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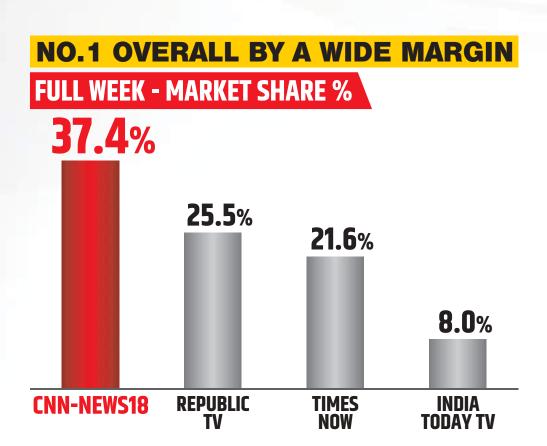
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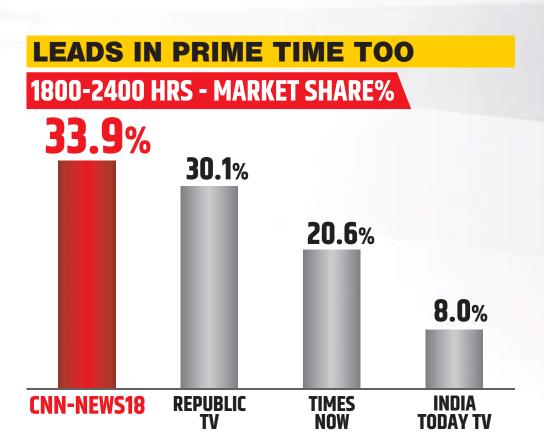
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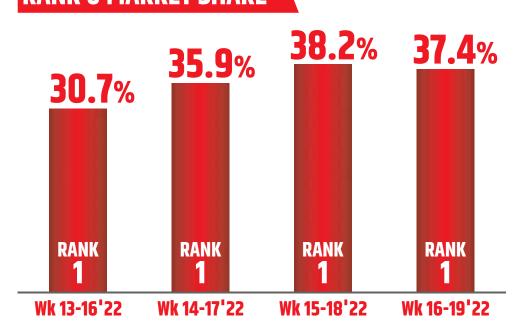
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ई निविदा सूचना

ई निविदा सूचना संख्या- 154/ए०सी०-3/08 दिनांक 21.05.2022 द्वारा टू बिड पद्यति ार निम्नलिखित शर्तो एवं प्रतिबन्धों के अन्तर्गत ई निविदा आमन्त्रित की जाती है। ई निविदा निर्माण खण्ड बुन्देलखण्ड—01 झॉसी, उ0प्र0 आवास एव विकास परिषद के खण्ड कार्यालय में उपस्थित निविदादाताओं अथवा उनके प्रतिनिधियों के समक्ष निर्धारित तिथि में खोली जायेगी। अन्य नियम व शर्ते परिषद वेबसाइट <u>www.upavp.in</u> एवं https://etender.up.nic.in की वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती हैं।

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E-tender Notice

Chhattisgarh Tourism Board invites tender for "Selection of Agency for Refurbishment and Operations of Properties on Lease Owned by Department of Tourism at Multiple Locations in Chhattisgarh" and 'Selection of Agency for Leasing of Properties Owned by Department of Tourism at Multiple Locations in Chhattisgarh''

Bid Publish Date Pre-Bid Meeting 06.06.2022 Time 14:00 Hrs. 23.06.2022 Time 15:00 Hrs

nterested bidders can download tender documents from the official website https:/eproc.cgstate.gov.in or www.chhattisgarhtourism.in. Any revision clarification, corrigendum; addendum etc. will be updated only on the above website and shall not be published in the newspaper.

> **Managing Director** Chhattisgarh Tourism Board

TENDER NOTICE

Duted 25" May, 2022 [Establishment of Common Facility Centre under SFLIRTI Scheme of Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India] Development Commissioner (Handictatts), Ministry of Textile, Govt of India)

Scales tenders are mated from **licensed registered civil engineers' contractors**. Joving minimum Three years experience in construction) for establishment of Common Facilities Centra at Wilage - Rampur Shahvanipur, Past - Rampur Kahn, Block - Small Causper, District - Baratamini, State - Uttler Prastein being bloitstated by HELP, Witage & Post - Caryara, Lucknow, Uttler Phadesh - 209028.
 Tender should be submitted in segarate envelops for Technical Eld and Financial Bid. Technical Bid must be submitted with cornest money of Rs 2,80,800 (NR Two Lash Only) orbid security declaration and can se deposited at the mentioned address up to 12° June, 2022. The Demand Craft of earned money or file. Security: Declaration, should, be in the name of HELP, Willage & Post - Geyala, Luchrow Utor Pradesh - 2000/ft, populate of Indian Bank, Lucknew Tendem monived will be opered before the Propurement Committee for the proposed Common Facilities Central on 12" June, 2002 at \$4.00 PM. Tender form camba obtained from HELP, Village & Post - Coyala , Lucknew, Utar Pradesh - 205005 on any working day between 23" May to 12" June, 2022 from 10,00 AM to 5.06 PM by payment of Ra. 500-. The details of works and Terms & Conditions are available with the Tender Form. HELP reserves all the rights to cancel any or all the Tenders without assigning any reason. Probid Meeting (online) as on: 31" May, 2022 at 83.08 pm

Sh. Harishyam, Secretary

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Wilage & Post - Goyala, Lucknow, Utar Pracest - 226026, Nob. 9566100252 Email ID : harishyam805@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER **RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BARIPADA** "e" Procurement Notice for PMGSY Works O-303 Identification No.- Online Tender- PMGSY N.C.B. No. 227 for 2021-22. Letter No. 1702/ Date: 20.05.2022

- . Total No. of works
- B. Estimated Cost

- . Eligible Class of Contractor
- . Other details Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E.R.W. Circle, Chief PMGSY 30.06.2022 27.05.2022 at 11.00 A.M. 6.06.2022 13.06.2022 17.06.2022 at 11.00 A.M

:- 01 No. (One)

:- As per annexure.

- As per annexure

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Principal

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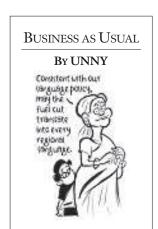


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'People told my

father that boxing

was a men's sport'

NIKHAT ZAREEN

PAGE 10

UMRAN MALIK EARNS

FIRST INDIA CALL-UP

FOR SOUTH AFRICA

SPORTS

T20 PAGE 13

PM IN TOKYO TODAY

Modi, Biden will discuss war in Ukraine and food security at Quad meeting

New Australia PM to be at Summit hosted by Japan's Kishida

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, MAY 22

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden will have a "constructive and straightforward" conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the "impact" of Russia's "brutal invasion of Ukraine", US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on Sunday, ahead of their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders'

Summit in Tokyo on May 24. Responding to questions on India's ban on wheat exports, Sullivan told reporters on Air Force One, the US President's aircraft, "Food security will be a topic of conversation at the Quad."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Navy info hub could play key role in Quad push to check China overfishing

SUBRAMANIAN CHENNAI, MAY 22

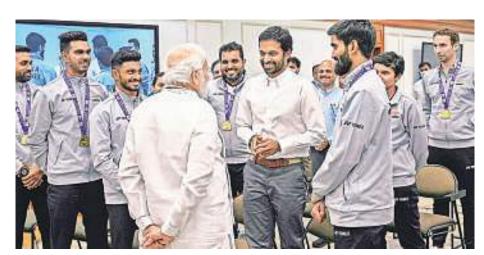
THE INDIAN Navy's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region(IFC-IOR) may play a key role in a Quad initiative against illegal fishing. Quoting a US official, the

Financial Times reported that the initiative, to be announced by

the four leaders of the Quad at the group's Tokyo Summit, will bring together existing surveil-

lance centres in Singapore, India, and the Pacific to create a tracking system for illegal unregulated and unreported fishing (IUUF) in the Indo-Pacific region.

Chinese trawler fleets are seen as responsible for most of the IUUF in the Indo-Pacific region, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



PM MEETS THOMAS CUP WINNERS

PM Narendra Modi with Indian badminton coach Pullela Gopichand and members of the contingent that won the Thomas Cup, during a felicitation event in New Delhi, Sunday, PTI

At RSS event, Yogi lists highlights: no Eid namaz on road, loudspeakers

Goa's Sawant wants temples rebuilt, Dhami calls for UCC

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY NEW DELHI. MAY 22

THE EID Namaz was not conducted on roads for the first time in UP, and "the volume of the mosque loudspeaker has gone down" following the state's reYogi Adityanath said on Sunday while referring to his government retaining power in the elections this year.

He was speaking at an event organised to celebrate 75 years of RSS-affiliated magazines Organiser and Panchianya.

Other BJP chief ministers also spoke at the event, with Goa's

Pramod Sawant calling for temples destroyed in the past to be rebuilt and Uttarakhand's Pushkar Singh Dhami reiterating that his state will form a "special committee" to implement Uniform Civil Code.

The chief ministers of Manipur (N Biren Singh), CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

relief to kin of those who died in farm stir; says 'fight on'

KCR hands out



The CMs of Punjab, Delhi and Telangana in Chandigarh on Sunday. Jasbir Malhi

KANCHAN VASDEV CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

TELANGANA CHIEF Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, one of three chief ministers who gathered in Chandigarh on Sunday to during the protest against the three now-repealed farm laws, said farmers have the power to change governments, and urged them to continue their agitation until they get the "right price" for their produce.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann were also at the event at which Rao, on **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

EXPRESS NETWORK

cent crackdown, Chief Minister



ASSAM: DAY AFTER POLICE STATION. TORCHED, HOMES OF **'CULPRITS' RAZED**

BJP'S ARJUN SINGH RETURNS TO TMC P8

BENGAL 'SSC SCAM'

Inquiry report shows how 5 officials booked by CBI 'committed fraud'

ATRIMITRA & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA KOLKATA, MAY 22

THE JUSTICE (retired) Ranjit Bag Committee that looked into an alleged scam in recruitment for Group C and Group D posts in the

School Education Department has recommended action against four West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) officials, former and current, and a senior education department officer for alleged criminal conspiracy. Based on the Committee's report,

Central

Investigation (CBI) on Saturday filed a fresh FIR against the five.

In its report to the Calcutta High Court (HC) on May 12, the Committee, which a Division **Bench of Calcutta High Court** Justices Harish Tandon and Rabindranath Samanta set up on **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

Remove harmonium from Golden Temple? Sikh music scholars strike differing notes

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR AMRITSAR, MAY 22

AKAL TAKHT Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh has asked the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) to phase out the harmonium within three years from Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) so that the *kir*tan, or singing of Gurbani, can be accompanied by traditional string instruments

But not everyone is on the

One group of scholars in



Most of the hymn groups perform on the harmonium. File

Gurmat Sangeet, the Sikh tradition that has parallels with Indian classical music, support

the move and say the harmonium was "imposed" by the British. Then there are those who

ask: the world can't go back in time, why should music?

Every day, 15 ragi jathas, or groups of hymn singers, are deployed in turns to perform at Harmandir Sahib for 20 hours in one of the mainly 31 raags that are chosen depending on the time of day and season. According to SGPC officials, only five of these groups have the experience and skills to perform without the harmonium, using only string instruments such as rabab and saranda. Most of the over 20 departments of Gurmat Sangeet in SGPC-runs colleges have started training in string instruments only recently.

The harmonium was an **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

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4

SIDDHARTHNAGAR

8 dead, 3 injured as SUV rams into truck



The mangled remains of the car after the accident, in Siddharthnagar, on Sunday. PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SIDDHARTHNAGAR, MAY 22

AN SUV carrying a marriage party rammed into a stationary truck here killing eight people and injuring three, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred around 1 am near Katya village in the Jogia Udaypur area. The SUV was returning to Mahla village from a wedding ceremony at Mahuwara in Shivnagar, they said.

Of the 11 people travelling in the car, four died on the spot and others were rushed to a hospital, where four more died during treatment.

Those killed have been identified as Sachin Pal (16), Mukesh Pal (35), Lalaram Paswan (26), Shiv Sagar (18), Ravi Paswan (19), Pintu Gupta (25), Ram Baran (35), and driver Gaurav Maurya (22), police said.

Ram Baran was admitted to the medical college in Gorakhpur where he died. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss

of lives in the accident and announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the kin of the deceased.

"The road accident in Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh, is very painful. My condolences are with the bereaved families. May God give them the strength to bear this immense sorrow," Modi was quoted as saying by his office.

The prime minister also wished a speedy recovery to all the injured. "The prime minister has announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each from PMNRF for the next of kin of those who lost their lives in an accident in Siddharthnagar, UP. The injured would be given Rs 50,000 each," the Prime Minister's Office said in a

tweet.
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also condoled the death and directed officials to ensure the best treatment for the injured.









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FROM PAGE ONE

Inquiry report

February 22, is learnt to have recommended criminal proceedings against former WBSSC chairpersons Professor Saumitra Sarkar and Ashok Kumar Saha; the organisation's former advisor, Dr Santi Prasad Sinha; programme officer Samarjit Acharya; and West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) president Dr Kalyanmoy Ganguly.

The Committee is said to have found out that a "lack of transparency in preparation and uploading of the panel (of candidates)" on the WBSSC website "and keeping the said panel a guarded secret from the chairpersons of the Regional Commissions" helped commit the alleged fraud in the recruitment process that began in 2016.

Sarkar, Saha (WBSSC Secretary at the time of the alleged offence), and Sinha allegedly recommended the names of unsuccessful candidates in Group C posts before and after the expiry of the panel on May 18, 2019, "in the garb of increase of marks of those candidates by way of re-evaluation of OMR (answer) sheets on the basis of their applications under RTI (Right to Information Act)". The answer sheets were allegedly destroyed after the manipulation of marks.

ter the manipulation of marks. The three allegedly compelled Acharya and another programme officer to fabricate WBSSC note sheets on May 14, 2019, and June 18 and June 20 "to give colour of increase of the marks of the candidates due to re-evaluation of OMR sheets on consideration of applications under RTI Act". In other words, the note sheets were falsified to provide a veneer of legality to the entire process even though it was "in violation of the provisions of School Service Commission Rules, 2009".

Sarkar and Sinha allegedly "collected vacancies" in an unauthorised manner — gathered information about vacancies that opened up after the recruitment exams were held — and recommended unsuccessful candidates for those

Using the names that the former WBSSC advisor supplied, Acharya is said to have prepared 381 recommendation letters for unsuccessful Group C candidates (almost 250 were not even on the merit list). In Group D, the rules were allegedly bent to favour 609 unsuccessful candidates.

"Acharya has candidly admitted that he has prepared more than 300 recommendation letters in favour of unsuccessful candidates in Group C posts and more than 500 recommendation letters in favour of unsuccessful Group D candidates under the instructions of Dr Santi Prasad Sinha by using the data from the server of the Central Commission and by using scanned signatures of the chairpersons of the Regional Commissions by keeping the chairpersons of the Regional Commissions in the dark and also by manipulating memo numbers of the Regional Commissions from the computer system of the Central Commission ..." said Bag Committee member

and HC advocate Arunava Banerjee. Sinha allegedly handed over a "bunch of fake recommendation letters" to WBBSE president Ganguly "on four to five occasions" after the "expiry of the panel". The Bag Committee report is learnt to have found that Ganguly issued instructions to a subordinate for the preparation of appointment letters based on these forged letters and bypassed the "normal chain of hierarchy" and did not send the recommendation letters to the Board's Appointment Section. Instead, the appointment letters were allegedly handed over to Ganguly himself or to the WBSSC officials who were part of the alleged scam at the Commission's new office in

Kolkata's Salt Lake area. "No explanation is forthcoming before us why Dr Kalyanmoy Ganguly did not follow the normal procedure of generation of appointment letters on the basis of recommendation of the School Service Commission and distribution of those appointment letters after notifying the names of the candidates in the website of the Central Commission for verification of testimonials and for collection of appointment letter on the notified date from the office of the Board or any other notified venue," the Committee report is learnt to

These actions, the Bag Committee reportedly said, indicate that Ganguly was "hand in glove" with Sinha "in making appointment letters on the basis of

fake recommendations".

The CBI, in keeping with the Committee's recommendations, has booked Sarkar, Saha, Sinha, and Ganguly under IPC Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy). It has also invoked IPC Sections 465 (forgery), 417 (cheating), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) against

Responding to the allegations against him, Saumitra Sarkar told *The Indian Express*, "I have not seen the Bag Committee report yet. We had to publish the panel after the expiry because of a court order. But I do not know how the names of new candidates came into the list."

Denying the allegations, Ganguly said, "The Board has no power to make recommendation letters. It basically works as a post office. We got the recommendation letters and as per the rules we distributed them. I do not know anything more than that."

While Sinha declined to speak to *The Indian Express*, Acharya and Saha could not be reached for comments.

Harmonium

invasion by the British. But then, it made inroads. We had met the Akal Takht Jathedar with a demand to revive string instruments. It is good that they are taking steps in this direction," said Bhai Balwant Singh Namdhari, who is a master in Gurmat Sangeet and string instruments.

Bhai Baldeep Singh, a direct descendent of Guru Nanak Dev's disciple Bhai Sadharan and renowned Gurmat Sangeet exponent, also wants the harmonium out.

wants the harmonium out.

"Guru Nanak Dev ji was the first kirtaniya (kirtan singer).... The harmonium was introduced as part of British interference in Sikh affairs. They had no idea about our heritage. Before the British came, every Gurudwara had a jagir (property) and part of the earnings from this would go to rababis and Sikh kirtaniyas. There were Muslim rababis, too, who used to play in gurdwaras. This system of supporting ragis and rababis collapsed after the British came," Baldeep Singh said.

Balwant Singh and Baldeep Singh feel the harmonium affects the quality of singing. "The harmonium covers up your limitations as a ragi. String instruments demand dedication and hard work," said Balwant Singh.

"There is no space for sympathy if someone feels bad about the harmonium being excluded. The Akal Takht Jathedar should call all scholars of string instruments if he wants to implement the edict in letter and spirit. A mission statement should be made," said Baldeep Singh.

Other experts believe the harmonium can co-exist with traditional instruments

"It is said the harmonium was played at Harmandir Sahib for the first time in 1901 or 1902. There are kirtani jathas that use both the harmonium and string instruments, and still come up with very good performances," says Punjabi University professor Dr Alankar Singh, who has specialised in Hindustani classical music and Gurmat Sangeet.

"It is true that the harmonium doesn't play slide notes like string instruments. The British have naturally affected our music. For example, the violin has become one of the main instruments in South Indian music. Sikhs believe that everything happens with the will of the Almighty. I would humbly request that instead of saying we will not play the harmonium, we should say we need to encourage the use of string instruments more." he said.

"The harmonium brought about a revolution in the field of kirtan. After we became slaves of the British, it was very difficult to learn to play string instruments for many reasons, including lack of teachers. The art of singing kirtan could have become extinct among the common Sikhs if the harmonium hadn't filled the space," he said

Surjit Singh, who heads the SGPC-run Giani Sohan Singh Sital Dhadi/Kavishri Gurmat Missionary College, which is an academy for Gurmat Sangeet, says "the words 'to phase out harmonium' do not fully convey the intention of the Akal Takht Jathedar, which is to revive string instruments"

vive string instruments".

"Do we need to shun the harmonium? There was only the rabab at the time of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Then came the saranda and taus. The harmonium and tabla came with changes in time. Now electric instruments have come,"

"Does reviving heritage mean that we should go back in time to when kirtan was performed only on rabab? Can we shun modern transportation because Guru Nanak Dev ji travelled on foot? There is a need to discuss whether the revival of string instruments means to phase out the harmonium."

RSS event

Himachal Pradesh (Jai Ram Thakur) and Haryana (MLKhattar) spoke mostly about various government schemes and development projects in their states.

Adityanath referred to the BJP retaining power in UP, and spoke about his government's achieve-

Modi, Biden to discuss war in Ukraine and food security at Quad meeting

The discussion on Ukraine between Biden and Modi "won't be a new conversation", Sullivan said. "It will be a continuation of the conversation they've already had about how we see the picture in Ukraine and the impacts of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine on a wider set of concerns in the world, including this food security concern."

The American NSA said the two leaders have already had the opportunity to engage on the issue of Ukraine, and Biden had an extended discussion with Modi at the virtual Quad Summit in March.

"And they also got to speak about it when they had a short video bilateral meeting at the top of the 2+2 when the Indian ministers came to Washington," he said.

"So, they'll talk all of that through. And I will leave the specifics of it to what has been a set of private and constructive exchanges, and I expect that this will similarly be constructive and straightforward," Sullivan said.

Modi, who left for Tokyo on Sunday night, said in a pre-departure statement, "I will hold a bilateral meeting with President Joseph Biden, where we will discuss further consolidation of our multifaceted bilateral relations with the US. We will also continue our dialogue on regional developments and contemporary global issues."

Asked about Washington's balancing act between economic cooperation and accountability on human rights issues, Sullivan said: "President Biden has been

clear from the beginning of this administration that we'll speak out when we see any form of departure from or deviation from basic principles, fundamental freedoms, human rights, the values of democratic institutions, and the rule of law. That's true for a range of countries. And, you know, we don't single India out."

He said the US had "found a way both to pursue practical cooperation with countries that are democratic and non-democratic, while at the same time being clear and consistent of where our values lie".

Sources said the Quad leaders — Prime Minister Modi, President Biden, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and the newly-elected Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese — are expected to launch a new maritime initiative aimed at curbing illegal fishing in the Indo-Pacific. This is aimed at countering China, which is responsible for an estimated 80 to 95 per cent of the illegal fishing in the region.

The planned initiative will use satellite technology to interlink maritime surveillance centres in Singapore, India, and other parts of the Indo-Pacific, and prevent Chinese vessels from fishing illegally in the region.

In his statement, Modi said, "In Japan, I will...participate in the second in-person Quad Leaders' Summit, which will provide an opportunity for the leaders of the four Quad countries to review the progress of Quad initiatives. We will also ex-

change views about developments in the Indo-Pacific region and global issues of mutual interest."

Prime Minister Albanese

would join the Quad Leaders' Summit for the first time, Modi said. "I look forward to a bilateral meeting with him during which the multifaceted cooperation between India and Australia under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and regional and global issues of mutual interest will be discussed."

With 71 per cent of the vote counted in Australia's federal elections until Sunday night, the Labour Party led by Albanese had won 72 seats, four short of majority in the 151-seat House of Representatives, the lower house of parliament, The Sydney Morning Herald reported on its website.

Albanese and his core team, including Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong, were scheduled to be sworn into office on Monday. Wong will accompany Albanese to Tokyo.

Modi recalled in his statement that he had hosted Japan's Prime Minister Kishida for the 14th India-Japan Annual Summit in March this year. "During my visit to Tokyo, I look forward to continuing our conversation further, with an aim to strengthen the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership."

Modi and Kishida are likely to meet on Tuesday, as per the current schedule. "Economic cooperation between India and Japan is an important aspect of our Special Strategic and Global Partnership," Modi said. During the March Summit, the two leaders had announced their "intention to realize JPY 5 trillion in public and private investment and financing over the next five years from Japan to India", he said.

Modi said he would also meet with Japanese business leaders "with the goal of further strengthening economic linkages between our countries".

