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MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022, KOLKATA, LATE CITY, 14 PAGES

**WORLD** 

**RUSSIAN MISSILES POUND KYIV AS G7 LEADERS MEET** 

WHITE HOUSE TO FIGHT STATES OVER **ABORTION PILL P13** 

SALVE VS SIBAL, SINGHVI IN HIGH VOLTAGE BATTLE

### Sena rebels challenge Dy Speaker's decisions in SC, to be heard today

One more minister flies to Guwahati, Shinde has 39 now

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, JUNE 26

THE MAHARASHTRA rebels camping in BJP-ruled Assam have moved their battle to the Supreme Court. The court will take up two petitions on Monday – one by rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde; the other by 15 MLAs belonging to his camp.

The petitions challenge the decision by Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal to recognise Ajay CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Aaditya Thackeray arrives for a meeting at the Shiv Sena office in Mumbai, Sunday. Amit Chakravarty REPORTS, PAGE 6 Keep Central forces ready, says Governor; 15 rebel MLAs get Y-plus security

YOGESH NAIK MUMBAI, JUNE 26

FLAGGING REPORTS of rebel Shiv Sena MLAs' houses and offices being targeted in Maharashtra, Governor BS Koshyari has asked the Centre to keep "adequate" central security forces "ready... to address the situation".

Meanwhile, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Sunday granted Y-plus security cover, comprising CRPF personnel, to at least 15 rebel Shiv Sena MLAs. While the MLAs are in a hotel in Assam, sources said security will be provided to their families in Maharashtra.

In his letter to Union Home **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 



SAD (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann after winning the bypoll in Sangrur on Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

### BJP wrests SP's strongholds in UP, **AAP loses Sangrur** in Punjab LS bypoll

### New SIT to probe Sreekumar, Teesta, Bhatt for conspiracy

**VAIBHAV JHA** AHMEDABAD, JUNE 26

THE GUJARAT government on Sunday formed a six-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by the state's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) DIG Deepan Bhadran to investigate retired DGP R B Sreekumar, activist Teesta Setalvad and former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt for criminal conspiracy and forgery, and other charges, "as per directions of the Supreme Court", a top of-

> The move follows an FIR CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ficial told The Indian Express.



Setalvad at an Ahmedabad court, Sunday. Nirmal Harindran

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

IN SC's NAME



### PM In Munich

PM Narendra Modi addresses the Indian diaspora in Munich, Germany, where he arrived on Sunday to take part in the G7 summit. At the community event, the PM said the Emergency, announced on June 25, 1975, was a 'black spot' in India's history. PTI

**EXCHANGE** 

'We are no longer chess players from mythology; someone bespectacled who is slightly old. Now chess is seen as a fairly young sport'

VISWANATHAN ANAND INDIA'S FIRST GRANDMASTER & FIVE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION PAGE 9

**EXPRESS NETWORK** 

**YOUTUBE REMOVES NEW MOOSEWALA** SONG AFTER GOVT **COMPLAINT PAGE 4** 

**MANOJ CG** NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

JUST MONTHS after it stormed to power in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) suffered a setback on Sunday as it lost the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat, vacated by its Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, to Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann. The AAP now has no member in the Lok Sabha.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party (SP) lost its strongholds of Azamgarh and Rampur to the BJP in the Lok Sabha bypolls. The two seats fell vacant after party chief Akhilesh Yadav and senior party leader Azam Khan were elected to the Assembly in March.

In Azamgarh, where the Muslim-Yadav dominance had helped Mulayam Singh Yadav win the seat in 2014 and Akhilesh in 2019, BJP nominee Dinesh Lal Yadav "Nirahua", a

for Opp

THE DEFEAT in Sangrur, just months after its spectacular win in the Punjab Assembly elections, comes as a wake-up call for the AAP. In UP, by wresting two SP strongholds, the BJP has strengthened its already-dominant position ahead of the urban local body elections due later this year.

Bhojpuri actor, defeated SP's Dharmendra Yadav, a former MP and cousin of Akhilesh, by a margin of about 8,600 votes. In 2019, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**MORE REPORTS** 

### GTA polls pass off peacefully, 59% turnout recorded

**SWEETY KUMARI** 

ELECTIONS to the Gorkhaland Territorial



Darjeeling on Sunday.

"The polls were overall peaceful, except for a few minor incidents." Darieeling District Magistrate S Ponnambalam said.

The final voting figures may slightly vary as reports were yet to be received from some polling stations, officials said.

Polling for the GTA, the semi-

erns the Darjeeling Hills, began on a slow note in the morning on Sunday, said election officials. The voting, held after 10 years, began at 7am with 9.98% voters casting their franchise till 9 am, it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 **RELATED REPORTS** 

DARJEELING, JUNE 26

Administration (GTA) in north Bengal's Darjeeling Hills were held peacefully with 59.05% voter turnout on Sunday, officials

### MP toasts its first Ranji title: 'Moment of



MP coach Chandrakant Pandit and captain Aditya Shrivastava on Sunday. PTI

**ABHISHEK PUROHIT** BENGALURU, JUNE 26

MADHYA PRADESH captain Aditya Shrivastava was waiting for his turn to speak after Mumbai skipper Prithvi Shaw at the postmatch presentation of the Ranji Trophy final. But Shrivastava's team had walked over to the board reading "Champions", ready to pose for photographs.

Earlier, in another glimpse of what this maiden Ranji Trophy crown means to a state formed in 1956. Shrivastava was already in his official dark blue MP blazer as he stood a few metres from his impatient teammates just moments after the six-wicket victory over 41-time champions Mumbai.

"Completely ecstatic," the 28-year old captain began when it was his turn to talk to the presenter, Anjum Chopra, the former India captain.

"A generation...of time has gone by and MP has won the Ranji Trophy for the first time CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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**EXPRESS TECHNOLOGY Apple CEO Tim Cook** defends billion dollar deal with Google



96 DIRECTOR ON VIJAY SETHUPATHI-TRISHA'S FATE IN THE FILM: 'I VERY BADLY WANT THEM TO MEET AGAIN BUT ... '

In today's installment of Scene Stealer, we revisit the heart-wrenching climax of Vijay Sethupathi-Trisha film 96. The romantic drama released in 2018 and was directed by Prem Kumar

#### **TECHNOLOGY**



**APPLE AIRPODS PRO 2** 

**Apple's AirPods Pro** are likely to get updated H1 chip, heart rate detection

#### LIFESTYLE



MSMARVEL'S UNIVERSE

A liberal sprinkling of the Subcontinent's music in Ms Marvel in their new offering

### **EXPRESS** AUDIO

### **Pride Month Special: A** lesbian couple about life and love in India

Even though the Pride Month is now embraced across India, its coverage mostly focuses on gay men and sometimes transgender women activists. But lesbians seem to be largely missing from this coverage and conversation

### **FROM PAGE ONE**

### **GTA polls**

is learnt. Till 11 am, a 24.4% turnout was reported, officials

"The voter turnout was lower than the previous elections. In fact, during the initial hours we could hardly spot queues at the polling stations,' said an official.

Voting was held at 922 polling stations for 45 seats spread across three sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Kalimpong. Out of the 922 polling stations, five were marked as 'critical' while 101 were identified as 'vulnerable'.

Of the 277 candidates in the fray from 45 seats, 169 are Independents while 108 are from various political parties.

Kalpana Thapa, a young voter, said, "Proper supply of water and unemployment are the main issues here. We are voting for more job opportu-

"We are peace lovers. We vote with a smile on our face and wish whoever forms the GTA board resolves basic issues of the people," said Manju Gurung who cast her vote at the 178 Municipal Girls High School in Darjeeling

The BJP and its allies Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and the Communist Party of Revolutionary (CPRM) have boycotted the GTA polls. Bimal Gurung's Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GIM), which was in power in the GTA for several years, is also not taking part in the polls.

The battle is mainly between Ajoy Edwards' newlyformed Hamro Party and Anit Thapa-led Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM).

The new entrant Hamro Party, which won 18 out of 32 seats in the recent civic body polls, is contesting from all 45 seats, the Bharativa Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) is fighting from 36, the CPIM from 12, the state's ruling party Trinamool Congress (TMC) from 10 and the Congress on 5.

The BGPM has extended support to Independents on

BGPM's Thapa said the state government should consider the problems and issues of the people of hills. "We cannot fight the government of the state which we are a part of," he said at Kurseong.

The first uncontested GTA election was held in 2012 when Bimal Gurung's GTA had formed the board. The political situation in the Hills got heated up after the term of that board expired in 2017. For five years, the GTA has been running only through the appointment of administrators.

In Siliguri, elections were held in nine segments of the Mahakuma Parishad (sub-divisional council), 22 panchayats, and four panchayat samitis. Till 5pm, Siliguri Mahakuma parishad recorded 79.5% turnout.

### Governor

Secretary Ajay Bhalla, dated June 25, Koshyari said that although he had asked the state police to provide adequate protection to the rebel MLAs, the police remained a "mute spectator" while the offices and homes of these MLAs were vandalised.

"It is accordingly requested

#### **CLARIFICATIONS** & CORRECTIONS

### 26.06.21, PAGE 4

IN A photo caption, the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) was erroneously referred to as the Indian Institute of Architects. The error is regretted.

that adequate provision of central security forces be made and kept ready, in case required, to address the situation," he said in his letter.

Koshyari, who had tested positive for Covid-19, was discharged from hospital on Sunday. When contacted, the Raj Bhavan spokesperson declined to comment on Koshyari's letter.

Koshyari also wrote to

Maharashtra Director General of Police Rajnish Seth on June 25, calling for "immediate" protection of the rebel MLAs and their families. "I have received a representation dated 25th June 2022 from 38 MLAs of Shiv Sena, 2 MLAs of Prahar Jan Shakti party and 7 Independent MLAs stating that the security of their families 'has been illegally and unlawfully withdrawn'. They have also raised serious concerns about the safety of their homes and families in context of the provocative and threatening statements being made by certain political leaders. Already, offices and homes of some of the MLAs have been vandalised, with the police being a mute spectator," he

"I therefore direct you to provide police protection to the MLAs, their families and homes on an immediate basis... I may be apprised of the action taken in this regard," he

Copies of the letter were marked to Chief Secretary Manukumar Shrivastava, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) A M Limaye, and Mumbai Police Commissioner Saniav Pandev.

In tweet post Saturday, rebel leader Eknath Shinde had alleged that the security of rebel Shiv Sena MLAs had been withdrawn on the orders of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and State Home

Minister Dilip Walse-Patil. On Sunday, Walse-Patil's office tweeted: "Adequate security has been provided at the office, residence of all MLAs who have gone to Guwahati. At no point was the security withdrawn...'

While Shinde has not been granted Y-plus security, among those in the list are Ramesh Bornare, Mangesh Kudalkar, Sanjay Shirsat, Latabai Sonawane and Prakas

"The decision has been taken after a threat assessment by the Intelligence Bureau. Only those MLAs who have a genuine threat have been provided protection," said a home ministry official.

On Friday, Kudalkar's office in Mumbai was vandalised. On Saturday, the office of Tanaji Sawant, another rebel MLA, was ransacked in Pune.

Addressing Yuva Sena workers on Sunday, Yuva Sena president and minister Aaditva Thackeray criticised the central government for providing CRPF security to rebel MLAs. 'We have been demanding CRPF security for Kashmiri Pandits, but it was not given... these rebel MLAs are being given security," he said.

Meanwhile, a senior IPS officer said the security cover provided by the state to the MLAs had not been removed. - WITH ENS, NEW DELHI

### **Bypolls**

Akhilesh had defeated Nirahua by 2.6 lakh votes. The SP had then contested the election in alliance with the BSP.

The results show that the BSP made a dent in the SP's votebank. The BSP, which was routed in the Assembly elections in March, had fielded former MLA Shah Alam alias Guddu Jamali, who came third

with over 2.54 lakh votes. He was the only prominent Muslim candidate in the fray.

In Rampur, where Muslims account for about 52 per cent of the population, BJP's Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi defeated SP's Asim Raja by a margin of 42,192 votes in a straight contest. The BSP had not fielded any candidate, which may have helped the BJP to get the Dalit votes.

Addressing a press conference in Lucknow, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the BJP had sent a clear message for 2024 -- that the party was on course to win all 80 Lok Sabha seats from the state.

In Punjab, the AAP suffered a shock defeat in Sangrur. where its candidate, Gurmel Singh, lost to SAD (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann, a 77-year-old pro-Khalistan leader, by a narrow margin of 5,822 votes.

CM Bhagwant Mann had won his first election as MP from Sangrur in 2014 by a margin of about 2.10 lakh votes. He retained the seat in 2019, with a winning margin of 1.1 lakh votes. The AAP had won all the nine Assembly seats which fall in Sangrur Lok Sabha constituency in the Assembly elections in March. Today, it lagged in Malerkotla, Dirba, Barnala, Mehal Kalan and Bhadaur constituencies.

"This is a great win for the party. We have defeated all the national parties in this bypoll. I am aware of the problems of labourers, poor economic conditions of Sangrur and hence, I will be taking up all these issues," Simranjit Singh Mann

While Congress's Dalvir Singh Goldy came third, SAD (Badal)'s Kamaldeep Kaur Rajoana was pushed to fifth place, after the BJP's Kewal

There was some cheer for the AAP in Delhi, where its candidate Durgesh Pathak won the Rajinder Nagar Assembly seat by over 11,000 votes, defeating BJP's Rajesh Bhatia. The seat was vacated by AAP's Raghav Chadha after his election to Rajya Sabha

from Puniah Bypolls were also held in six other Assembly seats -four in Tripura and one each in Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand. While the ruling YSRCP won the Atmakur seat in Andhra, the Congress won the Mandar (ST) reserved seat

in Jharkhand. In Tripura, Chief Minister Manik Saha won the Bardowali seat. Of the four seats in the state, the ruling BIP won three and the Congress one. The BJP had three seats earlier as well.

### Kanji

now. It is the moment of a lifetime for me. The emotions are really deep in the squad, we are trying to laugh it out loud, but we are extremely emotional from inside," Shrivastava

MP has produced India players such as Narendra Hirwani, Rajesh Chauhan, Amay Khurasiya, Jai Prakash Yadav, Naman Ojha and the third-highest run-getter in Ranji history Devendra Bundela.

But the Ranji Trophy had proved elusive, unlike the golden period of the distant past when a part of the region, including the cricketing nerve centre Indore, was represented the Holkar team. Comprising legends such as C K Nayudu, C S Nayudu, Syed Mushtaq Ali and Chandu Sarwate. Holkar reached the Ranji final ten times in 11 seasons from 1944-45 to 1954-55, and won the trophy four times, the last of which came 69

years ago in 1952-53. On Sunday, having managed to hold on to his feelings

during the post-match speech, Shrivastava flung aside the mike, accepted the Ranji Trophy, walked over to his team and handed the cup to an

overjoyed Raghuwanshi, the 18-year old attacking batsman who began with a hundred on debut this season and made three crucial fifties, two of them in the knockouts.

Shrivastava and coach Chandrakant Pandit held up the trophy and kissed it. The heartbreak of 1998-99 at the same Chinnaswamy Stadium was on then-captain Pandit's mind. That was the only previous occasion when MP had reached the final, and had one hand on the title, before squandering a safe position against hosts Karnataka deep into the last day. "Twentythree years later, we are back here and we have done it,' Pandit said.

The team walked with the trophy towards the stand next to their dressing room where about a thousand fans cheered from the upper tier. They had largely backed MP through the five days of the match, with their Royal Challengers Bangalore star and MP middleorder batsman Rajat Patidar receiving special adulation. Shouts of "RCB, RCB" and "Patidar, Patidar" had been constant.

Patidar, who had made a century in the IPL knockouts, did a repeat against Mumbai in the first innings of the final, and hit the winning runs in the second.

The team proceeded to walk over to the middle of the ground, where they set the trophy down and soaked in the moment for a while. The ground staff and the main curators assembled nearby, and were soon joined by the MP players and support staff. Coach Pandit addressed the gathering, praising their ef-

He told his players: "Not only have you achieved something historic, but it is also a historic occasion for this ground, as it has hosted its 100th Ranji match. So this day is doubly historic." Captain Shriyastaya then walked over to the curators and handed over a bunch of currency notes as a token of the team's appre-

In the press conference that followed, Shrivastava spoke about the dedication of his unit during preparation and the personal "sacrifices" they had made under the coach, who is known as a hard taskmaster.

Pandit intervened: "I remember he was supposed to get married last year and asked me, 'sir, which date should I pick?' I told him only in June and that too only for two-three days, you will not get time to go on your honeymoon because we had started our preparations." Shrivastava responded: "It has been a year since I got married and I have still not gone on my honeymoon."

Pandit went on to call his combination with Shrivastava the best he had had in a long career - this was his sixth Ranji title as a coach.

"I have worked with many associations and have handled many captains," Pandit said. "But the rapport that Aditya and I have is entirely different. He is the only captain who has spent hours and hours in my room. None of the other captains were as interested in the other players and the team."

said he Shrivastava wanted to build on what this group of players had achieved. Pandit has coached

Mumbai and Vidarbha to backto-back Ranji titles before, so who knows what further glory awaits MP next season.

### Sena rebels challenge Dy Speaker's decisions in SC, to be heard today

Shiv Sena Legislature Party (SSLP) in place of Shinde, and the disqualification notices served on Shinde and the 15 MLAs.

The matter has been listed before a vacation bench of **Justices Surva Kant and I B** Pardiwala.

India Harish Salve will represent the Shinde camp. Former Congress leader Kapil Sibal will appear for the Deputy Speaker, and Congress MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi for the Shiv

"Legal recourse is the only for the Shinde camp said on Sunday. "The Shiv Sena is try-MLAs have abandoned them.'

The Shinde camp has claimed it has 39 of the Sena's 55 MLAs, including Minister for Higher Education and Technical Education Uday Samant, who flew to Guwahati to join the rebels on Sunday. The rebels are now more than  $two\text{-thirds} (37) of the Sena \, leg-$ 

50-plus in all," Shinde said.

According to Shinde's petition, the Deputy Speaker recognised Choudhary as leader of the SSLP "despite the said request being admittedly made by a minority faction" of the Legislature Party, and the action was, therefore, "illegal and unconstitutional".

grossly illegal, unconstitutional and in utter disregard" of the previous rulings of the

Former Solicitor General of

way forward," a spokesperson ing to create hurdles even though the majority of party

islature party.

Several Independent MLAs too are with Shinde. "We are

The notice issued to him on Saturday on a plea to disqualify him from the Assembly too "is

Supreme Court on this subject, Shinde has said.

'It is common knowledge that the current government in the State of Maharashtra, led by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance has lost the majority in the house as 38 of the members of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party have withdrawn their support thus bringing it below the majority in the house. However, the MVA government continues to misuse the office of the Deputy Speaker to ensure that they remain in power by whatever means necessary," the petition

The disqualification notice is classic example of the Deputy Speaker acting hand in glove with the Government in an attempt to hastily disqualify" him "along with other supporters". and Disqualification Rules and the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules are sought to be completely bypassed", Shinde has argued.

He has said that he was given "merely 48 hrs." to reply to the notice, whereas under the Rules, he is entitled to at least seven days, which can be extended further by the Speaker. The notice is "completely mala fide and arbitrary and therefore violative of Article 14 Constitution...and has been issued with a pre-meditated mindset to illegally disqualify' him, says the petition.

According to the plea, filed through Advocate on Record of Speaker of the Maharashtra Assembly has been vacant since Nana Patole resigned in February 2021, and "thus, there is no authority who can adjudicate upon the disqualification petition under which the Impugned Notice has been is-

Shinde has told the court that a resolution for the removal of the Deputy Speaker is pending, and asked it to direct that no action should be taken on the disqualification petition until the resolution for removal of Deputy Speaker is decided. The petition also mentions the alleged threat to the rebel

MLAs and their families. .Not only the security of our families and relatives have been compromised by removing the security personnel but also there is an ongoing agenda wherein various leaders of the MVA government are instigating the cadres of their respective parties to take up violence... (Sena MP) Mr Sanjay Raut (has) threatened the Petitioners and the other members by stating that he would make it difficult for the MLAs who have left to return to Maharashtra...," it says.

The second petition — filed  $by\,Bharat\,Gogavale, whom\,the$ rebels have chosen Chief Whip of the Sena legislature party replacing Sunil Prabhu, and 14 other MLAs — says that the SC had in a 2016 decision "clearly held" that Speaker or Deputy Speaker cannot disqualify a member while a resolution for their own removal is pending.

The petition argues that the rebel MLAs have not given up their Shiv Sena membership. and their actions would not fall within the meaning of the expression "voluntarily giving up membership" under Paragraph 2 of the Tenth membership (of the House)."

At a meeting of the constituent parties of the MVA convened by NCP president Sharad Pawar on Sunday, leaders of the Sena, NCP and Congress resolved to fight together the legal battle to save

their coalition government. Five of the Sena's nine Cabinet Ministers - Shinde, Samant, Dadaji Gulabrao Patil, and Sandipan Bhumre – have rebelled against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. There are two Ministers of State among the rebels - Abdul Sattar and Shambhuraje Desai – as well as former Cabinet Minister Sanjay Rathod.

Left with the Chief Minister are his son Aaditya Thackeray, Subhash Desai, and Anil Parab.

Shiv Sena counsel Devdutt Kamat told reporters that disqualification rules are applicable to members even outside the House. He cited the precedent of Sharad Yadav of the JD(U), who had invited action because he had attended a rally by RJD chief Lalu Prasad.

"The Shiv Sena had convened several meetings at different places which the rebels did not attend. They are visiting BJP-ruled states, and are meeting BJP leaders. An attempt to topple the government amounts to an act of violation (of discipline) by the

rebels," Kamat said. On the anti-defection law, he said, "The concept of twothirds (to escape punishment) applies only if there is a merger of the rebel group with another it will amount to their having voluntarily given up their

### New SIT to probe Teesta, Sreekumar and Bhatt for criminal conspiracy

lodged against the three at the Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) office in Ahmedabad on Saturday, a day after the Supreme Court upheld the clean chit given to the then chief minister Narendra Modi, his council of ministers and bureaucrats in the 2002 Gujarat riots.

Mumbai-based Setalvad, who was brought to Ahmedabad by an ATS team, and Sreekumar, who was arrested from his home on Saturday, were produced on Sunday before Metropolitan Magistrate Smita Prakashchandra Patel, who sent them both on police remand till July 2.

Even as the hearing was on, Setalvad was taken to hospital for a "medical check-up" after she complained of injuries caused by an alleged assault by the police while detaining her in Mumbai. The police have denied the allegation.

Sources said Bhatt was taken into custody by a DCB team on Sunday from Palanpur jail in Banaskantha where he has been lodged in a 1996 narcotics case. DCP (Crime) Chaitanya Mandalik told The Indian Express that the process of bringing Bhatt to the DCB office in Ahmedabad on a transfer warrant and arresting him "will take two to three days". Mandalik is part of the new

SIT under DIG Bhadran. The other members are: ATS SP Sunil Joshi, Deputy SP (Special Operations Group) B C Solanki, who will be the Investigating Officer, police inspectors PG Vaghela and AD Parmar, and a



Former DGP R B Sreekumar outside a court in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Nirmal Harindran

woman inspector H V Raval. The terms of reference include collection of evidence to investigate the case "as per the directions of the Supreme Court"

On Friday, while dismissing a petition filed by Zakia Jafri against the clean chit given to Modi by the SIT that probed the 2002 riots, the Supreme Court had ruled that "no material was discovered pointing towards any meeting of minds/ conspiracy in the higher echelons of the administration or the political establishment conspired with other persons to cause such riots or turned a Nelson's eye when the riots had triggered and continued".

It pointed to a "coalesced effort of the disgruntled officials of the state of Gujarat along with others... to create sensation by making revelations which were false to their own knowledge. The falsity of their claims had been fully exposed by the SIT (in the Gujarat riots case) after a thorough investigation".

The court noted that "intriguingly, the present proceedings have been pursued for the last 16 years...to keep the pot boiling, obviously, for ulterior design...all those involved in such abuse of process, need to be in the dock and proceeded with in accordance with law".

DCP Mandalik said: "The charges are forging government records, submitting forged documents and abuse of power. The arrested accused have been uncooperative so far and we are investigating the case from all angles. Prima facie, the charges against two ex-IPS officers are their affidavits and documents

submitted in the case.' Mandalik said the police "are also in the process of retrieving the documents they have submitted in front of commissions, courts and the SIT for further probe". "The investiga-

tion is at an early stage but we believe that there could be other persons also behind the conspiracy." he said.

Asked why the time frame of the offence in the FIR was recorded as "January 1 2002 to June 15, 2022", Mandalik said: The entire case began after the Godhra riots in February 2002, therefore we have kept a time period bracket of 2002 to 2022 to investigate all angles in it."

Setalvad was brought to the DCB office in Ahmedabad's Jamalpur early on Sunday after which she was taken to civil hospital for a RT PCR test. Later, while being presented in court, Setalvad told reporters that she is "not a criminal".

