countries?
- How much oil does India import?
- How many Indians work in the Gulf, and how much remittance do they send?
- How this latest episode of Nupur Sharma is denting India’s relations with Gulf Region?

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes | Nupur Sharma hates speech row: Beware of half victories](#)

⌚ [Explained: What is OIC and why did India slam the group?](#)

⌚ [Why the Gulf matters for India](#)

⌚ [Explained: Delhi's deep ties in Gulf were delinked from faith, now under strain](#)

⌚ [Nupur Sharma, Naveen Jindal ignored warnings, dented image, action to draw the line: BJP](#)

[Corvettes, Su-30 engines: Rs 76,390-cr procurement boost to Indian industry](#)

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies III: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are corvettes in Indian Navy?
- India's Naval Strength in terms of presence of corvette and frigate in Indian Navy-Know the Data
- What is Defence Acquisition Council?
- Defence Acquisition Council comes under which ministry?
- Who is the Chairman of the Defence Acquisition Council?

- What is ‘Digital Coast Guard’ project?
- What is the difference between Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy?
- What is the Point of Contention between Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy?

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [Peace in Indian Ocean Region key to global prosperity: Rajnath](#)

[27% of Delhi students left out of midday meal in 2nd pandemic year: Centre](#)

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Indian Polity and Governance

Mains Examination: General Studies II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is Midday Meal Scheme?
- Midday Meal Scheme-Know Key provisions of the scheme
- Midday Meal Scheme and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-Connect the dots
- Midday Meal Scheme and PM-POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman) Scheme-How they are connected?
- Convention on the Rights of the Child and India’s commitment to yielding “adequate nutritious food” for children-Know more in detail
- Supreme Court of India on Midday meal Scheme-Know the landmark Judgements

- What is POSHAN Abhiyaan?
- Know the objectives of POSHAN Abhiyaan?
- Poshan Abhiyaan and Midday Meal Scheme comes under which ministry?

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [POSHAN Abhiyaan – PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment](#)

⌚ [Mid Day Meal Rules : Notification](#)

GOVT & POLITICS

Govt cracks down on diversion of subsidised urea

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Economic and Social Development

Mains Examination: General Studies III: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is ‘Fertilizers Flying Squad’?
- Fertilizers Flying Squad-Rationality behind its formation?
- What do you understand by ‘Agriculture grade urea’?
- Know in detail about the Fertilizer Consumption in India
- What is Fertilizer?
- Primary (Macro) Nutrients and Secondary (Micro) Nutrients in Fertiliser-Know the difference

- Know more about Fertiliser Sector in India and Related Policies
- Fertilizer comes under Union List, State List or Concurrent List?
- know the basics-Fertiliser Subsidy
- Subsidy Mechanism in the form of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)-know more in detail
- What is the fertiliser requirement of a typical farmer?
- How much subsidy does a farmer really get per acre?
- What is Di-ammonium phosphate (DAP)?
- NPK in Fertilisers-Have you heard of ‘NPK’? What is NPK and Its Ideal Ratio in Fertilizers?
- Advantages of fertigation in agriculture?

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

- ⌚ [Explained: How fertiliser subsidy works](#)
- ⌚ [Explained: Why has the Modi government increased subsidy on DAP?](#)

EXPRESS NETWORK

India tests nuclear-capable Agni-4 missile

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies III: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the Agni Class of Missiles?
- Know in detail about Integrated Guided Missile Development Program
- Know the specifications of other Ranges of Agni Missiles like Agni I, Agni II, Agni III and Agni V
- Integrated Guided Missile Development Program and Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam-Connect the Dots

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [DRDO's Agni-P missile: A nightmare for India's adversaries!](#)

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

Beware of half victories RE-ENGAGING KABUL

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies II: India and its neighbourhood-relations

Key Points to Ponder:

- India and Afghanistan Bilateral Relations-Know the Background
- How Afghanistan impacts India's security?
- 'Principle and Pragmatism' and Relationship with Taliban-Connect the Dots
- Afghanistan's location in South Asia is particularly relevant to India as a geographical neighbour, why?

- Map Work-Afghanistan
- The first official Indian visit to Kabul since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021-Why Significant?
- What is the Current Situation in Afghanistan?
- Who are the Taliban?
- In what context have you heard or know about “Good Taliban, Bad Taliban”?
- The Doha Agreement, signed by the United States and the Taliban on 29 February 2020, was one of the critical events that caused the Fall of Kabul- How far you agree?
- What was there in Doha Agreement?
- India’s bilateral relations with Afghanistan before and after august 2021- Compare and Contrast

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [Explained: Engaging with the Taliban](#)

⌚ [Who are the Taliban?](#)

EXPLAINED

[**Carbon dioxide levels are now comparable to 4 mn years ago**](#)

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change – that do not require subject specialization.

Mains Examination: General Studies III: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)?
- According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration “the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere peaked at a level 50 percent higher than the pre-industrial average”-What do you understand by this statement?
- Why Does CO₂ Peak Every May?
- How CO₂ pollution is generated?
- How rise in CO₂ impacts the planet Earth?
- What was the CO₂ Levels prior to the Industrial Revolution?
- Map work-Mauna Loa volcano

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [Carbon dioxide now more than 50% higher than pre-industrial levels](#)

[How inflation defeated the RBI: A recent history of MPC statements](#)

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Economic and Social Development

Mains Examination: General Studies III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation, of resources, growth, development and employment

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is [REPO rate](#)?
- What is Current Repo Rate?
- What is Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) Rate?

- What happens when Repo Rate and CRR is increased?
- Why did RBI increase the REPO and CRR recently?
- What is the Monetary Policy Committee?
- What is the Monetary Policy Committee?
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is a Statutory Body-True or False?
- What is the Primary Objective of monetary policy in India?
- There are several direct and indirect instruments that are used for implementing monetary policy-What are they?
- Inflation and Various Types of Inflation
- Causes of Inflation in recent time?
- Long term, Medium Term and Short-term impact of Inflation
- Impact of increase in the REPO and CRR on Money Supply on an Economy-Inflation or Deflation?
- Know about these terms-Bank Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF), Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) etc.
- New Standard for Measuring Inflation in India and Old Standard for Measuring Inflation-Key Differences
- Steps or Measures Taken by GOI to Control Inflation
- National Statistical Office (NSO)-About, Vision, Mandate and Role

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [A Jolt From RBI](#)

⌚ [Explained: Federal Reserve signals, and Indian markets](#)

ECONOMY

People-centric governance, simplifying reforms key: PM

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Indian Polity and Governance

Mains Examination: General Studies II: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is Jan Samarth Portal?
- Jan Samarth Portal-What are the highlights of this new launched portal?
- ‘Jan Samarth portal will be an ‘end-to-end delivery platform’-What do you understand by this Statement?
- Jan Samarth, a portal connecting 13 credit-linked government schemes. Which are all schemes comes under this portal?

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ Jan Samarth

THE WORLD

Boris Johnson faces no-confidence vote over ‘partygate’

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies II: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the “Partygate Controversy”?
- What were Britain’s Covid lockdown Rules?
- What is the Gray report?
- What triggered the leadership challenge?
- What will happen during the confidence vote?
- What happens if Johnson wins the confidence vote?
- What would happen if Johnson loses?
- No confidence motion in India and in Britain-Compare and Contrast

Other Important Articles Covering the same topic:

⌚ [Explained: What are the options with Boris Johnson after ‘Partygate’ criticism?](#)

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UPSC Essentials: Reports, policies and data on your tips- Jan Samarth Portal

What is Jan Samarth Portal? Aspirants must take a note of such government initiatives for the UPSC- CSE prelims and mains.

Written by [Manas Srivastava](#) | New Delhi |
June 7, 2022 6:17:00 pm



PM Narendra Modi launched a special series of coins on the iconic week celebration of the Ministry of Finance. (Source: Twitter/ @PIBinMaharashtra)

Essential data, facts, figures, and background information from reports, policies and important documents for UPSC-CSE.

What is Jan Samarth Portal?

- According to Prime Minister's Office, Jan Samarth Portal is a one-stop digital portal that links the government credit schemes.
- Beneficiaries can digitally check eligibility, apply online and receive digital approval.

What is the special feature of this portal?

- The portal is unique in the sense it is the first of its kind. It connects beneficiaries directly to the lenders.

What is the idea behind launching this portal?

- The idea behind launching this portal is to encourage inclusive growth and development of several sectors.
- This will be achieved by guiding them toward the appropriate government schemes and benefits through simple and easy digital processes.
- Important is to note that this portal ensures end-to-end coverage of all the linked schemes.

How many schemes are linked to this portal?

-13 schemes under 4 loan categories are linked to this portal. The 4 loan categories are- education, agricultural infrastructure, business activity and livelihood.

When was this portal launched?

- The Prime Minister launched this portal in the ‘Iconic week celebrations’ of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs at Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi.
- The Iconic week (June 6-11) is being celebrated as part of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’.

- A digital exhibition that traces the journey of two ministries — Finance and Corporate Affairs — over the past eight years was also unveiled.
- PM also released special series of Re 1, Rs. 2, Rs. 5, Rs. 10, and Rs. 20 coins. These special series of coins have the theme of the logo of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. A very special feature about these coins is that they are easily identifiable to visually impaired persons.

Point to ponder: What is the significance of Jan Samarth portal? Who all will be its beneficiaries?

(sources: jansamarth.in, pib.gov.in)

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UPSC Essentials: One word a day- Food safety (Part 1)

Why is food safety an important issue according to WHO? Aspirants must cover this topic for UPSC-CSE as we celebrate World Food Safety Day on June 7. UPSC Essentials discusses this word in 2 parts.

Written by [Manas Srivastava](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 7, 2022 4:34:43 pm



UPSC Essentials covers part I of the term food safety on World Food Safety Day. (Representative image)

Take a look at the essential concepts, terms, and phenomena from the static and current parts of the UPSC-CSE.

Word: Food safety (Part I)

Subject: Polity, Governance and Justice

(Relevance: Prelims, GS II, GS III, Ethics and Essay)

Note: Part II will cover Food safety from India's perspective – FSSAI, Food Safety Index etc.

Why food safety?

- We are all food consumers, and we all want our food to be safe. Safe food is essential to human health and well-being. Only when food is safe can we fully benefit from its nutritional value and from the mental and social benefits of sharing a safe meal. Safe food is one of the most critical guarantors for good health.
- Foodborne illnesses, caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites, are infectious and toxic. They can enter the body through contaminated food and water. Foodborne diseases affect 1 in 10 people worldwide each year. There are over 200 of these diseases – some mild, but others deadly.
- From a social perspective, they contribute to absenteeism from school and work and reduce productivity.
- According to the United Nations website, “With an estimated 600 million cases of foodborne illnesses annually, unsafe food is a threat to human health and economies, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized people, especially women and children, populations affected by conflict, and migrants.”
- It is, therefore, important to ensure the food stays safe at every step of the food chain, from production to consumption.

What is World Food Safety Day?

- It is an annual celebration to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks.

- The United Nations General Assembly established World Food Safety Day in 2018 to raise awareness of this important issue.
- WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with the Member States and other stakeholders.

What is the theme of this year's World Food Safety Day and what does it highlight?

- This year's theme is “Safer food, better health”.
- It highlights the role that safe, nutritional food plays in ensuring human health and well-being and calls for a set of specific actions to make food safer.
- According to WHO- We all have a role to play; whether we grow, process, transport, store, sell, buy, prepare or serve food, food safety is in all our hands. And if we work together, we can all help achieve safer food for better health.

What is the food safety slogan by the UN and what does it mean?

- Food safety slogan is “Food safety is everyone's business”.
- Under the slogan “Food safety, everyone's business”, the action-oriented campaign promotes global food safety awareness and calls upon countries and decision-makers, the private sector, civil society, UN organizations, and the general public to take action.

What are WHO's five keys to safer food?

WHO's five keys to safer food: keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures and use safe water and raw materials.

What is the connection between food safety and food security?

(Relevance: Good fodder for your notes on food safety)

- According to FAO, food security means having regular access to enough safe and nutritious food to lead an active and healthy life. “That makes food safety an integral part of food security. If food isn’t safe, it can make you sick. If food isn’t safe, it isn’t good for you. If it isn’t safe, it isn’t food. To end hunger and achieve food security, we must ensure access to safe food for all.”

What are some facts and figures provided by WHO related to food safety?

(Relevant in supporting your arguments and answers. Just a few points will do)

- One in ten people worldwide fall ill from contaminated food each year. It affects all countries.
- The magnitude of the public health burden due to foodborne diseases is comparable to that of malaria or HIV AIDS.
- Over 200 diseases are caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, or chemical substances such as heavy metals.
- Antimicrobial-resistant microbes can be transmitted through the food chain. Each year, an estimated 700 000 people die around the globe because of antimicrobial-resistant infections.
- Children under the age of five are at a higher risk of malnutrition and mortality due to unsafe food and carry 40 percent of the foodborne disease burden. Unsafe food caused one in six deaths from diarrhea, a major killer in this age group.
- If there are no contraindications, exclusive breastfeeding is the safest way to feed infants during the first six months of life.
- The production of safe food reduces food loss and waste and benefits the planet.
- 188 countries and one member organization (the European Union) have negotiated science-based recommendations in all areas related to food safety

and quality, Codex Alimentarius standards, which ensure that food is safe and can be traded.

What should be the role of different stakeholders for food safety?

(Relevant for Essay, GS II and Ethics)

As per WHO, role of different stakeholders are:

1) Governments

Encourage and engage in multi-sector collaboration at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Public support programmes must focus on healthy and safe food.

Design strong policies and practice good governance. Support policy measures and legal frameworks to strengthen the national food safety system and ensure it complies with food safety standards.

2) Food Businesses

Everyone involved in food production, processing, distribution and retail – must ensure compliance with standards to identify, evaluate and control food safety hazards.

Engage employees, suppliers and other stakeholders to grow and develop a food safety culture. Organize regular informational sessions, trainings or workshops on food safety.

Comply with international food standards.

3) Educational Institutions and Workplaces

Universities, schools and workplaces should include food safety education into wellness policies. Consider including food safety education training as part of professional development.

Food halls and canteens should ensure that all food safety regulations are followed by, for example, applying Hazard Analysis and Critical Points (HACCP) processes and all relevant standard operating procedures, as well as by providing adequate training to anyone handling food.

Involve families in food safety activities, allowing them to learn and inform others that by changing simple day-to-day actions, they can reduce the risk of foodborne disease.

4) Consumers

Keep informed and promote food safety. Consumers have the power to drive change. By making safe and healthy dietary choices, you help reduce the global burden of disease and support sustainable food systems.

Practice safe food handling at home.

Follow WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food: keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures and use safe water and raw materials.

How can one spread the message of food safety in an innovative way?

(Relevant for Essay, Ethics and Personality test)

WHO suggests some interesting ways-

- 1) Host a webinar- Bring together key players in the food system to talk about everyone's role in food safety
- 2) Organize public event and launch a campaign on social media- Organize an event for the general public – concerts, festivals or fairs, food tastings or cooking demonstrations with a food safety message. Music concerts and demonstrations can also attract virtual audiences.
- 3) Hold a sport activity- Organize a run, march, walk to promote food safety. Fitness and exercise are a great way to encourage people to get involved in their communities for a cause.

- 4) Reach out to media- Use radio, newspapers and magazines to generate awareness of food safety issues.
- 5) Collect personal stories and recognize success- Document stories about food workers, farmers, health professionals or someone who has suffered a foodborne illness. Sharing experiences can help people understand just how important food safety is.
- 6) Turn to the arts or make it a game- There are numerous ways you can learn about food safety or share your knowledge either in person or online. Run a competition or a quiz. Develop and act out a drama with friends, write a song or poem.

What is Codex Alimentarius?

- The Codex Alimentarius or “Food Code” is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- The Codex Alimentarius Commission is a joint intergovernmental body of the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization. Currently, it has 189 members and India is a member.

(source: *who.int, fao.org*)

To be continued..

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Ukraine launching ‘Book of Executioners’ to detail war crimes – Zelensky

Ukrainian prosecutors say they have registered more than 12,000 alleged war crimes involving more than 600 suspects since the Kremlin started its offensive on Feb. 24.

By: [Reuters](#) | Kyiv |
June 8, 2022 11:13:22 am



A boy places chocolate at his father's grave, who died in the Bucha massacre, at the cemetery in Ukraine. (AP/file photo)

[Ukraine](#) is launching a “Book of Executioners”, a system to collate evidence of war crimes Kyiv says were committed during Russia’s occupation,

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday.

Ukrainian prosecutors say they have registered more than 12,000 alleged war crimes involving more than 600 suspects since the Kremlin started its offensive on Feb. 24.

“Next week, a special publication is to be launched – ‘The Book of Executioners’ – an information system to collect a confirmation of data about war criminals, criminals from the Russian army,” Zelensky said in a video address.

Zelensky said this would be a key element in his longstanding pledge to bring to account Russian servicemen who have committed what Ukrainian authorities have described as murders, rape and looting.

“These are concrete facts about concrete individuals guilty of concrete cruel crimes against Ukrainians,” Zelensky said.

He cited the Kyiv suburb of Bucha, where investigators found what they say is evidence of mass executions.

Russia says it has gone out of its way to avoid targeting civilians in its “special military operation” in Ukraine.

Russian officials have specifically dismissed pictures of events in Bucha as “fabrications” staged by Ukrainian authorities after Russian forces left the town at the end of March.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
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Next UN assembly president, Hungarian Ambassador Csaba Korosi, warns world in dangerous crisis

Hungarian Ambassador Csaba Korosi, who takes over the presidency of the 193-member world body in September, said there is "a red alert" for the global climate and crises in food, energy and water supplies.

By: [AP](#) |

Updated: June 8, 2022 11:12:00 am



Csaba Korosi, Director of Environmental Sustainability at the Office of the President of Hungary. (AP)

Hungarian Ambassador Csaba Korosi was elected Tuesday as the next president of the U.N. General Assembly, and he warned immediately that the world is in the throes of a dangerous crisis and the credibility of the United Nations is at stake.

In addition, he said, people everywhere are still affected by the consequences of the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, “the global economy is at the threshold of recession and the sovereign debts are at an unprecedented level.” On top of that, conflicts this century — including in [Ukraine](#) — are fiercer and “a postcard from the future,” Korosi said.

When the United Nations was founded 77 years ago at the end of World War II, member states showed that “lasting peace can be built on the ashes of war,” Korosi said. But today, “we live in times that rock the foundation this organization was built upon, with multiple crises looming.” He called for the same resolve today that the U.N.’s founding nations had “to stand up to the challenges that threaten international peace and security as well as our sustainable future on this planet.” Korosi, a diplomat for nearly 40 years previously served in Libya, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Greece and the United Nations in New York. More recently, he served as deputy state secretary responsible for security policy, diplomacy and human rights.

He was elected president of the 77th session of the General Assembly by acclamation, without a vote. The assembly’s current president, Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives, banged his gavel signifying Korosi’s election.

Shahid noted that Korosi has chosen the theme “Solutions through Solidarity, Sustainability and Science” as the motto for his presidency.

He said it offers “a pragmatic view” of the assembly’s continuing work to promote a global recovery from the pandemic, tackle climate change and strive to meet the 17 U.N. development goals for 2030, starting with ending extreme poverty and hunger and including achieving gender equality and ensuring quality education for every child.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres echoed Korosi's concerns, saying: "We face a world in peril." "From the war in Ukraine in all its dimensions to the deepening impacts of the climate crisis; from the COVID-19 pandemic to escalating humanitarian needs, hunger and poverty, the months ahead will test the multilateral system," he said.

He said the world looks to the General Assembly, where every country has a seat, "to debate, to forge consensus, and most of all to deliver solutions." Guterres said the year-long 77th session "can be a moment of transformation — a time to recalibrate multilateralism and strengthen the foundations of global cooperation."

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Sri Lankan PM requests patience as UN calls for relief funds

In a speech to Parliament, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the U.N. seeks to provide \$48 million in assistance over a four-month period.

By: [AP](#) | Colombo |
June 8, 2022 11:10:06 am



A Sri Lankan port worker stands on a ship that carried emergency supplies granted as humanitarian aid by India government to Sri Lankan people at a port in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (Express file photo)

Sri Lanka's prime minister said Tuesday that the United Nations has arranged a worldwide appeal to help the island nation cope with critical shortages of food, fuel and medicines, but the projected funds barely scratch the surface of the \$6 billion it needs to stay afloat over the next six months.

In a speech to Parliament, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the U.N. seeks to provide \$48 million in assistance over a four-month period.

Wickremesinghe said it will be tough for the next three weeks to obtain some essentials and urged people to be united and patient, to use the scarce supplies as carefully as possible and avoid nonessential travel.

“Therefore, I urge all citizens to refrain from thinking about hoarding fuel and gas during this period. After those difficult three weeks, we will try to provide fuel and food without further disruptions. Negotiations are underway with various parties to ensure this happens,” Wickremesinghe said.

Sri Lanka is nearly bankrupt, having suspended repayment of its foreign loans. Its foreign reserves are almost spent, which has limited imports and caused serious shortages of essential items including food, medicine, fuel and cooking gas.

It is due to repay \$7 billion this year of the \$25 billion in foreign loans it is scheduled to pay by 2026. Sri Lanka’s total foreign debt is \$51 billion.

Authorities have started discussions with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout package, and Wickremesinghe said he asked the IMF to lead a conference to unite Sri Lanka’s lenders.

“Holding such a conference under the leadership of India, China and Japan will be a great strength to our country. China and Japan have different credit approaches. It is our hope that some consensus on lending approaches can be reached through such a conference,” Wickremesinghe said.

A decision last year to ban imported agrochemicals and make farming totally organic halved rice production during the main cultivating season, though the ban has since been withdrawn. A lack of funds to buy fertilizer threatens future yields, too, causing fears of a worsening food crisis.

Wickremesinghe said chemical fertilizer imports cost \$600 million a year and \$150 million will be needed to import food each month. Another \$1 billion will be required to strengthen the local currency, and in all, Sri Lanka will need about \$6 billion to stay afloat for the next six months, he said.

“The task of rebuilding our declining agriculture must begin immediately. We are losing the international market for our export crops. Action must be taken to prevent this. Chemical fertilizers are needed to boost local agriculture,” he said.

Wickremesinghe said that before he took over as prime minister last month, the government had alienated Sri Lanka’s long-time allies.

“Japan is our long-time friend. A nation that has helped our country greatly. But they are now unhappy with us due to the unfortunate events of the past,” Wickremesinghe said. “Our country failed to formally notify Japan of the suspension of certain projects. Sometimes the reasons for these suspensions were not even stated.”

Sri Lanka cancelled and reinstated a port development project with India and Japan multiple times in the years following their initial 2019 agreement.

“Despite alienating these friendly nations, India offered to help us in the face of the growing crisis. We express our respect and gratitude to them during this difficult time. We are also working to re-establish old friendships with Japan,” he said.

India has provided billions of dollars in help to Sri Lanka through loans and credit lines since the crisis started.

Sri Lankan Foreign Employment Minister Manusha Nanayakkara said the government plans to send part of its bloated state workforce to work overseas to earn much-needed foreign currency. He said the health ministry is also formulating laws to help state health workers seek foreign jobs.

Remittances from overseas workers have been one of Sri Lanka’s main economic lifelines, along with garment exports and tourism, but that income has drastically declined because authorities artificially maintained the value of the U.S. dollar and made the conversion of foreign money into local currency compulsory, leading many to use illegal channels to transfer funds.

Nanayakkara said Sri Lanka typically received \$700 million a month in remittances from expatriate workers, but the figure dropped to \$230 million in March.

The economic crisis has led to political turmoil. Protesters have been camped outside the president's office for more than 50 days calling for the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, whom they accuse of being responsible for the crisis.

Protests have almost dismantled the once-powerful Rajapaksa political dynasty, with the president's brother resigning as prime minister last month amid violent protests. Three other family members resigned from Cabinet positions earlier this year.

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World Bank board approves \$1.49 billion in new funds for Ukraine

Ukraine has said that it needs at least \$5 billion per month in the near term to keep its government operating in the face of the invasion by Russia in February and fighting that has shut down vast portions of its economy.

By: [Reuters](#) |
June 8, 2022 11:09:01 am



The International Monetary Fund logo is seen outside the headquarters building during the IMF/World Bank spring meeting in Washington, U.S., April 20, 2018. (REUTERS/Yuri Gripas/File Photo)

The World Bank's executive board approved \$1.49 billion of additional financing for [Ukraine](#) on Tuesday to help pay wages for government and social workers, expanding the bank's total pledged support to over \$4 billion.

The World Bank said in a statement that the latest funding is supported by financing guarantees from Britain, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Latvia. The project is also being supported by parallel financing from Italy and contributions from a new Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

Ukraine has said that it needs at least \$5 billion per month in the near term to keep its government operating in the face of the invasion by Russia in February and fighting that has shut down vast portions of its economy.

Finance leaders from the Group of Seven industrial democracies last month pledged \$9.5 billion in new funding, bringing their non-military support to nearly \$20 billion.

