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VIDEOGRAPHY SURVEY COMPLETED, REPORT IN COURT TODAY

Varanasi court orders sealing of Gyanvapi mosque spot after Shivling discovery claim

Masjid panel says object is part of fountain, will challenge sealing order in top court

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, MAY 16

RETURNING THE spotlight to the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque controversy, a Varanasi court Monday directed the district administration to seal the spot in the mosque complex where a Shivling was claimed to have been found during a court-mandated videography survey



Security personnel at the site in Varanasi Monday. Anand Singh

that just concluded. The Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee said it would

challenge the order in the Supreme Court where it had

SC's Ayodhya verdict faces Kashi test: Mosque plea hearing today

Survey violates Places of Worship Act, says petition

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE SUPREME Court is likely to hear Tuesday a plea by the Committee of Management of Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, Varanasi, challenging the videography survey ordered by a local court of the Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal in the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque complex. The Muslim

EXPRESS NETWORK

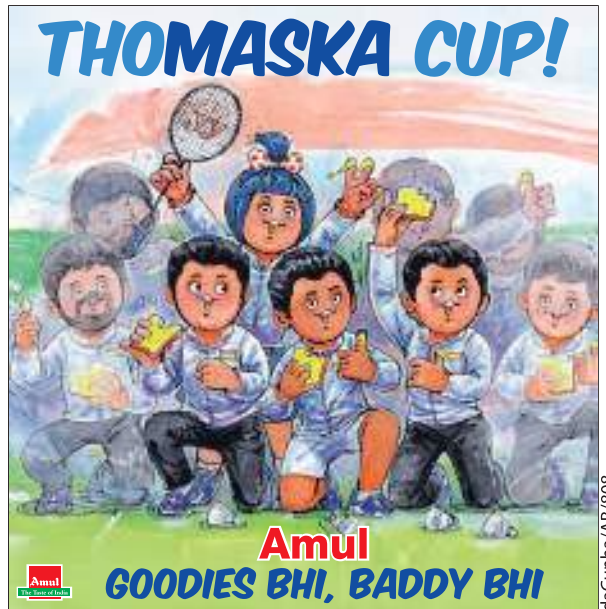
PLEA IN MATHURA COURT FOR SURVEY OF SHAHI IDGAH
PAGE 9

body contends that it is contrary to provisions of the Places of Worship Act (Special Provisions) Act 1991. The Act states that the nature

of all places of worship, except Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, shall be maintained as it was on August 15, 1947 and that no suit shall lie in any court with respect to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship, as existing on that date.

Incidentally, the Act itself is under challenge before the top court with at least two pending petitions questioning its

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**DOMESTIC PRICES DROP SHARPLY**

Export ban shakes world markets, wheat prices up 6%

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

INDIA'S BAN on wheat exports Saturday fuelled international prices by almost 6 per cent a bushel (60 pounds or one million kernels or 27.21 kg) when global markets opened Monday. Locally, prices dropped sharply by 4-8 per cent in different states — Rs 200-250 a quintal in Rajasthan, Rs 100-150 a quintal in Punjab, and about Rs 100 a quintal in Uttar Pradesh.

With the February 24 invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the supply disruption that followed, global wheat prices jumped 60 per cent in 2022; just Russia and Ukraine together account for almost a third of world wheat exports.

The unexpected ban by India,

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which accounts for about 5 per cent of world wheat exports, stoked prices further. In Chicago, futures rose 5.9 per cent to \$12.47 a bushel on Monday, the highest in two months. The closing price in the previous trading

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUDDHIST CULTURE CENTRE TO COME UP

India-Nepal ties are as stable as the Himalayas, says Modi in Lumbini

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
LUMBINI, MAY 16

MARKING HIS first official visit to the birthplace of the Buddha, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday marked Buddha Purnima by laying the foundation stone of a centre for Buddhist culture and heritage in Nepal's Lumbini — the first such facility to be set up by India there.

Modi later said the two countries of "Buddha's birth and enlightenment together have an obligation to work for the entire humanity" — and said that rela-

tions between India and Nepal are "as ancient as the ocean and as stable as the Himalayas".

"The growing and strengthening friendship between India and Nepal will work for the benefit of the entire humanity amid the kind of global situation that is emerging today. The devotion to Lord Buddha binds us together, and makes us members of one family," Modi said, referring to Nepal and India as "the countries of Buddha's birth and enlightenment".

"The energy of the place, where Lord Buddha was born,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and others in Lumbini on Monday. PTI

India looks at reopening mission in Kabul minus senior diplomats

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

INDIA IS exploring the possibility of reopening its embassy in Afghanistan soon, but without top level diplomatic representation, according to sources.

The Indian Express has learnt that a team of security officials flew to Kabul in February to assess the ground situation.

The plan for reopening does not include sending diplomats at senior levels — the embassy will likely function only with personnel for liaison purposes that may

EXPLAINED
● Much at stake

WHILE IT has not granted recognition to the Taliban regime, Delhi has been calling for an inclusive government in Afghanistan, one that ensures that Afghan soil is not used for any terror activity. India has much at stake in Afghanistan, having participated in a range of development projects.

extend to consular services, the sources said. It would not mean a recognition of the Taliban regime.

India shut down its embassy in Kabul on August 17, two days after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Since then, Delhi has debated whether that was the right decision. Some sections of the security establishment and Ministry of External Affairs have maintained that continuing there would have put the lives of Indian personnel at risk, pointing to the 1998 incident in which Iranian diplomats at Iran's Mazar-i-Sharif consulate were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NCLT ruling in way, so Govt takes another look at sale of Pawan Hans

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE CENTRE is taking a relook at the Pawan Hans disinvestment process on account that Almas Global Opportunity Fund, one of the three entities part of the winning consortium, has a court order passed against it by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), government sources told *The Indian Express*. The government is studying whether the NCLT verdict amounts to an "adverse order"

— something that may lead to disqualification of the bid, as per guidelines on strategic disinvestment.

The consortium entity that placed and won the bid for the state-owned helicopter service provider is Star9 Mobility Pvt Ltd. Cayman Islands-based Almas Global Opportunity Fund, which is managed by Dubai-based Almas Capital owns 49% of Star9 Mobility, with the remaining held by Mumbai-based Big Charter Pvt Ltd and Delhi-based Maharaja Aviation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY

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THE WORLD**SRI LANKA DOWN TO LAST DAY OF PETROL****PUTIN APPEARS TO BACK OFF THREATS AS SWEDEN DECIDES TO JOIN NATO**

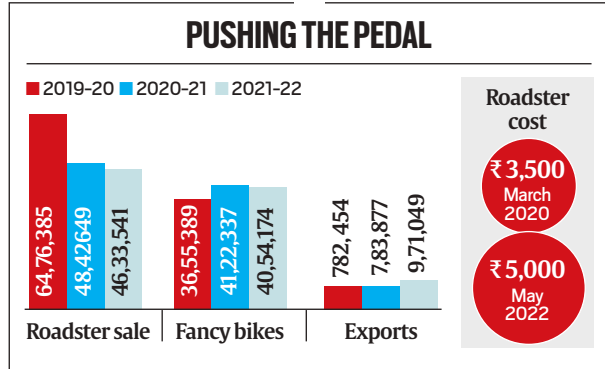
End of road for sturdy roadster? Shooting steel rates put brakes on poor man's ride

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, MAY 16

WITH ITS price shooting up by almost 50 per cent in the last two years, the sales of the sturdy Roadster, popularly called the poor man's cycle, have fallen by almost 39 per cent, sending shock waves across cycle manufacturers in Ludhiana.

The black entry-level cycle was priced around Rs 3500 in March 2020 before the first lockdown. Two years on, its price



ranges between Rs 5,000 and 5,500, depending upon different brands and inclusive of accessories like carrier and stand.

The latest price rise of Rs 100 took place last month. "This hike is governed by the prices of steel which are on the rise. What can

we do," says Gurmeet Singh Kular, president of Federation of Industrial and Commercial Organisation (FICO).

"Steel is a major component in bicycle manufacturing and prices of cold rolled pipes have doubled from Rs 50-55 a kg in March 2020 to Rs 95-100 a kg now. Similarly, the CR sheets, which were priced around Rs 42 a kg in March 2020, are now at Rs 80-85 a kg. We need it in bicycle manufacturing, so we have no choice but to pass on the increased cost of production to the consumer," says Upkar Singh, president of Chamber of Industrial and Commercial Undertakings.

Going by the figures of All

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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FROM PAGE ONE

Gyanvapi

already moved a plea against the videography survey. It said the object being described as a Shivling was part of the fountain in the wuzu (ablution) area.

Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar, hearing a plea by five women seeking permission for daily prayers at Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal on the outer wall of the mosque complex, said, "District Magistrate, Varanasi, is directed to immediately seal the place where the Shivling has been found. No person should be allowed to enter the place which will be sealed."

"The responsibility for the security and custodianship of the place which will be sealed will be considered personally of Varanasi district magistrate, Varanasi police commissioner and the CRPF commandant, Varanasi," the judge said.

Advocate Hari Shankar Jain, representing the five women petitioners, filed an application Monday, saying a "Shivling is found in masjid complex at the place where wuzu khana is there".

A commission tasked by the court to conduct a survey will submit its report and findings on Tuesday. It concluded its survey Monday and officials said the findings were "confidential".

According to the court order, the application filed by Jain stated that a Shivling was found inside the mosque complex by the survey commission on May 16.

"This is very important evidence. Hence, the CRPF commandant should be directed to seal it. Varanasi District Magistrate should be directed to stop the entry of Muslims. Only 20 Muslims should be allowed to pray at the mosque and they should not be allowed to perform wuzu (ablution)," the order stated.

S M Yasin, general secretary of the Anjumman Intezamia Masjid Committee, said, "We will challenge today's order for sealing in the writ petition being heard in the Honourable Supreme Court. The structure is part of the fountain in the wuzu area. In all old mosques, there used to be a hauz (basin), and a fountain in the centre. This is part

of the fountain, which they are calling Shivling. We are surprised how the court passed the order in a hurry. We will mention it in the Supreme Court."

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma said, "The court commissioner had given directions to all parties that until the report is submitted in court on May 17, no one should disclose what was found inside. But still if someone of their own will has given some information, then it can't be verified by anyone. Only the court is the custodian of this information. If someone has told you something, it is a personal thought. It has nothing to do with the court commission's action."

Police Commissioner Satish Ganesh told mediapersons that the action of the court-appointed commission was completed Monday. "It was done in an ideal atmosphere where no incident of law and order happened. We thank the people of Kashi for their cooperation." He appealed to the media to "not pay heed to any unofficial statement".

Soon after the court order, UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, in a Twitter post, said, "No matter how much you hide 'truth', it comes out one day because 'truth is Shiv'. Baba ji ki jai, har har Mahadev. #GyanvapiTruthNow. #GyanvapiTemple."

In another tweet, he wrote in Hindi, "On the occasion of Budh Purnima, the manifestation of Baba Mahadev at Gyanvapi is a mythological message to Sanatan Hindu tradition."

Meanwhile, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, responding to the court order, said the "Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi is a mosque and will remain one".

"To convert the mosque into a temple, then it is nothing but an attempt at a conspiracy to give birth to communal hatred. This is against the historical facts, and against the law," said a statement issued by AIMPLB secretary Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani.

"In 1937, the court had established in the Din Mohd vs. Secretary of State case matter that the premises is a property of Muslim Waqf and Muslims have a right to offer namaz there. The court had also determined how

much of the disputed land is mosque's and temple's... Then, the Parliament passed the Places of Worship Act, 1991 which says that the status of religious places as in 1947 will remain. Then in 2019, the Supreme Court in the Babri mosque matter also said clearly that all places of worship will remain under this Act," the AIMPLB said.

Mosque plea

Constitutional validity on the ground that it bars judicial review, which is a basic feature of the Constitution, and abridges the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

Although the SC issued notice on one of them in March 2021, the Centre is yet to file its reply.

The appeal by the Masjid Committee, which challenges the April 21, 2022 Allahabad High Court ruling dismissing its petition against the order of a Varanasi court ordering the videographic survey of the disputed side, is listed Tuesday before a Supreme Court bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and P S Narasimha.

Significantly, a five-judge Constitution bench of the then Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer had, in the Ayodhya judgment of November 9, 2019, lauded the Places of Worship Act as "a legislative instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution".

In that 5-0 unanimous verdict — on the title suit — in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, the Supreme Court ruled that the 2.77 acres of disputed land in Ayodhya would be handed over to a trust for the construction of a Ram Mandir and a 5-acre plot allotted to the Sunni Waqf Board at an alternate site.

The Masjid Committee's appeal contends that an earlier suit filed in 1991 by some devotees alleging that the Gyanvapi mosque was built after demolishing a temple had been stayed by the HC and the present proceedings which were instituted in 2021, were an attempt to get around the stay.

It also said that the proceedings are "an attempt to disturb

the communal peace and harmony and in contravention to the Places of Worship Act".

The local court, said the Mosque Committee, should have first heard its application seeking rejection of demand for being barred by the Act, before going ahead.

Hearing a petition by five Hindu women seeking round-the-year access to pray at "a shrine behind the western wall of the mosque complex", a civil court in Varanasi had on April 8, 2022, appointed Advocate Commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra to carry out an inspection of the disputed site — and directed him to "prepare videography of the action" and submit a report.

On April 21, the Allahabad High Court dismissed a petition filed by the mosque committee challenging this local court's order. On April 26, the Varanasi court again ordered videography of the disputed site.

Though the inspection began, it was halted after the mosque committee filed an application in the court, alleging bias, and seeking replacement of the court-appointed Advocate Commissioner. On May 12, the Varanasi court rejected the prayer to change Advocate Commissioner Mishra and ordered resumption of the video survey — even if it meant getting "locks opened/ broken". The inspection report should be submitted on May 17, it said.

The two petitions challenging the Places of Worship Act have been filed by Lucknow-based trust 'Vishwa Bhadra Pujari Purohit Mahasangh' along with some followers of Sanatan Vedic Religion, and Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay.

On March 12, 2021, a bench headed by the then Chief Justice of India S A Bobde issued notice on Upadhyay's plea. The Centre has not filed a reply and the matter has not come up for hearing. Upadhyay's petition contends that the Act "has created arbitrary irrational retrospective cut-off date" and "has barred the remedies against illegal encroachment on the places of worship and pilgrimages and now Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs cannot file suit or approach High Court under Article 226".