Setalvad, Sreekumar and Bhatt have been booked under IPC sections 120 B (criminal conspiracy), 468 (forgery), 471 (using as genuine a forged document or electronic record), 194 (giving or fabricating false evidence with intent to procure conviction of capital offence, 211 (false charge of offence made with intent to injure) and 218 (public servant framing incorrect record or writing with intent to save person from punishment or prop-

erty from forfeiture). Based on the Supreme Court verdict, the FIR states that the accused will be investigated for "finding out the behind the scene criminal conspiracy and financial and other benefits, inducements for commission of various serious offences in collusion with other individuals,

entities and organisations". (WITH SOHINI GHOSH)

## WESTBENGAL



Local residents on their way to cast vote at the Thurbo Prathamik Pathshala in Mirik. Partha Paul

### GORKHALAND TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION ELECTION

### First-time voters want jobs and development, vote for a change

Villagers accuse local administration & government of indifferent treatment

SWEETY KUMARI DARJEELING, JUNE 26

AFTER WALKING hilly terrain for about 45 minutes and climbing 200 steps by Thurbo Tea garden, 18-year-old Swadiksha, a firsttime voter, cast her vote at Thurbo Prathamik Pathshala in Mirik to elect a candidate of her choice for the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), the voting for which took place on Sunday.

Swadiksha is voting for a regular supply of potable water and electricity and a road to her village, among other things, she told The Indian Express. "Can you imagine, at a time when people are thinking of buying land on Mars and the moon, we don't have proper electricity and water supply to our village," said Swadiksha, a Class 12 student who lives in the Thurbo Tea Estate area, located at an altitude varying from 3,220 to 8,010 feet, in Mirik town of Darjeeling district.

"Moreover, no government thinks about the youths. There is no job opportunity for them. Tourism is there, but our village is too far from tourist spots. People come here for sightseeing and return after a few hours." she rued. This polling station has recorded a 54 per cent turnout till 2:48 pm. "There are 819 voters registered at this polling booth and 443 have, so far, cast their vote," said Arvind Rai, the Presiding Officer.

When the GTA polling was underway, The Indian Express travelled to several villages and gram panchayats and interacted with a wide range of voters.

Another first-time voter 18year-old Sukaj Tamang, a student at a local school in Simana village, too complained that "no political party is serious about the problems faced by the vouths". "I haven't come across any GTA candidate with a vision for the welfare and growth of the youths, like creating job opportunities for them and providing better education infrastructure. After completing education here, youths move out in search of a better opportunity or loiter here and there with no job in hand," said Tamang.



Gorkha Janmukti Morcha chief Bimal Gurung, who boycotted the GTA poll, at the Singmari party office in Darjeeling as the polling goes on. Partha Paul

Soon, a few local youths from Simana village, located at the edge of the Indian territory bordering Nepal, joined Tamang.

"We are tired of being fooled by politicians in the name of separate statehood. Tourism is restricted to and around Darjeeling city. A few tourists pass through our village on their way to Mirik, that too for a few minutes. There is no development at all in our village. There is no proper water supply, no dispensary and just a few teachers at the primary school. Even mobile networks do not work properly. We want a change and development in the true sense," said Minju Serpa and Kundan Khaws, both first-

Several polling stations in Darjeeling and Kurseong were located in isolated areas with limited facilities, some of them even lacking mobile connectivity. A few were located in the forest or semi-forest areas.

Balasan Forest village, located in the middle of a forest area at an altitude of nearly 6,000 feet and about 5 kilometres from Ghum station, has a total of 507 registered voters, but only 178 had cast their vote till 11 am. "Till 11 am, 178 people cast their vote. It is relatively low. If the weather remains clear we hope the turnout will improve," said Presiding Officer Binay Deep Tamang at the Balasan Bhanjyang Forest Village Primary School polling station. Most of the people in this vil-

lage are labours and survive on agriculture. The villagers accused the administration and the government of indifferent treatment. Angry over the nonfulfilment of promises made by the government and local politicians, Rajni Bhutiya chose not to vote

"I won't vote. What's the benefit of voting when no one even comes to see in which condition we live here," said Bhutiya. Usha Bhutiya, 52, too.

slammed the local administration and the government for their lackadaisical attitude toward villages in the district.

"Darjeeling and Kurseong are tourist spots, so we developed homestay but people hardly visit. Why would they visit here? There is no sightseeing area here. We have a 'Hawaghar' of the British Era, but it is destroyed due to the apathy of the government. If the government restores it and declares it a heritage site, and creates some sight-seeing spots in our village to attract tourists, our lives will be a little easy. Even during the peak season when no hotel is available in Darjeeling, we get only 40-45 tourists," said 60-year-old Subhash Lopchang.

Though voting remained peaceful, many chose not to vote.

TMC accused of rigging in Siliguri rural elections, municipal bypolls

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA. JUNE 26

SOME CANDIDATES on Sunday accused the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) of rigging and fake voting in the rural elections of the Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad in Darjeeling district and bypolls to six wards of different municipalities in other districts of West Bengal.

There were reports of tension in the Chaterhat area of ?? Siliguri's Fansidewa block. It was alleged that an agent of Akhtar Ali, an independent candidate, was prevented from entering a booth by the TMC workers.

Besides, allegations were also levelled against the party for preventing the Independent candidate's supporters and other voters from exercising their franchise. It was also claimed that the Trinamool supporters attacked independent candidates.

At least one person was injured. A video of such an incident went viral. In the video, some people were running with a group chasing them from behind with sticks. The police reached the spot after getting the news of the clash.

Independent candidate Akhtar claimed that the miscreants attacked them without provocation at the behest of the ruling party.

CPM leader Gargi Chatterjee alleged rigging in the bypoll for a of the Bhatpara Municipality. She said, "In a booth, unauthorised people entered the booth. We complained to the police but they did not take any

Partha Bhowmik, a TMC leader from North 24 Parganas, denied the allegations. He said, "In one booth we got a complaint that the media was stopped from enter a booth and we protested against it. Overall, the polling was peaceful. In the initial hours, polling percentage was low but it

#### Left parties protest arrest of Setalvad and Sreekumar, demand their release fascistic act of arresting the noted waged by the Sanghparivar **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** against its opponents. The examsocial worker Teesta Setalvad since KOLKATA, JUNE 26

LEFT FRONT leaders and workers took to the streets in the state on Sunday protesting the arrest of civil rights activist Teesta Setalvad and former Gujarat DGP RB Sreekumar. Led by CPIM, they held a massive protest rally from Park Circus to Entally market here, demanding their immediate release and withdrawal of all "false charges" against

In a statement issued here, Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) general secretary Himagnaraj Bhattacharya said, "Renowned human rights activist Teesta Setlavad and former DGP RB Sreekumar, who dared to expose the acts of the Sangh Parivar and the BJP government during the 2002 Guiarat riots, are now being targetted by the state machinery. False charges were imposed on them and they were taken into custody. This is nothing but revenge politics being

Bengal logs 493

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA, JUNE 26

new Covid cases

THE STATE reported fresh 493 fresh Covid-19 cases on Sunday,

pushing the tally to 20,24,972, a

health department bulletin said.

at 21,216 as there was no report

of any fatality due to the disease

3,777 active Covid -19 cases,

while 19,99,979 people have re-

covered from the disease, in-

cluding 212 people on Sunday,

The Covid-19 recovery rate

The state had reported 235

Atotal of 2,55,18,831 samples

now is 98.77 per cent while the

daily positivity count was 5.11

new Covid-19 cases and two fa-

have been tested for Covid -19 so

in the last 24 hours, it said.

the bulletin said.

talities on Saturday.

Man dies as

boundary wall

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** 

KOLKATA, JUNE 26

Sunday, police said.

police said.

nearby hospital.

collapses on him

A MAN was killed when the

boundary wall of a dilapidated

house collapsed and fell on him

during rains in central Kolkata on

Jaan Alam (45), a resident of

the Entally area, died when the

wall fell on him as he was walk-

ing on the pavement adjacent

to the dilapidated house in the

Taltala area of the city, the

Alam was declared dead

Police and Kolkata Municipal

when rescuers took him to a

Corporation officials rushed to

the spot and cordoned off the

stretch to remove the debris.

The Covid -19 toll remained

West Bengal currently has

ple of Sanjeev Bhatt, a civil servant, a whistle-blower, is right in front of us. The arrests are in continuation with repressive ac-"DYFI Central Executive

Committee condemns the arrest and demands their immediate release and withdrawal of all false charges imposed on them. We stand against the use of state machinery for political gains and seeking revenge. We also request the people of the country, who believe in democratic values, to come together against this sheer injustice and rise in protest." added Bhattacharya.

Revolutionary Socialist Party (India) general secretary Manoj Bhattacharya said, "The RSS-BJP combine has once again demonstrated that the state, as on this day, is abominably intolerant and aggressive in avenging anyone they doubt to disagree with their nefarious designs. The Revolutionary Socialist Party is shocked and ex-

she advanced the years-long fight for justice to the victims of the state-sponsored genocide in 2002 in Gujarat."The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) also protested the arrests across the

CPIML

Committee said, "We salute the

Central

courage of Zakia Jafri, Teesta Setalvad, R.B. Shreekumar and others who did not falter in their pursuit of justice even when Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister. It does not augur well for a democracy when the Supreme Court inexplicably criminalises this pursuit of justice and calls for every person involved need to be in the dock and proceeded in accordance with the law. Their arrest is a product of the vindictiveness of PM Modi and Home Minister (Amit) Shah, enabled by the apex court of India."

A day after the Supreme Court upheld the SIT's clean chit

Guiarat government led by Chie Minister Narendra Modi, the Ahmedabad Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) arrested retired state DGPRB Sreekumar, whose role had been called into guestion by the Court, and Mumbaibased activist Teesta Setalvad, who supported the petitioner,

Zakia Jafri. The two were held on charges of criminal conspiracy, forgery and other Sections of the IPC based on an FIR lodged in the DCB by Inspector Darshansinh Barad, which quotes extensively from the Supreme Court order. Also named in the nine-page FIR, filed on behalf of the Gujarat state, is former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt, who also faced strictures in the Supreme Court order. Bhatt is already in jail in connection with another case.

While a DCB team detained Sreekumar after serving summons at his residence in Gandhinagar on Saturday afternoon, Setalvad was detained

### **Empanelled candidates allege** irregularities in appointment of assistant professors by WBCSC

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, JUNE 26

COLLEGE SERVICE Commission's 2018 empanelled candidates on Sunday alleged that there were irregularities in the selection of assistant professors by the West Bengal College Service Commission (WBCSC) (2018).

Holing a press conference presided over by Binoy Krishna Pal, Kshudiram Chakraborty and Palash Mandal at the Kolkata Press Club, they claimed that they were the "victims of the corruption in the recruitment by

the Commission in 2018". Pal accused the Commission of following an "illegitimate" grading process and "recruiting ineligible candidates" as assistant professors in colleges across

"We have with us proofs in the form of mark sheets and certificates to prove the ineligibility of those who were preferred over the legitimate candidates. We have already produced them in the court and will continue providing more proofs until everything is brought out in the open," claimed Pal. "Half of those who have been given jobs belong to political families or are otherwise influential. They made it to the list despite

leged Pal. "We have filed an RTI and collected all requisite information. We will now present them in the court," said Kshudiram Chakraborty, "A single bench of the Calcutta High Court gave a decision in our favour. Now, we

scoring as low as 30-40%," al-

want the Commission to give us the marks percentage of those who have been recruited, added Chakraborty.

"I am a PhD and a victim of the corruption in the recruitment process. When I saw MA pass-outs were being recruited, I approached the Commission but they said that everything was being done following the rule. However, the truth is that they moulded the rules as per their convenience," alleged Mandal.

"It's not about taking revenge. It is about seeking justice for those who send their children to colleges where these corrupt assistant professors have been recruited," said Pal.

WBCSC officials, however, refused to comment on the issue. saying the matter is sub judice.

### TMC MP Prasun Banerjee expresses surprise over return of turncoats

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** KOLKATA, JUNE 26

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS MP Prasun Banerjee on Sunday expressed surprise as to why turncoats who had deserted the TMC to join the BIP ahead of the 2021 West Bengal Assembly election

were allowed re-entry to its fold. The MP did not name anyone in particular.

Speaking at a function in his Howrah Lok Sabha constituency, the former footballer-turnedpolitician said he was at a loss to understand the induction of some turncoats, who had even campaigned against TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and others, into the ruling party.



Banerjee had made similar comments in Nov last

"After the spectacular victory of the TMC in the 2021 Assembly polls in the face of an aggressive campaign by the BIP, we find some of those who had deserted us and spoke against us at such a crucial time is being taken back in the party, one after another. Don't know, why," Banerjee said.

In November last year, Banerjee had made similar comments, saying he had reservations about allowing the former

Rajib Banerjee, to participate in political programmes in the Howrah Lok Sabha constituency in the coming days. Rajib Banerjee had returned to the TMC from the saffron

camp in October last year. BJP state president Sukanta Maiumdar said Baneriee's comments show there are "dissatis-

fied souls within the TMC. "Everything is not well within the TMC. It is not a happy family." TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh had earlier said the MP's comments were his per-

sonal views.

stand and appreciate the TMC stand on the issue," Ghosh had said.

"We are sure he will under-

### Trinamool Congress debunks report that it proposed Murmu for president in 2017

**PRESSTRUST OF INDIA** KOLKATA, JUNE 26

THE TRINAMOOL Congress did not propose the name of Droupadi Murmu as president in 2017, say the party's spokespersons, debunking a media report that it had backed the tribal leader for the post five years ago.

Murmu is now the BIP-led NDA's nominee for president. With the numbers in her favour, she is set to become the country's first tribal president and the second woman in the post.

Quoting TMC leader Kunal

Ghosh, a prominent Hindi dailv reported earlier this week that the party was the first to have proposed the name of the former Jharkhand governor as president in 2017.

That is incorrect, said party spokesperson Ghosh. Setting the record straight, he said the TMC along with several other opposition parties had endorsed former speaker Meira Kumar for the top job in 2017 -- when Ram Nath Kovind was elected as president. However, he had written a letter to Prime Minister

Narendra Modi in his personal

capacity, suggesting that a con-

sensus candidate be considered and forwarded three names -Najma Heptullah, then president Pranab Mukherjee (for re-election) and Murmu.

At the time, Ghosh was suspended from the TMC.

"I had written it as a citizen of the country. I had suggested the names in my individual capacity at that time and not on behalf of TMC," Ghosh told PTI.

TMC Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sukhendu Sekhar Roy added that Ghosh's 2017 letter was sent in his private capacity. The party was not privy to his missive and had not endorsed it, Roy said.

A copy of the June 24, 2017 letter resurfaced two days ago after West Bengal's ruling party supported the candidature of Yashwant Sinha as the joint opposition candidate and several party leaders, including Ghosh, called for electing him to the Rashtrapati Bhavan to defeat the "undemocratic, fascist BJP".

The report in the Hindi daily followed.

Ghosh said he was not belittling Murmu by pledging support to opposition consensus candidate Sinha, who resigned from TMC recently.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** The General Public is hereby provined that my client is intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule property from Hemiata Patel, Jaswant Patel, Bhaskar Patel, Vandana Patel and Minal Patel all wife, sons and daughters of ate Jayanti Lal Patel of 912, Pran Krishna Mukherjee Road, Knikata - 700002, I anybody is having any objection, claim nterest, dispute, for the above intended sale transaction, he/she may contact the undersigned with documents substantiating his/her objections/ claims/disputes within seven days from date hereof failing my client shall proceed above owners as if there are no third party claim/objections in respect of the schedule property and thereafter no claims/ objections will be entertained.

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### Pawar convenes MVA meeting, calls for collective effort to fight Sena rebels

NCP president urges ministers to return to mantralaya, get back to work

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, JUNE 26

WITH THE Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra facing a political crisis following a rebellion in the Shiv Sena ranks, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Sunday convened a meeting of all three coalition partners at his Silver Oak residence in Mumbai and reassured senior leaders that they could collectively weather the storm.

"Pawar stressed on collective efforts to fight the political battle against the rebel Eknath Shinde group," a Congress minister, requesting anonymity, said.

With the Shiv Sena likely to get embroiled in legal and legislative challenges as the Shinde-led rebel faction digs its heels in, Pawar reportedly also assured his allies that whatever was required to legally contest (the rebel camp's claims), would be done.

Senior Congress ministers Balasaheb Thorat and Ashok Chavan, Shiv Sena minister Anil Parab and senior Sena leader Anil Desai were present at the meeting. Later, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and home minister

Dilip Walse Patil also met Pawar. Sharad Pawar reportedly also told the ministers to return to work at Mantralaya. With political uncertainty, ministers have stayed away from their offices, adopting a wait-and-watch attitude. Sensing that the administration has come to a halt. Pawar reportedly "urged all ministers across Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena to get back to work".

Congress ministers at the meeting brought up the issue of farmers in the state. With the onset of the monsoon, farmers are preparing to start sowing seeds. An effective administration at this crucial time is a must, they pointed out.

Another concern was farmers' unrest following a price rise in fertilizers and quality seeds. Congress ministers also raised the issue of farmers failing to access fresh crop loans from various financial institutions. Though Kharif sowing should end by July 15, to date, less than 20 per cent of sowing has been completed, they pointed out. Moreover, agriculture minister Dadaji Bhuse, who is part of the Shinde-led rebel camp, is himself in Guwahati.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, Shinde was appointed as a leader by his faction and given the right to take any decision on behalf of the rebels, who are currently staving at a Guwahati hotel. Apart from Shinde and Bhuse, other rebel ministers at Guwahati include Gulabrao Patil, Shambhu Desai, Sandipan Bhumre and



Eknath Shinde with Maharashtra minister Uday Samant in Guwahati on Sunday. Express

### Sena rebels living corpses, buffaloes, says Raut, draws flak

**VALLABHOZARKAR** MUMBAI, JUNE 26

SHIV SENA MP Sanjay Raut's fresh salvo at the rebel party MLAs camping at a Guwahati hotel, on Sunday, calling them living corpses who would be sent to a mortuary for postmortem on their return from the Assam capital, received flak from the Opposition and the Eknath Shinde camp, which termed it as a death threat to the rebels.

"When they step out of Assam, they won't be alive at heart. They know what can happen in the fire which has been lit here now. The dead bodies of all these 40 MLAs will come to Mumbai (from Guwahati), we will directly send them to the mortuary for post-mortem," Raut said at a rally of Shiv Sena workers in Dahisar on Sunday.

Calling the rebels buffaloes, the Sena MP said, "There is a temple in Guwahati where buffaloes are sacrificed. These 40 buffaloes have gone there to be sacrificed."

Deepak Kesarkar, the spokesperson for the rebel Shinde Camp objected to Raut's choice of language and his statement that the MLAs have many fathers, saying that "there is too much outrage in the rebels".

"He is insulting women in our families and it won't be tolerated. He is saying anything he wants and damaging the party. No party should have a spokesperson like Sanjay Raut. He is on a mission to finish the party. It is because of his statements that all the MLAs are angry and more are joining us," esarkar said

"He has called us corpses. He should remember that it was on our votes that he became an MP earlier this month. He has also called us animals. If we are animals and corpses then he should have some self-esteem and resign as MP. He should contest the polls afresh. He needs votes of only 41 MLAs, let's see from where he gets it," he added.

He said the rebel camp currently has 39 Sena MLAs and 12 Independents on its side and if Raut continues to speak like this, more will join in the coming

Bharat Gogawale, the chief whip of the Shinde camp said, "Party members are joining us as they are upset with Raut's statements and language. The more he speaks, the more will be the members joining us. He is damaging our party.'

The BJP, too, came down heavily on the Sena MP on social media, claiming that it was a threat to kill the rebel MLAs once they return to Mumbai.

Facing a backlash over his remark, Raut issued a clarification later in the day, saying that his statement should not be taken in its literal sense as what he meant was that the rebel MLAs have lost their souls after betraying the party and are living corpses whose post-mortem will be conducted at Vidhan Bhavan (during a floor test).

Give CRPF cover to Kashmiri Pandits, not MLAs: Aaditya

**VALLABHOZARKAR** MUMBAI, JUNE 26

ADDRESSING YUVA Sena workers in Mumbai on Sunday, Yuya Sena president and minister Aaditva Thackeray criticised the Union government after it decided to provide CRPF security to rebel MLAs camping at a Guwahati hotel. Aaditya said that instead of providing security to these MLAs provide security to our Kashmiri" Pandits and secure them first", in a reference to the killings of Kashmiri Pandits recently.

'We have been demanding the same CRPF security for the Kashmiri Pandits, but it was not given and these rebel MLAs are being given the security," he said. A few other Shiv Sena leaders also slammed the Centre over providing CRPF cover. During the rally, Thackeray also challenged the 40 MLAs to resign from their posts and contest elections and said that he will ensure that none of them win and gets to see the state assembly again. "I am challenging all those rebel MLAs who have been sold out for a price tag, if you have guts then resign from the post and face election. I will ensure that each of you loses. The Shiv Sainiks have come out with strong force... And there is an energy in them. you (Shiv Sainik) decide what to do with those who have tried to spilt Shiv Sena... But first, ensure that they will not be able to enter into the Assembly again," the Yuva Sena president said.

Aaditya also called rebels liars  $and\,opportunists\,and\,said\,that\,the$ CM had offered Shinde CM position but he did drama and rebelled taking undue advantage of ill health of Uddhav Thackeray.

### Emergency a black spot on India's democracy: PM

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** 

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

**DESCRIBING EMERGENCY rule** in 1975 as a "black spot" on the vibrant history of India's democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that democracy was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago but the people of India responded to it in a democratic way.

Addressing the Indian community in Germany, the Prime Minister said, "Today is June 26 which is also known as the day when India's democracy, which is in the DNA of every Indian, was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago. Emergency is a black spot on the vibrant history of

"The people of India responded to all the conspiracies to crush democracy in a democratic way. We Indians take pride in our democracy wherever we

are," he said. "Today, we can proudly say that India is the mother of democracy... The diversity of culture, food, clothes, music and traditions makes our democracy vibrant. India has shown that democracy can deliver and has delivered."

Highlighting the achievements of his government in the past eight years, the Prime Minister said, "In last century, Germany and other countries benefited from the 3rd Industrial Revolution, India was a colony back then, that is why it could not get the benefits. But now India will not be left behind in the 4th Industrial Revolution, it is now leading the world."

Modi said that drone technology is being used, which is unprecedented, and then cited several examples – fertilisers are being sprayed using drones, land's mapping in Indian villages is being made through drones.

"Today's India has come out



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with Indian diaspora during his visit to Munich on Sunday. PTI

of the mindset of 'It happens, it runs like this'. Today India takes a pledge to 'have to do', 'have to do' and 'have to do on time'." he said.

Modi, who arrived in Munich on Sunday on a twoday visit to Germany, will attend the G7 summit on Monday

and discuss issues like energy. food security, counter-terrorism, environment and democracy with the leaders of the powerful grouping and its partner countries.

"An early morning touch-down in Munich... PM @narendramodi will participate in the G-7 Summit..," the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Twitter. "At the invitation of @Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, PM @narendramodi arrives in Germany for the G7 Summit. Besides participating in @G7 discussions on climate, energy, food security, health, gender equality and more, PM will also hold several bilateral meetings on the sidelines," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi

The G7 leaders are expected to focus on the Ukraine crisis that has triggered geopolitical turmoil besides fuelling a global food and energy crisis.

Modi is likely to meet German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, European President Ursula von der Leyen, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Indonesian President Joko Widodo in bilateral meetings during his stay.

"During the sessions of the Summit, I will be exchanging views with the G7 counties, G7 partner countries and guest International Organisations on topical issues such as environment, energy, climate, food security, health, counter-terrorism, gender equality and democracy," Modi had said in a statement ahead of his visit.

Besides India, Germany, the invited Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa as guests for the summit to recognise the democracies of the global south as its partners.

### YouTube removes new Moosewala song on the video sharing and social

After govt complaint,

**KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR** CHANDIGARH, JUNE 26

YOUTUBE HAS removed a new song by deceased Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, from its platform in India following a complaint from the Union government. The song, SYL, is available in other countries.

It raises multiple issues, including — as its name suggests the under-construction Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal that has been a bone of contention between Punjab and Haryana for the past four decades. It also brings up undivided

Punjab, the 1984 riots, militancy, Sikh prisoners and the flag hoisting at the Red Fort during the farmer agitation.

SYL was released on the evening of June 23 and it got 2.7 crore views in less than three days. It also received 33 lakh likes

media platform.

It is the first Moosewala song to be released after the murder of the singer on May 29 this year.

"The content is not available on this country domain due to legal complaint from the government," reads the song's YouTube link in India.