The World Bank has been working with donor countries to use its various financing programs to support health care, education, social services, power and water supplies and roads.

The core services were “essential to preventing further deterioration in living conditions and poverty in Ukraine beyond the suffering inflicted because of the war,” World Bank Eastern Europe country director Arup Banerji said in a statement.

Such services would also be “the bedrock of any recovery and reconstruction,” Banerji added.

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Police: New York anti-abortion center damaged by arson

On its website, the centre said it and others like it have faced online and in-person threats in recent weeks following the leak of a draft opinion that suggests the U.S. Supreme Court could overturn the Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide.

By: [AP](#) | New York |
Updated: June 8, 2022 11:08:22 am



Paul King cleans up broken glass after an early morning firebombing at the CompassCare facility, an anti-abortion center in Amherst, N.Y., on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. (Mark Mulville/The Buffalo News via AP)

Police are investigating a fire at an anti-abortion centre in a Buffalo suburb early Tuesday as a likely arson-one the centre's operators suspect is the work of women's rights extremists.

The fire was reported at about 3 a.m. and left the building temporarily unusable, CompassCare Chief Executive Jim Harden said.

"Essentially, they firebombed the operation," Harden said. "They broke the two main windows in the reception area and the nurse's office and lit the fires." The Amherst police news release announcing the investigation did not include a suspected motive. The FBI declined to comment on whether it was involved in the arson investigation.

On its website, the centre said it and others like it have faced online and in-person threats in recent weeks following the leak of a draft opinion that suggests the U.S. Supreme Court could be poised to [overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide.](#)

Last month, the office of a prominent Wisconsin anti-abortion lobby group was damaged by fire after two Molotov cocktails were thrown at it. Police said an anti-abortion organization in Salem, Oregon, also recently was damaged by two Molotov cocktails during an unsuccessful break-in attempt.

Harden said CompassCare provides free health care to women and encourages them to seek alternatives to abortion. The Buffalo office serves about 20 patients each week, he said.

Services will resume Wednesday at an undisclosed location, he said. The Rochester-based organization has increased security at its Rochester and Albany locations and plans to install armoured glass in the Buffalo office.

At a news conference, Harden said the vandals who set the fire wrote "Jane was here" on the building.

"This is the face of abortion," he said. "They're revealing it to us." The fire took place in the same Buffalo suburb where Dr. Barnett Slepian was murdered by an anti-abortion extremist in 1998.



CompassCare employees survey the damage of an early morning firebombing at their anti-abortion centre in Amherst, N.Y., on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. (Mark Mulville/The Buffalo News via AP)

That killing followed a period in which Buffalo was ground zero in the nation's anti-abortion movement, with protesters converging on the city from around the U.S. in an attempt to close clinics down.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul announced last month the state would give abortion providers \$35 million [to expand services and boost security in anticipation of the Supreme Court decision](#). Besides Slepian, at least 10 other people have been slain across the U.S. by anti-abortion zealots since 1993 in attacks on clinics and health care providers.

Harden said the fire shows that groups opposed to abortion deserve security help, too.

"We haven't gotten a single dime for security," Harden said.

In an emailed statement, Hochul's office said the governor "condemns violence of any kind, and the State Police stand ready to assist local authorities with the investigation."

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Biden envoy to visit Marshall Islands as US concerns grow about China's Pacific push

Last week, a virtual meeting of 10 Pacific foreign ministers hosted by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Fiji agreed to defer consideration of a Chinese proposal for a sweeping trade and security pact.

By: [Reuters](#) | Washington |
June 8, 2022 10:38:03 am



US President Joe Biden (AP/File)

US President Joe Biden's special envoy for talks with three tiny but strategically important Pacific island nations will lead a delegation to the Marshall Islands next week amid growing US worries about China's efforts to expand its influence in the region.

Joseph Yun, a veteran diplomat appointed by Biden in March, told *Reuters* he and his team would be in the Marshall Islands from June 14-16.

A spokesperson for the US State Department said Yun would hold talks on the Compact of Free Association (COFA) that governs US economic assistance for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), which is due to expire next year.

The United States has similar agreements with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau, which expire in 2023 and 2024, respectively, and Yun is also responsible for those negotiations.

"We welcome the opportunity for in-person meetings with the RMI negotiating team and look forward to productive talks," the State Department spokesperson said.

The Pacific islands have emerged as a key front in Washington's strategic competition with China, which has stepped up diplomatic efforts to woo countries in the region.

Biden and New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern aired shared concerns last week about China's bid to expand its influence in the Pacific and a senior US official said they discussed the need for in-person engagement with Pacific island leaders.

They also expressed concern about a recent security agreement between China and the Solomon Islands.

Last week, a virtual meeting of 10 Pacific foreign ministers hosted by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Fiji agreed to defer consideration of a Chinese proposal for a sweeping trade and security pact.

Samoa's leader said subsequently the pact needed to be discussed at a regional meeting before any decisions are made.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with Henry Puna, general secretary of the Pacific Islands Forum. China will unswervingly expand and deepen opening-up at a higher level, and is willing to share development dividends with Pacific Island countries. pic.twitter.com/TUmRscaZmy

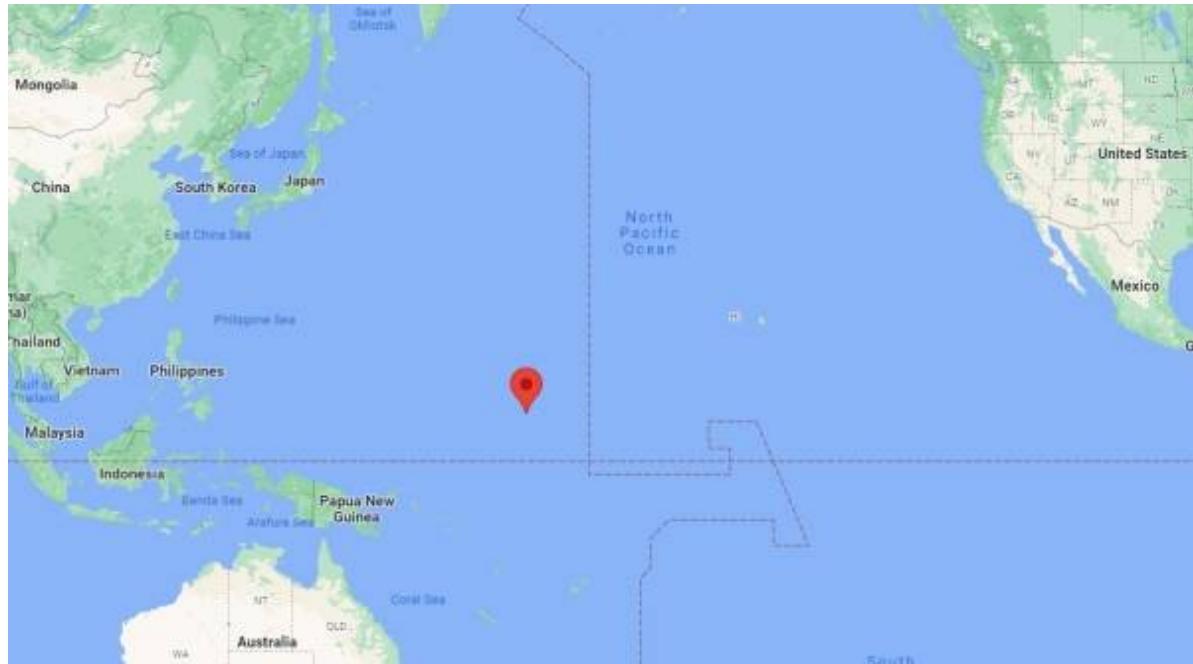
— Chinese Consulate General in Christchurch (@ChinaCG_CC) June 2, 2022

Talks to renew the US COFA agreements with the Marshall Islands, FSM and Palau began during the Trump administration but languished before Yun's appointment, raising concerns that Washington could lose its battle for influence with Beijing.

Key issues for the Marshall Islands include remuneration for the legacy of massive US nuclear testing there, the presence of US military bases and climate-change mitigation.

One source familiar with the plans said the talks would be held at the US Army Garrison – Kwajalein Atoll, site of a crucial US missile testing facility, and were a sign that Yun's appointment had injected greater momentum into the Biden administration's engagement with Pacific Island countries.

Yun had already conducted meetings or virtual discussions with the leaders of the three countries, and held virtual talks with the negotiating team from FSM, the source said, but the Marshall Islands trip would mark the first in-person negotiations since they were largely stalled in December 2020.



The source said Wang's recent visit to the region had created a sense of urgency among US officials.

"I think it focused a lot more attention from people who weren't very involved," the person said, adding that Pentagon personnel were getting more involved in the COFA process.

The United States conducted 67 nuclear weapons tests in the Marshall Islands from 1946 to 1958 and islanders are still plagued by the health and environmental effects as a result.

The tests included the "Castle Bravo" at Bikini Atoll in 1954 – the largest US bomb ever tested and 1,000 times more powerful than the one that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

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Why Buddhist organisations in Sikkim want to stop Nepali film Kabaddi 4's release

Sikkimese Buddhist cleric Ondi Pinto told a press conference in Gangtok that if the film is released, the lamas will take to the streets.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) |
June 8, 2022 10:00:07 am



Poster of the film Kabaddi 4. (Source: Instagram/mirumgr)

Buddhist organisations in Sikkim have urged authorities to not release Nepali film *Kabaddi 4*, already the centre of controversy in its home country, in the state.

According to reports, the Sikkim Lama Association said it will speak with Sikkim Chief Minister PS Tamang to stop the June 17 release in Gangtok and Namchi. They have also decided to write a letter to the state minister for culture demanding the same.

Addressing a press conference in Gangtok, Sikkimese Buddhist cleric Ondi Pinto said that if the film is released, the lamas will take to the streets and “if the hall is vandalised, we will not be held responsible”.

Pinto said that the character of Lama, played by Dayhang Rai in the film *Kabaddi 4*, has attacked the faith of all Lamas. “Indeed, an injustice has been done to Buddhism and to the monks. It is necessary for everyone to raise their voice against it. We want that the dispute should be resolved in Nepal as well,” he was quoted as saying by [*Himal Sanchar*](#).

Another controversy surrounds Kabaddi 4

Widespread protests were staged in Kathmandu and the film’s posters were burnt after [*Kabaddi 4* actress Miruna Magar](#) allegedly slapped a monk who behaved “indecently” with her. 24-year-old monk Phurba Tamang was arrested last week when he touched Magar inappropriately during the film’s promotional event at the Civil Mall in Kathmandu Metropolitan City-11.

Calls to not screen *Kabaddi 4* in movie halls mounted as protesters demanded that Tamang be released and Magar tenders an unconditional apology. Soon after, [both parties apologised to each other](#) and the case was settled mutually. District Administration Office, Kathmandu released Tamang on a bail bond of Rs 3,000.

View this post on Instagram

[A post shared by Miruna Lisara Magar \(@mirumgr\)](#)

However, the film’s producers are still in talks with various Buddhist organisations to ensure *Kabaddi 4* sees a smooth run in Sikkim.

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Russian cosmonaut Valery Ryumin, who set space endurance record, dies

Valery Ryumin made his last flight on a Soviet capsule in 1980, then returned to space 18 years later on the US space shuttle Discovery when it docked with Mir.

By: [AP](#) | Moscow |
June 8, 2022 8:43:56 am



Valery Ryumin

Veteran Russian cosmonaut Valery Ryumin, who set space endurance records on Soviet missions, then returned to orbit after a long absence to fly on a US space shuttle, has died at the age of 82.

Ryumin went into space four times, including to the space stations Salyut-7 and Mir after becoming a cosmonaut in 1973.

He logged a total of 371 days in space in two short missions and two record-setting long-duration flights.

“We have lost a comrade and a friend,” Dmitry Rogozin, the head of the Roscosmos space agency, said in a statement. “This is an irreparable loss for all of us. I express my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Valery Viktorovich. The memory of him will forever remain in our hearts.”

Ryumin, who was born August 16, 1939, in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, made his last flight on a Soviet capsule in 1980, then returned to space 18 years later on the US space shuttle Discovery when it docked with Mir.

In Memoriam: Valeri Ryumin

August 16, 1939 – June 6, 2022 pic.twitter.com/RYQniuHGII

— Association of Space Explorers (@ASE_Astronauts) [June 7, 2022](#)

“After my three flights in the eighties, I was thinking it would be nice to fly for the fourth time. I thought it would be very useful for a person who has very good flight and life experience, to visit the station,” Ryumin recalled in a NASA oral history quoted by the CollectSpace website.

“I will be able to see more details and more things compared to young cosmonauts or crew members.” Ryumin will be buried Thursday at a military cemetery outside Moscow, the state news agency Tass reported.

He is survived by his wife and fellow cosmonaut Yelena Kondakova.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/russian-cosmonaut-valery-ryumin-dead-7958046/>

FBI seizes retired general's data related to Qatar lobbying

New federal court filings outlined a potential criminal case against former Marine Gen. John R Allen, who led US and Nato forces in Afghanistan before being tapped in 2017 to lead the influential Brookings Institution.

By: [AP](#) | Washington |
June 8, 2022 7:57:28 am



The FBI has seized the electronic data of a retired four-star general Marine Gen. John R Allen. (Representational image)

The FBI has seized the electronic data of a retired four-star general who authorities say made false statements and withheld “incriminating”

documents about his role in an illegal foreign lobbying campaign on behalf of the wealthy Persian Gulf nation of Qatar.

New federal court filings obtained Tuesday outlined a potential criminal case against former Marine Gen. John R Allen, who led US and [Nato](#) forces in Afghanistan before being tapped in 2017 to lead the influential Brookings Institution.

It's part of an expanding investigation that has ensnared Richard G Olson, a former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, who pleaded guilty to federal charges last week, and Imaad Zuberi, a prolific political donor now serving a 12-year prison sentence on corruption charges.

The court filings detail Allen's behind-the scenes efforts to help Qatar influence US policy in 2017 when a diplomatic crisis erupted between the gas-rich Persian Gulf monarchy and its neighbours.

"There is substantial evidence that these FARA violations were willful," FBI agent Babak Adib wrote in a search warrant application, referring to the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Allen also misrepresented his role in the lobbying campaign to US officials, Adib wrote, and failed to disclose "that he was simultaneously pursuing multimillion-dollar business deals with the government of Qatar." The FBI says Allen gave a "false version of events" about his work for Qatar during a 2020 interview with law enforcement officials and failed to produce relevant email messages in response to an earlier grand jury subpoena, the affidavit says.

The 77-page application appears to have been filed in error and was removed from the docket Tuesday after *The Associated Press* reached out to federal authorities about its contents.

Allen declined to comment on the new filings.

He has previously denied ever working as a Qatari agent and said his efforts on Qatar in 2017 were motivated to prevent a war from breaking out in the Gulf that would put US troops at risk.

Allen spokesperson Beau Phillips told AP last week that Allen “voluntarily cooperated with the government’s investigation into this matter.” The Brookings Institution, one of the most influential think tanks in the US, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Qatar has long been one of Brookings’ biggest financial backers, though the institution says it has recently stopped taking Qatari funding.

Olson was working with Zuberi on another matter involving Qatar when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf countries announced a blockade of the gas-rich monarchy over Qatar’s alleged ties to terror groups and other issues in mid-2017.

Shortly after the blockade was announced, then-President Donald Trump appear to side against Qatar.

The court papers say Allen played an important role in shifting the U’s response.

Specifically, authorities say Allen lobbied then National Security Advisor HR McMaster to have the Trump administration adopt more Qatar-friendly tone.

In a June 9 email to McMaster, Allen said the Qatars were “asking for some help” and wanted the White House or State Department to issue a statement with specific language calling on all sides of the Gulf diplomatic crisis to “act with restraint.” Federal law enforcement officials say then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson did what Allen told McMaster the Qatars wanted done two days later, issuing a statement that “shifted away from earlier statements by the White House.” Tillerson’s statement called on other Gulf countries to “ease the blockade against Qatar” and asked “that there be no further escalation by the parties in the region.”

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Russia's Navalny loses appeal on terrorist, extremist label

Navalny was first designated by the penitentiary authorities as a flight risk. But in October last year officials replaced that label with the “terrorist or extremist” one.

By: [AP](#) | Moscow |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:34:36 am



Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny looks at photographers standing in the Babuskinsky District Court in Moscow, Russia. (AP, file)

Imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Tuesday lost an appeal contesting the decision by penitentiary officials to label him as “inclined to commit crimes of a terrorist or extremist nature.” Navalny, who has been behind bars since January 2021, was first designated by the

penitentiary authorities as a flight risk, which implied additional checks and inspections in prison. But in October last year officials replaced that label with the “terrorist or extremist” one.

“I was worried they would demand that I kissed portraits of (President Vladimir) Putin and learned quotes by (his top associate Dmitry) Medvedev, but it wasn’t necessary. It is just that my bunk bed now has a label that describes me a terrorist,” Navalny, in his usual sardonic matter, commented on the move at the time in a social media post.

He and his defense team filed an appeal contesting the label, but a panel of judges in the Russia’s Vladimir region about 100 kilometers (62 miles) east of Moscow on Tuesday rejected the appeal and ruled to keep the designation in place.

Navalny, Putin’s fiercest foe, was arrested in January 2021 upon returning from Germany, where he had been recuperating from nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin, and handed a 2½-year sentence for a parole violation.

In March, Navalny was sentenced to nine years in prison on fraud and contempt of court charges that he rejected as politically motivated. The move signaled an attempt by the authorities to keep him behind bars for as long as possible.

The new sentence followed a year-long Kremlin crackdown on Navalny’s supporters, other opposition activists and independent journalists, in which authorities appear eager to stifle all dissent.

Navalny’s close associates have faced criminal charges and left the country, and his group’s political infrastructure — an anti-corruption foundation and a nationwide network of regional offices — has been destroyed after being labeled an extremist organisation.

Navalny and several of his associates have been added to Russia’s registry of terrorists and extremists.

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Iraq, Libya, Malaysia join over a dozen Muslim countries in condemning controversial remarks against Prophet

The Indian embassies in Qatar and Kuwait in their statements had referred to comments as "being made by fringe elements."

By: [PTI](#) | Dubai |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:34:29 am



Iraq PM Mustafa Al-Kadhimi (File/AP)

Iraq, Libya, Malaysia and Turkey have joined over a dozen Muslim countries in condemning the controversial remarks made by now-suspended

and expelled [BJP](#) leaders against Prophet Mohammad.

In response to a statement issued by the Parliamentary Committee on Awqaf and Tribals of Iraq on the controversial tweets, the Spokesperson of the Embassy of India in Iraq on Monday clarified that the tweets do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India.

The Iraqi statement said that “these abuses, malicious and disgraceful acts will have serious repercussions and, if not contained, may lead to dire consequences that will have unimaginable consequences for the peaceful coexistence, as well as increase strife and tensions between peoples,” according to the official Iraqi News Agency – INA.

The Indian embassy in its statement said that “in line with our civilisational heritage and strong cultural traditions of unity in diversity, Government of India accords the highest respect of all religions. Strong action has already been taken against those who made the derogatory remarks.” A statement has also been issued by concerned quarters emphasising respect for all religions, denouncing insults to any religious personality or demeaning any religion or sect, it said.

“Vested interests that are against India-Iraq relations have been inciting the people using these derogatory comments. We should work together against such mischievous elements who aim to undercut the strength of our bilateral ties,” said the statement, which was identical to the statements issued by the Indian embassies in Kuwait and Qatar on Sunday.

The Indian embassies in Qatar and Kuwait in their statements had referred to comments as “being made by fringe elements.” However, the phrase “fringe elements” is not there in the statement issued by the Indian embassy in Iraq.

Libya’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in a statement “strongly condemned” the “insulting remarks” and called for the consolidation of the values of tolerance and coexistence and the rejection of the discourse of violence and hatred.

Egypt-based Arab Parliament also expressed its strong condemnation of, and rejection of the “irresponsible remarks issued by the spokeswoman of India’s

ruling (BJP) against Prophet Mohammad.” In a statement, the Arab Parliament affirmed that such remarks fully contradict the principle of tolerance, and interfaith dialogue, and lead to hate, Kuwait’s state-run KUNA news agency reported.

Malaysia’s Foreign Ministry on Tuesday condemned the “derogatory remarks by politicians in India against the Prophet.” In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said it summoned India’s High Commissioner on Tuesday to convey Malaysia’s total repudiation over this incident.

“Malaysia welcomed the decision by the ruling party to suspend the party’s officials due to their provocative remarks that has generated rage” among Muslims, the statement added.

“Malaysia also called upon India to work together in ending the Islamophobia and cease any provocative acts in the interest of peace and stability,” it added.

In Turkey, the ruling Justice and Development Party spokesperson Omer Celik described the statements against the Prophet as an “insult” to all Muslim.

On Monday, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the Maldives, the UAE, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman and Afghanistan condemned the controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammad, stressing the importance of respecting all religious beliefs.

Qatar, Iran and Kuwait on Sunday summoned India’s Ambassadors and the expressed their strong protest and condemnation of the controversial remarks.

The BJP on Sunday suspended its national spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal after their controversial remarks against the Prophet.

Amid protests by Muslim groups over the remarks, the party also issued a statement aimed at assuaging the concerns of minorities and distancing itself from these members, asserting that it respects all religions and strongly denounces the insult of any religious personality.

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Could North Korea become a breeding ground for new Covid mutations?

With few people vaccinated, an overwhelmed medical service, and generally poor health among its population, virologists fear North Korea could be the source of dangerous new mutations of the virus.

By: [Deutsche Welle](#) |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:34:30 am



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, attends a meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party in Pyongyang, North Korea. (AP/File)

Written by Julian Ryall

International health organizations are concerned that despite North Korea's insistence that it has the [coronavirus](#) outbreak under control, limited vaccines, rudimentary medical facilities and the poor health of the general population make the isolated state the ideal environment for new variants of the virus to emerge.

Virologists point out that South Africa, which has an alarmingly high HIV infection rate, has had problems halting the spread of the disease and has been the source of at least one new mutation that has since spread around the world. And while South Africa has accepted outside assistance and aggressively fought the virus, North Korea has opted for isolation and, in the early phases of the pandemic, rebuffed offers of vaccines and other medical equipment.

In mid-May, the government finally admitted what virologists had always assumed: that [Covid-19](#) was spreading rapidly among the local population and earlier reports of unspecified "fevers" across the country were cases of the virus.

Despite those offers of assistance from foreign governments and health agencies, Pyongyang claims that its coronavirus infection rate is in steady decline. On Tuesday, state media reported 61,730 new cases of "fever," bringing the total number of cases since late April to 4.19 million, approximately one in six of the 25.78 million population.

Little faith in official figures

With outside aid organizations not permitted to enter the secretive state to gauge the true scale of the problem and little faith in official figures, however, there is growing concern that the virus may be evolving.

"I believe the situation we have seen in South Africa with coronavirus in a population that had a high HIV infection rate has parallels with what is happening in North Korea," said Kazuhiro Tateda, president of the Japan Association of Infectious Diseases and a member of the advisory panel set

up to advise the Japanese government at the outset of the health crisis in early 2020.

“Health authorities there have had problems eradicating the virus and, in places, it has mutated into new strains,” he told DW.

Tateda also points out that North Korea has a serious problem with tuberculosis, which is also transmitted between people through the air.

“For many years, it has proved difficult to stop the spread of TB, and I can see the same thing happening with Covid. This is, of course, made worse by a healthcare system that is not very advanced, food shortages, and the fact that we believe very few people have been vaccinated,” Tateda added.

In a recent seminar in Seoul examining the situation in North Korea, Kim Sin-gon, a professor at Korea University’s college of medicine, pointed out that the delta and omicron variants of the virus emerged in areas of India and South Africa with relatively low levels of vaccination.

“This is why South Korea and the world should pay more attention to North Korea’s struggle with Covid-19,” The Korea Times quoted him as saying. “Its zero vaccine rate is deeply concerning.”

Fears for 40 per cent of population

Kim says he has little trust in the official figures on infections and that he estimates the virus may have already infected fully 40% of the North Korean population.

That concern has been echoed by the World Health Organization, which cautioned in May that “unchecked transmission” in North Korea could lead to the emergence of new variants of the virus.

“WHO has always said that where you have unchecked transmission, there is always a higher risk of new variants emerging,” said Mike Ryan, director of emergencies for the organization, at a press briefing.

Quizzed about how the WHO intends to intervene in the North, Ryan said the organization was ready to provide assistance but could only wait to be

invited in by the government in Pyongyang as it has no power to step in unilaterally, even when lives are at stake.

For Dr Edwin Salvador, the WHO representative to North Korea, that is the biggest frustration in his efforts to provide help.

Shortage of information

“Through our country office, the WHO has shared with the national authorities the recommended priority actions for Covid response, along with links to various WHO guidelines,” he told DW.

“The WHO has also shared a list of deployable supplies such as masks, gloves, personal protective equipment, and so on.”

It is still awaiting a response from Pyongyang, he said.

The WHO has provided North Korea with information on variants of concern and their characteristics, Salvador added, and shared laboratory guidance on Covid-19 testing and sequencing, as well as online training resources. But there is still a shortage of the information that would enable the organization to provide more targeted solutions, he said.