It said the Act is "unconstitutional and beyond its (Parliament's) law making power" as it has "frustrated" the principle of law "ubi jus ibi remedium (where there is a right, there is a remedy)", "thus violating the concept of justice and Rule of Law, which is core of Article 14".

Besides, Article 13(2) also prohibits State from making any law which takes away or abridges fundamental rights conferred under Part-III of the Constitution and any law made in contravention to basic rights is void, it pointed out.

The petition by the Lucknow trust has put forth similar arguments and questioned how any law can bar the right to seek judicial review of a grievance.

Soon after the Lucknow trust approached the court in June 2020, the Jamiat Ulema-I-Hind filed an impleadment application opposing it.

Urging the court not to even issue a notice claiming that that "will create fear in the minds of the Muslim community," it said that if the petition is entertained, "it will open floodgates of litigation against countless mosques in the country and the religious divide from which the country is recovering in the aftermath of the Ayodhya dispute will only be widened".

promote tourism," Deuba said while thanking Modi for India's help in post-earthquake reconstruction and development.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Indian centre will be a 'NetZero' compliant complex in terms of energy, water and waste handling, which will house prayer halls, meditation centers, library, exhibition hall, cafeteria, offices and other amenities.

On Monday, Modi was accompanied during the day-long visit, which included a stopover at the seventh-century Maya Devi temple, by Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his wife Arzu Rana Deuba. The two leaders also held a meeting to discuss the "full range of bilateral relations".

The two sides also signed six MoUs, including a Dr Ambedkar Chair for Buddhist Studies in Lumbini Buddhist University; ICCR Chairs of Indian Studies in Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University; and, a joint master's degree programme between IIT-Madras and Kathmandu University.

There was also an MoU between Sutlej Jala Vidyut Nigam, a Himachal government subsidiary, and Nepal Electricity Authority for a 695 MW Arun-4 power project under which Nepal will receive 152 MW of free electricity under a sharing arrangement.

"Today's meeting with PM @SherBDeuba was excellent. We discussed the full range of relations between India and Nepal. Key MoUs were signed which will diversify and deepen cooperation," Modi tweeted.

"PM @narendramodi holds bilateral talks with PM @SherBDeuba in Lumbini. Opportunity to strengthen ongoing cooperation and develop new areas in our multifaceted partnership," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted at the start of the meeting.

This is Modi's fifth visit to Nepal after becoming Prime Minister. Monday's foundation ceremony was conducted by monks belonging to three major Buddhist traditions — Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. The two prime ministers also unveiled a model of the centre.

At the Maya Devi temple, the two leaders paid their respects at the marker stone inside the premises, which is said to pinpoint the birth spot of the Buddha. They also attended the puja conducted according to Buddhist rituals and lit lamps near the Ashoka Pillar adjacent to the temple.

Deuba also hosted a luncheon in honour of Modi. "Today's visit has provided further momentum to the multifaceted partnership between the two countries and advanced cooperation in key areas, particularly in education, culture, energy and people to people exchanges," the MEA said.

"Thank you, Shree @narendramodi, for visiting Lumbini on #BuddhaPurnima today. I believe your special pilgrimage to the Birthplace of Lord Buddha has further strengthened our friendship and cultural ties," Deuba tweeted.

(WITH DIVYA IN NEW DELHI)

relating to its humanitarian assistance. The view is that India needs to do so too in its own interests.

The Pakistan, Chinese and Russian and Iranian missions did not shut down during the chaos of the Taliban takeover. These countries see key roles for themselves in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, and began positioning themselves early. All five Central Asian countries have diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime. The US signed an agreement with Qatar in April making it the "protecting power" for its interests. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have also returned. But none has yet recognised the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.

Developments on the ground also seem to be influencing the view in Delhi that India needs some presence in Kabul quickly. Aside from the emergence of various Taliban factions, and the Haqqani network working towards repairing their international image, Tolo News reported earlier this month that a loya jirga would be held, though no dates have yet been mentioned.

Pawan Hans sale

On April 29, a group of ministers, comprising Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, approved Star9 Mobility's bid for sale of the Centre's 51% stake in Pawan Hans for Rs 211.14 crore.

However, nine days prior to the approval on April 20, the Kolkata bench of the NCLT had passed an order against Almas Global Opportunity Fund saying that the entity was in "knowing and wilful contravention of the approved resolution plan".

"We will do legal examination of the NCLT order before proceeding further. The letter of award (for the Pawan Hans disinvestment) has not been issued yet," a Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) official involved in the Pawan Hans disinvestment process told The Indian Express.

Asper guidelines issued by the DIPAM in September 2017, "any conviction by a Court of Law or indictment/adverse order by a regulatory authority that casts a doubt on the ability of the bidder to manage the public sector unit when it is disinvested, or which relates to a grave offence would constitute disqualification".

The resolution plan in question pertains to a Kolkata-based power distribution company EMCLtd for which Almas Global Opportunity Fund was declared the successful bidder. But despite having its resolution plan for EMCLtd approved by the NCLT, the fund did not deposit the money required for the resolution process.

"The SRA (Successful Resolution Applicant) has not exhibited any intention by taking some concrete steps that can instil some degree of confidence in the earnestness of the SRA. It is plain for anyone willing to see that the SRA is not likely to part with the funds in the foreseeable future. The SRA has taken the entire process for a ride, and nothing can really excuse this audacity. The attitude of the SRA really will tick every parameter that can be applied to satisfy the 'knowing and wilful contravention' test laid down in section 74(3)(4) of the Code on a reasonable construction," the NCLT noted in its April 20 order.

"The SRA has been pussyfooting around with regard to the payments to be made under the approved Resolution Plan, for more than one-and-a-quarter years. It is futile to wait indefinitely for the SRA to fulfil its commitments... The repeated exhortations made during the course of hearings to the SRA through its learned senior counsel to make at least some payments in order to show its bona fides, & earnestness have gone completely unheeded. There is no point in chas-

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Kashmiri pandits protest, India's fertility rate, Tripura's new CM

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Why Kashmiri Pandits are protesting in the valley, why India's overall fertility rate has gone down, and why the BJP has decided to change the Chief Minister in Tripura

ing the chimera of the SRA fulfilling its commitments under the Resolution Plan," it said.

The bankruptcy court had also ordered action against Almas Global Opportunity Fund and its officers under Section 74 (3) read with Section 236 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, 2016. These sections stipulate that the party can be imprisoned for a minimum of one year and maximum of five years, in addition to facing a maximum penalty of up to Rs 1 crore.

Sturdy roadster

India Bicycle Manufacturing Association (AICMA), the sale of Roadsters dropped from 64,76,385 in 2019-20 to 48,42,649 the next year and further to 46,33,541 in 2021-22, signalling a drop of drop of 39.77 per cent.

"The steel manufacturing is being done by a handful of large units in the country and they have created a cartel due to which they increase prices overnight. We have highlighted this matter to Finance Minister Nirmal Sitharaman, and asked for regulation of prices of steel but nothing has happened till now," says Upkar Singh.

Last November, members of United Cycles Parts and Manufacturing Association (UCPMA) had even sat on a month-long dhama to seek regulation of steel prices.

"Before the 2020 lockdown, there used to be institutional sales of bicycles as well with state governments distributing them free to students (largely girl students) as part of social security schemes. Since schools remained closed for most of 2020 and 2021, these orders stopped. Only the West Bengal government had placed a small order last year. We hope such orders will resume this financial year," said SK Rai, MD of Hero Cycles.

Interestingly, fancy bikes whose starting price ranges around Rs 7,000 and goes up to lakhs witnessed a slight hike in sales during the pandemic but now this number too has fallen. "We sold 36,55, 389 bicycles in this segment in 2019-20, which increased to 41,22, 337 in 2020-21 but in 2021-22, it fell to 40,54,174," said Dr KB Thakur, secretary general of AICMA.

Rajesh Bansal, owner of Rana cycles, said most people largely buy cycles in the range of Rs 10,000-20,000 and only a handful go for expensive fancy bikes. "This segment uses imported bicycle parts. With inflation hitting everyone, we are also feeling the squeeze in sales," added Bansal, who feels customers are waiting for prices to come down as their salaries have not increased but inflation is hitting the roof.

Bansal summed up the sentiments of this sector when he said, "We want steel prices, rubber prices etc to stabilize as our sales have been hit badly."

Export is the only segment which is seeing growth. The sales in this segment have gone up from 782, 454 in 2019-20 to 9,71,049 in 2021-22, a jump of 24.1 per cent.

Manufacturers attribute it to rise in the cost of manufacturing bicycles in China due to the surge in their labour cost after Covid. "So a number of companies grabbed those orders. However, I would not call it a very encouraging response. It was lukewarm. Overall the bicycle industry needs an overhaul," said Rai.

Upkar Singh added, "The purchasing capacity of consumers has been hit due to inflation. The school fee has increased, cost of books is increasing every year, clothes are getting costly, grocery, fuel... the prices have increased but the income of most people is stagnant. Hence, we have to suffer."

Sewak, who works in a factory at Dugri, rues that the Roadster is no longer affordable to the poor. "When you have barely enough to feed your family, how can you think of sparing Rs 2000 more for a cycle?"

E-bikes, which caught the

fancy of many due to the hike in price of fuel, are also yet to catch on. Only 1,306 such bikes were sold in 2021-22 and AICMA has not recorded any sale in the previous two years.

In sum, the cycle sales are falling across segments. They have gone down from 12816733 bicycles in 2019-20 to 1,14,37,826 in 2021-22, a dip of 12.05 per cent.

Wheat export ban

session on May 13 — the day India imposed the ban — was \$11.77 a bushel.

According to the Indian government's Department of Commerce portal, the country exported 66.41 lakh tonnes of wheat in the first 11 months (April 2021 to February 2022) of financial year 2021-22 (1 tonne is 1,000 kgs or 2,204.6 pounds). This data conforms with the latest US Department of Agriculture's May 2022 report, which estimates wheat exports from India in the 12 months from July 2021 to June 2022 at 10 million metric tons (1 ton is 2,000 pounds). The total world wheat exports during the period are estimated at 201.5 million metric tons.

In the current financial year — April 2022 to March 2023, the Indian government estimates about 45 lakh metric tonnes of wheat to have been contracted for exports. Of this, 14.63 lakh metric tonnes have been exported in April 2022 alone, substantially higher than 2.43 lakh metric tonnes in the same month last year. Besides, 95,167 metric tonnes atta have been exported in April this year, almost four times more than 25,566 MT in April 2021.

The Group of Seven (G-7) countries too expressed disappointment on India's decision. After a meeting of G-7 agriculture ministers in Germany, German Agriculture Minister Cem Ozdemir said the export restriction would "worsen the crisis". "If everyone starts to impose export restrictions or to close markets, that would worsen the crisis," Ozdemir said at a press conference in Stuttgart on Saturday.

India defended the decision. The ban was "essentially in view of the price rise". Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said Saturday during a media briefing. Retail inflation has been ruling over 6 per cent for four straight months in calendar year 2022, with the print for April soaring to 7.79 per cent, much higher than the upper band of RBI inflation target of 6 per cent. In the Consumer Price Index, wheat/atta from PDS has a weight of 0.17 and wheat/atta from other sources has a weight of 2.56.

Research analysts said the impact of India's export ban would be felt disproportionately by low income developing countries. In a note after the ban, Nomura Global Markets Research pointed out that except India and Australia, most Asian economies depend on imported wheat for domestic consumption and are at risk from higher wheat prices globally, even if they do not directly import from India.

Bangladesh especially will feel the brunt, Nomura noted. Indeed, Bangladesh was the biggest buyer of Indian wheat, importing 38.04 lakh tonnes in 2021-22. Sri Lanka (5.48 lakh tonnes), UAE (4.24 lakh tonnes), Indonesia (3.66 lakh tonnes), the Philippines (3.52 lakh tonnes) and Nepal (2.90 lakh tonnes) were the other big importers of Indian wheat.

Nomura further said the impact on India's domestic food inflation would be muted. "This export ban is a pre-emptive step and may prevent local wheat prices from rising substantially; however, with domestic wheat production likely limited by the heatwave, local wheat prices may not moderate materially. If India's wheat ban leads to higher price of substitutes like rice, then there could be upward pressure on other food prices," it said.

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NOTICE TO THE CANDIDATES

In reference to Advt. No. 5/2019, Cat. No.01 for the post of Clerk, Hon'ble High court has passed following order in CWP No. 15672 of 2021 on dated 25.04.2022:-

“ **After the re-evaluation is carried out, needless to say that entire exercise of further rounds, including scrutiny of documents shall also be carried out all over again.**”

1. In Compliance of Hon'ble High Court orders in CWP No. 15672 of 2021 dated 25.04.2022, it is informed to all concerned candidates of Advt. No. 5/2019, Cat. No.01 for the post of Clerk, that commission will shortly call all the shortlisted candidates for physical scrutiny of documents. So, all candidates are advised to prepare themselves for scrutiny alongwith all original documents and one photostated copy of all documents. Commission will conduct the scrutiny afresh of all shortlisted candidates, and the scrutiny which was done earlier prior to the final result of above mentioned posts, thus now becomes null and void. Only documents which will be submitted now will be considered for final selection and no claim with regard to scrutiny of documents submitted earlier whether online or offline will be considered. Candidates shall bring and submit all documents again when they are called for scrutiny of documents, without which benefit or claim of reservation, educational qualification, socio-economics marks will not be given. If a candidate has submitted documents during filling online application form or scrutiny form but fails to submit or produce the documents during physical verification of documents, then his claim stands forfeited and no benefit will be given.

2. Accordingly, department allocation to all selected candidates will be done on the basis of their revised merit and preference, so all candidates are advised to fill their department preference online using their login ID and password failing which departments will be allocated in accordance with merit as per criteria decided by Commission. Candidates already selected/presently working and candidates who have already filled department preference earlier shall also fill again as department allocation will be done again on the basis of revised result and thus revised merit for all selected candidates.