A YouTube spokesperson said: "We have clear policies for removal requests from governments around the world. We review government removal requests when notified through the correct legal processes, and also review content for violations of our Community Guidelines. And, where appropriate, we restrict or remove content in keeping with local laws and our Terms of Service after a thorough review. All of these requests are tracked and included in our Transparency

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**POSSESSION NOTICE** (For Immovable Property)

at 10 00 a m

reas The undersigned being the authorised officer of Union Bank of India, Stressed Asset Management Branch, Yamuna Bhavan 55/58 Ezra Street, First floor, Kolkata –700001, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcemen Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 10.02,2020 calling upon the borrower - M/s, SYNDICATE JEWELLERS PVT. LTD. of 22 Camac Street, Block A, 1st floor, Kolkata 700016 also of M/s. Syndicate Jewellers Pvt. Ltd., Gems 8 Jewellery Park, Module No.GJA-2A3, 2nd floor, SDF Building, Ankurhati, Domjur, Howrah 711409; also of M/s. Syndicate Jewellers Pvt Ltd. City Centre New Town (City Center II) Action Area IID, New Town, PS Rajarhat,Kolkata 700157; also of City Centre Siluguri Jttarayan, Matigara, PO & PS Matigara, Dist. Darjeeling 734010. (Borrowers / Guarantors – M/s Syndicate Export, proprietor Mr Raiendra Tosawad of 22 Camac Street. Block A. 1st floor. Kolkata700016 also of M/s Syndicate Export of EE 8120. 8th floor. Bhara Diamond Boutdr Complex, Plot No. C-28 at G Block, CTS No. 4207, Mumbai 400051. Mr. Rajendra Tosawad s/o Shr Bhagirath Tosawad of FE 182, Sector II, Salt Lake Kolkata 700091 also of Mr. Rajendra Tosawad s/o Shri Bhagirathi Tosawad, 5Janpath Unit 3,Kharavel Nagar, Oppossite Ram Mandir Bhubaneswar 751001, Orissa, **Amar Singh Tosawad** of FE 183, Sector II, Salt Lake Kolkata 700091) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 63,46,10,407.40 (Rupees Sixty-three Crore Forty-six Lakh Ter Thousand Four Hundred Seven and Paisa Forty only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this 23rd day of June 2022 (property 1) and 24th day of June 2022 (property 2). The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India for an amount Rs.63,46,10,407.40 as on 31.01.2020 and interest thereon

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to the corrower to redeem the secured assets

**Description of Immovable Properties** 

. Commercial Unit No. EE8120, admeasuring 209 square feet carpet area equivalent to 298 sq.ft. saleable / built up area, on8th floor, East Wing, "E" Tower, Bharat Diamond Bourse Complex, Plot No. C-28. G Block. CTS No. 4207. Village –Kolekalvan Bandra (East), Mumbai 400051 (belonging to Syndicate Export)- Possession taken on 23.06.2022

2. Office Premises No. 307 admeasuring about 354 sq.ft. built up on the 3rd floor of the building know as "Parekh Market" of Parekh Market Cooperative Society Ltd. situate at 39, Jagannath Shankar Sheth Road, Girgaum, Mumbai 400004 on the land bearing CTS No. 1/1605 and 1605 of Girgaum Division in the Registration District and Sub-District of Mumbai City. belonging to Syndicate Jewellers Pvt. Ltd.) - Possession taken on 24.06.2022

**Authorised Officer** Union Bank of India

### **MANN KI BAAT**

### 'Learn from Emergency, it was bid to crush democracy'

**CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT** 

ender Enquiry No: HO(Contracts)/Conversion/Bacheli/2022/142 Dated : 27-06-2022

MSTC Ref. No. NMDC/HO/31/22-23/ET/198

IMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry

of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from prospective bidders for

ne work of "Conversion of 2 Nos. (33KV Hilltop Feeder & 11KV

Backfeed Feeder) Overhead Lines into Underground Cables near

Γhe detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloade

Central Public Procurement Portal - https://www.eprocure.gov.in/

MSTC portal - https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/

The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTC

imited website. The details of submission of bid through online are giver

n NIT. The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's

ebsite / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date

Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad

Fax No. +91-040-23534746, Tel No. +91-040-2353 2800, email

10/11A & Screening Plant, Dep-5, Bacheli Complex (C.G.)".

rom 27-06-2022 to 18-07-2022 from following website links;

. NMDC website - https://tenders.nmdc.co.in/nmdctender/

epublish/app and search tender through tender enquiry number

For further help refer to 'vendor guide' given in MSTC website.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted -

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

CALLING THE imposition of Emergency in the country in June 1975 an attempt to "crush the democracy of India", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday in his 90th Mann ki Baat address that generations to come should remember and

"At that time, an attempt was made to crush the democracy of India. The country's courts, every

learn from that period.

tempts, thousands of arrests, and atrocities on lakhs of people, the faith of the people of India in democracy did not shake... Not at all! ... The people of India got rid of the emergency and re-established democracy in a democratic way," he said. The PM also said that he had the "good fortune to have been a witness to and a partner in the struggle of the countrymen as a soldier of during the democracy" Emergency

> In his address, Modi also NMDC Limited

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contracts@nmdc.co.in

constitutional institution, the highlighted the creation of the press, were put under control. National Space Promotion and Authorization The condition of censorship was such that nothing could be Centre (In-Space), an independprinted without approval," Modi ent nodal agency formed to regulate private industry in the "But even after many at-

space sector, as an achievement in promoting new opportunities. He mentioned several space-related startups, including Chennai-based AgniKul Cosmis. Hyderababd-based Skyroot, Bengaluru-based Digantara and Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space. Both Digantara and Dhruva Space are going to make their first launch from ISRO's launch vehicle on June 30. Modi also lauded the

sportspersons who set several records at the recently concluded Khelo India Youth

**Chief General Manager (Contracts)** 

"Friends, there has been another special feature of Khelo India Youth Games. This time, too, many such talents have emerged, who are from very ordinary families. These players have struggled a lot in their lives to reach this stage of success. In their success, their family and parents, too, have had a big role to play," he said. He also highlighted the suc-

cessful 'waste-to-wealth' efforts of Aizwal and Puducherry. "There is a beautiful river,

Chitte Lui, in Aizwal, which, due to neglect for years, had turned into a heap of dirt and garbage. Efforts have started in the last few years to save this river," he

### compulsory from Class 1, RSS tells Gujarat govt

## **Make Sanskrit**

Ahmedabad The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Gujarat has made a strong pitch for teaching Sanskrit compulsorily from Class 1, at a meeting with the state government. The Indian Express has learnt. According to sources, senior representatives of the Sangh and its affiliates met with Education Minister Jitu Vaghani, senior officials of the department and the organisational general secretary of Guiarat BIP Ratnakar in April to discuss the implementation of the new National Education Policy (NEP). Sanskrit teaching was the main thrust of nearly 20 representatives of the RSS affiliate organisations, **ENS** 

### investment pledges from Adani, Ambani: Rs 1.68 lakh crore **DEEPMUKHERJEE**

Rajasthan gets biggest

Report.'

JAIPUR, JUNE 26

received by the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan under the 'Invest Rajasthan' outreach programme include commitments by the Gautam Adani-led Adani Group and the Mukesh Ambani-chaired Reliance Industries Ltd, according to information obtained by The Indian Express under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

THE BIGGEST investment pledges

Data furnished by the state's Bureau of Investment Promotion (BoIP) following the RTI application shows the two corporate houses together pledged over Rs 1.68 lakh crore between December 2021 and March 2022 in Letters of Intent (LoIs)/ Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), with the state government. This accounts for almost 18 per cent of Rs 9,40,453 crore – the total value of investment pledges over Rs 1,000 crore during the period. The investment pledges have come to the Congress-ruled state despite Rahul Gandhi, former party President, accusing the BJP at the Centre of crony capitalism he referred to Adani and Ambani as the "double A variant" spreading in the Indian economy and reYour Right TO KNOW

AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

sulting in monopolies across different sectors – in the Lok Sabha in February this year. He had earlier too taken similar iibes on the BIPled government at the Centre.

According to the data furnished, investment pledges were made between December 2021 and March 2022 by Reliance New Energy Solar Limited (Rs 1.00.000 crore), Adani Green Energy Limited (Rs 60,000 crore), Adani Infra Limited (Rs 5,000 crore), Adani Total Gas Limited (Rs 3,000 crore) and Adani Wilmar Ltd (Rs 246.08 crore).

Among 4,016 institutions listed by the Rajasthan BoIP are also JSW Future Energy Limited (Rs 40,000 crore), Sterlite Power Technologies Private Limited of the Vedanta Group (Rs 40,000 crore), Hindustan Zinc Cairn, also of Vedanta Group (Rs 33,350 crore), Axis Energy Ventures Private Limited (Rs 30,000 crore), Axis Energy (Rs 30,000 crore), Eden-Renewables (Rs 20,000 crore) and Tata Power (Rs 15,000 crore).

### #ExpressExplained

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

**EVERYDAY ECONOMY** 

### WHO ARE THE G7, WHOSE SUMMIT IN GERMANY INDIA HAS BEEN INVITED TO?

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI JUNE 26

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is in Germany to attend the Group of Seven (G7) Summit at Schloss Elmau, a century-old retreat in a nature reserve in the Bavarian Alps. He is expected to speak in two sessions that include Environment, Energy, Climate, Food Security, Health, Gender Equality, and Democracy, the Ministry of External Affairs

#### Group of 7

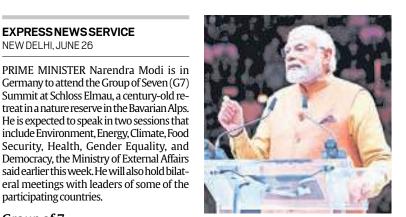
participating countries.

The G7 is an informal forum of leading industrialised nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Representatives of the European Union are always present at the annual meeting of G7 heads of state and government. Germany holds the G7 presidency in 2022. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has invited India, along with Argentina, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa to the 2022 Summit as partner countries. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, will take part virtually on June 27. The United Nations. the WHO, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the IMF and the World Bank, are also participating in the Summit.

#### G6, G8, G7

The G7 Germany website says the first "World Economic Summit", which later became the G7, was launched in 1975 by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and then Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. The heads of state and government of Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and the US — a Group of Six — met for a fireside chat at Rambouillet Castle in

The participants exchanged ideas on the economic problems of the 1970s — the first oil crisis and the collapse of the system of fixed exchange rates (Bretton Woods) – and agreed on international economic policy and



PM Narendra Modi addresses an event in Munich on Sunday. PTI

initial measures to fight the global downturn.

In 1976, Canada was added to the group, and the first G7 met in Puerto Rico. The first talks between the then European Community and the G7 took place in London in 1977, and since the Ottawa Summit of 1981, the European Community (now European Union) has been part of all working sessions.

In the 1980s, the interest of the G7 expanded to include foreign and security policy issues. In 1998, the Group of Eight was constituted as Russia became a member. Russia was thrown out of the group after its violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014.

#### G7 numbers

As of 2022, G7 countries make up 10% of the world's population, 31% of global GDP, and 21% of global carbon dioxide emissions, according to the Summit website. China and India, the two most populous countries with among the largest GDP figures in the world, are not part of the grouping.

In all G7 countries, annual public sector expenditure exceeded revenue in 2021. Most G7 countries also had a high level of gross debt, especially Japan (263% of GDP), Italy (151%) and the US (133%).

### Why women itch less than men: study finds key in a hormone

COMPARED TO men, women have a significantly lower incidence of severe psoriasis - a skin condition that causes rashes and leads to itchiness. The underlying reason for the sex differences that made men more prone to this condition, however, had re-

mained unclear so far. Now a team of researchers has found that the female hormone estradiol suppresses psoriasis. The protective role of the hormone has provided a basis for its therapeutic potential, according to a media release from Kyoto University. The study has been published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

"Our results have not only revealed the molecular mechanisms of sex differences in psoriasis but also shed new light on our understanding of the physiological role of estradiol." the release quoted Hamamatsu University School of

Medicine's Tetsuya Honda, formerly of Kyoto University, as saying.

The team tested conditional knockout mice (cko mice), which means mice with specific genes removed or inactivated. Here, the mice had their ovaries removed.

which were supplemented with estradiol pellets. In contrast to wild-type mice, the cko mice without the natural ovarian hormones estradiol showed symptoms of severe

> skin inflammation. Once these mice were given estradiol, the production of cytokines in immune cells was reversed, reducing the inflammation. This effect was also observed in human cells in vitro.

"These results indicate that estradiol suppresses psoriatic inflammation by regulating neutrophil and macrophage cells," the author was quoted as saving.

Source: Kvoto University



NEW RESEARCH

### **EXPLAINED** RUSSIA VS THE WEST

## Why sanctions are flagging

Western sanctions were predicted to inflict pain on Putin's govt. The EU's dependence on Russian energy has prevented that from happening so far, and Russia's export outlook continues to look good in the near term.

**HARISH DAMODARAN** NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

SINCE FEBRUARY 23, the day before Russia invaded Ukraine, the European Union's Council has adopted six rounds of sanctions to "impose clear economic and political costs" on the Vladimir Putin government, and to "cripple the

Kremlin's ability to finance the war". Western governments, including the United States and United Kingdom, have cut off major Russian banks from SWIFT, the interbank messaging system to enable crossborder payments. They have frozen some \$315 billion out the \$550 billion of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation's (CBR) foreign exchange reserves held in currencies and gold within their jurisdictions, as on January 1.

On April 6, the White House issued a statement that the "most impactful, coordinated and wide-ranging economic restrictions in history" would cause Russia's GDP to "contract up to 15 per cent this year, wiping out the last 15 years of economic gains"

#### Has this intent been borne out by reality?

More than four months into the war, the story hasn't quite followed the West's predicted script. To begin with, the latest median forecast of GDP decline for 2022 - based on a survey of 27 economists from various organisations (including the likes of Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan) conducted by the CBR between May 25 and 31 - is at 7.5%. This is better than the -9.2% average growth forecast in a previous survey from April 13-19.

The median forecast of consumer price inflation for the year too, has fallen from 22% to 17% between the two surveys.

The sanctions initially led to a free fall of the Russian ruble, from about 76 to the US dollar in mid-February to a low of 158.3 on March 7. The CBR was forced to raise its key interest rate from 9.5% to 20% on February 28, which was aimed as much at bolstering the currency which US President Joe Biden had mocked as "rubble" — as at reining in inflation risks.

But as the ruble bounced back to 75-76 levels towards the second week of April — and is currently trading at over seven-year-high levels of 53.4. And the central bank slashed its key rate to 17% on April 8, to 14% on April 29, 11% on May 26, and to 9.5% on June 10.

With the ruble appreciating, inflation trending downwards (rather than upwards as RUSSIA'S GOODS EXPORTS: OIL & GAS VERSUS OTHERS (IN MILLION US DOLLARS)

	TOTAL EXPORTS	CRUDE OIL	OIL PRODUCTS	NATURAL GAS*	OTHERS	OTHERS (% SHARE)				
2001	96.55	24.99	9.37	17.77	44.42	46.00				
2011	515.41	181.81	95.71	68.14	169.74	32.93				
2012	527.43	180.93	103.62	66.93	175.95	33.36				
2013	521.84	173.67	109.41	71.48	167.27	32.05				
2014	496.81	153.90	115.81	59.93	167.17	33.65				
2015	341.42	89.59	67.45	46.32	138.05	40.43				
2016	281.71	73.71	46.19	34.09	127.72	45.34				
2017	352.94	93.38	58.25	41.83	159.48	45.19				
2018	443.92	129.20	78.24	55.04	181.44	40.87				
2019	419.72	122.20	66.97	49.38	181.17	43.16				
2020	333.38	72.56	45.37	32.43	183.01	54.90				
2021	493.82	110.97	69.98	62.85	250.02	50.63				
*Includes liquefied natural gas. Source: Central Bank of Russia										

predicted by the White House) and GDP unlikely to shrink quite as much as predicted, the sanctions have not had their intended effect.

Nor has Russia's external trade really suffered. The country's surplus of goods and services exports over imports has widened, from \$44.5 billion in January-May 2021 to \$124.3 billion in January-May 2022. So has its overall current account surplus — from \$32.1 billion to \$110.3 billion — for the comparable periods.

#### Why do the sanctions appear not to have had the desired effect?

The main reason is the dependence, especially of EU countries, on energy imports from Russia. In 2021, Russia accounted for 25.7% of the petroleum oil, 44.5% of natural gas, and 52.3% of coal imported by the 27-nation bloc.

During the first 100 days of the war, from February 24 to June 3, Russia's revenues from fossil fuel exports totalled 93 billion euros (\$98 billion), according to the Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

That included 46 billion euros from crude oil. 13 billion euros from refined oil products. 24 billion euros from pipeline gas, 5.1 billion euros from liquefied natural gas, and 4.8 billion euros from coal. Out of the 93 billion euros, the EU's share alone was 57 billion euros or 61%.

In its sixth "package" of sanctions on June 3, the EU decided to phase out imports of crude oil and refined products from Russia over six and eight months respectively. Temporary exemption was granted to countries such as Hungary and Slovakia, which import crude oil by pipeline and "have no viable alternative options"

This was preceded by an outright prohibition on Russian coal imports from August, as part of a fifth round of sanctions on April 8.

It remains to be seen how successful these import phase-out plans will be, in terms of implementation on the ground. The test will be in the winter, when energy demand peaks.

Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, recently warned that Europe is at risk of energy rationing, particularly "if we have a harsh and long winter", and if the cold weather coincides with resurgent demand in China post the lifting of Covid lockdowns there.

The EU for now has not announced any ban on natural gas imports from Russia. This, even as the Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom has cut gas supplies to nearly a dozen EU countries, including Germany, France and Italy, over the past few weeks.

### Have China and India had a role to play in

It is significant that China and India have emerged as major buyers of Russian fossil fu-

the largest importer from Russia, At No. 8 is India. Its imports during this period are valued at 3.7 billion euros, comprising 3.2 billion eu-

els. CREA's latest tracker shows Russia's cumu-

lative exports of oil, gas, and coal to the EU since

(16.6 billion euros) has surpassed Germany as

But among individual countries, China

February 24 at around 64.4 billion euros.

ros of oil, and the balance coal. While the EU is trying hard to wean itself

off Russian energy, Moscow has aggressively diversified its exports towards China and India. China was the world's top importer of crude oil in 2021, with India ranked third behind the US.

In May, Russia overtook Saudi Arabia to be China's leading crude supplier. In 2021-22, Russia was the ninth biggest crude exporter to India. However, by May, it had jumped seven positions to displace Saudi Arabia and become No. 2 after only Iraq.

By continuing to sell to the EU, and at the same time ramping up exports to China and India by offering steep discounts on international prices, Russia has effectively blunted Western sanctions.

#### Does this mean sanctions targeting Russia have ended up hurting the West?

The table shows the share of oil and gas in Russia's merchandise exports at close to 50% in 2021. It was roughly 66% during the 2011-14 period, when crude prices averaged over \$100 per barrel. High prices are again benefitting Russia, although its average oil production has fallen to 10-10.1 million barrels per day (mbd) in April-May, from 11-11.1 mbd in February-March.

As Russia has increased efforts to find alternative markets and the world is figuring out ways to trade with it, the country's exports may not drastically drop from the \$494 billion of 2021.

Moreover, it isn't just fossil fuels. In the coming months, one can expect Russia to step up exports of wheat and fertilisers. Being also the world's biggest supplier of palladium and nickel - which are central inputs in emission control systems and electric vehicle batteries respectively - besides ferro-alloys, chromium and vanadium (required for steel production), makes it easier for Russia to cope with sanctions than it is for Cuba, Iran, or North Korea.

Europe and the West might be discovering that sanctions are perhaps hurting them more than they are hurting Russia.

### The coat hanger as a symbol for abortion rights

**BENITA FERNANDO** MUMBAI, JUNE 26

WITHIN HOURS of the Roe v Wade verdict being overturned by the US Supreme Court, activists on the streets and on social media used the coat hanger as a symbol of their protest. The overturned verdict had allowed American women the right to legal abortion.

### What it stands for

The symbol derives from the expression 'coat hanger abortion', which means an unsafe abortion. It refers to the practice of using the object to induce an abortion, as with many other household objects or homemade herbal concoctions, in the unavailability of safe or legal abortion access. A coat hanger operation, like other abortions performed in non-hospital settings, can endanger life.

The coat hanger, therefore, serves as a reminder of the pre-Roe era. It symbolises a last resort for women who have been denied legal abortion services, and points to a situation that many activists and experts warn about. Even when abortions are made illegal, they continue, but in ways that pose a



A protester makes a statement with a coat hanger earring in Roanoke, Virginia on Friday. The Roanoke Times via AP

#### risk to women's health and bodies. Use as a protest tool

It was notably used in April 1969, a few years before the Roe v Wade verdict in 1973, in which 3 lakh protesters in Washington marched with coat hangers around their necks. They also held up signs that read: "Never Again".

In 2016, protesters in Ohio decorated the

abortion once a foetal heartbeat could be heard — at six weeks, before most people even discover they are pregnant – even though, at that point, Roe v Wade allowed abortion until viability (roughly 24 weeks).

In May this year, a college student bought a pack of six wire hangers on Amazon and shipped them to the Supreme Court. In a viral Tik Tok post, she encouraged others to do the same. **IMAGERY:** Very often, pro-choice protest

imagery shows Lady Liberty with the coat hanger in her hand instead of the scales – something that the late Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Paul Conrad, a devout Catholic, drew back in 1988 while critiquing anti-abortionists with a cartoon captioned 'Alternative to Roe vs. Wade'. Conrad had previously criticised then US President George HW Bush by depicting him holding a gun in one hand and a coat hanger in the other, meant to show his pro-gun and anti-abortion stance.

Some pro-choice activists and doctors advocate using less sensational imagery. They believe the coat hanger makes abortions

Statehouse fencing with coat hangers to op-seem unsafe and violent, which bolsters antipose the Heartbeat Bill, which would outlaw abortion arguments and dissuades women from seeking abortions. JEWELLERY: The DC Abortion Fund, a US-

based non-profit group that helps low-income women afford abortion care, used to give out silver coat hanger pendants to its monthly donors, "The coat hanger is a reminder of patient's suffering when abortion is placed out of reach," according to its website. The coat hanger has been turned into pro-choice jewellery or accessories, such as pendants or badges, often. Some even get it tattooed as a reminder of protests for legal abortion rights.

**ART:** Abortion has also been an important theme in feminist and political art. For some, the coat hanger comes as a loaded metaphor.

'The Right to Choose' (2021), a print by Laia Abril and Carmen Winant, shows the coat hanger on one side and newspaper obituaries of feminists on the other. It was created in response to a Texas law banning most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

In 2019, a Los Angeles-based guerrilla street artist, who goes by the name Plastic lesus, placed a set of wire coat hangers in pharmacies calling them "at-home abortion kits".

### Nepal's abandoned partnership with US troops, and how its Army weighed in

YUBARAJGHIMIRE KATHMANDU. JUNE 26

NEPAL RECENTLY had to abandon at the last minute a plan to sign a State Partnership Programme (SSP) with the United States. Amid political outrage against the programme, the Nepal Army stepped in on June 15, asserting it will not accept a deal that goes against Nepal's non-aligned foreign policy. The Sher Bahadur Deuba government relented, deciding three days later that the Foreign Ministry would communicate with

the US government. The SPP would have brought the Utah State National Guard and the Nepal Army working together on "humanitarian and disaster management". It was to be signed during Deuba's proposed visit to the US in July. It

is now shelved for the foreseeable future. The widely expressed fear was that giving legitimate entry to US forces would have dangerous security implications for Nepal. The criticism has been on three concerns: that it would mean Nepal aligning militarily with the US; that India, which has close links with the Nepal Army, would not like a US presence of this nature; and that it would provoke China to retaliate in some way or the other. These concerns are based on series of de-

velopments: Nepal and US signing the \$500million grant of the Millennium Challenge Corporation(Nepal compact) after a US threat to review relations with Nepal in February; Nepal voting against Russia in the United Nations; US Deputy Secretary of State Zeya Ujra visiting a Tibetan refugee camp in Nepal; and Kathmandu recently rolling out the red carpet for Charles A Flynn, commanding general of United States Army Pacific.

### Political storm

Last week, the House of Representatives debated the consequences of the SPP once signed. A "draft agreement" purported to have been exchanged had found its way to the media, the opposition and Army generals. Three ministers made different statements: Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka said the SPP was not a "military pact" and the US troops would go back on completion of the term; Law Minister Gobinda Bandi denied any letters having been exchanged; and Home Minister Balkrishna Khand said the government would not sign such a deal. At a Cabinet meeting on June 20. minis-

US. A day earlier, the State Affairs Committee of Parliament had forced the Foreign Minister to backtrack from his earlier statement. Deuba has so far been avoiding a response

ters asked the Foreign Ministry to write to the

to the full House as well as the Committee. There is pressure on him to call off his US visit.

### The Army

Literally disowned by political parties and the government since the 2005-06 political changes, the Army has been largely quiet all these years — until this assertive reaction against the programme.

In April 2006, after the Maoists decided

to give up insurgency against the state, their leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda denounced the Nepal Army at the Prime Minister's residence as "an institution of rapists and the corrupt". Later that year, Prachanda signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with Prime Minister G P Koirala. While the Maoists became part of the government, the Nepal Army was projected as the 'Private Army' of the King.

International agencies involved in the peace process, including United Nations Mission to Nepal (UNMIN), began holding seminars for downsizing the 100,000-strong Army as part of "security sector reforms". Nepal Army Generals were denied leadership roles in the peace process in view of the Army's human rights record. UNMIN was later packed off prematurely for its alleged bias towards Maoists.

The Army, which never confronted political leaders during this period, has chosen to speak up at a time when it is being seen as regaining its esteem amid political instability

and allegations of corruption in government.

### The latest move

President Bidhya Bhandari, in her capacity as Supreme Commander of the National Army, conveyed her concern to the PM about the impact of the SPP, a source said.

A letter by then Army Chief Rajendra Chhetri to US Ambassador Aliana B Tepliz on October 27, 2015, leaked to the media recently, said: "As authorised by the government of Nepal, it is my honour to formally request the establishment of a National Guard State Partnership program for Nepal in the near future." While the Army has said Gen Chhetri's letter was in the context of the devastation caused by an earthquake that year, which led to aid from US and other countries, his letter has come to the rescue of Deuba, who can use it as a shield to claim that the Nepal Army was seeking a partnership with the US before his time — when his rival K P Oli, now a critic of the SSP, has just taken charge as Prime Minister.

Also leaked was a purported "draft" of an agreement (declared fake by US authorities) said the US State National Guard and the Nepal Army shall cooperate in areas like joint training exercises in the high-altitude terrain in Nepal, besides counter-intelligence and against cybercrime. Geographicalkly, "highaltitude areas" mean areas along the border with China.