“State media continues to be the only source of information on the number of people with ‘fever’ in North Korea,” he said. “And in view of the numbers being reported, testing capacities and hospitals are likely to be overwhelmed, as was the case in countries with similar numbers of cases.”

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Russia sends in more troops amid barrage of eastern Ukraine

Moscow's strategy has suffered numerous setbacks, however, since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, including a failed attempt to take Kyiv, the capital.

By: [AP](#) | Kyiv |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:34:32 am



Civilian militia men hold shotguns during training at a shooting range in outskirts Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, June 7, 2022. (AP)

Russia is deploying troop reinforcements in eastern [Ukraine](#) to help capture a key city, a Ukrainian official said Tuesday, as Moscow's artillery kept up a barrage aimed at grinding down Ukrainian defences.

Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai told The Associated Press that Russian forces control the industrial outskirts of Sievierodonetsk, one of two cities in the Luhansk region still in Ukrainian hands.

“Toughest street battles continue, with varying degrees of success,” Haidai said. “The situation constantly changes, but the Ukrainians are repelling attacks.” Russia appears bent on capturing the entire eastern Donbas part of Ukraine, which is made up of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Though while the Kremlin’s forces have superior firepower, the Ukrainians defenders — among them the country’s most well-trained forces — are entrenched and have the capability to counterattack.

Moscow’s strategy has suffered numerous setbacks, however, since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, including a failed attempt to take Kyiv, the capital.

Moscow’s forces also kept up an artillery barrage of Lysychansk, a city close to Sievierodonetsk which is almost fully controlled by Russian troops.

Haidai said Russian troops shelled a local market, a school and a college building, destroying the latter. Three wounded people were sent to hospitals in other parts of Ukraine, he said.

“A total destruction of the city is underway, Russian shelling has intensified significantly over the past 24 hours. Russians are using scorched earth tactics,” Haidai said.

In all, Ukrainian forces had repelled 10 Russian attacks over the previous 24 hours, according to Haidai. His report couldn’t be independently verified.

Ukraine is receiving weapons and ammunition from the West to help fend off relentless Russian attacks. That assistance has become a target for Russian artillery and warplanes.

Russia claimed Tuesday its forces took out two artillery systems given by the United States and a howitzer supplied by Norway.

Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said the Russian artillery barrage destroyed other Ukrainian equipment in the country’s east while the Russian air force

hit Ukrainian troops and equipment concentrations and artillery positions.

Konashenkov's claims couldn't be independently confirmed.

In Kyiv, meanwhile, autopsies were planned on dozens of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks.

The bodies were returned to Ukraine by the Russian occupiers of the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol, where their last-ditch stand became a symbol of resistance against Moscow's invasion.

The Azov Regiment was among the Ukrainian units that defended the steelworks for nearly three months before surrendering in May under relentless Russian attacks from the ground, sea and air.

It was unclear how many bodies might remain at the plant.

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Johnny Depp shells out Rs 48 lakh at Indian restaurant in Birmingham to celebrate trial win

Mohammed Hussain, Operations Director of Varanasi, reportedly said that a special banquet for Johnny Depp's celebratory dinner included shish kebabs, chicken tikka, tandoori king prawns, butter chicken, and paneer tikka masala.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) |
June 7, 2022 3:39:30 pm



Johnny Depp with musician Jeff Beck at Birmingham's Varanasi restaurant.
(Source: Facebook/Varanasibham)

Actor Johnny Depp, who was recently awarded \$15 million by a court in the defamation case against former wife Amber Heard, spent over \$62,000 (roughly Rs 48.1 lakh) on a [**celebratory dinner with friends**](#) at an Indian restaurant in UK's Birmingham, according to reports.

The 58-year-old Pirates of the Caribbean actor was joined by musician Jeff Beck and around 20 others at Birmingham's Varanasi restaurant on Sunday night to enjoy specially prepared Indian food along with cocktails, [**Daily Mail**](#) reported. Depp and his friends were at the restaurant from around 7 pm till midnight.

Mohammed Hussain, Operations Director of Varanasi, told the publication that Depp was "a very lovely, down-to-earth bloke" and "spent a lot of time speaking with the staff, our friends and family."

He further said that a special banquet for the party included shish kebabs, chicken tikka, tandoori king prawns, butter chicken, paneer tikka masala, lamb karahi and king prawn bhuna. Reportedly, the actor also ordered a takeaway.

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Ditching Indian sweets, the party rounded off the dinner with panna cotta and vanilla cheesecakes, according to a [**metro.co.uk**](#) report.

The Hollywood actor sat with Hussain in his office twice, spending between 15 and 20 minutes on each occasion. "When he met my children he said some of the lines from his movies to them and they were delighted, they were over the moon," he told *metro.co.uk*.

Depp and Heard have been in the spotlight since the defamation trial began in Virginia over a 2018 piece she had written in which she claimed she was a domestic abuse victim.

Depp was in Birmingham to accompany Beck at his Symphony Hall performance on Monday.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/johnny-depps-celebratory-dinner-at-indian-restaurant-in-birmingham-rs-48-lakh-amber-heard-trial-win-7957067/>

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Potent weapons reach Ukraine faster than the know-how to use them

Since the beginning of the war, the US has pledged roughly \$54 billion in aid for Ukraine and supplied a bevy of weapons and equipment.

By: [New York Times](#) | Ukraine |
Updated: June 8, 2022 7:34:35 am



Ukrainian soldiers meet at a base near their aging anti-tank gun just northeast of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson, Ukraine, June 4, 2022. (Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)

Written by Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Natalia Yermak

Since Russia invaded, [Nato](#) nations have upgraded [Ukraine](#)'s arsenal with increasingly sophisticated tools, with more promised, like the advanced multiple-launch rocket systems pledged by the United States and Britain.

But training soldiers how to use the equipment has become a significant and growing obstacle — one encountered daily by Junior Sgt. Dmytro Pysanka and his crew, operating an aged anti-tank gun camouflaged in netting and green underbrush in southern Ukraine.

Peering through the sight attached to the gun, Pysanka is greeted with a kaleidoscope of numbers and lines that, if read correctly, should give him the calculations needed to fire at Russian forces. However, errors are common in the chaos of battle.

More than a month ago, the commanders of his front-line artillery unit secured a far more advanced tool: a high-tech, Western-supplied laser range finder to help with targeting.

But there's a hitch: Nobody knows how to use it.

"It's like being given an iPhone 13 and only being able to make phone calls," said Pysanka, clearly exasperated.

The range finder, called a JIM LR, is likely part of the tranche of equipment supplied by the US, said Pysanka.

It may seem like a perfect choice to help make better use of the anti-tank gun, built in 1985. It can see targets at night and transmit their distance, compass heading and GPS coordinates. Some soldiers learned enough to operate the tool, but then rotated elsewhere in recent days, leaving the unit with an expensive paperweight.

"I have been trying to learn how to use it by reading the manual in English and using [Google](#) Translate to understand it," Pysanka said.

On Monday, Britain promised to send Ukraine mobile multiple-rocket launchers, improving the range and accuracy of Ukrainian artillery, days after President Joe Biden committed to sending similar weapons.



A Ukrainian artillery unit with their aging anti-tank gun just northeast of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson, Ukraine, on Saturday, June 4, 2022.
(Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)

Ukraine's most advanced new arms are concentrated in the eastern Donbas region, where the fiercest fighting rages as Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces — approaching from the east, north and south — try to crush a pocket of Ukrainian-held territory. At the eastern tip of that pocket, the two sides have waged a seesaw battle for the devastated, mostly abandoned city of Sievierodonetsk.

Over the weekend, Ukrainian troops regained some ground in the city, according to Western analysts and Ukrainian officials. But Monday, the Ukrainians were forced back again as Russian military ramped up its already intense artillery attack, according to Serhiy Haidai, Ukraine's administrator for the region.

A day after a risky visit to troops in Lysychansk, near Sievierodonetsk, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine on Monday gave journalists a blunt assessment of the challenge: "There are more of them. They are more powerful. But we have every chance to fight in this direction."

Ukraine's leaders frequently call for high-end Western weapons and equipment, pinning their hopes for victory to requests for new anti-tank guided missiles, howitzers and satellite-guided rockets.

⌚ CinC AF of Ukraine:

Special greetings and thanks from our artillerymen to the American people for the M777 howitzer.

My guys know the price of artillery. First of all, they wanted to convey that this is a high-precision and very effective weapon.

Together to Victory! pic.twitter.com/x5mNB4YEmM

— Defence of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [May 13, 2022](#)

But atop the need for the tools of war, Ukrainian troops need to know how to use them. Without proper training, the same dilemma facing Pysanka's unit and their lone range finder will be pervasive on a much larger scale.

Analysts say that could echo the United States' failed approach of supplying the Afghan military with equipment that couldn't be maintained absent massive logistical support.

"Ukrainians are eager to employ Western equipment, but it requires training to maintain," said Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at CNA, a research institute in Arlington, Virginia. "Some things it's not easy to rush."

The US and other Nato countries gave extensive training to Ukrainian military in the years before the war, although not on some of the advanced weapons that they are now sending. From 2015 to early this year, US military officials say, US instructors trained more than 27,000 Ukrainian soldiers at the Yavoriv Combat Training Center near Lviv. There were more than 150 US military advisers in Ukraine when Russia invaded in February, but they were withdrawn.

Since the beginning of the war, the US has pledged roughly \$54 billion in aid for Ukraine and supplied a bevy of weapons and equipment, most recently several advanced HIMARS mobile rocket launchers, a move greeted with swift condemnation from the Kremlin.

But to avoid a more direct confrontation with Russia, the Biden administration has so far declined to send military advisers back into Ukraine to help train Ukrainian forces to use new weapons systems, and has instead relied on training programs outside the country.

This has put enormous pressure on Ukrainian soldiers like Sgt. Andriy Mykyta, a member of the country's border guard who, before the war, received brief training from Nato advisers on the advanced British anti-tank weapons, known as NLAWs.

Now he races around front-line positions trying to educate his comrades on how to use them. In many cases, he said, Ukrainian soldiers learned how to use some weapons, including NLAWs, on their own, using online videos and practice.

"But there are types of weapons that you can't learn from intuition: surface-to-air missiles, artillery and some gear," Mykyta said. "So we need formal courses," he added.

Ukraine's needs are palpable in the region where Pysanka's unit is dug in, just northeast of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson. The area was the site of a brief Ukrainian offensive in the past week that slowed as soon as the retreating Russians destroyed a key bridge; the Ukrainians' lack of longer-range artillery meant they were unable to attempt a difficult river crossing in pursuit, Ukrainian military officials said.

For Pysanka's gun team, the only instructor available for the laser range finder is a soldier who remained behind from the last unit and had taken time to translate most of the 104-page instruction manual. But it's still trial and error as they figure out what combination of buttons do what, while searching for ad hoc solutions to solve the lack of a mounting tripod and video monitor (both of which are advertised in the instruction manual).

"If you're working long distances while holding it by hand, sometimes it can transmit inaccurate figures," Pysanka said. "It is safer," he added, "to work when the gear is stationed on the tripod facing the enemy and the operator is working with the monitor under cover."

The JIM LR, made by the French company Safran, looks like a cross between a virtual reality headset and traditional binoculars, and can be used alongside a mapping application on a computer tablet that Ukrainian troops use to help call in artillery strikes.

At around 6 pounds, it is far smaller than the 4-1/2-ton, US-supplied M777 155 mm howitzer that has recently made its way to the front line in Ukraine's east. But both pieces of equipment have intricacies that are reminders of the complications that come from supplying a military with foreign matériel.

The M777 is highly mobile and capable of firing long distances, but training has been a bottleneck in deploying the howitzers, Ukrainian officers say. At courses in Germany that lasted a week, the US trained soldiers to fire the weapon and others to maintain it.

But an oversight nearly delayed all maintenance on the guns at the hard-to-reach front lines, Ukrainian officers said. The entire M777 machine is put together on the imperial system used in the US, meaning that using a Ukrainian metric wrench on it would be difficult, and would risk damaging the equipment.

Only after sending the guns did the US arrange for a rushed shipment of toolboxes of imperial-gauge wrenches, said Maj. Vadim Baranik, the deputy commander of a maintenance unit.

But tools can be misplaced, lost or destroyed, potentially leaving guns inoperable unless someone scrounges up a US-supplied wrench.

And the JIM LR, capable of displaying extremely accurate targeting data, supplies the information, known as grid coordinates, in a widely used Nato format that Pysanka has to convert to the Soviet-era coordinate system used on the Ukrainians' maps. Such minor speed bumps and chances for error add up, especially when under the stress of a Russian artillery barrage.

For now, Pysanka is focused on learning the range finder. In his small slice of the war, Western-supplied weapons and equipment are limited to a small number of anti-tank rockets and first-aid kits.

“We can’t boast the same kind of resources that there are in the east,” said Maj. Roman Kovalyov, a deputy commander of the unit that oversees Pysanka’s gun position. “What Ukraine gets, we can only see on the TV. But we believe that sooner or later it will turn up here.”

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In Britain, a new test of an old dream: the 4-day workweek

In Britain, the experiment began as employees trickled back to work after a four-day holiday honouring the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

By: [New York Times](#) | London |
Updated: June 7, 2022 3:23:23 pm



Thousands of employees across 70 companies in Britain started the first day of a four-day workweek Monday.

Written by Christine Hauser

Thousands of employees across 70 companies in Britain started the first day of [**a four-day workweek**](#) Monday, a pilot program that is the latest test in

the decades-long quest to scale back workers' hours while they earn the same amount of pay.

The six-month trial was organised by the nonprofit groups 4 Day Week Global and 4 Day Week UK Campaign, and Autonomy, an organisation that studies the impact of labour on well-being. Researchers at Cambridge University, Oxford University and Boston College will assess its effect on productivity and quality of life and will announce results in 2023, the organisers said in a statement.

The program in Britain follows similar efforts in other countries, including Iceland, New Zealand, Scotland and the United States, where companies have embraced greater flexibility in work hours as more people worked remotely and adjusted their schedules during the pandemic.

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"After the pandemic, people want a work-life balance," Joe Ryle, the campaign director for the 4 Day Week Campaign, said. "They want to be working less."

More than 3,300 workers in banks, marketing, health care, financial services, retail, hospitality and other industries in Britain are taking part in the pilot, the organisers said. Ryle said the data would be collected through interviews and staff surveys, and through the measures each company uses to assess its productivity.

When French company boss Laurent de la Clergerie decided to let his staff work a four-day week, on the same pay as before, some people took him for a crazy person. But a year on, his company has increased annual turnover by 40% <https://t.co/llwWxgcdPEpic.twitter.com/mf1W3rAas2>

— Reuters (@Reuters) [March 17, 2022](#)

"We'll be analysing how employees respond to having an extra day off, in terms of stress and burnout, job and life satisfaction, health, sleep, energy

use, travel and many other aspects of life,” Juliet Schor, a sociology professor at Boston College and the lead researcher on the project, said.

In Britain, the experiment began as employees trickled back to work after a four-day holiday honouring the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Ed Siegel, the CEO of Charity Bank, one of the companies taking part in the pilot program, said a shorter workweek was a logical next step for a happier workforce.

“We have long been a champion of flexible working, but the pandemic really moved the goal posts in this regard,” he said.

Platten’s, a fish and chip shop in Norfolk, [England](#), is also participating in the program.

“We believe that by giving our staff a better work-life balance they can work more efficiently and effectively,” said Callum Howard, a spokesperson for the restaurant.

The four-day workweek has been a workplace dream for decades. In 1956, then-Vice President Richard Nixon predicted such an arrangement in the “not too distant future.” But the reality has been unevenly implemented globally over the years, said Schor, who is also leading research into other trials.

Individual companies have tailored their approaches, particularly as the pandemic upended traditional work culture. In the US, some companies allowed employees to trim their workweek, by cutting out Fridays, working hybrid shifts, taking pay cuts for fewer hours or setting their own timetables.

Workers across the UK will be able to try out a four-day work week starting June 6. The 6-month pilot program is the largest of its kind ever conducted and includes 3,300 workers from 70 companies, from financial services to restaurants. pic.twitter.com/WTjDwTBSMf

— NowThis (@nowthisnews) [June 6, 2022](#)

In New Zealand, the company Unilever kicked off a shorter workweek trial in 2020. In Iceland, a trial with a weekly work time reduction to 35 or 36 hours, involving about 2,500 government workers, has expanded during the pandemic, with 86% of all Icelandic workers now on, or eligible for, shorter time schedules, Schor said.

Most of the efforts are taking place in the private sector, but governments in Scotland and Spain have announced support, including subsidies, for four-day workweeks, she said. Companies in Ireland and Australia are starting trials August 1, and two more trials are starting in the US and Canada in October.

Working from home during the pandemic has been the main factor driving the growing momentum for a shorter workweek, Schor said. “It made employers realise they could trust their workers,” she said.

Companies are also being forced to restructure the way they work.

“The companies that are really successful in this take activities off the plates of people,” she said. “The most common work reorganisation has to do with meetings — the excessive number of meetings, excessive length and lack of efficiency in meetings.”

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‘We strongly encourage respect and tolerance for all religions’: UN spokesperson amid row over BJP leaders’ Prophet remarks

Seeking to defuse a diplomatic row, spokespersons of the Indian Embassy in Qatar and Kuwait said that the comments are views of fringe elements.

By: [PTI](#) | United Nations |
June 7, 2022 2:45:38 pm



Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General

Amid [sharp reaction from several Muslim nations](#) over [remarks by BJP leaders against Prophet Mohammed](#), a spokesperson for UN Secretary-

General Antonio Guterres has said that “we strongly encourage respect and tolerance for all religions.”

The spokesperson was responding to a question by a Pakistani journalist on the condemnation by several Muslim nations over remarks by [BJP](#)’s former national spokesperson Nupur Sharma and its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal against the Prophet and the Secretary General’s response to it.

“I’ve seen stories. I haven’t seen the remarks themselves, but I mean, regardless, I can tell you that we strongly encourage respect and tolerance for all religions,” Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said on Monday at the daily press briefing.

The BJP on Sunday suspended Sharma and expelled Jindal as the row over their remarks against the Prophet escalated with protests from many Muslim countries.

Amid demonstrations by Muslim groups and the sharp reaction from countries like Kuwait, Qatar and Iran, the BJP had issued a statement asserting that it respects all religions and strongly denounces insults of any religious personality.

Seeking to defuse a diplomatic row, spokespersons of the Indian Embassy in Qatar and Kuwait said on Sunday that the Ambassadors have “conveyed that the tweets do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India. These are the views of fringe elements.”

Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Bahrain and Afghanistan and the Maldives on Monday joined several Muslim nations to condemn the controversial remarks of BJP leaders against Prophet Mohammed, stressing the importance of respecting all religious beliefs.

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Proud Boys charged with seditious conspiracy in Capitol riot

The indictment Monday alleges that the Proud Boys conspired to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power.

By: [AP](#) | Washington |
June 7, 2022 1:38:47 pm



File photo of Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio wearing a hat that says The War Boys and smokes a cigarette at a rally in Delta Park on Sept. 26, 2020, in Portland. (AP)

The former top leader of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group and other members were charged with seditious conspiracy for what federal prosecutors say was a coordinated attack on the U.S. Capitol to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.

The latest indictment against Henry “Enrique” Tarrio, the former Proud Boys chairman, and four others linked to the group comes as the U.S. House committee investigating the Jan. 6 riot prepares to begin public hearings this week to lay out its findings.

The indictment Monday alleges that the Proud Boys conspired to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power. Tarrio and the others — Ethan Nordean, Joseph Biggs, Zachary Rehl and Dominic Pezzola — were previously charged with different conspiracy counts.

They are scheduled to stand trial in August in Washington, D.C.’s federal court.

The seditious conspiracy charges are among the most serious filed so far, but aren’t the first of their kind. Eleven members or associates of the anti-government Oath Keepers militia group, including its founder and leader Stewart Rhodes, were indicted in January on seditious conspiracy charges in a serious escalation in the largest investigation in the Justice Department’s history.

Three Oath Keepers have already pleaded guilty to the rarely used Civil War-era charge that calls for up to 20 years in prison. The indictment alleges that the Oath Keepers and their associates prepared in the weeks leading up to Jan. 6 as if they were going to war, discussing things like weapons and training.

Tarrio, the group’s top leader, wasn’t in Washington, D.C., when the riot erupted on Jan. 6, 2021, but authorities say he helped put into motion the violence that day.

Police arrested Tarrio in Washington two days before the riot and charged him with vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic Black church during a protest in December 2020. Tarrio was released from jail on Jan. 14 after serving his five-month sentence for that case.



Protestors climbing the Capitol Hill building during the siege on January 6, 2021. (AP Photo)

An attorney for Tarrio said his client “is going to have his day in court.”

“And we intend to vigorously represent him through that process,” said Nayib Hassan.

Defense attorney Carmen Hernandez, who represents Rehl, said her client is “as innocent of these charges as the ones that had already been pending against him.”

“Seditious conspiracy requires the use of force, and he never used any force nor thought about using any force,” Hernandez said.

More than three dozen people charged in the Capitol siege have been identified by federal authorities as leaders, members or associates of the Proud Boys, whose members describe it as a politically incorrect men’s club for “Western chauvinists.”

They have brawled with antifascist activists at rallies and protests. Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes, who founded the Proud Boys in 2016, sued the Southern Poverty Law Center for labeling it as a hate group.

The indictment alleges that the Proud Boys held meetings and communicated over encrypted messages to plan for the attack in the days leading up to Jan. 6. On the day of the riot, authorities say Proud Boys dismantled metal barricades set up to protect the Capitol and mobilized, directed and led members of the crowd into the building.

Prosecutors have said the Proud Boys arranged for members to communicate using specific frequencies on Baofeng radios. The Chinese-made devices can be programmed for use on hundreds of frequencies, making it difficult for outsiders to eavesdrop.

Shortly before the riot, authorities say Tarrio posted on social media that the group planned to turn out in “record numbers” on Jan. 6, but would be “incognito” instead of donning their traditional clothing colors of black and yellow.

Around the same time, an unnamed person sent Tarrio a document that laid out plans for occupying a few “crucial buildings” in Washington on Jan. 6, including House and Senate office buildings around the Capitol, the indictment says. The nine-page document was entitled “1776 Returns” and called for having as “many people as possible” to “show our politicians We the People are in charge,” according to the indictment.



People shelter in the House gallery as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington. (AP)

Nordean, of Auburn, Washington, was a Proud Boys chapter president and a member of the group's national "Elders Council." Biggs, of Ormond Beach, Florida, is a self-described Proud Boys organizer. Rehl was president of the Proud Boys chapter in Philadelphia. Pezzola is a Proud Boy member from Rochester, New York.

A New York man pleaded guilty in December to storming the U.S. Capitol with fellow Proud Boys members. Matthew Greene was the first Proud Boys member to publicly plead guilty to conspiring with other members to stop Congress from certifying the Electoral College vote. Greene agreed to cooperate with authorities investigating the attack.

In photos | 25 photos that show the horror of Trump supporters storming Capitol Hill

Another Proud Boy, Charles Donohoe, of Kernersville, North Carolina, pleaded guilty in April to conspiracy and assault charges and also agreed to cooperate in the Justice Department's cases against other members of the extremist group.

In December, a federal judge refused to dismiss an earlier indictment charging alleged leaders of the Proud Boys with conspiring to block the certification of Biden's electoral college win. U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly rejected defense attorneys' arguments that the men were charged with conduct that is protected by the First Amendment right to free speech.

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How Boris Johnson became politically vulnerable

With 148 of 359 Tory lawmakers voting against British Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a no-confidence vote, he has been damaged, perhaps irretrievably, as an effective, credible leader.

By: [New York Times](#) | London |
June 7, 2022 1:11:53 pm



Rebels in the Conservative Party called for a no-confidence vote that could have cost Prime Minister Boris Johnson his job. (The New York Times)

Written by Mark Landler

When Boris Johnson won a landslide election victory for his Conservative Party in 2019, he loomed as a colossus over British politics, the man who

had redrawn the country's political map with a vow to "get Brexit done."

With an 80-seat majority in Parliament, the greatest amassed by a Conservative leader since Margaret Thatcher in 1987, Johnson seemed assured of five years in power. Some analysts predicted a comfortable decade in No. 10 Downing St. for Johnson, the most reliable vote-getter in British politics.

Now, just 2-1/2 years after that triumph, Johnson's political invincibility has been shattered. Rebels in his party fell short of ousting him in a **dramatic no-confidence vote** on Monday. But with 148 of 359 Tory lawmakers voting against him, he has been damaged, perhaps irretrievably, as an effective, credible leader. Although he remains prime minister, he may be living on borrowed time.

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YAXIS

It is one of the most head-spinning reversals of fortune in modern British political history. What happened?

To some extent, Johnson's standing crumbled because of the same confounding mix of strengths and foibles that propelled his rise: rare political intuition offset by breathtaking personal recklessness; a sense of history not matched by a corresponding sense of how he should conduct himself as a leader; uncanny people skills vitiated by a transactional style that earned him few allies and left him isolated at dangerous moments.