Important Note:

- 1) List of shortlisted candidates along with detailed roll no. wise schedule of scrutiny will be issued shortly.
- 2) Since, the process has to be completed in a time bound manner, so all candidates must prepare themselves for scrutiny along with all relevant documents. All Photostat copy of documents to be submitted during physical scrutiny of documents shall be clear and legible. Issuing date, issuing authority and complete header/footer should be clearly visible. Documents without issuing date and issuing authority will be out rightly rejected and candidate will himself/herself be responsible for this lapse.
- 3) Only those documents will be considered valid which are issued before cut off date i.e. 13.08.2019 for above mentioned post, so candidates must bring documents issued before cut off date for the said post.
- 4) Link for filling online department preference will be activated shortly and candidates will be informed through public notice. Status of Scrutiny conducted during physical verification is only provisional and is subject to change, as in physical scrutiny the official only matches & checks the original documents. Final scrutiny is conducted by Commission before preparing and finalizing the result.
- 5) In case of any fake documents submitted by candidate, candidature of candidate will be cancelled, candidate will be debarred and criminal proceedings will be initiated against him/her. So, candidates shall submit/produce only those documents which are correct & authentic.
- 6) Thumb and facial biometric will also be carried out during scrutiny of documents of all candidates and in case of any mismatch their candidature will be cancelled and candidates will be debarred from future recruitments.
- 7) Since the recruitment is to be completed in restricted time frame as per court order, so no chance to any absentee candidates will be given for scrutiny of documents. Candidates shall be present on the date and time mentioned in the scrutiny schedule. Candidate's documents will not be verified if he/she does not appear on the scheduled date, slot and time. Even if he appears on any other date when scrutiny of other candidates is scheduled, he will not be given any opportunity and no representation in this regard will be entertained by commission and no separate information will be sent to any candidate.
- 8) Candidate shall keep following the updates or notices on website of Commission as no individual information will be sent to any candidate.

Place: Panchkula.
Dated: 13th May,2022

Sd/-
Secretary,
Haryana Staff Selection Commission,
Panchkula

9642/HRY

Chandigarh

3 THE CITY

LEFT IN THE LURCH: PART I

Denied Covid relief, family struggles for survival

HINA ROHTAKI
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

AFTER ATTENDING day-long classes of BSc (Medical) first-year, Anmol doesn't come home and crash like his other classmates. Instead, he freshens up and heads for night shift at a call centre in Mohali, where he works till 3:30 am. With barely two hours of sleep a day, the 18-year-old has been working at a gruelling pace to support his mother and younger sister after the death of his father. Umesh Kumar, the sole breadwinner of the family, died of Covid-19 during the second wave on April 9, 2021. Although the central government announced a compensation of Rs 50,000 per family (which was to be disbursed by the UT Administration) and the UT administration promised free education to the dependents, the family is yet to receive a penny till now.

Living on rent at Dhanas, Anmol and his mother Rajni did their best to procure the required documents such as death certificate, but could not get the prom-

ised compensation. Last one year has been traumatic for Rajni and her two children, Anmol, and Aastha, who is in standard VI.

"We were told by officials that there is a link on which we have to go and upload the documents. At first, I uploaded the death certificate and they asked for a Covid-19 positive report. I just had the text message from PGI that my husband is positive and a slip that he died of Covid-19. We uploaded those but never got any compensation. My brother Rajneesh even tried to check the status online but the website didn't open," said Rajni.

With no official guidance or counselling, the family was left to fend for itself. As Anmol was 17 when Umesh, a senior assistant at DAV School, Sector 8, Chandigarh, passed away, the family even went to the Social Welfare Department's Child Welfare Committee's (CWC) office to request if they could get a refund of the fees paid (Rs 36,000) as per the Parvarish scheme of the UT administration to support the families who had lost one of the two parents to



Umesh Kumar (who died of Covid) and his family. *Express*

Covid-19. According to the scheme, Anmol was also entitled to Rs 5,000 every month till he turned 18. However, the authorities approved only Aastha's case and refused any relief to Anmol. "We submitted Anmol's fee slip but the authorities remained unmoved. Aastha started getting the monetary aid of Rs 5,000 a month after the intervention of her teachers. It's the only assistance the family is getting and it's too meagre," said Rajneesh.

Aastha studies in a private school which asked the family to

deposit her fee this year. No one from the CWC told either the family or the school that as per the Parvarish scheme, a child who lost a parent to Covid is eligible for the EWS quota and a reduced fee, that will be reimbursed by the Department of Education.

The scheme further states that annual financial support of up to Rs 50,000 (admission + tuition fee + examination fee) will be provided to young adults pursuing graduation or an equivalent three-year course in Chandigarh or anywhere else

within the country from a recognised institute. But Anmol is yet to get any such aid, and pays his fee from his call centre salary. Anmol worked as a Zomato delivery boy before being employed by the call centre.

"I get Rs 20,000, most of which goes into our rent and daily expenses. Whatever little I save pays my college fee, which is Rs 30,000 per semester. We thought the administration and the central government would come to our rescue but we were wrong," said Anmol.

Rajni, who has done post-graduation in commerce, has been trying to look for a job but to no avail. "We even approached my father's institution, but they said it wasn't possible," said Anmol. His uncle Rajnish is the only relative who has been trying to lend him a helping hand. "But how much can he help us, he has to look after his own family," said Rajni.

Umesh Kumar was working at DAV School, Sector 8, Chandigarh, when he got tested at PGIMER and found he was Covid positive. A health team

gave him a Covid-19 kit and Umesh continued to remain at home under observation. It was after his oxygen level fell to 91 that doctors referred him to GMSH, Sector 16, on April 6. When his oxygen level continued to fall, the family moved him to GMCH, Sector 32, on the evening of April 8. The next morning, the family received a call around 5 am, saying he was critical. Three hours later, he died.

BENEFITS ONLY ON PAPER

When asked about the relief mandated for families that may have lost one or both parents, Nikita Pawar, Secretary, Social Welfare Department, UT, said, "Children are given Rs 5,000 every month until the age of 18 and for those above 18, the administration pays the college fee with a ceiling of Rs 50,000 for a course. Also, education in government schools is free and if the child is studying in a private school, her fee is charged under the EWS quota and refunded by the administration."

When informed that there are families who haven't got the

Passenger dies after falling off moving CTU bus

Driver held for death due to negligence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

A 37-YEAR-OLD Ludhiana resident fell to death from a moving Chandigarh Transport Undertaking (CTU) bus near Shivalik Hotel turn, Sector 17, on Sunday. Police arrested the CTU bus driver identified as Deepak Sidhu for death due to negligent driving. The victim was identified as Pushpinder Singh Sidhu, a resident of New Janta Colony, Ludhiana.

Sources said that Pushpinder fell from the rear door of the bus when the bus had taken a turn towards ISBT-17. Sources said that though it is mandatory for CTU drivers to not open the doors of the bus until the bus reaches the bus stop, bus stand or the conductor signals the driver to stop the vehicle, the death is being investigated from all aspects. Sources said Pushpinder was standing near the rear door. He was going to

ISBT-17. Police said that the mishap was witnessed by many passengers including Umesh Kumar of Naya Gaon, who reported the matter to Chandigarh police.

Sources said that Pushpinder was rushed to GMSH-16 by Deepak. Later, doctors referred him to PGI. The family arrived and took him to Civil Hospital, Ropar. Later, information about his death was received from Civil hospital, Ropar. He received severe head injuries. He succumbed to the injuries during treatment. The body was handed over to the family after postmortem.

A CTU officer said, "We have initiated a department probe against the driver Deepak Sidhu. A detailed explanation will also sought from the bus conductor. The bus, which was seized by the Chandigarh police, will soon be released from the police custody."

A case was registered at Sector 17 police station.

GMADA razes 50 shops at Khokha market

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, MAY 16

BULLDOZERS ROLLED into Mohali's busy Shaheed Bhagat Singh market — also known as Khokha market — in Phase 1 on Monday, as the Greater Mohali Area Development Authority carried out an anti-encroachment drive to raze at least 50 temporary shops that they claimed had come up on occupied land.

GMADA officials said that notices of eviction had been served to the shopkeepers three days ago.

Records showed that Shaheed Bhagat Singh market was established in the area around 40 years ago as a temporary arrangement that was to be shifted later. GMADA had of late wanted the shopkeepers to clear out, claiming that they were encroaching on the land.

On Monday, as GMADA officials rolled in with a heavy police force to carry out the demolition, the shopkeepers staged a brief protest before giving up and making way. The protesting shopkeepers stated that the development authority should make alternative arrangements for them so that they are not rendered jobless.



The demolition in progress

Gurpreet Kaur, one of the shopkeepers from the market, said that she and her two sisters operated three tiny shops in the area for the last 40 years, which were their only sources of income. "My father is bed-ridden and these shop were the only source of income for us. GMADA had razed our shops and not provided us any alternative form of employment. What will we do now?" Kaur asked.

While the GMADA had initially promised to provide them land near the existing market, but they later went rescinded and left them jobless. The officers of GMADA overseeing the drive, on the other hand, said that the shops were razed by following all due legal process and the notices were served to the shopkeepers prior to the drive.

BRIEFLY

Pedestrian dies in accident

Chandigarh: An unidentified pedestrian died after being hit by an auto near Housing Board on Sunday. Police said that constable Sushik Kumar of Mani Majra police station reported the incident. The victim was rushed to PGI where he died of injuries. Auto driver Hira Lal of Panchkula, was arrested and released on bail.

Teen drowns in village pond

Mohali: A 14-year-old drowned on Monday after accidentally slipping into a pond near Teera village. The victim Arun Kumar was a resident of Dhanas. Arun had gone to Teera with his friends. Investigators said that the boys entered the pond to bathe but suddenly Arun slipped and drowned.

2 booked for abetment to suicide

Mohali: Mullanpur Garibdas police booked two including a woman after a man allegedly died by suicide by consuming poison. The accused have not been arrested. The complainant Amarjeet Singh, said his brother Paramjeet Singh (38) died by suicide and had objections to his wife being in contact with a man and that they were responsible for Paramjeet's death. Police registered a case and have started investigation. **ENS**

POST FOR FIREPERSON IN MC

HC issues notice to UT after woman files petition for exemption from fitness test

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

THE PUNJAB and Haryana High Court issued notice to the Chandigarh Administration and Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh, over a petition filed by a woman applicant seeking directions to either exempt her from physique and physical fitness test for the post of fireperson or to prescribe the criteria

for the same for female fireperson.

The petitioner, Rekha Rani (28) through her counsel Nikunj Dhawan contended that there is no criteria for appointment of women for the post and she has been forced to clear the test (which is only for males), in terms of the MC, Chandigarh Service Regulations 2011 dated June 15, 2015 for Fire and Emergency Service Department. She sought that the respondents

conduct the test in terms of letter dated May 2, 2022.

Rani submitted that her father who had been working as a mali in the MC, died on July 12, 2014. She requested for a compassionate appointment, while submitting her application in May 2015, but the respondents kept delaying the matter. She filed a petition at the HC, where the respondents were directed to consider her case as per seniority list as and when Group D

category becomes vacant for compassionate appointment.

It was further submitted that, in 2021, the respondents vide letter April 8, 2021 directed her to submit her consent for appointment on compassionate grounds to the post of fireperson, wherein she had been directed along with other males to pass the test in accordance with the standards prescribed in the MC. In the letter it was told to her that if the test is not cleared,

then her name will again be placed in the seniority list for the group C post as and when available.

The petitioner submitted before HC that she came to know later that there is no criteria for women for the post, and she has been directed by the respondents to appear for the test on May 27, 2022. Hearing the matter, the Bench of Justice Rajbir Sehrawat issued notice to the UT and others, for May 25.

2 nabbed with narcotics in two separate cases

Mohali: Two people were arrested by the Mohali police in separate cases of drug smuggling on Monday. The first suspect was arrested by Sohana police, who recovered 1240 banned tablets from teh possession of the accused. The second man was nabbed by Kharar police, who found 101 gram of heroin on the suspect.

In the first case Sohana police identified the suspect as Kulwant Singh alias Lucky, who was nabbed from near Purab Premium Apartments in Sector 88. According to the police officers, the accused was walking towards Sector 88 on foot, when a police team — led by Assistant

sub-inspector (ASI) Harjinder Singh — stopped him and checked his bag. The checking led to the recovery of the banned tablets. Police have registered a case against Lucky under relevant sections of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. In the second case, Kharar police arrested a man identified as Harjeet Singh.

Police said Harjeet was on his way from Chandigarh to Kharar, when a police party — led by ASI Lakhwinder Singh — stopped his car for checking. On checking the vehicle, the heroin was recovered. A case has been registered against Harjeet at Kharar (city) police station.

FOR STUDENTS, START 52-SEATER BUS FROM UT TO DERA BASSI, CTU REQUESTED

Chandigarh: Residents of Panchkula and Dera Bassi urged the Chandigarh Transport Undertaking (CTU) authorities to introduce a 52-seater bus instead of a mini-bus on the route between UT and Dera Bassi via Panchkula to accommodate school students who commute from Ramgarh, to Chandigarh, especially in the morning hours. Parmaal Singh Rana and Yashwant Thakur took up the matter with the CTU authorities through emails while sharing a detailed note along with pictures of an over-crowded CTU bus parked at Ramgarh bus stop. **ENS**

April bills to reflect 5% hike in waste collection charges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

CHANDIGARH MUNICIPAL Corporation has hiked the garbage collection charges by 5 per cent, which will now be reflected in the water bills from April. The hike has disappointed residents of the city who stated that the existing charges were already not pocket friendly. Water tariffs were also increased, earlier. The Chandigarh Municipal Commissioner Anindita Mitra confirmed that it is a notified increase.

Baljinder Singh Bittu, Chairman of Federation of

Sectors Welfare Association of Chandigarh said "The Chandigarh civic body has already hiked so many charges. Water bills, property tax and now these waste collection charges. Residents are being burdened without any reason. It is not justified."

MC HAD TAKEN OVER WASTE COLLECTION

UT Municipal Corporation had taken over waste collection from independent waste collectors and has introduced its 399 garbage collection vehicles to collect dry and wet waste. After the take over, the rates were imposed on residents from March, 2019.