A series of meetings with leaders of Japanese industry — including Nobuhiro Endo, chairman of IT and electronics company NEC Corporation, Tadashi Yanai, chairman/ president & CEO of the clothing brand UNIQLO, Osamu Suzuki, Adviser, Suzuki Motor Corporation, and Masayoshi Son, board director at Softbank Group Corp. — are lined up for Monday afternoon, followed by a roundtable with Japanese business leaders in the evening.

In between, the Prime Minister will attend the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework event hosted by President Biden, during which a wide-ranging trade agreement is expected to be launched, with separate modules for "fair and resilient trade, supply chain resilience, infrastructure and decarbonisation, and tax and anti-corruption".

Japan is home to nearly 40,000 members of the Indian diaspora, and Modi said he looked forward to interacting with their representatives. An interaction with the Indian community is scheduled for Monday evening.

ments, especially in law and order in the context of communal clashes occuring in some other states amid a string of religious festivals last month.

"In many states, there were riots after the elections were over. There were no riots in UP during or after the elections," he said.

"After the formation of the government, Ram Navami was celebrated with fervour. Hanuman Jayanti celebrations passed off peacefully. This is the same UP where small issues led to riots. Now, you must have seen for the first time that Eid namaz was not held on roads. Now, you must have heard that either the volume of the mosque loudspeaker has gone down or the loudspeaker has been removed completely. Now these loudspeakers are being donated to schools and hospitals for their use,"

More than 1 lakh loudspeakers have had their volumes turned down or been removed, he said.

down or been removed, he said.
Adityanath also spoke on the issue of stray cattle in the state and detailed the steps taken by his government. "You may remember that when our government came to power in the state, it shut down all illegal slaughterhouses. But there was an adverse consequence of this that we had to bear — of stray cattle roaming on the roads and in the fields." he said.

"Earlier, they were smuggled into illegal slaughterhouses. To meet this challenge, we set up over 5,600 shelters for stray cattle. We are also setting up a new model where we will make CNG from cow dung, which will be bought at Rs 1 per kg from people. We have taken all necessary steps to protect cows," he said.

ne said.
Adityanath spoke about how a "grand Ram temple" is being built in Ayodhya, the "splendour" with which the Kashi Vishwanath temple complex has been rejuvenated, and new life being injected into pilgrimage sites such as Mathura, Vrindavan and Chitrakoot.

According to the Chief Minister, UP has started moving towards becoming the No.2 economy in the country under a "double engine" government, with the BJP at the helm in the Centre too.

"In 70 years, UP has reached the sixth position among economies in the country. In the last 70 years, the per capita income of UP had remained one-fourth of the nation's. In the past five years, we have doubled it. In ease of doing business, UP has climbed up to No.2 spot in the country. And in ease of living, in 44 schemes, UP is No.1. The maximum infrastructure development is happening in UP and the state is now known as an expressway," he

said.
Goa Chief Minister Sawant said
his government has made a budgetary allocation for renovation of
temples destroyed by the
Portuguese.
"In the 450 years of Portuguese

rule, there was destruction of Hindu culture and many people

were converted. Temples of the

state were destroyed. We are going to rejuvenate all of them... I believe wherever there are temples in destroyed condition, they should be rebuilt," he said.

Sawant said that beyond

beaches, the Goa government was promoting cultural and spiritual tourism in the hinterland and coaxing people to go to temples. "In every village, there are a

couple of temples. We have to take people from the beach to the temple," he said. Sawant said Goa already has a Uniform Civil Code, and urged other states to implement it. "We have discussed the Goa UCC with

The Goa government is also working on restarting mining in the state, he said.

Uttarakhand's Dhami said that apart from moves to bring in the Uniform Civil Code, a special drive was on to identify infiltrators and

that the anti-conversion law will

be made "stronger".

other chief ministers also," he said.

"We have decided to form a committee on Uniform Civil Code. The committee will have legal experts and stakeholders. We will implement the draft that the committee submits... We will implement Uniform Civil Code for which we are making preparations and we want other states to follow suit," he said during an interaction with Hitesh Shankar, editor of Panchjanya.

Asked about "infiltrators" like "Rohingyas" or those having criminal records settling down in the state, Dhami said: "We have done surveys and a special drive by the police is also on to identify such elements"

(WITH AVISHEK G DASTIDAR)

Navy info

and the initiative is likely to be viewed as a Quad pressure point against China.

The US is also expected to launch a new economic and trade agreement called the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework that is also aimed at containing China's economic clout in the region.

The IFC-IOR was established in 2018 for regional collaboration on maritime security issues including "maritime terrorism", IUUF, piracy, armed robbery on the high seas, and human and contraband trafficking. The Gurgaon-based data fusion centre has information sharing links with 50 nations and multinational/maritime centres, according to its website.

The IFC-IOR "aims at strengthening maritime security in the region and beyond, by building a common coherent maritime situation picture and acting as a maritime security information hub for the region", according to the website.

The centre was established as

part of the government's SAGAR (Security and Growth For All in the Region) framework for maritime co-operation in the Indian Ocean region. It hosts international liaison officers from partner countries, which include both India's immediate neighbours in the Indian Ocean region and from further afield, including Australia, France, Japan, Singapore, the UK and the US. The two other data fusion cen-

tres likely to be involved in this ini-

tiative are the Singapore Navy's Information Fusion Centre, and the Australia-sponsored Pacific Fusion Centre, set up in 2019 in Port Vila in Vanuatu.

In recent years, IUUF has been seen as growing into a bigger threat to maritime states than interna-

tional piracy. Studies have said that

unregulated and underreported

fishing are bigger challenges than

illegal fishing, as they deplete stocks and deprive vulnerable regional economies of an important food source.

In a January 2021 paper, the American think tank Brookings called IUUF "a national security concern" that "may indeed become an increasingly important mission for the United States and its secu-

world, and most certainly those in the Indo-Pacific."

The paper ('National Security Imperative to Tackle IUUF', Michael Sinclair) argued that Chinese fishing practices presented "a truly

rity partners and allies around the

unique and dire" threat.

"First, China boasts the world's largest fishing fleet. It uses this fleet to devastating effect to meet its population's huge demand for protein. It also provides generous subsidies, which has incentivised the rapid proliferation of large, capable, "distant water" vessels that can harvest staggering amounts of catch in a single voyage, often by dragging the ocean bottom without regard to fish type, age, or quantity limits. When working together in fleets, these vessels are rapacious"

cious".

Ahead of the 2020 presidential election in the US, an article in the journal The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs said "the flagrancy and scale of IUU fishing tramples sovereign rights, undermines the rule of law, and robs coastal states of a valuable economic resource.

"In this age of global great power competition, IUU fishing should be seen as an international security threat and should be given appropriate priority by the next administration, irrespective of whether Donald Trump or Joe Biden occupies the Oval Office."

KCI

behalf of the Telangana government, handed out cheques of Rs 3 lakh to each of the families of the 712 farmers who lost their lives during the agitation against the farm laws. He also distributed Rs 10 lakh each to the families of the four soldiers from Punjab who died during clashes with Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in June, 2020.

Speaking at the event, Rao hailed farmers for the way they carried out their agitation.

"The way you launched the agitation and continued the fight till the end, and forced the Centre to withdraw the farm laws — I bow to

those farmers and their leaders. We cannot bring back those who were martyred. But we can say that the entire country empathises with

Urging farmers to continue the agitation, he said: "The farmers from the north, east, west and south should get together and fight for our rights. We grow food for the country. We should get justice. Agar kisan chahe toh satta palat sakta hai. Koi badi baat naĥi. (If farmers want, they can overthrow the government of the day. It is no big deal)... The agitation should continue till the farmers get the right price for their produce and a constitutional guarantee to it. We should vote for only those parties who give these guarantees... Governments from across the country who love farmers will get together and when you start your agitation, we will be with you. Kejriwal ji is fortunate that this (the protest against the farm laws) was happening at his (Delhi) border. He served the agitation. He tried to save the farmers. Now, we all will get associated with the agitation and fight till the Centre agrees to our demands. I urge the farmers to

come forward."
Kejriwal, who was on his first visit to Chandigarh since Mann's swearing in as Punjab Chief Minister, said the AAP government in the state would make a farmers' model in Punjab that would later be replicated across the country.

"That Chandrashekhar ji is here shows that the entire country is with you," Kejriwal said, addressing farmers. Regarding the protests at the Delhi border, he said, "It was not the andolan (movement) of a section of society, but the entire nation. It happened at the Delhi border. It was like a yajna (ritual) in which I also made an offering. Whatever we could do, we did. I remember when the farmers from Punjab and Haryana had started and were on their way, we got a file from the Centre that farmers are moving towards Delhi, and to arrest all of them, we would have had to convert Delhi's stadia into jails... But we refused the Centre, and said we would not clear this file... We stood with the farmers, we helped them in setting up toilets and providing water."

Earlier, Mann set the tone of the function, hailing the farmers for ensuring that the farm laws were repealed. In an emotional address, he

said, "When I used to raise the issue of suicide of Punjab farmers, then MPs of other states would surround me and ask me if farmers of a prosperous state like Punjab were also committing suicide. I told them that Punjab is no more the state it used to be — a happy state where the Punjabis danced to the tunes of bhangra. Successive governments had brought it to this situation. But we will restore its glorv."

The event, organised by the Punjab government at Tagore theatre in Chandigarh, was also attended by farmer leader Rakesh

Lucknow

UTTAR PRADESH

BUDGET SESSION FROM TODAY

Yogi says discuss issues in 'positive environment'; Opp for longer session

At the all-party meeting, CM, Speaker call for smooth functioning of House

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, MAY 22

STATING THAT the discussions should be held in a "positive environment", Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday assured the Opposition parties that the ruling BIP will extend its support to ensure "smooth functioning of the Assembly to strengthen

Speaking at the all-party meeting on the eve of the Budget session of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, the chief minister said: "The people of the state have shown great confidence and sent the members to the country's biggest Vidhan Sabha. I will repeatedly say that you are the 403 special people in whom the 25 crore people of the state have reposed their faith and you should contribute to changing the destiny of the 25 crore people (of the state)... The members should live up to the expectations of the people."

During the meeting, Speaker Satish Mahana also urged all the parties to extend their support for the smooth functioning of

Sources said that while assuring their support for smooth functioning of the House, some of the Opposition leaders pointed out the "short duration" of the Budget session and sought more time to be allocated for debates.

While SP chief and Leader of Opposition Akhilesh Yadav skipped the all-party meeting, the party was represented by MLA Indrajeet Saroj. Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhna Mishra, Umashankar Singh of the BSP, Raghuraj Pratap Singh of

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SBSP CHIEF Om Prakash

Raibhar on Sunday said his ally

Samajwadi Party president

Akhilesh Yadav has become

"too used to air-conditioned

rooms" and advised him to

venture out more often to

too used to air-conditioned

"Akhilesh Yadav has become

Jansatta Dal Loktantrik, and SBSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar at-

tended the meeting.

Speaking to The Indian Express after the all-party meet, Saroj said that on behalf of his party, he expressed the party's unhappiness with the short duration of the Budget session. "This government has been reelected. Yet it seems that it is running away from the questions and discussions with the Opposition... Howsoever, our party will corner the government at every chance," the SP MLA from Manjhanpur added.

Meanwhile, in a statement, the SP said the Budget Session should be at least 35-day-long. "In a session lasting five-six days, issues pertaining to the common man cannot be discussed. The Budget Session should be extended so that detailed discussions can be held." the SP said.

After the drubbing that the BSP and the Congress received during the polls in March, the SP has emerged as the principal opposition party in the 403-member House. Presently, the SP and its have 111 MLAs while the Congress and the BSP have just one member each in the House.

The Budget Session will commence on Monday with Governor Anandiben Patel addressing the members of the Legislative Assembly as well as the Legislative Council. The 2022-2023 Budget is likely to be tabled on Thursday.

As per the announced schedule till May 31, the House will also sit on May 27 (Saturday).

The 18th Legislative Assembly will also witness the use of the National E Vidhan application for the first time as a step towards

Akhilesh too accustomed to ACs, should step

out more often to meet people, says Rajbhar

rooms," the Suheldev Bharatiya

Samaj Party chief said, address-

Asked if his statemer

would not be taken otherwise

by Yadav or the SP, Rajbhar said,

"Why should it be taken other-

wise? Have I said anything

that I should advise him so that

he meets people, strengthens

his party and shun his 'navrat-

nas' (nine gems) who surround

"His leaders have told me

ing his party workers.

wrong? Truth is bitter.'



CM Yogi Adityanath with Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana and other ministers and Opposition leaders at the all-party meeting at Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow, on Sunday. PTI

Azam, his son & Shivpal skip SP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

FORMER UTTAR Pradesh chief

"Several MLAs couldn't make it today. One should not read too much into the absence of Azam sahab and Abdullah. And as far as Shivpal ji is concerned, he has a separate party and is an ally. He will be invited to a meeting con-

Azam, who was granted in-

Sitapur jail for the past two years.

Speaking to media persons in Rampur on Sunday, Azam Khan said that there was no reason for

"I am a man without any base, so where will the basis for resentment come from? I am a poor person now and live in a bylane. I am a poor person who lives in such a congested lane that not even a single fourwheeler could enter it," the senior SP leader said. On skipping the SP legislators' meet, Khan said, "The Vidhan Sabha is not a new place for me. I will be enter-

Speaking to The Indian Express, SP MLA from Katehri Lalji Verma said, "We were told that we must be present in the House to make the government accountable on people's issues. The most basic issues are unemployment and inflation, and they will be a part of our questions to the government.'

Verma said that SPMLAs will also raise questions about the promises made by the government before the elections. "We will ensure that the government can't run away from its manifesto... Issues like stray cattle have still not been resolved. Farmers are struggling while selling wheat. Electricity shortage is another issue," he said.

Another SP leader said that the party will ensure that the government answers questions about the promises it made to the people of the state.

-WITH PTI INPUTS

Varanasi district court judge to hear Gyanvapi suit today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE VARANASI, MAY 22

THE VARANASI district court of judge Ajaya Krishna Vishvesha on Monday will hear the civil suit on the Gyanvapi mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple complex dispute after the Supreme Court on Friday ordered the transfer of

the pending proceedings to the

District Judge, Varanasi, for "trial

and all interlocutory and ancil-

lary proceedings".

Underlining the "complexity of the issues involved in the civil suit" earlier pending before the Civil Judge (Senior Division), Varanasi, the Supreme Court on Friday had said that the suit "should be tried before a senior and experienced judicial officer of the Uttar Pradesh Higher

Judicial Service". Following the apex court's order, all documents and files related to the case, including the reports of advocate commissioners and case-related applications, were transferred from the office of the Civil Judge (Senior Division) to the office of the District Judge on Saturday. Both the offices are located in the same building.

"The hearing will begin in the court of the district judge on Monday... It is up to the district judge to decide at what point he starts the hearing. It would depend on the urgency and the importance of various issues," said

a well-placed source.

Earlier, Civil Judge (Senior Division), Ravi Kumar Diwakar had listed the matter for hearing on May 23. On April 8, while hearing a petition filed by five women seeking the right to worship at Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal on the outer wall of the mosque complex, Civil Judge (Senior Division), Varanasi, Ravi Kumar Diwakar, appointed Ajay Kumar Mishra Commissioner to carry out a video survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque complex, and directed

him to submit a report. While passing an order on an application filed by the Committee of Management of Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, Varanasi, which had accused Mishra of being "biased", the court on May 12 had appointed two more advocate commissioners — lawyers Vishal Singh and Ajay Pratap Singh — to assist him. Last week, the court removed Mishra as court commissioner. Singh and Mishra have

submitted their separate re-

ports of the survey.

BRIEFLY -

Lightning strike leaves 3 dead, 6 injured

Amroha: Three people were killed and six injured when lightning struck them in Kaneta village here, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday when some labourers were cutting trees, they said. SDM of Hasanpur Sudheer Kumar said the family of all the victims will be given Rs 4 lakh.

Villagers to be booked for 'killing leopard'

Bahraich: A leopard was allegedly killed by locals of Nabi Nagar village, following which the forest department decided to lodge an FIR against them, officials said on Sunday. According to Divisional Forest Officer Manish Singh, the female leopard was chased, its legs tied and pushed around with sticks on Friday.

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NOTICE

26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING (VC) / OTHER AUDIO VISUAL MEANS (OAVM)

Shareholders of the Bank may note that in pursuance of Circular issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in this regard, the 26th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bank will be held through VIDEO CONFERENCING (VC) / OTHER AUDIO VISUAL MEANS (OAVM) on Monday, 27th June, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. IST, to transact the businesses that will be set forth in the Notice of the Meeting.

In compliance with the above Circulars, electronic copies of the Notice of AGM and Annual Report 2021-22 will be sent to all the shareholders whose email addresses are registered with the Bank/Depository Participant(s). Shareholders holding shares in dematerialized mode and whose email ids are not registered, are requested to register their email addresses and mobile numbers with their relevant depositories through their depositary participants. Shareholders holding shares in physical mode are requested to demat their holdings / furnish their email addresses and mobile numbers with the Bank's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent KFin Technologies Limited, at einward.ris@kfintech.com. The notice of the 26th AGM and Annual Report 2021-22 will also be made available on the Bank's website, at www.bankofbaroda.in, the Stock Exchange websites and on the RTA's website, at https://evoting.kfintech.com

Shareholders will have an opportunity to cast their vote remotely on the business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM through electronic voting system. The manner of voting remotely for shareholders holding shares in dematerialized mode, physical mode and for shareholders who have not registered their email addresses will be provided in the Notice to the shareholders. The details will also be made available on the website of the Bank. Shareholders are requested to visit www.bankofbaroda.in to obtain such details.

Shareholders may please note that in terms of aforementioned circulars, the Bank will not be sending physical copies of AGM Notice and Annual Report to the Shareholders.

Place: Mumbai Date: 23.05.2022

For Bank of Baroda ≈ Sanjiv Chadha Managing Director & CEO 8

MLAs' meet chaired by Akhilesh

minister Akhilesh Yadav Sunday met Samajwadi Party MLAs in Lucknow to discuss the party's strategy for the upcoming budget session of the state Assembly. However, the meeting was skipped by Rampur MLA Azam Khan, his son and Suar MLA Abdullah Khan and, PSPL chief Shivpal Yadav who had contested the 2022 assembly polls from Jaswantnagar on an SP ticket.

A senior SP leader said, vened for MLAs of ally parties."

terim bail by the Supreme Court

him," the SBSP chief added.

Rajbhar also said Yadav's

party men allege that he was

prevented by his associates

from forming government in

SP snaps its ties with the SBSP

over his statement, Rajbhar

said, "I have formed the party

(SBSP) on my own, and work on

my strength. A person who re-

quires me will come to me auto-

matically."

Asked what will happen if

the 2022 assembly elections.

He was released on Friday.

him to be upset with the party.

ing it for the 10th time."

Meanwhile, at the legislators' meet, Akhilesh Yadav urged SP MLAs to ensure maximum attendance in the Assembly and pose tough questions to the government with a special focus on the promises made by the ruling BJP in the recently concluded

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MPSEZ UTILITIES LIMITED

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

MPSEZ Utilities Limited (MUL) hereby invites bids for procurement of power of 300 MW and additional upto 300 MW under Greenshoe option for the period 01.04.2023 to 31.03.2028 on Medium Term Basis through Tariff based Competitive Bidding Process as per Ministry of Power (MoP), Gol Guidelines dated 30.01.2019 for Procurement of Electricity from Thermal Power Station set up on Finance, Own and Operate (FOO) basis. Tender document (RfQ, RFP & PPA) and further details would be available at www.mstcecommerce.com and www.adaniports.com. The last date for Bid submission is 21.06.2022.

Man held for 'raping' woman on pretext of 'arranging job'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

meet people.

LUCKNOW, MAY 22

A 27-YEAR-OLD man was arrested in Moradabad for allegedly raping a woman on the pretext of arranging a job for her. The man, identified as Mohammad Aslam, hails from Sambhal and works as a labourer in Delhi. "On the basis of the allega-

tion made by the woman, we have arrested the man on charges of rape and criminal intimidation... While the woman's medical examination report is still awaited, we

recorded before a magistrate on Monday. The woman is a widow and mother of four children," the local SHO said. According to police, the

woman came in contact with the accused a year ago, and since then he had been visiting her house on a regular ba-Meanwhile, members of a

Hindu outfit staged a protest outside the police station, demanding action against the accused. The matter was resolved after senior police officers assured action in the matter.

The situation in the area is normal, said the SHO.

37 meat export unit staffers held for animal cruelty: cops

Aligarh: Thirty-seven employees of a leading meat export unit in Aligarh were arrested for alleged animal cruelty and violation of the Environment Quality Act, police said on Sunday.

The arrests were made on Saturday evening following a surprise check of the unit located. Those arrested have been booked under the Animal Cruelty Act and the Environment Quality Act, 1974,

according to a police statement. The Delhi-based owner of the Hind Agro industries plant and two top officers of the unit, who were not present at the site at the time of the raid, have been booked under IPC sections 273 (selling food or drink knowing the same to be noxious), 420 (forgery) and 120 B (conspiracy). Areport mentioning tech-

nical violations at the unit found by the team of officials has been sent to the authorities in Lucknow, police said. A large amount of the slaughtered flesh was allegedly found strewn on the floor and their samples have been sent to a laboratory in Lucknow for testing, they said.





आइए, हम सब यातायात नियमों का पालन करने का संकल्प लें।

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— J. PAUL GETTY

The Indian EXPRESS

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Ramnath Goenka

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

The new Labor government has signalled a commitment to the Ouad, relations with India

Change Down Under

BALANCE AND CHECK

In Gyanvapi-Kashi Vishwanath case, the apex court needs to say more to underline the primacy of the Constitution

DAY AFTER the Supreme Court allowed namaz to continue at the Gyanvapi mosque and ordered securing the site where the Shivling is claimed to have been found, it transferred the case from the senior civil judge to the district judge arguing that the issue needed a more "seasoned hand". Then the court suggested that the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 doesn't bar ascertaining its nature. This attempt by the court, ostensibly to "heal" and to balance competing claims in the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque dispute, raises questions.

Transferring the case to a senior judge, the court acknowledged "the complexity of the issues involved" in the case. This is reminiscent of the court's decision in the Ayodhya-Ramjanmabhoomi dispute where the civil suits were clubbed and transferred from lower courts directly to the Allahabad High Court. Short-circuiting due process is a slippery slope, especially in cases where "complexity" is as much about the law as it's about politics. Leading the three-judge bench, Justice DY Chandrachud remarked, in the form of a question to the parties, that the 1991 law may not bar "ascertaining" the nature of the place of worship even when it bars conversion of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947. Surely, the bench is aware that "ascertainment" in this case is not a mere intellectual inquiry, an academic expedition by diligent history students. The plea explicitly calls for access to worship — in Mathura, one even calls for demolition of the mosque — and, outside the courtroom, the lawsuits are framed by politics, faith, and a disdain of Constitutional norms. The court's remark also contradicts its own unanimous verdict, that included Justice Chandrachud, which drew the curtains on the Ayodhya case. The SC held that the 1991 Act is "a legislative instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution". It also emphasised that the law preserves non-retrogression, "a foundational feature of the fundamental constitutional principles of which secularism is a core component".