It is that last quality, analysts say, that made Johnson so vulnerable to the setbacks he has suffered. With no underlying ideology beyond Brexit and no network of political friends, the prime minister lost the support of lawmakers in his party when it became clear they could not count on him to win the next election.

"Johnson's such an accomplished escape artist, and his colleagues so craven and cowardly that you can't rule out him living to fight another day," said Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. "But for what precisely? 'There's no there there,' as the saying goes."

Johnson, after all, is the politician who decided to back Brexit after writing two columns — one making the case for leaving the European Union; the other arguing against it — the night before announcing his position. He won in 2019 by promising to “Get Brexit done,” but having accomplished that goal within months of the election, he often seemed like a prime minister without a plan.

Events, as another British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, once put it, have also played a role. Like other world leaders, Johnson was thrown off course by the [coronavirus](#) pandemic, his government upended by a rolling health crisis, in which he played a highly visible but not always reassuring role.

Johnson reacted late to the looming threat of the virus, imposing a lockdown on the country a week after neighbouring European countries. That delay, critics argued, made the first wave of the pandemic worse in Britain than elsewhere. In April 2020, with the virus circulating in Downing Street, Johnson himself contracted [Covid-19](#), ended up in an intensive care unit and nearly died.



PRAVEEN KHANNA

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on an official tour to India in 2022. (Express file photo by Praveen Khanna)

But Johnson also pushed for Britain to be a pioneer in developing a vaccine. When Oxford University and AstraZeneca produced one, he rolled it out faster than almost any other major country. He also made a fateful decision — one later copied by other leaders — to reopen society after a significant percentage of the population had been vaccinated. Britons, he said, must learn to live with Covid.

It was during the darkest days of the pandemic that the seeds of Johnson's current troubles were sown. While the rest of the country was enduring stifling lockdowns, the prime minister and his top aides were taking part in social gatherings at Downing Street that [violated their own lockdown restrictions](#).

The first reports of illicit parties emerged late last November, prompting Johnson to issue a blanket denial that any laws had been broken. A subsequent police investigation found that was not true: Johnson himself was fined for attending his own birthday party in violation of the rules.

Allies of Johnson argue that “Partygate,” as the London tabloids nicknamed it, is a trivial distraction at a time when Europe is confronting its first major land war since World War II. The prime minister swiftly staked out a position as [Ukraine](#)’s staunchest defender, shipping powerful weapons to its army and placing regular phone calls to [his new friend, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky](#).

At first, the war eclipsed the scandal, giving Johnson the chance to wrap himself in a statesman’s mantle. But as the fighting ground on, disenchantment resurfaced at home. London’s Metropolitan Police levied fines, and an internal investigation by a senior civil servant painted a lurid portrait of partying in the heart of government.

The taint of moral hypocrisy corroded the prime minister’s popularity with the public. On Friday, when he and his wife Carrie Johnson climbed the steps to St. Paul’s Cathedral for a thanksgiving service in honor of Queen Elizabeth II’s 70 years on the throne, he was roundly booed by the crowd. It was an omen.

Beyond that, the economic winds began blowing against Johnson. The supply-chain disruptions from the pandemic — combined with price shocks on food and fuel after Russia’s invasion — drove [inflation](#) into double digits and raised the specter of “stagflation.”

The last time Britain faced that, its Labour government went down to a crushing defeat against Thatcher’s Conservatives. The prospect of history repeating itself helps explain why lawmakers are turning against Johnson.

The 2019 Conservative victory was fuelled by winning seats in longtime Labour districts in the country’s Midlands and industrial north, known colloquially as the “red wall.” But as Johnson himself acknowledged after the victory, the Tories had rented these seats, not won them in perpetuity.

Instead of appealing to those new Tory voters with innovative policies, Johnson lurches from scandal to scandal. In addition to Partygate, the prime minister became embroiled in an uproar over the expensive refurbishment of his apartment in Downing Street, which was funded by a Conservative donor.

He defended a Conservative lawmaker who was accused of lobbying improperly while in office and then had to back down, a humiliating setback that presaged some of the troubles to come within his own party. He got caught up in a vicious and damaging public feud with his former chief adviser, Dominic Cummings.

By themselves, these issues might not have been enough to trip up a politician known for his Houdini-like escapes. But against an economic backdrop that the head of the Bank of [England](#) described as “apocalyptic,” they contributed to fears in the party that the Conservatives face a ferocious voter backlash.

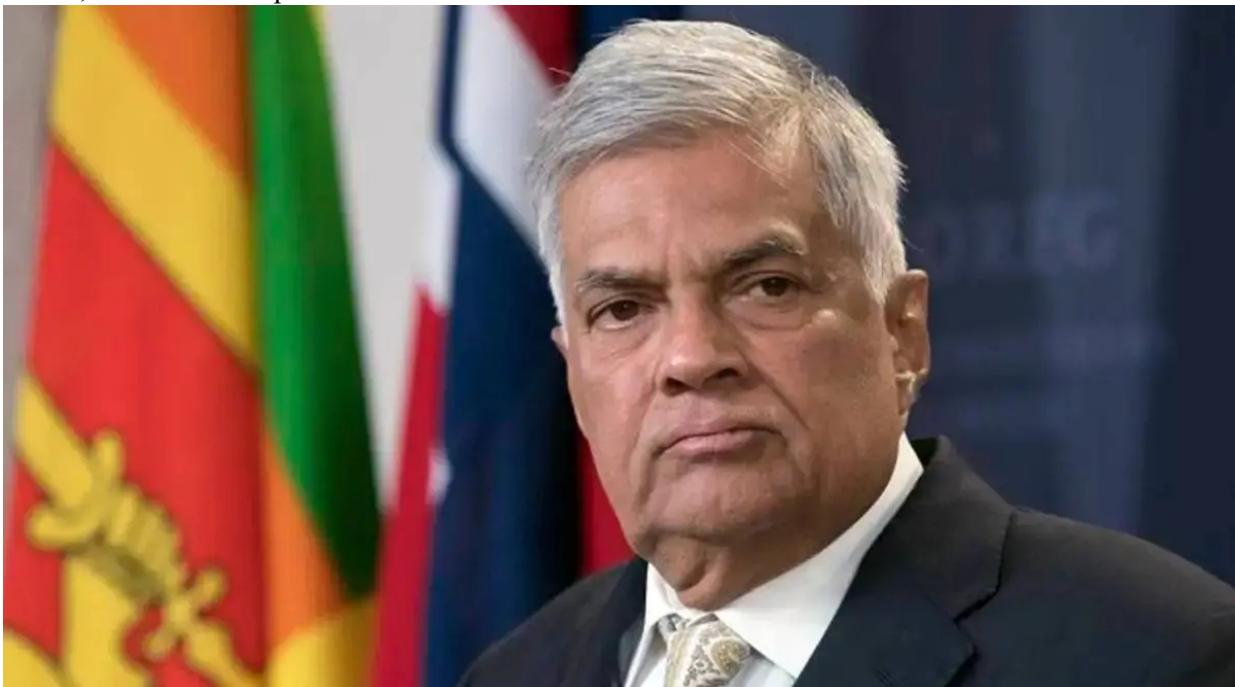
“All we can say with any level of certainty is that ordinary Brits are going to find it tough going economically for the rest of this year — and probably well into the next,” Bale said. “And that spells trouble for the Tories, Johnson or no Johnson.”

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Sri Lanka will need \$5 bln in next six months for essentials: Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

The island nation of 22 million is suffering its worst economic crisis in seven decades.

By: [Reuters](#) | Colombo |
June 7, 2022 12:47:33 pm



File photo of Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. (AP)

Sri Lanka's cash-strapped government will need at least \$5 billion in the next six months to maintain basic standards of living, including some \$3.3 billion for fuel imports, the country's prime minister told parliament on Tuesday.

“Only establishing economic stability not enough, we have to restructure the entire economy,” said Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is working to prepare an interim budget to balance Sri Lanka’s battered public finances.

The island nation of 22 million is suffering its worst economic crisis in seven decades, with a shortage of foreign exchange stalling essential imports.

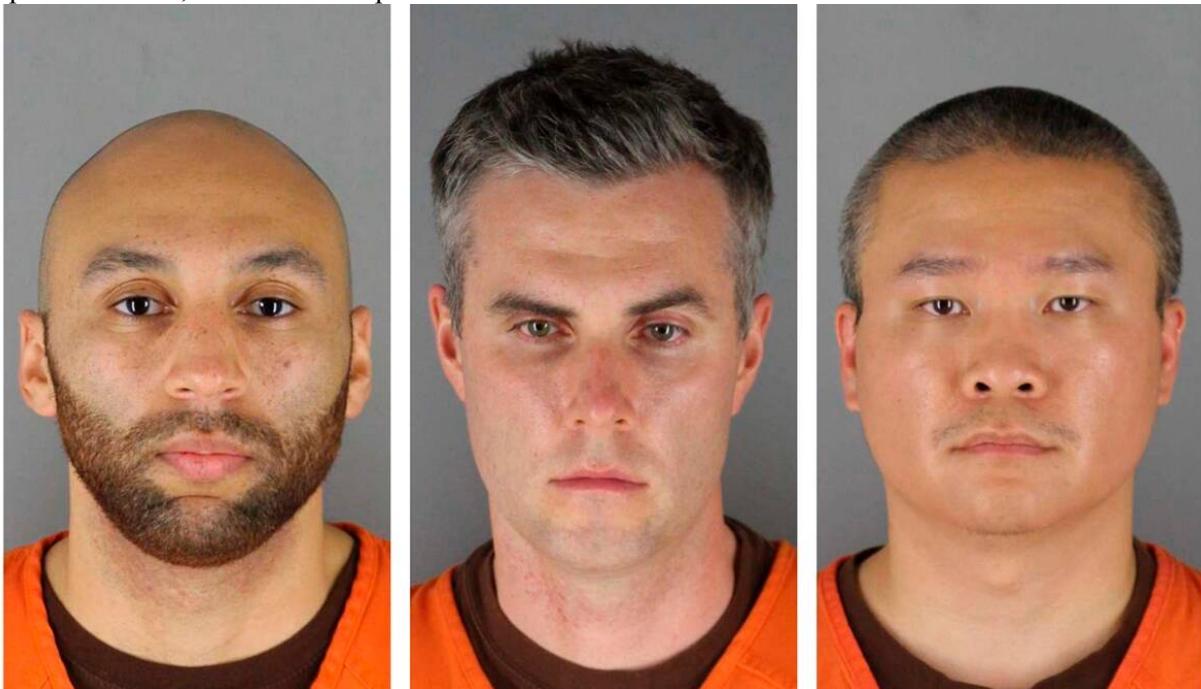
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Judge delays trial of 2 ex-cops in George Floyd killing until 2023

Tou Thao and J. Alexander Kueng were due to go on trial next week on charges of aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter of George Floyd.

By: [AP](#) | Minneapolis |
Updated: June 7, 2022 12:46:58 pm



(From left) former Minneapolis police officers J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao. (AP Photo)

The judge overseeing the remaining case against two former Minneapolis police officers charged in George Floyd's killing ordered Monday that the trial be delayed until January in hopes that some additional time will improve prospects for a fair trial.

Tou Thao and J. Alexander Kueng were due to go on trial next week on charges of aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the May 2020 death of Floyd. But Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill ordered Monday that the trial be delayed until Jan. 5.

Cahill denied a defence motion for a change of venue, which was requested because of the extensive publicity in the case. But he said media reports and recent events surrounding connected cases have created “a reasonable likelihood of an unfair trial” if it were to begin next week.

Cahill cited the May 18 guilty plea by Thao and Keung’s co-defendant, former Officer Thomas Lane. He also cited the February convictions of Thao, Kueng and Lane on federal charges of violating Floyd’s civil rights.

The judge said those two events and the publicity surrounding them are significant enough to make it difficult for jurors to presume that Thao and Kueng are innocent of the state charges. So, he ordered the delay, just shy of seven months, to diminish the effects of that publicity.

Cahill also presided over last year’s trial of former Officer Derek Chauvin, which ended with a second-degree murder conviction and a 22 1/2-year sentence for the white officer who kneeled on the Black man’s neck for 9 1/2 minutes despite Floyd’s fading pleas of “I can’t breathe.” The killing led to protests worldwide and a national reckoning on racial injustice.



Spokesperson Evan Ross, foreground, reads a statement from LaToya Ratlieff, who was shot in the face during a 2020 protest over George Floyd's murder. A federal lawsuit this week accused the officer and the department of violating her civil rights has been filed. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

The judge also denied a motion by a coalition of media organizations, including The Associated Press, to reconsider his April decision to prohibit live audiovisual coverage of the proceedings from gavel to gavel.

But he said he may reconsider if the Minnesota state court system revises its rules on cameras in the courts by Jan. 4.

Bob Paule, an attorney for Thao, said he thought the decision "was a thoughtful and well-reasoned decision by Judge Cahill." Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, whose office is prosecuting the case, said in a statement: "It's unfortunate for the victims, the witnesses, and the community that the opportunity to seek justice has been delayed. The State was ready for trial next week and will be ready next January." A message left for Kueng's attorney was not immediately returned Monday.

The new trial schedule says pretrial motions will be held on Jan. 5 and Jan. 6, with jury selection beginning on Jan. 9. Questionnaires will be mailed to a

new pool of “several hundred” potential jurors around Sept. 1. Opening statements are set for Jan. 30.

In denying a change of venue, Cahill wrote that he is satisfied that a fair and impartial trial can be held in Hennepin County “eventually,” noting that it’s the most populous and diverse county in the state. He said attorneys will get to select jurors from a panel “that will surely exceed 200” after the lengthy questionnaires designed to screen out bias are returned.



Michael Davis, right, and Stuart Ratzan, left, attorneys for LaToya Ratliff, who was shot in the face by Fort Lauderdale, Fla., police while demonstrating against police brutality, speak during a news conference, Thursday. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

Alan Tuerkheimer, a Chicago-based jury consultant, said the reason for the postponement seems like a “strange rationale.” He said he doesn’t see how a potential juror’s bias would subside with the passage of time, and with effective questioning, “jurors with bias can be weeded out today or tomorrow or in early 2023.” He added that while other events that happen between now and January will consume jurors’ minds, “feelings about these cops will not just vanish over time. As the trial approaches in January it will all come back to those who followed this case. For those who haven’t, the passage of time doesn’t matter.” Mike Brandt, a Minneapolis defence

attorney who has been following the case, said although Cahill's stated reason for the postponement is to dissipate the case's notoriety, the decision is also likely pragmatic. He said pushing the trial back allows time for Thao and Kueng to be sentenced on their federal convictions first, increasing the likelihood of plea deals with the state.

"They may not be on the radar, but in my opinion, this enhances the options for a settlement," Brandt said. He added that once the federal sentences are known, the thinking could be: "If we're going to be doing this amount of time anyway, and the state agrees to this amount of time, why would we risk going to trial?" Chauvin has been in prison since his state murder conviction, while Thao, Keung and Lane remain free on bail pending their sentences on federal civil rights convictions. No federal sentencing dates have been set, but defence attorneys said in state court last week that they expect them to be in September. Chauvin pleaded guilty to a civil rights charge, while the other three went to trial.

Cahill's order said he won't entertain any potential plea agreements from Thao or Kueng until 15 days after their federal sentencing. They rejected plea deals from prosecutors earlier.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/george-floyd-news-killing-minneapolis-police-case-trial-7956725/>

Judge lets sex assault suit go on against actor Kevin Spacey

The judge noted that Anthony Rapp has alleged that Kevin Spacey placed a clothed Rapp on a bed and briefly put his own clothed body partially beside and partially across Rapp's before Rapp “wriggled out,” got up, and left the premises.

By: [AP](#) | New York |
Updated: June 7, 2022 1:29:45 pm



Actor Kevin Spacey (Instagram/@kevinspacey)

A sex-assault civil lawsuit against actor Kevin Spacey can proceed in federal court in New York City, a federal judge ruled Monday.

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan said in a written ruling that the allegations that actor Anthony Rapp brought against Spacey established an issue of material fact as to whether Rapp sufficiently alleges that Spacey acted to gratify sexual desire during an encounter at a Manhattan party in 1986 when Rapp was 14.

The judge noted that Rapp has alleged that Spacey placed a clothed Rapp on a bed and briefly put his own clothed body partially beside and partially across Rapp's before Rapp "wriggled out," got up, and left the premises.

In his lawsuit, Rapp seeks compensatory and punitive damages for what he alleges was assault, battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Rapp testified at a deposition that there was no kissing, no undressing, no reaching under clothes and no sexualised statements or innuendo during an encounter that lasted no more than two minutes, the judge said.

Spacey denies the allegations.

Kaplan did dismiss a common law assault allegation, saying the claim was not included in those revived by a Child Victims Act in New York state that in 2019 temporarily allowed individuals to make claims in instances in which the statute of limitations would normally have barred them.

The ruling comes two weeks after British prosecutors said they had authorised police to charge Spacey with four counts of sexual assault against three men.

The alleged incidents occurred in London between 2005 and 2013.

Peter Saghir, a lawyer for Rapp, declined comment. A lawyer for Spacey did not return a message seeking comment.

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Mali junta adopts transition to democratic rule from March 2022

With a start date of March 26, 2022, the duration of the transition to civilian rule in Mali is "set at 24 months", according to an official spokesperson of the transitional government.

By: [Reuters](#) | Bamako |
June 7, 2022 12:21:36 pm



In 2020, military leaders had overthrown Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, with the promise of holding fresh elections within a "reasonable" period of time. (AP)

Mali's military junta will take 24 months from March 2022 to restore civilian rule after an August 2020 coup, its spokesman said on Monday, the

latest move in negotiations with regional bloc ECOWAS to lift sanctions crippling the economy.

The West African country's military leaders have been under pressure to restore democracy since they toppled the government and failed on a promise to hold elections in February, prompting sanctions from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

"The duration of the transition is set at 24 months," the transitional government spokesman Abdoulaye Maiga said on national television, with a start date of March 26, 2022.

Maiga said the decree followed an "advanced stage of negotiations with ECOWAS" and Mali hoped sanctions would be lifted.

"The adoption of this decree is proof of the willingness of (Malian) authorities to dialogue with ECOWAS," he added.

Mali's putsch leaders and regional heads of state have been at odds over a proposed five-year election timeline that was then revised to two – a delay that was previously rejected as too long by ECOWAS.

The ECOWAS bloc did not immediately comment on the 24-month decree adopted on Monday.

The length of the transition has also caused a rift with Mali's partners including the United States and former colonial power, France.

Maiga said both the ECOWAS mediator on the crisis, former Nigeria President Goodluck Jonathan, and heads of state had been informed of the 24-month decree.

"We are hopeful... the sanctions will be lifted imminently," he said, adding that an electoral timeline would follow.

West African heads of state met in Ghana's capital Accra over the weekend to discuss the situation and agreed not to lift sanctions, which include border closures and restrictions on financial transactions, unless interim leaders proposed a shorter transition.

The leaders are expected to convene for another summit before July 3.

Military governments in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Guinea are also facing similar threats from ECOWAS for dragging their feet on democratic transitions.

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British journalist, Brazilian expert missing in the Amazon

The place where they disappeared is the primary access route to and from the Vale do Javari, where several thousand Indigenous people live in dozens of villages.

By: [AP](#) | Rio Di Janeiro |
June 7, 2022 12:20:49 pm



Dom Phillips

A British journalist and an Indigenous affairs expert are missing in a remote part of Brazil's Amazon region, a local Indigenous association said Monday.

The area has been marked by violent conflicts between fishermen, poachers and government agents.

Dom Phillips, who has been a regular contributor to the *Guardian* newspaper, and Bruno Araújo Pereira were last seen at 7 am on Sunday in the São Rafael community, according to the [Univaja association of Indigenous people in the Vale do Javari](#), for which Pereira has been an advisor.

They were returning by boat from the Vale do Javari and bound for the city of Atalaia do Norte, about an hour away, but never showed up.

Pereira is currently on leave from his post with Brazil's indigenous affairs agency and is one of its most experienced employees operating within the Vale do Javari area.

He has overseen the agency's regional office and the coordination of isolated Indigenous groups before taking leave. He has received a steady stream of threats from illegal fishermen and poachers and usually carries a gun.

Univaja said the two had been threatened during their current reporting trip.

They disappeared while returning from a two-day trip to the Jaburu Lake region, where Phillips interviewed local Indigenous people, according to Univaja.

Only the two were on the boat, according to the association. Phillips is writing a book about the preservation of the Amazon with support from the Alicia Patterson Foundation, which awarded him a yearlong fellowship for environmental reporting than ran through January.

The place where they disappeared is the primary access route to and from the Vale do Javari, where several thousand Indigenous people live in dozens of villages.

Onde estão [@domphillips](#) e Bruno Pereira? [#Brasil](#)
pic.twitter.com/M7Reytx8lf

— Paulo Abrão (@PauloAbrao) [June 6, 2022](#)

People in the area say that it is highly unlikely they would have gotten lost in that sector.

“He is a cautious journalist, with impressive knowledge of the complexities of the Brazilian environmental crisis,” Margaret Engel, the Alicia Patterson Foundation’s executive director, wrote in an email.

“And he is a beautiful writer and a lovely person. The best of our business.” Brazil’s federal public prosecutors said in a statement they have opened an investigation and mobilised the Federal Police, Amazonas state’s civil police, the national guard and navy.

The latter will coordinate search efforts, according to the statement.

The army’s footprint and manpower are far greater than the navy’s in the region.

Neither the army nor the navy responded to *Associated Press* emails seeking comment about progress as of Monday afternoon.

The *Guardian* quoted a spokesperson as saying it “is very concerning and is urgently seeking information about Mr. Phillips’ whereabouts and condition. We are in contact with the British embassy in Brazil and local and national authorities to try to establish the facts as soon as possible.” Phillips, who resides in Salvador, Bahia, also has contributed to the Washington Post and New York Times.

“I hope they are found soon, that they are fine and safe,” former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva posted on Twitter while recalling Phillips interviewing him in 2017.

The Vale do Javari region has experienced repeated shootings between hunters and fishers and official security agents, who have a permanent base in the area, known for having the world’s largest population of uncontacted Indigenous people.

It is also a major route for cocaine produced on the Peruvian side of the border, then smuggled into Brazil to supply local cities or to be shipped to Europe.

In September 2019, an employee of the Indigenous affairs agency was shot dead in Tabatinga, the largest city in the region. The crime was never solved.

“It is extremely important that Brazilian authorities dedicate all available and necessary resources to the immediate realisation of searches, in order to guarantee, as soon as possible, the safety of the two men,” Maria Laura Canineau, the director of Human Rights Watch in Brazil, said in a statement on Monday.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/climate-change/british-journalist-missing-brazil-amazon-7956650/>

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Business

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RBI Monetary Policy Meet Live Updates: Repo rate hiked by 50 bps to 4.90%

RBI policy announcement today live updates: The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das hiked the repo rate by 50 bps to 4.90 per cent. Here's what the Indian central bank chief announced.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 11:13:06 am



Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das interacts with the media
(Express Photo by Tashi Tobgyal)

RBI MPC Meet LIVE Updates: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Wednesday hiked the repo rate by **50 basis points (bps)** to **4.90 per cent**, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced.

The move comes barely a month after the central bank in a surprise off-cycle meeting had jacked up the repo rate, the main policy rate, by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent to bring down the elevated inflation and tackle the impact of geopolitical tensions. Last month, Das in an interview with CNBC-TV18 had indicated that the central bank would continue to hike policy interest rates to bring down inflation but refused to say whether it will be raised to the pre-pandemic level.

In his speech today, Das said that the MPC vote was **unanimous**. Additionally, he said the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate stands adjusted to **4.65 per cent** and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to **5.15 per cent**. He noted that the repo rate remains below the pre-pandemic level.

Das said that the MPC voted unanimously to remain focused on the withdrawal of accommodation to ensure inflation remains within target going ahead.

The central bank governor said that the Indian economy remains resilient and added that the RBI will remain supportive of growth. He added that RBI's steps will be calibrated, and focused on bringing down inflation to the target level.

Speaking on the inflation, Shaktikanta Das said that the inflation is likely to remain above 6 per cent in the first three-quarters of the current fiscal. He added that the upside risk to inflation persists. A recent spike in tomato and crude prices fuelling inflation. The RBI raised its inflation forecast for the financial year 2022-23 (FY23) to **6.7 per cent** from its earlier estimate of 5.7 per cent.

"With the assumption of a normal monsoon, in 2022 and average crude oil price in the Indian basket of 105 dollars per barrel, inflation is now projected at 6.7 per cent in 2022-23," Das said.

On the demand front, he said that while the urban demand is improving, rural demand gradually recovering.

Speaking on growth, RBI retained its growth projection at **7.2 per cent** for the current fiscal. Das said the Indian economy remained resilient, and the central bank will continue to support growth.

The RBI expects growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal at 16.2 per cent, which will taper to 4 per cent by the fourth quarter. He, however, cautioned that there are risks from the ongoing Russia-[Ukraine](#) war.