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL
CHANDIGARH BENCH, CHANDIGARH
(ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY PETITION NO. CP (CAA) 17/Chd/Pb OF 2022
CONNECTED WITH
COMPANY APPLICATION NO. CA (CAA) 41/Chd/Pb OF 2021
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013 (18 OF 2013)
SECTIONS 230 & 232
AND
IN THE MATTER OF SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT
AND
IN THE MATTER OF
G.N.A. TRANSMISSIONS PVT LTD
(A Company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at G.T. Road, Goraya-144 409, District Jalandhar, Punjab)
PETITIONER NO. 1/TRANSFEROR COMPANY
GURU NANAK AUTO ENTERPRISES LTD
(A Company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at G.T. Road, Jamalpur, Phagwara-144 632, District Kapurthala, Punjab)
PETITIONER NO. 2/TRANSFeree COMPANY
AND
ASKK ESTATES PVT LTD
(A Company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and having its registered office at Village and Post Office: Bundala, Tehsil & District Jalandhar-144 034, Punjab)
PETITIONER NO. 3/ RESULTING COMPANY
Notice of Hearing of Petition
A joint Petition under sections 230 and 232 of the Companies Act, 2013, read with section 66 of the Companies Act, 2013, the Companies (Compromises, Arrangements and Amalgamations) Rules, 2016, the National Company Law Tribunal Rules, 2016, and other applicable provisions, if any, for obtaining sanction to the Scheme of Arrangement of G.N.A. Transmissions Pvt Ltd, Guru Nanak Auto Enterprises Ltd and ASKK Estates Pvt Ltd was presented by the Petitioners above named on 18th March, 2022 and the said Petition is fixed for hearing on 19th July, 2022 at 10:30 A.M. before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Chandigarh Bench, Corporate Bhawan, Plot No. 4-B, Ground Floor, Sector-27-B, Madhya Marg, Chandigarh-160 019.
Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said Petition should send to the Bench and to the Petitioners' Advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the Bench and the Petitioners' Advocate not later than 2 days before the date fixed for hearing of the Petition. Where he seeks to oppose the Petition, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the Petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.
Sd/-
Rajeev K Goel, Advocate
For Rajeev Goel & Associates
Counsel for the Petitioners
785, Pocket-E, Mayur Vihar-II,
Delhi Meerut Expressway/NH-9, Delhi 110 091
Date: 16.05.2022
Place: New Delhi
Mobile: 93124 09354, e-mail: rajeev391@gmail.com, Website: www.ralegal.in

OMIDYAR NETWORK INDIA
presents
The Indian EXPRESS
thinc
MIGRATION
17 MAY | 6.00 PM | Join through ZOOM
migrationinindia.com

Keynote Speaker
Shri Bhupender Yadav
Minister of Labour & Employment and
Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Eighth Edition
Migrant workers and the promise of e-Shram

The reverse migration that India experienced as the nation went into lockdown mode in 2020 brought out an overwhelming overlap between the most vulnerable migrant workers and those that worked in the country's informal sector. As such, any policy that aims to alleviate the economic hardships among informal sector workers would also have a significant bearing on India's most vulnerable migrant workers.

The e-Shram portal, which was launched with a far-reaching mandate of registering millions of unorganised workers, is one such policy.

But can the e-Shram portal be leveraged to help India's internal migrants? Can it be used to provide social security to migrant workers? What are the kind of policy enhancements required to get around the issues of bridging the digital divide and gender divide? What can be done to reduce possible exclusions?

Join us as we delve into these questions and more.

Panelists

Ashif Shaikh
Founder & CEO
Jan Sahas

Chandan Kumar
National Organising Secretary
Working Peoples' Coalition

Divya Varma
Programme Manager, Centre for
Migration & Labour Solutions
Aajeevika Bureau

Govindraj Ethiraj
Senior Journalist &
Founder, IndiaSpend

Sanjay Awasthi
India Head of Office
International Organization
for Migration

IndianExpress.com | twitter.com/IndianExpress | facebook.com/IndianExpress | #MigrationInIndia

Punjabi men top country in hypertension

PARUL
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

AT 37.7 per cent, Punjab has the highest number of men with diabetes in the country against the national average of 24 percent. This was part of the findings of the recent National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5), the fifth in the NFHS series. The prevalence of hypertension in women in Punjab is 32% while in Haryana, it is 22.9% in women and 26.2% in men. In Chandigarh, it is 30% in men and 25% in women, as against the national prevalence of hypertension in 22% of women and 24% of men.

“These are alarming figures, and need to be addressed urgently and on a priority basis,” says Dr Sonu Goel, Professor, Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGI, adding that most people are unaware of their blood pressure levels, particularly the younger population. The department is implementing a project entitled, ‘Strengthening the management of hypertension services through capacity building, media

and communication and stakeholder’s engagement in the state of Punjab’, with an aim to strengthen the prevention and management of hypertension services.

Dr Goel, principal investigator of the project, adds that uncontrolled raised blood pressure and/or hypertension can cause stroke, myocardial infarction, cardiac failure, renal failure, blindness, etc. “Tackling hypertension will avert many non-communicable diseases, disabilities and deaths.”

Dr Dheeraj Khurana, Professor, Department of Neurology, says that hypertension is a leading cause of stroke. It puts an extra strain on all the blood vessels in the body and makes them stiffer and narrower. This can lead to clots forming and travelling to the brain, causing a stroke. Hypertension, adds Dr Khurana, is one of the biggest killers and is a silent killer as it causes a significant burden of heart attacks and stroke. “In the case of stroke, poorly controlled hypertension leads to a build-up of cholesterol plaque in the arteries which can further block a blood vessel. On the other extreme, very high blood pressure can cause the

artery to burst and cause bleeding in the brain. To prevent hypertension, a healthy diet of fresh fruit and vegetables is recommended.”

According to Dr Sood, excessive consumption of sugar, salt and trans-fats are the leading cause of non-communicable diseases. As per World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation, the total trans-fat intake should be limited to less than 1% of total energy intake, which translates to less than 2.2 g/day with a 2,000-calorie diet. “WHO recommends a salt intake of 5 gms in a day and 25 gms of sugar in a day, while just one bottle of soft drink contains 50 gms of sugar. Trans-fats, better known as bad fats, have been proven as one of the major risk factors for cardiovascular diseases worldwide,” explains Dr Sood.

Hydrogenated vegetable oil in the form of vanaspati is consumed in large quantities and is known for highest content of trans-fat. Cakes, cookies and pies, microwave popcorn, frozen pizza, refrigerated dough, such as biscuits and rolls, fried foods, doughnuts, non-dairy coffee creamer, and stick margarine — trans-fats are formed during partial hydro-

genation, the addition of chemicals, a process that creates fats.” The doctor recommends eating fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains, poultry, fish, using natural non-hydrogenated vegetable oils, and avoiding commercially baked and fried food, sweets, mithais.

Dr Ankur Ahuja, Senior Consultant, Cardiology, Fortis Hospital, Mohali, says that it is estimated that 15% to 25% of Indian adults have hypertension, but a majority of them remain oblivious about the disease. Hypertension is blood pressure (BP) that is higher than normal — blood pressure above 140/90, while pressure above 180/110 is termed severe hypertension. Hypertension or high BP — commonly termed the ‘silent killer’ — poses a great risk for heart attack (myocardial infarction), stroke, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, peripheral arterial disease, and aortic dissection/aneurysm. “Prevalence of hypertension is rising fast among Indians. Women are more likely to have high blood pressure as they get older. It is important that one should keep tabs on one’s BP level and consult a cardiologist for assessment.” It is a

common belief that headaches and hypertension are the same. But both the health conditions are separate, clarifies Dr Ahuja. In fact, those suffering from hypertension don’t usually exhibit symptoms till later complications manifest, and it is important that we keep tabs on our blood pressure.”

Stress, adds Dr Ahuja, is a major factor that can hamper one’s health over time. Lifestyle habits such as overeating and weight gain, inactivity, or drinking alcohol can lead to a further increase in blood pressure. Chronic health conditions such as kidney disorders, obesity, diabetes, and sleep apnea are commonly associated with hypertension. Dr Ahuja advises that even if one does not exhibit any symptoms, it is important to get their BP checked regularly. Reducing salt intake, avoiding food items that are high in sodium like pickles and chutneys, limiting alcohol consumption to only 60 ml per day, exercising, and avoiding processed and red meats are advised. Introducing changes in lifestyle, can help reduce blood pressure to a large extent and further reduce dependence on blood pressure medication.

Car with Chandigarh dealer for repair, Shimla man booked for hit-and-run

Consumer panel tells car dealership to pay him Rs 10 lakh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

THE STATE Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has directed a Renault dealership of Chandigarh to pay Rs 10 lakh to a Shimla resident for causing him harassment due to an FIR registered following an accident involving the dealership’s employee.

Kamal Kant Kalia, a junior resident at Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC) at Shimla, alleged that his Renault Duster developed a technical fault on July 1, 2018, due to which he contacted Renault India Road Side Assistance, which took away the vehicle the same day and a repair job card was opened on July 2, 2018, at 10.41 am. A confirmation message was sent to him that the vehicle was handed over to Renault PMG Autos Private Limited, Chandigarh, for repair.

The estimated delivery date was July 8 but it was extended

to July 18 due to the complainant’s personal issue. However, as per Kalia’s counsel Nevadita Sharma, the complainant received a call from Sector 14 police station in Panchkula on July 17, intimating him that his vehicle was involved in a hit-and-run case dated July 15 that killed a six-year-old boy and he was asked to visit the police station immediately. The complainant contacted the Renault India authorities but got no help. Kalia stated that he had been running from pillar to post for getting his car released from the police station. Ultimately, after sending a legal notice to the opposite parties, the complainant filed a complaint at the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Chandigarh.

In reply, the director, Renault PMG Autos Private Limited, Chandigarh, submitted that the vehicle in dispute was repaired and was ready for delivery on July 8 but the complainant did not take it. The accident oc-

curred during the time when their driver Pardeep Kumar was shifting the vehicle from Chandigarh workshop to Panchkula workshop due to paucity of space. They contended that they made all efforts to help the complainant to get the vehicle released.

After hearing the arguments, the commission held that due to fault of Renault PMG Autos Private Limited, the complainant suffered a lot. Observing that there was no fault of Renault India Private Limited as it is only the manufacturer of the said vehicle and the vehicle was parked on the premises of Renault PMG Autos Private Limited, Chandigarh (service centre), the commission allowed the complaint only against Renault PMG Autos Private Limited, Chandigarh, and directed it to pay Rs 3 lakh as compensation for mental agony, harassment and Rs 7 lakh towards depreciated value of the car, which was damaged due to its negligence.