The 2019 US Indo-Pacific Strategy Report and website mention Nepal and Sri Lanka as considering the MCC grant (Sri Lanka has since declined it) as parties to the SPP.

### China and India

China has not yet responded to the government's decision. A Defence Ministry official said: "China has taken up the issue several times, but it should be happy now as domestic politics forced Deuba to call it off."

India's acting Ambassador Namgya C Khampa met Nepal Army Chief Gen Prabhu Ram Sharma the same day the Army Headquarters issued the statement.

#### WORDLY WISE

BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES CANNOT LAUGH... THEY'RE MADE TO DENOUNCE, INTERROGATE AND

CAPTURE. — MANLIO ARGUETA

### The Indian EXPRESS

∞ Founded By ∞
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

### IN SC'S NAME

Had it not been for Court, justice would be elusive for Gujarat 2002. That's why its latest order, its use by police, is disturbing

NTHE LONG, tortuous and still unfolding process of justice after the communal violence in Gujarat 2002, the Supreme Court of India has played a commendable role. Its several interventions have ensured that the process stays on course, that it was insulated from pressure by the powerful, and that victims and survivors could hope for a fair and just closure. This is why the two arrests on Saturday, of activist Teesta Setalvad and former Gujarat DGP RB Sreekumar, are disquieting - the FIR is based on extensive quotes from the SC verdict and its annexures the day before. On Friday, the SC upheld the SIT's clean chit in the 2002 riots to the then Gujarat government led by Chief Minister Narendra Modi, discarding allegations of a larger conspiracy by high state functionaries. The collapse of that particular case was, arguably, foretold — connecting the dots right up to the chief minister's office was a tall order to begin with, and the case may have been propelled more by the anguish of those devastated by the violence, less by evidence that could hold up in a court of law. In the same order, however, the Court went a worrying step further. Its verdict said, and the FIR lodged the next day faithfully quoted: "At the end of the day, it appears to us that a coalesced effort of disgruntled officials of the state of Gujarat along with others was to create sensation...to keep the pot boiling, obviously for ulterior design...all those involved in such abuse of process, need to be in the dock and proceeded with in accordance with law". The day after, the question is: Surely the court would not countenance a witch-hunt that borrows its lines from the court?

The law must take its course on Sreekumar and Setalvad. But there is a problem with an FIR that draws so heavily upon what the court says, and a court verdict that lends itself to such immediate police action against those standing with the petitioners in cases of 2002. What the court said on Friday and the police taking its cue from it on Saturday also appears to turn on its head the story so far — after all, it was the same court that, down the years, took a number of unprecedented steps to ensure justice for 2002. The SC stayed the trials in certain cases in response to allegations that there had been serious lapses in investigation. It set up an SIT and supervised designated fast track courts for hearing sensitive cases. It ensured that cases were shifted outside Gujarat so that justice could be done. Its interventions resulted in the reopening of nearly 2,000 post–Godhra riots cases. The SC, in fact, became the centrepiece of a larger effort in which individual activists, NGOs and the NHRC, among others, contributed towards bringing justice closer to victims and survivors of the communal violence that took place in Gujarat a little over two decades ago.

The cases stemming from Gujarat 2002 raise serious questions about a range of abdications by institutions and actors. The collapse of one case should not become the pretext for a sweeping indictment of the whole struggle for justice and accountability. The SC must also reflect on whether it behoves its status and role as the wise custodian of constitutional processes and values to be seen to be turning on those who were stricken by the violence and knocked on its doors, even if, as it turns out in this particular case, their plea failed to hold.

### BALANCING ON BRICS

Its latest outing navigated tightrope on Ukraine. It is yet to live up to its promise of an alternative economic or trading bloc

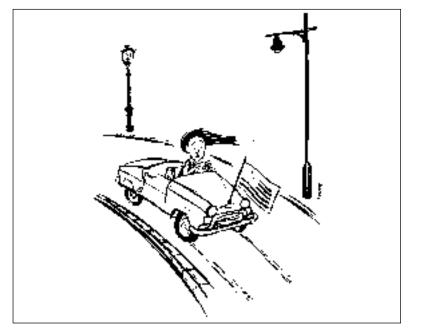
HE MOST REMARKABLE thing about the BRICS summit last week was that its five members managed to negotiate their way through the meeting in a way that sent no ripples of surprise through the post-February 24 world. This was the 14th summit of the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa grouping set up in 2009. It was hosted by China this year and was its opportunity to showcase multi-lateralism, Beijing's big foreign policy slogan, and to hit out once again at US "hegemony". Aside from the members, China had invited 13 nations from across continents, signalling its desire to expand the group. Getting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend despite the tensions owing to China's military incursions in Ladakh was a bonus. For India, BRICS was always about its commitment to building non-western alliances, but this time it was, more, an international balancing act. Ditto for Brazil. It voted for the UN Security Council resolution "deploring" the invasion of Ukraine and the General Assembly resolution condemning Russia, but President Jair Bolsonaro went to Moscow on a "solidarity trip" a week before the invasion and has insisted his country stands for "peace". South Africa too has been walking the neutrality tightrope on Ukraine. As for Russia, the summit gave President Vladimir Putin his first multilateral outing since February 24. The joint statement was able to find common ground on the invasion of Ukraine by asserting the sanctity of sovereignty and territorial integrity and the need to find a peaceful solution.

President Putin's proposal for an alternative reserve currency was received with caution. The Western sanctions on Russia have had a fall-out on economies around the world, but a post-dollar world is an idea whose time has not yet arrived. Barring Russia now, the other BRICS members are well-integrated members of the US currency-led, digitised global financial market. But in a nod to the concept, a BRICS Think Tank Network for Finance is to be set up, to "work independently and provide intellectual support, as and when tasked, for knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences and practices and cooperation on finance issues amongst BRICS countries, aiming at addressing global challenges and serving the interests of the EMDCs (Emerging Markets and Developing Countries)". The wording is suitably vague.

BRICS has yet to live up to its promise of an economic or trading bloc that can offer alternatives to developing countries. The New Development Bank, or the BRICS bank, is yet to catch speed as a multilateral lender of standing. China's push to dominate BRICS, and Russia's being in economic limbo, have set limits on what the grouping can hope to achieve.

### Freeze Frame

E P Unny



## Backsliding in America



Arc of rights must broaden further, instead of retreating. Overturning of Roe v Wade outlines democratic challenge

ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

IN A DEMOCRACY, can a right once granted be taken away? In the current international debate, this question has become part of the rising intellectual and political concern over "democratic backsliding", a concept that depicts how democracies weaken and decline without collapsing fully.

As the world's oldest surviving democracy, the United States has figured prominently in this debate, especially since Donald Trump rose to the presidency in 2016, engaged in a lot of anti-minority politics, and finally sought to overturn his 2020 election defeat. But after all is said and done, the American debate thus far has been about whether it is legitimate to put some restrictions on the exercise of franchise by racial minorities, who vote markedly less for the Republican party and considerably more for the Democrats. Strictly speaking, the debate has not been about the right to vote per se.

With the US Supreme Court's decision on June 24 to overturn a half-century-old right to abortion, granted by a 1973 Supreme Court decision in the Roe vs Wade case, the debate has now become wider, as it moves from how to engineer voter suppression to the larger realm of rights. With a 5-4 majority, the court has said that American women have no nationwide right to abortion. Rather, state legislatures should decide whether women can have that right in their respective states. In several states, within hours of the court's decision, abortion was banned, for prior legislation existed. Though Democratic states would steadfastly protect the right to abortion, nearly half of the 50 states are likely to go the other way. In the new field of democratic backsliding, comprising the retraction of rights, the floodgates have opened up.

In poll after poll, a majority of Americans, bordering sometimes on three-fourths of the population, support women's right to abortion. So, what the court has done is against popular will. But that cannot be the principal criticism against the decision. Courts are not fundamentally governed by popular passion or will, which can fluctuate from election to election, but by constitutional propriety. The key question is whether the right to abortion was constitutionally justified.

The 1973 court decision allowing the

Men don't have to deal physically with pregnancy, whereas the foetus grows inside a woman's body for nine months. If men have the right over their bodies, which can't be taken away by the government, why can't women have autonomy over their bodies as well? Why should they be subjected to the government's authority and supervision any more than men's bodies? That men are free, but women must forcibly be chained to maternity, is an idea whose time surely has gone. Maternity must be a voluntary choice. There is no going back to the notion of rights as they were viewed in

the 18th century — unequal,

unneutral, unbalanced.

right to abortion was based on the 14th Constitutional Amendment (1868). This Amendment, the court said, allowed protection of liberty and privacy, something the state could not impinge upon. Thus, even though abortion was not mentioned in the 1787 US Constitution, abortion's defence was derived from the 1868 Amendment - via its protection of citizens' liberty about matters as intimate as a decision to have a child. The 1973 court also argued that this right was not absolute, limited as it would be by considerations of "protecting potential life". This line of reasoning led to a trimester-based court ruling, which more or less forbade the government from interfering in the first trimester of pregnancy but the state could ban abortions in the third trimester, when "the viability of the fetus" was beyond doubt.

This whole structure of judicial reasoning has now collapsed. In the court's opinion, the right to privacy stemming from the 14th Amendment is not relevant, for abortion concerns not only the pregnant woman but also the life of the unborn. Moreover, the court said, abortion is neither "enumerated" as a right in the original 1787 constitution nor is it consistent with American history and tradition. In short, it is a political and legislative, not a constitutional, matter. State legislatures should decide what is permissible.

How should a political analyst comment on this tussle? Hard as we might wish otherwise, constitutional decisions are inevitably tied up with politics. There is no escape from political reasoning.

First of all, no constitution can fully anticipate how the arc of rights would bend in the future. Abortion was not mentioned in the 1787 constitution, nor explicitly in the 1868 amendment. That is because women were not autonomous political agents at that time. Until they were given the right to vote in 1920, they were not a constitutional category in the US, as was true virtually everywhere in the world. Women are autonomous

agents today. Norms change; rights evolve. Second, as the court's dissent note puts it, how can this majority decision ignore rape and incest? Why should women carry the child of a rapist, a father or an uncle? If abortion as a right is dissolved, women can be forced to give such unwanted births. The majority decision of the court is silent on this important matter.

Third, having a child is not simply a deeply moral obligation to the unborn. It is also a decision that affects "the ability of women to participate equally in (the nation's) economic and social life". These words are from a later decision, known as Casey (1992), when the US Supreme Court added the concept of "undue burdens" to support the idea of abortion. As more and more women become scientists, professors, journalists, lawyers, managers, executives, politicians and sportspersons, these considerations cannot simply be brushed aside. If a woman chooses to terminate a pregnancy now but has a child later, that may be more consistent with her dreams and desires, to which she has a rightful claim. Finally, men don't have to deal physically

with pregnancy, whereas the foetus grows inside a woman's body for nine months. If men have the right over their bodies, which can't be taken away by the government, why can't women have autonomy over their bodies as well? Why should they be subjected to the government's authority and supervision any more than men's bodies? That men are free, but women must forcibly be chained to maternity, is an idea whose time surely has gone. Maternity must be a voluntary choice. There is no going back to the notion of rights as they were viewed in the 18th century — unequal, unneutral, unbalanced.

With the Supreme Court's overturning of abortion as a constitutionally guaranteed right, America has taken another step towards democratic backsliding. Now, democratic renewal not only means fighting for more easily accessible voting procedures but also a push for a legislative codification of the right to abortion. Typically, as they evolve and deepen, democracies allow the arc of rights to broaden further, not retreat. After this judgment in the US, the stakes have become much higher and the democratic challenges bigger.

The writer is Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies and the Social Sciences at Brown University

### A Lesson From Maharashtra

Political crisis shows that anti-defection law is ineffective, even counterproductive

(imminent) power themselves. At the same

RUCHI GUPTA

THE POLITICAL crisis in Maharashtra has brought the focus back to the anti-defection law. By all accounts, the law has failed to shore up the stability of elected governments. Many governments have fallen due to defections and the defectors have not suffered any cautionary consequences. To thwart the provisions of the law, the Speaker can keep defection pleas pending and the beneficiary party can use money and investigative agencies to engineer enough defections to hit the two-thirds threshold. Voters, too, don't penalise defections, with defectors routinely winning re-elections. Some have thus mooted amendments to the antidefection law to mandate time-bound decisions by the Speaker and disqualify defectors from the next election.

The practice of politics is too wide for any institutional process to fully capture. Politicians are adept at subverting institutional processes and there are many possibilities for payoff for defectors outside of elected office alone. Moreover, politics has a history of the exercise of power by proxy and the disqualified representative can have a family member stand in their stead. It is thus unlikely that these amendments will stop defections in any substantive manner. The anti-defection law and proposed amendments approach the issue of defections from the prism of denying power to the defector, a framing which repeatedly comes up short in the face of a bigger and/or more punitive power.

It is obvious that if political parties want to resist defections, they must be able to project

Multiple analyses have attributed the political crisis in Maharashtra in part to Shiv Sena's inability to accommodate the aspirations of its dissident MLAs. The rebel MLAs on their part have spoken of the chief minister's inaccessibility. The MLAs may be opportunistic but there is no question that political parties are failing to create intra-party forums where differences can be expressed and resolved on an ongoing basis.

time, out-of-power political parties must address organisational and ideological infirmities which have made them susceptible to mass defections. There are only about 4,000 MLAs in a country with a population of almost 1.4 billion people. However, political parties tasked with representing the aspirations of crores of people are unable to find candidates who take themselves seriously enough to not cross over to political opponents. The bar is so low that the MLAs have to be physically corralled and phones confiscated to ensure continuation with the party. This is not idealistic outrage but instead has pragmatic and organisational value. It is one thing for a few individuals to be susceptible to threats and inducement, another for the organisation to be vulnerable to mass defections. Individuals can be faulted in the former but the latter calls for urgent introspective and corrective measures at the level of the leadership.

Two measures with both short-term and long-term implications come to mind. First, political parties need ideological clarity and the ability to attract individuals with a sense of purpose and not the love of power alone. This ideological depth if reflected in the party organisation and its political programmes will give members the ability to withstand lean periods of power. Every party has committed individuals; internal party processes must be geared to identify and promote them into leadership positions. This ties into the second issue.

Multiple analyses have attributed the political crisis in Maharashtra in part to Shiv Sena's inability to accommodate the aspirations of its dissident MLAs. The rebel MLAs on their part have spoken of the chief minister's inaccessibility. The MLAs may be opportunistic but there is no question that political parties are failing to create intra-party forums where differences can be expressed and resolved on an ongoing basis. Internal mechanisms for innerparty democracy - from elections to deliberative forums – are ultimately at the discretion of the party leadership. Scrapping the anti-defection law would provide some institutional leverage to express intra-party dissidence and while it may be more chaotic in the short term, can lead to greater stability and political strength in the long term.

strength in the long term.
Finally, two fundamental questions. In trying to legislate political affiliation — a key freedom in democracy — political parties are ending up as supplicants in the court. This repeated ceding of political power to the judiciary is a deviation from the democratic paradigm and must be checked. Second, the anti-defection law has undermined not just the principle of representation but is also contributing to polarisation in our country by making it impossible to construct a majority on any issue outside of party affiliation. Instead of providing stability, the law is undermining our democracy. It is time to scrap the anti-defection law.

The writer is executive director of the Future of India Foundation



### JUNE 27, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

### ISRAEL'S INVASION

GUNS STAYED SILENT in Beirut while new diplomatic moves raised cautious hopes of a breakthrough in efforts to end the Lebanese conflict. The ceasefire proclaimed by Israel after three days of bombarding Beirut seemed to be holding. During the lull, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation studied new American proposals for neutralising the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon. No details were given but the former Lebanese Prime Minister Saeb Salam, who has played a go-between role in negotiations, told reporters, "There has been a new development. I believe things are looking better."

### PM MEETS ABDULLAH

PRIME MINISTER *Indira* Gandhi, and J&K Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah met for the second time to remove "misunderstandings", if any, between them. Mrs Gandhi, accompanied by Governor B K Nehru, had a closed-door meeting for over 40 minutes with the ailing Kashmir leader at the latter's residence in Srinagar. Farooq Abdullah, the Sheikh's son and president of the ruling National Conference, said the two had a "cordial meeting". Asked if the misunderstanding between them was removed by this meeting, he replied, "There was, in fact, no misunderstanding" and added "but most

of the things were sorted out".

### Haig resigns

US SECRETARY OF State Alexander Haig said he had resigned as he felt the Reagan administration's foreign policy had strayed from its goal of "consistency, clarity and steadiness of purpose." Haig, appearing in the State Department auditorium, read his letter of resignation, which said he and the President had agreed on the three aims at the start of the administration. "In recent months," he said, "it has become clear to me that the foreign policy on which we embarked together was shifting from that careful course."

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022

to 9.4 per cent between NFHS-4 (2014-15) to

NFHS-5 (2019-21). However, on a standalone

basis, nearly 7 per cent of females aged 15-19

years were already mothers or pregnant at the

time of NFHS-5, a marginal decline over NFHS-

4's 7.8 per cent, Such young mothers are poorly

aware of feeding practices and baby care, mak-

ing them more likely to have stunted or wasted

children. Together the MTP Act, 2021 and the

PCMA Bill, 2021 — if enacted — can axe the vi-

cious cycle of early marriages, consequent early

pregnancies and poor maternal and child

 $Another \, underrated \, policy \, innovation \, that \,$ 

the government curated was the decimation of

surrogacy bazaars that allowed "renting a

womb". Given global inequalities, India be-

came a lucrative "biomarket" for surrogate

mothers. The bodies of poor Indian women

became "bioavailable" to the residents of the

Global North, spurring commercialisation of

motherhood, the commodification of women

and their reduction to their reproductive ca-

pacity. In a country with a long-standing cul-

tural lineage of revering mothers, careless com-

mercial surrogacy appeared to be in stark

contrast with the cultural ethos. Responding

to this dissonance, the Surrogacy (Regulation)

Act, 2021, replaced commercial surrogacy with

ethical, altruistic surrogacy. The Act prohibits

couples who are not of Indian origin from avail-

ing surrogacy in the country and allows only

locals with certified, medical reasons necessi-

tating gestational surrogacy to avail of it. The

MTP Act, the Surrogacy Act and the

PCM(Amendment) Bill, 2021, collectively give

tus, the government has framed policies that

readily coalesce to respect the choices and de-

cisions made by women. Under the aegis of

Ayushman Bharat-Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-

JAY), a health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per

annum is provided and a wide range of pack-

ages pertaining to obstetrics and gynaecology

are offered. While the Pradhan Mantri Matru

Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) partially compen-

sates wage loss before and after pregnancy, the

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyaan

(PMSMA) provides free antenatal care to preg-

nant women on every 9th day of the month,

easing the financial burden of pregnant

Not only is the government making a con-

women.

Within this enabling politico-legal appara-

new meaning to nari shakti.

nealth outcomes.

## THE IDEAS PAGE

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The Taliban are warming up to India faster than expected. Whether we like it or not, the Taliban are a reality now. To deal with them successfully, we have to re-evaluate our approach towards them.."

### West steps back, India shows way

While West curtails abortion rights, India empowers women through Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, Surrogacy Regulation Act and Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021



SMRITI IRANI

AT A TIME of distressing furore on social media and the streets against the near-total bans on abortion in the West, India's generous stance on the termination of pregnancy is a comforting sanctum. Coupled with the moratorium on commercial surrogacy and the proposal to equalise men's and women's ages at marriage, India is positioned securely in the highest echelons of countries that safeguard reproductive autonomy.

India's constitutional ethos commits to the protection of personal liberty through Article 21. Abortion or termination of pregnancy is a woman's prerogative. While women are exclusively fated to withstand child-bearing purely on account of their biological predisposition — sociocultural constructs also subject them to a disproportionate share of child-rear-

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021, is a step in the right direction. It ensures that expectant mothers exercise self-determination in welcoming new life to their homes. Under the aegis of the Act, abortions may be performed up to 24 gestational weeks on grounds of risk to the mother's life, mental anguish, rape, incest, contraception failure or the diagnosis of foetal abnormalities. The Act navigates the 20 weeks challenge posed by the MTP Act, 1971 and is a nod to advances in the field of health and reproductive science. It is a liberal achievement over countries where abortions are disallowed since conception, even in the most traumatising of circumstances of sexual abuse or incest.

The MTP Act, 2021, attests to the intuition and farsightedness of its crafters. Readiness for and desirability of children decisively shape the life trajectories of mothers, families and children alike. Unwanted pregnancies unexpectedly curtail the life choices of parents, especially mothers, and may limit their mental well-being and personal growth. Further, children born unwanted may suffer reduced opportunities. Illustratively, the WHO links the likelihood of children being born "wanted" to greater parental investments in their

Incumbent law and policy-makers have skilfully given reproductive choice a life-cycle twist. Since fertility, child-bearing and childrearing are unmistakably associated with marriage, by proposing to raise the legal marriageable age for women, policymakers are heralding welcome changes that delay pregnancy. The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeks to push the marriage age for women from 18 years to 21 years. The Bill is well-founded in the face of scholarship and evidence cited by the WHO, which holds that adolescent mothers aged 10 to 19 years are prone to higher risks of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, and systemic infections in comparison to women aged 20 to 24 years. Children born to such mothers additionally face higher risks of low birth weight, preterm delivery and severe neonatal

It is noteworthy that the unmet need for family planning in terms of limiting or spacing child-bearing decreased from 12.9 per cent



CR Sasikumar

The present government evinces the highest regard for its bahuroopi daughters who act at various points in their life — not only as loving mothers but as sincere students, valuable employees and valorous entrepreneurs. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign's call to ensure that girls are born and nurtured bore fruit in the form of an improved sex ratio of 1,020 females per 1,000 males. Yojanas such as Ujjwala and Jal Jeevan Mission gave many women much needed respite from the drudgery of collecting fuelwood or water so they could partake in other gainful activities. The Mudra Yojana has provided aspiring women entrepreneurs with loans sans collateral and yet another scheme, the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, has ad-

India is extending the ceiling of permissible abortions. While menstrual hygiene remains a conversation hushed in whispered tones in parts of the world, PM Modi addressed the issue from the ramparts of the Red Fort with 1.3 billion Indians listening intently. By outlawing triple talaq, the government has addressed the constant state of insecurity faced by Muslim women. By proposing to revise the permissible marriageable age, the government has held men and women to the same, unbiased standards. The present government has instilled conscientiousness into the calculus of policymaking with a fervent hope that it will better the lives of the mothers and daughters of India for generations to come. Even as the West retrogresses, India shows the path to a progres-

certed effort for reproductive choices to be easier on the pockets of women, it is also promoting safe motherhood through institutional deliveries under Janani Suraksha Yojana and quality, respectful care in labour rooms during deliveries under schemes like LaQshya. These efforts have culminated in a manifold increase in institutional deliveries from 79 per cent in NFHS-4 to nearly 89 per cent in NFHS-5. The ultimate reward to the nation is the greater longevity of mothers as evidenced by the declining Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) from 167 per lakh live births in 2011-13 to 103 per lakh live births as of 2019.

vocated for higher subsidies for women.

While the West is curtailing abortion rights, sive society.

The writer is Union Minister for Women and Child Development

### Using past to oppress future

Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid judgment makes it clear that revanchist claims to religious sites, post 1947, have no basis in law



CHANDER UDAY SINGH

NOVEMBER 9, 2019, was a historic day for the Supreme Court of India. On this day, five justices pronounced a unanimous verdict in M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das, better known as the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid judgment. In what was hailed by many as a masterful act of judicial statesmanship, the Bench speaking as one through a judgment ascribed to no individual judge, held that the Hindu parties had illegally planted idols in the central courtyard of the Babri mosque on the night between December 22-23, 1949, thereby desecrating it and that Hindu zealots committed a grave crime by demolishing the mosque on December 6, 1992. It also held that nevertheless, the title to the underlying land must be declared in favour of Ram Lalla Virajman, the deity of infant Lord Ram that had made out the best case of continuous possession and worship. The Sunni Central Wagf Board, as compensation for the illegal desecration and complete destruction of their structure, were to be given five acres of land elsewhere in Ayodhya.

Unprecedented too, even if not historic, was the celebration organised by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who constituted and headed the five-judge bench. This triumphalism would be worth it if the judgment succeeds in closing the door on revanchist claims upon other mosques that were already in the crosshairs of zealots long before it was pronounced: Gyanvapi and Shahi Idgah in Varanasi and Mathura, and as many as 3,000 others scattered around the nation.

Indeed, one of their strongest claims to judicial statesmanship lies in the manner in which the Bench explained The Places of Worship Act, 1991, and its effect. In para 97 the justices hold that this law "imposes two unwavering and mandatory norms": The first is an absolute bar on the conversion of a place of worship of one religious denomination to that of any other religion. Second, to preserve the religious character of every place of worship as it existed at Independence, on August 15, 1947. The only exceptions, carved out in the 1991 Act itself, were the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute that was pending in the courts, any cases that had become final by judicial verdict or concluded settlements prior to September 18, 1991, and any monuments governed by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

What is one to make then of the spate of suits being filed across the country, court orders directing entry into ancient mosques. videography by court commissioners, searches for religious artefacts or symbolism, and claims for the right of one denomination to worship in the place of worship of another? More importantly, what does one make of the timorousness of constitutional courts when faced with such claims? And what of the throwaway comments or remarks during hearings, which to the media and general public might suggest new avenues to use history and its wrongs to oppress the present and the future? And lastly, does the exclusion of ancient monuments and archaeological sites from the purview of Section 4 of the Places of Worship Act make a material difference to these suits?