Just days ago, the Centre told the Supreme Court, in the sedition hearing, that the Prime Minister has repeatedly expressed his "unequivocal" views on "Constitutionally cherished freedoms", that he has underlined one of India's strengths as the "diverse thought streams that beautifully flourish". The petitions in Kashi and Mathura challenge this very strength. Their final goal is the conversion of the religious character of these places in the name of "correcting historical mistakes." The Supreme Court itself has said that independence from colonial rule furnishes a Constitutional basis for healing injustices of the past. The question is how will the Court put this idea into effect. It may need to do more, to say more, than the "balance" it has tried to strike so far.

WELCOME RELIEF

Fuel tax cuts will help ease price pressures, but inflation is likely to remain elevated

N SATURDAY, THE Union government announced a reduction in the excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 8 per litre and Rs 6 per litre respectively. Alongside, the government also reduced the customs duty on raw materials and intermediaries for plastic products and iron and steel. Undoubtedly, these decisions are driven by the desire to cool the surge in inflation – recent data showed that retail inflation had risen to an eight-year high of 7.9 per cent in April, while wholesale inflation has been in double digits for 13 consecutive months. But, implicit in these decisions is also the acknowledgement that both fiscal and monetary policies are needed at this juncture to curb inflation. As per some analysts the cut in fuel taxes could help reduce inflation directly by around 20 basis points in June when its full impact will be visible. The second-round effects are likely to be equally strong.

This is the second time in the recent past that the Centre has cut fuel taxes. In November last year, the Centre had lowered the excise duty on petrol by Rs 5 and by Rs 10 on diesel. Back then, 21 states and some Union Territories had followed suit, cutting the VAT. If state governments follow suit this time also, the relief could be higher. Prior to this cut, taxes imposed by the Centre and states accounted for almost 43 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol. But with the latest cut, the government has brought the excise duty back to pre-pandemic levels. As per the finance minister, the reduction in excise duty will lower the government's revenue by around Rs 1 lakh crore. However, it is possible that this loss in revenue is offset in part by higher collections through other sources. As per some analysts, the government's tax revenues will exceed budget estimates by around Rs 1.3 lakh crore, even after this cut.

While this decision will have a moderating influence on price pressures in the economy, the worry is that inflation has become entrenched. As per projections by analysts, inflation is likely to remain above the RBI's inflation targeting framework. To tackle this surge in inflation, analysts had, prior to this move, expected the monetary policy committee (MPC) to raise rates aggressively over the course of the next few meetings. The MPC, in its next meeting which is scheduled a few weeks from now, must not only release an updated forecast for inflation, but also shed some clarity on the extent of monetary tightening it envisages, and over what duration to bring inflation in line with its target.

Freeze Frame

E P Unny



Амітавн Маттоо

AS ANTHONY ALBANESE is sworn in as Australia's 31st Prime Minister, he will be conscious of the deep electoral angst against traditional politics and a groundswell in support for a contemporary avatar of Australia's own "Aam Aadmi" politics: The Teal independents, a motley group brought together primarily by the lack of mainstream urgency to act against climate change.

But the alacrity with which the PM has acted to ensure that he and his Foreign Minister Penny Wong attend the Quad summit in Tokyo on Tuesday, should reassure those concerned about the future direction of Canberra's foreign policy under a Labor government. At a moment of profound domestic churning, Australia's foreign policy is unlikely to swing, especially under the charge of the wise and incisive Wong. This holds true, particularly of the near-consensus in Canberra about the importance of India and of improving bilateral relations.

After nearly a decade in opposition, Labor has come back to government. But that victory disguises the rise of a new force in Australian politics, the Teal independents and the fall in support for the Coalition (Liberals and Nationals) and for Labor, with a marginal increase in the standing of the Greens. The Teal independents, mostly women, are not connected organisationally except through the Teal colour (a blue-green that they used in the campaign) and financial support from an advocacy group — Climate 200.

The Teal independents have won at least nine seats; most of them, the safest blue-chip Liberal seats. Consider this: Kew, where my family has lived for the last decade, is part of the Kooyong constituency and a bastion of the Liberal Party ever since Robert Menzies, Australia's longest-serving PM, occupied the seat in 1934. The incumbent, Josh Frydenberg, was the Treasurer in the Scott Morrison government and most saw him becoming PM one day. Frydenberg has been defeated by a rookie in politics, Monique Ryan one of the Teals. Ryan, a well-regarded doctor, ran an electrifying campaign with hundreds of volunteers who campaigned doorto-door on just three planks - action on climate change; transparency and integrity in politics; and safety for women.

Climate 200 was set up as a "community crowd-funded initiative" by Simon Holmes à Court, a political activist and clean energy investor (and son of Australia's first billionaire) that supported political candidates committed to a science-based response to the climate crisis; restoring integrity to politics, and advancing gender equity. The group backed 23 "Teal" candidates across the country, including the journalist Zoe Daniel in Goldstein and Allegra Spender in Wentworth, who defeated the Indian-origin Dave Sharma (a former diplomat who had served as Australia's Ambassador to Israel).

Climate 200 has a deep resonance with sections of conservative Liberal voters who are concerned about the end of a "lifestyle" because of climate change. As Australia's best-known novelist Richard Flanagan wrote last year: "Australia today is ground zero for the climate catastrophe. Its glorious Great Barrier Reef is dying, its world-heritage rain forests are burning, its giant kelp forests have largely vanished, numerous towns have run out of water or are about to, and now the vast continent is burning on a scale never before seen.

Not surprisingly Climate 200 managed to raise over \$10 million, amidst concerns about the degree of control it would have over the Teals and suggestions of a conflict of interest with Holmes à Court's clean energy business.

When Albanese arrives in Tokyo to meet with other leaders of the Quad, much will be expected of him. The leaders will seek reassurance that Australia is still as committed to the Quad as the previous Liberal government. For the Australian PM, this will be a moment to demonstrate that he is different from his predecessor, but equally committed to the multilateral arrangement and to the bilateral relations that have been fostered over the last decade, including with India.

To be sure, Albanese is not Scott Morrison. Morrison was flamboyant, with a background in marketing. He had headed Tourism Australia and presided over perhaps the most controversial campaign video ever launched to promote Australia tourism: "So, where the bloody hell are you?"

In contrast, Albanese has a low-profile presence and a workman-like attitude and is given to a considered rather than a brilliant spontaneous response on most issues. Remember that Albanese was a child of deprivation rather than privilege. He was brought up by a single mother who suffered dreadfully because of rheumatoid arthritis while living in council housing in Sydney. Success did not come easily to him, but whether in the party or the government, he was seen as a coalition builder having the skills and patience to generate a consensus.

Although he has roots in the left-wing of the Labor Party (in his youth he identified with the struggles of the African National Congress against apartheid and the campaigns for nuclear disarmament — both have a resonance in India) he is a pragmatic leader who understands that Australia faces today a deeply volatile situation in the region and beyond.

One of the most animated moments in the electoral campaign was when Morrison suggested that Albanese was soft on China. Albanese responded by describing the PM's words as an outrageous slur. This was after he had questioned the government on its failures over not doing enough to prevent the Solomon Islands from signing a controversial security deal with China.

Albanese is fortunate to have the brilliant and charismatic Wong as his Foreign Minister. Wong, who has been part of the Australia India Leadership Dialogue which I chaired in the past, genuinely believes in the importance of Australia's partnership with India and has often referred to the fact that it was under the Labor Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, that the policies to reach out to India were first initiated (including overturning the ban on uranium exports to India).

One of the tired cliches about Australia is drawn from Donald Horne's book The Lucky Country, which suggested that Australia was a lucky country run by second rate leaders. In contrast, by all evidence, the Albanese cabinet is one gifted with outstanding leaders, and hopefully luck will continue to be on its side.

> The writer is professor at JNU& honorary professor at the University of Melbourne

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AN EXCEPTIONAL JUSTICE

Perarivalan's release highlights the gaps, callousness in India's criminal justice system

ANUP SURENDRANATH AND ADRIJA GHOSH

THE SUPREME COURT'S May 18 order releasing A G Perarivalan, one of the convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, is the culmination of a long-drawn-out battle for freedom spanning over 31 years. Perarivalan's agonising wait may have ended, but his struggle serves as a grim reminder of the several failures of our criminal justice system.

The fact that it took over 31 years for Perarivalan's release despite strong concerns of wrongful prosecution and wrongful conviction ought to worry us. Perarivalan's case forces us to reckon with the tyrannical legacy of terror laws and the broader crisis that plagues criminal justice administration. The case against Perarivalan, charged under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) and the Indian Penal Code (IPC), was that he had participated in the conspiracy to assassinate former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by supplying batteries for the belt bomb allegedly used for the assassination, with the knowledge that the batteries would be put to said use. The main evidence against him was a confession made to this effect to CBI officer, V Thiagarajan. Such confessions to the police, ordinarily inadmissible under the Indian Evidence Act, were admissible under the TADA

In 2017, 18 years after the Supreme Court upheld Perarivalan's conviction under IPC provisions, using the confession recorded under TADA (despite the TADA charges having been dropped). Thiagaraian submitted a sworn affidavit before the SC stating that he had omitted the exculpatory part of Perarivalan's statement, denying knowledge of the use to which

olent reality of our criminal justice system that statements and evidence are manipulated to secure convictions. It also demonstrates the dangers of conferring extraordinary police powers under the garb of national security legislation. Again, in 2017, Justice KTThomas, one of the three SC judges who had upheld Perarivalan's conviction, acknowledged "serious flaws" in the CBI investigation.

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For nearly half of his 31 years in prison. Perarivalan lived under the sentence of death. The SC confirmed the death sentence imposed by the TADA Court in ignorance of the Bachan Singh framework, which requires circumstances relating to both the crime and the criminal to be considered. Justice KT Thomas later expressed doubts as to whether such severe punishment would have been imposed, had it not been such a high-profile case. Nevertheless, in what must be seen as a triumph of the human spirit. Perarivalan's educational attainments in prison are extraordinary. Life in prison, especially on death row, is one of despair; a reality that we can barely begin to imagine.

Perarivalan's death sentence was finally commuted to life imprisonment by the SC in 2014, after almost 16 years on death row, on grounds of an extraordinary and unexplainable delay of 11 years, after which his mercy plea was rejected by the President. In 2015, Perarivalan filed a mercy petition before the Tamil Nadu governor under Article 161 of the Constitution, seeking pardon. For years, there was sustained back and forth between the state government in Tamil Nadu and the Centre

on which one of them had the authority to decide Perarivalan's release. In 2018, the council of ministers of the Tamil Nadu government recommended to the governor that Perarivalan be released in the exercise of constitutional powers of clemency; advice that the governor was constitutionally obligated to follow. Despite this, the governor took no decision on the mercy petition and finally in 2021, forwarded the same to the President for his decision under Article 72. Holding that this was done without constitutional backing, the SC invoked its extraordinary powers under Article 142, releasing Perarivalan and deeming his sentence as having been served.

The manner in which Perarivalan and his mother Arputhammal ensured that their fight stayed alive for over three decades demonstrates the enormous effort required to correct an injustice in our system. Their efforts ensured that the case received national attention, that Perarivalan's cause was backed by political parties in Tamil Nadu with strong support from the bar, civil society, and retired judges - all of these aspects are stories of exceptions rather than the norm. Perarivalan might have rightfully won his freedom back, but the same fate does not await others like him.

The passage of time has allowed us to look at the questions of injustice in this case in a far more meaningful way. It now is a question of whether we as a society have the courage to acknowledge what was inflicted in our name.

> The writers are with Project 39A at National Law University, Delhi

May 23, 1982, Forty Years Ago



BAHUGUNA SURE TO WIN H N BAHUGUNA, chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party romped home in the elections to Garhwal Lok Sabha seat defeating his Congress (I)-rival Chandra Mohan Singh, minister of state for hill development, in one of the prestigious byelections. According to provisional figures available at the state headquarters, Bahuguna led his Congress (I) rival by over 20,000 votes. Postal results are yet to be counted and the results are likely to be declared in a day. Bahuguna was elected from the Congress (I) in a victory with a big mar-

honeymoon with the Congress (I) came to an abrupt end on the eve of the elections to the assembly elections to the Garhwal assembly constituency. Bahuguna's men won from all the constituencies making him desert the Congress (I) and seek re-

Reverses for Cong (I) THE CONGRESS (I) has failed to secure a majority in Haryana and is facing a similar predicament in Himachal, the Left Front has romped home with a two-thirds majority in West Bengal. With the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress (I) bagging 28 and 29 seats respectively in the 65-member

Himachal Assembly, the poll in this hilly state, as also in Haryana, is in a stalemate. In Himachal much will depend on the six independents, four of whom are ex-Congress (I) members.

BRITISH FRIGATE SUNK

A BRITISH FRIGATE was sunk in Argentine air raids on the British task force landing troops on the Falkland Islands. Twenty crewmen were missing and feared dead and 40 were injured aboard the frigate MMS Ardent. The 3,300 tonne frigate was the second warship lost by Britain in the seven old crisis caused by Argentina's occupation of the South Atlantic colony.

Lucknow

THE OBSERVER

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022

THE IDEAS PAGE

The carbon footprint cost

Rice and sugar are water guzzlers. Serious thought must be given to making our exports sustainable



BY RITIKA JUNEJA AND ASHOK GULATI

IN THE FISCAL year 2021-22 (FY22), agri-exports scaled an all-time high of \$50.3 billion, registering a growth of 20 per cent over the preceding year. This was made possible largely by rising global commodity prices, but also by the favourable and aggressive export policy of the Ministry of Commerce and its various export promotion agencies like APEDA, MPEDA, and commodity boards. However, from a strategic point of view, an important question that arises is how sustainable is this growth in agri-exports, given India's resource endowments and the country's domestic needs? Already, we have seen a sudden ban on wheat exports. To answer this question rationally, let us first look at the composition of agri-exports

Among the several agri-commodities exported in FY22, rice ranks first with exports of \$9.6 billion in value (with 21.2 million metric tonnes (MMT) in quantity). It is followed by marine products worth \$7.7 billion (1.4 MMT), sugar worth \$4.6 billion (10.4 MMT), spices worth \$3.9 billion (1.4 MMT) and bovine (buffalo) meat worth \$3.3 billion (1.18 MMT) (see figure). Of these, two commodities, rice and sugar, are water guzzlers and serious thought should be given to their global competitiveness and environmental sustainability.

Let's take the case of rice first. India's exports of 21 MMT constituted 41 per cent of a global rice market of 51.3 MMT. Interestingly, when most of the other commodity prices were surging in global markets, the price of rice (Thailand supplies 25 per cent) collapsed by about 13 per cent from \$484/tonne in April 2021 to \$429/tonne in April 2022, largely due to India's massive exports. This means that India had to export a greater quantity of rice to get the same amount of dollars. Is this in the country's economic interest? In trade theory, it is a classic case for levying the optimal export tax of 5 to 10 per cent. India should optimally not go beyond 12 to 15 MMT of rice exports, else the marginal revenue from exports will keep falling. And that won't be in India's interest.

Another concern in the case of rice is that a substantial part of its global competitiveness comes from highly subsidised water, power and fertilisers that go into its production. It is well known that one kg of rice requires about 3,000 to 5,000 litres of water for irrigation, depending on the topography. Taking an average of about 4,000 litres of water per kg of rice, and assuming that half of this percolates into groundwater, exporting 21MMT of rice would mean the virtual export of 42 billion cubic meters (m3) of water!

Sugar is another water guzzler, whose exports touched 10.4 MMT in FY22. It was backed partly by subsidies (including export subsidy) that crossed the 10 per cent limit mandated by the World Trade Organisation, bringing India into a dispute with other sugar exporting countries at the WTO. India lost the case. But rising global prices of sugar



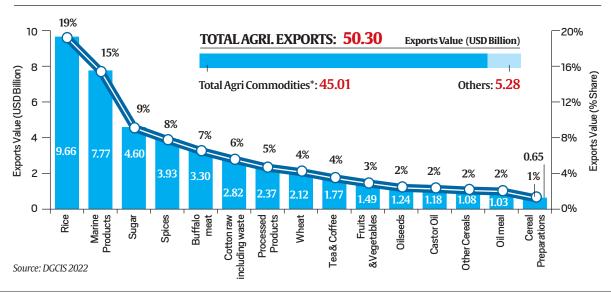


Illustration: C R Sasikumar; Graphics: Ritesh Kumar

helped the country at that juncture.

However, from a sustainability point of view, we must note that exporting one kg of sugar amounts to roughly exporting 2,000 litres of virtual water. That means in FY22, India exported at least 20 billion m3 of water through sugar exports.

So, by exporting 21 MMT of rice and 10

MMT of sugar in FY22, India exported at least 62 billion cubic meters of virtual water. Much of this water is extracted from groundwater - as is being done in much of the Punjab and Haryana belt (for rice), where the water table is receding by 9.2 metres and 7 metres over the last two decades (2000-19), and in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh for sugar. This can lead to a water disaster. Also, remember that rice production systems are among the most important sources of anthropogenic methane emissions, contributing to 17.5 per cent of GHG emissions generated from agriculture (2021). This is all because of the distortionary policies of free power and highly-subsidised fertilisers, especially urea. In the case of common rice, our earlier research shows that power and fertiliser subsidies account for roughly 12 to 15 per cent of the value of rice in states like Punjab and Haryana. The best way to tackle this upcoming environmental disaster would be to support farmers smartly, by giving them aggregate input subsidy support on a per hectare basis and freeing up the input prices of fertilisers and power to be determined by market forces and their costs of production.

Innovative farming practices such as alternate wetting drying (AWD), direct seeded

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rice (DSR) that can save up to 25-30 per cent water and micro-irrigation that can save up to 50 per cent irrigation water, could be game-changing technologies in reducing the crop's carbon footprint. However, the real solution lies in incentivising the farmers to switch some of the area under rice and sugar cultivation to other, less water-guzzling crops. Haryana has come up with two schemes, Mera Pani, Meri Virasat and Kheti Khaali, Fir Bhi Khushali. Under the first scheme, Rs 7,000/acre incentive is given to farmers to switch from paddy to alternate crops, while under the second scheme farmers get Rs 7,000/acre even if they do not grow any crop during the kharif season.

A closer evaluation of non-basmati rice exports brings out another interesting fact. The unit value of these exports was just \$354/tonne, which is below the MSP of rice (\$390/tonne). How does that happen? One possibility is that a substantial part of the supplies through the PDS and PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) are leaking out and swelling rice exports. From a policy angle, it may be high time to introduce the option of direct cash transfers in lieu of almost free grains under the PDS and PMGKAY. This will help plug leakages as well as save costs. The savings can then be used for better diversification of our food systems, better use of scarce water and other practices that lower GHG emissions, and saving on burgeoning food and fertiliser subsidies. Can the Modi government make agri-exports more sustainable? Only time will tell.

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A civilisational question in Gyanvapi

"While its collapsing economy is as much a product of its corrupt politics as of global economic trends, Sri Lanka is also a worrying bellwether for the instability elsewhere that may be triggered by declining economic security in countries

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

Top-down secularism can't be saved by mocking Hindu beliefs, demonising Hindus and ridiculing their concerns and aspirations



with high levels of poverty."

ABHINAV PRAKASH SINGH

NANDI'S ETERNAL WAIT at Gyanvapi is symbolic of the sorrow, perseverance and hope of a civilisation. The hope is not only for the restoration of deities to their rightful places and the rebirth of temples but also for an end to the denialism and delusion that has plagued the Indian polity for too long. Kashi is an open and shut case like Mathura and many other places. There is no real controversy over the fact that these mosques were built after the destruction of the temples by medieval Islamic warlords. The only "controversy" is the manufactured political rhetoric, academic obfuscation and chicanery joined by Islamist religious supremacism. The Islamist claim over Hindu sites occupied by force and violence is untenable, unethical, and, like in the case of Ayodhya, illegal.

But Islamist supremacism and aggression are being provided intellectual cover by the usual suspects on the left and liberal spectrum. This has been a trend since the 1920s. The Kashi case is portrayed as a conflict between religious obstructionism and modernity, and appeals are being made to reject the past to build an enlightened secular future. This argument is both conceptually and theoretically flawed. First, it's about truth and justice and not modernity or obstructionism. Second, it assumes that there is some standard model of modernity or universal values like secularism, and the only task is to impose them forcefully. Third, it assumes that the past is dead, and a cut-off date of August 15, 1947, can decide between the old and new.

It is a liberal delusion that past, present and future are disjointed. But the past continues to shape the present and future. And no society can be detached from its past and unique trajectory. Ignoring the complex social formations and inter-community relations that evolved over centuries can only lead to disasters, as demonstrated repeatedly across the world. And Hindus and Muslims share a tumultuous past that has never been openly acknowledged. There has never been an honest Hindu-Muslim dialogue despite them not agreeing on the big questions of the day as a political community. No amount of academic jugglery and intervention can alter the ground realities.

The obsessive appeals to secularism have no legitimacy when it is always deployed in the service of the Islamic cause and is never used to challenge the Islamist agenda.

Secularism is also an uncomfortable fit outside Western Europe and America, whose unique experiences gave birth to it. There is growing evidence of the crisis of secularism across the world. It is not the fault of those societies or people not being secular enough. It is due to unrealistic expectations from societies whose historical experiences, evolution in tellectual traditions are in dissonance with secularism. India has no word for secularism in any classical language because the concept or idea never existed. India managed its unparalleled diversity and pluralism using its own framework.

Secularism comes under great stress when dealing with the presence of two Abrahamic religions in a polity. And it becomes a harbinger of discord and conflict when other non-Abrahamic religions are also present because it privileges expansionist Abrahamic religions over others. The doctrine of the "basic structure" is itself a violation of the basic structure of the constitution because the Constitution envisioned no such arbitrary doctrine or gave effective veto power to an unelected judiciary.

The appeal to the Place of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 may still have some legitimacy if not for the violent antifarm laws protests and open rioting to oppose CAA supported by those now appealing to the sanctity of the legislation passed by Parliament. The 1991 Act is draconian. It was passed without any consultation with or regard for the affected communities, bars judicial review, mandates an arbitrary retrospective cut-off date, and closes the constitutional and legal route to justice for an entire community.

Then there is the argument to protect the post-1947 social and political compact with its socialist-secular core. Such nostalgic arguments mistakenly assume that the old system is worth saving, that it had popular legitimacy and that it can be saved. It produced only misery and regular riots. It could neither produce economic growth, social upliftment or cultural rejuvenation. It was always a topdown imposition by an ultra-minority of urban elites and collapsed as democratic deepening accelerated after the '80s. It can't be saved, not least due to the utter incompetence of its champions, busy mocking Hindu beliefs, demonising Hindus and ridiculing their concerns and civilisational aspirations. They are trying to do to Shiva what they did to Rama and Ayodhya for decades. They clearly do not understand Shaivism or the undercurrents and faultlines at work.

The way forward is to accept the burden of the past and restore the Hindu sites — the only ethical thing to do. A grand bargain, something which should have been done in Ayodhya in the 1980s itself.

The writer is National Vice-President, BIYM

It's about criminalising dissent

Doing away with sedition without touching UAPA will not bring much change

RAJSHREE CHANDRA

SINCE 2010, INDIANS have spent nearly 3 million hours in prison on charges of sedition. An accused is most likely to spend up to 50 days in prison until a trial court grants bail and up to 200 days until a high court does so. The exhaustive database of *Article* 14 (corroborated by the NCRB data) reveals that more than 13,000 Indians are trapped in a black hole since 2010.