Indian Bank	Indian Bank	Indian Bank
INDIAN BANK	ALLAHABAD	ZONAL OFFICE : LUDHIANA.
DEMAND NOTICE		
NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13 (2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS & ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002		
Notice is hereby given that the following borrower has defaulted in the repayment of credit facilities obtained by them from the bank and said facilities have turned NPA. The notice under section 13(2) of the Securitisation of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued to the borrower/guarantors on their last known address by the registered post. However the notices have been returned un-served & the authorised officer has reasons to believe that the borrower /guarantors are avoiding the service of notice as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same.		
Name of the Branch Borrower & Guarantor	Details of the Properties	Date Of NPA Date Of Demand Notice & Amount
Branch Office : Rupnagar	All part and parcel of property measuring 89.65 Acre of Land & Building of Royal Group of Institute , Village Rail Majra, Jalandhar Road, Distt. SBS Nagar, Punjab in the name of M/s Rayat Educational and Research Trust.	31.03.2021 09.05.2022 Rs. 28,02,10,229.72 as on 30.04.2021 plus further interest at the agreed rate w.e.f. 01.05.2021
1. Mrs Rayat Educational & Research Trust (Borrower), Village Rail Majra, Distt. SAS Nagar, Punjab. Registered/ Administrative/ Corporate Office: SCO- 126-127, 3 & 4 Floor, Sector 34, Chandigarh. 2. a) Mr. Nirmal Singh Rayat S/o Sh. Channan Singh (Guarantor), Village Rail Majra, SBS Nagar, Punjab. b) Mrs. Shaladhar Kaur W/o Sh. Nirmal Singh Rayat (Guarantor), #1246, 1st floor Sec 22 B Chandigarh. c) Mrs. Mohinder Kaur W/o Sh. Channan Singh (Guarantor), #13, Ward No.1, Balachur, Nawanshahr Punjab-144521. d) Mr. Udhham Singh S/o Sh. Amrik Singh (Guarantor) 195-B Arjun Nagar, Safdarjung Enclave, South West Delhi, South Delhi-110029. e) Mrs. Paramjit Kaur W/o Sh. Surinder Singh (Guarantor), Ward No.2, Balachur, Nawanshahr Punjab-144521. f) Mrs. Manjit Kaur W/o Sh. Chatter Singh (Guarantor), Bhanun, Sahdra, Nawanshahr, Punjab 144525. g) Mr. Chatter Singh S/o Amrik Singh (Guarantor), Bhanun, Sahdra, Nawanshahr, Punjab 144525. h) Mr. Gurvinder Singh Bahra S/o Lt. Sh. Sagil Ram, 202 Sector 21A, Chandigarh. i) Mrs. Manjit Kaur W/o Gurvinder Singh Bahra, 202 Sector 21A, Chandigarh.		
102/11/2(4-11),2(8-0),3(8-0),8(8-0),9(8-0),10(8-0),13(8-0),16(8-0),18(8-0),23(8-0),123/1/3(7-3),2(7-11),3(2/7-11),4(2/4-11),5(2/6-1),6(2/6-10),7(8-0),15(2/6-12),93(2/48-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No:1746 bahi 1 jld No:0 dated 14.08.2001.		
6. 1904/3471 share out of the land measuring 173K 11M equivalent to 95K 3M bearing khawat No 805 khatoni 973 bearing khasra 101/1(8-0),10(8-0),11(8-0),20(8-0),21(8-0),102/4(2-4-11),5(8-0),6(8-0),7(8-0),14(8-0),15(8-0),16(8-0),17(8-0),24(8-0),25(8-0),123/5(3-1-12),6(1-1-10),15(1-1-10),124/1(8-0),2(8-0),3(1/4-10),9(8-0),10(8-0),11(8-0),12(8-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No:1747 bahi 1 jld No:0 dated 14.08.2001.		
7. Land measuring 26K 1M bearing khawat No. 815 khatoni 983 bearing khasra 122/6(1-3-15), 15/2(7-4),16(1-8-0), 123/10(17-2) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No:2480 bahi 1 jld No:852 dated 10.11.2000.		
8. 400/3410 share out of the land measuring 170K 10M equivalent to 20K 0M bearing khawat No 808 khatoni 974 bearing khasra 102/11/2(4-11),2(8-0),3(8-0),8(8-0),9(8-0),10(8-0),13(8-0),16(8-0),23(8-0),123/1/3(7-3),2(7-11), 4(2/4-11),5(2/6-1),6(2/6-10),7(8-0),15(2/6-12),93(2/48-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No: 2961 bahi 1 jld No:0 dated 26.12.2000		
9. 518/3536 share out of the land measuring 176K 16M equivalent to 25K 18M bearing khawat No 803 khatoni 971 bearing khasra 101/1(8-0),3(8-0),4(2/4-11),7(8-0),8(8-0),9(8-0),10(8-0),12(8-0),13(8-0),14(8-0),17(8-0),18(8-0),19(8-0),22(8-0),23(8-0),24(8-0),124/3(2-3-10),4(8-0),5(8-0),6(8-0),7(8-0),15(8-0),16(8-0),25(8-0),25(8-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No-2960 bahi 1 jld No-0 dated 26.12.2000.		
10. 443/3471 share out of the land measuring 173K-11M equivalent to 22K-3M bearing khawat No.- 805, khatoni no.-973 bearing khasra No.- 101/1(8-0),10(8-0),11(8-0),20(8-0),21(8-0),102/4(2-4-11),5(8-0),6(8-0),7(8-0),14(8-0),15(8-0),16(8-0),17(8-0),24(8-0),25(8-0),123/5(3-1-12),6(1-1-10),15(1-1-10),124/1(8-0),2(8-0),3(1/4-10),9(8-0),10(8-0),11(8-0),12(8-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No.-2859 bahi 1 jld No:0 dated 26.12.2000.		
11. Land measuring 19K-09M bearing Khawat No:687 khatoni No: 850 bearing khasra No:124/8(2-4-9),14(8-0),18(7-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No:2921 bahi jld No:0 dated 26.12.2000.		
12. 548/3470 share out of the land measuring 170K-10M equivalent to 27K- 6M bearing khawat No 806 khatoni 974 bearing khasra 102/11/2(4-11),2(8-0),3(8-0),8(8-0),9(8-0),10(8-0),13(8-0),16(8-0),23(8-0),123/1/3(7-3),2(7-11),3(2/7-11),4(2/4-11),5(2/6-1),6(2/6-10),7(8-0),15(2/6-12),93(2/48-0) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No: 2920 bahi 1 jld No: 0 dated 22.12.2000.		
13. 1/2 share out of land measuring 2K-11M equivalent to 1K 5M bearing Khawat No:807, Khatoni No:975 bearing khasra No:123/11(0-9),12(0-9),2(10-9),4(10-9),5(10-7) land situated at Village Rail Majra No:804, Khatoni No: 972 bearing khasra No:122/6(2-0-15),15(10-16),16(2-0-12),123/10(2-0-9) land situated at Village Rail Majra No: 555/3536 share out of the land measuring 176K 16M equivalent to 27K 15M bearing khawat No 803 khatoni 971 bearing khasra 101/1(8-0),3(8-0),4(2/4-11),7(8-0),8(8-0),9(8-0),10(8-0),12(8-0),13(8-0),14(8-0),17(8-0),18(8-0),19(8-0),22(8-0),23(8-0),24(8-0),124/3(2-3-10),4(8-0),5(8-0),6(8-0),7(8-0),15(8-0),16(8-0),25(8-0),25(8-0) land situated at village Rail Majra Vasika No:2919 bahi 1 jld No: 0 dated 22.12.2000		
2/3 share out of land measuring 2K 12M equivalent to 1K 15M Khawat Khatoni 804/972 bearing khasra No:122/6(2-0-15),15(10-16),16(2-0-12),123/10(2-0-9) land situated at village Rail Majra No:807 khatoni No: 807 bearing khasra No. 123/11(0-9),12(0-8),2(10-9),3(10-9),4(10-9),5(10-7) land situated at Village Rail majra		
15. Land measuring 18K-7M bearing khawat No:815 Khatoni 983 bearing khasra No: 123/11(1-11-15),11(2(8-16),20(16-14),124(7(64-0),20(2(14-8),21(1(8-0),21(2(2-14) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No.-2481 bahi 1 jld No.-852 dated 10.11.2000.		
16. Land Measuring 75K-1M bearing khata/Khatoni 815/983 bearing khasra No:123/8(8-0),9(8-0),12(5-3),18(13-13),19(10-13),19(2(6-15),22(2(7-16),23(9-11),24(5-13),25(3-18),134(2(21-0),3(2(5-2),4(2(7-19),7(2(1-14),25(2(0-4) land situated at Village Rail Majra Vasika No.-1273 dated 25.07.2002.		
17. Land Measuring 61K-7M bearing khata/Khatoni 560/671 bearing khasra No:124/21(8-0)22(3-18),133/1(8-0),2(8-0),9(8-0),10(8-0),11(2-4-1),12(26-11),134/5(8-0),6(2(5-18) land situated at village Rail Majra Vasika No.1997 Date 30.09.2002.		
Hypothecated assets: Hypothecation of equipments and other Fixed Assets Rs. 2.87 Crores WDV as on 31.03.2019 as per Audited Balance Sheet for Year 2018-19.		
The above Borrower /Proprietor are advised to pay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days as per provisions of the Securitisation of financial Assets and enforcement of security interest Act, 2002. Moreover the borrower/ guarantors are hereby restrained from dealing with any of the above secured assets mentioned above in any manner whatsoever without our prior consent. This is prejudice to any other rights available to us under the subject act and/or any other law in force.		
DATE: 16.05.2021	PLACE : Ludhiana	Authorised Officer

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC)
In The Court Of
Sh Mohit Bansal
Additional Principal Judge Family Court, Ludhiana
Ranjeet Vs
Ranjana Kumari

CNR NO: PBLD01-000137-2021

Next date : 08-07-2022
Publication Issued To: Ranjana Kumari
Father : Harikesh Ram Village Chhitauna Azamgarh Uttar Pradesh-223221

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent (s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant (s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 08-07-2022 at 10:00 a.m. for details logon to: https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=Ludhiana
Additional Principal Judge Family Court, Ludhiana

**IRCON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED**
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Website: www.ircon.org CIN-L45203DL1976GO008171

E-Procurement Notice (National Competitive Bidding)
e-Tender No. IRCON/2052/TN/SC/IELECT/OHE MD/2022/86 Dated: 14/05/2022
e-Tender for and on behalf of South Eastern Railway is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work of Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC, 50 Hz, Single Phase Railway Electrification Modification Works at Santragachi Railway Station under Santragachi Station Development Project of South Eastern Railway.
Estimated Cost of the work Rs. 38,04,117.22 (inclusive of all applicable Taxes & GST)
Earnest Money Deposit Rs.2,38,500.00
Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission 03/06/2022 upto 15.00 Hrs.
For further details, visit website <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. General Manager/East 378 Prantik Pally, Kasba, Kolkata-700107

**IRCON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED**
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Website: www.ircon.org CIN-L45203DL1976GO008171

e-Tender No. IRCON/2053/TN/SHM/CA, P & R/2022/87 Dated: 17/05/2022
e-Tender for and on behalf of South Eastern Railway is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work of Construction of Circulating area, Parking area and Roads in front of Station Building upto Gangra end at Shalimar Station in Howrah District for South Eastern Railway in West Bengal.
Estimated Cost of the work Rs. 8,95,29,989/- (Inclusive all applicable Taxes and GST).
Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission 31.05.2022 upto 17.00 Hrs.
For further details, visit website <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. General Manager/East 378 Prantik Pally, Kasba, Kolkata-700107

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Shri Rohini Chandra Roy, SFA (Vety)
17.05.2010
Sashastra Seema Bal fondly remembers and cherishes the valiant act of brave heart Shri Rohini Chandra Roy, SFA (Vety) who made supreme sacrifice of his life on the line of duty for Nation. Shri Rohini Chandra Roy, SFA (Vety) was deployed at E coy, Dronapal of 41st Battalion, SSB in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh. Shri Rohini Chandra Roy, SFA (Vety) attained martyrdom in an IED blast triggered by the Naxals on Dantewada-Sukma highway Chhattisgarh on 17.05.2010.
We salute the supreme sacrifice of the brave soldier.
SASHASTRA SEEMA BAL

TENDER NOTICE
Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Gujarat
Abhilekhaghar Bhavan, Sector-17, Gnadhinagar

Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Gujarat invites interested Bidders to participate in the bidding process for the Selection of Construction & Maintenance Agency for Archaeological Experiential Museum at Vadnagar, Gujarat. Bid Documents can be downloaded from 16th May 2022 at 14:00 PM. The last date of submission of Online Bid is 15th June 2022 at 6:00 PM. The last date of submission of hard copies of the documents is 16th June 2022 at 6:00 PM.
Please note that bid documents are available on <https://eprocure.com/>. For further details please contact 079-23256730/40.
Director of Archaeology & Museum
IMF/346122-23

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC)
In The Court Of Sh. Manoj Kumar Principal Judge Family Court, Amritsar

1) Amandeep Kaur Gill D/o Baljinder Singh Sohi W/o Ravjit Singh Gill 2) Agaas Kaur Gill D/o. Ravjit Singh Gill Through Her Mother I.e. Petitioner No. 1 Amandeep Kaur Gill Both Residents Of Kotli No. 4, Khasra No. 70/2/2 Min, Khewat Khatoni No. 542/2, Situated In The Area Of Gurmata Sub Urban, Abadi Ranjit Vihar, Loharka Road, Amritsar India At Present 14573-76 Avenue Surrey, British Columbia No.1 Namely Arjun Singh S/o Surjit Singh R/o. Village Muradpur, P/o Narot Jaimal Singh, Kollain, Pathankot Punjab-145026

Vs.
Ravjit Singh Gill S/o Gurbachan Singh Gill R/o Khasa Patti, Ward No.9, Tehsil Majitha, Distt. Amritsar, At Present Unit 209-8028 Street 209 Surrey Bc V3W 4E9, Canada
CNR No: PBA501-002132-2022
Next Date : 19-07-2022
GW/18/2022
Publication Issued To: Ravjit Singh Gill R/o Khasa Patti, Ward No.9, Tehsil Majitha, Distt. Amritsar At Present Unit 209-8028 Street 209 Surrey Bc V3W 4E9, Canada

In above titled case, the defendant (s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/ respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 19-07-2022 at 10:00 a.m. for details logon to: https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=Amritsar

**punjab national bank**
.....Together for the better

Circle SASTRA Office : Ludhiana West
Circle Office : Plot-5 Ferozepur Road,
E-Mail: cs8273@pnbb.in

PUBLIC NOTICE OF POSSESSION TAKEN OVER OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
The Authorised Officer of Punjab National Bank under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security interest Act-2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules- 2002. issued a demand notice on the date mentioned against account calling upon the borrower to repay the amount as mentioned against the account within 60 days from the date of notice. The Borrower/Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/Guarantor and the public general that the Authorised Officer of the Bank has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the properties described herein in below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of the section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules
The borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public general is hereby cautioned not deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to charge of Punjab National Bank for the amount and interest there

Name of the Branch /Borrowers /Guarantors/ Mortgagees	Description Of The Property Mortgaged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Amount outstanding as on the date given below
SHERPUR ROAD		03.08.2021	11.05.2022	Rs. 10, 96,127.70 (Ten lakhs ninety six thousand one hundred twenty seven rupees and seventy paise only) balance as on 03.08.2021 with interest charged upto 03.08.2021 and further interest w.e.f. 04.08.2021 & costs until payment in full

DATE : 16.05.2022 PLACE : LUDHIANA AUTHORISED OFFICER

**STATE BANK OF INDIA**
RACC, 1st Floor , Main Branch, Bathinda Road, Fazilka
E-Mail: sbi.613457@sbi.co.in

[Rule-8(1)] Possession Notice (For Immovable Property)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised officer of the State Bank Of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 3 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 to borrower(s) / guarantor(s), on the date mentioned hereunder, calling upon the borrower(s) / guarantor(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective demand notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower(s)/guarantor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) 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 sub section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned against below accounts. The borrower(s) / guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the Properties will be subject to the charge of the State Bank of India, Jalandhar Road Branch, Muksar for the amount specified against each as per details below less amount of recovery if any plus future interest, expenses, costs, thereon.
The Borrower's / Guarantors attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Amount Outstanding as per Demand Notice
1. Sh. Chandan Kataria S/o Sh. Sat Pal Kataria R/o Salem Shah Road, Sultanpura , Fazilka (Borrower) Smt. Sonia W/o Sh. Chandan Kataria R/o Salem Shah Road, Sultanpura , Fazilka (Guarantor)	All that part and parcel of Property measuring 24'X40' (i.e. 3 Marla 4 Sarsal being 31'558 share out of total land measuring 3 Kanal 2 Marla comprised in Khassra No.172/2 (2-15), 182/5 (0-6), Khewat No. 147 Khatoni No. 305 as per Jamabandi for the year 2009-10 situated at Sultanpura Dakhil Nal Abadi, Sakemshah Road Fazilka within Municipal Limit, Fazilka in the name of Sh. Chandan Kataria S/o Sh. Sat Pal Kataria vide Sale Deed No. 4418 Dated 08.11.2011, bounded as under: East : Plot of Sh. Gori Shankar, West : Street, North : Plot of Sh. Rajesh Bathia, South : House of Sh. Kashmiri	03.08.2021	13.05.2022	Rs. 3,58,012/- due as on 02.08.2021 plus further interest, other charges and expenses thereon w.e.f. 03.08.2021
2. Ms Pawan & Co. Shop No. 34, New Grain Market, Fazilka Through its Prop. Late Sh. Pawan Kumar S/o Sh. Bhani Lal through its Legal Heirs 1) Smt. Seema Kawatra W/o Late Sh. Pawan Kumar 2) Karan Kawatra S/o Late Sh. Pawan Kumar 3) Kanika Kawatra D/o Late Sh. Pawan Kumar R/o Kamra Colony, Opposite Varidh Ashram Fazilka Distt. Fazilka (Borrower)	All that part and parcel of Property measuring 20'9'X125' = 2593.75 Sq. Feet situated at Shop No. 34, New Grain Market, Fazilka, Distt. Fazilka in the name of Sh. Pawan Kumar S/o Sh. Bhani Lal vide Sale Deed No. 4295 dated 03.03.1997 and Transfer Deed No. 1644 Dated 26.07.2017, Bounded as under: East: Shop No. 33B of M/S. SKK Commission Agent, West : Street North : Road, South : Street	21.02.2022	13.05.2022	Rs. 31,62,714/- due as on 18.02.2022 plus further interest, other charges and expenses thereon w.e.f. 19.02.2022

DATE: 16.05.2022 PLACE: FAZILKA AUTHORISED OFFICER

**UCO BANK**

ZONAL OFFICE: SCO-113-114-115, MASTER TARA SINGH NAGAR,Jalandhar-144001, Ph.: 9181-5064050, 5064061

[Rule-8(1)] Possession Notice (For Movable Assets)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised officer of the UCO BANK, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 3 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 to borrower(s)/ guarantor(s), on the date mentioned hereunder, calling upon the borrower(s)/ guarantor(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective demand notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower(s) / guarantor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower (s) / guarantor (s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section(4) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned against below accounts. The borrower(s) / guarantor(s) in particular, and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property / properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the UCO BANK for an amount of being less amount of recovery made, if any other charges/ expenses, costs, thereon.
The Borrower's / Guarantors attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Description of the Movable Assets	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Amount Outstanding the Date of Notice
1. Symbal Chowk Pathankot	Sale Deed No. 326			



Indians develop hypertension in the early 40s

■ How serious is hypertension as a debilitating health condition and why should India be worried?