The first question is easily answered, and not only because of The Places of Worship Act. Insofar as the Act is concerned, the Bench in M. Siddiq (supra) expressly quashed the findings of the Allahabad High Court to the effect that certain types of disputes could be kept alive, or subsequently raised. The five justices elevated non-retrogression to a basic feature of the Constitution. These findings were rendered after noting that many ancient places of worship were built upon the ruins of others, and sometimes even after destroying those that stood before, and that consequently religious artefacts, pillars, stones, carvings, and even idols might have been subsumed within the later place of

Apart from the 1991 Act, it appears from the nature of these suits that they are barred by limitation and are untenable. Judging by press reports, the claims in these suits are based not on title, ownership and continuous possession, but on the right to worship at particular sites. The foundation of these claims is a belief that a sacred temple was destroved centuries ago, and a mosque was built on the ruins. Such claims, as held by the Bench in M. Siddiq, are clearly time-barred under the Limitation Act, 1963.

My second question is clearly rhetorical, and the reader can fill in the answers.

As for the third, it must be said that queries and open-ended discussions during court hearings are par for the course. But when issues as fraught as this one are met with the Supreme Court musing on the possibility of discoveries by a court commissioner — and their significance — and hypothesising about a Parsi Agyari in which a Christian cross might be found, and the "hybrid" nature of such Agyari, some clarifications become necessary.

The Places of Worship Act, 1991, is concerned with one principal question: What was the religious character of a place of worship on August 15, 1947? The Act is not concerned with what existed before the construction of the place of worship, what materials were used to build it, or whether it stands upon religious symbols or icons or artefacts of any other religious denomina-

That brings me to the last question, on the

Ancient Monuments Act, 1958. The mosques that are the subject matter of most of these suits are not covered by the 1958 Act, so this is essentially a red herring. However, other monuments like the Qutub Minar and Taj Mahal are certainly covered by the 1958 Act. Occasionally, there are places of worship within ancient monuments, and in such cases, section 16 of the 1958 Act grants them protection that is broadly on par with that which is available under The Places of Worship Act. This Act bars civil suits in respect of any matters falling within the purview of the National Monuments Authority, so it is unlikely that the 1958 Act will spring to the rescue of these revanchist

> The writer is a senior advocate. The full version of this article is available on the indianexpress.com



### Avoiding a GSTexit

At root of GST imbroglio is a deficit of trust and revenues that must be addressed

The Medical Termination of

Pregnancy (Amendment)

Act, 2021, is a step in the

right direction. It ensures

exercise self-determination

their homes. Under the aegis

of the Act, abortions may be

that expectant mothers

in welcoming new life to

performed up to 24

gestational weeks on

grounds of risk to the

mother's life, mental

anguish, rape, incest,

diagnosis of foetal

abnormalities.

contraception failure or the

Praveen Chakravarty

 $INDIA'S\,GOODS\,and\,services\,tax\,(GST) will\,be$ five years old on July 1. The GST Council, comprising minister representatives from all states and union territories, will be meeting over the next few days. There will likely be celebrations, commiserations and contestations.

Three significant issues — the breakdown of trust and cooperative federalism between states and the Union government, the expiry of the revenue guarantee that protected states' revenues and the recent Supreme Court's judgment highlighting that the GST Council's recommendations are not binding on the states - form the backdrop to this Council

Maharashtra, the highest contributor to GST revenues (20 per cent) may not be represented in today's meeting because its government is on the verge of collapse, aided in part by the BJP governments of the Union, Gujarat and Assam. Surely, these egregious political developments in Maharashtra will play in the minds of the non-BIP representatives in the GST Council meeting from Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delhi, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand and Orissa, that together contribute 36 per cent of overall GST revenues.

Cooperation between states and the Union cannot just be an economic compact, but a broader political ethic. It is foolhardy to expect states to indulge in a harmonious spirit of economic cooperative federalism inside the GST Council when their governments, leaders and institutions are being politically attacked and destroyed outside.

The SC recently observed that it is in the national interest to have both cooperative and competitive federalism, and hence, the GST Council's decisions are not binding on the states. This means that states had and continue to have the right to either comply fully with the Council's recommendations or modify them as they deem necessary. This has opened the window for states to override the fundamental GST premise of a "one nation one tax". If pushed to a corner, states may now

use the SC ruling as a shield. The other fulcrum of GST was the tangible mechanism of guaranteed revenues for states. When GST was mooted amid lofty promises in 2017, sceptical state governments extracted a five-year insurance from the Centre of a minimum revenue guarantee, without which GST may not have been possible. It turned out to be prescient as GST failed to live up to its economic promises and states' revenues were protected through this guarantee, despite Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's attempt to wriggle out of this commitment during the pandemic under the alibi of an "act of God". The Union government's proclivity to levy and appropriate cess revenues for itself without sharing them with the states has lent credence to the wisdom of guaranteed compensation for states. This guarantee is now set to expire.

GST is too precariously perched to yank away the compensation guarantee for states. The ideal solution to salvage and fix GST is to extend the compensation guarantee. The tenure of extension and the guaranteed rate of revenue growth can be mutually agreed upon by states and the Union.

However, the Union government is not desirous of extending the compensation guarantee. Its apprehension and reluctance are understandable, given its deteriorating fiscal situation, foisted by high global crude oil prices, rising fertiliser imports and expanding welfare expenditure. But in the larger and longer term interest of GST, it is prudent to extend the compensation guarantee, which will assuage states' concerns and buy time to revive GST. It is no secret that nearly all states, irrespective of their political affiliations, want an extension of the compensation guarantee. At this juncture of the GST regime, it is perhaps wiser to extend the compensation guarantee and hope to obviate its need through buoyant GST revenues than to further erode states' confidence. Sacrificing a percentage point or half of the fiscal deficit next year by extending the compensation guarantee is worth the potential benefits of a well-functioning GST. At the root of the current GST, imbroglio is

a deficit of trust and revenues. Technical fixes such as rationalisation of rates and ease of GST compliance are necessary but not sufficient to bridge the revenue deficit since GST revenues are a function of the performance of the larger economy, which in turn depends on

various other factors. The trust deficit can be bridged only through acts of good faith. The Union government should commit to the states that it will not resort to cesses and surcharges that are outside the shareable pool of revenues. It must resolve to honour the revenue guarantee commitment to the states. It must respect and uphold the true spirit of not just fiscal federalism but political and constitutional federalism too.

Democratically elected state governments in India do not have sole powers for both direct and indirect taxation, which is unheard of in any other federal democracy. GST centralised India's indirect taxation. It is time to start a national discussion on reversing the course. moving towards decentralisation by giving states powers for direct taxation. A commitment to initiate such discussions by the Union government will be a healthy signal for states' confidence and fiscal freedom.

After five years, it is now well established that GST has failed to deliver on its economic promises. Contrary to the technocratic rhetoric, it is not just the flawed implementation that is responsible for GST's economic failure. GST was always an economic square peg in India's federal round hole. Regardless, we are now far down the GST path and must strive to make it work, to avoid a "GSTexit", a la

Chakravarty is chairman of the data analytics department of the Congress Party

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INFORMATION AGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Let there be data' (IE, 25 June). Managing a country as diverse as India calls for availability of good quality, reliable and regular data. In our age of information, data and facts are everything, and their absence, a recipe for failure. There must, therefore, be a constant stream of data forthcoming on important national objectives, for use by policymakers, researchers and analysts. The proposed resumption of the Consumer Expenditure Survey, after a long hiatus, is welcome news, and one which hopefully marks a new beginning in the availability of comprehensive and regular official data in the country.

**Hemant Contractor,** Pune

### NATION FIRST?

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Penny wise, security foolish' (IE, June 26). The government seems to be aware that despite its ill-conceived "Agnipath" recruitment scheme, the youth of the country will come forward to join it, due to compelling unemployment. Faced by the question of bread and butter, the youngsters have no time and energy to resist and compel the Centre to roll back the scheme. The most insidious facet of "Agnipath" is that only one-fourth of

the soldiers would be absorbed into the force. This will create a deep rift amongst them at the cost of camaraderie and the principle of "nation first" as every "Agniveer" would like to overshadow the other in sycophancy for senior officers. Besides, a fancy name and a "mercenary" like arrangement cannot be an alternative for motivated, dedicated and fulfilled soldiers ready to

die for the nation and each other. Devendra Awasthi, Lucknow

### FOOD SECURITY

THIS REFERS TO the article 'Preparing soil for the future' (IE, June 24). Soil is an essential natural resource that supports various ecosystem services. Proper management of soil health is crucial, as it involves the survival of any species that directly depend on soil for their existence, including humans. Improper agricultural practices have impacted the soil health in many regions of the world. Monoculture and plantationbased farming has changed the natural character of local ecosystems, resulting in the degradation of soil quality. Aggressive and unsustainable farming cannot be justified on grounds of ensuring food security, as these practices, in the long run, will lead to a food-insecure world for future generations.

Sudip Kumar Dey, via email



## 8 GOVT & POLITICS

## 100 days after Punjab sweep, a reality check for AAP in CM's bastion

**MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA** 

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 26

BARELY THREE days after the Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government in Punjab marked its 100 days, the Sangrur bypoll outcome has come as a sobering reminder that a record poll sweep can be followed by a humiliating electoral defeat.

Sangrur, the pocket borough of Chief Minister Mann, had catapulted him into the political stage by electing him with a record margin of over 2 lakh votes in the 2014 general elections. Mann had got re-elected from Sangrur in 2019 Lok Sabha polls by over 1 lakh votes. The bypoll was necessitated when he resigned from the seat after taking over as the CM on March 16.

The defeat of the AAP candidate Gurmel Singh at the hands of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president, Simraniit Singh Mann, with a margin of 5,822 votes in a neck-and-neck contest – which comes at a time when the Mann government is seen to have acted against the corrupt — is a wake-up call for the AAP dispensation. The AAP's leaders have been facing the charge of being "inaccessible", which used to be once the bugbear of the previous Capt Amarinder Singh-led Congress

Evidently, the ruling party seems to have failed to neutralise the public anger against the killing of popular Punjabi rapper Sidhu Moosewala, even as it fielded a relatively unknown candidate in a fiercely-contested five-cornered battle in Sangrur.

The AAP was certainly not expecting to lose to the SAD(A),



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann

which has not won an election since 1999, when Simranjit won from the Sangrur parliamentary seat. The AAP, on the other hand, had bagged all nine Assembly seats in this constituency four months ago. It also deployed its top brass for campaigning, with both Delhi CM Arvind Keiriwal  $and\,CM\,Mann\,hitting\,the\,Sangrur$ trail ahead of the election.

A former IPS officer, the SAD(A) chief had resigned from his job in 1984 in protest against Operation Blue Star. A two-time MP. Simraniit was first elected to the

Lok Sabha in 1989 when he was in jail. He has been seeking a UNmonitored inquiry into the killing of Moosewala, who was gunned down on May 29, days after his security was withdrawn by the Mann government. Although the singer had contested the Assembly poll from Mansa on the Congress ticket, it was no secret that he had decided to support Simranjit in the Sangrur bypoll — a point that the latter highlighted in his electioneering and campaign ads.

Mann, who has been in political wilderness for years and was often dismissed as a relic of militancy who continued to harp on "a separate State", sprang back into the spotlight when a "Sarbat Khalsa" meeting called by him

against the sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 got a significant public response. He gained further traction during the 2020-21 farmers' agitation when "influencers" like late Deep Sidhu aligned with him. The bids mounted by some ruling quarters to paint the farm stir as "anti-national" gave ammunition to leaders like Simranjit, who have spent a lifetime highlighting the alleged "excesses" of the central dispensation against the minorities.

In the run-up to the Sangrur bypoll, Mann said his win would be a "victory of the secular people and minorities against the ultraright parties such as BJP, AAP, and Congress". The AAP candidate, Gurmel Singh, a sarpanch, could not deal with such growing rage or match the rhetoric of his rival.

As the AAP failed to ad-

blings as it did not include anyone from the Malwa region that gave AAP 66 of its total 92-seat haul in Assembly elections.

ing close on the heels of the AAP's Assembly poll landslide, it was contested hotly by other parties, including the BJP. While the Congress fielded Dalvir Goldy, who had contested against Bhagwant Mann from Dhuri in the Assembly poll, the BJP nominated Kewal Dhillon, an industrialist and former Congress legislator, in the fray, with the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) giving its ticket to Kamaldeep Kaur, sister of Balwant Singh Rajoana, a death row convict in the ex-CM Beant Singh assassi-

dress the anger among voters due to the inaccessibility of local leaders, its choice of nominees for the Rajya Sabha also led to some rum-

With the Sangrur bypoll com-

nation case. FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com



Simranjit Mann's supporters take out a victory rally to celebrate his win in Sangrur on Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

### The comeback Mann: SAD(A) chief who had the last laugh on Punjab CM

**KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR** AMRITSAR, JUNE 26

DEALING A severe blow to the ruling AAP in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president, Simranjit Singh Mann, emerged as the victor Sunday in the crucial bypoll in the Sangrur Lok Sabha constituency, the bastion of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, defeating AAP candidate Gurmail Singh in a neck-and-neck fight.

The bypoll was necessitated when the incumbent Sangrur MP Bhagwant Mann resigned from the seat after becoming the CM in March following the AAP's landslide victory in the state Assembly elections. It was considered to be the first test of the fledgling Mannled AAP government's popularity Pushed to the margins of

Punjab's mainstream politics for over two-and-half decades, the 77-year-old pro-Khalistan leader



Simranjit Singh Mann in Sangrur, Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

and ex-IPS officer Simranjit Singh Mann's stunning win is likely to boost the Panthic politics in the border state.

In its campaign for the Sangrur bypoll, the Sukhbir Badal-led Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) had also played the Panthic card and fielded Kamaldeep Kaur, sister of Balwant Singh Rajoana, the ex-CM Beant Singh's assassination convict lodged in jail, while making the release of the Sikh prisOpposition Congress also campaigned vigorously for its candidate in the Sangrur fray. However, it was Mann who eventually won the race. Significantly, an effort was

oners its plank. The principal

mounted in the run-up to the Sangrur bypoll to get various SAD factions united with Sukhbir even visiting Mann's house to persuade him to withdraw in favour of Kamaldeep's candidature, but the SAD (Amritsar) chief turned it down and went ahead with his campaign

It used to be said in Punjab political circles that Mann would contest all parliamentary and Assembly polls only to get defeated. A two-time Lok Sabha MP, he had last won from the Sangrur parliamentary constituency in 1999.

According to the Lok Sabha website, "Mann remained in jail from 1984 to 1989 for the devoludid not take oath. He was elected to 13th Lok Sabha from 1999 to 2004 and remained Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of External Affairs. He was committed to the protection of social, cultural, civil, economic, and political rights as enshrined in the UN charter. Protection of human rights and rights of minority were his special interests as MP." Although he has been a pro-

tion of powers to the Sikhs and al-

though elected to 9th Lok Sabha.

Khalistan leader, Mann had focused on constructing cow shelters during his term as an MP during 1999-2004. He was then also declared "outstanding parliamentarian" by the Lok Sabha Speaker. He is a relative of former CM Captain Amarinder Singh.

Mann had resigned from the IPS in 1984 in protest against the

**FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

Vikram Reddy with Andhra Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. Twitter/@MekapatiVikram

### Low-profile construction magnate retains YSRCP seat

**SREENIVAS JANYALA** HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

THE YSR Congress Party scored a huge victory in the bypoll for the Atmakur Assembly constituency in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district on Sunday as its candidate Mekapati Vikram Reddy defeated the BJP candidate by 82,888 votes.

The 49-year-old is the younger brother of Mekapati Goutham Reddy, the previous MLA from the constituency and the state industries minister who died of a heart attack on February 21. Their father was the four-time Lok Sabha MP from Nellore. Mekapati Rajmohan Reddy.

Vikram is the managing director of the family's company KMC Constructions Ltd that his father had founded.

When Rajmohan launched his Goutham in politics ahead of the 2014 elections, Vikram took care of the family business. An IIT-Chennai graduate, he has a master's degree in construction management from the US. It is said that Vikram was initially reluctant to contest the election and instead wanted his sister-inlaw to contest. But after several rounds of discussions, it fell on him to take his brother's place.

The YSRCP leader in charge of the district, Balineni Srinivas Reddy, described Vikram as a soft-spoken person. "He is extremely polite and gentle and has maintained a very low profile," he said.

### Tripura: Cong demands probe into attack on its Agartala office

**DEBRAJ DEB** 

A CONGRESS supporter was stabbed in front of the party state headquarters in Agartala, leading to a clash between BJP and Congress workers after bypoll results were announced Sunday.

Police fired teargas shells to bring the situation under control. Around 20 people, including state Congress chief Birajit Sinha, were injured.

Sinha sustained head injuries when stones were pelted at him. A makeshift camp set up in front of the Congress Bhawan destroyed and several two-wheelers were damaged in the clash.

Soon after, the residence of a BIP corporator of Agartala municipality, Shilpi Sen, was allegedly targeted by Congress activists. Sen's daughter suffered minor injuries after being hit by an object hurled at the house. A BIP supporter, who came to Sen's rescue, was also injured when he was assaulted by the mob.

In Delhi, the Congress demanded an investigation into the attack on the party office and imposition of President's Rule if the "state government is unable to handle law and order".

The party decided to send a three-member delegation led by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury to Tripura to take stock of the situation and "make a report on the heinous attack".

The Indian National Congress strongly condemns the mindless attack on Congress Bhawan and brutal assault on Tripura PCC president Birajit Sinha and other Congress workers by BJP goons, after the thumping victory of Congress party candidate Sudip Roy Barman in the Agartala bypoll," AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said. "It is utterly shameful that the police stood as mute and complicit spectators while the goons stormed the office and attacked our office bearers... We demand an apology from BIP president IP Nadda and an investigation by Home Minister Amit Shah into why

these attacks occurred." WITH ENS, DELHI

### And the winners are...

Results of bypolls held on June 23 for 3 LS seats and 7 Assembly seats



Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi (centre, left) after winning the Rampur Lok Sabha bypoll. PTI

### **AZAMGARH**

UTTAR PRADESH

**DINESH LAL YADAV** "NIRAHUA", BJP ■ PREVIOUS WINNER:

Akhilesh Yadav,

Samajwadi Party

■WINNING MARGIN: 8679 votes over SP's Dharmendra

### LOK SABHA SEATS

**RAMPUR UTTAR PRADESH** 

**GHANSHYAM SINGH** LODHI, BJP

■ PREVIOUS WINNER: Azam Khan, Samajwadi Party

■ WINNING MARGIN: 42,192 votes over SP's Mohd, Asim

#### SANGRUR, PUNJAB

SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN, SHIROMANI AKALI DAL ■ PREVIOUS WINNER: Bhagwant Mann,

■ WINNING MARGIN: 5,822 votes over AAP's **Gurmail Singh** 

### ⊣ Tripura ⊦

ANDHRA PRADESH

WINNER: MEKAPATI VIKRAM REDDY, **YSRCP** 

**DEFEATED BIP's Bharat** Kumar Gundlapalli by 82,888 votes

### **JHARKHAND**

WINNER: SHILPI NEHA TIRKEY, CONGRESS **DEFEATED BIP's** Gangotri Kujur by 23,690 votes

RAJINDER NAGAR, DELHI

WINNING CANDIDATE: DURGESH PATHAK,

**DEFEATED** BJP's Rajesh Bhatia by 11, 468 votes

### **ASSEMBLY SEATS**

**AGARTALA** WINNER: SUDIP ROY **BARMAN, CONGRESS DEFEATED** BJP's Ashok

Sinha by 3163 votes

**JUBARAJNAGAR WINNER: MALINI** DEBNATH, BJP **DEFEATED CPM's Sailendra** 

Chandra Nath by 4572 votes

**SURMA WINNER: SWAPNA DAS** (PAUL), BJP

**DEFEATED** Independent candidate Baburam Satnami by 4583 votes **TOWN BARDOWALI** 

WINNER: MANIK SAHA, BJP

**DEFEATED** Congress' Asish

Kumar Saha by 6104 votes



BJP supporters celebrate in Agartala on Sunday. PTI

Source: Election Commission

### Absent Akhilesh, strong BJP campaign & BSP: Why SP sank

**LALMANI VERMA** 

the helm of its campaign and facing an aggressive campaign by the BJP, the Samajwadi Party (SP) lost the Lok Sabha by-elections in Rampur and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh that were once considered its strongholds. The Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) strong performance in Azamgarh heavily damaged the SP.

By winning both the bypolls, the BIP on Sunday strengthened its already dominant position in the state ahead of the urban local body elections that are due later this year and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The elections are also likely to raise questions about Akhilesh Yadav's absence from campaigning in both Azamgarh, where his cousin Dharmendra Yadav was the contestant, and in Rampur the once bastion of senior SP leader Azam Khan now in the hands of the BJP. He leader is also likely to face questions about

**JIGNASA SINHA** 

RAMPUR, JUNE 26

"Azam Khan ke gadh mei kamal khi-

laye hain (we have got the lotus to

bloom in Azam Khan's bastion),"

says Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi. The

BJP candidate from Rampur is cel-

ebrating his bypoll victory at his

farmhouse, filled with party work-

The victory is doubly sweet

"This is an achievement for

all the party workers who

worked hard for months. I felt

the Samajwadi Party didn't de-

serve the win because they have

no vision and no ambition. I left

the party because I wanted to

his position in the party follow- Assembly segments in ing this defeat as he had to negotiate hard with Akhilesh to give the candidature to his longtime associate Asim Raia.

Though the BSP could not win Azamgarh - it did not contest Rampur – its candidate Shah Alam, popularly known as Guddu Jamali, got 2.66 lakh votes and effectively ended Dharmendra Yadav's chances. Reacting to the results, BSP president Mayawati said they had "shown that only the BSP has theoretical and ground strength to defeat the BJP".

For the BJP, putting its entire might into the campaign paid off as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and almost his entire Cabinet canvassed for the party's candidates.

### Azamgarh

The SP won the constituency in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections despite a wave of support across the country for the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Even in the state elections earlier this year, it won all the five

'Got lotus to bloom in Azam

bastion': BJP's Rampur winner

port from everyone" he says.

change things. Today, I have sup-

meanwhile, the disappointment

it is sad to lose in Rampur. We

had hopes and it's a bad loss. We

did push for more votes but

everything was hay-wire. The

nomination was filed at the last

moment and there wasn't much

support from the leaders. We

have the potential and will work

towards the next elections," said

an SP spokesperson at the office,

one of the few people present

there. The other workers alleged

that BIP fought the elections

derstandably, was the veteran

Azam Khan himself, who refused

to accept the result, "Why would

you call this an election? My

workers were detained and

beaten up. Our supporters were

The most disappointed, un-

with unfair means.

of the loss is hard to shake off.

At the Samajwadi Party office,

"I don't want to say much but

Azamgarh. But this time, the parliamentary constituency fell to the BJP as its candidate Dinesh

Nirahua managed to take advantage of the BSP eroding away the SP's support base. The SP's alleged silence on Muslim issues also seemed to not go down well with Muslim voters.

### Rampur

Considered the citadel of Azam Khan, the SP left campaigning in Rampur to the veteran leader and his supporters. But the BIP did not throw in the towel and mobilised its entire top leadership to storm Azam's bastion.

Azam campaigned for Raja and tried to garner sympathy by narrating the hardships he and his family faced in prison. But the strategy failed in front of the BJP iuggernaut and the SP leader could not benefit from the decision of the BSP and the Congress to not contest the election. Political observers said several Dalit voters also chose the BIP.

threatened and abused by the po-

lice. Lodhi is lucky he has a party

that can bend rules and be happy.

I can't do all that. I have spent

months in jail. I run schools here

and am a chancellor of the univer-

sity. My aim has always been to

help people. But can one fight

with police and the goondagardi

against us? We were called names

and people were stopped from

voting. There were only 6 votes

from a place where 900 votes

could come. I refuse to believe this

were quiet after the results were

announced and many refused to

talk about the elections. Many lo-

cal residents said they were

happy with the results but didn't

expect much. One resident said:

"I saw the results on TV. We hope

they do make some changes

here. Power cuts and roads are a

huge issue. This is a developing

city and we want change."

In the town itself, the streets

was a fair election," he said.

### **U.P. RESULTS: LEADERS REACT**



bypoll wins in Azamgarh

Rampur are historic. It indicates wide-scale acceptance and support for the double engine governments at the Centre and in UP..."

NARENDRA MODI PRIME MINISTER



"Today's has given this message

very clearly in front of everyone that in 2024, the Bharatiya Janata Party is going to win 80 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh"

YOGI ADITYANATH U.P. CHIEF MINISTER



"This victory of BJP is the victory of

dishonesty, disregard for democracy... the 'Dhritarashtra' vision of the Election Commission, and hijacking of public mandate... Democracy is bleeding and the public mandate lost"

**AKHILESH YADAV** SP CHIEF



results have once again proved that only BSP has the ideological

and ground force to defeat the BJP here...'

MAYAWATI **BSP CHIEF** 

## IDEA EXCHANGE NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

Nihal Koshie: You played back-toback events in Poland and Norway and are scheduled to play in Lyon and Dortmund. So is Vishy Anand, at 52, planning to make a fullfledged comeback?

Well, I will play as often as I can, but select tournaments. I will not play tournaments that require huge commitment like the World Championship cycle. But events that I can somehow fit into my schedule and I find interesting. It will be less chess than I used to play, but nonetheless, I still enjoy it very much.

Nihal Koshie: Can you talk about beating Magnus Carlsen, and also the ninth round against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, where you made an error and videos showed a lot of emotion from you?