It is time, therefore, that the sedition law (IPC, Section 124 A) is consigned to the bin. However, as we wait with bated expectation after the Supreme Court order (to keep the 152-year old sedition law in abeyance), and after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's willingness to reconsider the colonial law in the spirit of *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav*, a cautionary check is in order.

There are reasons to be sceptical. Not too long back, the BJP had attacked the Congress for its 2019 election promise to do away with dark laws like the AFSPA and sedition. Calling the Congress manifesto a "document of Pakistan's conspiracies", PM Modi accused the Congress of hatching a conspiracy to destabilise the country and "demoralise" its soldiers. One could, of course, argue that election speeches are not reliable indicators of intent. But the zeal of the ruling regime in criminalising dissent is a matter of record. The Article 14 archive reveals that 2,862 citizens were charged with sedition during the anti-CAA protests; 133 farmers (and representatives)

during the farm protests of 2021; 42 persons after the Pulwama attack, and 59 journalists for reportage on the farm bills, Covid-19, Hathras gang rape, citizenship and for being critical of the government were charged with sedition in the last seven years. There has been a 28 per cent increase in the number of sedition cases filed each year after 2014.

tion cases filed each year after 2014.

It is this track record that makes one suspicious of the government's intent. But perhaps there's a change of heart, a change of tack. Sceptic reasoning ought to make as much room for doubt as for a promise. In either case, my argument is that any move to remove sedition is imperative, but by itself, it's only a half-measure and a half-hearted measure. As long as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) is untouched, dissent will continue to be criminalised. The government will claim moral victory but nothing really will change in substance. Here are two reasons why.

First, the sedition law under Section 124 A is a part of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) where along with penal provisions, there are safeguards and constitutional remedies. Bail is easier, there is provision for anticipatory bail, police have to file a charge sheet within 90 days, failing which the accused arrested is entitled to bail, and so on. These safeguards are not available to those charged under UAPA. As an anti-terror law, it has more stringent provisions and far fewer safeguards. For instance, UAPA permits detention without a charge

sheet for upto 180 days, creates a presumption of guilt, places the burden of proof on the accused and creates a strong presumption against bail.

against Dali.

In April, a single-judge bench of the Allahabad High Court granted bail to three Kashmiri students accused of shouting pro-Pakistan slogans in a T-20 cricket match. Justice Ajay Bhanot remarked eloquently: "The unity of India is not made of bamboo reeds which will bend to the passing winds of empty slogans...the foundations of our nation are more enduring." In contrast, especially after the SC's Watali judgment (2019), bail has become a virtual impossibility for the UAPA accused. The numerous bail rejections for the Bhima Koregaon and Delhi riots accused is a case in point.

Second, let's just look at the conviction rate of the sedition law. Arrests under sedition law may have risen but the conviction rate is as low as 2.25 per cent. Of the 399 cases that were registered between 2014-20, just nine were convicted. The ministry of home affairs data further reveals that of the cases registered, charge sheets were filed only in 169 cases. This tells us that the sedition law is not a very effective tool for incarceration.

The UAPA is a better bet. The conviction rate is higher. NCRB data reveals that between 2014-2020, 27.5 per cent of the cases saw convictions. But what is more damning is that very few cases even reach the stage where inno-

cence or guilt is proven. In the seven-year period, of the 6,900 cases, only 4.5 percent of the cases sent for trial reached the stage of completion. And we are not yet talking of cases that languish in protracted pre-trial and trial period. 95.4 per cent cases were still pending trial at the end of each year between 2014-2020.

Many of those charged under sedition are also slapped with charges under the UAPA — Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Tahir Hussain, Khalid Saifi, Siddique Kappan to name a few. For all the attention the sedition law has received, it is the UAPA that does the heavy lifting.

It is expected that after the SC interim order, those imprisoned under the sedition law are likely to get immediate bail. However, retired Justice Manmohan Singh is, reportedly, of the view that this may not be the case for those charged with the draconian UAPA. He rightly says that the "UAPA contains many aspects of the sedition law with far-reaching consequences".

Civil liberties stand precariously poised in India today. The removal of the sedition law makes a dent, but it will be small and ineffective if the road-roller of civil liberties — the UAPA — remains untouched. We can celebrate the sedition law's much-awaited demise, but let's not miss the wood for the trees.

The writer teaches political science at Janki Devi Memorial College, DU

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOR DIGNITY THIS REFERS TO the editorial,

'Unworkable' (IE, May 21). The recommendation of the PM's Economic Advisory Council to launch an urban equivalent of the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment National Guarantee Act deserves serious attention. Urban unemployment is higher than rural, and though income levels are also higher, so is the cost of living. Though urban employment is not seasonal, it is sporadic, and the current trend of contract employment aggravates the problem. An employment guarantee could mitigate many hardships that the urban poor face and prevent reverse migration to rural areas, as so sadly seen during the pandemic. Above all, as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act shows, guaranteed employment enables the poor to live with a modicum of dignity. Some states such as Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan have seen the merit in an urban guaranteed employment scheme and it is time the nation too considers adopting it. The benefits will far outweigh the costs.

Hemant Contractor, *Pune*

BIASED CENTRE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The business of federalism' (IE, May 21). The writer has lucidly explained how the Centre can motivate the states to compete and cooperate to create a winwin situation required for the country's development. This is because the competitive spirit in federalism goads states to try each other for far-reaching reforms. Similarly, these states can join hands for the synergy required for undertaking innovative projects. The problem surfaces when the party ruling at the Centre does not get well

with opposition parties ruling in states. They face problems in getting their share even in the much-touted federal tax, the Good and Services Tax. Apparently, this situation prevents these states from undertaking reforms and other welfare schemes. Unfortunately, the dwarfed NITI Aayog, the forerunner of the all-powerful Planning Commission often hesitates to come to their rescue when faced with such discriminatory situations.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

LAW NEEDED

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A regressive exception' (IE, May 20). The marital rape issue in India revolves around the basis of the institution of marriage. Post marriage, women are considered something similar to property possession as Hindu customs have termed it kanyadaan. Legislation regarding the crime is needed though such deliberations would take time. The judiciary may need to step in temporarily.

p in temporarily. **H Upadhyay,** via email

Not in our stars

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Our languages soul of Bharatiyata....some are trying to poison: PM' (IE, May 21). Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the Bharatiya Janata Party national office-bearers spoke about the virtues and sacredness of every Indian language and connected it with Indianness. However, he overlooked the recent spate of speeches that were full of hate and bigotry targeted against Muslims. Nonetheless, he blamed the rival political parties for "trying to divert the nation's focus from major issues".

LR Murmu, Delhi

Setback for Bengal BJP as Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh returns to TMC

SWEETY KUMARI KOLKATA, MAY 22

DAYS AFTER criticising the Central government over its jute policy, BJP MP from Barrackpore, Arjun Singh, on Sunday returned to the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Singh's return to the TMC nearly three years after he had left the party ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections is yet another blow to the BJP in West Bengal, plagued by the exit of several MLAs and leaders since its defeat in the last year's Assembly elections in the state.

The BJP also conceded that Singh leaving the party was a huge loss for them. "What can we say if someone wants to do politics for their personal benefit. But it's a huge loss (to the party)," BJP national secretary

Addressing a press conference after joining the ruling TMC in the presence of its national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee at his Camac Street office in Kolkata, the Barrackpore MP said, "The way TMC is working on the development of Bengal is worth appreciating. I am from the jute mill area where people have been suffering due to the Centre's unjust jute policies.'

The BJP as an organisation is limited to Facebook. It is not possible to do politics only on Facebook. Ground politics is important in Bengal. I am back in the party as I was facing problems working for the development of the people of Bengal," he added.

Abhishek Banerjee said on Twitter, "Extending a warm welcome to Arjun Singh who rejected the divisive forces... People across the nation are suffering and they need us now more than ever. Let's keep the fight alive

Sources said Abhishek had serious deliberations in a meeting on whether or not Singh should be inducted in the party.

Assam: Day after mob sets police station ablaze, houses of accused demolished

AUTHORITIES IN Assam's Nagaon district Sunday demolished the homes of five families that were allegedly involved in setting fire to

TORA AGARWALA

GUWAHATI, MAY 22

a police station the previous day. A mob of about 40 people from Salonabari village had set fire to a part of the Batadrava police station in Dhing circle Saturday afternoon over the death of Safikul Islam, a local fish-seller, after he was taken into custody.

A special investigation team (SIT) has been set up to probe the mob attack. The district administration, meanwhile, ordered a judicial probe into the death, Police suspended the officer in-charge of the Batadrava police station, 6 km

On Sunday morning, bulldozers reached the village and demolished the "illegal" homes of "those

to the police station", police officers said.

"There were about 40 people in the mob. We have identified and arrested eight... and 15 have been detained," Assam Special DGP(law and order) GPSingh told The Indian Express, A woman and a minor are among those picked up. Singh claimed that the demolished homes belonged to "illegal settlers". "They have settled on the land illegally or with forged documents," he said, adding that the demolition was wrapped up in the morning itself.

"Everything is under control now," he said. "We have ordered an independent probe into the alleged custodial death, and if any officer is found guilty, we will take strong action. But such an allegation does not mean you set fire to a police station."

He added that video footage was being analysed to identify the



A bulldozer demolishes a house in Nagaon Sunday. ANI

others involved. Asked if the about the demolition, Singh said notices fell under the jurisdiction of the district administration.

The Indian Express reached out to Nagaon DC Nisarg Hivare but

his phone was switched off. However, another district official, who did not wish to be idenany written communication or instruction from the office of the DC regarding the demolition, and that no notice was sent from the circle office to the village.

Speaking to the Press on Sunday evening, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said the incident was a reflection of the "dangerous" times the people of Assam were living in. "A police station was burnt down. Till our government is in power, we will not nardon such crimes," he said.

He said a lot of land in Batadrava was under "illegal occupation". "I have directed the district administration to identify such areas. We will take action either through eviction or other laws – against any element trying to disturb the peace.'

The circumstances preceding the death of Islam, who was picked up Friday night on a complaint of being "drunk", are con-

from the office of the Assam DGP, Islam was released and handed over to his wife on Saturday morning. "His wife even gave him some water/food. Later he complained of sickness and he was taken to two hospitals, one after another. Unfortunately he was declared dead," it said.

'Centre expecting states to reduce taxes neither fair nor reasonable'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHENNAI, MAY 22

A DAY after union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced reduction of excise duty on petrol and diesel, and asked the states to follow suit, Tamil Nadu finance minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan on Sunday said it is "neither fair nor reasonable" for the union nment to expect states to reduce their

Saturday, the

Rs 8 per litre,

and on diesel

the

Centre

duced

on petrol by

TN finance minister **Palanivel** Thiaga Rajan

by Rs 6 per litre In a direct

reply Sitharaman's tweet "exhorting all state governments to implement a similar cut", Rajan said that "the union government didn't inform, let alone ask for any state's view" when they increased union taxes on fuel, citing a total increase of Rs 23 per litre for petrol and Rs 29 per litre for diesel since 2014. "Now, after rolling back ~50% of their increases, they are exhorting states to cut. Is this federalism?" Rajan

On Sunday, a statement issued by Rajan's office said "It is heartening to note that the Union Government has finally heeded to the repeated requests of the Tamil Nadu government to reduce the taxes on petrol and diesel..."

Even before the Union Government had first reduced its taxes on petrol and diesel in November 2021, the DMK government had cut the VAT on Petrol, in August 2021, the statement added.

ASSAM FLOODS

IAF personnel evacuate people from the flood-affected areas in Assam on Sunday. Nearly 7.2 lakh people across 22 districts have been impacted by floods caused due to heavy premonsoon rain in the state, officials said. PTI

RS polls near, suspense in JD(U) over renomination of RCP Singh

SANTOSH SINGH PATNA, MAY 22

IN THE run-up to next month's elections to five Raiva Sabha seats in Bihar, the ID(U), which is set to win one seat, faces a dilemma over renominating Union Minister Ramchandra Prasad Singh.

Singh, who was the national party chief before becoming the Steel Minister, is a divisive figure within the party. The JD(U) has left it up to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to take a call on his renomination.

A JD(U) source said: "Since there had been subtle posturing from RCP Singh himself and some senior leaders reacting to it, Nitish Kumar is the only competent person to take the final decision on the matter.'

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

strength for us. Let us pray for him in our hearts and remember

CO & All Ranks 6 SIKH

a life lived so wonderfully in the service of the nation.

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक

HAV SAWARAN SINGH 31 MAY 1958 TO

23 MAY 1991 In the remembrance of Late Hay

Sawaran Singh who left us for his heavenly

abode on 23 May 1991. May Wahe Guru Ji give

strength to CHHE SIKH fraternity and his family to bear this loss with courage and fortitude. He

will continue to be a source of inspiration and



Nitish Kumar and RCP Singh

The top leadership of the JD(U) had reportedly been upset with Singh for having become a Union Minister when he was national president of the party. Munger MP Rajiv Ranjan Singh later took over as JD(U) national

chief. "Nitish Kumar is caught in a piquant situation. If he renominates RCP, it may displease not just Rajiv Ranjan Singh but a large part of the party cadre. RCP

has little hold in party organisation as only three of his 32 candidates could win 2020 Assembly polls. And if RCP is not renominated, he will lose his said a JD(U) leader.

The elections to the five Rajya Sabha seats are scheduled for June 10. In a House of 243, BJP has 77 MLAs followed by RJD's 76 and JD (U)'s 45 legislators. This means BJP and RJD will get two seats each and ID(U) one.

Besides JD(U)'s Singh, those completing their Rajya Sabha term this July include Satish Chandra Dubey and Gopal Narayan Singh from BIP and Misa Bharati from RJD. Socialist veteran Sharad Yadav had lost his Rajya Sabha berth after rebelling against Nitish's decision to return to NDA in 2017.

PWA won't back any front in Kerala bypolls

Thiruvananthapuram: People's Welfare Alliance (PWA). a newly floated political front of by-election at Thrikkakara con-

"The outcome of this by-election is not going to make any impact in the state. But we urge our party workers to exercise their votes after evaluating the present political scenario. The decision is left to the people," said Sabu, who was flanked by AAP state convener P C Cyriac.

Twenty20 and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), on Sunday announced that PWA would not back any political party or front in the upcoming

punjab national bank

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Date of Possession Notice Affixed

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which was under pressure from

proven to be minors.

While the Cyberabad Police was then hailed for the alleged encounter, senior minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav had said that the police action could not have happened without the support of the government.

As the Sirpurkar Commission posed tough questions during its investigation and took to task po-

mean it as a Union of states? By

calling it a Union of states, Rahul

Cyberabad Police Commissioner when the alleged encounter killing happened, to the

legedly did not push the Special Investigation Team, set up to probe the alleged encounter, to conduct a thorough investigation.

Family members of Islam alleged that police demanded Rs 10,000 and a duck as a bribe for his release. A villager said, Islam's wife and neice visited the police station with a duck on Friday night, but

was asked to arrange money by the police. "When they returned the next morning, they found he was unwell and took him to the dispensary nearby. The case was referred to the civil hospital but he died on the way," said the resident.

Special DGP Singh said he had advised the Nagaon SP to probe if those accused had links with

Over 10 lakh apply for CUET; BHU, DU, Allahabad University big draws

SOURAV ROY BARMAN NEW DELHI, MAY 22

OVER 10 LAKH candidates have registered to take the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for undergraduate courses, the application window for which closed on Sunday, with Delhi University, BHU and Allahabad University emerging as the top

With each candidate allowed to take up to nine papers, 46 lakh applications have been made so far, with students from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Harvana and Raiasthan accounting for a bulk of the registrations.

As many as 44 central universities, 12 state universities, 11 deemed universities and 19 private universities will take in undergraduate students through CUET in the 2022-23 academic sessions. The dates for the test have not yet been announced.

Among Central universities, DU leads the chart with over 6 lakh applications, followed by

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) with 3.94 applications and Allahabad University with 2.31 lakh applications. Lucknow-based Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University trails closely behind with 1.49 lakh applications.

Iamia Millia Islamia University, which had initially expressed reservations over adopting CUET, has also attracted 1.21 lakh applications. The institution is carrying out admissions to 10 of its undergraduate programmes through the common entrance. The government had initially told Jamia and Aligarh Muslim University that admissions to all UG courses need to be carried out through CUET, but later allowed the institutions to use it for selected programmes only.

Jawaharlal Nehru University, which is more popular for its postgraduate degree courses and advanced research, has received 57,000 applications. And in line with the trend seen during the initial days after the application window was opened on April 6, at 3.3 lakh, the maximum number of registrations have come from Uttar Pradesh. UP is followed by Delhi (1.5

lakh registrations), Bihar

(83,672), Haryana (69,349), Madhya Pradesh (62,394), Rajasthan (48,016). Among the southern states, Kerala accounts for 40,476 applications, followed by Tamil Nadu with 16,590 ap-Last month, the Tamil Nadu Assembly had adopted a resolu-

tion against CUET, prompting Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to write to the state government, saying there is "no case for infringing upon the rights of the states and Union Territories" through the test. The numbers also reflect the popularity of DU among students in the Northeast, a region which lacks an adequate number of high quality higher education institutions, forcing students to migrate to other parts of the country.

For instance, there have been 17,613 registrations from Meghalaya, a state with a population of around 26 lakh, as opposed to only 5,739 from Karnataka.

The geographical spread of the applications will be more even from next year. Actually much depends on the success of this year's edition of the entrance. Registrations will also increase as the exams will be held twice a year from next year," an official said.

The government had on May 19 exempted eight Central Universities in the Northeast and one in Uttarakhand from conducting the CUET, attributing the decision to "operational difficulties".

Among state universities, the Delhi government-run Ambedkar University has emerged as the most popular, drawing over 1,28 lakh applications, followed by UP's Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University with 97,376 applications. The Meerut-based IIMT received 1.37 applications, becoming the top draw among private universities.

SC committee report on action against 'encounter' cops may put Telangana govt in a bind

Other cases of alleged encounters may face legal scrutiny

SREENIVAS JANYALA HYDERABAD MAY 22

THE RECOMMENDATION by the Justice V S Sirpurkar Commission that murder charges should be filed against the 10 policemen involved in the December 2019 alleged encounter killing of the four accused of the gangrape and murder of a veterinarian on the outskirts of Hyderabad, has put Telangana government in a difficult situation.

"The Commission's report and the case has been transferred to the Telangana High Court. If the HC upholds the recommendation, the government will be in a tight spot whether to initiate action against them because it may go against public opinion. We will discuss what is to be done," said a minister.

The Justice V S Sirpurkar Commission was set up by the Supreme Court to probe the deaths of the four accused in the rape and murder of a veterinarian at Chattanpally in Shadnagar on the outskirts of Hyderabad on November 27, 2019.

The Telangana government,



At the site of the December 2019 encounter. File

people to bring the alleged rapists to instant justice in the rape and murder, did not condemn the alleged encounter killing of the four accused, two of whom are now

consistent in August last year, the state government transferred IPS officer V C Sajjanar, who was Telangana State Road Transport Corporation. The Commission, which asked Sajjanar 160 questions, noted that his replies were

licemen whose answers were in-

The government also al-

Maharashtra, Rajasthan slash VAT on fuel

ENS&PTI JAIPUR, MUMBAI, MAY 22

A DAY after the Centre reduced excise duty on fuel, the Rajasthan and Maharashtra governments slashed the Value Added Tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the state government would reduce VAT by Rs 2.48 per litre on petrol and Rs 1.16 per litre on diesel. However, Maharashtra slashed the VAT on petrol by Rs 2.08 per litre and diesel by Rs 1.44 per litre.

A statement issued by the Shiv Sena-led government in Maharashtra said the state exchequer would have to bear an annual loss of Rs 2,500 crore as a result of the decision.

After reducing the VAT on petrol and diesel, the per month revenue from petrol will reduce by Rs 80 crore, while that from diesel by Rs 125 crore. The Congress government in Rajasthan had cut VAT following the November 2021 decision.

The Centre on Saturday announced a record Rs 8 per litre cut in excise duty on petrol and Rs 6 reduction on diesel. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the cut in excise duty on fuel has a revenue implication of Rs 1 lakh crore a year and urged states to follow suit.

Bringing UCC is for benefit of Muslims: Himanta at RSS event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MAY 22

RAHUL GANDHI is indirectly encouraging secessionist elements by calling India a Union of states and anyone who shuts down madrassas and talks about the Uniform Civil Code is, in fact, a friend of Indian Muslims, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Sunday.

"If India is a Union of states, what about the 5,000 years of rich history? When Congress called itself Indian National Congress and

Gandhi is speaking of breaking up the country. Indirectly he is encouraging secessionist sentiments. It is no different from what ULFA says, only the language used may be different," Sarma said at an event in Delhi commemorating 75 years of RSS-linked magazines Panchjanya and Organiser. "But it is not his fault. He may

be taking tuition from someone from JNU and learning these things," he said.

Speaking at an event in

held meetings across India, did it London Saturday, Gandhi had said India is a Union of states as described in the Constitution. Sarma had earlier been with

the Congress for 22 years. He said betraying the Gandhi family is viewed as betraying the nation in Congress, while in the BJP, the nation is above the party. The Assam Chief Minister,

who initiated a controversial move to shut down governmentfunded madrassas in the state, said the word "madrassa" should go extinct if Indian Muslims are to progress in education, "If you want to teach religion, you do that

ence, mathematics... Targeting AIMIM chief

at home. In schools, you learn sci-

Asaduddin Owaisi. Sarma said that shutting of madrassas and implementing Uniform Civil Code would be for the benefit of Muslims. "We don't have to do this for Hindutva. Those who shut down madrassas and implement Uniform Civil Code, Indian Muslims should call them their friend, and Owaisi their enemy," he said.

Sarma was speaking on a day when authorities demolished houses of people allegedly involved in torching a police station.

Lucknow

Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice on the date mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s)/ date of receipt of the said notice(s). The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the oublic in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4 of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules, 2002 as the mentioned date given against each account/s. The borrower's /guarantor's /mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the ecured assets. The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be ubject to the charge of Punjab National Bank for the amounts and interest thereon.

Name of the Branch Name of the Account Name of Borrower (Owner of the property) BO: Jal Sansthan (previously Harsh Nagar:e-UNI), Kanpur

1. M/s Crazee Wear through its partner Smt. Farheen Khanam W/o Shri Rafat Bashir & Shri Rafat Bashir S/o Shri Bashir 2. Shri Rafat Bashir S/o Shri Bashir Ahmad Khan 3. Smt. Farheen Khanam W/o Shri Rafat Bashir 4. Mortgagor: Mrs. Jamila Begum W/o Shri Bashir Ahmad Address 1 to 4: H. No. 231-D, Defence Colony, Jajma Kanpur-208010.