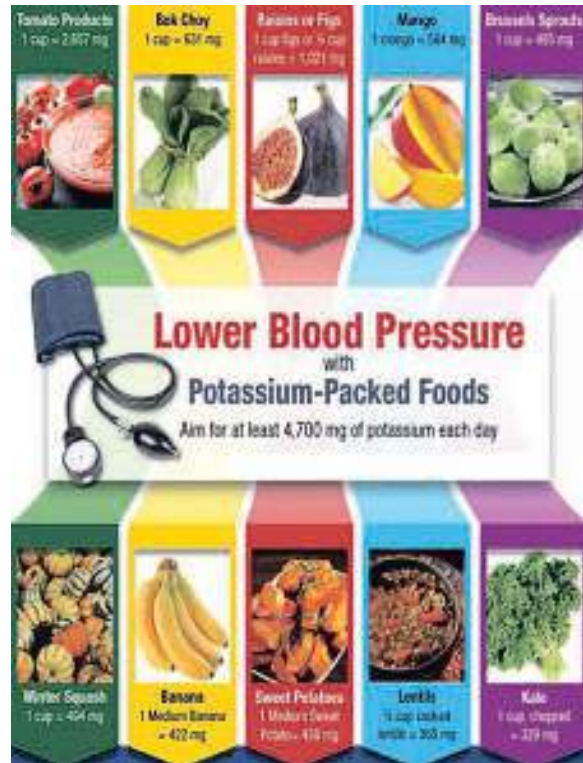
Hypertension or high blood pressure (BP) has emerged as the largest global health problem. If not detected and treated on time, it can aggravate a patient's condition, leading to fatal consequences such as brain stroke, heart attack, heart failure or even kidney failure.

In India, the situation is more alarming as hypertension sets in the early 40s as compared to the Western population where the condition sets in between the 60s and 70s. One of the main reasons for the problem spiralling into challenging proportions is the lack of awareness. If you look at the malaise in people above 40, almost 60 per cent of the population is hypertensive. And if you go by recent medical guidelines, anyone with a systolic reading of above 100 and a diastolic marker of more than 85 also indicates that more than 60 per cent of the population is hypertensive.

An estimated 57 per cent and 24 per cent of stroke and coronary artery disease-related deaths respectively are related to hypertension. The focus, therefore, must be on an aggressive awareness drive, particularly in low and middle-income social strata, about the perils of hypertension and adoption of accurate BP measurement methods for monitoring BP as well as acting in time to seek medical help.

■ The younger population is increasingly becoming susceptible to hypertension. Can that be attributed to a poor lifestyle?

There are multiple causes but you could say unhealthy lifestyle is the leading one. Poor diet, lack of exercise, stress, smoking and alcohol are



among the major factors, other than genetics. The rise in hypertension cases is also proportional to economic prosperity, which is seen in countries that are transitioning to becoming a developed nation. The younger population tends to chase a hectic and competitive professional life that upsets the work-life balance. Longer working hours mean eating junk food, which is high in sodium, chemical preservatives or taste enhancers. Young people also end up smoking heavily, leading to high BP. If these habits are not checked well in time, hypertension is bound to catch up with them sooner or later.

Almost every person goes through stress for various reasons. It could either be a brief spell or prolonged stress leading to hypertension. How do you identify these two varying categories?

My professor used to say, "Retention of tension is hypertension", underlining that stress is a big risk factor leading to hypertension. High levels of stress and tension spike BP which in turn stimulates the energy drive with the release of a lot of stress-related hormones in the body.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a lot of stress. Every day, we see young people with no history of hypertension diagnosed with high BP. Factors such as lack of sleep, stress, job loss, and financial crisis push up stress levels, which can trigger heart failure and brain stroke that may require hospitalisation. Stress is debilitating and can kill.

■ Hypertension can also affect mental health adversely.

*Dr Raghav Sharma,
Interventional Cardiologist,
Meditrina Hospital, Ambala
explains the warning signs
like frequent headaches
and the markers that one
needs to be vigilant
about. Regular
monitoring of your BP
levels can prevent
brain stroke, heart
attack, heart or
even kidney
failure*

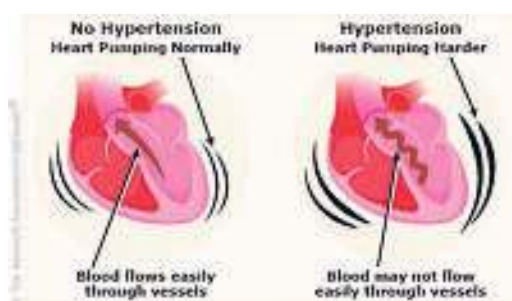
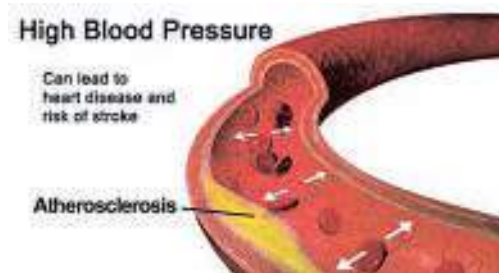
Dr RAGHAV SHARMA, Interventional Cardiologist, Meditrina Hospital, Ambala

Could you elaborate on this aspect?

In medical parlance, we call the state where mental health is compromised as malignant hypertension, when stress can lead to high blood pressure and headache. Most youngsters tend to ignore frontal headaches. A severe headache is an indicator of hypertension. High BP is the most common cause of brain stroke because it can rupture the arteries, result in brain bleed and even death if levels are abnormally high.

■ What are the symptoms that indicate that a person's condition is serious to the point of being critical? What are the different stages of hypertension?

Hypertension is also called normotensive. Leading world cardiology organisations such as The American Heart Association and the Cardiology Society of India have defined certain guidelines for measuring BP in the community. The normal consensus is that the upper systolic should be 130 and the lower diastolic should be below 85. If the systolic reading goes beyond 130/140 and if the diastolic goes beyond 85 to 90 it is high. That means you have reached a stage where lifestyle changes can control the condition from worsening. But if the reading goes beyond 140 systolic and beyond 90 diastolic, then it is called mild hypertension, and if it is above 160 systolic and over 100 in diastolic, then it is considered severe hypertension. We need to control BP with medication, but if the condition deteriorates, it can cause stroke or heart failure and the patient may need



hospitalisation. In the long term, if people don't get treated for high BP, kidney failure can also occur.

■ There are misconceptions about BP levels and acceptable norms. Could you elaborate on this?

The older school of thinking was that higher the age, the higher the BP. This was acceptable until new guidelines came up, albeit with some differences of opinion. One of the international hypertension societies says that beyond the age of 60, 10 mm of higher BP can be accepted as normal, but if you look at the American Heart Association, the yardstick applies to everybody. The advantage is that if BP markers are taken as uniform, then the number of people who would be classified as hypertensive would be very large. This could lead to early BP check-ups, monitoring and detection before the onset of hypertension. It has been seen that if the BP level is kept normal with medication, then the BP spiral beyond the age of 80 can be prevented. This reduces chances of hospitalisation due to heart failure.

■ What are the symptoms that indicate the patient has to be rushed to the doctor or hospital?

One of the reasons why many hypertensive patients do not reach the doctor or the hospital in time is that the condition does not show any alarming symptoms during the initial stages. Because younger people can tolerate high BP very well, they tend to take it lightly as a bout of headache and take a painkiller. Therefore, one must go for regular annual health checks, which are recommended

not only by the doctors, but even by the Health Ministry and private drug companies.

The symptoms of hypertension manifest as a constant headache, breathlessness while walking short distances or even during routine work. This is when one must check one's BP level and immediately go for medication.

Also do not dismiss short-tempered people as a behavioural aberration. On the contrary, a person becomes irritable in the hypertensive condition. So, get the BP values checked. Today, with BP meters widely available in the market, anybody can check and monitor their BP levels at home. If a person is mild to moderately hypertensive, he/she should make lifestyle changes to lead a healthy life and in due course of time, the blood pressure medication can also be discontinued. It's a myth that if someone starts BP medication, it cannot be stopped.

Cut down on salt intake, reduce weight and maintain a regular exercise routine, all of which can decrease BP by 5-6 mm to lead a tension-free life.

■ New drugs are available which are as effective in treating high BP, minimising surgical intervention. Could you comment on this treatment?

First and foremost, lifestyle modification is very important — losing weight and consuming healthy, nutritious food with a high-fibre diet and juices, which are rich in potassium, can help decrease levels. Patients who have got resistant to hypertension need more than five tablets a day to control their BP. Yes, some new drugs have proven efficacious in treating high BP and reducing surgical intervention in the early stages of treatment.



■ In some cases, Covid patients have suddenly died of cardiac arrest despite recovering from it. Does hypertension trigger this condition?

Hypertension can just be an associated risk factor during cardiac arrest in a Covid patient or a patient who has just recovered from the virus attack. If you look at the data, it shows that if anyone's heart gets affected, the incidence of mortality jumps from 1.2 per cent to almost 20-25 per cent. So now it is standard protocol to get cardiac markers checked in Covid survivors and control their BP. If the inflammatory markers are high, then we start by giving them blood thinners known as anticoagulants to prevent clot formation, leading to cardiac arrest or cardiac arrhythmia that can trigger cardiac arrest. I think a lot of cardiac arrests happen because panic sets in and the patient's BP shoots up so high that it impacts the heart severely. Complications arising from Covid have led to mortality mainly because of two factors. Either there is a heart attack or cardiac arrhythmia because of Covid-induced myocarditis, which can also lead to cardiac arrest. A patient should understand that a reading showing an increase of 1.2 per cent is not too high, so keep monitoring your BP and be in touch with your physician.

■ On Hypertension Day, what is your message to readers?

Stay happy and don't stress yourself out, it's not worth it. Ensure that you get good sleep, cut down on salt intake, set an exercise routine, don't smoke or take excess alcohol or indulge in any substance abuse and shun a sedentary lifestyle. If you cannot go outdoors, you can do yoga, meditation, aerobics, treadmill, and stretching exercises within the confines of your home to keep fit. By leading a healthy lifestyle, BP can be controlled, which is otherwise be a big killer. Most importantly, be positive.

Issued in Public Interest by



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120



6 REGION

SGPC FORMS 9-MEMBER COMMITTEE

With Badal in panel for release of Sikh prisoners, men booked for sedition by his party's govt

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, MAY 16

WHEN, ON MAY 19, Sukhbir Singh Badal sits as part of a committee to discuss ways and means to get Sikh prisoners released, he will be sharing the platform with Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president Simranjeet Singh Mann and preacher Baba Baljit Singh Daduwal, two men who were booked for sedition in 2015 when SAD-BJP government was in power in Punjab. At that time, Sukhbir was the deputy chief minister and home minister in the government led by his father and Akali patron Parkash Singh Badal.

Also, sitting with the Shiromani Akali Dal chief as part of the nine-member panel formed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee will be his arch rival and Shiromani Akali Dal (Delhi) president Paramjit Singh Sarna. The other members of the joint committee announced and headed by SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami include head of Damdami Taksal Baba Harnam Singh Khalsa on behalf of Sant Samaj, head of Tarna Dal Harijan Vela Baba Nihal Singh on behalf of Nihang Singh Jathebandis, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) president Harmeet Singh Kalka, and former DSGMC president Manjit Singh GK.

In 2015, Mann's party had played a key role in organising Sarbat Khalsa to appoint Dhian Singh Mand as a parallel acting Akal Takht Jathedar. Soon after the Sarbat Khalsa concluded, the



Sukhbir Badal with SAD (Amritsar)'s Simranjit Singh Mann, and former DSGMC chiefs Manjeet Singh GK and Paramjit Singh Sarna during panthic convention

Punjab Police had booked Mann, Daduwal and several other on charges of sedition. Many of the organisers were arrested too.

Earlier, on the orders of the Akal Takht, the SGPC had convened a panthik convention at the Teja Singh Samundri Hall on May 11, in which Dhami was given rights to form a joint committee to seek release of the Sikh prisoners.

"The nine-member joint committee has been formed to make joint panthik efforts for the release of Sikh prisoners. The committee will work in support of organisations and personalities actively working for the release of Sikh prisoners. The suggestions received from the Sikh organisations will also be respected and, if need be, the committee would be expanded," Dhami said.

He said the first meeting of the committee has been called at Amritsar on May 19.

Reacting to development, Congress MP Ravneet Bittu said he will oppose any efforts to get

freed terrorists including those convicted for plotting and executing his grandfather and then Punjab CM Beant Singh's assassination.

"The nine-member committee has been formed by the SGPC president to facilitate pardon of the likes of Balwant Singh Rajoana and Jagtar Singh Hawara. We will form a group of people who, like us, have lost family members to terror attacks. Wherever the committee pleads the pardon of these terrorists, our group will raise awareness that if such people are released, many more people will lose their lives. We will demand that such terrorists should not be released at any cost," Bittu said.

The Congress leader said that it was "shameful" that the committee, instead of helping thousands of terror victim families of Punjab, is solely focused on release of "hate spreading" terrorists. "Government should take strict action against them and file charges for anti-national activity," he added.