So, against Carlsen, I had a winning position in the Classical, which would have been worth much more. I would've got the full three points, it would've been a threepoint lead in the tournament, and that was a huge missed opportunity. (Against) Mamedyarov, I simply missed a certain thread, and after I made it, I saw it. And I was so disgusted with myself that I just decided to resign. And the worst thing is when he came and sat down, at first, he seemed very confused. By then, I felt really stupid, because I understood I had resigned prematurely, and I could have at least had the sense to go to the other room and wait for him to see. Maybe, he would have played instantly and I would have gotten away with it. I was so shaken by it that I resigned and this was quite emotional.

Nihal Koshie: You are calm and collected in public, but does Vishy Anand vent? And do you ever identify say with tennis players who throw

their racquets? I feel like doing those things, it's just that I restrain myself. And I was quite angry and I knew I would have a bad night's sleep (after resigning against Mamedyarov), I knew the next day I would be irritable. But you know you still have a game, and if you lose that as well, you will feel even worse. So, there are times when I mentally break a racquet but I haven't physically done

Nihal Koshie: Have you thrown

In my room, sure. But nothing that really breaks. I mean nothing exciting. I can throw a pen on the bed or fling a key across the room. And nowadays, they don't even give you those keys. They give these key cards. What can you do with a key card? It's like the joke goes: in the old days, you could slam a phone on the receiver, but now what can you do with a mobile phone? Just punch the keypad!

Mihir Vasavda: Chess players sit quietly most of the time, but we saw Carlsen's reaction when Nepo (Jan Nepomniachtchi) blundered in the 2021 World Championship match and the famous Garry Kasparov blunder against you in 1996. Do you have a favourite meltdown of a chess player during a match?

There are times in games when I make a blunder and open my eyes. I shake my head and am furious with myself. That's as much as you permit yourself. I have seen some spectacular expressions from Kasparov, for instance. Famously, the Rapid game that I played against him in 1996, the fact that we still have it on video is very nice. Carlsen will sometimes fall and look up there are people who look disgusted with themselves, they shake their head, you can see they are cursing themselves. They fidget, they do all these things, but it has never gotten violent so far.

### Sandip G: What are the challenges of

playing chess at 52? As is the case with many things in life, some things happen gradually. It's not like some things change from the age of 49 to the age of 50. It had been happening over time. So you get used to it, but over the years I noticed that certain kind of mistakes recur more often. Your calculation is not so exact. But you notice that over time you cut yourself more slack; you overcompensate in other areas that you can. If you keep working on chess, you are able to learn new things and that compensates for a lot of other things. So, if you are able to work on new areas, your brain remains fresh and it

#### Sandip G: Is it becoming more emotional with experience?

I don't think I have become more emotional as I have aged. The only thing I can say is that I continue to keep it inside. I have always been irritated, even when I was 22-23, and ridiculous when I blundered Nowadays I just shake my head, do those small gestures that are permitted. You are cursing yourself inside and know that night's sleep is going to go. You know a certain amount of pain you are going to go through. But the thing is, once you play another game, the previous one goes away very fast. So you are also experienced. And it's true that if something has happened many, many times in your life, you

#### **VISWANATHAN ANAND**

INDIA'S FIRST GRANDMASTER & FIVE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION

### We are no longer chess players from mythology; someone bespectacled who is slightly old. Now chess is seen as a fairly young sport ?

Chess legend Viswanathan Anand on keeping it together as a chess player despite wanting to throw keys and pens around after a bad day's play, chess shrugging out of its Cold War garb and how he quietly hit back at Anatoly Karpov's casual snide of the Indian being too nice to win – by winning. A lot. The session was moderated by Senior Editor NIHALKOSHIE

The best way to cure a bad game is to play a sent to cover chess good one. And once you during the Cold War, play a good one, it even if he couldn't follow allows you to settle chess, could write a few down emotionally and lines about the KGB... get on with it. Like everyone loved it. Once maths... if you develop a that was removed, it kind fear, then it becomes of left a certain vacuum much more deep-rooted but new storylines and never goes away have emerged

Illustration: Shyam Kumar Prasad

stop overreacting.

Sandip G: You will mentor the Indian team at the Chess Olympiad and you are also a mentor at the Westbridge Anand Chess Academy, with Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh and Vaishali, all of whom started playing in the post-computer era with powerful engines. How fast are these kids and what are the

major changes? I would say it's fairly similar to how I work and how they work. The only thing is that the younger generation soaks it up much more easily because there's nothing that they had to relearn or unlearn. And also, when a new idea contradicts a lot of chess knowledge and theory, it takes a while for me to accept it. I think it's easier for them to accept these things because they are not so steeped in old knowledge.

Sandeep Dwivedi: Normal people have fear of writing a math paper and the paper is blank and we don't know any of these questions... What are your

nightmares like? I do get nightmares. You learn to avoid painful memories. You put them away. After a while, you find your brain is trying to forget them. The most painful ones, when I look at them again, it hurts just as much, even after many years. But you get on with it. Somehow the best way to cure a bad game is to play a good one. And once you play a good one, then it allows you to emotionally settle down and get on with it. Like you mentioned maths as a subject, if you develop a fear, you feel something like 'I'm not good at this', then it becomes much more deeprooted and it never goes away.

Nihal Koshie: You are in the running for the post of deputy president of FIDE. Do you believe a sportsperson can be a good administrator?

Yes, I do. The assumption that sports people can't be good at running the sport and or the only people who can run a sport are sportspeople — those two assumptions are flawed. It's good to have sportspeople and their opinions, but by no means should they be the only people who should be heard. You should listen to other people, even if it seems to violate your dogma or things you deeply believe in because it's outsiders' perspective. If you are talking to a fan or an outsider with a remote perspective on the game, then you have to understand what is it that attracts them to the game. So, it's good to get perspective.

Nihal Koshie: The current president, Arkady (Dvorkovich), is the former deputy Prime Minister of Russia and has close links with the Kremlin. Also, Ukraine is a strong chess-playing nation and I'm sure you have friends over there. Did you get any negative feedback when you decided to contest as part of the Dvorkovich panel?

We know Arkady's background but he has shown through his actions since February that he is able to act as a FIDE president and represent players all over the world. He's able to separate it from his feelings inside. He's Russian, so he has feelings but he has mentioned multiple times that he felt for the Ukrainians and what they were going through. He has come out against the war. I feel that he has shown he is sufficiently independent of Russia. But he lives there with his family, which means he'll keep going back and forth. I have had no negative experiences with Ukrainian players. I have met quite a few of them and they've acted normally. They understand that this wasn't something any one of us was responsible for and they are trying to cope the best they can.

Sriram Veera: In 1998, the Anatoly

### WHY VISWANATHAN ANAND



The Indian chess great is playing at choice tournaments at 52 and still enjoying it. Anand is also contesting for the post of FIDE deputy president and will also mentor the Indian team

at the upcoming Chess Olympiad, an extention of what he does at his academy

Karpov game — you had come from Groningen, Netherlands — you didn't have any flight bookings or hotels but you played this crazy game and lost in the tie-breaker. You were sitting with your wife and then he made a comment that 'Vishy is a nice guy but he doesn't have the character to win'. That hit you hard and then 2000 happened and you won in New Delhi. How did that incident motivate you?

I think that was one of the moments I realised that nobody owes being nice to you. Nobody owes you any favours, and especially when a title or something big is on the line, you have to develop a thick skin if you want to be out there. It is why a couple of years later I continued in that yein even when the Prague reunification wasn't going my way. It was clear that I was not going to find a spot. My attitude was: I'm going to walk away and with my results, I'll make my point. Not that I'm going to sit here and beg. It certainly helped me in my matches later on with (Vladimir) Kramnik, and (Veselin) Topalov, and the way you approach negotiations. You don't approach negotiations as two people trying to be fair. Again, let's be clear. I may have a feeling I was fair and correct to other people but maybe they disagree. Also, when you are playing someone you start to see ghosts everywhere. Now, to be honest, even when I read this, it doesn't move the needle anymore inside. Even if I read the same thing, it's like watching two war veterans when they are 80 years old. They can't get worked up. Once upon a time, they might've said 'I'm gonna kill the other guy' but you simply can't be bothered. I don't think about things with Karpov. Though those impressions remain. You can't dwell on the past,

and I had so many good results after that. I played my own career. Karpov hardly played for anything after that.

Sriram Veera: Is the pendulum still loaded so much against the challenger rather than the champion?

A champion can still nudge his way into a few choices first. But the challenger will be offered a pretty fair deal. There is no more a privilege of making a draw. If you make a draw, you play tiebreaks. Many of these changes happened because of previous results. So, I can say that the era when Karpov could do what he did, has disappeared. In fact, if I have to explain to someone what privileges Karpov got, I'll have to explain that those privileges existed first of all to these youngsters. And then 'can you believe that Karpov could get all these privileges' and they'll still give me a baffled look. It's like telling people that once upon a time you would book your telephone, wait six months and then they would give it to you. Can you believe it? That era passed. But a lot of things of that era have passed — the Soviet domination passed, the Soviet Union disappeared. So many things that I thought were permanent features in my childhood, just disappeared.

Shamik Chakrabarty: Your emergence coincided with the tail-end of the Cold War. Has the lack of political punch taken the sheen out of high-profile chess rivalries?

Yes, (Bobby) Fischer-(Boris) Spassky was the pinnacle of chess' Cold War rivalry. And there was some echo of that even in a match between a Soviet defector and a Soviet champion or someone like Kasparov who doesn't fit in and a Karpov who fits in completely... you were

still able to take sides. Every journalist who was Every journalist who was sent to cover chess, even if he couldn't follow chess. he could write a few lines about the KGB, mention that some spies are standing here, some standing there and mention bugs and microphones and a few conspiracy theories and he could finish his article and send it to the paper and everyone loved it. Once that was removed, it kind of left a certain vacuum but new storylines have emerged. We are no longer chess players from mythology; which is

someone bespectacled

sitting in front of a computer who is slightly old. Now chess is seen as a fairly young sport with all sorts of talented youngsters. Each one is an interesting charismatic character. Just to mention, the last two world champions have been Indian and Norwegian, neither possible even 30 years back. The sport has moved on and we don't need the Cold War thing anymore but it took a while because some new storyline

Shivani Naik: Does the writing of the sport need a fresh vocabulary?

The vocabulary we have is good enough but new forms of describing the game have already emerged. The streaming revolution has thrown in a new way of looking at chess. Streamers sound very different to what I am used to hearing about chess. And clearly every new fan base we are able to connect with will bring its own way of describing the game. I would say evolution is already happening. Now we are often compared to gamers, we are often seen on Twitch and YouTube. All these areas didn't even exist five years ago for us. The formats, time controls and all those things are changing very fast. One big difference now is that journalists have the best information about the game because as long as they are sitting with the computer they know. at least, what the best moves were and the mistakes the players made. So inevitably it will change the way they describe the game as well.

Shivani Naik: Have you ever played sentimentally, like thinking, today I don't feel like sacrificing a pawn or being attached to particular pieces?

There are moves that make me uncomfortable and there are moves that are comfortable. The uncomfortable ones I have to force myself to make. Unfortunately, if the computer says something is good, it is probably right and it is your job to understand why. One of the things of modern chess is that you are forced to understand what the computer is saying. Still, your personal preferences play a huge role.

Mihir Vasavda: Magnus Carlsen has already said that he may opt-out of defending his world championship title. If that happens, what kind of impact will it have on the Classical format?

We have not had a situation like this since Bobby Fischer. Fischer quit the game and ran away. Carlsen, as I understand it, still wants to play other events but he won't play this one. My tendency is to believe him and that he is serious. But also when the moment comes to actually doing it, he will hesitate because it is a big step. It will hurt the game for a while because after all you are losing a champion and it is a very strange transition. But eventually, people will move on and the game will go on.

> For a longer transcript, go to indianexpress.com

## 10 THE WORLD



**TOM BALMFORTH** 

& MARKO DJURICA

JUNE 26

KYIV, POKROVSK (UKRAINE),

sanctions against Moscow.

Reuters reporter said.

said Andriy Yermak, head of the

Klymenko, said on national tel-

evision that five people had been

wounded, and police later said

strikes on Ukraine this weekend,

which has also seen the fall of a

strategic eastern city to pro-

said Biden, referring to the mis-

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ELMAU (GERMANY), JUNE 26

THE GROUP of Seven leading

democratic economies or G7

Sunday formally launched a

global infrastructure and invest-

ment partnership aimed at

pushing back China's influence

in the developing world. The G7

programme responds to China's

so-called Belt and Road Initiative,

which Western officials have

long argued traps receiving

Russia has stepped up air

"It's more of their barbarism,"

president's administration. Ukraine's police chief, Ihor

one person was killed.

Russian forces.

### DEEPEST WRECK DISCOVERED

**BARBARISM, SAYS JOE BIDEN** 

### EXPLORERS FIND WWII NAVY DESTROYER

Kyiv as G7 leaders meet

Homes, kindergarten hit in first such attack since early June

The USS Samuel B Roberts, popularly known as the "Sammy B," was identified on Wednesday broken into two pieces at a depth of 6,985 metres. "We have the chance to retell her story of heroism and duty..." said American explorer Victor Vescovo.



Iranian President **Ebrahim Raisi shakes** hands with Iraqi PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi in Tehran, Sunday. Reuters

### Iraqi PM in Tehran after Saudi visit

IRAQI PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi arrived in Iran on Sunday, Iranian state TV reported, a day after he travelled to Saudi Arabia in a bid to revive talks between the regional rivals to ease years of hostility. An Iranian official said that "the resumption of talks between Tehran and Riyadh will be discussed during Khadimi's trip to Iran". On Saturday, Kadhimi held talks with Saudi de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah and discusses bilateral relations and "boosting security and stability in the re-**REUTERS** 

### **ECUADOR**

#### **Emergency** lifted amid protests

ECUADOR PRESIDENT Guillermo Lasso on Saturday lifted a state of emergency he had imposed in six provinces amid an Indigenous-led strike, a surprise move that came as lawmakers in the National Assembly heard an opposition petition to remove him from office. The decision followed an initial meeting between officials and Ecuador's largest Indigenous organisation, which began the strike two weeks ago to demand gasoline prices be cut, price controls on agricultural products and a larger budget be set for ed-

### **MEXICO**

### 8 bodies found. likely to be of missing workers

EIGHT BODIES were found Saturday on Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, and they appear to be those of eight men apparently kidnapped from a resort on the Caribbean coast. At least seven men, and possibly eight, had been reported abducted Friday from the beach town of Xcalak. The bodies were found by a farmer in a field just over the border. Prosecutors said the men do not appear to have been killed where they were found, and were probably dumped there.

### Roe v. Wade overturned, White House seeks to take on states over abortion pill Russian missiles pound

LAWRENCE HURLEY

WASHINGTON, JUNE 26

PRESIDENT JOE Biden's administration indicated it will seek to prevent states from banning a pill used for medication abortion in light of the Supreme Court ruling overturning the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling, signaling a major new legal fight.

The administration could argue in court that the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of mifepristone, one of the pills used for medication abortions, pre-empts state restrictions, meaning federal authority outweighs any state action.

Over a dozen states plan to almost totally ban abortion with the Roe precedent upended. The conservative majority Supreme Court overturned Roe on Friday, saying there is no right to abortion in the US Constitution.

Mifepristone was approved for abortions by FDA in 2000. The pill, also known as RU 486, blocks the pregnancy-sustaining hormone progesterone. **REUTERS** 



Abortion rights protesters demonstrate after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, in Boston. Reuters

#### No smooth passage

WHILE REPRODUC-TIVE rights experts have lauded the Biden administration's stance on the pill, Mifepristone, legal experts say the law on preemption is murky. The Congress has never said ex-

plicitly that FDA approval trumps state law as it has done in the context of medical devices.

Therefore it would be left to courts to decide the question under a theory known as "implied preemption".

### Vatican: Activists can't be selective on pro-life issues

ANTI-ABORTION activists should be concerned with other issues that can threaten life, such as easy access to guns, poverty and rising maternity mortality rates, the Vatican's editorial director said on Saturday. In a media editorial on the US

Supreme Court's ruling to end the right to abortion, Andrea Tornielli said those who oppose abortion could not pick and choose pro-life issues. "Being for life, always, for example, means being concerned if the mortality rates of women due to motherhood increase," he wrote. "Being for life, always, also means defending it against the threat of firearms, which unfortunately have become a leading cause of death of children and adolescents in the US".

The Roman Catholic church teaches that abortion is murder because life begins at the moment of conception. **REUTERS** 



A damaged residential building in Kyiv. Reuters

sile strikes on Kyiv, as leaders from the Group of Seven (G7) rich democracies gathered for a summit in Germany.

#### Gold sanctions

During the summit, Biden told allies "we have to stay together" against Russia. At the start of the meeting, four members of the Group of Seven rich nations moved to ban imports of

G7 plan to counter China influence

countries in debt and with in-

vestments that benefit China

The White House says the

initiative seeks to leverage USD

200 billion in US investment

over the next five years, along

with a similar amount from G7

allies, to boost infrastructure de-

velopment in lower- and mid-

ing will come from the private

sector, sovereign wealth and

It adds that most of the fund-

more than their hosts.

dle-income nations.

tighten the sanctions squeeze on Moscow and cut off its means of financing the invasion of Ukraine. However, it was not immedi-

Russian gold as part of efforts to

ately clear whether there was consensus on the move, with European Council President Charles Michel saying the issue would need to be handled carefully or risk backfiring. REUTERS

that direct taxpayer dollars.

Among the first initiatives are

a USD 2 billion solar farm invest-

ment in Angola in Southwest

AFrica, USD 320 million for hos-

pital construction in Ivory Coast,

in West Africa, and USD 40 mil-

lion to promote regional energy

Commission President Ursula

von der Leyen said the G-7 is of-

fering "sustainable, quality infra-

structure" and will be "listening

closely to the recipient countries.

22 youths found

dead in tavern,

cause not yet

known: police

JOHANNESBURG, JUNE 26

SOUTH AFRICAN police are in-

vestigating the deaths of at least

22 people at a nightclub in the

coastal town of East London early Sunday morning.

It is unclear what led to the

deaths of the young people, who

were reportedly attending a

**SOUTH AFRICA** 

In a jab at China, European

trade in Southeast Asia.

No, NATO, No

Demonstrators take part in an anti-NATO protest ahead of the NATO summit on June 28 and June 30, in Madrid, Spain, on Sunday. The protesters said an increase in defence spending in Europe urged by NATO is 'a threat to peace'. Reuters

### **Prince Charles** got suitcase of cash from Qatar, says report

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON, JUNE 26

PRINCE CHARLES, the heir to Britain's throne, allegedly accepted a suitcase full of cash as a charitable donation from the former PM of Oatar, according to a

office said in a statement.

### **AHEAD OF NUCLEAR TALKS**

## Tehran launches rocket

TEHRAN, JUNE 26

UK media report on Sunday.

The Sunday Times says the suitcase was one of three bundles of cash given as charitable donations which the 73-year-old received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin laber Al Thani. The three lots. which reportedly totalled Euro 3 million, were handed to the prince personally between 2011 and 2015. "Charitable donations received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim were passed immediately to one of the Prince's charities who carried out the appropriate governance and have assured us that all the correct processes were followed." Prince Charles'

into space as US fumes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRANIAN STATE television said Sunday that Tehran had launched a solid-fueled rocket into space, drawing a rebuke from Washington ahead of the expected resumption of stalled talks over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

It's unclear when or where the rocket, christened Zuljanah, was launched, but the announcement came after satellite photos showed preparations at Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's rural Semnan province, the site of Iran's frequent failed attempts to put a satellite into orbit.

The White House said it was aware of Iran's announcement and criticised the move as "unhelpful and destabilising." It said it was committed to using sanctions and other measures to prevent further advances in Iran's



Footage released by Iran's state TV, IRINN, shows the rocket blasting off. AP

ballistic missile program. The launch comes just a day after the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, traveled to Tehran to resuscitate negotiations over Iran's nuclear program that have stalemated for months. Borrel said on Saturday talks over the nuclear deal would resume in an unnamed Persian Gulf country in coming days, with Iranian media reporting that Qatar would likely host the negotiations.

New fans pay tribute to China's legendary Indian classical dancer

### Lanka struggling to secure fresh fuel supplies, energy minister says

**UDITHA JAYASINGHE** COLOMBO, JUNE 26

SRI LANKA is struggling to secure fresh fuel supplies, a top government minister said on Sunday, as the crisis-hit country of 22 million people is down to just 15,000 tons of petrol and diesel to keep essential services running in the coming days.

"We are struggling to find suppliers. They are reluctant to accept letters of credit from our banks. There are over \$700 million in overdue payments so now suppliers want advance payments," Power and Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera told reporters.

In the past two months Sri Lanka largely recieved fuel via a \$500 million Indian credit line, which ran out in mid-June. A petrol shipment due last Thursday failed to arrive and no fresh shipments are yet scheduled. Wijesekera said. "We have about 9,000 metric tons of diesel



A daily wage labourer waits for work in Colombo, Sunday. AF

and 6,000 metric tons of petrol left. We are doing everything we can to get new stocks but we don't know when that will be." The government on Sunday

asked public employees to work from home until further notice.

#### **US delegation visits** A top delegation from the US

Treasury and State Departments arrived in Colombo on Sunday

captivated by the Indian dance

Cultural Revolution (1966-76)

during which millions of intellec-

tuals were persecuted, she trav-

elled to India seven more times

mastering the dance forms

studying under maestros like

Birju Maharaj, Uday Shankar and

Barring Mao Zedong's

and art forms.

for a three-day visit to assess the situation. The US delegation will hold talks with the country's top leadership and explore the "most effective ways" to help the island nation resolve its unprecedented economic crisis.

team from International Monetary Fund (IMF) is already in Sri Lanka for talks on a possible \$3 billion REUTERS bailout package.

of heaven, the joy and beauty that

Indian dance has brought to her,"

stints here met Zhang, said she

was one of the greatest teachers

of Indian classical dances in China.

"I always wondered what at-

tracted her towards Indian dance

forms as the attraction was very

Rawat, who during his earlier

Zhang's son Han Xiao Xia said.

#### party to celebrate the end of winter school exams. Local newspaper Daily Dispatch reported that bodies were strewn across tables and chairs without any visible signs of injuries.

**AGENCIES** 

"At this point we cannot confirm the cause of death," said health department spokesperson Siyanda Manana. 'We are going to conduct au-

topsies as soon as possible to establish the probable cause of death." Manana said. 'We are talking 22 bodies

right now," Manana added.

Police Minister Bheki Cele was on Sunday morning expected to visit the scene. The owner of the club,

Siyakhangela Ndevu, told local broadcaster eNCA that he had been called to the scene early Sunday morning. "I am still uncertain about

what really happened, but when I was called in the morning I was told the place was too full and that some people were trying to force their way into the tavern," he said.

Earlier Brigadier Tembinkosi Kinana said police were alerted by members of the public to the incident at Scenery Park, about three kms from the city centre.

"The circumstances under which they died are under inves-

Brigadier Kinana added it was too early to determine the cause of death of the youngsters

#### **KJMVARMA** ticing and performing Indian classical dance forms in this country. BEIJING, JUNE 26

POPULARISED KATHAK, BHARATANATYAM AND ODISSI IN THE COUNTRY

THE INDIA-CHINA frictions took a backseat for a while here as a large number of Chinese flocked to a scintillating show of Indian classical dance performances to pay emotional tribute to Zhang Jun, China's legendary dancer of classical art form. Bharatanatyam, Kathak and

Over 300 Chinese fans of Zhang thronged the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) auditorium on Friday night to watch sterling performances from young Chinese children as well as highly talented professionals who devoted their lives prac-

It was a dream come true for Jin Shan Shan, Zhang's ardent student and widely acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer both in India and China who took to her Guru's footsteps and devoted her life in popularising the Indian

The audience included India's Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat and former Vice Minister of Finance of China and President of AIIB Jin Liqun who cheered the meticulous dances to classical Tamil and Hindi music.

Zhang Jun (1933-2012) has inspired generations of Chinese





India's ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat with performers at the show to pay tribute to Zhang Jun (right) in Beijing on Friday. PTI

and Indians with her relentless passion to learn Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi and make

them popular in China. Encouraged by the then Chinese premier Zhu Enlai at the

height of India-China bonhomie, she first visited India in the early 1950s during which she was

Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble. "She wanted to bring the beauty of the Indian dance to more people. I hope that she will continue to enjoy, on the other side

later at the Kalakshetra, a revered deep, almost like soul touching. To institution of Bharatanatyam in us it appeared that probably in her then Madras, now Chennai. earlier birth she was born in India She later helped to form and carried that bond to this birth China's famous dance troupes, the in China. "The energy radiated out of her devotion attracted many students even during a phase when our bilateral relations were undergoing some turbulence," Rawat said. PTI

tigation," Kinana said.

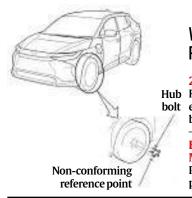
aged between 18-20 years.

Volatility no bar:

New Delhi: Nine of the 10 most valued firms added Rs 2.51 lakh crore to their market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainer. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,367 points or 2.66 per cent. PTI

### SECTOR WATCH **ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

### 'Loose wheels' behind EV recall: What next in Toyota's journey



#### WHERE THE **PROBLEM LIES**

2,700 CARS: Recall of new electric vehicle, bZ4X

**BETWEEN MAR-JUNE:** Period of production

### **SRIDHAR V**

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

LESS THAN three months after it launched the bZ4X SUV globally, Toyota Motor Corporation has issued a recall of nearly 2,700 units of the new electric vehicle (EV) following concerns that its "loose wheels" may fall off. The Japanese auto manufacturer, in a recall notice issued to owners of the bZ4X on Friday through various channels, said the action is for all vehicles "in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific".