Date: 23.05.2022

Circle Sastra Centre: 59/29, Birhana Road, Kanpur | E-mail: cs8258@pnb.co.in

Description of the Property Mortgaged

Shop situated at muncipal no.- 80/76 pvt office

no.10b & 11b at Hamraz Complex Coopergan Kanpur admeasuring 8.84 sq.mtr. in the name o

Mrs. Jamila Begum W/o Bashir Ahmad Khan as pe

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POSSESSION NOTICE Whereas, Punjab National Bank/ the Authorised Officer of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement o

> Premises No. 80/78 NAFEES Tower, **West:**13 Feet Wide Common Passage, **North:** Private Office No. 12 B, **South:** Private Office No. 09 B Authorised Officer, Punjab National Bank

ECONOMY

Market Watch

M-CAP OF 3 OF TOP-FIVE VALUED FIRMS JUMPS

New Delhi: Three of the top five valued firms together added Rs 1,78,650.71 crore to their market valuation last week, led by Reliance Industries. Last week, benchmark BSE Sensex climbed 1,532.77 points or 2.9 per cent. **PTI**

POLICY WATCH EXTERNAL DEBT

India has space to attract \$90 bn debt flows: RBI

GEORGE MATHEW MUMBAI, MAY 22

INDIA HAS the space to attract debt flows of another \$90 billion (around Rs 693,000 crore), given the threshold level of the country's external debt, says a Reserve Bank of India study.

"The empirical results suggest that as against India's current external debt to GDP ratio of 20 per cent, the estimated threshold level is higher in the range between 23 per cent and 24 per cent of GDP, indicating space for attracting more debt flows of the order of \$90 billion," says the RBI study on 'Growth maximising external debt of India'. Given the risk of amplifying external vulnerabilities because of higher exposure to external debt, the estimated space may be used carefully balancing the objective of growth and macro-stability,

India's debt market is being progressively opened up to the foreign capital in a careful and calibrated manner.

According to estimates, India's external debt stood at \$614.9 billion as at end-December 2022. Commercial borrowings (CBs) at \$226.4 billion, NRI deposits at \$141.9 billion and short-term trade credit at \$110.5 billion, together account for about 78 per cent of the total external debt. The external debt to GDP ratio as at end-December 2021 was 20.0 per cent.

The total external debt, which fell below the pre-crisis levels in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic lockdown, crossed the prepandemic levels as at end-December 2020 and consolidated further helped by NRI deposits crossing pre-pandemic levels as at end-June 2020, commercial borrowings crossing the pre-pandemic levels as at end September 2021 and shortterm trade credit crossing the pre-pandemic levels as at end-December 2021, the RBI said.

In contrast, India's external debt remained relatively immune to the global finan-

NRI deposits down \$2.87 bn

Mumbai: Outstanding non-resident Indian (NRI) deposits in India fell by \$2.875 billion to \$139.020 billion in the financial year ended March 2022 as against \$141.895 billion a year ago, according to the latest RBI data.

India attracted only \$3.23 billion NRI deposits in FY22 as against \$7.36 billion a year ago. Nonresident external rupee account (NR(E)RA) witnessed a growth of \$3.33 billion in FY22 as against \$8.84 billion last year. FCNR (B) deposits declined by \$3.55 billion in FY22. **ENS**

cial crisis (GFC) reflecting the resilience of commercial borrowings, the most growthsensitive and the largest component of India's external debt. "The resilience of commercial borrowings in the wake of the GFC stemmed largely from the relatively muted impact of GFC on growth in sharp contrast to that during GLD," the

At present, a rule-based dynamic limit for outstanding stock of ECBs at 6.5 per cent of GDP is in place. As India aims at higher, sustainable and inclusive growth, the need for attracting larger external debt flows within the estimated threshold may be assessed along with other external vulnerability parameters so that the growth objective is pursued while preserving overall macro-stability, the RBI study said.

External debt, by supplementing domestic savings, can help countries grow faster. But a large stock of external debt can potentially create vulnerabilities and dent growth prospects. Since the onset of the pandemic, many countries have expanded public spending to support the recovery, which has led to a build-up of their

FOCUS ON DISCLOSURES, COMPLIANCES FOR NEW-AGE COS

Front-running: Sebi likely to soon initiate stringent action

SANDEEP SINGH MUMBAI, MAY 22

CONCERNED OVER the recent case of front-running in the mutual fund industry and possibility of similar practices happening, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is likely to take stringent action, which may include action against top officials of the fund house. A source close to the development said Sebi is closely monitoring the situation and its actions may follow soon.

On May 19, Axis Mutual Fund terminated its chief dealer Viresh Ioshi, who was under investigation for irregularities, including front-running the AMC's transactions. A couple of days later, it sacked its second fund manager Deepak Agrawal on similar charges. The fund house had suspended the two fund managers on May 6, after irregularities running into several crores at the fund house came under the scanner of the market regulator.

Front-running involves purchasing a stock based on advance non-public information regarding an expected large transaction that will affect the share price of a company. When MFs purchase in huge quantities, it leads to rise in share price, resulting into illegitimate gains for the front runners.

Sebi has investigated and penalised several brokers, fund houses and fund managers in the past for front-running. In June 2021, it passed an order against three dealers of Reliance Securities for front-running the

Cost overruns of ₹4.83 lakh cr

As many as 425 infrastructure projects, each entailing an

investment of Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost

of Statistics and Programme Implementation report

overruns of more than Rs 4.83 lakh crore, as per a Ministry

impact 425 infra projects



The Securities and **Exchange Board of India** building, Mumbai. File

trades of an alternative investment fund. In the HDFC MF frontrunning case, Sebi passed several orders, over the last few years, including disgorgement of illegal gains and penalty on several entities including the former equity dealer of HDFC MF for numerous instances of front running in 2006 and 2007.

Stating that investor protection is one the key roles of the regulator, the source added that Sebi is looking at various aspects of primary and secondary market in order to safeguard retail investors, who have been entering the markets in large numbers over the last two years. The number of investor accounts with CDSL and NSDL has jumped from 4.06 crore in March 2020 to 9.2 crore at the end of April 2022.

While on the primary market

OF 1,579 PROJECTS,

425 PROJECTS REPORTED

COST OVERRUNS AND AS

MANY AS 664 PROJECTS

WERE DELAYED

front, the regulator is keen on enhancing disclosure and compliance requirement for listing of new-age technology companies, for the secondary market participants, it is keen on enhancing awareness around responsible investing as lot of new customers

are going for speculative trading. "What we worry about is the increasing amount of trading in the segment. As margins have increased for futures, they are shifting to options and largely in index options. It is pure trading ... People need to be educated and made aware of the risks of these trades and so there is a thinking that it might be the right time for the broking community to come out with campaigns like responsible trading," said the source.

As concerns have been growing around valuations being commanded by new-age lossmaking technology companies when they come out with their public issues, the regulator may be of the view that while it may leave the price determination with the markets, it may introduce disclosures that may take away liberty of the company management and merchant bankers from commanding unreasonable valuations.

The source said that the companies will have to disclose the change in financially quantifiable metrics that have resulted in increase in valuation and if there is no change in such metrics, then they will have to disclose upfront that there has been no change in the financial metrics but the valuation has gone up by 'x' times. So, they will have to disclose reasons for the increase in valuation

TOTAL ORIGINAL COST

and their anticipated

the original cost)

of implementation of the 1,579

projects was ₹21,95,196.72 cr

completion cost is likely to be

reflects overall cost overruns of

EXPENDITURE INCURRED on

these projects till March 2022

anticipated cost of the projects

PROJECTS decreased to 561.

if delay is calculated on basis of

latest schedule of completion

stood at ₹13,88,760.73 cr,

which is 51.85 % of the

NUMBER OF DELAYED

₹4.83,168.90 cr (22.01 % of

₹26,78,365.62 cr, which

since the last funding round.

The source added that there was a thinking in the past that if the regulator had brought stringent regulations at the time of permitting loss-making new age technology companies to raise funds through public issues, it would have attracted lot of criticism. But now, with some not-sohappy experiences across several listings, additional regulations and compliances can be brought in and there is call for it, too.

"Sometimes you need to buy the time. And after what has happened with a couple of issues the regulator thinks that they can bring in the reform as people sometimes need to understand the need for reform and now everyone is aware of the issue and they feel that changes are needed," the source said.

The regulator is also looking at adding more disclosures for such companies.

Among some other key changes, the regulator is also learnt to be closely monitoring the appointment of chief financial officers (CFO) by several of these companies and may bring in a new compliance requirement with respect to CFO appointment for companies coming with public offering.

"It has been noticed that in several cases the CFOs are appointed few days before the issue and he/she signs up on all the financial details. Sebi is considering to make it mandatory for companies to appoint the CFO atleast 2-3 quarter before the IPO and deliberations are going on this particular issue as of now," the source said.

Salil Parekh reappointed as CEO, MD of Infosys for 5 yrs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, MAY 22

THE BOARD of Infosys has approved the reappointment of Salil Parekh as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director of the company for five more years, till March 31, 2027, according to a regulatory filing.

This is based on the recommendations of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC) and subject to the approval of shareholders. WITHPTI

Excise cut on fuel: FM says burden to be borne by Centre

CENTRAL EXCISE DUTY/CESS



Note: Figures in ₹/L; RIDC is Road & Infrastructure Development Cess, SAED is Special Additional Excise Duty and AIDC stands for Agriculture & Infrastructure Development Cess: Sources: Lok Sabha, CBIC

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & KARUNJIT SINGH NEW DELHI, MAY 22

PROVIDING DETAILS of the cut in excise duty on fuels, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said the excise duty cut of Rs 8/litre on petrol and Rs 6/litre on diesel has entirely been made in Road & Infrastructure Cess (RIC), which is not shared with states and, hence, the burden lies with Centre. The duty

cut, effective Sunday, has a revenue implication of Rs 1 lakh crore annually for the Centre, which, coupled with the earlier duty cut of November 2021, will result in a total revenue loss of Rs 2.2 lakh crore a year, she said. "Basic ED which is sharable with states has not been touched. Therefore, the entire burden of these two duty cuts (made in

Nov. 21 and yesterday) is borne by the Centre. The duty reduction made yesterday has an implication of Rs 1,00,000 cr a year for Centre. The duty reduction made in November'21 has an implication of Rs 1,20,000 cr a year for Centre. Total revenue implication to Centre, on these two duty cuts is thus Rs 2,20,000 cr a year," she tweeted.

Opposition leaders had said that this round of excise duty cut would reduce the share of states

The excise duty reduction on petrol and diesel effective Sunday has entirely been made in RIC and this was the case even in November 2021 when tax on petrol was cut by Rs 5 and that on diesel by Rs 10, she said.

"Basic Excise Duty (BED), Special Additional Excise duty (SAED), Road & Infrastructure Cess (RIC) and Agriculture & Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC) together constitute Excise Duty on petrol and diesel, Basic ED is shareable with states. SAED,RIC & AIDC are nonsharable," she said.

Total Central tax on petrol before this duty cut was Rs 27.9 per litre, while basic excise duty was only Rs 1.4 a litre. Of Rs 21.80 a litre, total Central tax on diesel basic excise duty was Rs 1.80. Special additional excise duty of Rs 11 a litre on petrol and Rs 8 per litre on diesel was levied. A Rs 2.50 a litre agriculture infrastructure and development cess (AIDC) was levied on petrol and Rs 4 per litre on diesel. Petrol had Rs 13 a litre additional excise duty in form of RIC and Rs 8 of such tax was levied on per litre of diesel, which has been cut now.

As per the tax sharing formula, 41 per cent of taxes collected by the Centre is shared

How it breaks up

BEFORE THIS round of duty cut, total central tax on petrol was Rs 27.90 per litre and Rs 21.80 a litre on diesel. Basic excise duty, which is shared with states, was only Rs 1.40 a litre on petrol and Rs 1.80 a litre on diesel. Special additional excise duty and agriculture infrastructure and development cess, accounted for Rs 13.5 a litre on petrol and Rs 12 per litre on diesel, not forming a part of the shareable pool with states but have been reduced now by the Centre.

with states, while cess collections accrue to the Centre. Cess constitutes the majority of the tax on petrol and diesel.

Before this round of excise duty cut, Central and state taxes accounted for about 43 per cent and 37 per cent of the retail price of petrol and diesel, respectively, in Delhi, States apply an ad valorem VAT or sales tax on the base price, freight charges, excise duty and dealer commission on petrol and diesel. Therefore, state collections also increase/decrease as the Centre hikes/reduces excise

Former Finance Minister and Congress leader P Chidambaram had on Saturday evening stated that the cut in excise duty was egual to rob Peter more & pay Peter less!" "FM's exhortation to States is meaningless. When she cuts Central Excise by one rupee, 41 paise of that rupee belongs to the States," he had stated. On Sunday, he tweeted stating that contrary to what he said on Saturday "the entire burden of the reduction falls on the Centre. To that extent, I stand corrected. The states are getting very little by way of share of duties on Petrol and Diesel. Their revenue is from VAT on Petrol and Diesel."

"The Union Government's levies on petrol have gone up substantially in the past 7 years. Though the revenue to the Union Government has increased manifold, there has not been a matching increase in the revenues to states. This is because the Union Government has increased the cess and surcharge on petrol and diesel while reducing the basic excise duty that is shareable with the states," Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan said.

external debt, the IMF says. CoinSwitch calls BRIEFLY —

Infra projects

New Delhi: All logistics and connectivity infrastructure projects, entailing investment of over Rs 500 crore, would now route through the network planning

SIAM on CNG

New Delhi: SIAM on Sunday sought reduction in CNG prices while welcoming the government's decision to lower the petrol and diesel

'GST Council' New Delhi: The GST Council

is likely to consider modification in summary return and monthly tax payment form GSTR-3B in its meeting next month, an official said.

'Specialty steel'

New Delhi: The government's PLI scheme for specialty steel has received just 10 applications, even as the last date to submit interest was extended twice.

'Paytm bank'

New Delhi: Paytm expects that the issue of RBI ban on its subsidiary Paytm Payments Bank to onboard customers would be resolved in 3-5 months, after the clearance by the regulator to the processes being put in place, Paytm group CFO Madhur Deora told PTI on Sunday. PTI

for regulatory 'peace, certainty'

REUTERS DAVOS, MAY 22

REUTERS

BENGALURU, MAY 22

miliar with the matter.

APPLE INC has told some of its

contract manufacturers that it

wants to increase production

outside China, the Wall Street

Journal reported, citing people fa-

already sites of Apple production,

are among the countries short-

bigger supply problems. The re-

listed as alternatives, it added.

India and Vietnam, which are

Apple last month forecast

INDIA MUST establish rules on cryptocurrencies to resolve regulatory uncertainty, protect investors and boost its crypto sector, CoinSwitch CEO Ashish Singhal said on Sunday.

'Users don't know what will happen with their holdings - is government going to ban, not ban, how is it going to be regulated?," Singhal, a former Amazon engineer who cofounded CoinSwitch, told Reuters at the World Economic "Users don't know what will happen with their holdings-is government going to ban, not ban, how is it going to be regulated?"

ASHISH SINGHAL CEO. COINSWITCH

Forum in Davos.

"Regulations will bring peace . more certainty," he added.

While moves on taxation and certain advertising regulation had brought some relief, a lot more needed to be done. Singhal said, adding that India should develop a set of laws.

'To boost production outside

An Apple store in Shanghai, China. Reuters file

Amazon: FRL independent dirs facilitated fraudulent stratagem

New Delhi: Amazon has accused independent directors of Future Retail of facilitating "fraudulent stratagem" of transfer of 835 stores to Reliance, saying the narrative of that transfer was on account of failure to pay outstanding rent was a "sham" as the retailer had a month prior to such move.

The retailer wrote on May 19 to FRL independent directors, stated the firm had in meeting with core lender banks on January 1 "categorically admitted the unpaid rental dues was Rs 250 crore only. FRL further stated that it voluntarily retained the amount." PTI

clined to comment to WSI and

'Govt considering spending \$26 billion more to fight inflation' "We are fully focussed on

Source: MoSPI/PTI

REUTERS NEW DELHI, MAY 22

THE GOVERNMENT is considering spending an additional Rs 2 trillion (\$26 billion) in the 2022-23 fiscal year to cushion consumers from rising prices and fight multi-year high inflation, two government officials told Reuters.

The new measures will be double the Rs 1 trillion hit government revenues could take from tax cuts on petrol and diesel the finance minister announced on Saturday, both the officials said.

Retail inflation rose to an eightyear high in April.

bringing down inflation. The impact of Ukraine crisis was worse than anyone's imagination," one official, who did not want to be named, said. The government estimates another Rs 500 billion in additional funds will be needed to subsidise fertilisers, from the current estimate of Rs 2.15 trillion, the two officials said.

The government could also deliver another round of tax cuts on petrol and diesel if crude oil continues to rise that could mean an added hit of Rs 1 trillion-1.5 trillion in 2022-23, the second official said.

The government did not comment outside office hours.

Price hikes help India Inc fight margin pressure

■ Management commentary suggests companies plan to either raise prices further or offer smaller volumes for the same

cent, in the three months to March. Consequently, the operating profit went up by a good 20 per cent y-o-y and the net profits by a handsome 34 per cent.

smaller volumes for the same price to protect margins. By a rough reckoning, prices have been raised by 5-15 per cent for consumer staples, 10-12 per cent for durables, around 10 per cent for automobiles, 5-15 per cent for residential properties and around 5-8 per cent at fast food eateries. By passing on the cost increases, companies have managed to grow their top lines despite, in many cases, selling smaller volumes. For the sample of 927 firms, net sales in Q4FY22

stance, has upped prices by about

ther raise prices further or offer 10 per cent, enabling it to report a revenue growth of 11 per cent y-o-y in Q4FY22 despite volumes staving flat. Despite a 9 per cent y-o-y drop in volumes, Eicher Motors posted a revenue growth of 9 per cent y-o-y, thanks to a 21 per cent y-o-y increase in the average selling prices (ASPs). While profitability may have

been under some pressure, the good news is that businesses that were hit by the pandemic are bouncing back with the economy opening up. AB Fashion and Retail, for instance, reported better-than expected Q4FY22 revenue growth of 25 per centy-o-y as the distributor channel recovered. FE

Lucknow

port said Apple is citing China's rose 24.2 per cent y-o-y. strict anti-Covid policy and other couldn't be reached by Reuters contracted by only 50 basis Hindustan Unilever, for in-Management commentary reasons for its decision. Apple deon Saturday. points year-on-year to 16.37 per suggests companies plan to ei-

China, Apple may turn to India' **ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**

MUMBAI, MAY 22

DESPITE THE inflation in inputs, India Inc seems to have managed to protect its margins reasonably well by passing on the costs to consumers. Not all companies have been able to take price hikes to offset the entire increase in costs, but aggregate numbers for Q4FY22 show they have covered some ground.

For a universe of 927 companies (excluding banks and financials), operating profit margins

VOLUMES GAME

price to protect margins

10 IDEA EXCHANGE NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

WORLD BOXING CHAMPION NIKHAT ZAREEN

6'People told my father that boxing was a men's sport

World champion boxer Nikhat Zareen talks about how people ridiculed her choice to become a boxer as a girl, her struggles in a conservative society and how she feels women boxers wearing hijab is a matter of choice. The session was moderated by Mihir Vasavda, Assistant Editor, The Indian Express

Mihir Vasavda: How has it been since the bout?

I haven't slept a wink the whole night. As I was going through text messages and social media DMs (direct messages) on my phone, I didn't even realise that it was daybreak. I was excited talking to my family and loved ones.

Mihir Vasavda: Your journey started in Turkey in 2011 when you won the junior and youth boxing championship. Now, you have won the senior world championship in the same city. How has the 11-year run been?

My journey has been a roller-coaster ride with plenty of ups and downs. Winning this gold medal makes me feel that all those challenges and struggles were totally worth it because they made me strong enough to win this world championship medal.

Mihir Vasavda: You mention struggle. Was that one of the reasons why you got so emotional when the referee raised your hand after the bout and declared you as the winner? We haven't seen you this emotional in the

When my hand was raised, I was the happiest person on earth. At the same time, I was also feeling emotional as it had taken a lot of hard work and struggle to finally win the world championship medal.

It was my dream all these years to win a big medal and be a champion in the elite professional world of boxing. In the youth championships, I had made it to every final but I couldn't get a medal in the senior world championship.

During the world championship in 2016, I lost in the quarters and missed a medal. I have now won one after six years. I got an opportunity this time and all that hard work has finally paid off.

Mihir Vasavda: If we go back to where it all began, in

Nizamabad, how was it growing up your childhood

I belong to an orthodox society where people think that girls should only be at home, take care of domestic chores, get married and look after their family. But my father was an athlete and he knows the kind of life an athlete lives. He has always been there for me and supported me

even when people told him, "Arre Jameel bhai, why have you trained your daughter in boxing; this is a men's sport (mardon ka khel hai). If she gets hit, her career will get hit, who will marry her? You already have four daughters." My father never listened to them and instead told me, "Beta, you focus on boxing and when you do well, these same people will want to take photographs with you." He never allowed their comments to get into my head and affect me. I feel blessed to have

I started out in 2009 and in a year, I won the national championship. I was selected for the national camp. I won my first international medal at the youth championship in Turkey in 2011. Since then, my dream goal was to win an Olympic gold medal for my country. I am working hard towards



NIKHAT ZAREEN

ikhat Zareen won the World Boxing Championships in Turkey on May 19, becoming only the fifth Indian woman to be crowned world champion (flyweight). But her story to the podium is also about breaking free from the shackles of patriarchy, tradition, mindset and, most importantly, from inhibitions. She is now setting her sights on the Olympic gold

Mihir Vasavda: You mentioned the support you received from your parents. You have three sisters, what is your relationship with them like and what did you all bond over?

I have two older sisters and a younger one, who is seven years junior to me. Both my elder sisters are physiotherapists and were not interested in sports. I had always been interested in sports and used to be a bit of a tomboy those days, hanging out

I remember asking my

father why there were no

girls in the ring. Could only

boys deliver a punch? He

said, 'no beta, girls can also

box but people think they

don't have the guts.' That

challenged me to take up

boxing

with the boys. I had a boyish short hair too and preferred wearing T-shirt and jeans. Nobody thought I was a girl. Perhaps, I became strong because I have been, what you would call, "rough-and-tough" since childhood.

Before boxing, I was into athletics. Since there were no proper facilities and coaches, I would accompany my father to the Collector's Ground where many competitive

sports took place. I saw girls in every sport except boxing. I remember asking my father why there were no girls in the ring and if only boys could box? And he said, "no beta, girls can also box but people think they don't have the guts to do so. That's why they don't send their girls to learn boxing.

That challenged me to take up boxing as I couldn't understand why people would think that girls weren't strong enough to take up such a sport. So, I thought, let's give it a try. Bachpan sey mujhe khatron ki khiladi khelne ka bahut shauk tha (I have always wanted to be a daredevil since my childhood). I didn't quite anticipate what awaited me.

I was the lone girl practising in that stadium among boys. Initially, I used to get hit a lot but I did not give up. Maybe training in that atmosphere, surrounded by boys, helped me steel my resolve.

Sriram Veera: I was watching an interview of your mother talking about an early sparring session of yours. It was with a boy and he hit you in your face. Your mother said that she started crying and saying 'beta tumse shaadi kaun karega?'

(Nikhat laughs) Let me tell you that story. That was my first sparring session and I was pitted against a boy who was very experienced. The coach shouted "box" and he started attacking me. I wasn't ready for his attack and got hit on my nose, which started bleeding along with my eve which got bruised as well.