Earlier, Sukhbir had termed the panthik convention as "historic", stating that the Khalsa Panth has "responded in one voice" for the "common cause of release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh Prisoners)."

He had said that the Bandi Singhs have been languishing in jails far beyond their sentenced term. "They are there not because of anything they did for personal gain but out of pure religious sentiments. With the blessings of great Guru Sahiban, Khalsa Panth today showed complete unity in the struggle for their release," he had said.

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

CHAOS AND protests marked the first "Lok Milni" of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Monday after people waiting outside the venue since the morning were not allowed to enter. Mann, meanwhile, claimed to have heard 61 complainants during the grievance redressal programme.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday had announced that Mann would be addressing a janta darbar at Punjab Bhawan. Later, the name was changed to Janta Sunwai and on Monday, the AAP called it Lok Milni.

Even though the programme was announced Sunday evening, residents from far flung areas such as Fazilka, and Gurdaspur had reached Chandigarh in the morning and kept waiting in the sweltering heat for their turn. People were seen protesting outside the main gate of Punjab Bhawan as security personnel posted at the venue told them that their names were not on the list and hence they could not be allowed inside.

Dr Hamanjit Singh, the president of a retired Ayurvedic Practitioners Association, was among those protesting. "Mann had called me before elections stating that I would be the CM if AAP is voted to power. When they got elected, I was the happiest thinking that I would also be heard by the government now. We have been trying to meet him. I got in touch with his additional chief secretary in CMO. But I have not been able to meet him," said Hamanjit.

"This government is not listening to us...We are standing here since 10 am. We are not allowed to go inside. The MLAs have called their friends inside," he added.

Harmanjit said if Mann has called a janta darbar, he should be at the venue till 10 pm. "He should



Visitors outside Punjab Bhawan during Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's Lok Milni in Chandigarh on Monday. Kamleshwar Singh

listen to all of us. He is not a bureaucrat that he does not have time for people. People have not voted for them (the AAP) but against the previous governments. I want to tell them that if the people of Punjab can bring someone honourably on an elephant, then they can also send them packing on a donkey."

Jasbir Singh, a farmer from New Chandigarh, said he wanted to give Mann a memorandum on the issue of shamlat land owned by the panchayat being vacated. "They are not letting us inside. They are telling us that only those who already have an appointment are allowed. The janta darbar was announced last night, then how could we get an appointment?" he asked.

"This was a stage-managed show and not a public darbar. Otherwise, I am a member of the public. Why am I not allowed inside?" asked Sarabjit Singh Makkar, president of the Kisan Hit Sangharsh Committee.

Two shopkeepers from Banga, Adirath Anand and Amrik Singh, also wanted to meet the CM. "When the land was acquired for

Phagwara to Ropar national highway, 70-72 shopkeepers were affected as their shops were acquired. We have not been compensated even after two years. We want to tell the CM but we are not allowed inside. They are saying we do not have an appointment," said Anand. With scores of people descending at the venue, the government set up a desk to record the complaints of those who could not be heard. Water bottles were supplied to people, many of who raised slogans and squatted on the road. An ambulance was also stationed at the spot.

Sikandar Singh Brar, a resident of Bir Sikhana Wala, Faridkot said he was an AAP worker and was called by an aide of the CM last evening. "Now, nobody is listening."

Charan Singh Saini from Mohali said: "They have taken my application. If they only had to take the application, then why call a public meeting?"

The government later issued a statement saying that Mann has launched his government's first-of-its-kind 'Lok Milni' (public interaction). The CM said this interactive programme is aimed at

providing a single-window platform to the people for redressal of their complaints.

"This is a humble step of my government to make sure that we facilitate resolution of long-pending administrative issues concerning people," Mann said.

As many as 61 complainants listed their grievances before the chief minister during this 'Lok Milni', as per the statement. Mann directed officers of the various departments to ensure resolution of complaints in time-bound manner.

Redressing a complaint, Mann asked the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to immediately release the pending arrears of the 'Shagun scheme' to eligible beneficiaries.

On another complaint, he asked the Water Resources Department to ensure that drinking water was supplied to each and every beneficiary without any prejudice. On the complaint of one Dr Seema Rani, whose husband passed away during the Covid-19 pandemic about two years ago, he asked officers to ensure that she gets a job at the earliest under the government's policy.

OPPN SLAMS AAP GOVT

'Complete breakdown of law & order in 2 months'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 16

THE OPPOSITION parties in Punjab Monday hit out at the Bhagwant Mann-led dispensation with Shiromani Akali Dal alleging that the state was witnessing a complete breakdown in law and order amid terror attacks and rampant drug overdose deaths while Congress said it will soon launch a campaign to "wake" the AAP government from its "honeymoon slumber" and remind it of its pre-poll promises.

Speaking to the media in Jalalabad where he had gone to Kattianwali village to express solidarity with the parents of three young children who died in a bus accident recently, SAD president, Sukhbir Singh Badal said that the state should provide at least Rs 5 lakh to the family of the victims.

"Punjab has witnessed 27 murders. As many as 24 farmers have committed suicide even as 61 youth have lost their lives due to drug overdose. Instead of providing succor to the common man, ensuring the rule of law, providing crop damage compen-

sation, making provision of co-operative loans to farmers as well as acting against the drug mafia, the CM is holding phony photo-ops in Chandigarh. Even on Monday two people were injured in a firing incident during a kabaddi match in Kapurthala. If this is the 'badlav' AAP had promised then Punjab is in for one of the worst phases in the history of the state," said Sukhbir.

In Chandigarh, Congress' working president Bharat Bhushan Ashu claimed that people were angry with this government. According to a Congress statement, he accused the AAP government of "doing nothing except indulging in hollow talks".

"But we will get it in their minds that they are in power and now it is time to deliver on the promises," Ashu said, adding the Congress will go to any extent to bring this government out of its "honeymoon slumber".

He said people were completely "alienated and disillusioned" with the Aam Aadmi Party government as it had "failed" in all its promises and commitments made before the elections.

WITH PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

IN AN ongoing crackdown, the Punjab prisons department has recovered 774 mobile phones in two months after formation of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the state, translating into daily average recovery of 13 cellphones.

The daily average was seven in 2021, when 2,902 mobile phones were recovered and 6.4 in 2020, when 2,344 cellphones were recovered from the jails across the state.

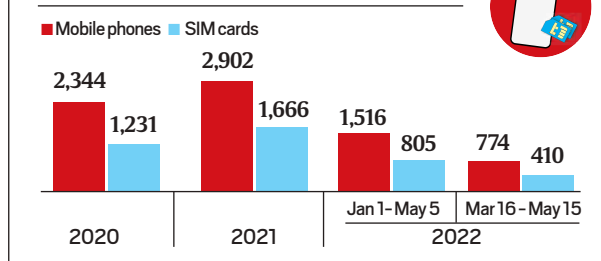
Out of the 26 jails in Punjab, 24, including 10 central jails, are operational.

As per the official data compiled by the prisons department, 70 per cent of the phones recovered are "non-touch-screen/small/sleek phones which can be easily hidden in luggage, clothes and even toilet seats".

The remaining 30 per cent touch-screen phones include models of Samsung, Kechaoda, LAVA, Oppo and even I-phone, an official said.

Additional Director General of Police (Jails) Varinder Kumar said, "Curtailling and completely stopping the use of phones by the inmates has been a challenge not only for us, but for officials in other states too as there are many ways to get these phones inside the prisons. One of the most prevalent means is throwing the phones in a packet in the

RECOVERY OF PHONES FROM JAILS



jails, which are in close proximity to the residential areas."

Kumar said the prisons department had taken up the matter with the chiefs of respective police districts to increase patrolling and dominance in the inhabited areas adjoining prisons.

He attributed the recoveries to "increase in frisking and checking at the entrance; intensifying checking inside the barracks; and taking strict action against the inmates found with mobile phones".

The ADGP said that department had also worked to ensure that inmates use prison inmate calling system (PICS) to call family members and relatives.

Kumar, however, said the jammers were the "permanent panacea to the problem", but with the continuous upgradation in technology from 2G to 3G and further to 4G and so on, the jammers had become obsolete.

The ADGP said the jails department was now counting heavily

on a prototype developed by the BSNL which in its initial trials has shown very good results in completely stopping all the frequencies being used in cell phones.

Punjab prisons have had the notorious distinction where gangsters and hardcore criminals have been found to use mobile phones with impunity, sharing videos and even broadcasting occasions like birthday celebrations after recording these on phone.

Apart from throwing mobile phones wrapped in packets, other modus operandi to sneak them inside the jails that has been officially recorded include "while returning from the courts or the hospitals and hiding these in luggage and thermo flasks".

The places the phones are kept hidden after being sneaked into the jail include "improvised cavities made in barracks, toilets, resting place etc; burying these near the barracks; and by conceiving with the staff members".

'New arbitrator to sort out issues of those displaced by road projects'

Chandigarh: Union Minister for Surface Transport, Nitin Gadkari has "assured the appointment of an arbitrator to sort out the issue of inadequate compensation for land acquired for Jammu-Katra Expressway and various highway projects in Punjab", Independent MLA from Sultanpur Lodhi, Rana Inder Partap Singh, said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference, Rana Inder Partap said he "personally met the Union min-

ister in New Delhi recently who assured that fair compensation would be provided to all those whose land was being acquired and are facing eviction."

"The Government had appointed an arbitrator in February last year to decide on the appeals. However, he completed his tenure a year later in which time he failed to reach any decision. To date, no new arbitrator has been appointed," said Rana.

ENS

नोटिस/सूचना

एतद्वारा सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्रशासक पंचायत समिति-कम- उपमण्डल अधिकारी (ना.), फतेहाबाद कार्यालय के पत्र को अनुपालन में खण्ड फतेहाबाद की पंचायत अकांशाली व बीघड़ प्रथम में पंच पदों में से अनुसूचित जाति, पिछड़ी जाति, अनुसूचित जाति की महिला, सामान्य जाति की महिला की सीटों का आरक्षण दिनांक 20.05.2022 को प्रातः 10.00 बजे खण्ड विकास एवं पंचायत अधिकारी, फतेहाबाद के कार्यालय में किया जाएगा। इस अवसर पर आप सभी को सादर आमंत्रित किया जाता है। इच्छुक व्यक्ति आरक्षण/डॉ ऑफ लॉट की प्रक्रिया को उपस्थित होकर देख सकते हैं। यह आमजन हेतु सूचनाय प्रेषित है।

ह./-
प्रशासक पंचायत समिति-कम-
उपमण्डल अधिकारी (ना.),
फतेहाबाद

9640/HRY

IN THE COURT OF ADDL. DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,
CLAS. MAGISTRATE OFFICE, LUDHIANA.
(Punjab Branch)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to general public that Harmanjit Singh Kaur W/o Harbhajan Singh K/o Village Bhatra, P.O. G.S. Ludhiana has requested for issuing Unmarried certificate in the name of her daughter Miss Renu D/o Harbhajan Singh, in this connection if anybody has any objection on issuing of Unmarried certificate to Miss Renu D/o Harbhajan Singh then objections to be given in writing hand/ self or through the counsel within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period then unmarried certificate in the name of Miss Renu D/o Harbhajan Singh will be issued.

Addl. Deputy Commissioner,
Court- Marriage Officer, Ludhiana,
Dated :- 02.05.2022

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM				
Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH.	OLD REFERENCE/ NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH. NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	HVPNL	45/PD&C DATED 25.03.2022	CORRIGENDUM-1/ EXTENSION OF DUE DATE OF ONLINE BID SUBMISSION UPTO 23.05.2022 UPTO 17:00 HRS. & 16.05.2022	www.hvnp.org.in 0172-2583789 pro@hvnp.org.in
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in 9659/HRY				

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM				
Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH.	OLD REFERENCE/ NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH. NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	DIRECTORATE OF SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, DEPARTMENT HARYANA	MEMO NO 1752 DT.13/05/2022 TENDER NO. 07	ISI MARKED CENTRIFUGALLY CAST (SPUN) DUCTILE IRON PRESSURE PIPES OF SIZE FROM 100MM TO 1200MM DIA OF CLASSES K-7 & K-9 FOR WATER GAS & SEWERAGE, CONFIRMING TO SPECIFICATIONS NO. 8329-2000 (AS AMENDED UP TO DATE), KINDLY OPENING AND CLOSING DATES OF TENDER BE TREATED AS 14.05.2022 AND 17.06.2022	dsdnaharyana.gov.in 0172-2570121 supplies@hry.nic.in
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in 9656/HRY				

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE					
Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP./AUTH.	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH. NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE NARAINGARH	TOTAL 15 NUMBER OF WORKS TO BE EXECUTED IN THE JURISDICTION OF MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE NARAINGARH.	13.05.2022 23.05.2022	149.98 LACS	9034115350 seeycnaraingarh167@gmail.com
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in 9653/HRY					

BRANCH: MSME Mandi Gobindgarh, Opp. Bus Stand, G.T. Road, Mandi Gobindgarh, Phone: 01635-253600

POSSESSION NOTICE

Under Rule 8(1) Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized officer of **Bank of Baroda (e-VB)** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** on the date mentioned against account & stated herein after calling upon the Borrowers/ Guarantors to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers/ Guarantors having failed to repay the amount in full, Notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors and the public in General that the undersigned has taken **Physical Possession** of the property described below in exercise of powers conferred to him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this the date mentioned against the account.

The Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Mortgagees 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 **Bank of Baroda, MSME Mandi Gobindgarh Branch**, for an amount mentioned herein below along with interest and other charges accrued thereon. The **Borrowers/ Guarantors** attention is invited to provisions of **Sub-Section (8) of section 13 of the Act**, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower/ Guarantor	Description of Mortgaged Properties/ Secured Assets	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Amount Outstanding
Borrower: M/s Amandeep Steel Corporation, GT Road, Near Jagdambey Kanda, Village - Alour, Tehsil - Khanna, District- Ludhiana -141001	Property No.1: All that part and parcel of the property measuring 01 kanal 13 Marlas out of the total land measuring 09 kanal 07 Marlas, comprised in khewat no 187, khatauli no. 225, Rect no. 25, kila no 23 as per Jamabandi sale deed vakia no 1737, dated 30.06.2004 situated at Alour, Tehsil Khanna Registered in name of M/s Amandeep Steel Corporation.	09.11.2021	16.05.2022	Rs.1,44,63,562.16/- + Interest & other charges as on 30.10.2021.
Property No.2: All that part and parcel of the property measuring 2 kanal 10 marlas out of the total land measuring 11 kanal 7 marlas comprised in khewat no.158, khatauli no. 191, Rect no. 25, kila no. 19, 22 as per of Jamabandi for the year of 1997-98 situated at Alour, Tehsil Khanna, Registered in name of M/s Amandeep Steel Corporation.				