#### What is the issue?

According to a spokesperson for Toyota, the hub bolts on the wheels of the concerned bZ4X battery EVs run

EXPLAINED

the risk of loosening "to the point where the wheel can detach from the vehicle" after "low-mileage use". In case one of the wheels detaches from the

car while driving, it could result in the vehicle veering off, increasing the risk of a crash.

Even though the cause of the defect is "still under investigation", Toyota said it had alerted Japanese safety regulators about the issue. "No one should drive these vehicles until the remedy is performed," the company added. The recalled vehicles include nearly 2,200 in Europe, about 270 in North America, over 110 in Japan and 60-odd in the rest of Asia, Toyota said Thursday. All these vehicles were produced between March and June. Moreover, nearly 400 units of the Solterra all-electric SUV by Subaru, developed in collaboration with Toyota, have been recalled for the same issue.

### How will it affect Toyota?

Despite being a longstanding giant in the automotive game, Toyota is a rather late entrant in the EV arena. Announced in early 2021, the bZ4X – the first in Toyota's 'bZ' (beyond Zero) series of battery EVs — is touted to be its flagship EV offering in the crossover SUV segment. Starting at \$42,000 (over Rs 32,86,000) and available in

limited markets, the bZ4X has not really set the roads on fire. Following its launch in Japan earlier this year, Toyota had said the model was only available on lease as concerns remained over maintenance, residual battery performance and residual value.

According to experts, the bZ4X recall comes early in its lifecycle, and as the defect pertains to a mechanical component rather than the vehicle's electric drivetrain, Toyota is likely to resolve it quickly. However, the fact that the recall affected its first mass-market electric car may pull Toyota back a bit in the global EV race a competition where Tesla

The US EV maker made a name for itself back in 2012

has a significant lead.

with the market-topping Model S sedan. Tesla cemented its status in 2015 with the launch of the mid-size crossover SUV Model X, now among the world's best plug-in cars. Adding to Toyota's

roadblocks is the global semiconductor shortage, which forced it to significantly curtail production across models and

#### Road ahead for Toyota Vehicle recall is not a new

trend: in one of the biggest recalls in recent times, Toyota and other automakers had flagged several millions of car models manufactured since 2013 due to faulty airbags manufactured by Japan's Takata Corporation, which subsequently went bankrupt. The bZ4X recall may turn out to be just a minor setback for Toyota, given its large plans across the globe.

In India, Toyota and Suzuki Motor Corporation signed a memorandum of understanding in 2017, to bring together their strengths and promote mutual supply of vehicles. On Friday, the Japanese majors announced that work will start on production of a new SUV developed by Suzuki at Toyota Kirloskar Motor — Toyota's India arm in August. The companies plan to export the upcoming model to markets beyond India, including Africa.

### ON THE TABLE: 28% GST ON ONLINE GAMING, CASINOS, HORSE RACING

### **GST Council to vet verification** DIIs cushion FPI plan for high-risk taxpayers

**AANCHAL MAGAZINE** NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

VERIFICATION AFTER registration for high-risk taxpayers under Goods and Services Tax (GST), along with use of geo-tagging and physical verification, are some of the measures suggested by a Group of Ministers (GoM) on system reforms. These steps, along with another ministerial panel's recommendation to levy 28 per cent GST on online gaming, casinos and horse racing, are expected to be discussed in the upcoming GST Council meeting on June 28-29.

The GoM on system reforms, chaired by Maharashtra Finance Minister Aiit Pawar, has also recommended mandatory biometric authentication for high-risk taxpayers along with use of artificial intelligence to prepare reports detailing risky behaviour of such taxpavers. Verification of electricity bill details and bank accounts will also be used as a source for identifying these high-risk taxpayers, sources said.

The other ministerial panel on gaming and casinos, headed by Meghalava Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, has recommended that no distinction should be made in these activities merely on the

423 infra projects show cost

As many as 423 infrastructure projects, each entailing an

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

overruns of more than Rs 4.95 lakh crore, as per a Ministry

**563:** Number of delayed projects decreased if delay is

calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion

overruns of ₹4.95 lakh cr

of Statistics and Programme Implementation report

**SOME SUGGESTIONS BY GoMs** 

■The GoM on system reforms, chaired by Maharashtra FM Ajit Pawar, has also recommended mandatory biometric authentication for high-risk taxpayers along with use of artificial intelligence to prepare reports detailing risky behaviour

■The other ministerial panel on gaming and casinos, headed by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, has recommended that no distinction should be made in these activities merely on the ground that an activity is a game of skill or of chance or both

ground that an activity is a game of skill or of chance or both. As per the estimates shared by Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports to the GoM, the online gaming sector's market size is around Rs 34,600 crore.It has also suggested that online gaming should be taxed at full value of the consideration, including contest entry fee paid by the player on participating in the game. In case of race courses. the GoM has suggested that GST be levied on the full value of bets pooled in the totalisators and placed with the bookmakers.

For casinos, the GoM is learnt to have recommended that the tax would be levied on the full face value of the chips/coins purchased from the casino by a player. No further GST would apply on the value of bets placed in each round of betting, including those placed with winnings in previous rounds, sources said.

The GoM is also learnt to have suggested that 28 per cent GST be levied on entry/access fees into casinos, which compulsorily includes foods/beverages etc. But, optional supplies, made independently of the entry tickets, would be taxed at the rate applicable on such supplies, sources said. At present, online gaming (without betting) attracts 18 per cent GST. Now, all categories are likely to attract a higher levy of 28 per cent. The Council will also discuss rate hike suggestions from the fitment committee for items such as cut and polished diamonds and tetra packs; and rate cut for rope-

**OF 1.568 PROJECTS, 423** 

**TOTALORIGINAL COST OF** 

reported cost overruns and as

many as 721 projects were delayed

IMPLEMENTATION of the 1,568

and their anticipated completion

cost is ... Rs 26,54,818.05 crore,

cent of original cost)

cost of the projects

which reflects overall cost overruns

of Rs 4,95,015.38 crore (22.92 per

**EXPENDITURE** incurred on these

projects till May 2022 is Rs

13,42,535.22 crore, which is

43.34 MONTHS: The average

time overrun in these 721 delayed

50.57 per cent of the anticipated

projects was Rs 21.59.802.67 crore

way cable and ostomy appliances, including waterproof pouch for collecting waste from the body. Also, a clarification would be issued on GST rates on electric vehicles, to state that EVs, whether fitted with batteries or not, would attract 5 per cent tax. The fitment committee had also clarified that Nicotine Polacrilex Gum, which is commonly used to aid in smoking cessation in adults, attracts 18 per cent GST. On the issue of taxation of virtual digital assets including cryptocurrency, the fitment committee has recommended deferring the decision and suggested that states of Haryana and Karnataka shall study all aspects and submit a paper in due course.

The committee, which includes officials from both states and Centre, gives its recommendation regarding tax rates, after receiving demands from stakeholders, in almost every meeting of the Council. This time around it has suggested the status quo for over 215 goods and services.

Rate rationalisation measures under GST are being considered as the compensation regime - under which states were offered compensation for revenue loss below the guaranteed compounded 14 per cent rate – comes to an end in June after five years of the rollout of the indirect tax regime.

**OFTHE 721 DELAYED** 

1-12 months

13-24 months

25-60 months

61 months

**PROJECTS** 

**PROJECTS** 

NO.OF

113

121

350

137

**REASONS** 

and linkages

For 569 projects, neither the year of commissioning

nor the tentative gestation period has been reported

Delay in land acquisition

environment clearances

■Delay in obtaining forest and

■ Lack of infrastructure support

Source: Ministry of Statistics and

Programme Implementation/PTI

### exit impact over last 8 months **ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI, JUNE 26 UNDAUNTED BY the massive selloff by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from the Indian stock markets, domestic institutional investors (DIIs), led by mutual funds and insurance companies, have invested Rs 2,88,167 crore in the

IPOs) since November 2021. According to stock exchange data, FPIs have pulled out Rs 3,54,285 crore in the last eight months. The FPI sell-off has been absorbed by DIIs to a great extent. preventing a major crash in the markets. While DIIs made net investments of Rs 41,983 crore in June so far, FPIs withdrew Rs 53,600 crore from Indian stocks during the month. "A global riskoff sentiment amidst increased

stock market (excluding debt and

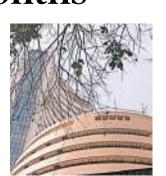
risks to global growth have contributed to the decline in global equities including India. There are domestic factors at play as well, including high inflation and rising interest rates. Inflows into mutual funds have however remained robust, as investors turn risk-averse," said Aditi Gupta, Economist, Bank of Baroda.

Despite huge volatility in stock markets and sustained selling by FPIs, equity mutual funds have been attracting inflows. MFs attracted net inflows of Rs 18,529 crore in May as against Rs 15,890 crore inflow in April.

Significantly, inflow through SIP (systematic investment plan) rose to Rs 12,286 crore in May from Rs 11,863 crore in April, indicating that retail investors continue to hold confidence on equity investments. This is the ninth consecutive month of SIP inflow being greater than Rs 10,000 crore, a trend which started in September 2021 with Rs.10,351 crore inflow.

MF equity schemes have been witnessing net inflow since March 2021, highlighting the positive sentiment among investors. Prior to this, such schemes had consistently witnessed outflows for eight months from July 2020 to February 2021 losing Rs 46,791 crore.

The RBI's tightening of the monetary policy and inflated global commodity prices have pri-



The BSE, Mumbai. File

marily led the domestic markets to bleed in terms of substantial cash outflows from the equity markets during the last few months. The pace of such withdrawals was last seen when the pandemic spurred in the first quarter of 2020. Globally, the ongoing military conflict between Ukraine and Russia, rising fed rates and the return of the pandemic outbreak have further added fuel to the fire, according to Manoj Purohit, partner & leader-Financial Services Tax. BDO India.

This short-term pace of negative volatility is likely to slow down in the coming weeks if not reversed completely. "India is still on a better footing as compared to other global markets primarily on account of sustained growth patterns, better GDP numbers, recovering forex reserves, consistent demand from consumers and good financial numbers by large corporates, Purohit said.

The FPI sell-off has been on the back of a global risk-off sentiment amidst increased expectations of a slowdown in global growth and surging inflation globally. This has prompted central banks across the world to hike rates. Fed has been at the forefront, hiking policy rate to 150-175 bps this year and expectations are that this can go up to 300-350 bps. This has further exacerbated FPI outflows from EMs. including India.

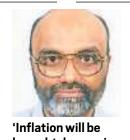
Meanwhile, foreign investors pulled out close to Rs 43,837 crore including stocks, debt and hybrid) so far this month following monetary policy tightening by the Reserve Bank and US Federal Reserve, high oil prices and

### 'Should ensure no intolerable growth sacrifice to tame inflation'

New Delhi: The economy has barely recovered from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and it should be ensured that there is no "intolerable growth sacrifice" in attempts to tame inflation "too abruptly", according to RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Jayanth R Varma.

With a cautiously optimistic outlook for the country's economy, Varma on Sunday said growth prospects for 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years are "reasonable" even after taking into consideration the possibility of a long-drawn-out period of geopolitical tensions and elevated commodity prices.

In an interview with PTI,



brought down ... in medium term' **JAYANTH R VARMA** 

Member, MPC

Varma, an external member of the MPC, said the pandemic was

the biggest test to the system so far. "The inflationary episode has lasted longer than we would have liked and will continue to last longer than we would like, but, I have no doubt in my mind that inflation will be brought down to the target level in the medium term. "The Indian economy has barely recovered from the pandemic, and we have to be careful not to impose an intolerable growth sacrifice in our attempt to tame inflation too abruptly," Varma said.

Amid inflationary pressures remaining high in recent times, the Reserve Bank of India's MPC is moving towards a hawkish

### SBI, other PSBs commit Govt to invite ₹6,071 crore to Adani Group for copper biz

New Delhi: Adani Group has forayed into copper manufacturing with tying up of finances from public sector lenders for a 1 million tonnes a year unit at Mundra in Gujarat.

"Kutch Copper Ltd (KCL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), is setting up a greenfield copper refinery project for production of refined copper with 1 million tonnes per annum in two phases," the company said in a statement.

For the phase-1 capacity of 0.5 million tonnes, KCL has achieved financial closure through a syn-

ployees having abortions.

State lawmakers in Texas have

already threatened Citigroup Inc

and Lyft, which had earlier an-

nounced travel reimbursement

policies, with legal repercussions.

A group of Republican lawmak-

ers in a letter last month to Lyft

chief executive Logan Green said

Texas "will take swift and decisive

action" if the ride-hailing com-

series of abortion-related propos-

als, including a Bill that would bar

companies from doing business

in Texas if they pay for residents

of the state to receive abortions

It is likely only a matter of time

The legislators also outlined a

pany implements the policy.

dicated club loan for the greenfield copper refinery project at Mundra, Gujarat.

It has executed "financing documents with the consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI). The other consortium members are Bank of Baroda. Canara Bank, EXIM Bank of India, Indian Bank, Punjab National Bank, and Bank of Maharashtra,' the statement said.

The consortium of banks has sanctioned and signed an agreement for the entire debt requirement of Rs 6,071 crore for the Phase-1 of the KCL Project. PTI

### power bids from 8K MW thermal capacities without PPAs



Power Ministe

New Delhi: The government will invite bids from states to sell electricity generated from 8,000 megawatt (MW) thermal capacities without PPAs, Power Minister RK Singh has said.

Atotal of 8,000 MW of thermal capacities in India are without any power purchase agreements, Singh, who is also the Minister for New and Renewable Energy, told PTI. Replying to a question related to capacities without PPAs in India, the minister said, "There are 8,000 MW of capacities which don't have PPAs in thermal". Sharing the government's plan to resolve the issue, the minister informed that states have been asked to send their electricity requirement, and accordingly bids will be invited.

'We will aggregate (their demand) and call on for bids and based on the bids, whoever puts in the lowest bids, PPAs will be signed. Once PPAs are signed, they (states) will get the power," he said.

Speaking further, the minister said there are also some thermal capacities undergoing the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) proceedings, and the government has already taken several steps to

### BRIEFLY ——

#### SAILex-Chairman New Delhi: V Krishnamurthy,

a former chairman of steel PSU SAIL and Maruti Udyog Ltd (now Maruti Suzuki) passed away Sunday at age of 97 in Chennai.

#### Goyal, economy New Delhi: India is one of

fastest-growing economies in the world and it is expected to reach \$30 trillion in the coming 30 years, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

### TKAP, e-parts

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar auto parts unit TKAP announced inauguration of its new electrified components line, E-Drive. PTI

### Legal clashes await US cos covering worker abortion costs

### **REUTERS**

NEW YORK, JUNE 26

A GROWING number of large US companies have said they will cover travel costs for employees who must leave their home states to get abortions, but these new policies could expose businesses to lawsuits and even potential criminal liability, legal experts said.

Amazon.com, Apple Inc, Lyft Inc, Microsoft and JPMorgan Chase & Co were among companies that announced plans to provide those benefits through their health insurance plans in anticipation of Friday's US Supreme Court decision overturning the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that had legalized abortion nationwide

Within an hour of the decision being released, Conde Nast chief executive Roger Lynch sent a memo to staff announcing a travel reimbursement policy and calling the court's ruling "a crushing blow to reproductive rights. Walt Disney Co unveiled a similar policy on Friday, telling employees that it recognizes the impact of the abortion ruling but remains committed to providing comprehensive access to quality healthcare, according to a spokesman. Companies including health

insurer Cigna Corp, Paypal Holdings Inc., Alaska Airlines Inc and Dick's Sporting Goods also announced reimbursement policies on Friday. Abortion restrictions that were already on the books in 13 states went into effect as a result of Friday's ruling and at least a dozen other Republicanled states are expected to ban abortion. The court's decision, driven by its conservative majority, upheld a Mississippi law that



The United States Supreme Court, Washington. Reuters

bans abortion after 15 weeks. Meanwhile, some Democraticled states are moving to bolster

access to abortion. Companies will have to navigate that patchwork of state laws and are likely to draw the ire of anti-abortion groups and Republican-led states if they adopt policies supportive of embefore companies face lawsuits from states or anti-abortion campaigners claiming that abortionrelated payments violate state bans on facilitating or aiding and abetting abortions, according to Conde Nast and several other companies that have announced reimbursement policies did not respond to requests for comment. For many large companies

Robin Fretwell Wilson, a law pro-

fessor at the University of Illinois

Amazon, Citigroup, Lyft,

and expert on healthcare law.

that fund their own health plans, the federal law regulating employee benefits will provide crucial cover in civil lawsuits over their reimbursement policies, several lawyers and other legal

experts said.

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) prohibits states from adopting requirements that "relate to" employer-sponsored health plans. Courts have for decades interpreted that language to bar state laws that dictate what health plans can and cannot cover.

resolve the issue at the earliest. PTI

### McLaughlin breaks own 400m hurdles world record

**REUTERS** EUGENE, JUNE 26

FOCUS, SKILL and a little bit of "Track Town, USA" magic propelled Sydney McLaughlin to break her own world record - again - in the 400 meters hurdles on Saturday.

The Olympic gold medallist won the U.S. championships final in 51.41 seconds at Hayward Field, improving upon her own benchmark time at the American track haven of Eugene, Oregon.

The 22-year-old wrested the lead early and never gave the rest of the field a fighting chance, clinching her spot in the world  $champions hips in front of an adoring \, crowd. \\$ 

"It's Track Town, USA, what can you expect?" said McLaughlin. "Any time I come here I can just feel something amazing is going to happen."

She previously set the record with a 51.90-second performance at the U.S. Olympic trials in Eugene almost a year ago to the day, only to shatter that figure in Tokyo, collecting gold in 51.46. "I don't anything compares to the first

time you do it, just crossing that line in awe," she told reporters, when asked to compare which of her record-breaking efforts meant

"This is just a great indicator of where we are and hopefully (we're) going to go home and work on some things.

Running out of lane five, McLaughlin put on a flawless performance with her opponents offering little in the way of pressure to push her toward the finish line.

McLaughlin, who also collected a relay gold in Tokyo, offered a subdued smile and double thumbs up as her accomplishment became clear. Britton Wilson finished 1.67 seconds behind with Shamier Little taking third in 53.92.

"Zoning in on what I have to focus on puts me in a headspace to really not worry about anyone else and focus on 10 my hurdles," she said after the race, adding that she planned to celebrate by eating some "real food - beside

McLaughlin faces a potential showdown at the world championships with chief rival and reigning champion Dalilah Muhammad, who was absent from the national championships due to injury.

She finished second to Muhammad by seven hundredths of a second at the 2019 Doha world championships.

The top three finishers in Eugene, Oregon, who meet certain qualifying standards, and reigning global title-holders will compete at the world championships, which will be held in the United States for the first time from July 15 at the same track.

### **Ashwin stakes claim with** restrained but probing spell

Decision on spinner's spot would hinge on extent of off-spinner's recovery, right/left handedness of England squad and how Jadeja and him bowl in the nets

SANDIPG

THREE DAYS after he landed in Leicestershire, his arrival delayed due to COVID-19 infection and subsequent isolation at home, he produced a spell that allayed fears on both his fitness and readiness. In an unchanged 11-over-spell, where he was restrained yet menacing, he looked the most potent of India's bowlers on a sunbaked placid surface, where most batters found run-scoring a less challenging exercise than it was on the first three days.

The swing on the surface had dissipated, but it had yet deteriorated to encourage spin. In the morning, the seamers, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami bowled with venom and vim, pounding the deck hard, but a breakthrough eluded.

So strolled in Ashwin to bowl the 20th over of the final day. From the outset, his intentions were obvious, he was not looking to marvel batsmen with outrageous turn or twinkling variations. In fact, he hardly unpacked his full bag of variations. He wanted to work his rhythm into the game, stifle the batsmen, get a measure of the conditions and then spread his wings.

The lengths thus were fuller, trajectory a fraction flatter and line on off-and-middle stump. He seemed in no mood for a battle of wits with batsmen. Sam Evans, the Leicestershire batsman who averages a shade under 30, bestowed him with respect, studiously blocking every ball. But his partner Shubman Gill, conversely, decided to draw Ashwin into a challenge. So in the next over, he dragged Ashwin from a country mile outside the off stump—a rare instance he bowled wide in the early part of the spell—and swept him powerfully through

On cue, Ashwin corrected his line and went around the stumps to angle the ball across him. But Gill would still not spare him. He stepped out and powered him through mid-wicket, picking the ball, slower through the air but harmlessly, from the off-stump.

The stroke roused Ashwin. The contest intensified. He reverted to bowl from over the stumps, alternating between a goodlength on off-stump and middle-stump, mixing up his pace. He couldn't harness a dangerous degree of drift, the wind blowing into him worked against him as well, but now he was making the ball drop. So many variegated skills has he that he could sum-



It was R Ashwin's first appearance following his recovery from COVID-19.

mon whatever he wants whenever he wants. He gradually pulled the length back, bringing Gill, who prefers the back-foot perch, forward. Gill probably read too much into Ashwin's ploys. Ashwin, sometimes, tends to over-complicate himself, but these days, batsmen over-complicate themselves when tussling him.

Anyway, Gill was brought out of his comforts. He chalked out an escape route—to sweep himself out of misery and reclaim the early ascendancy. This is what Ashwin does at his best-to sow self-doubts in batsmen's mind. Until then, Gill was batting with an air of authority. Now, though, he felt both insecure and inadequate. He unfurled the sweep. But Ashwin, ever a psychoanalyst of batsmen, floated one on the leg-stump. Gill failed to control the shot and holed out in the deep.

Thereafter, he began to work over Evans. As tempting as it might have been to bamboozle him with a deceptive variation of his, he was in no mood for quick kill. Rather, he induced a suicide. Evans was keen to use his feet, but Ashwin's pace and trajectory kept him crease-tied. He knew it was only a matter of time before the restless Evans would step out. The batsmen's feet telegraphed his plan and Ashwin bowled a shortish ball outside the leg-stump. Evans was beaten and stumped. One more over, and Ashwin walked back gingerly into the pavilion, wearing a content smile.

Shortly, Ravindra Jadeja replaced him. Louis Kimber welcomed him with a four before Hanuma Vihari, hitherto in wretched form, walloped him for a six and four off successive balls. Jadeja bounced back, suffocated the batsmen with tight lengths and grabbed a brace of wickets to the three he had snaffled in the first innings. That would lay another layer to the Jadeja-Ashwin debate for the Edgbaston Test.

A stray warm-up game, though, would not have the final word on the debate. The decision would hinge on several factorsthe extent of Ashwin's recovery, the nature of the the surface (Edgbaston has a spinfriendly reputation), the combination that India would seek, the right/left handedness of the England squad, and how they bowl in the nets in the days preceding to the Test that begins on July 1. But Ashwin, to his credit, has emphasised that he is in fine fettle, having been benched for the first four Tests of this series last year.

Overall, the visitors would leave East Midland satisfied with their bowlers' rhythm, but dissatisfied with most of their batsmen's touch. Only Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and KS Bharat were fluent. Both Shreyas Iyer and Hanuma Vihari spent considerable time in the middle, without exuding any assurance. Cheteshwar Pujara was scratchy rather than steady in the second innings, after the first-innings duck. The brightest spark of the sleepy day, though, was Ashwin.

Brief scores: Indians 246 for 8 dec (Bharat 70, Walker 5-24) and 364 for 9 (Kohli 67, Jadeja 56\*) drew Leicestershire 244 (Pant 76, Jadeja 3-28, Shami 3-42) and 219 for 4 (Gill 62, Kimber 56, Ashwin 2-31).

## England 113 runs away from series sweep against New Zealand

**REUTERS** LEEDS. JUNE 26

ENGLAND ARE 113 runs away from completing a series whitewash against New Zealand after the hosts put themselves in a commanding position with eight wickets in hand in the final innings of the third test on

Chasing 296 for victory, Ollie Pope and Joe Root were at the crease at stumps after the pair made light work of a competitive target as England finished day four on 183-2.

The pair set up what promises to be an intriguing final day, with Headingley hopeful of having a packed house as they look to replicate the Trent Bridge test's atmosphere by offering free tickets.

England lost Alex Lees to a run-out after a mix-up in the fifth over while his opening partner Zak Crawley (25) was caught in the covers off Michael Bracewell, with skipper Kane Williamson involved in both dismissals.

But Pope (81) and Root (55) steadied the ship with an unbeaten 132-run partnership as they saw off the fast bowlers and targeted spinner Bracewell, who went for over six per over. New Zealand also lost two reviews in successive balls when Root was rapped on the pads. The former England skipper survived on both occasions, giving Williamson a lot to ponder every time there was a shout for leg-before wicket.

Earlier, New Zealand were dismissed for 326 after the in-form Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell had again frustrated the hosts.

Chasing 296 for victory, Ollie Pope and Joe Root were at the crease at stumps after the pair made light work of a competitive target as England finished Day Four on 183-2

England's momentum gained by taking three wickets late on the third day seemed to be fading away in the morning as Mitchell and Blundell continued their fine form in the series. The pair batted through the first session, negotiated the early swing in gusty conditions and also saw off a bit of the new ball, completing their half-centuries after lunch.