How economists and market experts reacted:

- **Ramani Sastri, Chairman and MD at Sterling Developers** said, “We have observed a robust comeback in residential sales and launches in the last couple of quarters. From a real estate perspective, this hike in the policy rate comes as a hurdle as home loan rates will increase, putting a dent on the homebuyer’s sentiments. Any increase in the interest rate will further impact the costs of doing business and hence the move will hurt business sentiment too as the economy is still recovering from the pandemic. However there has been a fundamental change in buyers expectations and attitude towards homeownership and this will largely withstand marginal fluctuations in lending rates. It also goes without saying that the real estate industry’s perennial hope is fixed on lower interest rates as it improves affordability. There is still pent-up demand and even after the repo rate hike, affordability is still high and the home buyer needs to take advantage of that in the short term.”
- **Lincoln Bennet Rodrigues, Chairman and Founder at The Bennet and Bernard Company** said, “The current round of hikes could make the buyers apprehensive and they might as well adopt a wait and watch attitude. But on a positive note, the continued wage and job growth in varied sectors will provide a cushion in the short term for the purchasing decisions. The all-time low home loan interest regime in the

recent past had boosted the housing demand and also enabled a robust recovery in the real estate sector post the pandemic. Today, people feel the inherent need to make progressive lifestyle changes to lead a more balanced and healthy life. We are hopeful that an improved homebuyer attitude and preference for owning a house will support the housing market and we expect that consumer demand will remain buoyant in the near term. The rate hike won't have significant impact as home loan interest rates have already gone down substantially in the recent past and buying decisions may not be altered by these marginal changes.”

- ***Pradeep Multani, President at PHD Chamber*** said, “Hard lending from an accommodative policy stance is disappointing as it will have an impact on costs of doing business and production possibilities. Though RBI's decision to raise the repo rate by 50 bps to 4.9% is in synchrony with its efforts to tackle persistently heightened inflation, however it will impact India's economic growth due to dampened demand scenario and discouraged consumer and business sentiments. Any increase in the interest rate increases the costs of doing business, which are already high vis-a-vis high raw material costs amid geo-political distress”
- ***V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services*** said, “RBI's projections of GDP growth rate of 7.2% and inflation of 6.7% for FY23 reflect a realistic monetary policy. The higher inflation projection indicates that the central bank recognises the seriousness of inflation and the 50 bp repo rate hike is a message that they are determined to anchor inflation expectations. The Governor's remark that ” the economy remains resilient and recovery has gathered momentum” is bullish from the market perspective. The bond market's positive response with bond yields rising stems from the absence of CRR hike”

[meeting-outcome-shaktikanta-das-key-announcements-repo-rate-hike-crr-economy-gdp-inflation-7958138/](#)

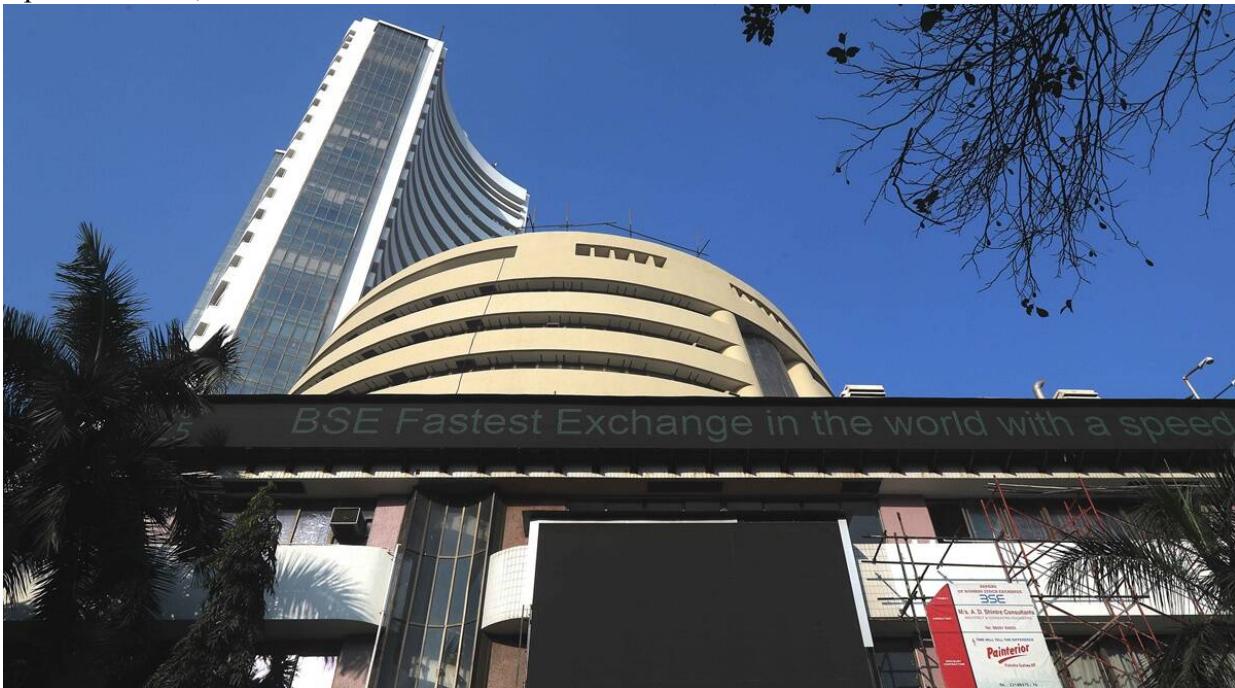
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Stock Market Today: Sensex and Nifty begin on a flat note ahead of RBI policy outcome

Share Market Today News, Sensex, Nifty, Share Prices Updates, 8 June 2022: At 9:19 am, the S&P BSE Sensex was trading at 55,079.25, down 28.09 points (0.05 per cent) while the Nifty 50 was down 7.70 points (0.05 per cent) AT 16,408.65.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 9:28:41 am



Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) in Dalal Street (Express photo by Nirmal Harindran)

The frontline indices on the BSE and National Stock Exchange (NSE) opened on a flat note with marginal negative bias on Wednesday ahead of the outcome of the RBI's [Monetary Policy Committee](#) meeting.

At 9:19 am, the S&P BSE Sensex was trading at 55,079.25, down 28.09 points (0.05 per cent) while the Nifty 50 was down 7.70 points (0.05 per cent) AT 16,408.65.

On the Sensex pack, Tata Steel, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank, [Wipro](#) and SBI were the top gainers in early trade while Nestle India, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints and ITC were the top laggards.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das will give a speech at 10 am today to announce the decisions taken by the six-member MPC. The rise in interest rates is not in doubt as Das said on May 23 that the decision would be a "no brainer".

More to follow

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Premium

A BPO, discounted Air India tickets & unpaid dues: ‘Racket’ unravelled by Covid

IGT Solutions was InterGlobe Technologies earlier while it was owned by Rahul Bhatia — the promoter of IndiGo. The call centre company was acquired in 2019 by AION Capital — a JV between global PE fund Apollo Global Management and ICICI Ventures — in 2019.

Written by [Mihir Mishra](#) , [Pranav Mukul](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:50:31 am



AION Capital is reported as likely to sell 85 per cent stake in IGT Solutions to private equity major Baring PE Asia for over \$800 million.
(Representational)

When a Chandigarh-based travel agent called Air India's customer care centre in February last year to seek clarity on a Kathmandu flight he was about to book for a passenger, he unwittingly became part of a racket that ended up in losses of over Rs 50 lakh for him and multiple others like him. The operation, which involved booking Air India tickets through a two-decade old BPO company, IGT Solutions, without making payments to the airline ran smoothly until the second wave of Covid hit the country, after which it started to unravel and come apart at the seams.

Last February, the agent called a Gurgaon-registered Air India customer support number seeking a clarification on the name pattern for tickets he was booking for a Kathmandu-bound flight. The Air India call centre, which is managed by IGT Solutions, assured that he will get a callback from one of their support executives. Soon, he received a call from a person claiming to be an Air India representative, helping him with his concern.

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Shortly after, he again got a call from the same representative, but this time with an offer. "The man claimed to be from Air India and asked me how much I paid for the Kathmandu ticket. When I told him the amount, he offered me the same ticket at a significant discount of Rs 10,000 to the quoted price," the agent said. "I checked with my friends here, who are senior travel agents, and they advised me to take the offer but to make the payment only after the passenger has travelled on the said ticket," he added.

The alleged Air India representative agreed to his payment terms and issued him a ticket. The agent's customer travelled to Kathmandu without hassle and he paid the money to this person. "For the next 15 days, we followed this model of payment only after the trip is complete ... since the person never failed, I decided to make payments at the time of booking," the agent said, adding his other colleagues also started booking through this person.

All this went on like clockwork until India got hit by a deadly Covid wave in May 2021, which impacted people's travel plans and they started cancelling tickets. Some of the agent's customers cancelled tickets to destinations such as Canada, expecting a refund. But he never received that refund to pass it on to his customers. Other travel agents also found themselves caught in this trap. "As of date, refunds of about 60 tickets (mostly to flights to Canada) totalling Rs 52 lakh is due ... and I am just one agent — there are several more," he said.

Simultaneously, Air India became aware of an accounting discrepancy towards the amount it expected to receive from IGT Solutions for tickets it believes were issued by the BPO company on the airline's behalf.

"Legitimate tickets were issued but the airline did not receive payments towards these bookings. Typically, such discrepancies arise on a rolling basis and they get settled in a few days, weeks or months. But when this particular mismatch lasted for a longer period, we approached IGT Solutions and asked them to look into it," an Air India executive told [The Indian Express](#). He refused to share the total amount that the airline is due to receive on account of these tickets.

IGT Solutions, on its part, has filed a [first information report \(FIR\)](#) at Cyber Crime Police Station, Gurgaon, last month against unknown persons where it has said "multiple tickets were issued through Air India system with no payments being received by the airline, which was notified by Air India to IGT".

"The company also looked into the bookings made using the IGT employees' log-in ids and passwords while these employees were not even authorised, nor trained for issuing of tickets and in few instances were not in the shift at the time when fraudulent tickets were made," read the FIR dated May 7, which was reviewed by The Indian Express.

In the FIR, IGT Solutions said after the discrepancy was discovered, it provided certain IP addresses to Air India from which it provides the call centre services, so that the airline can restrict access to all other IP addresses. "As this control was not put in place, to our utter shock, we find that few/may be many tickets have been issued without any payments," read the

complaint filed by IGT Solutions' Senior Manager-Fraud Investigations Manmeet Bakshi.

Multiple messages sent to Bakshi seeking comment for this story did not elicit a response. IGT Solutions did not respond to a detailed set of queries sent by this newspaper. IGT Solutions, was InterGlobe Technologies earlier while it was owned by Rahul Bhatia — the billionaire promoter of budget airline IndiGo. The call centre company was acquired in 2019 by AION Capital — a JV between global PE fund Apollo Global Management and ICICI Ventures — in 2019 for \$230 million. AION Capital is reported as likely to sell 85 per cent stake in IGT Solutions to private equity major Baring PE Asia for over \$800 million.

Responding to email queries, an Air India spokesperson denied involvement of its employees in the fraudulent ticket bookings. “We are, however, aware that M/s IGT, which looks after the contact centre for Air India, has filed an FIR against unknown persons and not against any Air India Employee. A discrepancy was observed and IGT has followed their procedure on this issue,” the spokesperson said. In a follow-up query about the circumstances in which the alleged fraudster could have accessed the agent’s details, the spokesperson said: “Air India has always been having zero tolerance for any kind of malpractice or impropriety in any area of its activities...we made it quite clear that Air India is in no way addressed in the FIR, mentioned by you, and is not aware of any allegation of involvement of its own personnel in the case”.

After months of not receiving their money, the agent and others travelled to Delhi in July last year to confront the alleged fraudster. “He promised to refund the money. But it is still due. He has not returned to his home since July last year. My only hope is on the police investigation,” he said.

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Single Nodal Agency launch: FM bats for transparent governance

The SNA dashboard of Public Financial Management System, launched by the Minister as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav iconic week celebrations, was put in place in July 2021 and all states got on board by March this year.

By: [ENS Economic Bureau](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 5:49:58 am



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in New Delhi. (PTI)

Launching the Single Nodal Agency (SNA) dashboard, a system which tracks transfer of funds to states for centrally sponsored schemes and utilisation of funds by central agencies, Finance Minister [Nirmala](#)

Sitharaman on Tuesday said it will make governance more transparent and realise better value for every rupee sent by the Centre by ‘just-in-time’ money release.

The SNA dashboard of the Public Financial Management System (PFMS), launched by Sitharaman as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Iconic Week Celebrations, was put in place in July 2021 and all states got on board by March this year. The SNA provides information about what the state has spent, and Centre releases the money only when it sees it getting utilised. Finance Ministry officials also spoke about another system for cash management, the Treasury Single Account (TSA) system, for autonomous bodies such as Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

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Sitharaman said about Rs 4.46 lakh crore gets transferred to states by way of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) and the SNA would bring about greater transparency in the spending of the amount. “About Rs 4.46 lakh crore goes through the Centrally Sponsored Schemes and this is not a small amount. Today, you are in a position to track that money in a year to states ... it is a huge success in making governance transparent. That quantum of money is also equally sent just in time ... what better value realisation for every rupee sent,” she said.

As of date, there was Rs 1.2 lakh crore lying with the states in the SNA system. “That’s the unspent balance. So we need not give more money right now ... the government has been able to save about Rs 10,000 crore in interest cost in the last fiscal due to the introduction of TSA,” an official said.

Finance Secretary T V Somanathan said this system would help cut down on the interest expenditure as money would be released at the stage where it is needed. “If the money is stuck somewhere, we would like to minimise what is stuck and hold it where it is more efficiently held. GoI would like to pay as little as possible of public money as interest. So the SNA and TSA help us to minimise the interest costs borne by the GoI and that is not a trivial cost. That actually helps us a lot, particularly in a difficult year like the current

financial year. These are extremely helpful in containing fiscal deficit within what is possible,” Somanathan said.

‘Regulators should be well advanced on digitisation’

At a separate event, Sitharaman said regulators and other entities should be well advanced and ahead of the curve in understanding digitisation to ensure that there is no misuse of technologies, adding that there is need to have firewall mechanisms in the context of digitisation.

According to her, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) should be ahead of the curve in the context of digitisation to ensure fair and accountable practices as well as no misuse of technologies.

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This is why your airline tickets are so expensive right now

It's unclear how long these high prices will persist, even as many travelers seem willing to pay up.

By: [Bloomberg](#) |
June 7, 2022 4:56:56 pm



With fewer planes in the skies, there are fewer seats to meet the recovery in demand, which in turn has pushed up fares. (Representational)

For more than two years, the main topic of conversation pretty much everywhere has been about the impact of [Covid-19](#). Now that the worst of the pandemic seems to be over and people are traveling more freely again, another hot topic is on the tips of everyone's tongues: expensive plane tickets.

People are looking for flights — sometimes their first in years — in a rush of what's been termed "revenge travel." Internet searches show sky-high airfares for many routes, yet travelers with wanderlust are opting to stomach the higher costs after being grounded for so long.

"The demand is off the charts," Delta Air Lines Inc. Chief Executive Officer Ed Bastian said at an industry conference last week, noting that fares this summer may be 30% higher than pre-pandemic levels. "It's coming with leisure, it's coming with premium customers, it's coming with business, it's coming with international. It doesn't matter what the category is."

Global Movement

The trend is across geographies, though some places are more squeezed than others. Searches for a return economy-class ticket between Hong Kong and London on Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. in late June turn up prices as high as HK\$42,051 (\$5,360), which is more than five times the typical cost before the pandemic. Direct flights between New York and London around the same time cost more than \$2,000 in economy.

"Ticket prices are really expensive these days," said Jacqueline Khoo, who works in tourism. Her company paid S\$5,000 (\$3632) for a colleague's return trip with Singapore Airlines Ltd. to Hamburg later this month. That used to cost about S\$2,000, she said. "It's really amazing that an economy seat ticket would cost you so much."

A Mastercard Economics Institute study found the cost of flying from Singapore was on average 27% higher in April than in 2019, while flights from Australia were 20% more. Increasingly, travelers are booking tickets months in advance as they're worried about the cost of buying at the last minute, said David Mann, chief economist for Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa at the institute.

There are several reasons for the higher fares, not all of which are within the control of airlines.

Giant Jets Parked

Carriers are cautious about bringing back all their idled jets, even though most countries have eased cross-border restrictions. That's particularly true

for giant aircraft like Airbus SE's A380 superjumbos and Boeing Co.'s older 747-8s, as airlines turn to more fuel-efficient models like A350s and 787 Dreamliners. The pinch is most acute in Asia, which was the slowest to ease restrictions, and as China, the biggest market in the region, remains essentially closed.

After navigating varied and changing government policies for the past two years, it will take time for airlines to rebuild fleets given that many restrictions only eased in May, said Subhas Menon, director general of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines. "It's still early days," he said. "We're just in June, so it's not like turning on the tap."

Carriers also scaled down their networks during Covid, none more so than Cathay, which has been hemmed in by Hong Kong's onerous travel and quarantine rules. That's left people considering lengthy journeys with one or more stopovers, whereas before they might have flown direct. British Airways Plc doesn't even fly to Hong Kong at the moment.

With fewer planes in the skies, there are fewer seats to meet the recovery in demand, which in turn has pushed up fares.

Skyrocketing Fuel Prices

Russia's invasion of [Ukraine](#) has exacerbated a steady rise in crude oil prices over the past 18 months. Jet fuel now represents as much as 38% of an average airline's costs, up from 27% in the years leading to 2019. For some budget airlines, it can be as high as 50%.

Spot jet fuel prices in New York have soared more than 80% this year, though prices vary from region to region depending on refining costs and local taxes. Many US carriers have been able to cover the increased fuel costs so far — but only by passing them along to travelers in the form of higher fares.

Some investors believe airlines may seek to boost fuel surcharges as a way to cope, analysts at Citigroup Inc. said in March. Most of Asia's airlines don't hedge jet fuel, which means they are more vulnerable to price increases.

Deep-Pocketed Travelers

Higher ticket costs don't seem to be dissuading people from making trips now that many travel restrictions have eased. Some consumers are tapping dormant holiday budgets and upgrading to more expensive aircraft cabins for leisure trips, the International Air Transport Association's Director General Willie Walsh said last month.

The so-called revenge traveler is "an individual that has been emotionally affected by the lockdowns and has craved travel over the last two years and they've dreamt about it," said Hermione Joye, sector lead for travel in Asia Pacific at Alphabet Inc.'s [Google](#). "They are very spontaneous."

Lack of Staff

Hundreds of thousands of pilots, flight attendants, ground handlers and other aviation workers lost their jobs over the past couple of years. With travel picking up, the industry now finds itself unable to hire fast enough to allow for seamless operations at its pre-pandemic levels.

Singapore's Changi Airport — regularly voted the world's best — is looking to recruit more than 6,600 people. Many workers who were let go have found other, less volatile careers, and aren't willing to come back to a cyclical industry. An operator at Changi is offering a joining bonus of S\$25,000 to auxiliary police officers, a job that pays a maximum of S\$3,700 a month.

In the US, smaller regional airlines can't fly at full capacity because bigger carriers have hired away too many pilots. Hundreds of flights have been canceled in the UK, scuppering holiday plans and leading to long delays and scenes of passengers sleeping at airports. In Europe, major airports have faced delays and cancellations after failing to hire adequate staff. That has disrupted airline schedules and added to costs.

Repairing Balance Sheets

Aviation is a capital-intensive industry with historically wafer-thin margins. Covid has made that operating climate even more challenging: globally, airlines lost more than \$200 billion in the three years to 2022.

Elevated fares provide carriers with a path to recover from losses and return to the black.

“We’ve never seen a revenue environment like this, led by domestic leisure,” American Airlines Group Inc. Chief Executive Officer Robert Isom said at an industry conference last week. “On top of that, we see large corporates coming back in. Small- and medium-sized businesses have been really off the charts for a number of months now.”

How Much Longer?

It’s unclear how long these high prices will persist, even as many travelers seem willing to pay up.

“The rise in prices is a short-term phenomenon,” estimates Stephen Tracy, chief operating officer at Milieu Insight, a Singapore-based consumer insight and analytics firm. “Let’s all just hope that once these things equalize again, the prices come back down. I am fairly confident that they will.”

In a few cases, fares are actually lower than pre-pandemic levels, according to Michael O’Leary, chief executive officer of Ryanair Holdings Plc. While there’s a prospect of more fares returning to levels they were at before Covid, the war in Ukraine and virus outbreaks are still risks, he said.

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LIC share price falls to a fresh all-time low; skid nearly 21% from their issue price

The LIC stock hit a new all-time low of Rs 751.80 on the NSE and Rs 751.00 on the BSE during the intraday trade.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 7, 2022 4:36:15 pm



An exterior view of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) eastern zonal head office building in Kolkata, India, February 14, 2022. (REUTERS)

LIC Share Price Drops Further Today to New All-Time Low, What LIC Investors Must Know, should buy, sell or hold?: Shares of insurance sector giant Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) continued their

downward momentum and hit a fresh all-time low during the intraday trade on Tuesday.

The LIC stock hit a fresh low of Rs 751.80 on the NSE and Rs 751.00 on the BSE during the intraday trade on Tuesday. Following its consecutive declines over the past six sessions, the scrip has now fallen nearly 21 per cent from its issue price.

It eventually settled at Rs 752.90, down 3.15 per cent on both the BSE and NSE. After slipping below the market capitalisation of Rs 5 lakh crore on Monday, the m-cap stood at Rs 4,76,209.08 crore at the end of trade on Tuesday, data on the BSE showed.

As many as 37,74,512 equity shares of the LIC were traded throughout the day on the NSE on Tuesday while over 5,10,964 shares exchanged hands on the BSE, data from the respective exchanges showed.

On May 17, LIC made its lacklustre debut on stock exchanges, listing at over an 8 per cent discount from its issue price of Rs 949 apiece after a successful Rs 21,000 crore [initial public offering \(IPO\)](#) which got subscribed 2.95 times.

Speaking on the LIC stock, Santosh Meena, head of research at Swastika Investmart noted, “The issue was priced at a price to the embedded value of 1.1x, which is a discount compared to its domestic as well as global peers. This valuation discounts concerns with the company like losing market share to private players, lower profitability & revenue growth compared to private players, lower VNB margins and short term persistency ratios. However, we believe India’s highly underserved life insurance market is still in its infancy and is well-positioned to capitalize on the enormous growth potential. LIC has a number of competitive advantages, including a strong brand value, a massive network of agents, and an enviable distribution network. So, investors with a long-term view can buy this stock at CMP and follow a buy on dip strategy.”

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Petrol and diesel prices in your city today, check here

Petrol and diesel prices: Petrol price in Delhi stands at Rs 96.72 per litre while diesel is available for Rs 89.62. In Mumbai, petrol is retailing at Rs 111.35, while diesel costs Rs 97.28. Read below to find out fuel prices in your city.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 7, 2022 2:40:43 pm



Petrol Diesel Latest Price Today: A fuel station attendant pumps petrol into a two-wheeler at a filling station in Mumbai, Wednesday, March 23, 2022. (PTI Photo)

Petrol Diesel Price Today: Prices of petrol and diesel remained steady for the 16th consecutive day across the country on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. The rates were last revised on May 22 when petrol was cut by Rs 8.69 per litre and diesel was reduced by Rs 7.05 in the national capital.

The price of petrol in Delhi stands at Rs 96.72 per litre while that of diesel is at Rs 89.62. In Mumbai, petrol currently costs Rs 111.35, while diesel is retailing at Rs 97.28, data available on Indian Oil Corporation's website showed.

The rates of both the key auto fuels were revised only once last month when Finance Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#) announced a cut in excise duty on petrol by 8 per litre, and 6 rupees per litre on diesel on May 21. Following the government's decision petrol and diesel prices were cut across the country on May 22.

Petrol and diesel prices in India differ from state to state depending on the local taxation (VAT) and freight charges. Apart from this, the central government charges an excise duty on auto fuels.

Generally, the OMCs revise rates of petrol and diesel daily based on the average price of benchmark fuel in the international market in the preceding 15-days and foreign exchange rates.

In the international market, oil prices edged higher on Tuesday on an expected demand recovery in China as the world's second-biggest economy relaxes tough [COVID-19](#) curbs, and on doubts that a higher output target by OPEC+ producers would ease tight supply, news agency *Reuters* reported.

Brent crude futures were up 28 cents (0.2 per cent) at \$119.79 barrel at 0601 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 31 cents (0.3 per cent) at \$118.81 a barrel. The benchmark hit a three-month high of \$120.99 on Monday, the report said.