I went home with bloodstains on my T-shirt. When I entered my house, I directly rushed into the bathroom and didn't come out until I had changed everything. I then stayed in my room, hiding my eye. But then my mother called me for dinner. We eat food together, while watching serials on TV, like every other household. This is the usual ritual but that day I chose to stay in my room. My mother got worried, barged in and seeing me bruised and black, she shivered. Then she started crying and said, "Beta maine tujhe boxing mein isliye nahi dala ki tera face kharab ho jaye (I didn't allow you to pursue boxing so that your face would get scarred)." She then said that no one would marry me. I replied, "arre ammi, tension nako lo, naam hoga toh dulhon ki line lag jayegi! (Dear mother, don't worry, once I make a name for myself, grooms will queue up at the doorstep).

Now she's used to it. Whenever I get hit, she casually tells me to apply some ice and says that it will be okay. Sometimes I feel she has become my coach. My parents watch all my bouts in every competition that I participate in and they now have a good idea of what boxing is. Whenever I have a match, my mother watches me closely and post-match calls me to review my performance, pulling me up on the mistakes I made during the fight. My parents have become my coaches and say things like, "Try to avoid clinching and play from a distance because your punches look clear then." I find it funny that there was a time when they didn't know anything about boxing and now they give me gyaan (laughs). But it feels nice that they've come a long way from their old mentality and have grown

Sriram Veera: Heard you say once that your plan B was to join the police.

In my childhood, I dreamt of becoming an IPS officer. When you are young, most children will say that they want to be a pilot, police, doctor or teacher. These were the professions we knew about and because of that, I wanted to be in the police. Also, the uniform looked cool and

when we were in school, IPS officers would visit us as chief guests during special events and programmes. I saw the respect they commanded. Whenever I looked at them, I told myself that one day I would wear a uniform like them and come as a chief guest to my school. That's how I started dreaming about becoming an IPS officer.

Nitin Sharma: We talked about the gold medal you won as a junior boxer in 2011. You were 15 years old back then. Ten years later, you have got the senior title. What do these achievements mean to you and do you feel the senior title came a bit late?

Medal der aaya lekin durust aaya (better late than never). The medal I won in 2011 was memorable because it was my firstever international competition where I got a standing ovation on the podium... our national anthem was being played in front of so many people. I was overwhelmed. That experience will always remain etched in my memory.

Still, I was a kid in a junior level championship. The elite level is very different. The competition is better and the pressure, higher. In the juniors, you don't know your opponent - all you can think about is to enter the ring, beat the opponent and win the bout. But in the senior category, you know about your opponents' styles, strengths and weakness. So, you end up having to plan your

moves strategically. There is a lot more pressure on your mind at this level. And yet, I managed to win the gold medal for my country. I am really happy about that. Hopefully, I can continue to work hard like this and keep winning medals.

Nitin Sharma: In your weight category, you have had to compete with MC Mary Kom, whom you have idolised, over the past three-four years. We also saw your bid to get into trials against her for the Tokyo Olympic qualifiers. She did not want the trials and it turned into a spat. The bout eventually took place but how do you see her after that incident? Also how do you feel about the CWG trials knowing that Mary Kom is expected to take part?

She is an experienced boxer with many records in her past. So based on that

it was her right, perhaps. But when two boxers enter the ring, only the one who's technically sounder wins. Because of that, when our trials took place, she won and was selected for the Tokyo Olympic qualifiers. I congratulated her on qualifying but unfortunately, she couldn't win a medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

When I lost in the trials, I decided to move on from Tokyo and focus on the Paris Olympic Games. With regard to the Commonwealth Games trials, I heard she's going for the trials in the 48-kg category, so I don't think we'll face each other.

Sandeep Dwivedi: What is so special about Hyderabad that so many worldbeating women athletes come out of the city? Is it common aggression, that is so important in sport and that you share with athletes like Saina Nehwal and Sania Mirza, which propels you to such heights?

(Laughs) Sab Hyderabad ki biryani aur haleem hi hai (It's all in Hyderabad's biryani and haleem). I guess every athlete gets

Before my shoulder injury,

I was not that mature. After

the injury, I learnt a lot. I

got to know who my real

friends were and who

weren't. Because, most did

not even message me or ask

me how I was doing. Still, I

remained positive

nervous. The quality of a champion is how she deals with that pressure and nervousness. Even I was nervous about the world championship I was nervous about how I would play against my opponent, whether I would be able to make her play according to my style and dominate her or whether she would trap me in her boxing style. Such thoughts mind. I won all my

bouts with unanimous decisions and I am happy about it.

Sandeep Dwivedi: You have been good friends with the likes of Tokyo Olympics champion Neeraj Chopra apart from CWG and Asian Games champion Vinesh Phogat and athletes like Tejaswin Shankar. Tell us how did this sharing of ideas start?

We met when all of us were going through a bad phase. We were suffering from injuries and were feeling low. Vinesh had a knee injury, I had a shoulder injury, Neeraj had issues with hamstring and even Tejaswin was struggling with some wound. We were rehabilitating at the JSW Sport Centre in Bengaluru. We would eat meals and roam together always. So, it all started from there. Then we shared each other's stories and understood how much struggle each one of us had to face. That's how

our friendship started. After the recovery, everybody got busy and now, Neeraj Chopra is an Olympic champion while Vinesh is a Commonwealth and Asian Games champion. They have made the country proud and seeing them achieve their personal highs inspired me to work hard. When they can do it on the world stage, it inspires me to push myself harder and achieve big on the world stage too. We can all meet together at the next Games.

Mihir Vasavda: You have mentioned a lot of ups, downs and struggles in your career. Was there any moment in your life, in your career to be precise, that shaped you as a boxer or inspired you to pack a punch?

Yes, before my shoulder injury, I was not mature enough. After the injury, I learnt a lot. I got to know who my real friends were and who weren't. Because most of them did not even message me or ask me how I was doing. But still I stayed positive and worked hard on my rehabilitation. I made my comeback in 2018 and took some time to recover before I won the gold at the Strandja Memorial in 2019. I have never looked back and have always thought of progressing ahead.

Mihir Vasavda: You have been a pathbreaker your entire career. You come from an orthodox family and have seen all kinds of struggle. In the last two-three weeks, we have seen referees and some boxers wearing hijab during the world championships. All over the world, there is a debate about whether athletes should be allowed to wear the hijab or not. In the normal course of life, too, there is a debate about this. What's your take?

According to me, it's their choice. If they feel comfortable, they should wear it. If they don't feel comfortable, they should wear whatever is normal for them. It's absolutely their choice. So, there is no need for my comment. I like boxing in shorts and a vest and nobody is forcing me to wear a hijab or stopping me from wearing shorts and a vest. It's everybody's choice and we should respect that.

Mihir Vasavda: It's known that you are a big Salman Khan fan and like watching Hindi movies. If a biopic is to be made on your life, which actor would you like to portray you?

I haven't given it a thought yet. When a movie is made on me, I don't know which actress will be on top of the charts at that time. Right now, I want Alia Bhatt to portray me. Kyunki usko bhi dimple aata hai and mere ko bhi dimple aata hai (Because she has got dimples like me). I guess she can portray me.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

EXPLAINED HEALTH

Is unexpected hepatitis in children linked to Covid-19?





DR ARVINDER SINGH SOIN

From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight

SEVERAL COUNTRIES are reporting severe hepatitis in children who have contracted Covid-19. A study from Madhya Pradesh, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, has shown that 8% of children in the group being investigated reported a unique form of hepatitis and subsequent asymptomatic Covid-19 infection.

Can we say there is a link between Covid-19 and hepatitis in children?

In the West, there have been some cases of hepatitis, which are unexplained by previously known causes. And there have been publica-

tions that have been peer-reviewed, including one published in The Lancet last week, where they have talked about several children reporting unexplained hepatitis, where every parameter they test usually is found negative. The majority of them actually get well. But there has been a small number of cases where children have actually developed severe liver cases that need a transplant. That is obviously of concern.

The timing suggests it is related to Covid. Because the chronology is suggestive of Covid having a role as such a condition wasn't seen before the pandemic, the theory of a link is gaining ground. I am talking about the Lancet paper. In the non-peer-reviewed data from Madhya Pradesh, they found 37 cases of hepatitis out of 457 patients of Covid-19.

The Lancet study detected adenovirus in nearly 80% of the cases. Normally, this virus is fairly harmless. It causes gastritis, diarrhoea and vomiting but so far has not caused any severe illness. But now nearly 80% of children with hepatitis have this virus. It is still not known if it is causally related. Researchers even analysed the type of adenovirus and found a particular strain called 41F in all samples. Now this strain is typically associated with mild gastro-intestinal illness in children. So, the theory going around is that somehow the immune system of children affected by Covid have developed abnormalities or been compromised to such an extent

It is all a little blurry right now. But as an expert in liver disease for over 30 years and as someone

that the adenovirus, which

is normally harmless, has

manifested itself severely.

who does liver transplants in children literally every other day, I think the recent cases of hepatitis are related to Covid-19 in some way. It is very likely, in my view, that there is hepatitis which has previously not been seen that has come about in children because of the pan-

THE EXPERT

DR ARVINDER SINGH **SOIN** is the Chief Hepatobiliary and Liver Transplant Surgeon and Chairman of the Institute of Liver Transplantation and Regenerative Medicine, Medanta. He has been part of the team

that has issued national guidelines on liver transplantation during the pandemic.

> not, you have some antigens. Over time, they will get absorbed and stimulate the immune cells, little by little, even long after the infection is gone.

It is like inciting the enemy during a ceasefire. So, even the slightest skirmish on the bor-

bance in children's im-

Could this have been

mune systems

triggered by an

immune response

caused by Covid-19?

Covid-19 activates the

immune system. Whether

you are symptomatic or

der will activate the enemy in a big way. With demic prevented the exthe immune system activated by the viruses and the antigen hanging around in the gut afposure to usual antigens or whether the virus itself in ter recovery from Covid, even a minor infeca silent or infected form tion caused by the adenovirus or a repeat infeccreated the imbalance in tion of Covid can trigger a large immune response. And when a large immune response the immune system needs to be looked into. But there happens, the patient can get hepatitis. has been some distur-

Can we say children are at an increased risk of liver dysfunction after recovery?

It would be fair to say there is a risk of liver dysfunction after you recover from Covid. But the proportion of children or patients who get it is not large. It would be somewhere between the 10-20% mark. But then that translates to a significant number. In all seroprevalence studies done in India, 60-70% of children have been found to have Covid antibodies. So, if you are surmising that 70% of kids have developed infection and antibodies, they are susceptible to this kind of hepatitis. That's still a large number.

What are the preventive measures? There are two things that you can do. First, prevent kids from getting Covid-19. That is easier said than done. We know that even without vaccination in India, 70% of them had antibodies. Second, boost immunity with nutritious food, adequate sleep and intake of vitamin and mineral supplements whenever needed.

I would say that families that have had Covid-19 infection in their homes are very likely to have children who will be at risk of developing hepatitis. They should see a paediatrician and make sure that nutritious food and supplements, if necessary, are given.

When should parents visit a specialist?

As I said, if a kid is known to have had Covid-19 in the past, he/she should follow up with a paediatrician for at least three months after recovery. Even if the parent has had Covid-19, it is likely that the child has been exposed. This is true for children younger than eight years because it is very difficult to contain them.

Dr Soin spoke to Kaunain Sheriff M

LONGER VERSION ON www.indianexpress.com

—— THIS WORD MEANS

STORAGE GAIN IN WHEAT

Extra weight gained from absorption of moisture. How it is calculated, and why Punjab agencies want a waiver

HAVING ALREADY got a relaxation in Fair and Average Quality (FAQ) norms for wheat procurement this season, Punjab's state procurement agencies are now seeking a waiver of 'storage gain'. If allowed, the waiver would stand at around Rs 150 crore for the current season.

HOW IT WORKS: Wheat tends to gain some weight during storage. This is what is known as 'storage gain' and it mostly happens due to absorption of moisture by the endosperm of the wheat. State procurement agencies are required to give 1 kg wheat extra per quintal to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to compensate for storage gain.

While 20% of wheat procured by the FCI and the state procurement agencies, is moved immediately after procurement, it is usually on the remaining 80%, which is

moved out after July 1 every year, that storage gain has to be accounted for due to longer storage duration.

CALCULATIONS THIS YEAR: This year 96 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) wheat was procured in Punjab by all agencies. As 80% of this figure comes to 76.80 LMT, it means that storage gain would be around 7.68 lakh quintals on this. At MSP rate of Rs 2,015, it would cost state agencies Rs 154.74 crore if they are unable to supply 7.68 lakh quintals extra during movement of 76.80 LMT wheat. The state agencies argue that grain procured this year is both shrivelled and broken and therefore will not gain much weight.

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA

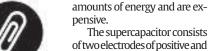
LONGER VERSION ON

Battery-like device that captures carbon dioxide while charging

NEW RESEARCH

RESEARCHERS HAVE developed a low-cost device that can selectively capture carbon dioxide gas while it charges. Then, when it discharges, the carbon dioxide can be released in a controlled way and collected to be reused or disposed of responsibly, the University of Cambridge said in a press release. The device has been described in the journal Nanoscale.

The supercapacitor device, which is similar to a rechargeable battery, is the size of a coin, and is made in part from sustainable materials including coconut shells and seawater. The University of Cambridge said the supercapacitor could help power carbon capture and storage technologies at much lower cost. The most advanced carbon capture technologies currently require large



of two electrodes of positive and negative charge. The team tried alternating from a negative to a positive voltage to extend the charging time from previous experiments. This improved the supercapacitor's ability to capture carbon.

The supercapacitor consists

"We found that that by slowly alternating the current between the plates we can capture double the amount of carbon dioxide than before," the release quoted lead researcher Dr Alexander Forse as saying. "Our next questions will involve investigating the precise mechanisms of carbon dioxide capture and improving them. Then it will be a question of scaling up."

Source: University of Cambridge



SIMPLY PUT

Behind current food inflation

The current inflation is supply shock-driven — and more about calories than proteins and micronutrients. What has been the impact of global calorie inflation on India, and what factors will determine trends?

ANNUAL CONSUMER FOOD INFLATION (%)

HARISH DAMODARAN& **PARTHASARATHI BISWAS**

NEW DELHI, PUNE, MAY 22

THE WORLD and India are witnessing a resurgence of food inflation. Between September 2021 and April 2022, consumer food price inflation in India has risen from 0.68% to 8.38% year on year. And with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index hitting new highs, it has reignited memories of the last great commodity inflation (from the mid-2000s till around 2012-13, briefly interrupted by the 2008-09 financial crisis).

But there's a difference between the two food inflationary episodes, especially in India.

The former was a structural, demand-led inflation, driven by rising incomes. Real incomes going up resulted in declining per capita consumption of cereals and sugar (which basically deliver calories) alongside growing demand for foods incorporating proteins (milk, pulses, egg, fish and meat) and micronutrients (fruits & vegetables). This dietary diversification also had a bearing on inflation. Between 2004-05 and 2012-13, the cumulative rise in the wholesale price index was 93.1% for sugar. 99.9% for cereals and 48.1% for edible oils; and to 108.1% for milk, 110.1% for vegetables, 141.3% for pulses and 144.5% for eggs, meat & fish.

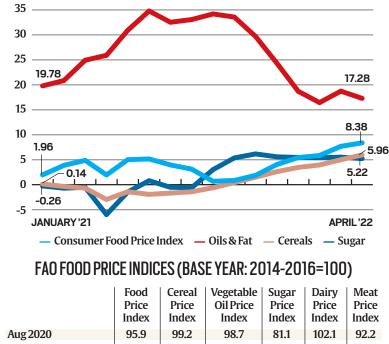
Now and then

The current food inflation, by contrast, is idiosyncratic and supply shock-driven. And it is more "calorie" than "protein" price inflation, a term coined by the former Reserve Bank of India deputy governor Subir Gokarn.

Since August 2020, when global demand started returning with the gradual lifting of lockdowns, the FAO's vegetable oil, cereal and sugar price indices have soared 141%, 71% and 50%, respectively. These exceed the 32% cumulative rise in the meat price index and 44% for dairy over the same period till April 2020.

Moreover, as the table shows, much of this inflation predated the war in Ukraine. Ukraine had drought in 2020-21, while Russia, in December 2020, announced export curbs on wheat, corn, barley, rye, sunflower and rapeseed for quelling domestic inflation. These coupled with shortages of migrant workers in Malaysia's oil palm plantations — drove up global prices of edible oils and cereals.

The war only worsened things - by squeezing supplies from the two countries having a substantial share of the world's wheat, corn,



Aug 2020	95.9	99.2	98.7	81.1	102.1	92.2		
Jan 2022	135.6	140.6	185.9	112.7	132.6	112.1		
Apr 2022	158.5	169.5	237.5	121.8	147.1	121.9		
Aug 20 to Jan 22 (%)	41.37	41.76	88.38	38.93	29.9	21.63		
Aug 20 to Apr 22 (%)	65.20	70.82	140.66	50.19	44.06	32.23		
barley and sunflower oil exports. Also, and sugar — has been relatively muted.								

Indonesia's restrictions on palm oil shipments to contain local inflation, and surging petroleum crude prices made it all the more attractive to divert sugar, corn, palm and soyabean oil for bio-fuel production.

There has been no such major inflation in proteins. The FAO's dairy and meat prices indices have gone up, but that has had more to do with increased cost of feed ingredients.

Impact on India

The transmission of the higher global calorie inflation to prices in India has been limited largely to vegetable fats. From the chart, it can be seen that retail edible oil inflation ruled at 20-35% levels through 2021, well before the surge in the overall consumer food price index from January. Interestingly, inflation in the other two calorie food commodities — cereals

The main reason for no imported inflation, at least until recently, in cereals and sugar is because of the country being a surplus producer of both. India's exports of cereals and sugar were valued at a record \$12.9 billion and \$4.6 billion respectively in 2021-22, Also, despite some 32.3 million tonnes (mt) of cereals being shipped out, overflowing stocks in government godowns still enabled an unprecedented 105.6 mt of grain to be sold through the public distribution system.

There has been a pick-up in cereal inflation of late. But that, basically in wheat, has come on the back of crop yield loss caused by the sudden heat wave. In other words, not imported. The transmission mechanism here has worked the other way round: With lower domestic production and depleting stocks prompting the Centre to ban wheat exports from India, global

All-India modal or most-quoted retail

prices have firmed up - translating into higher

inflation for importing countries. What about proteins?

prices of dals (split pulses) are lower now than a year ago. That includes chana (Rs 70 versus Rs 75/kg), tur/arhar (Rs 97.5 versus Rs 110), urad (Rs 97 versus Rs 105) and moong (Rs 98.5 versus Rs 105). The only exception is masoor, whose modal price of Rs 90/kg is higher than the Rs 85 at this time last year, according to Department of Consumer Affairs data.

The crash in international skim milk powder and butter fat prices has forced some correction in the domestic market as well. One can expect a similar easing of egg and meat prices. The heat subsiding should help reduce growing time and mortality of poultry birds.

On the whole, while there has been a recovery of demand from the reopening of hotels and other lockdown restrictions going, it is unlikely to trigger any "protein inflation". The demand-pull from rising incomes isn't strong enough this time round.

There is not much inflation in onion, potato and watermelons, cucumber, pumpkin, okra/ladies finger, gourds and other vegetables. Tomato prices are high, but not abnormally so.

Summing up

Food inflation resulting from war, drought, unseasonal rains and heat waves is different from structural demand-pull factors. The inflation now is not only more of the former, but also in foods mainly delivering calories rather than proteins, vitamins and minerals. That, to some extent, makes it worse than the previous inflation, which, in Gokarn's words, was "an inevitable consequence of rising affluence".

While high prices would also induce supply response from farmers, a lot hinges on the monsoon. Last year's monsoon was "normal" overall, but marked by an extended dry spell in July and then too much rain from late-August, followed by heavy unseasonal showers in December-January. One has to see how normal the "normal" forecast by the India Meteorological Department turns out to be.

Meanwhile, the good news is the Centre, on Saturday, cutting the excise duty on diesel by Rs 6/litre and many states also announcing reductions. That should have a further salutary effect on food inflation in the coming days.

LONGER VERSION ON

Ram Mohan Roy's legacy and its renewed relevance, 250 years on

PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI NEW DELHI, MAY 22

ONE OF the most influential social and religious reformers of the 19th century, Ram Mohan Roy, born on May 22, 1772, in what was then Bengal Presidency's Radhanagar in Hooghly district, would have turned 250 on Sunday, Amid changing social and religious circumstances in India, Roy's work in the spheres of women's emancipation, modernising education and seeking changes to religious orthodoxy finds new relevance.

Early life

Born into a prosperous Brahmin family, Ram Mohan Roy grew up when orthodox caste practices such as child marriage, polygamy and dowry were prevalent among the higher castes. He was himself married more than once in his childhood. The family's affluence also made the best in education ac-

cessible to him. Roy knew Bengali and Persian, but also Arabic, Sanskrit, and later, English. His exposure to the literature and culture of these languages bred in him a scepticism towards religious dogmas and social strictures. In particular, he chafed at practices such as Sati; his own sister-in-law had been a victim of Sati after his elder brother's death.

This was a time when the Mughals were waning and the East India Company was on the ascendancy in Bengal. Roy spent considerable time studying the Vedas and the Upanishads, but also religious texts of Islam and Christianity. He was intrigued by the Unitarian faction of Christianity and drawn by the precepts of monotheism. He wrote extensively on matters of theology, polity and human rights, and translated Sanskrit texts into Bengali, making them accessible.

"Ram Mohan did not quite make a distinction between the religious and the secular. He believed religion to be the site of all fundamental changes. What he fought was not religion but what he believed to be its perversion... (Rabindranath) Tagore called him a 'Bharatpathik' by which he meant to say that Ram Mohan combined in his person the underlying spirit of Indic civilisation, its spirit of pluralism, tolerance and a cosmic respect for all forms of life," said historian Amiya PSen, Sivadasani Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, and author of Rammohun Roy: A Critical Biography (2012).

First among liberals

Even though British consolidation of power was still at a nascent stage at the time, Roy could sense that change was afoot. Confident about the strength of his heritage



Ram Mohan Roy's portrait by Rembrandt Peale. Wikipedia

was simultaneously interested in religion, politics, law and jurisprudence, commerce and agrarian enterprise, Constitutions and civic rights, the unjust treatment of women and the appalling condition of the Indian poor... And he studied matters not in the

and open to imbibing from

other cultures, Roy was

among India;s first liberals.

In the introduction to his

biography, Sen writes, "He

abstract or in academic solitude but with the practical objective of securing human happiness and freedom. That made him a modern man."

In 1814, he started the Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends), to nurture philosophical discussions on the idea of monotheism in Vedanta and to campaign against idolatry, casteism, child marriage and other social ills. The Atmiya Sabha would make way for the Brahmo Sabha in 1828, set up with Debendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore's father.

Sati abolition, other reforms

During his 15 years in Calcutta, Roy became a prominent public intellectual. He campaigned for the modernisation of education, in particular the introduction of a Western curriculum, and started several educational institutions. In 1817, he collaborated with Scottish philanthropist David Hare to set up the Hindu College (now, Presidency University). The Anglo-Hindu School followed in 1822 and, in 1830, he assisted Alexander Duff in setting up the General Assembly's Institution (later Scottish Church College).

His relentless advocacy alongside contemporaries such as Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar finally led to the abolition of Sati under the governor-generalship of William Bentinck in 1829. Roy argued for the property rights of women, and petitioned the British for freedom of the press (in 1829 and 1830).