But Matthew Potts finally broke the 113run stand when he had Mitchell (56) trapped leg-before. That wicket opened the floodgates as the tourists lost half their side for 52 runs while Jack Leach became the first England spinner to claim two five-wicket hauls in a home test since Derek Underwood in 1974. Blundell was in fine form and desperately tried to reach his century with unorthodox shots but he was left stranded on 88 not out as he ran out of partners.

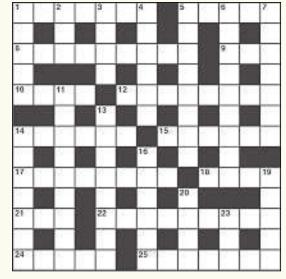
The hosts were dealt a blow before play started when wicketkeeper Ben Foakes was ruled out of the remainder of the game after testing positive for COVID-19, with Billings brought in as a substitute.

Brief scores: NZ 392 & 326 Vs England 360 & 183/2 (Ollie Pope  $81^*$  , Joe Root 55 , M



Pope (81) and Root (55) steadied the ship with an unbroken 132-run partnership.

### **CROSSWORD 4778**



### ACROSS

- 1 Has second thoughts about a hundred workers (7)
- 5 Approaches a listener in two directions (5) 8 Dead Roman exchanged for
- wife of Perseus (9) 9 Left with a thousand to beat
- 10 They take turns on and off (4) 12 Plant it in haste (8)
- 14 Display by top-class band (6) 15 Published and is prosecuted
- 17 Sticking together he said no changes are needed
- (8) 18 Ring maker (4)
- 21 A religious palindrome (3) 22 It may help to rescue a country
- from mad policy (9) 24 Cask Edward put into good
- order(5) 25 He has something to say on the
- radio (7)

- Respond to an encore call?
- Fish paid for at the door (3) Either way it's high time (4)
- parts of the play (6)
- Possibly ten areas mostly in southwest Asia (4,4) 6 Not occupied? There's no hurry (2,7)
- Breed of dog that will change
- some day (7) 11 Separate layer on ruined
- temple (9) 13 It could be indeed so unfair
- (3-5)14 Opposed to making a profit.
- Good man! (7) 16 Manages adequately round a
- bend in two-door cars (6) 19 A better bed (5)
- 20 Knows the sound of an organ
- 23 Put a question like 'the capital of Kenya?'(3)

Solutions Crossword 4777: Across: 1 Tenement, 5 Ford, 9 Arras, 10 Tension, 11 Supernatural, 13 Hyenas, 14 Turban, 17 Installation, 20 Minimum, 21 Orate, 22 Nice, 23 Minsters. Down: 1 Trap, 2 Nurture, 3 Master-at-arms, 4 Noting, 6 Osier, 7 Dangling, 8 Instructions, 12 Chairman, 15 Brocade, 16 Alumni, 18 Sonic, 19 Mess.

### **OVER THE HEDGE** by Michael Fry & T Lewis









### **CALVIN & HOBBES** by Bill Watterson









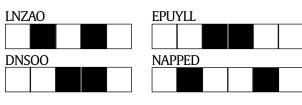
### MARVIN by Tom Armstrong





### **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 There are 350 varieties of shark, not counting  $\_$  and  $\_$  - L M Boyd (4,.,4)



Answer: There are 350 varieties of shark, not counting loan and pool - LM Boyd SOUUTION: ZONAL, SNOOD, PULLEY, APPEND

#### 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

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

**JDOKU** 

S

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4877 1 6 8 9 3 2 6 1 8 3 9 2 5 7 4 7 5 4 1 8 6 3 5 8 5 6 2 3 9 4 7 9 2 5 8 3 6 4 9 1 8 3 6 7 2 5 8 5 2 1 7 6 4 9 6 2 9 4 5 8 1 3

### **DAY TODAY**

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Lunar alignments are very much to your taste today, but will only confer their promised benefits if you

are happy to go along with all adventurous suggestions and invitations. Remember to check up on your rights, lest someone takes advantage

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) As the days pass, it will become much easier for you to

relax and enjoy yourself. On the other hand, if vou imagine domestic responsibilities are becoming lighter, you might be in for a shock! If people you live with begin to think that you're slacking, then they may soon play a trick on you.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)** Good communication is

of the essence. Over the next few days you must say what needs to be said. You should have got something important off your chest by now, but there are still one or two hidden resentments. These can be left

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) The Sun is now preparing to reduce its romantic

presence, a poetic indication that you must draw the veil over several difficult situations, and make sure that a number of promising opportunities are of lasting value. Hang on to the past by all means, but not on to people and places that are no good for you.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) Sometimes

planetary cycles just

convenient. Your stars are out of tune with the working week, and ideally you should extend your personal activities until Wednesday, at business to conduct today. make sure you concentrate on the financial aspects.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) Secrets are all very well, but the fact that you're still not

letting on about

something important could eventually cause a spot of aggravation. You must pick your time carefully - next week might bring the best moment to reveal all. Can you wait? I think so.

### BY PETER VIDAL

LiBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Like many other

people, your mood will change on Wednesday and Thursday. So, if you have social arrangements to confirm, do so as soon as possible, because by the end of the week partners will be showing an

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

instruction.

increasing tendency to misunderstand the simplest



a period of professional adjustment. A complete change of direction is likely for many Scorpios, and even if you're not in paid employment, a long-term ambition is about to

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22) The Moon is in an intense relationship with your sign, an

indication that while you may be a little more emotional than usual, you have the advantage in most dealings with other people, both at work and at home. You must use your talents and energy wisely.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) If financial decisions are pending, don't mess



prevaricate. There is a great deal to be gained from exerting your monetary muscle to get your own way. Dazzle people with the facts, and you may just find that they come round to your way of thinking.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19) You'll have to clarify the issues in all personal

relationships now. Although you are about to enter a phase in which the emotional situation should be generally satisfying, you'll be guided by your instincts and hence liable to make one or two false moves.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) If conditions at

work need to be improved, or if your daily burden must be lightened, then talk to the people who can help. You have everything to gain by opting for dialogue and debate, everything to lose by keeping yourself to yourself. Stay close



to the folk who matter.

TV TIMINGS

#### WIMBLEDON

1st round, Live on Star Sports network; 3:30

### Will compete with myself at CWG: Mirabai Chanu

Patiala: It won't be surprising if diminutive Mirabai Chanu, stands atop the podium, flashing her radiant smile, after winning a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games on July 30. After all, she will enter Birmingham, as title favourite. Chanu's personal best is 207kg(88kg+119kg)which is far better than the best effort of Nigeria's Stella Kingsley, who will be her nearest rival and has managed only 168kg (72kg+96kg) till date. "CWG will be easy for me. I will be fighting with myself," Chanu said. She then added, "There is not much competition in CWG, but that doesn't mean there is no competition. I have to give my best performance keeping in mind the future tournaments." The former world champion also wants to breach the much-anticipated 90kg mark in the snatch section, which she confesses has become somewhat of a mental block. "Yes (it has become a mental block). We have planned to lift 91 kg or 92 kg at the CWG. Hopefully, it will happen.'

### Deepika & Co. bag silver at Archery WC

Paris: The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur settled for a silver medal after the trio's fairytale run was halted by Chinese Taipei in a one-sided final at the World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday. India concluded their campaign with one gold and two silver medals -- two of them coming in the compound section. The tournament was all about compound archer Jyothi Surekha Vennam's dream comeback, who led India's medal tally with one gold (mixed team event with Abhishek Verma) and one silver (individual) on

### **Dhanalakshmi wins** 200mgold

Almaty: Ace sprinter Sekar Dhanalakshmi ran her personal best time to win 200m gold at the Qosanov Memorial Athletics Meet while the likes of shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor and javelin thrower Rohit Yadav returned to India without competing in the event here on Sunday. Dhanalakshmi ran a creditable sub-23 second, clocking 22.89s to better her earlier personal best of 23.14s she had come up last year. She had won a 200m gold in the national Inter-Sate Championships in Chennai earlier this month with a time of 23.27s. She missed the automatic qualification mark of 22.80s for World Championships.

### Indian U-17 women suffer 0-2 defeat

New Delhi: The Indian women's team suffered a 0-2 defeat against Mexico in their last match of the 6th Torneo Female U-17 Football Tournament in Vilesse, Italy on Sunday. Mexico netted one in each half to wrap up the match, with Katherin Sillas and Alice Gallegos getting on the scoresheet. The Indian girls had earlier gone down to USA 0-7 and Chile 1-3. India is set to host the FIFA 2022 U-17 Women's World Cup later this year.

## Madhya Pradesh end long Ranji wait

Coach Chandrakant Pandit guides them to six-wicket win over 41-time champions Mumbai

**ABHISHEK PUROHIT** BENGALURU, JUNE 26

MADHYA PRADESH, which last won the Ranji Trophy 69 years ago – back then known as Holkar state - finally returned to glory days, thumping powerhouse Mumbai by six wickets on Sunday. Holkar dominated the domestic scene around the time of Indian independence, and in times when cricket relied on benevolence of the antiquated princely states. But the 2021-22 crown counts as the first for the state of MP and for the region since modern-day federalism took firm root in India, and it's taken a long time coming for the cricketloving central plateau.

There was the last-afternoon disappointment of the 1998-99 final at the same Chinnaswamy stadium, 23 years ago when Madhya Pradesh had gone down in the final. This time they beat the 41-time champions Mumbai outright by six wickets. The team was coached by former India wicketkeeper-batsman Chandrakant Pandit — hoisted on his players' shoulders after victory. Pandit has now won his fourth Ranji title in five final appearances in six seasons, after Mumbai in 2015-16, and Vidarbha in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

MP boasts of a rich ancient past and in the 11 seasons from 1944-45 to 1954-55, the erstwhile Holkar team made the Ranji final ten times, and won the title on four occasions, including against Bombay in 1947-48. Boasting greats such as CK Nayudu, CS Nayudu, Syed Mushtaq Ali and Chandu Sarwate, the Holkar era was one of the most dominant for any side in Indian domestic cricket, before the states' reorganisation led to the formation of Madhya

For a cricketing culture that has subsequently produced players such as Narendra Hirwani, Rajesh Chauhan, Amay Khurasiya, Jai Prakash Yadav, Naman Ojha and Devendra Bundela, and boasts the proud heritage of the Holkar decade, the 1998-99 final was the only one MP had had to remember with longing all these years. Led by Pandit, MP had taken a 75run first-innings lead against Karnataka and had one hand on the trophy.

Set a target of 247, they were 108 for 3 and in sight of a draw before collapsing to 150 all out late on the final day.

To this day, Bundela, who would become the third-highest run-getter in Ranji history, rues what could have been – for his team as well as for his then dream of playing at the



The 2021-22 Ranji Trophy counts as a first for MP, even though as Holkar, the state was a force in domestic cricket.

For a cricketing culture that has produced players such as Narendra Hirwani, Rajesh Chauhan, Amay Khurasiya, Jai Prakash Yadav, Naman Ojha and Devendra Bundela, and boasts the heritage of the Holkar decade, the 1998-99 final was the only one MP had had to remember with longing all these years.

highest level - had he not fallen to Vijay Bharadwaj around tea to spark the MP collapse.

2021-22 looked poised to be different and this team has achieved the ultimate goal despite not having the services of players like Venkatesh Iyer, Avesh Khan, Ishwar Pandey and Kuldeep Sen. They played only four frontline bowlers, leaving out seam regular Puneet Datey and playing a debutant batting allrounder in Parth Sahani instead.

"Missing out on this trophy when I was captain and to win this trophy (on Sunday) on the same ground is indeed special. Some say father could not do it but son has done it so Aditya Shrivastava has done this tremendously," Pandit said.

#### How Mumbai was outgunned

Gaurav Yadav made his debut back in 2012 but bowled the spell of his life on the first morning of the match, going past Prithvi Shaw's edge five times in a single over alone. His new-ball partner Anubhav Agarwal made his debut this season, and displayed similar commitment and control, as the pair bowled nearly 65 overs in lot more than the three Mumbai seamers, although they also had a much longer stretch of overcast skies to exploit. Off-spinner Saransh Jain, playing only

the first innings. They made the ball do a

his 11th first-class game in eight years, tossed up the ball beautifully and got it to climb. He also played his part in flattening Mumbai with the bat, making a maiden half-century at No 8. Young left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya posed questions on an unhelpful surface with his accuracy and ability to drift and cut the quicker ball into the right-handers.

Promising Yash Dubey and veteran Shubham Sharma sucked the fight out of Mumbai with contrasting centuries in a 222run second-wicket partnership. And Rajat Patidar arrived to bat Mumbai out of the match with a hundred that will be remembered for its

"In our earlier games we didn't have to take the second new ball, we got regular wickets, but here during the third day we couldn't and that affected us," said Mumbai coach Amol

MP have been a side that has often made the knockouts but just could not land the final few punches. Pandit's planning and authority have certainly made a difference but this is also a competent side that has been developing and rebuilding for a while, after the retirement of stalwarts Bundela and Ojha.

"This team has spent a good four-five years together now and that sort of unit develops maturity. Our batch when Chandu bhai was captain was similar – Abbas Ali, Sanjay Pandey, me. IP Yadav, Harvinder Sodhi, it makes a lot of difference when you have such a bunch of players. Some of us went on to play 100-plus games," Bundela said.

On the final morning of the game, Mumbai went too hard for quick runs in the face of wide lines for MP and lost too many wickets to pose any real threat. Resuming the second innings on 113 for 2, and trailing by 49, Armaan Jaffer and Suved Parkar began aggressively before Yadav provided the breakthrough with a surprise, slow full toss that took out Jaffer's leg

Parkar and Sarfaraz Khan added a brisk 53 to take Mumbai to 192 for 3 when Kartikeya broke the stand, bowling Parkar on the attempted cut with a straighter one. An injured Yashasvi Jaiswal lasted two balls, and Mumbai crumbled to 269 all out at lunch. In hindsight, perhaps a more measured approach with the bat could have helped them set a decent target around 175-200, but a mere 108 wasn't going

It will be even more satisfying that the maiden title has come by beating Mumbai, a side that has been long respected in MP cricket for its achievements, and a city with which the commercial and cricketing capital of the state, Indore, shares a partly common cultural heritage given the Holkar background. For now, MP will finally be able to move beyond 1998-99, relax in the glow of victory after a regimented season under their coach, and then start thinking about how to prevent other sides from poaching Pandit for the next season.

BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai 374 and 269 (Suvad Parkar 51, Sarfaraz Khan 45; Kumar Karthikeya 4/98) lost to Madhya Pradesh 536 and 108/4 (Himanshu Mantri 37, Rajat Patidar 30; Shams Mulani 3/41) by 6 wkts.

### Bumrah likely to be a rare fast bowling captain for India

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** 

FOR THE first time in three and a half decades, a fast bowler is likely to lead India in a Test match. Jasprit Bumrah is set to follow in Kapil Dev's footsteps after regular captain Rohit Sharma tested positive for Covid-19 just days ahead of the rescheduled fifth Test against

England at Edgbaston starting July 1. Not since 1987 has a pace bowler been at the helm of the Indian Test XI, and with regular vice-captain KL Rahul out injured, Bumrah may occupy the hot seat. Head coach Rahul Dravid had alluded to the number of different captains he has had to deal with during his relatively short tenure, and it seems another name will be added to the list.

There is still a slim chance for Rohit to play, and lead India, in Birmingham as the five-day isolation period mandated for Covid-positive persons finishes just before the game begins, but that may be a risky proposition as he would be going into the deciding Test cold after being cocooned in a

There is still a slim chance for Rohit to play, and lead India, in Birmingham as the five-day isolation period mandated for Covid-positive persons finishes just before the game begins

room for a significant duration.

Bumrah was named vice-captain for the ODI series in South Africa at the beginning of the year, when Sharma was out with injury and Rahul had to lead the side. Fellow fast bowler Pat Cummins has had an impressive start to his Australian Test captaincy stint, winning the Ashes and a series in Pakistan. But India has been reluctant to trust pace bowlers with the added responsibility.

The fact that there was hardly anyone of Kapil's overall stature over the last 35 years could be a factor. Also, fast bowling is backbreaking business, especially on pitches traditionally associated with India, and there may



Iasprit Bumrah was named vicecaptain when India faced South Africa in an ODI series at the beginning of the

be a line of thought that after sending down their share of overs, pacers would be left with little physical and mental reserves to focus on bowling changes, field placements, team building and motivating other players.

But there's a chance Bumrah may be cut from a different cloth.

"If given an opportunity (to lead India), it would be an honour. I don't think any player would say no. There's no bigger feeling than that," Bumrah had said earlier this year when he was named vice-captain for the ODI series in South Africa.

"I don't like to chase things because I don't want to. I am a person who believes that God  $has a plan \, and \, everything \, will \, find \, its \, own \, way, \,$ so I don't like to hamper the plan that is there. I try to never change anything. Whatever role is asked of me I would do it with the best ability that I can. I don't want to change the whole organisation, you are always a leader when you are a senior member of the team so it's just a post that comes with you. Basically, you try to help all the people in whatever capacity you

With England a transformed lot lately under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, it remains to be seen how Bumrah deals with the challenge – both as a bowler and captain – if he is elevated to the top job.

### **Ben Foakes tests** positive for Covid

Headingley: England Wicketkeeperbatter Ben Foakes has tested positive for Covid-19 and is replaced in England XI by Sam Billings as a likefor-like replacement.

Foakes will miss the rest of the third Test against New Zealand at Headingley.

On a further medical assessment yesterday evening, he subsequently tested positive after administering an LFT COVID-19 test.

Foakes was unable to keep wicket on day three due to a stiff back - Jonny Bairstow took the gloves at that point - and he subsequently tested positive for coronavirus after further medical assess-

### Can unique Wimbledon without ranking points throw up a surprise champ?

**NAMIT KUMAR** 

The sun shines brightly on the pristine grass at SW19 as Wimbledon, devoid of ranking points but full of intrigue, is set to kick off on Monday. Two of the main draw's biggest personalities – Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams - were confirmed at the last moment, and the men's World No. 1, and three of the women's Top 20 are barred from participating in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Top seeds Novak Djokovic and Iga Swiatek, both coming into the Championships in polar opposite form, are the overwhelming favourites. The pressure of expectation weighs heavily on both as they open the play on Centre Court on Monday and Tuesday respectively, though questions on their form leave the door slightly open for fans to see a first-time winner lift the trophy this year.

### The Big 4 monopoly

The men's singles title at SW19 has been won by one of Djokovic, Nadal, Roger Federer, or Andy Murray every single year since 2002. That streak is showing no signs of letting up either, with Djokovic and Nadal the top two seeds, and Murray a big dark horse, floating unseeded in the main draw this year. Djokovic is the bookmakers' favourite:

the three-time defending champion, chasing a seventh London crown, having been more dominant on grass than any other player. But it has been a muted run-up to the third Major of the year. Djokovic's 2022 season has been a mess,

due to his contentious anti-vaccination stance and the unwelcome distraction it brought. He has played only 21 matches, and as things stand, will not be travelling to New York for the US Open. Handed a relatively easier draw, the 35-

year-old has avoided any dangerous floaters in the early rounds: Nadal, Matteo Berrettini. Stefanos Tsitsipas, and Felix Auger-Aliassime are all in the other half, and Hubert Hurkacz is in the other quarter.

Nadal, halfway to the Calendar Slam for the first time in his career making him customary favourite.

But the chronic foot injury, is a cause for concern and the 36-year-old has said the new radio frequency treatment has alleviated the pain, but only the first week will indicate whether he is moving with power and freedom. With a fourth-round against



Novak Djokovic plays a return as he practices ahead of the Wimbledon.

2017 finalist Marin Cilic looming, he will need to find as much match-sharpness as

With Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev out, the one likely to lead the charge

to break the Big 4's hegemony is last year's finalist Berrettini. The Italian, whose massive serve and forehand combination seem tailor-made for grass, would have been an outside-favourite a few months ago, after he

missed the clay season for an operation in his right hand. He's unbeaten ever since his return though, with titles in Stuttgart and the Queen's Club making him one of the tournament favourites.

The big-serving Hurkacz, who beat Federer in straight sets in the quarterfinal last year, and the well-rounded and powerful Auger-Aliassime are both threats. Even Tsitsipas, usually out of touch on grass, picked up form by winning the title in Mallorca this

#### Can Swiatek keep her run going?

The 21-year-old from Poland has been on a 35-match winning streak that started in Doha back in February and lasted all the way through to the recent French Open. Her powerful game and aggressive tactics are yet to find a match, and her overwhelming dominance on the women's tour is reminiscent of a certain American making her comeback

over the next fortnight. Swiatek is yet to prove herself on grass though. She could not go past the fourth round at SW19 last year, the only times she has ever won a main draw match there. Her power is an asset, and she has crucial and versatile return of serve in her armour.

Primarily among her challengers, is third seed Ons Jabeur. The Tunisian became the first Arab to break into the top 10 this year and with a title at the Berlin tune-up, will be hoping for a more impressive showing this time around.

A trio of former Wimbledon champions - Simona Halep, Angelique Kerber, and Petra Kvitova - have been handed confidenceboosting draws. Serena Williams too makes her long-awaited return to the tour, no matches in exactly one year barring a few rounds of doubles at Eastbourne last week, but self-belief intact. The American has a new coach and looks calm and fit.

Emma Raducanu, whose fairytale story to the US Open title last year began at Wimbledon, will have the partisan British crowd willing her on but has a tough firstround encounter against Alison van Uytvanck and injury and fitness issues plaguing her first full year on tour though.

Chief among the dark horses is Beatriz Haddad Maia, a relative unknown on the tour whose 12-match winning streak resulted in back-to-back titles in Nottingham and Birmingham, and becoming the 23rd seed in the main draw at SW19. While still untested on the big stage, she is one to watch to go deep in the draw.

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<u>ADVERT</u>ORIAL





# HOLD THE VISION, TRUST THE PROCESS - coveted career courses in today's context

### Civil service is still a top career choice



he term "civil service" was first used by the East India Company for its establishment of nonmilitary or "civilian" employees in India and it has been retained with that restrictive meaning of administrative services. Civil servants are essentially backroom boys, the pillars of the administration really, implementing government and developmental policies, keeping law and order and acting as a bridge between the masses and the government. They also get an opportunity to participate in nation-building and make a difference in the lives of people. They hold power responsibly



Director of **APTI PLUS** Academy For Civil Services Pvt. Ltd. is receiving "Award" for **BEST CIVIL SERVICES COACHING** from Shri Sonu Sood

and are immensely respected for the job they do since the services are the best way to assess ground realities and address them. This is the reason why many youngsters sign up for this role.

In addition to this, civil servants are handsomely paid, provided comfortable living quarters and caretakers to focus on the task of governance.

If you or anybody you know ever plans on pursuing a career in the government services, you should definitely aspire for the top three, namely, IAS, IPS and IFS. Between them, they hold a vast power to bring about development in society. Also, these services are much

sought after as they are symbols of great power, social recognition and affluence. But one needs proper guidance and mentoring.



While there are excellent IAS coaching centres with dedicated faculty, self confidence, discipline and hard work are also essential. The point here is that with a little self-application, perseverance and dedication you could absolutely find yourself in the coveted service that is both respective and beneficiary in nature. A person who wants to participate closely in the process of building society and wants to bring about positive social change should certainly try for the UPSC exams. Once successful, you can serve the country with pride.

> Dr Prithwiraj Biswas Associate Professor and Head, Department of History RK Mission Vidyamandira,

> > Belurmath, Howrah

## CMA Syllabus, 2022 is dynamic



Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Culture, Govt of India released the CMA Syllabus 2022 on 9th June 2022 at Scope Complex, New Delhi during MCA Iconic Week Celebration on 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. CMA P Raju Iyer, President, CMA Vijender Sharma, Vice President, CMA (Dr.) Balwinder Singh, Chairman – Training & Educational Facilities Committee of the Institute and other dignitaries were present in this historical event.

MA Syllabus – 2022 shall be effective from the June 2023 term examinations and onwards. The new syllabus maps curricula of national and international accounting bodies, meeting the requirements of international education standards and covering the important aspects of National Education Policy, 2020. The new syllabus will nurture students to become professionals, who will lead entities across all industry sectors and become practitioners. The curriculum has been designed in a manner to enable Cost and Management Accountants

acquire the highest level of competency that the industry and profession requires and ensure that the curriculum remains effective and relevant in this dynamic global ecosystem.

The aim behind rationalisation and upgradation of the course curriculum is to incorporate contemporary topics, minimise overlapping areas and duplication of topics and sub-topics besides introducing new subjects/topics like Business Communication, Business Data Analytics, Risk Management in Banking & Insurance, Entrepreneurship & Start-up, ESG, Forensic Audit, Digital Strategy, Cyber Security, Financial Modelling, Emotional Intelligence, Six Sigma, Financial Derivatives, Anti-money Laundering Laws and so on.

As a long-term vision of the institute, its professional social responsibility and being an organisation under the administrative control of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, the institute ensures that the students pursuing the CMA course should possess and acquire robust employability skills to cope with the global challenges and become future-ready professionals. It has introduced mandatory SAP Finance Power User

Training & Certification, Microsoft Office Training & Certification, Cambridge University Press Soft Skill Training & Certification and E-filing Training & Certification. All this will ensure world class employability and technoskill training facilities for stu-

dents. With world-class skills training facilities coupled with international level curriculum and pedagogy, an industryrecognised robust practical training scheme and a high standard of online examination systems, the CMA course is expected to groom a globally competitive professional.

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Kolkata





Behind Every Successful Business Decision, there is always a CMA