Here's what you pay for a litre of petrol and diesel in your city on Tuesday, June 7, 2022:

City	Petrol (Rs/litre)	Diesel (Rs/litre)
New Delhi	96.72	89.62
Mumbai	111.35	97.28
Kolkata	106.03	92.76
Chennai	102.63	94.24
Bengaluru	101.94	87.89
Hyderabad	109.66	97.82
Patna	107.24	94.04
Bhopal	108.65	93.90
Jaipur	108.48	93.72
Lucknow	96.57	89.76
Thiruvananthapuram	107.71	96.52
<i>Source: Indian Oil Corporation</i>		

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Political Pulse

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</figure><h6>Soren on back foot, BJP to build back Adivasi support</h6> </div><div class="story"><figure> </figure> <h6>Assam hill council polls: BJP has the edge</h6> </div><div class="story"><figure> </figure><h6>In Gujarat, AAP sets sights on Patidar fortress</h6> </div> </div> <div class="nation"> <div class="section-priority-border"> </div> <div class="articles first "><div class="snaps"> <noscript> </noscript> </div> <h2 class="title"> As its Maharashtra CM pitch sets off fresh MVA rumblings, NCP eyes a ‘distant dream’ </h2> <div class="date"> June 8, 2022 11:00:55 am </div> <p>Addressing a public function in Beed on June 4, NCP minister Dhananjay Munde created a stir by claiming that “the next chief minister in Maharashtra will be from NCP”.</p> </div> <div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript> </noscript> </div> <h2 class="title"> In Karnataka textbook controversy Congress finds leverage to battle BJP on Hindutva agenda </h2> <div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:26:32 am </div> <p>While the early concerns in revisions prescribed by the textbook committee were over the chopping of portions of lessons on the Muslim king, Tipu Sultan, the emergence of the final textbooks for Kannada and social sciences has resulted in a plethora of grousing cutting across communities over revisions done under the guardianship of the BJP government.</p> </div> <div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript> </noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> As Nadda arrives, Bengal BJP looks to leave behind recent struggles </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:28:01 am</div><p>BJP national president will meet party leaders and workers during two-day stay, prepare a roadmap for next year's panchayat polls. </p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> For MLAs of 3 states, Rajya Sabha polls a walk in the park, splash in the pool </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 7:33:24 am</div><p>Ahead of the June 10 Rajya Sabha elections, legislators of at least three states – Rajasthan, Haryana and Maharashtra – are huddled in five-star hotels and resorts to ensure rival parties do not lure away their MLAs.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> 'From where will Subhash Chandra get votes?': Mahesh Joshi, Gehlot's resort politics fulcrum </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:29:45 am</div><p>Media baron Subhash Chandra claims to be an Independent but not a single Independent MLA has signed as a proposer in his forms – all his proposers are from the BJP, says Mahesh Joshi.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> </noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> BJP to Cong, Rajasthan to Haryana, all roads lead to Moosewala home </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 7:58:03 am</div><p>Shubdeep Singh Sidhu Moosewala was the Congress candidate from Mansa in the state elections earlier this year and lost to AAP's Vijay Singla. The Congress' flag was placed on the singer's body before the cremation on May 31.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> </noscript> </div>

class="attachment-thumbnail size-thumbnail wp-post-image" height="250" src="https://indianexpress.com/wp-content/plugins/lazy-load/images/1x1.trans.gif" width="450" /><noscript></noscript></div><h2 class="title"> Hemant Soren on back foot, BJP moves to build back Adivasi support </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:30:04 am</div><p>BJP banking on Babulal Marandi, who returned to its fold in 2019</p></div><div class="articles"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript></div><h2 class="title"> After caste census, population control faultline erupts between Nitish, BJP </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:28:43 am</div> <p>Following Bihar BJP minister Neeraj Singh Bablu's recent remark that there was "an urgent need of population control policy besides just having caste census", CM Nitish Kumar disapproved of his idea.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript></div><h2 class="title"> Assam hill council polls: BJP has the edge; Cong, tribal parties go for broke </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:30:18 am</div><p>The ruling BJP's resources, organisational strength, and the fact that it heads the state government give the party a definite edge in the election to one of Assam's oldest tribal councils under the Sixth Schedule.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript></div><h2 class="title"> As it tries to enter Gujarat, AAP sets sights on Patidar fortress </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:31:19 am</div><p>AAP's Arvind Kejriwal takes on BJP in Mehsana on Monday – his fourth such event in the state in two months</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> From Nupur Sharma to Bhagwat speech to world's first Urdu newspaper </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 8:29:08 am</div><p>In its editorial on June 6, headlined "Der aaed durust aaed", the New Delhi edition of Roznama Rashtriya Sahara appreciates the BJP's disciplinary action against Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal, for their anti-Islam remarks, although it says this was a "belated action".</p></div> <div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Newsmaker | Billionaire industrialist Kewal Singh Dhillon bets on BJP for second shot at Lok Sabha </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 2:56:26 pm</div><p>The Congress expelled the former Barnala MLA earlier this year. Now, he is the BJP's candidate for the Sangrur bypoll. </p> </div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Gujarat BJP old hand Vansiya's reinduction pitch against prohibition brews heady row </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 3:50:23 am</div><p>Khumansinh Vansiya owns up his remarks calling for ending prohibition, saying "I have given the statement and I will stick to it and it is my personal opinion."</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Sadhu Singh Dharamsot, ex-Punjab minister arrested in graft case, is dyed-in-wool Congressman </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 2:48:41 am</div><p>Dharmasot had courted several

controversies during his stint as the Punjab Cabinet minister. He was among the four ministers who were dropped by Amarinder's successor Charanjit Singh Channi in his Cabinet.

</div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Omar Abdullah interview: 'Don't think any sensible Kashmiri has found justification for 1990 ... We have greater responsibility to make minorities feel safe' </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 6:54:14 am</div><p>On recent attacks in the Valley, former J&K CM tells The Indian Express, 'Not all happening at the behest of foreign militants ... These are locals who have not even gone across for training.' </p>

</div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> What's Khalsa raj? Does it mean a separate State? No, say experts </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 7:58:02 am</div><p>What is Khalsa raj? And does it tie in with the secessionist idea of Khalistan? Experts disagree, saying it is an egalitarian concept that goes beyond the confines of religion or State. </p>

</div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Lalu packs a punch: 'Civil war-like situation' due to BJP </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 7:21:43 am</div><p>Lalu cautioned opposition parties in the state and underlined the need for Opposition unity to take on "firkaparast taakate" (communal forces).</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> <a

[Nupur Sharma, Naveen Jindal ignored warnings, dented image, action to draw the line: BJP](https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/nupur-sharma-naveen-jindal-warnings-dented-image-swift-action-bjp-7955875/) </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 7:26:31 am</div><p>The controversy over Nupur Sharma's remarks and Naveen Jindal's tweets has not only hurt our development agenda but also dented the image of the government and Prime Minister at the international level," a party leader said.</p></div><div class="articles m-premium"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Omar Abdullah: 'Every single (Pandit) employee who goes back, I consider it my personal failure' </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 8:43:31 am</div> <p>Omar Abdullah said the claims in the immediate aftermath of the revocation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, about the law being the root cause of terror were not being borne out on the ground.</p></div><div class="articles m-premium"><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Road to 2024: Friendless and snubbed, why Congress has no ally shedding tears for itSP falls back on family, old warhorse Azam Khan for Azamgarh & Rampur bypolls

while Khan's associate Asim Raja is the candidate from Rampur.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Rise and rise of Vijayasai Reddy, key YSRCP strategist and Jagan confidant </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 8:04:36 am</div><p>The 64-year-old Rajya Sabha MP and YSRCP national general secretary, Vijayasai has had a flourishing career as a chartered accountant with offices in several cities.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> 3 months after poll rout, headless Congress adrift in Uttar Pradesh </h2><div class="date"> June 8, 2022 6:05:04 am</div><p>The pending appointment of the UPPCC president has led to frustration in the party circles over the leadership's continued "indecision".</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Congress vs Congress in Chhattisgarh over forest mining projects </h2><div class="date"> June 7, 2022 8:05:42 am</div><p>CM Bhupesh Baghel has hit out at those against coal extraction in Hasdeo Aranya. But a Congress district unit has opposed the government and Rahul Gandhi has also expressed reservations.</p></div><div class="articles "><div class="snaps"> <noscript></noscript> </div><h2 class="title"> Sangrur braces for brutal LS bypoll as all parties bring out the big guns </h2><div class="date"> June 6, 2022 2:26:37 am</div><p>There had been talk of a

consensus candidate earlier in Sangrur, with slain singer Sidhu Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh's name also floated – putting, briefly, the Aam Aadmi Party, for which it is a prestige fight, in consternation.

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Govt 'open' to self-regulatory redressal by social media companies

Terming the regulations as an "evolving" issue, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrashekhar said the government is looking for a way to make social media companies more accountable in handling grievances of users.

Written by [Soumyarendra Barik](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:56:31 am



Deplatforming, or removing a person from a social media platform, was a recurring complaint from users, Minister Rajeev Chandrashekhar said.

While the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has proposed a government-appointed appeals' committee to look into

complaints against social media companies' content moderation, it is "open" to an industry-wide "self-regulatory framework" if Big Tech platforms such as [Facebook](#) and Twitter were to handle users' grievances and appeals in a "satisfactory way", Rajeev Chandrashekhar, Minister of State for Electronics and IT, said on Tuesday.

In a fresh draft of amendments to the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, on Monday, the MeitY proposed that "the central government shall constitute one or more grievance appellate committees, which shall consist of a chairperson and such other members as the central government may ... appoint", to be empowered to review, and possibly reverse, content moderation decisions taken by social media companies.

Explained

Draft up for discussion

The draft, which is up for public consultation for 30 days, triggered concerns about the government overriding the decisions of social media platforms.

The draft, which is up for public consultation for 30 days, triggered concerns about the government overriding the decisions of social media platforms.

Terming the regulations as an "evolving" issue, Chandrashekhar said the government is looking for a way to make social media companies more accountable in handling grievances of users. "If the industry and these Big Tech platforms come up with their own self-regulatory mechanism to address grievances of users, we are open to it. If the platforms themselves form a framework of addressing grievances of users, and are accountable to them, we are open to that idea," he said.

Asked if the Ministry would consider rolling back the proposal to set up a government-appointed appeals' committee if the industry comes up with its own self-regulatory structure, Chandrashekhar said, "The government is open to the idea, that's why we have opened the draft for public consultation".

Deplatforming, or removing a person from a social media platform, was a recurring complaint from users, he said. “What we are seeing repeatedly in many cases is that social media companies are deplatforming users without giving them an opportunity to explain their actions, which is a violation of Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. Deplatforming a user following a court order or a proven illegality is a different thing. But deplatforming users just based on these companies’ own guidelines is very arbitrary,” said the minister. Article 14 of the Constitution provides for equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

“If the platforms demonstrated systems and responsibilities to the users, we would not have to introduce last year’s amendments to the intermediary rules. But they did not. So, at some point, social media platforms will have to figure out a way of doing this, because it is not sustainable for the government to keep playing this watchman type of role. We are hoping that at some point the platforms recognise that they have to create accountability into their business model,” he said.

At the moment, the only recourse users have is to approach the courts. But “in a way, corporations have an advantage over citizens in court cases because very few people actually can seek legal recourse,” added Chandrashekhar.

Under the IT Rules, released in February last year, social media companies are mandated to appoint India-based grievance officers as part of their due diligence as “intermediaries” who enjoy legal immunity from third-party content on their platform. These officers are responsible for overseeing the grievance redressal mechanism. So, if a user has an issue with an account or content on a social media platform, he/she can complain to the company’s grievance officer who will have to act and dispose of that complaint within 15 days.

The rules, implemented in May last year, have run into several legal problems. Last year, WhatsApp filed a lawsuit against a provision which requires encrypted messaging platforms to trace the identity of the originator of a message. The company said that implementing the provision would dilute its encryption security and present a privacy-risk to users’ personal conversations.

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70 yrs after extinction in India, 1st batch of cheetahs set to arrive from Africa in August

Declared extinct 70 years ago, the first batch of five-six Cheetahs will be translocated from South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. This is the first time that a trans-continental shifting of a large carnivore will take place.

By: [Express News Service](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:20:33 am



A team of experts from South Africa will arrive in India on June 15th, and visit the park to oversee the arrangements for the translocation.

In a first, a batch of cheetahs will be translocated from South Africa to India in August this year after delays caused due to the Covid pandemic, Ministry officials announced on Tuesday.

Declared extinct 70 years ago, the first batch of five-six Cheetahs will be translocated from South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. This is the first time that a trans-continental shifting of a large carnivore will take place.

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“All the modalities for bringing the Cheetah have been completed and the agreement with South Africa is in place. Now the final clearance from Ministry of External Affairs is awaited. One of our teams is currently in South Africa,” said a senior official in the Environment Ministry on Tuesday.

A team of experts from South Africa will arrive in India on June 15th, and visit the park to oversee the arrangements for the translocation.

The Ministry is coordinating with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) as well as the Wildlife Institute of India, which has been spearheading the project on behalf of the Indian government.

The Cheetah is believed to have disappeared from the Indian landscape when the Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Koriya is believed to have hunted and shot the last three recorded Asiatic cheetahs in India in 1947. In 1952, the Indian Government declared the Cheetah extinct in the country.

The only large carnivore till date to have gone extinct in the country, due to a combination of hunting and loss of habitat, the plan to reintroduce the Cheetah in the country has been afoot for decades.

While plans to reintroduce the Cheetah to India have been afoot for decades, the current proposal was first floated in 2009. The plan was cleared by the Supreme Court in 2020. Of the six sites – Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve and Shergarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan and, Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kuno National Park, Madhav National Park and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh – which had been previously

assessed in 2010, were re-assessed by WII, out of which Kuno was found to be ready for the Cheetah relocation.

WII experts have said that over the coming decades, 35-40 Cheetahs are likely to be translocated to sites across the country, once the first batch of African Cheetahs are able to acclimatise to Indian conditions.

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State Food Safety list: Tamil Nadu tops big states, Goa smaller ones

This was the fourth State Food Safety Index award, which was started in 2018-19 with the aim of creating a competitive and positive change in India's food safety ecosystem. States that showed significant improvement were also felicitated.

By: [Express News Service](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:03 am



Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya (File)

Tamil Nadu topped the list among larger states, followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra, in the State Food Safety Index awards announced by Union

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday on the occasion of World Food Safety Day.

Among smaller states, Goa was the winner, followed by Manipur and Sikkim, while Jammu and Kashmir emerged top among Union Territories, followed by Delhi and Chandigarh.

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This was the fourth State Food Safety Index award, which was started in 2018-19 with the aim of creating a competitive and positive change in India's food safety ecosystem. States that showed significant improvement were also felicitated.

Mandaviya said, "I hope all states that received awards continue to work harder to improve food safety. The Prime Minister says nation and nutrition are deeply connected — if a country has to progress, it is very important that its citizens are healthy."

He said the government is working to ensure health security for all through initiatives such as health and wellness centres and strengthening of district hospitals under the national health mission.

To motivate smart cities to develop and execute a plan that supports a healthy, safe, and sustainable food environment through adoption of various Eat Right India initiatives, Mandaviya also felicitated 11 winning smart cities of the EatSmart Cities Challenge.

The minister also launched the AyurvedaAahar logo, which contains the initials of Ayurveda and Ahara, the first in Devanagri and the second in English, with five leaves symbolising five elements of nature. This logo will help in easy identification of ayurvedic foods.

The minister also released a guidance document on Food Borne Disease Outbreak Investigation and Microbiological Process Control, and Sampling and Testing of Fish and Fishery Products.

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Officers of 1983, '84 batches to vie for first IRMS top panel slots: Railways

As per the circular, officers from 1983 and '84 batches in the eight organised Group-A services (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Traffic, Accounts, Personnel, Signal and Stores) are eligible to apply.

Written by [Avishek G Dastidar](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:20:12 am



The seniority lists of the cadres show that the senior-most Traffic service offers are from batches 1986 onwards, and hence are not eligible to apply in this round. (Representational)

Days after notifying it, the Railways on Tuesday asked its senior officers to send applications on the panel of Indian Railway Management Service's Level 16, to be selected from suitable officers who are currently serving in Level 15.

As per the circular, officers from 1983 and '84 batches in the eight organised Group-A services (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Traffic, Accounts, Personnel, Signal and Stores) are eligible to apply.

Several officers from non-Engineering services, who are civil servants, such as Traffic, Accounts and Personnel, pointed out that going by this cut-off, senior-most officers from their services will not make the cut even though they are working in Level 15, as they are from batches of subsequent years.

The seniority lists of the cadres show that the senior-most Traffic service offers are from batches 1986 onwards, and hence are not eligible to apply in this round. Same is the case with Accounts and Personnel services. "What is the point of a merger of cadres when civil servants will not be eligible to apply at all," a senior civil servant asked.

Sources in the ministry told *The Indian Express* that the call for applications is not equal to final empanelment, and a second call for applications from subsequent batches will come "very soon". A senior official said: "The new system is yet to be established. This is just a call for applications so we can iron out the new process. We will call for applications from junior batches soon."

All batches will get a chance to apply to be empanelled, "as there is no age bar to applying and being empanelled in the new system", the official said.

Empaneled officers of Level 16 of IRMS will be the pool for the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet to pick suitable officers for posting in 29 posts of General Managers of zones, production units and others. The next level is seven posts of Level 17, which are Railway Board members and Chairman Railway Board. As per the new rule, anyone in Level 15 is eligible to apply to be empanelled for both Level 16 and 17. The current form is to make the panel for Level 16 posts.

The selection process for empanelment will have officers going through a process of self-assessment, multi-source assessment (peers, seniors, etc), along with annual confidential reports of the officers.

Theoretically, this new system takes away any advantage or disadvantage the age factor earlier had on posting to positions of General Manager and Board members.

Applying officers, for instance, will have to describe at least top five contributions to the organisation in their lifetime, and top five contributions that the officer will make in the top three positions that he or she is aspiring for in a given time-frame. They will also be marked on the basis of Emotional Quotient Intelligence. A Departmental Promotion Committee that will make an overall assessment of the officers for empanelment will consist of Secretary, DOP&T; Chairman & CEO, Railway Board, and one non-railway officer (like Secretary DPIIT, or Secretary MORTH, or CEO, NITI Aayog, etc.) to be nominated by the Railways Minister.

The committee will be aided by an expert panel comprising retired chairmen Railway Board, Board Members, GMs, additional members and principal departmental heads and retired secretaries to the Government of India.

Sources said Railways will keep names of the nominated members of the expert panel a secret to maintain strict confidentiality of the process.

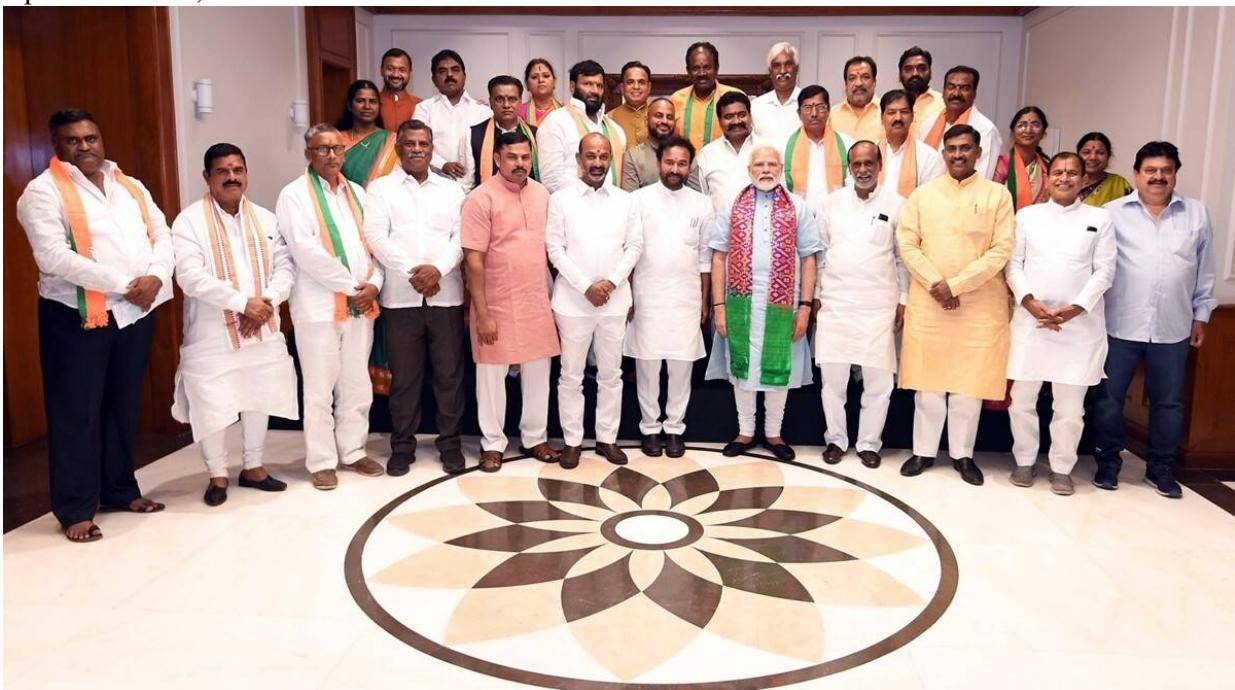
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PM meets Telangana BJP leaders, says will work to end dynastic misrule

The 76-member delegation included Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar, party functionaries and BJP corporators of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

By: [Express News Service](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:06 am



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar and other party leaders, in New Delhi. (Twitter @narendramodi)

BJP will work towards good governance and ending dynastic misrule in Telangana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Tuesday after meeting a delegation of party leaders from the state.

The 76-member delegation included G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region (DONER); Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar; the party functionaries and BJP corporators of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. They met Modi at his official residence. During the hour-long meeting, the BJP GHMC corporators introduced themselves and gave their suggestions, sources said.

One of the corporators brought up “politics of appeasement and dynasty” being adopted by the ruling TRS in Telangana. Another corporator raised the issue of lack of development in rural areas around Hyderabad, particularly the unavailability of digital classes, sources said.

Sources said the delegation included BJP’s 46 GHMC corporators including 27 women corporators. The PM asked corporators about their family and business, sources said, adding that the PM also shared his experience as Chief Minister of Gujarat.

While no official statement was issued about the meeting, sources said that the PM, during his recent visit to Hyderabad, had promised the corporators he would meet them in Delhi.

Met @BJP4Telangana corporators in GHMC and other Party leaders from Telangana. We had wide-ranging discussions on how to focus on community service endeavours and help people at the grassroots. BJP will work for good governance and ending dynastic misrule in Telangana. pic.twitter.com/y0Xt3sWz40

— Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) [June 7, 2022](#)

After the meeting, Modi tweeted that the BJP will work of “ending dynastic misrule in Telangana”.

“Met @BJP4Telangana corporators in GHMC and other Party leaders from Telangana. We had wide-ranging discussions on how to focus on community

service endeavours and help people at the grassroots. BJP will work for good governance and ending dynastic misrule in Telangana,” the PM tweeted.

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Environment Performance Index: India fails green test, finishes at bottom

With a paltry score of 18.9, India's 180th ranking comes after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar — the bottom five together make up the poorest performing countries for environmental health.

By: [Express News Service](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:41:38 am



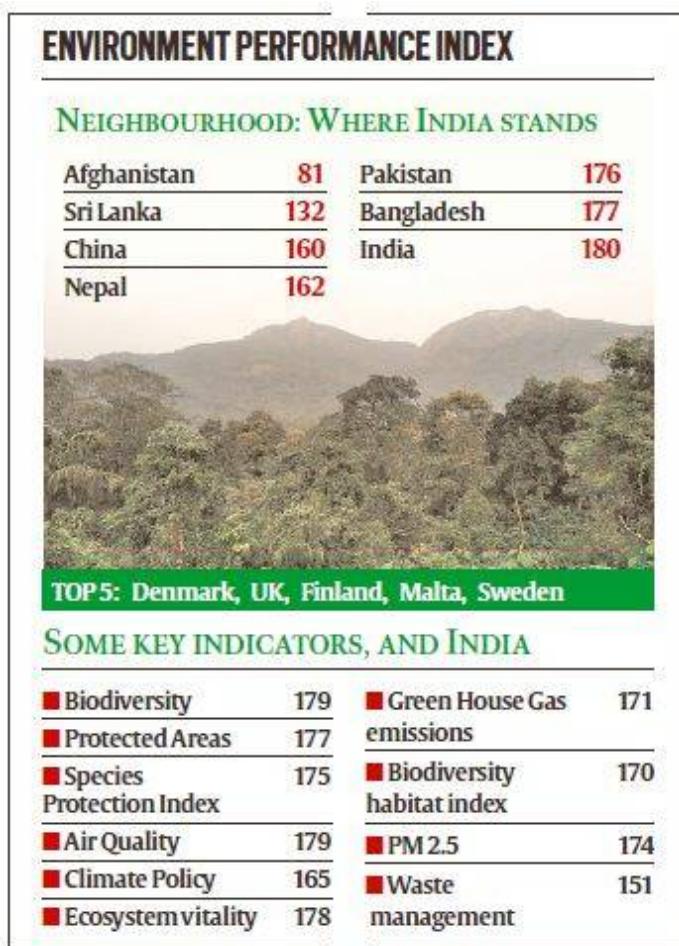
India was ranked 168th in EPI-2020, with a score of 27.6 In EPI-2020, Denmark has been ranked first in environmental health and sustainability.
(Image: Pixabay)

The recently released **Environment Performance Index**-2022, an international ranking system that measures environmental health and sustainability of countries, has ranked India last among 180 countries that have been ranked.