His Brahmo Sabha, which later became the Brahmo Samaj, evolved as a reaction against the upper-caste stranglehold on social customs. During the Bengal Renaissance, it ushered in social changes and birthed the Brahmo religion, a reformed spiritual Hinduism that believes in monotheism and the uniformity of all men, irrespective of caste, class or creed.

Non-conformism brought its share of infamy. Roy, who was given the title of Raja by the Mughal emperor Akbar II, and who was among the first Indians to gain recognition in the UK and in America for his radical thoughts, was also often attacked by his own countrymen who felt threatened by his reformist agenda, and by British reformers and functionaries whose views differed from his.

> LONGER VERSION ON www.indianexpress.com

12 THE WORLD



BIGGEST SHORTAGE IN ITS RECENT HISTORY

BABY FORMULA SHIPMENT LANDS IN US A military cargo plane carrying 78,000 pounds of infant formula landed in Indianapolis on Sunday. The Biden administration is seeking to stock empty

shelves with 1.5 million containers of Nestle specialty infant formulas.



At a polling station in Bangkok, Sunday. AP

THAILAND

Bangkok votes for governor 1st time since coup

VOTERS IN the Thai capital headed to the polls Sunday to elect a new governor in a contest delayed by a military coup that still reflects a divided country with main candidates either supported by the conservative establishment or the liberal opposition. A record 31 candidates entered the race, but the battle being watched most closely is between two who registered as independents. The candidates campaigned on issues including congestion, pollution and persistent flooding.

IRAN

Revolutionary **Guard colonel** shot dead

ASENIOR member of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard was killed outside his home in Tehran on Sunday by unidentified gunmen on a motorbike, state TV reported. Although the Guard gave only scant detail about the attack that occurred in broad daylight in the heart of Iran's capital, the group blamed the killing on "global arrogance," typically code for the United States and Israel. The two assailants shot Col. Hassan Sayad Khodayari five times in his unarmoured Iranianmade Kia Pride, state media said.

FRANCE

New minister for the disabled accused of rape

DAMIEN ABAD, France's newly appointed minister for Solidarity and the Disabled, has denied he raped two women, following accusations published on Sunday by the Mediapart website in an article based on interviews with the women. The women quoted by Mediapart said Abad had forced them to have unwanted sexual relationships with him in late 2010 and early 2011, they said. "I contest with the greatest force these accusations of sexual violence." he said in a statement. "The sexual relations I have had throughout my life have always been by mutual con-REUTERS

ZELENSKYY SEEKS TOUGHER SANCTIONS

Poland PM in Kyiv, addresses Parliament: Only Ukraine has right to decide its future

As strikes intensify in Donbas, lead negotiator rules out giving territorial concessions to Moscow

REUTERS KYIV, MAY 22

UKRAINE RULED out a ceasefire or any territorial concessions to Moscow as Russia stepped up its attack in the country's east and south, pounding the Donbas and Mykolaiv regions with air strikes and artillery fire.

"The war must end with the complete restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty," Ukraine's presidential chief of staff Andriy Yermak said in a Twitter post on Sunday.

The comments came as Polish President Andrzej Duda told lawmakers in Kyiv on Sunday the international community had to demand Russia's complete withdrawal and that sacrificing any of it would be a "huge blow" to the entire West.

"Worrying voices have appeared, saying that Ukraine should give in to (President Vladimir) Putin's demands," Duda said, the first foreign leader to address Ukrainian parliament in person since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion. "Only Ukraine has the right to decide about its future,"

Speaking to the same parliamentary session, Ukrainian



Poland President Andrzej Duda in the Ukrainian Parliament on Sunday. Reuters

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed a plea for stronger economic sanctions against Moscow. "Half-measures should not be used when aggression should be stopped," he said.

Shortly after both finished speaking, an air raid siren was heard in the capital. Meanwhile, Russia pressed

its offensive in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region Sunday. The heaviest fighting focused around

twin cities Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, interior ministry adviser Vadym Denysenko told Ukrainian tele-

Russia's defence ministry said on Sunday its forces pummeled Ukrainian command centres, troops and ammunition depots in Donbas and the Mykolaiv region in the south with air strikes and artillery.

Ukraine's lead negotiator,

Zelenskiy adviser Mykhailo Podolyak, ruled out any territorial concessions and rejected calls for an immediate ceasefire, saying it meant Russian troops would stay in occupied territories, which Kyiv could not accept.

"The (Russian) forces must leave the country and after that the resumption of the peace process will be possible," Podolvak said in an interview with Reuters on Saturday.

Fate of 2,500 POWs from Mariupol plant stirs concern

Pokrovsk, Ukraine: With Russia claiming to have taken prisoner nearly 2,500 Ukrainian fighters from the besieged Mariupol steel plant, concerns grew about their fate. Russia has declared its full control of the Azovstal steel plant, which for weeks was the last holdout in Mariupol.

Denis Pushilin, the pro-Kremlin head of an area of eastern Ukraine controlled by separatists, said the captured fighters were sure to face a tribunal. Russian officials and state media have sought to characterize the fighters as neo-Nazis and criminals. "I believe that justice must be restored," Russian state news agency Tass quoted Pushilin as saying

A prominent member of Russia's parliament, Leonid Slutsky, said Moscow was studying possibility of exchanging the fighters for Viktor Medvedchuk, a Ukrainian with close ties to Putin who faces criminal charges in Ukraine. He later walked back those remarks.



US President Joe Biden arrives in Tokyo on Sunday. Reuters

Biden visits Japan to launch economic plan to counter Beijing

REUTERS TOKYO, MAY 22

PRESIDENT IOE Biden arrived in Japan on Sunday to launch a plan for greater US economic engagement with the Indo-Pacific.

On the second leg of his first Asia trip as president, Biden is to meet with leaders of Japan, India and Australia, the "Quad," another cornerstone of his strategy to push back against China.

Biden met with Japanese business leaders in Tokyo shortly after arriving, said a person familiar with the matter.

On Monday, he will meet Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, to discuss Japan's plans to expand its military reach in response to China's growing might. Biden on Monday plans to

roll out the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), a programme to bind regional countries more

Beijing appeared to take a dim view of the planned IPEF.

Message for N Korea's Kim: 'Hello... Period'

Seoul: As US President Joe Biden was leaving Seoul for Japan, he had a simple message for North Korea's Kim Jong Un: "Hello... period."

Biden said he was "not concerned" about new North Korean nuclear tests, which would be the first in nearly five years. But his wry response when asked what message he had for Kim underscored the administration's low-key approach to the unresolved tensions with North Korea. REUTERS

"China welcomes initiatives conducive to strengthening regional cooperation but "opposes attempts to create division and confrontation", Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a statement.

The Godfather, on the beach: An offer one could not refuse



EXPRESS IN CANNES

SHUBHRA GUPTA

A MAN sacked from his job at a slaughter-house makes his way home on a snow-laden night, (Martin Gregore) enters his tiny town in rural Transylvania and gets off in front of his house, we see a fox run out of the bushes. Clearly, this is a place where people live in close proximity with nature: there are lumbering bears in the forest which abuts the town, and there are beasts who live in the houses.

'RMN', Cristian Mungiu's slow burn of a movie pulls back from the specific – a man who is at odds with his wife and his life — to the universal, townspeople riven by a visceral suspicion of the other. And that other could be ethnic Romanians (gypsy is not an endearing term in those parts), Bulgarians, Germans, and a group of Sri Lankan immigrants.

These people are dirty, yells a woman at a town meeting, face contorted in fury. And they put their hands in our bread She is referring to the Sri Lankans employed by the local bakery where they work long hours for very little money, but we can hear

echoes of this kind of anger against 'outsiders' everywhere.

In this microcosm set in a small European town is a larger story which speaks to snowballing provincialism, xenophobia, and ugly racism. RMN makes a powerful case for blurring boundaries between people.

'Brother and Sister'

The beauteous Marion Cottilard plays unforgiving sister to Melvil Poupaud's agonised brother in Cannes veteran Arnaud Desplechin's 'Brother them is deep, but nowhere in the nearly two-hour long film do we find concrete reasons for it.

Cottilard and Poupaud deliver intense performances, as they circle around each other, but after a point, our inquisitiveness turns into indifference: what is with these two fifty-something siblings? Will they, or will they not reconcile?

'The Godfather'

The highlight of my day was the open-air beach screening of the restored version of 'The Godfather'. which is celebrating its fiftieth year. Francis Ford Coppola's classic drew massive crowds at the Cinema de Plage. I've seen the film many times before, but the promise of this very Cannes experience pushed other things to the side: in Don Corleone's immortal words, it was an offer I couldn't, and didn't want to, refuse.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

COUNTER VIEW

A resident fixes a banner on a balcony in Davos, Switzerland, to protest against the World Economic Forum. The WEF, an event that sees the world's business and political elite

hobnob for days, is back two years after the Covid-19 pandemic struck. Reuters

Bilawal in China: Need to resolve disputes in S Asia Beijing: Pakistan's newly ap-Asia was in the common interest

pointed Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Sunday in Guangzhou city and emphasised that "it is critical to resolve all outstanding disputes" in South Asia in view of the challenges faced by the people due to the pandemic, soaring commodity prices, climate change and poverty.

This is Bilawal's maiden visit to China after he took over as foreign minister following the fall ment last month.

While reaffirming their strong support for each other's "core interests", both sides reiterated that a peaceful and prosperous South

of all parties, said a joint statement issued at the end of their meeting held in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou.

While it said Bilawal has "briefed the Chinese side about the latest developments in Jammu and Kashmir" the reference to all "outstanding disputes" raised speculation whether it also alluded to the border dispute between India and China, especially the current over two year long military standoff at Eastern Ladakh.

a chord with the Chinese people by highlighting his mother and grandfather's efforts in building the ties between the two coun-

Sri Lanka minister warns to stop fuel delivery after arson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO, MAY 22

THE SRI LANKAN government has warned that it will suspend the delivery of fuel if transporters are threatened, after an angry mob torched a petrol pump owner's house in the country's North Central Province.

Spontaneous protests have been reported at the filling stations across the country where consumers have been waiting in long serpentine queues for fuel for hours on end. Minister of Power and

Energy Kanchana Wijesekera

said if the public continues to threaten the truckers delivering the fuel, then the government will have to suspend fuel deliveries for the safety of the trans-

port workforce. On Saturday, the residence of a fuel station owner and dealer in Anuradhapura, situated in Sri Lanka's North Central Province, was torched by an irate mob after the station ran out of fuel.

Citing obstructions and threat calls, the Ceylon Petroleum Private Tanker Owners' Association on Sunday requested police protection while transporting fuel, online portal the Daily Mirror reported



A cargo ship carrying humanitarian aid from India arrives at a port in Colombo on Sunday. AP

Wijesekara, meanwhile, said a ship carrying petrol had begun unloading in Colombo port on Saturday night, and another ship carrying petrol is scheduled to arrive on May 25.

Sri Lankan police on Sunday began a nation-wide raid on those hoarding fuel for resale. Police spokesman Nihal Thalduwa has warned that anyone keeping unauthorised fuel and cooking gas would face arrest.

India on Saturday provided another 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Sri Lanka under the credit line facility to the island nation which is grappling with its worst economic crisis.

SEEKING HELP TO CURE DEPRESSION USING HALLUCINOGENS SUCH AS TOAD POISON

'I want to reset my brain': Female US veterans turn to psychedelic therapy

ERNESTO LONDOÑO TIJUANA, MEXICO

PLUMES OF incense swirled through the dimly lit living room as seven women took turns explaining what drove them to sign up for a weekend of psychedelic therapy at a villa in northern Mexico with sweeping ocean views

A former US Marine said she hoped to connect with the spirit of her mother, who killed herself 11 years ago. An Army veteran said she had been sexually assaulted by a relative as a child. A handful of veterans said they had been sexually assaulted by fel-

The wife of a Navy bomb dis-

posal expert choked up as she lamented that years of unrelenting combat missions had turned her husband into an absent, dysfunctional father. Kristine Bostwick, 38, a for-

mer Navy corpsman, said she hoped that putting her mind through ceremonies with mindaltering substances would help her make peace with the end of a turbulent marriage and perhaps ease the migraines that had become a daily torment.

"I want to reset my brain from the bottom up," she said during the introductory session of a recent three-day retreat, wiping away tears. "My kids deserve it. I deserve it."

A growing body of research into the therapeutic benefits of psychedelic therapy has generated enthusiasm among some psychiatrists and venture capitalists.

Measures to decriminalise psychedelics, fund research into their healing potential and establish frameworks for their medicinaluse have been passed with bipartisan support in city councils and state legislatures across the United States in recent years.

Much of the expanding appeal of such treatments has been driven by veterans of America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Having turned to experimental therapies to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, addiction and depression, many former military members have become effusive advocates for a wider embrace



A ceremony initiating the psychedelic retreat. Meridith Kohut/ NYT

of psychedelics.

Psychedelic retreat participants often pay thousands of dollars for the experience. But

these female veterans and spouses of veterans who had traveled to Mexico for treatment at the Mission Within were at-

Hope Project. The groups, founded by an Army ranger and the wife of a Navy SEAL, raise money to make psychedelic therapy affordable for people from military backgrounds. The Mission Within, on the outskirts of Tijuana, is run by Dr.

tending for free, courtesy of the

Heroic Hearts Project and the

has focused almost exclusively on treating veterans. Dr. Polanco said he had treated more than 600 American veterans in Mexico. "They un-

Martín Polanco, who since 2017

derstand what it takes to achieve peak performance? In the beginning, he said, he treated male veterans almost exclusively. But recently, he started

receiving many requests from fe-

wives and began running women-only retreats. With the exception of clini-

male veterans and military

cal trials, psychedelic therapy is currently performed underground or under nebulous legality. As demand soars, a handful of countries in Latin America, including Costa Rica, Jamaica and Mexico, have become hubs for experimental protocols and clinical studies.

In Mexico, two of the substances that Dr. Polanco administers — ibogaine, a plant-based psychoactive commonly used to treat addiction, and 5-MeO-DMT, a powerful hallucinogen derived from the poison of the Sonoran desert toad — are neither unlawful nor approved for

bin mushrooms, may be taken legally in ceremonies that follow Indigenous traditions.

medical use. The third, psilocy-

Dr. Charles Nemeroff, the chairman of the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Texas at Austin, which recently started a center for psychedelic research, said that the hype about the curative potential of psychedelics has outpaced hard evidence. The risks which include episodes of psychosis - are considerable, he said.

The women at the Mexico retreat understood the risks. But several said they had lost faith in conventional treatments like antidepressants and had heard enough inspiring stories from friends to take a leap of faith. NYT

Lucknow

Thiem out of sync, out of French Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS PARIS, MAY 22

IT ALL used to come so easily for Dominic Thiem on a tennis court _ his powerful forehand, his elegant backhand, his hit-whichshot-when calculations, all fine-tuned to the point of a title at the U.S. Open and three other Grand Slam final appearances, including two at Roland Garros.

Nowadays, even though the pain from last year's torn tendon in his right wrist is no longer there, the strokes and, most disconcertingly, the wherewithal, are not what they once were, to the extent that his first-round exit at the French Open on Sunday was his 10th consecutive loss. The situation has become dire enough that Thiem, a 28-year-old Austrian once ranked No. 3 but now No. 194, acknowledged after being beaten 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 by Hugo Dellien that perhaps it's time for him to head to the lower-level Challenger Tour to get a win and gain some confidence.

After lamenting his forehand, his backhand and a too-low first-serve percentage, Thiem got to the bigger issue:"Sometimes, I do really stupid decisions during the rally, drop shots or down-the-line (groundstrokes) at the wrong moment.(In) match match situations, I'm not playing well. ... Then, for example, there was one game today where I did four or five forehand return mistakes in a row, where I'm thinking, 'What the heck is happening?"' His quick departure was not the only noteworthy development on a cloudy, occasionally drizzly Day 1 at the year's second major tennis tournament, which welcomed back pre-pandemic sights and sounds of full attendance and no masks in the stands.

Given Thiem's troubles _ sure, he was the runner-up to Rafael Nadal in Paris in 2018 and 2019, and to Novak Djokovic at the Australian Open in 2020, but his last victory came in May 2021 – there were other results that probably were more surprising.

 $Chiefly in that \, category \, would \, be \, No. \, 6 \, seed$ Ons Jabeur's 3-6, 7-6 (4), 7-5 loss to 56thranked Magda Linette of Poland.

Jabeur, a Tunisian who is the first Arab woman to win a WTA title and first to reach a Grand Slam quarterfinal, acknowledged: "I was expecting myself to go far in this tournament." As were others. That's because Jabeur began the day with a tour-leading 17 wins on clay this season, including taking the title at the Madrid Open and reaching the final of the Italian Open.

Another top-10 women's seed _ and the 2016 champion at the place _ was sent home when Garbine Muguruza was defeated 2-6,6-3, 6-4 by 46th-ranked Kaia Kanepi of Estonia. Muguruza beat Serena Williams in the final at Roland Garros six years ago and Venus Williams in the final at Wimbledon in 2017, but she now has lost her opening match in Paris two straight years.

Patel hopes FIFA doesn't ban India after SC intervention

MIHIR VASAVDA

FEARING A FIFA ban, which could grind most activities to a halt, former All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel said he will talk to FIFA president Gianni Infantino and secretary-general Fatma Samoura to request them not to take such strong action. Patel also said he'll speak with the Supreme Court-appointed Committee Administrators (CoA) and ask them to expedite the election process, underlining that 'dragging this issue can be very disastrous' for Indian football.

On Wednesday, due to a logjam in finalising AIFF's constitution to hold elections, the Supreme Court formed a three-member CoA to look after the day-to-day affairs of the federation, thus bringing an unceremonious end to Patel's stint as president. The Supreme Court also empowered the CoA – comprising Justice Anil Dave, ex-Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi and former India captain Bhaskar Ganguly - 'to take decisions on holding of tournaments, selection of players and all other matters necessary for the proper governance of the federation.'

Patel said the AIFF lawyers had pointed out to the court that this could amount to third-party interference and thus violate FIFA's statutes, leading to India's suspension. "All possible scenarios were pointed out and after that, it was up to the honourable court to decide," Patel, whose term officially ended in December 2020, said. "There was a phone call from FIFA on Friday asking for the order of the Supreme Court as they wanted to study that.

As per FIFA statutes, its Congress can suspend a member association at the request of the Council. However, the all-powerful FIFA Council can also temporarily suspend an association with immediate effect without a vote in the Congress.

The impact of FIFA's suspension could be 'drastic', Patel said. To start with, it could lead to India being thrown out of the Asian Cup qualifiers, which are scheduled to begin in Kolkata on June 8. The country could also lose the hosting rights of the Under-17 Women's World Cup, set to take place in October this year, Indian clubs will be barred from competing in continental tournaments and additionally, they will also be unable to sign foreign players other than those already on their rosters.

As per the court order, the CoA has been given time until July 15 to finalise the draft of the constitution before the next hearing takes place on July 21. The CoA has hinted that elections will be held within two or three months from the day the court approves the new constitution.



Former AIFF head Praful Patel says he will talk to the world body, and wants CoA to expedite election process

'Don't underestimate FIFA's power'

Patel said he will use his position as a Council member to request his colleagues to give the country time till July-end to complete the election process. "I don't want to pre-judge. FIFA is like a government, it's systems-driven. You have seen how FIFA reacts very strongly. They have suspended major football countries," Patel said, adding that he got an impression that 'AFC and FIFA legal teams have offered their services to quickly find a solution." I will do my best to tell them that if the court allows early elections, do not punish Indian football, but that can only be in the form of a request. I will do my best to talk to them in writing and in person."

The Rajya Sabha member added: 'Dragging this issue can be very disastrous. If it's expeditiously dealt with, it'll be the best for Indian football. In the BCCI, we saw years and years of the CoA running the sport. For the ICC, if India doesn't play, there's no cricket in the world. In football, if India doesn't play, no one will miss it. I can't tell the courts what to do, but my suggestion is, please do not underestimate FIFA's strength to take radical decisions.'

Patel looked back at his decade-plus long stint as the head of Indian football, which has been riddled with controversies, without any regrets and 'with a sense of satisfaction that one has laid the foundation for many more

During his tenure, the AIFF was accused of succumbing to pressure from its commercial rights holders, IMG-Reliance (now Reliance Sports), on many football-related issues. And while the federation's dependence on corporate sponsors' money increased, its government grant got slashed due to poor performance of the national team.

Patel insisted that the government support for football has always been 'very minimal' and lashed out at their policies. "They say 'you win a medal and we'll give you more money'. This is not the right approach. How can you say that? It's a very ridiculous argument," Patel said.

'Challenge to balance interests'

The career politician accepted it was a 'challenge' to balance the interests of corporates who pour in money, but said he 'never let anybody dictate the way AIFF does its duty. "Nobody is doing charity. They give us money and get rights for lots of things," Patel said.

He cited the example of the impending merger of the Indian Super League and I-League, which has been one of the prickliest issues of his tenure.

"There was so much resistance from our partners (to merge the two leagues). But we could not let Indian football be driven by a closed league that would destroy it in the future. I can say with a sense of pride that I did push for it. I said, 'nothing doing, unless this issue is resolved, there is no future for Indian football'.

From next season onwards, the winners of the I-League will get promoted to the ISL and from the 2024-25 season, a promotionrelegation system will be introduced in the top division. "The next people (in charge of AIFF) also will face that challenge. Integrating ISL with I-League will be a major challenge," he said, guaranteeing that there will be no going back on the merger promises already made.

'My position in politics would've helped AIFF than hurt them'

Patel said juggling issues like these showed that heading a federation required people with all kinds of skill-sets, going against the argument that former players should be elected to the top posts. Last month, the Madras High Court observed that only sportspersons, and not politicians, should be office-bearers of sports federations.

Patel said a democratic process should be followed to elect office-bearers, and everyone should be allowed to be a part of it. 'Administration of football has nothing to do with just understanding the game. I understand the game as well but running the federation is not playing the game. The leader of the federation has to be administering the game, and balance various interests," he said. "I don't think it is right to say politicians cannot perform a job. My position in politics would have helped the AIFF on more occasions than hurt them."

ASIA CUP

Sardar's coaching debut talking point as India face Pak

MIHIR VASAVDA

BIRENDRA LAKRA and SV Sunil smiled sheepishly when asked how they felt playing in a team coached by former teammate and captain Sardar Singh. "It's not weird under him. He's a strict disciplinarian," Sunil said. Lakra chipped in: "He has been a role model. He's always been known for his fitness and discipline."

It's come full circle for the trio that formed the core of the team when India clinched the Asia Cup at the previous edition in 2017. Then, after heading in different directions, they are reunited.

Sunil, playing his fourth Asia Cup, a testimony to his longevity, was on a sabbatical when he was summoned to join the training camp for the Commonwealth Games. Lakra was enjoying his retirement, juggling time between family and office work, when he, too, got the call-up. Sardar, who'd been earning his coaching credentials, had been waiting for this opportunity.

The Asia Cup, starting in Jakarta on Monday, might not be of huge significance for the defending champions. The teams that reach the semifinals of the tournament will make it to January's World Cup, but India, being hosts, do not have to worry about qualification. Yet, when they take the field against Pakistan in their opening match, there'll be some fascinating storylines to follow. Sardar's debut in the dugout - he'll be working alongside junior team coach BJ Kariappa - will be one of them.

The other important thread to follow during the tournament will be the return of Simranjeet Singh. The forward last played in India's bronze medal playoff at the Tokyo Olympics against Germany, where he scored two goals that had a decisive role in the outcome of the match.

Since then, he'd been nursing an injury and missed all Pro League matches as well as the Asian Champions Trophy.

New faces

Simranjeet's comeback, coupled with the return of Sunil and Lakra, will be crucial for India given that the rest of the team has littleto-no senior international experience. Ten players, who were all part of last year's junior World Cup, will make their senior team debut on Monday. This includes the likes of drag-flicker Yashdeep Siwach, defenders Abhisek Lakra and Manjeet, midfielder Vishnukant Singh and forward Uttam Singh. Midfielders Mareeswaren Sakthivel and Sheshe Gowda BM, and forwards Abharan Sudey, Pawan Rajbhar and S Karthi will also make their first India appearances on Monday. The youngsters will immediately be thrown at the deep end when they open

Sardar Singh will be working alongside junior team coach BJ Kariappa.

Simranjeet's comeback, coupled with the return of Sunil and Lakra, will be crucial for India given that the rest of the team has little-to-no senior international experience.

their campaign against Pakistan, who too have travelled with a young squad as part of their rebuilding process.

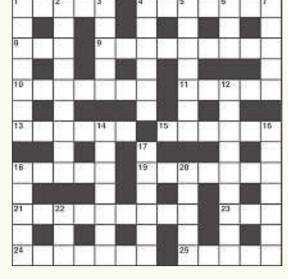
"We'll need to motivate them, guide them. If we get affected by the excitement and the pressure of playing Pakistan, the younger players too will come under pressure," Sunil said.

This young bunch, led by two veterans and coached by a former India captain, was selected for this tournament as preparation for July-August's Commonwealth Games. With an eve on the Asian Games, India had decided to send their second-string squad to Birmingham. To give the hastily-assembled group some match practice, Hockey India chose to send the group for the Asia Cup, where not a lot is at stake from an Indian point of view.

Now with the Asian Games postponed, it's unclear whether the main playing group coached by Graham Reid will take part at the CWG or the team currently in Jakarta.

The players aren't fretting over it. "I am at a stage of my career where I approach each tournament as if it's my last," Sunil said. "So, I hope to win this one, and not worry about what's in store in the future."

CROSSWORD 4747



ACROSS

- Group tutorial (5) 4 Get mail perhaps but not
- without delay (4,3) 8 A low sound (3)
- 9 Goes ashore in South Africa to get the picture (9) 10 A sitter becoming a performer
- 11 Not rounds used in an erratic salvo(5)
- 13 One can never be sure if one has them (6) 15 Dazed state possibly produced
- by Proust (6) 18 You may play it but don't let
- little Josephine (5)
- 19 Jams and preserves (7) 21 A plain fellow treated like a
- doormat (7,2)
- $23\ \ One\ note\ produces\ anger(3)$ 24 Wrings out (7)
- 25 Do some spadework for the figure (5)

- 1 Order the ambitious officer hopes to get(7)
- A call for military revolution
- These are sure to be brisk for beer on board (5)
- Well-filled vessel (6) Fail to include something so I
- must be corrected (4,3) Start leading the field (3) Think of Americans (5)
- 12 A northerner brought up fish that's frightful (9) 14 Soldier puts nothing in report
- sent back (7)
- 16 Relation to treat with consideration(7)
- 17 Pass around the quarterdeck
- 18 Cook and sew (5)
- 20 Dance around when beaten (5) 22 Take food from the attendant (3)

Solutions Crossword 4746: Across: 1 Perfect fit, 8 Put on, 9 Allured, 10 Student, 11 Growl, 12 Totems, 14 Lyrics, 17 Venus, 19 Umbrage, 21 Lariats, 22 Waist, 23 Headstrong. Down: 2 Entrust, 3 Fence, 4 Chaste, 5 Fall guy, 6 Torso, 7 Adolescent, 8

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

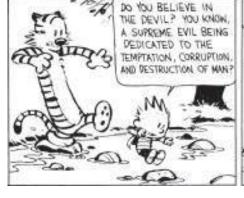








CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson





I'M NOT SURE MAN



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong







JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get are just a way of showing other people that we have respect for them - Bill Kelly (4,7)



AETDNN AENTGM them - Bill Kelly

Difficulty Level 4s Instructions To solve a Sudoku puzzle. every digit from 1 to 9

must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s =

8 6 5 8 8 8

SUDOKU 4842 2 9 6 5 1 8 4 7 3 4 3 8 9 6 7 5 2 1 7 5 1 3 4 2 6 8 9 9 6 1 7 2 5 4 6 2 5 7 8 3 194 OLUTION 4 3 9 8 1 6 3 6 9 8 2 1 7 4 5 1 8 4 6 7 5 9 3 2

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) May I advise you to keep a close watch on all financial

Today's epic planetary influences will have an amazing range of effects, but the impact on your financial, emotional and material competing for a prize, go for broke.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) Tomorrow's challenging lunar pattern is already casting its shadow over your affairs in the nicest possible way. This will be an

optimum weekend for creative expression, cultural events,

romantic encounters and happy relationships GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) You may imagine that you know what

> are probably mistaken. Rarely have you been so likely to pick up the wrong end of the stick. Please take proper advice in all legal, foreign and travel matters. After all, if you're properly prepared, then you'll be one step ahead of the game.

is going on, but you

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) Jupiter and Venus

are as benevolent a pair of planets as you could wish to have watching over you. Generosity on your part will win friends and impress people, protecting you in the

present and gaining you allies

for the future: give now to

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) With so much planetary activity

taking place today. chiefly a stunning Sun-Moon angle, you'd do very well to take centre stage. Watch out for flying missiles, though, and duck if anything comes in your direction. Emotionally, by the way, family relationships take first place.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) I am sure that you



have been put out, pushed around and generally had

your interests ignored, but then that's all part of life's rich tapestry. This is no time to complain about the world being unfair. You'll just have to live with it like everyone else.

Recent unexpected developments at

BY PETER VIDAL LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

work have not undermined your confidence or commitment. Far from it. If your professional been dented, I suspect that the real cause lies elsewhere. An intimate relationship could be proving costly, but a generous

gesture will be worth it SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Today's lunar alignments are about the most intriguing that there have been for a long time. The

news will be exciting, even if you are enjoying placid times. It's doubly significant for all new relationships, so go forward with hope in your

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22) All the extraordinary

planetary activity now taking place must be harnessed and used to channel your noble and selfless instincts. You have a clear choice whether to go all out for personal interest or to realise that material security is, in the grand scheme of things, purely

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) It's a day of major planetary configurations, but

whether you are directly involved in today's dramatic events, or merely a passive observer is a moot point. I take the view that the latter is more likely. That way you can put your feet up while partners pick up the pieces.

AOUARIUS (Ian 21- Feb 19) Today's lunar patterns are among the most striking to hit your sign for a knocked slightly off course

good few months. If you're not there'll be something wrong, for it means that you're not directly in tune with your stars. After all, nobody promised it would be easy.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) A helpful aspect between the Sun and Jupiter is only one of a series of

three months.

benevolent planetary alignments which is causing you to think again. There'll probably be a major mystery to solve. The answers will come next month, but you might not get the full picture for another

Lucknow

Answer: **Good manners** are just a way of showing other people that we have respect for SOLUTION: MAKER, SCOOP, TANNED, MACNET

63PTS

57PTS

Hockey: Asia Cup India vs Pakistan; 5pm Live on Star Sports Network French Open Live on Sony Sports Network, 2.30pm

Man City eclipse rivals United to become EPL's

dominant force

SHASHANK NAIR

JUST DAYS before Manchester City won their fourth league title in five years, Pep Guardiola compared his team's consistency in winning the Premier League to Alex Ferguson's golden era when he achieved the same level of dominance. Perhaps, it was a statement designed to

rub salt into the wounds of their neighbours. On Sunday, Guardiola and City won the title in a dramatic finale. City came back from 0-2 down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 with Liverpool breathing down their necks.

When a cash-strapped City was bought by Sheikh Mansour, their initial days of playing catch-up to an English football dynasty prompted a 'money can't buy everything' admonition. Yet City stuck to their guns, stressing that their project had nothing to do with United.

City's 2011-12 title confirmed that the threat was real. Ferguson came back next season to win the Premier League, but the writing was on the wall.

In 2012, City hired Ferran Soriano and Txiki Begiristain - the architects of Barcelona's famed success in the late 2000s and early 2010s. The owners of City Football Group then opened a £200m football campus - one that left behind Manchester United's famed youth facilities in the rearview mirror by some margin.

Just as City continued to lay the red carpet for one of the greatest managers football has seen, United embarked on life after Ferguson and club CEO David Gill. City waited while Guardiola took over Bayern Munich. And in 2016, they finally had their target.

During this time, and in the years to come, City flouted financial rules, unlike any club before them with inflated sponsorship deals. When they were taken to task by UEFA for breaking Financial Fair Play rules, the Court of Arbitration for Sport provided the Citizens with get-out-of-jail cards. Money talked and titles started to flow.

Meanwhile, at the other end of town, a club geared towards proactively searching for the best deals in the market was now trying to break transfer records in a desperate attempt to close the gap. In three seasons at United, Jose Mourinho, Guardiola's eternal rival, had a net transfer spend of just under 315 million pounds. The money resulted in Paul Pogba, Romelu Lukaku and Zlatan Ibrahimovic signing for the Red Devils.

While rebuilds and managerial changes were taking place at United, City's golden period under Guardiola began in 2017. Their closest challenge has come from Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool, who managed to win their first-ever Premier League title, spending far less, but wisely. The Champions League is the only crown that evades the Citizens but signing a striker like Erling Braut Haaland could wipe away that blemish as well.

When a cash-strapped City was bought by Sheikh Mansour, their initial days of playing catch-up to an English football dynasty prompted a 'money can't buy everything' admonition

How City nearly blew up 14-point cushion & became champions on the final day

In mid-January, Manchester City were coasting to another EPL title. Guardiola's side had opened up a 14-point gap over Liverpool. However, Liverpool's incredible form since the start of 2022, coupled with a few slip-ups by City, helped them trim the lead to just one point by mid-March and take the title race right to the very last day of the season. City, ultimately held on to defend the title

•	•	•	•	•	•
JANUARY 15					JAN
1. MANCHESTER CITY			56	PTS	1. N
3.LIVERPOOL			42	PTS	2.L
JANUARY 16					JAN
1. MANCHESTER CITY			56	PTS	1. N
2.LIVERPOOL			45	PTS	2.L
					1

Kevin de Bruyne's superb curling shot helps City beat second-placed Chelsea 1-0. City, with the win, race 13 points ahead of Chelsea and 14 more than third-placed Liverpool. The following day, the Reds beat Brentford to move to the second spot but remain 11 points behind the leaders.

JANUARY 22	
1. MANCHESTER CITY	57PTS
2.LIVERPOOL	45PTS
JANUARY 23	
1. MANCHESTER CITY	57PTS
2.LIVERPOOL	48PTS

Manchester City drop points away from home to Southampton, who defend deep and hold the reigning champions to a 1-1 draw. The following day, Liverpool make most of City's slip-up by beating Crystal Palace and reducing the gap to nine points.



Manager Pep Guardiola masterminded Manchester City's title run. Reuters

	FEBRUARY 19	
7	1. MANCHESTER CITY	63 PTS
N	2. LIVERPOOL	57 PTS
	City lose to Tottenham 3-2 v same day, Liverpool thrash l 3-1 to cut the deficit to six p	Norwich City
2	FEBRUARY 25	
	1. MANCHESTER CITY	63 PTS

2. LIVERPOOL Postponed due to Covid-19, Liverpool play their rescheduled match against Leeds United and thrash them 6-0 to get within three points of Man City.

1. MANCHESTER CITY 2.LIVERPOOL MARCH 17 1. MANCHESTER CITY 2.LIVERPOOL

A resilient Crystal Palace hold Manchester City to a goalless draw at Selhurst Park even though Guardiola's team dominated the proceedings.

A couple of days later, Liverpool produce a stunning performance to beat Arsenal 2-0 away from home and cut City's gap at the top to just one point.

3-2... No. 1

Down 0-2 to Aston Villa and title slipping out of their grasp, Man City stage stunning fightback to win fourth EPL title in five years



REUTERS

MANCHESTER CITY won their fourth Premier League title in five years on Sunday but nearly let the trophy slip from their hands, coming back from two goals down to beat Aston Villa with three goals inside an electrifying five minutes late in the second half.

After an afternoon of high nerves, laced with fear of Liverpool pipping them to the title at the post, relieved and jubilant City fans poured on to the field at the final whistle.

Matty Cash put Villa in front in the 37th minute with a fine header from a Lucas Digne $cross\,from\,the\,left\,flank, and\,the\,mood\,in\,the$ stadium instantly changed. The edgy mood among the home fans turned to desperation after Philippe Coutinho then doubled the lead for Villa with a goal of pure simplicity. Ollie Watkins headed on from a goal kick by keeper Robin Olsen long, and the former Liverpool midfielder Coutinho produced a brilliant first touch to cut inside and then drilled the ball into the bottom corner. Liverpool were level with Wolves at the time of Coutinho's goal, but City knew that a goal for Juergen Klopp's side could now take the title away from them.

But then came the City comeback blitz that sealed the title regardless of events at Anfield. Two substitutes combined for the first, with Ilkay Gundogan heading in a Raheem Sterling time substitute Oleksandr Zinchenko, on the left flank, then showed composure to pull back to Rodri, and the Spaniard delivered a pinpoint finish -- side-footing into the bottom corner from 20 metres out. The title-winning goal came in the 81st minute when De Bruyne whipped in a low cross to Gundogan, who tapped in from close range, sending the crowd into rapturous delight.



Manchester City players celebrate after winning their fourth Premier League title in five years on Sunday. Reuters

SPURS TAKE FINAL CL SPOT

					GD	
4. Spurs						
5. Arsenal	38	22	3	13	13	69

■ Norwich 0 lost to Tottenham 5 Arsenal 5 bt Everton 1

Arsenal hammered Everton 5-1 on Champions League place - and it was the visiting fans who were celebrating at the end after Liverpool missed out on the title.

Arsenal were on top from first to last and led 2-1 at the break through a Gabrie Martinelli strike and an Eddie Nketiah header. Second-half strikes for Cedric Soares, Gabriel Magalhaes and Martin Odegaard were a fair reflection of their

dominance. However, Tottenham Hotspur's 5-0 thrashing of Norwich City ensured they remained fourth, leaving Arsenal in fifth. The Londoners, who last played in the

Champions League in 2016-17 after 19

straight years of qualifying under Arsene Wenger, will have to settle for a place in the Europa League, which itself is something of a success after they began the season with three straight defeats. Two goals from Dejan Kulusevski for

Harry Kane header guaranteed Antonio Conte's side a fourth-place finish and a spot in Europe's elite club competition for the first time in three seasons.

At full time the home fans gave Arsenal a good send-off after a troubled season but it was the Everton supporters, still giddy from their great escape on Thursday, who were making all the noise.

MAN U SEAL EUROPA BERTH								
	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts		
6. Man U 7. W. Ham	38	16	10	12	0	58		
7.W. Ham	38	16	8	14	9	56		

■ Crystal Palace 1 bt Man Utd 0 ■ Brighton 3 bt West Ham 1

Manchester United secured a ticket to next Premier League campaign in sixth place - despite losing 1-0 away at Crystal Palace.

Forward Wilfried Zaha scored against his former team in the first half as Palace celebrated their first-ever Premier League victory over United at home. Ralf Rangnick's tenure as interim manager came to an end with United collecting 58 points, their lowest tally in Premier League history.

United were nevertheless able to hold on to sixth place after West Ham United suffered a 3-1 defeat at Brighton & Hove Albion and had to settle for seventh.

Watched by new manager Erik ten Hag, who joined them from Ajax Amsterdam, from the stands, United produced a lacklustre display and went behind in the 37th minute as Zaha finished smartly from the edge of the box after picking up a loose pass and cutting across the United defence.

The visitors tried to improve their game in the second half but they looked poor in attack and barely created chances as Patrick Vieira's Palace ended the season on a winning note and took the 12th spot.

LEEDS WIN RELEGATION BATTLE P W D L GD Pts 17. Leeds 38 9 11 18 -37 38 18. Burnley 38 7 14 17 -19 35 ■ Brentford 1 lost to Leeds Utd 2 ■ Burnley 1 lost to Newcastle 2

meant Leeds United ensured Premier League survival with a 2-1 victory away at nine-man Brentford that saw Burnley go down instead. A Raphinha penalty gave Leeds a second-

Jack Harrison's stoppage-time winner

half lead but they conceded a goal from Sergi Canos in the 78th minute before Harrison fired home four minutes into stoppage time to spark ecstatic celebrations. Burnley's 2-1 loss to Newcastle United at

Turf Moor meant Leeds finished three points above them, with 38 points being enough to ensure their safety. They had trailed Burnley on goal difference going into the final day's fixtures.

points from their previous five league games, rode their luck initially before taking advantage of their numerical superiority to set up a dramatic victory. "I believed all the way we were going to

do this," said Leeds manager Jesse Marsch.

"This business is about belief and exuding it as a leader. I believed in the players and their resolve.'

COUNTY TO COUNTRY

IPL snub turns out to be blessing in disguise as Pujara returns

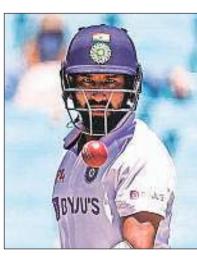
DEVENDRA PANDEY MAY 22

GOING UNSOLD in the Indian Premier League auction in February has turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Cheteshwar Pujara. While the IPL was on, Pujara travelled to England for a highly successful county stint with Sussex, which has helped him force his way back into the India Test squad for the deciding Birmingham Test in July.

'You can say that now in hindsight. Had I been picked by an IPL team, there were major chances that I wouldn't have got any games. I would have just gone (to nets) and practised. Getting match practice and practice in the nets is always different. So when the county thing happened, I just said yes. The major reason I said yes was that I wanted my old rhythm back," Pujara told The Indian Express from Paris, where he is on holiday.

With scores of 6, 201 not out, 109, 12, 203, 16, 170* and 3, Pujara slammed 720 runs for Sussex in five County Championship games at a staggering average of 120 across April and May. The stunning performance raised his hopes of making an India come-

"I was positive, there was no doubt about it. The way my county stint went, I was hopeful that I will make a comeback to the Indian team, But when I went to play county cricket, the India comeback was never on my mind; I just wanted to find my rhythm and I knew one big innings would help me find my rhythm back."



Cheteshwar Pujara has scored 720 runs in five County matches for Sussex. File

Pujara is back, but the other veteran batsman who had also been dropped for the home Tests against Sri Lanka in March. Ajinkya Rahane, hasn't made it back. The fates of the two middle-order stalwarts had been seemingly intertwined for quite a while. Their struggles to post big runs had played out in parallel; they had fought against their fading fortunes with a brave, counter-attacking century partnership in the second innings of the Johannesburg Test against South Africa in January. Nevertheless, time had appeared to run out when the na-

Umran, Arshdeep get maiden call-ups

New Delhi: Umran Malik and Arshdeep Singh, young pacers with vastly contrasting styles, have been given maiden callups to the India squad for the five-match home T20I series against South Africa starting June 9.

With speeds often above 150kph, Sunrisers Hyderabad tearaway Umran has been among the leading wickettakers in the IPL, and the sight of him shattering stumps has captured the nation's imagination, although he's gone for runs too. Meanwhile, left-armer Arshdeep has conceded just 7.70 runs an over for Punjab Kings, which is highly creditable considering he is regularly used at the death.

Hardik Pandya and Dinesh Karthik

tional selectors opted to try out fresh talent for the Sri Lanka Tests. In February, the IPL auction had taken place, where both Pujara and Rahane had put in their names. Pujara would go unsold, and it had seemed even Rahane would, before he was picked up at his base price of Rs 1 crore, the sole bid coming from Kolkata Knight

Riders. And that is where, in hindsight, the

duo's fortunes diverged. By the time Pujara began his county stint against Derbyshire on April 14, Rahane's IPL season had ground to a halt after only 80 have made comebacks, riding on their IPL showing. Pandya has led debutants Gujarat Titans to the top of the table, batted responsibly and bowled nearly 25 overs. Karthik, who hasn't played for India since the 2019 World Cup, has finished multiple games for Royal Challengers Bangalore at a strike-rate of 191.33.

T20I SQUAD: KL Rahul (Captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan, Deepak Hooda, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (vice-captain)(wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), Hardik Pandya, Venkatesh Iyer, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik

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runs at just a-run-a-ball strike rate from his first five matches. From their sixth game on April 15, KKR would drop Rahane. And by the time he got his next game, on May 9, Pujara had racked up 720 runs. A 95-Test veteran churning out doubles and daddy tons in the country where the team is set to play a series decider - the timing, weight and significance of Pujara's runs forced the selectors to bring him back.

For Pujara, the aim at Sussex was to get 150-plus scores. "If you look at my innings in the past, I was getting 80s, 90s, so I never felt

I was out of form even when the big runs were not coming. I was just hoping to get big runs. Big runs means not 100 but 150-plus scores. Because to get back to my usual concentration level, I needed those big scores. And I found that in England. I found my rhythm and as I got those runs, things began to fall in place.

Spending hours batting in the middle is what Pujara is known for, and he said that getting into that mode again also made him more aware of where his fitness levels were. "Once I bat for long, it not only improves concentration, but it also improves fitness. The county stint helped me to see where my fitness stands. One cannot play big innings if one does not have proper fitness. So everything went well," Pujara said.

Mayank dropped

With KL Rahul returning to the Test squad as vice-captain, and Shubman Gill retaining his spot as well, Mayank Agarwal has been eft out. Agarwal opened along with skipper Rohit Sharma in the Sri Lanka Tests and had managed underwhelming scores of 33,4 and 22. Before that, he had had a tough tour of South Africa, where he could average just

22.5 in six innings. TEST SQUAD: Rohit Sharma (Captain), KL Rahul (vice-captain) Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant (wk), KS Bharat (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Shardul Thakur, Mohd Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Prasidh Krishna

Punjab Kings beat SRH to finish sixth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI, MAY 22

PUNJAB KINGS ended their campaign on a winning note, crushing an already demoralised Sunrisers Hyderabad by five wickets in an inconsequential final IPL league match here on Sunday. Batting first, Sunrisers Hyderabad managed only 157 for 8 on a good batting track.

But it was never going to be enough as Liam Livingstone made mincemeat of a hapless SRH attack, scoring 49 not out off 22 balls, and also hitting the coveted 1000th six of the tournament.

Shikhar Dhawan (39 off 32 balls) and Jitesh Sharma (19 off 7 balls) also contributed handsomely to the team's cause as the chase was completed in just 15.1 overs.

Punjab Kings, who haven't made the play-offs since their final appearance in 2014, finished sixth while the Sunrisers ended their high-spending IPL on eighth in the 10team competition. For Livingstone, it was all about smashing big sixes once again as he hit five in all, while Dhawan helped himself to two fours and two sixes.

BRIEF SCORES: Sunrisers Hyderabad 157 for 8 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 43; Harpreet Brar 3/26, Nathan Ellis 3/40) lost to Punjab Kings 160 for 5 in 15.1 overs (Liam Livingstone 49 not out; Fazalhaq Farooqi 2/32) by 5 wickets

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