With a paltry score of 18.9, India's 180th ranking comes after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar — the bottom five together make up the poorest performing countries for environmental health.

India has also scored low on rule of law, control of corruption and government effectiveness, according to EPI.

India was ranked 168th in EPI-2020, with a score of 27.6. In EPI-2020, Denmark has been ranked first in environmental health and sustainability.



India was ranked 168th in EPI-2020, with a score of 27.6

The EPI, a biennial index, was started in 2002 as Environmental Sustainability Index by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network.

“Using 40 performance indicators across 11 issue categories, EPI ranks 180 countries on climate change performance, environmental health, and ecosystem vitality. These indicators provide a gauge at a national scale of how close countries are to established environmental policy targets,” says the EPI report.

Overall EPI rankings indicate which countries are best addressing environmental challenges , it states.

The report has found that “good policy results are associated with wealth (GDP per capita)”, meaning economic prosperity makes it possible for nations to invest in policies and programmes that lead to desirable outcomes. “This trend is especially true for issue categories under the umbrella of environmental health, as building the necessary infrastructure to provide clean drinking water and sanitation, reduce ambient air pollution, control hazardous waste, and respond to public health crises yields large returns for human well-being,” the report states.

The pursuit of economic prosperity — manifested in industrialisation and urbanisation — often means more pollution and other strains on ecosystem vitality, especially in the developing world, where air and water emissions remain significant, it says. The report says that top-performing countries have paid attention to all areas of sustainability, while their lagging peers tend to have uneven performance.

‘

“In general, high scorers exhibit long-standing policies and programs to protect public health, preserve natural resources, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. The data further suggest that countries making concerted efforts to decarbonize their electricity sectors have made the greatest gains in combating climate change, with associated benefits for ecosystems and human health,” says the report.

The report states: “A number of important countries in the Global South, including India and Nigeria, come out near the bottom of the rankings. Their low EPI scores indicate the need for greater attention to the spectrum of sustainability requirements, with a high-priority focus on critical issues such as air and water quality, biodiversity, and climate change. Some of the other laggards, including Nepal and Afghanistan, face broader challenges such as civil unrest, and their low scores can almost all be attributed to weak governance.”

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Kerala gold smuggling case| CM took bag full of money to UAE in 2016: Ex-consulate employee

Suresh, a former executive secretary at the Consulate, told the media that she had testified against Vijayan's wife Kamala, daughter Veena, Vijayan's former principal secretary M Sivasankar, Vijayan's chief principal secretary Nalini Netto, and former minister KT Jaleel over their involvement in gold smuggling. "I cannot reveal more," she said.

Written by [Shaju Philip](#) | Thiruvananthapuram |

Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:07 am



Sivasankar said such allegations had come up several times in the past; while Netto said she accompanied the CM to Dubai in 2016 in her official capacity as his chief principal secretary and was not aware of any other development. (File Photo)

Swapna Suresh, one of the accused in the gold smuggling through diplomatic baggage case that rocked the previous LDF regime, on Tuesday alleged that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had taken a bag full of currency to the UAE in 2016.

However, Vijayan, in a statement, trashed the allegation as “baseless”.

Suresh was talking to the media in Kochi after recording her statement under Section 164 of the CrPC in connection with a case pertaining to money laundering that came up during the probe into gold smuggling through diplomatic baggage in 2020 after the customs had seized 30kg gold.

Suresh, a former executive secretary at the Consulate, told the media that she had testified against Vijayan’s wife Kamala, daughter Veena, Vijayan’s former principal secretary M Sivasankar, Vijayan’s chief principal secretary Nalini Netto, and former minister KT Jaleel over their involvement in gold smuggling. “I cannot reveal more,” she said.

Referring to the alleged involvement of Vijayan in taking currency to the UAE, Suresh said, “Sivasankar had met me for the first time in 2016 when I was the executive secretary to the Consul General. Sivasankar told me that the CM had forgotten to carry a bag, which needed to be taken to Dubai. When the bag was brought to the Consulate (in Thiruvananthapuram), we scanned it and realised that it contained currency. I cannot reveal everything about my statement before the court,” she said.

Suresh said on several occasions, utensils used for cooking ‘[biryani](#)’ were sent to the Cliff House (the official residence of the CM) from the Consulate. “The transfer of utensils made of heavy metals from Consulate to the Cliff House had taken place many times. This had been done at the instance of Sivasankar,” she said.

Reacting to the allegation, Vijayan, in a statement, said there was no truth in the allegation. “When the gold smuggling case came out, the state government had urged the Centre to conduct a comprehensive probe. Due to political reasons, certain allegations have been repeatedly made against us. This is part of a certain agenda...I am sure Kerala society will give a befitting reply to those trying to harvest gains through baseless allegations,” he said.

Sivasankar said such allegations had come up several times in the past; while Netto said she accompanied the CM to Dubai in 2016 in her official capacity as his chief principal secretary and was not aware of any other development.

Meanwhile, Opposition leader V D Satheesan sought the resignation of Vijayan. “He has no right to continue as the CM. The probe into the smuggling case did not reach anywhere as part of a deal between the CPI(M) and the [BJP](#). In the wake of the revelations of Suresh, there should be a comprehensive court-monitored probe,” he said.

Earlier, another accused in the gold smuggling case P S Sarith, who also had served at the Consulate, alleged that Vijayan had taken a packet containing a bundle of currency to the UAE during one of his trips. Sarith said that after Vijayan had left for the UAE, Suresh called him and said the Consul General wanted him to collect a packet that the CM had forgotten to carry. Sarith said

he picked a packet from an employee of the General Administration Department at the Secretariat.

Kerala News

- 1Kerala gold smuggling case| CM took bag full of money to UAE in 2016: Ex-consulate employee
- 2Remarks against Prophet: No impact on NDA govt, good ties to continue with Gulf countries, says Piyush Goyal
- 3Kerala's Guruvayur temple re-auctions SUV after previous attempt ends in controversy

More from Kerala

Customs had quoted Sarith as saying that after the X-ray machine detected the currency in the packet, he conveyed this to Suresh. “As per her direction, I handed over the packet to Ahamed Al Doukhi, the Admin Attache at the Consulate, who was travelling to the UAE,” he had stated.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from
<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kerala/kerala-gold-smuggling-case-cm-took-bag-full-of-money-to-uae-in-2016-ex-consulate-employee-7957765/>

Commerce ministry completes winding up exercise of Tariff Commission in two months

On March 30, the cabinet had approved the proposal of the ministry to wind up the commission. It had directed the ministry to complete the winding up process by June 30.

By: [PTI](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 7, 2022 10:28:23 pm



According to an office memorandum of the Commerce and Industry Ministry, the winding up exercise has been completed on May 31.

The Commerce and Industry Ministry has completed the process of winding up of Tariff Commission, which had outlived its utility and was no longer

needed in the liberalised regime, within two months as against the cabinet mandate of three months.

On March 30, the cabinet approved the proposal of the ministry to wind up the commission. It had directed the ministry to complete the winding-up process by June 30.

According to an office memorandum of the Commerce and Industry Ministry, the winding up exercise has been completed on May 31.

An official said that the move is aimed at promoting ease of doing business.

The Tariff Commission dates back to pre-liberalisation era, when it was known as Tariff Board and was advising on measures to protect the domestic industry.

It was set up in 1951 with statutory powers by converting Tariff Board into this commission to suggest changes in duties of any goods, action in relation to dumping of goods and to undertake suo moto studies.

Immediately after the directions of the union cabinet, follow-up meeting of the officers concerned of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Tariff Commission (TC) was held and all the tasks that were required to be carried out for completion of winding up process were identified on April 12.

“Each task was given a target date in consultation with officers of TC and responsibility was assigned to officers in TC and DPIIT in respect of individual task. Review meetings were held at the level of minister (fortnightly); Secretary, DPIIT (weekly); Joint Secretary DPIIT (bi-weekly),” the official added.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/commerce-ministry-completes-winding-exercise-tariff-commission-two-months-7957675/>

Still suffering from Covid, Sonia seeks more time to appear before ED

The ED had summoned Gandhi to appear before it on June 8 in connection with a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper-AJL issue.

By: [PTI](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:09 am



Congress president Sonia Gandhi attends the conclusion event of Azadi Gaurav Yatra, in New Delhi. (PTI, file)

Congress president [Sonia Gandhi](#) has sought more time from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to appear before it as she is still **suffering**

from Covid, party sources said on Tuesday.

They said Gandhi, who tested positive on Thursday, is yet to recover and her latest report is not Covid-negative.

The **ED had summoned Gandhi to appear before it on June 8** in connection with a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper-AJL issue.

The ED had also summoned her son and former party chief **Rahul Gandhi** on June 13 for questioning in the case.

He was earlier asked by the agency to depose on June 2 but the Lok Sabha member from **Wayanad** constituency in Kerala sought a fresh date as he was out of country. The federal agency later asked Rahul Gandhi to appear on June 13 at its headquarters in central Delhi.

Congress leaders had earlier claimed that Sonia Gandhi is determined to appear before the ED provided she recovered from the virus.

The case pertains to the probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the party-promoted Young Indian that owns the National Herald newspaper. The paper is published by Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and owned by Young Indian Pvt Limited.

Officials said the agency wants to record the statements of Rahul and Sonia Gandhi under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The questioning of the senior Congress leaders and the Gandhis is part of the ED's investigation to understand the shareholding pattern, financial transactions and role of the promoters of Young Indian and AJL, officials had said.

The members of the first family of the Congress party, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, are among the promoters and shareholders of Young Indian.

The probe agency had registered a fresh case under the criminal provisions of the PMLA after a trial court here took cognizance of an Income Tax Department probe against Young Indian Pvt Ltd on the basis of a private criminal complaint filed by [BJP](#) MP Subramanian Swamy in 2013.

Swamy had accused Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others of conspiring to cheat and misappropriate funds with Young Indian Pvt Ltd paying only Rs 50 lakh to obtain the right to recover Rs 90.25 crore that Associate Journals Ltd owed to the Congress.

The ED summons triggered furious reactions from the Congress, which alleged that the “fake issue of AJL, (Associated Journals Limited) is an attempt by BJP’s propaganda machinery to deviate, divert and digress the attention of citizens from the multifarious vital issues of [inflation](#), falling GDP and social unrest, social divisiveness in this country”.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/covid-sonia-gandhi-enforcement-directorate-ed-money-laundering-case-7957668/>

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India won't accept any unilateral change in status quo: Jaishankar

“We have overcome the hesitations of history and will not allow anyone a veto on our choices,” he said. India has been engaged with China for the past two years over border row in Eastern Ladakh.

By: [Express News Service](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 7:47:29 am



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (PTI, file)

India's borders need safeguarding, it will never accept any attempt to “unilaterally change the status quo”, and a posture that “departs from established understanding” will evoke its own responses, External Affairs

Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday. He was addressing foreign diplomatic corps at a special event organised to celebrate eight years of the Modi government.

“We have overcome the hesitations of history and will not allow anyone a veto on our choices,” he said. India has been engaged with China for the past two years over border row in Eastern Ladakh.

Speaking of how self-reliance adds to making a stronger India, Jaishankar said that in the past, globalisation caused “lowered defences”. “In the past, mantras of globalisation lowered its defences and discouraged building of deeper strengths. That realisation is responsible for the commitment we now see to Atmanirbhar Bharat,” he said.

Jaishankar said that India shares the international community’s disappointment with the United Nations. “While our endeavours will always remain supportive, we also share the disappointment of the international community of the UN’s declining effectiveness,” he said.

Jaishankar also spoke of the triumph of diplomacy over terrorism as part of the foreign policy achievement. “Diplomacy has contributed to addressing that challenge by delegitimising it and by denying it support and sustenance to terrorism,” he said.

He said India is looking forward to joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group, overcoming the “political impediments” that are against global interest, seen as an indirect reference to China’s objection to New Delhi’s entry into the elite group of nations.

Speaking of India’s stance towards neighbours, Jaishankar said that India has a “generous, non-reciprocal approach to our immediate proximity”.

“Whether during Covid or current economic challenges, India has gone the extra mile for its neighbours and will continue to do so,” he said.

He said India has also articulated a “sharp awareness” of its extended neighbourhoods. “It is expressed in Act East policy...a Gulf engagement and a Central Asia initiative,” he said, adding “in each case, whether it is

leadership attention, diplomatic energies, practical projects, or shared activity, the record is one of higher commitment”.

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World Bank cuts India's economic growth forecast to 7.5 pc for FY23

In March, Fitch had cut India's growth forecast to 8.5 per cent, from 10.3 per cent, while IMF has lowered the projection to 8.2 per cent from 9 per cent.

By: [PTI](#) | Washington |
Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:12 am



This is the second time that the World Bank has revised its GDP growth forecast for India in the current fiscal 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023) (File photo)

The World Bank on Tuesday cut India's economic growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7.5 per cent as rising [inflation](#), supply chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions taper recovery.

This is the second time that the World Bank has revised its GDP growth forecast for India in the current fiscal 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023). In April, it had trimmed the forecast from 8.7 per cent to 8 per cent and now it is projected at 7.5 per cent.

The GDP growth compares to an 8.7 per cent expansion in the previous 2021-22 fiscal.

“In India, growth is forecast to edge down to 7.5 percent in the fiscal year 2022/23, with headwinds from rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical tensions offsetting buoyancy in the recovery of services consumption from the pandemic,” the World Bank said in its latest issue of the Global Economic Prospects.

Growth, it said, will also be supported by fixed investment undertaken by the private sector and by the government, which has introduced incentives and reforms to improve the business climate. This forecast reflects a 1.2 percentage point downward revision of growth from the January projection, the bank added.

“Growth is expected to slow further to 7.1 percent in 2023-24 back towards its longer-run potential,” it noted.

A rise in prices across all items from fuel to vegetables and cooking oil pushed [WPI](#) or wholesale price-based inflation to a record high of 15.08 per cent in April and retail inflation to a near eight-year high of 7.79 per cent.

High inflation prompted the Reserve Bank to hold an unscheduled meeting to raise the benchmark interest rate by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent last month and another hike is expected on Wednesday.

Prior to the World Bank’s action, global rating agencies too had slashed India’s economic growth forecast. Last month, Moody’s Investors Service trimmed the GDP projection to 8.8 per cent for the calendar year 2022 from 9.1 per cent earlier, citing high inflation.

S&P Global Ratings too had cut India’s growth projection for 2022-23 to 7.3 per cent, from 7.8 per cent earlier, on rising inflation and longer-than-expected Russia-[Ukraine](#) conflict.

In March, Fitch had cut India's growth forecast to 8.5 per cent, from 10.3 per cent, while IMF has lowered the projection to 8.2 per cent from 9 per cent. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has pegged India's growth at 7.5 per cent, while RBI in April cut the forecast to 7.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent amid volatile crude oil prices and supply chain disruptions due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

According to the World Bank report, growth in India slowed in the first half of 2022 as activity was disrupted both by a surge in [COVID-19](#) cases, accompanied by more-targeted mobility restrictions and by the war in Ukraine. The recovery is facing headwinds from rising inflation.

The unemployment rate has declined to levels seen prior to the pandemic, but the labour force participation rate remains below pre-pandemic levels and workers have shifted to lower-paying jobs.

In India, the focus of government spending has shifted toward infrastructure investment, labour regulations are being simplified, underperforming state-owned assets are being privatised, and the logistics sector is expected to be modernized and integrated, the bank said.

World Bank President David Malpas, in his foreword to the report, said after multiple crises, long-term prosperity will depend on returning to faster growth and a more stable, rules-based policy environment.

"There is good reason to expect that, once the war in Ukraine stops, efforts will redouble — including by the World Bank Group — to rebuild the Ukrainian economy and revive global growth." Global growth is expected to slow sharply from 5.7 per cent in 2021 to 2.9 per cent this year. "This also reflects a nearly one-third cut to our January 2022 forecast for this year of 4.1 per cent," he said.

"The surge in energy and food prices, along with the supply and trade disruptions triggered by the war in Ukraine and the necessary interest-rate normalization now underway, account for most of the downgrade," Malpass added.

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Your Daily Wrap: Raging row over remarks against Prophet; arrests in Moosewala murder case; and more

From ED seizing Rs 2.85 crore and 133 gold coins during its raids on the home of Delhi minister Satyendar Jain and his alleged associates, to the game of one-upmanship between the two ruling alliance partners in Bihar, here are the top stories of today.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) | New Delhi |
June 7, 2022 8:00:57 pm



(Clockwise) Delhi minister Satyendar Jain, now-suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma, Candlelight vigil for Sidhu Moosewala and

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar. (File)

- Amid the snowballing row over two [BJP](#) functionaries making remarks against Prophet Mohammed, the [**Mumbra Police Tuesday summoned now-suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma**](#) on June 22 to record her statement in the case.

Several FIRs were lodged against Sharma after her remarks during a TV show. She has also been suspended from the BJP's primary membership. Simultaneously, [**Delhi BJP expelled Naveen Kumar Jindal**](#), who headed the party's media unit in Delhi, for his inflammatory tweets about the Prophet.

The [**BJP's move**](#) came after the governments of many Muslim countries slammed the remarks made by its leaders.

- In the [**Sidhu Moosewala**](#) murder case, the [**Punjab Police Tuesday said they have arrested at least eight people**](#) for providing logistic support, conducting recce and harbouring the shooters who killed the Punjabi singer on May 29.

“Those arrested have been identified as [**Sandeep Singh**](#) alias Kekda of Sirsa, Haryana; Manpreet Singh alias Manna of Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda; Manpreet Bhau of Dhaipai, Faridkot; Saraj Mintu of village Dode Kalsia, Amritsar; Prabhdeep Sidhu alias Pabbi of Takhat-Mall, Haryana; Monu Dagar of village Rewli in Sonipat, Haryana; Pawan Bishnoi and Naseeb, both residents of Fatehabad, Haryana. The police have also identified four shooters involved in the crime,” added a spokesperson of the Punjab Police in a written statement.

- Any serving or retired Lt General, Air Marshal and Vice Admiral under the age of 62 years will be eligible for the post of Chief of Defence Staff, according to [**notifications brought out by the government**](#).

The officers can be considered for the top post along with serving chiefs of the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force, according to the amended rules which are aimed at widening the pool from which CDS can be appointed.

The post of Chief of Defence Staff has been lying vacant since the death of Gen [Bipin Rawat](#) in a helicopter crash on December 8.

- The Enforcement Directorate ([ED said Tuesday it had seized Rs 2.85 crore and 133 gold coins during its raids](#)) on the home of Delhi minister Satyendar Jain and his alleged associates as part of a money laundering probe against him.

Jain is in ED custody till June 9. The ED statement did not say whose premises the money and gold coins were recovered from.

Delhi Chief Minister [Arvind Kejriwal](#), who has stood behind Jain since the case was filed, tweeted on Tuesday afternoon: “The Prime Minister is harassing the [Aam Aadmi Party](#) – especially the governments of Delhi and Punjab. Lies upon lies are being propagated. You have all the agencies under your control, but God is with us.”

Political Pulse

- The game of one-upmanship, marked with posturings and counter-posturings, between the two ruling alliance partners in Bihar, the [Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal \(United\)](#) and its senior partner [Bharatiya Janata Party](#) (BJP), has continued unabated on various issues.

The latest instance of the JD(U) and the BJP being at odds with each other is over the population control policy.

Following Bihar BJP minister Neeraj Singh Bablu’s recent remark that there was “an urgent need of population control policy besides just having caste census”, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar disapproved of his idea, while adding that everyone was entitled to their own opinion. [Read on for more on what is brewing in Bihar](#).

- On Monday, as Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal led a massive road show in Mehsana in north Gujarat, he promised to “uproot” the BJP that has been in power in Gujarat for three decades. While largely sparing Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Kejriwal focused his attacks on BJP Gujarat president C R Paatil,

accusing him of running a dummy government. Kejriwal's attempt to show CM Patel as being remote-controlled by a 'more powerful' C R Paatil was not lost on many. [**Here is why Kejriwal went after Patil.**](#)

Express Explained

- The BJP recently axed two of its leaders for their remarks against Prophet Mohammed following outrage in the Gulf countries. India has enjoyed centuries of good relations with countries like Iran, while smaller gas-rich nation Qatar is one of India's closest allies in the region. India shares good relations with most of the countries in the Gulf. From energy needs, trade, and remittances from NRIs working there, [**here are the reasons why the Gulf matters to India.**](#)
- At an event to mark World Environment Day recently, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) spoke about India's consistent efforts to combat climate change. During his speech, he also mentioned India's efforts to create 'green jobs'. [**So what are these 'green jobs?'**](#)

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/row-over-remarks-against-prophet-arrests-in-moosewala-murder-case-7957528/>

EC to look at remote voting for migrant voters on pilot basis

The poll panel said a committee will be set up to examine issues of migrant voters; this committee will seek consultation from political parties as well.

Written by [Anisha Dutta](#) | New Delhi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:14 am



On November 12 last year, The Indian Express had reported that the EC plans to start mapping the population of migrant workers to prepare a road map to introduce remote voting. (PTI, file)

The Election Commission of India (EC) on Tuesday said it will start exploring possibilities of remote voting on a pilot basis.

The poll panel also said a committee will be set up to examine issues of migrant voters; this committee will seek consultation from political parties as well.

The EC has been thinking over the concept of remote voting over the last few years. On November 12 last year, [The Indian Express](#) had reported that the [**Election Commission plans to start mapping the population of migrant workers**](#) across the country to prepare a road map to introduce remote voting.

“Voters migrate from the place of their registration to cities and other places for education, employment and other purposes. It becomes difficult for them to return to their registered polling stations to cast their vote,” the EC said in a statement on Tuesday. “The Commission felt that time has come to explore possibilities of remote voting, maybe on a pilot basis.”

It stated that a committee will be set up to examine the issues of migrant voters. “Given the fact that voters and political parties are the primary stakeholders, the wider consultation with all stakeholders, including political parties, would be started thereafter,” the Commission stated.

In a meeting on Tuesday, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar was informed that “remote areas such as Dumak village had a 71.14% voter turnout and Kalgoth village recorded 80.45% voter turnout in recent elections,” the statement mentioned.

CEC Kumar had trekked nearly 18 km to some of Uttarakhand’s most remote polling booths in Chamoli district in the recent Assembly polls to assess challenges faced by election officials — he had visited both Dumak and Kalgoth, and interacted with both villagers and polling parties there.

Explained

What, why remote voting?

Remote voting refers to a mechanism that allows electors to vote from locations other than polling stations assigned to their registered constituencies — either within the country or even abroad — as the Election

Commission focusses on the importance of “inclusiveness” in polls. With lakhs of voters unable to exercise their franchise on account of geographical barrier due to different reasons, remote voting aims to bridge that gap.

In these remote villages, the EC stated, “female voters participated in equal numbers. It was further noted that in villages like Dumak and Kalgoth, about 20-25 % registered voters are unable to cast their vote in their constituencies as they are required to move out of their village/state broadly on account of their jobs or educational pursuits.”

“This situation opens up the opportunity to explore possibilities of (a) much awaited leap forward to facilitate remote voting by migrant voters,” the EC added.

In its statement, the poll panel noted that in contrast, during the 2019 General Election quite a few urban constituencies saw poor voter turnout of less than 50%.

“The Commission noted with concern the abysmally low voter turnout in some of the metropolitan/city areas despite the fact that polling stations are set up within 2 km for any voter in urban areas. The need to address voting apathy in urban areas was felt,” it said.

Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey also participated in Tuesday’s meeting.

The EC has been working with IIT-Madras on using Blockchain technology for remote voting. A technical advisory committee has also been formed, which is headed by IIT-Bhilai director Prof Rajat Moona, who is also the former director-general of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, and comprising experts from IIT-Delhi, IIT-Bombay, IIT-Madras and Election Commission officials.

This article was downloaded by **calibre** from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/ec-exploring-remote-voting-migrant-voters-pilot-basis-7957486/>

Remarks against Prophet: No impact on NDA govt, good ties to continue with Gulf countries, says Piyush Goyal

Amid demonstrations by Muslim groups and the sharp reaction from countries like Kuwait, Qatar and Iran, the BJP had issued a statement asserting it respects all religions and strongly denounces insults of any religious personality.

By: [PTI](#) | Kochi |

Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:19 am



When asked about a social media campaign to boycott Indian products in the wake of the row, Goyal said he has not heard of any such thing. (PTI/File)

Union Minister [Piyush Goyal](#) on Tuesday said the controversial remarks on Prophet Mohammad made by [ousted BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma](#), has not made any impact on the ruling NDA at the Centre as she was not a government functionary and asserted good relations will continue with the Gulf countries that have reacted sharply to the issue.

He said necessary action has been taken against Sharma, referring to her suspension.

The [BJP had on Sunday suspended Sharma](#) and expelled its Delhi unit media head Naveen Kumar Jindal as the row over their alleged derogatory remarks against Prophet Mohammad escalated with protests from some Muslim countries.

Amid demonstrations by Muslim groups and the sharp reaction from countries like Kuwait, Qatar and Iran, the [BJP had issued a statement asserting it respects all religions](#) and strongly denounces insults of any religious personality.

“I don’t think that this statement was made by any government functionary and therefore it has no impact on the government and necessary action has been taken by the party,” Goyal, Minister for Commerce and Industry told reporters when asked about the controversy.

He said the Foreign ministry has clarified on the issue.

“The Foreign office has come out with a clear clarification on that remark and the [BJP](#) has taken the necessary action in this regard. With all these countries, we have a very good relationship and our relations will continue to be very good,” he said.

When asked about a social media campaign to boycott Indian products in the wake of the row, the minister said he has not heard of any such thing.

“They (Gulf Countries) have only mentioned that such a statement should not be made and accordingly, action has been taken against the person who

made the comments. All the Indians living in gulf countries are safe and do not have to worry,” the union minister said.

Sharma’s comments, made during a TV debate nearly 10 days ago, and Jindal’s now-deleted tweets sparked a Twitter trend calling for a boycott of Indian products in some countries.

Kerala News

- 1Kerala gold smuggling case| CM took bag full of money to UAE in 2016: Ex-consulate employee
- 2Remarks against Prophet: No impact on NDA govt, good ties to continue with Gulf countries, says Piyush Goyal
- 3Kerala's Guruvayur temple re-auctions SUV after previous attempt ends in controversy

More from Kerala

After the action, Sharma unconditionally withdrew her controversial statement and claimed her comments were a reaction to the “continuous insult and disrespect towards our Mahadev (Lord Shiva)”.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kerala/remarks-against-prophet-no-impact-on-nda-govt-piyush-goyal-7957470/>

CDS selection pool widened: Rtd, serving 3-star officers too eligible

Announcement imminent; 3 chiefs who retired after September 2021 out of reckoning.

Written by [Krishn Kaushik](#) | New Delhi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 5:43:26 am



Former Chief of Defence Staff late General Bipin Rawat. (File)

Six months after [**General Bipin Rawat, India's first Chief of Defence Staff, died in a helicopter crash**](#), the government has amended service rules of the armed forces, making all serving and recently retired three-star officers — Lt General, Air Marshal and Vice Admiral — under the age of 62 eligible for the post of CDS, according to notifications brought out by the government.

The new rules mean that the recently retired chiefs of services will not be considered. The amendments also indicate that an announcement on the new CDS is imminent.

The CDS is the most senior uniformed officer in rank, the first among equals — the only four-star officers in the country are the CDS, the chiefs of the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.

But according to the new rules, all three-star and four-star officers from the three services, including those who retired in the last two years, will be eligible for consideration. The government, however, has put an age limit of 62 years. Since service chiefs retire at the age of 62, the three service chiefs who retired in quick succession since September 2021 are ruled out.

On Monday, the government amended the Army Rules, 1954; the Naval Ceremonial, Conditions of Service and Miscellaneous Regulations, 1963; and the Air Force Regulations, 1964 to add that the “Central Government may, if considered necessary, in public interest, so to do, appoint as Chief of Defence Staff, an officer” who is serving as Lieutenant General, Vice Admiral, Air Marshal or General, Admiral, Air Chief Marshal “or an officer who has retired” from these ranks, “but has not attained the age of sixty-two years on the date of his appointment.” It said the government may extend the service of the CDS for such a period as it may deem necessary subject to a maximum age of 65.

This means that all Lt Generals in the Army and equivalent officers in the Navy and Air Force, who retired after June 2020, are under consideration.

It also means that General MM Naravane, who retired as Army chief in April when he turned 62, will not be considered. Naravane was considered a frontrunner for the CDS ever since the post fell vacant in December. Admiral Karambir Singh, who retired as Navy chief in November 2021, and Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, who retired as IAF chief in September 2021, will also not be eligible for consideration.

Among the three service chiefs Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari is the most senior and is officiating as head of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

Admiral R Hari Kumar is the second most senior officer, and General Manoj Pande, who took over as Army chief in May, is third in seniority.

Explained

Can be tricky

The amended rules widen the pool from which the CDS can be appointed, making retired three-star officers eligible for the post. But this can be tricky given that the serving chiefs, who are four-star officers, will have to report to a retired three-star officer if he is named CDS.

Appointment of a serving or a retired three-star officer over the serving four-star officers can create some issues. Even for the service chiefs, usually the most senior officer of the service is appointed, but that is a convention, and not a rule, and there have been exceptions.

General Bipin Rawat, the first CDS, died in a helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu on December 8, 2021. Appointed on December 31, 2019, he was to have a three-year tenure until the end of this year.

It has been six months since Rawat's death, but the government is yet to announce a replacement. But the amendments to the service rules for the Army, Navy and Air Force now throws open the field of potential candidates because the government can look beyond the serving officers.

The mandate of the CDS, as the primary military advisor to the government, also includes creating jointness among the armed forces, creation of integrated theatre commands, and prioritising capital acquisition for the modernisation of the forces. It was created as a dual-hatted role, since the CDS was also appointed as Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs.

It was touted as one of the most significant reforms in the top echelons of the military, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the creation of the post of the CDS during his Independence Day speech in 2019.

The post has been vacant since December 2021, and some of the work has since slowed down, or stalled. Before his death, Rawat had commissioned

officers at the level of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (heading a command) in each of the services to come up with a report on what the possible integrated theatre commands could look like. These reports, due for submission earlier this year, are yet to be finalised.

Four to five integrated theatre commands have been envisioned: One for air defence, one maritime command for maritime defence, and either two land-based theatre commands, looking at the western border (Pakistan) and northern border (China), or an additional integrated command which includes the area under the Northern Army Command at the moment, looking at the borders with Pakistan and China in the UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

The integrated commands will have resources from all the three services available under them, depending on the requirement. The Theatre Commander will have operational control over all such resources, and will report to the Chiefs of Staff Committee headed by the CDS.

But there has also been discussion on possible changes in the role of the CDS. Splitting the responsibilities of Secretary, DMA, from the CDS has been considered, but a final decision is yet to be taken.

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Close shave for Lalu as fan in his room catches fire

Prasad arrived in Medininagar, the district headquarters of Palamu, on Monday to appear before a special court on Wednesday in connection with a 13-year-old case pertaining to the violation of the Model Code of Conduct during elections.

By: [PTI](#) | Jharkhand |
Updated: June 8, 2022 6:57:17 am



Lalu Prasad (Express archive)

RJD chief Lalu Prasad had a narrow escape on Tuesday morning as a fire that broke out in a room of the circuit house in Jharkhand's Palamu district where he was staying could be doused in time, officials said.

Prasad, 73, was having breakfast in his room around 8 am when the wall-mounted fan caught fire, they said.

The fire was immediately doused by his aides, they added.

“The fire was caused by a short circuit and electricity supply to the premises was snapped after the incident,” Deputy Commissioner of Palamu Shashiranjan told PTI.

No one has suffered any injury due to the incident and no significant damage has been reported, he said.

The short circuit has been rectified and the fan that caught fire was removed, he added.

Prasad arrived in Medininagar, the district headquarters of Palamu, on Monday to appear before a special court on Wednesday in connection with a 13-year-old case pertaining to the violation of the Model Code of Conduct during elections.

He is slated to appear in the court of special judge Satish Kumar Munda.

A case under IPC sections 188, 279, 290, 291 and 34, and section 127 of Representation of People’s Act was registered against the RJD chief in Garhwa district after his chopper had diverted and landed in a paddy field allegedly owing to the mistake of the pilot instead of the scheduled helipad in Medininagar during the 2009 assembly polls in Jharkhand.

Prasad’s counsel Prabhat Kumar said the case was later transferred to Ranchi and then to Medininagar.

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In Chhattisgarh, BJP, Cong spar over mining at Hasdeo Aranya forest

Chhattisgarh is an ATM for Cong, says BJP; Why doesn't BJP protest in front of central government, asks CM Baghel

Written by [Gargi Verma](#) | Ranchi |
Updated: June 8, 2022 1:53:40 am



Tribals in Hasdeo Aranya, a biodiversity-rich dense forest in Chhattisgarh, have been protesting against the mining inside the area for the past 97 days. (File)

Demanding the resignation of Chhattisgarh Panchayat and Health Minister T S Singh Deo, the opposition [BJP](#) in the state attacked the Congress on

Tuesday, saying that the ruling party did not care about the people of the state.

“Chhattisgarh is an ATM for the Congress. Party leaders are busy looking after other states,” BJP leader Brijmohan Agarwal said. Agarwal, along with BJP leader Kedar Kashyap, was addressing the media on the Hasdeo Aranya protests.

Tribals in Hasdeo Aranya, a biodiversity-rich dense forest in Chhattisgarh, have been protesting against the mining inside the area for the past 97 days.

Singh Deo had said on Monday that had it been in his control, he would not have let mining take place in the forests. “He is saying he will take a bullet for the cause. He should resign and join the protest,” Agarwal said.

While the Chhattisgarh government gave permission to clear the forest for the expansion of PEKB mines, the central government is also planning to make the Parsa coal mines inside the same forest operational.

The BJP leaders defended the role of the central government in granting mining licences. “The BJP met with the tribals...we heard people out. The state government is pushing everything on the central government, but what did they do? They should have put their foot down. State governments have rights too,” Agarwal said. “Chief minister Bhupesh Baghel likes to talk about Chhattisgarhia identity but he is not doing anything for the state. He is busy pleasing the party leadership.”

Meanwhile, In response to the opposition, chief minister Baghel said that protests should be held in Delhi. “If they feel so strongly about the issue, why don’t they protest in front of the central government? After all, they are the ones who allot mines.”

Baghel also commented on Singh Deo’s statement. “If Singh Deo doesn’t want trees to be cut, not even a branch will be hampered there. He is saying he will take a bullet, there will be no need. Goli chalane waale par goli chal jaayegi (The one who wields the gun will have to face the bullet),” Baghel said.

On Monday, Singh Deo had visited protesters in the affected villages inside Hasdeo Aranya forests and had extended his support to the protest.

State Congress chief Mohan Markam also responded to Singh Deo's statement. Speaking in [Bilaspur](#), Markam said, "As a public representative of the area, it is Singh Deo's duty to meet the people and take their voices of dissent to the government."

Last week, chief minister Baghel had remarked that those protesting against mining in Hasdeo Aranya should first stop using electricity.

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Gujarat: Mundra heroin haul to be destroyed today, Union finance minister to oversee process virtually

Of the 42,000 kg narcotics set to be incinerated, 2,990 kg or around three metric tonne is high grade heroin seized by the DRI at Mundra port run by the Adani Group in Kutch district last September.

By: [Express News Service](#) | Rajkot |

Updated: June 8, 2022 3:54:48 am



Nearly 2,990 kg heroin seized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) at Mundra port last September will be destroyed Wednesday, during

an operation overseen by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Centre said. (express archive photo/representational)

Nearly 2,990 kg heroin seized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) at Mundra port last September will be destroyed Wednesday, during an operation overseen by Union Finance Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#), the Centre said.

“The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) would be conducting a Drug Destruction Day tomorrow (08.06.2022) as apart of Iconic Week of “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav” (AKAM) celebrations of Ministry of Finance to mark the 75th year of Indian independence. A total of around 42000 kg narcotics would be destroyed at 14 locations across the country,” a release by the Press Information Bureau read.

Of the 42,000 kg narcotics set to be incinerated, 2,990 kg is high-grade heroin seized by the DRI at Mundra port, which is run by the Adani Group, in Kutch district last September. The consignment, the largest ever to be intercepted in India, was believed to be worth Rs 21,000 crore in market price, sources said.

The 14 locations where the narcotics will be destroyed include Mundra and Kandla ports in Kutch district as well as Ankleshwar in Bharuch district of Gujarat, Guwahati in Assam, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, Mumbai, Pune and Raigad in Maharashtra, Patna in Bihar, Siliguri in West Bengal, Tumkur in Karnataka, New Delhi, Hyderabad in Telangana, Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu, the release further said.

“The heroin consignment seized by the DRI from Adani’s Mundra port is part of the narcotics and psychotropic substances which will be incinerated on Wednesday,” an officer involved in the probe in the Mundra drug haul case told [indianexpress.com](#).

Sitharaman will virtually oversee the process of destroying the contraband, he added.

“The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman would be virtually witnessing the destruction process to be held

at Guwahati, Lucknow, Mumbai, Mundra/Kandla, Patna and Siliguri and would be addressing the officers,” the release said.

According to investigating agencies that probed the Mundra drug haul case, the contraband had come from Afghanistan and was shipped from Bandar Abbas port in Iran. In official documents, the cargo packed in two containers was declared to be semi-processed talc and talc stones. However, based on inputs, the DRI had intercepted the consignment at Mundra port and arrested a couple from Chennai, claiming the firm run by them had imported the cargo. Later on, a few more people were arrested in connection with the case even as the probe was eventually transferred to the National Investigating Agency (NIA). Accordingly, the case was transferred to a special NIA court in Ahmedabad from the NDPS Act court in Bhuj, Kutch.

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Inclusion is firm foundation underlying Indian constitutional architecture: Naidu

Naidu's remarks at a community reception in Doha, Qatar on Monday came against the backdrop of protests in India and condemnation by several Muslim countries of the controversial remarks of two BJP members against Prophet Mohammad.

By: [PTI](#) | New Delhi |
June 7, 2022 3:23:50 pm



Vice President Venkaiah Naidu addressed the members of Indian diaspora during a Community Reception in Doha, Qatar today.

(Twitter/VPSecretariat)

‘Inclusion’ is the firm foundation underlying the Indian constitutional architecture and it finds an echo in the philosophy of the Modi government which believes in “sabka sath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas and sabka prayas”, Vice President M [Venkaiah Naidu](#) has said.

His remarks at a community reception in Doha, Qatar on Monday came against the backdrop of protests in India and condemnation by several Muslim countries of the controversial remarks of two [BJP](#) members against Prophet Mohammad.

Qatar was the first country to officially take up the issue with New Delhi.

According to the text of his speech issued by the Vice President Secretariat, Naidu said, “Underlying our constitutional architecture is the firm foundation of ‘inclusion’, of leaving no one behind. It is the vision that finds an echo in the overarching philosophy of the present government, led by Prime Minister Modi that believes in “sabka sath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas and sabka prayas”(together with all, development for all, the trust of all and effort of all).

The vice president said the government cares for everyone, especially those marginalised and who need support.

“It is highlighted by the free distribution of food grains under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana to over 80 crore people to ensure that no poor household went to bed without (food) during the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, as well as the Ayushman Bharat that ensures healthcare by providing health insurance to over 50 crore people,” he said.

The 7.80 lakh strong Indian community in Qatar is a living bridge between the two countries, the vice president said.

“Some of you have stayed here for over 40 years. You would have noted how well India-Qatar ties have progressed since Prime Minister NarendraModi activated the Look West policy. He has taken a personal interest in actively engaging with the Qatari leadership,” he asserted.

Despite the challenges posed by the [coronavirus](#) pandemic, the two countries recorded the highest-ever bilateral trade of over USD 15 billion last year.

India, he pointed out, was Qatar's third-largest trading partner. Since March 2020, Qatar's foreign direct investment in India has increased five folds. Over 50 wholly-owned Indian companies in Qatar are in diverse fields such as infrastructure, information technology, and energy and the 15,000 jointly owned companies are adding momentum to the India-Qatar economic partnership.

"We are building a comprehensive energy partnership. Cooperation between India and Qatar is strengthening in defence, security, healthcare and education. Yesterday, we agreed to establish an Indian Chair at Qatar University and to pursue cooperation in the fields of sports and culture. We also launched a start-up bridge between India and Qatar to link the innovative ecosystems of the two countries," Naidu told the gathering.

India and Qatar will soon mark the 50th anniversary of establishing full diplomatic relations, he said.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/inclusion-foundation-underlying-indian-constitutional-architecture-venkaiah-naidu-7957124/>

Day after Arvind Kejriwal's Tiranga Yatra in Gujarat, police lodge complaint for 'insult of national flag'

According to the police, the FIR against unknown people was lodged after a local TV news channel broadcast images of national flags strewn on the roadside and people stepping on them.

By: [Express News Service](#) | Ahmedabad |

Updated: June 8, 2022 3:53:09 am



Delhi Chief Minister and AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal during the party's Tiranga Yatra cum roadshow, in Mehsana(PTI Photo)

A day after Delhi Chief Minister and [Aam Aadmi Party](#) (AAP) national convenor [Arvind Kejriwal](#) held a ‘Tiranga Yatra’ in Gujarat’s Mehsana city, the police Tuesday registered a case against unknown persons for allegedly insulting the national flag at the roadshow.

According to the police, an [FIR](#) has been lodged at the Mehsana A Division police station Tuesday against unknown persons under Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act at the behest of a complaint by police inspector B M Patel of the Mehsana A Division police station.

According to the police, the FIR was lodged after a local TV news channel broadcast images of flags strewn on the roadside and people stepping on them.

Monday afternoon, Kejriwal led a two-kilometre-long roadshow from an old bus stand in Mehsana where he was joined by thousands of AAP workers with national flags in their hands.

Patel in his complaint said, “Due police permission was sought for the scheduled roadshow of Arvind Kejriwal from the old bus stand in Mehsana. Around 3 pm, AAP workers were distributing national flags to other workers joining the roadshow at gate number 1 of the old bus stand. At that time, a local TV news channel had broadcast a news video on national flags being strewn on the road and people stepping on them. An FIR has been lodged against unknown persons in this regard.”

In another case, an FIR was lodged against four persons for allegedly assaulting the staff members of an event management company after they allegedly pasted banners against Kejriwal in Mehsana ahead of his visit.

According to the police, an FIR has been lodged at the Mehsana B Division police station against four accused — Ashish Patel, Mahadev, Darbar and Bhagat — under sections of rioting, especially IPC sections 323 and 324 for causing hurt and grievous hurt and section 504 for invoking breach of peace.

According to the police, the accused group had allegedly assaulted Pankaj Barot and Girish, employees of an event management company, who were

allegedly given the task of installing banners against Kejriwal.

“Around 12:30 am Monday, we were installing banners asking questions to Kejriwal at Modhera chokdi in Mehsana when four men arrived in two scooters and asked us why we were installing banners against Kejriwal. When we told them that we are asking questions to Kejriwal as citizens of Gujarat, the four men started assaulting us,” said Barot in his complaint.

Speaking to [The Indian Express](#), a senior police official in Mehsana said no arrests have been made in both the cases yet.

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Supreme Court agrees to consider plea seeking special stray round of counselling in NEET 2021

The petitioners in Supreme Court also sought a direction to the Medical Counselling Committee to provide the exact number of vacant seats after the conduct of the stray vacancy round of All-India Quota.

By: [PTI](#) | New Delhi |
June 7, 2022 12:50:10 pm



The matter will now be heard on June 8.

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider a plea by medical students seeking a special stray round of counselling to fill vacant postgraduate medical seats under the All-India Quota (AIQ) in the NEET 2021.

A vacation bench of Justices M R Shah and Aniruddha Bose asked the counsel appearing for the candidates to serve a copy of the petition to the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC), National Board of Examination, and the Centre.

“Let the advance copy of the petition be served on Ms. Aishwarya Bhati, Additional Solicitor General who may get instructions in the matter. The petitioner may serve one advance copy of the petition in the Central Agency also,” the bench said.

The matter will now be heard on June 8.

The petition filed by Astha Goel and others has sought a direction to MCC to conduct a special stray round of counselling to allow the candidates to participate for the vacant seats, available after the conduct of the stray vacancy round of AIQ.

The petitioners also sought a direction to MCC to provide the exact number of vacant seats after the conduct of the stray vacancy round of AIQ.

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Coronavirus India Updates: Active cases rise to 26,976; masks mandatory in Bengaluru again; Omicron BA, BA5 detected in TN

Active cases in the country increased to 26,976 and the death toll climbed to 5,24,708 with seven fresh fatalities.

By: [Express Web Desk](#) | New Delhi |

June 7, 2022 12:39:39 pm



A healthcare worker takes a swab sample from a man for Covid-19 testing, at a school in New Delhi, Saturday, April 30, 2022. (PTI)

India added 3,714 new [coronavirus](#) cases to its tally Monday, taking the total to 4,31,85,049, according to Union Health Ministry data. Active cases increased to 26,976, while the death toll climbed to 5,24,708 with seven fresh fatalities.

An increase of 1,194 cases has been recorded in the active [Covid-19](#) caseload in a span of 24 hours. The active cases comprise 0.06 per cent of the total infections.

The daily positivity rate is 1.21 per cent, while the weekly positivity rate is 0.97 per cent.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,26,33,365, taking the national recovery rate to 98.72 per cent, the ministry said.

The case fatality rate is recorded at 1.22 per cent.

Masks made compulsory in public places in Bengaluru again

With a significant rise in daily Covid cases in Bengaluru, the civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Monday stated that its marshals will once again enforce the mandatory wearing of masks in public places.

“The marshals will enforce the wearing of masks and also make people aware about it. Wearing masks is compulsory in places like malls and restaurants, railway stations etc. However, there will be no penalties for not wearing masks,” BBMP Special Commissioner (Solid Waste Management) Harish Kumar said.

“Adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour is compulsory. Daily testing will also be increased from 16,000 to 20,000. Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath has instructed zonal commissioners to submit a report on ILI (influenza-like illness) and SARI (severe acute respiratory infections) cases being reported in the hospitals,” Kumar added.

Mumbai: Hospitalisations low, but positivity rate exceeds pre-third wave figures

Even though the severity of Covid-19 cases remains mild and very few cases of hospitalisations are reported, the current test positivity rate (TPR) — the number of positive cases out of the total tests conducted — over the past week exceeds five times that of December 2021, when [Omicron](#) started proliferating in the third wave.

Over the last week, 54,164 tests were conducted in Mumbai and 4,732 people were identified with Covid-19 taking the TPR to 8.7 per cent. By comparison, in the period between December 21-27, 2021, which was the beginning of the third wave, 4,263 individuals tested positive out of the 2,45,538 tests conducted — registering a TPR of 1.7 per cent.

Public health experts believe that due to low testing, many infected patients might be going unreported. Some say since the TPR is high, if the tests were to increase, there could be a sharp rise in cases across the city.

Meanwhile, as the active Covid-19 count in Maharashtra stood at 7,429 on Monday, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope advised citizens to wear masks to avoid any possible contraction of infection. A day after recording 1,494 cases on Sunday, the daily caseload dropped to 1,036 on Monday. This has been attributed to the plunge in testing in the weekend from 25,994 to 15,988 in the last 48 hours.

Despite rising cases, schools in Maharashtra to reopen as scheduled with precautions

Even though the state is witnessing a rise in Covid-19 cases, there won't be any change in the plan of reopening schools after the summer break on June 13, Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said on Sunday.

The minister said a new set of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be issued to ensure all precautions are taken as students across all standards attend offline classes after a gap of two years. The SOPs will also decide whether the mask mandate should be brought back into the offline mode.

“The school education department has been cautious throughout the pandemic. Whenever schools have opened in the past at places with lower Covid cases, the required SOPs were put in place to ensure all precautions are taken. If required, a new set of SOPs will be declared in the future too,” said Gaikwad, adding that there is no decision on closing schools as yet despite the rise in fresh cases.

Cases of Omicron variants BA.4, BA.5 detected in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian on Sunday said that 12 people have been diagnosed with the BA.4 and BA.5 variants of Covid-19 strain Omicron in Tamil Nadu. While BA.4 was detected in four samples, BA.5 was detected in eight and all the 12 infected people are doing fine and being monitored, said the minister.

Delhi logs 247 new Covid cases

The national capital on Monday logged 247 fresh Covid-19 cases with a positivity rate of 3.47 per cent while no new death was reported due to the viral disease, according to data shared by the city health department. This is the highest positivity rate since May 12 when 3.47 per cent of those tested turned out positive.

With this, the national capital's COVID-19 case tally increased to 19,08,977, while the death toll stood at 26,212. Only 7,128 Covid-19 tests were conducted in Delhi the previous day, the department said in its latest bulletin.

Following a Delhi High court order, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) directed all district magistrates to conduct surprise checks and inspections of all labs collecting Covid samples and tests. The authority also ordered that samples should only be collected by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) accredited labs, and they should ensure that their own collector or entity is collecting samples.

China's exports, imports witness recovery as Shanghai emerges from lockdown

In global news, China's exports are expected to have expanded at a faster pace in May as factories reopened and supply chain disruptions calmed after Shanghai began to emerge from a lockdown. Imports also likely rose, a poll conducted by news agency *Reuters* showed.

Oil prices also rose on Tuesday due to an expected demand recovery in China as the world's second-biggest economy began relaxing tough Covid-19 curbs, and due to doubts that a higher output target by OPEC+ producers would ease tight supply.

Pfizer to spend \$120 mln to boost US Covid-19 pill manufacturing

Pfizer Inc said it would spend \$120 million to expand manufacturing of its Covid-19 antiviral treatment Paxlovid at its Michigan plant, as demand ramps up.

(With PTI inputs)

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