DATE: 16.05.2022 PLACE: MANDI GOBINDGARH AUTHORISED OFFICER

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD (Irrigation Wing)

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

NIT No.	Scope of Work	Last Date/Time of Sale Availability of Documents	Last Date/Time of Receipt of Bids	Date / Time of Opening of Bids
03/2022-23	Online Tender - Maintenance of fur and flower bed in law of parks in new colony, park near S-4 72, 73 and children park and Colony of Redgins (S-4, S-5 and S-6 type houses in old ISL Colony, Sundernagar.	30.05.2022 Upto 16:00 P.M.	30.05.2022 Upto 16:00 P.M.	31.05.2022 at 15:30 P.M.

For detail please visit us at www.bbmb.gov.in and <https://leproc.punjab.gov.in>
Executive Engineer, Township Division, BBMB, Sundernagar, Distt. Mandi (H.P.) - 175019
1182-PR-BSL-3 FOR YOUR BETTER TOMORROW SAVE ENERGY TODAY

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD (IRRIGATION WING)

Notice Inviting E-Tender

NIT No. 04/BR/2022-23
Name of Office : Addl. Superintending Engineer, BR SC & Plant Design Division, BBMB Sundernagar, Distt. Mandi (H.P.) - 175019
Name of Work : Providing and fixing speed breakers, warning board, cautional board and other at BR read

Approx. Cost : Rs. 2.42 Lac.	Cost of Tender Form : Rs.236/-
Last Date & Time for on-line bid submission	01.06.2022 Upto 12.30 P.M.
Date and Time of on-line opening of Tender	02.06.2022 at 03:30 P.M.

The detailed NIT may be seen on BBMB website: www.bbmb.gov.in & <https://leproc.punjab.gov.in>
1181-PR-BSL-3 FOR YOUR BETTER TOMORROW SAVE ENERGY TODAY

“IMPORTANT

Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

Three held for smuggling cattle

Gurgaon: The police on early Monday arrested three people for allegedly smuggling cattle and firing at some Bajrang Dal activists who chased the vehicle carrying 15 bulls. The smugglers were transporting the 15 cattle, two of them dead, in a truck to Mewat in Haryana from Punjab through the KMP Expressway, police said, adding that a country-made pistol and some cartridges were also found under the seat of the driver of the truck. An FIR has been registered at Farrukhnagar police station.

PTI

Employee at five-star hotel, live-in partner found dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, MAY 16

A MAN and a woman, both aged 28, were found dead inside a rented house in Gurgaon's Sushant Lok on Monday. Police said no suicide note was recovered, and inquest proceedings under CrPC Section 174 have been initiated.

Police said they were still probing if both had committed suicide or the man had murdered the woman and then killed himself. Police said the

No suicide note recovered, cops begin inquest proceedings

man worked as a chef at a five-star hotel in Delhi, while the woman worked with a food delivery chain in Gurgaon.

Police said the two, believed to be living-in together, had been staying there for the past 15 months, and hail from the same locality in Delhi. The man was married and his wife had gone to Bhutan, where she hailed from, during the pandemic. She had returned to India recently.

Police said the incident was

reported to them at 11.30 am by the man's brother.

Poonam Hooda, SHO, Sushant Lok police station, said, "Prima facie, it is suspected that the man killed the woman — either by strangulation or giving her a poisonous substance — and then hanged himself. The exact circumstances will be known after the post-mortem."

Police said after the man did not report for work for two days, his employer contacted his family to enquire. "The family tried

contacting him on his phone, but there was no response. The family was aware he was staying in Gurgaon but did not know the exact address or that he was living with a woman," said a police officer, requesting anonymity.

Police said his brother took the address from his colleagues and reached Gurgaon. "His brother got in through the main door after a neighbour entered the access code. The door to the house was not locked. He pushed the door and saw his

brother hanging from a ceiling fan, while the woman was found lying on the bed in the room. He then reported the incident to police," said SHO Hooda.

Police said the bodies appeared to have been there for a while. "The neighbours reported that they had seen the victims two days ago," said the SHO.

DCP (East) Virender Vij said, "No suicide note has been recovered and the respective families have not filed any complaint. The reason is yet to be ascertained. The bodies have been sent to the mortuary for a post-mortem."

HSWC RECRUITMENT ROW

Today, HC to hear Khemka plea to quash corruption FIR

Chandigarh: Senior IAS officer Ashok Khemka Monday moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking quashing of an FIR registered against him in Panchkula on a reference sent by 2004-batch IAS officer Sanjeev Verma. The matter will come up for hearing before the Bench of Justice Avneesh Jhingan on Tuesday.

Khemka has sought quashing of the FIR registered against him under Section 13 of the

Prevention of Corruption Act and Section 420 (cheating) of Indian Penal Code.

The Panchkula police had booked Khemka and three retired employees of Haryana State Warehouse Corporation on April 20 following a reference by HSWC MD Sanjeev Verma regarding alleged irregularities in recruitment of two officials in the warehousing corporation during former's tenure as its MD over 12 years ago.

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second (diastolic) number represents the pressure in the vessels when the heart rests between beats. Hypertension is diagnosed if the BP, measured on two different days,

shows a consistent pattern. If the systolic blood pressure readings on both days is ≥ 140 mmHg and/or the diastolic blood pressure readings on both days is ≥ 90 mmHg, then you are hypertensive.

Hypertension has long been recognised as one of the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and premature deaths worldwide, and is one of the most common lifestyle-related "silent killers," with every third person having suffered from it. International data suggest that fewer than half of those with hypertension are aware of their condition. Raised blood pressure — hypertension — causes approximately 9.4 million deaths each year worldwide, and many of those who die never

knew they were affected. There are no symptoms and some only find out after suffering a heart attack or stroke, or are diagnosed with something else, such as heart or kidney disease. In India, it exerts substantial public health burden on the cardiovascular health status and the health care system. The adult hypertension prevalence has shown a drastic increase in the past three decades in urban as well as rural areas. It is estimated that 16% of Ischaemic Heart Disease, 21% of Peripheral Vascular Disease, 24% of Acute Myocardial Infarctions and 29% of strokes are attributed to hypertension. About 2.6 lakh Indians die in India due to hypertension, making it the most prevalent chronic disease in India. This stresses the need for its effective management and the huge impact it can have on the burden of cardiovascular diseases.

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Wheat prices crash by Rs 200/quintal as Centre bans export; farm unions divided

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, MAY 16

THE DECISION to ban the export of wheat has started to have ripple effect in the markets, with prices of the crop plummeting by around Rs 200 per quintal over the weekend since the Centre's Friday decision.

In Punjab wheat procurement by the government agencies, which purchased around 96 lakh tonnes (9.6 million tonnes) against the target of 13 million tonnes this year, is almost over.

Two brothers, Rajinder Prasad and Om Parkash, from Araiyanwali village in Hanumangarh district, told The Indian Express that they cultivated the wheat crop under 25 bighas this year. Till Friday, the price of the crop hovered around the Rs 2,200 to Rs 2,250 per quintal in the mandis.

After the Centre's ban announcement, the brothers on Saturday said they were forced to sell their wheat crop for Rs 2,075 per quintal.

"The high temperature in the month of March caused yield loss for us. Our wheat yield decreased

from 14-15 quintals per bigha (average) to 10-11 quintals per bigha this year. Because of its increasing prices and demand in international market due to the Ukraine-Russian war, the farmers were getting Rs 200 to Rs 300 per quintal above the MSP. After harvesting, we held on to selling our crops because we wanted to wait for the right moment and then sell it at a slightly higher price this year to cover our yield losses. However, the prices in the market, instead of going up, crashed after the ban on export," said Rajinder Prasad. He added that they had to sell their produce, variety 2851, in a hurry on Saturday at Rs 2,075 per quintal, as they believe that the prices will crash further and settle at the MSP.

Sunil Kumar, another farmer from Matoria Wali Dhani village in Hanumangarh, added that he sold half his wheat crop earlier to a private player at Rs 2,200 to 2,250 per quintal. The remaining 150 quintal he saved at home to sell at a higher price later due to the export demand. But the sudden price crash has now ensured that he gets nothing more than Rs 2,050 to 2,100 per quintal, leading



In Punjab, wheat procurement by government agencies is almost over. *Express*

ing to a loss of Rs 150 per quintal for him.

Farmer Kulwinder Singh of Gadaya village in Nabha district, Patiala, stated that he had kept all his wheat produce from 7 acre land, at his home, hoping to sell it at more than Rs 2,150 per quintal, which was offered to him by a private player, form a flour miller till few days.

"Today, I got back to the private player and they offered a rate that was close to the MSP. I have decided not to sell for now.

I will wait for a few more months as there was no point to sell the produce at MSP after holding it back for a month," Kulwinder said. He added that this time his farm yielded only 16.4 quintals per acre as opposed to around 20 quintals last year.

But unlike Kulwinder, in Punjab, a majority of the farmers have already sold their wheat crop to government agencies and private players at rates that were close to the MSP. The private players this year have purchased

over 6 lakh tonnes of the grain from the mandis — the highest in 15 years, they said that in mandis, they didn't offer more than Rs 5 to Rs 10 per quintal, above the MSP.

Deepak Saharan, grain merchant and commission agent at Hanumangarh, which is one of the leading wheat producing districts of the state, told The Indian Express that the government's ban on wheat export the market has made the prices crash and farmers now will face a loss of Rs 100 to Rs 150 per quintal.

"The ban on export was necessary as nothing comes before the interest of our country. Farmers in any case farmers can still sell at MSP," he said.

"In our district, half of the wheat crop is lying unsold as farmers want to wait and watch for a few more weeks in hopes of fetching a higher price. I had sold the wheat crop of the farmers associated with me at the rate of Rs 2,341 per quintal recently to a private player," said Saharan.

Resham Singh Manuka, district Hanumangarh president of Bhartiya Sikh Union (Tikait) Rajasthan, said that the Centre decision to ban wheat export was

anti-farmer. "Farmers were getting prices more than MSP for wheat this year, which was a little relief for them because they had already suffered huge yield losses. Now this sudden decision by the Centre has brought the wheat rates down by Rs 150 to Rs 200 per quintal in Rajasthan's mandis," he said.

Jagmohan Singh Dakaunda, General Secretary of Bharti Kisan Union-Dakaunda, however, said that the partial ban being imposed by the government on wheat export is in the interest of the country. "The rate of wheat flour was increasing for the past few weeks due to heavy export, which was impacting our people. Inflation is always anti-people and government must regulate the food prices by procuring all types of crops on MSP," he said.

Naresh Ghai, president Punjab Rollers Flour Mills Association, while talking to The Indian Express, said that though Punjab is far away from ports and due to high logistics cost, no direct wheat export takes place from here. However, the wheat export ban announcement had triggered prices to crash by at least Rs 100 per quintal.

Under scanner for RPG attack: Babbar Khalsa, oldest and most organised Sikh militant outfit

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, MAY 16

PUNJAB DIRECTOR General of Police (DGP) V K Bhawra said last Friday that the recent rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) strike at the state police's Intelligence headquarters at Mohali was perpetrated by an axis of the banned pro-Khalistan outfit Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and gangsters with the backing of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

Lakhvir Singh Landi, a gangster from Tarn Taran district who has been in Canada since 2017, was identified as a key conspirator in the attack, with police saying that he was an associate of Harwinder Rinda, who was close to BKI chief Wadhawa Singh Babbar and the ISI. Several local pro-farmers arrested in the case had helped the attackers with shelter, logistics and arms, police said.

Although the RPG attack did not cause any injury, several Opposition parties issued warnings about the revival of terrorism in the border state as they targeted the fledgling Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party government over its "lack of experience and capacity" in dealing with serious issues related to security and law-and-order.

Babbar Khalsa, which had been banned under the anti-terror Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, is the oldest and most organised Sikh militant outfit since India's Independence.

The ultra group got its name from the militant organisation "Babbar Akali", which was active in the 1920s during the British rule.

While BKI reportedly operates in several countries, including Canada and the UK, it is most active in Pakistan under the ISI's patronage. A section of BKI has engaged in informal negotiations with the Indian government in recent years, with several of their operatives adopting a "soft line" towards India. It has also led to the government removing the names of some ex-BKI militants from "terrorist blacklist".

However, these developments have still not stopped targeted attacks like the one launched in Mohali on May 9, in which BKI's role figures. A look at BKI and its trajectory over the years:

CREATION OF BKI

Unlike other Punjab insurgent groups, BKI came into existence not due to any direct conflict with the Indian government but with the Nirankari sect of the Sikh community.

Some of the founding BKI members, including its current chief Wadhawa, had association with the Naxalite movement that had made waves in Punjab in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Baisakhi day on April 13, 1978, when BKI's first head Sukhdev Singh Babbar got married, saw 13 Sikh activists, mostly from Akhand Kirtini Jatha (AKJ), including its head Fuja Singh, getting killed in clashes with Nirankaris in Amritsar. Sukhdev also belonged to AKJ.

In the next few years, many top Nirankari sect leaders, including its head Gurbachan Singh, were killed in targeted attacks. Later, those involved in these killings owned their responsibility under the aegis of an outfit named BKI.

Subsequently, Wadhawa went to Pakistan. Talwinder Singh Parmar, who was behind the June 23 1985 bombing of Air India flight 182 mid-air en route from Montreal to London in



The rocket launcher that was allegedly used for the attack on state police headquarters

Star, BKI had developed differences with Damdami Taksal head Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The first militant killed during the Operation Blue Star, Mehanga Singh Babbar, belonged to BKI. However, realising that the outfit will not be able to combat the Indian Army, the BKI militants had then preferred to escape from the Golden Temple premises. This move was said to have ensured BKI's survival.

Babbar Khalsa has mainly remained involved in targeted killings. The construction of the SYL canal project, which had started following the 1986 Rajiv-Longowal accord, was halted in 1990, when the BKI militants killed its two engineers and many labourers.

In 1992, Sukhdev was killed in a police encounter near Ludhiana. Two years later, BKI carried out one of its biggest terrorist strikes, assassinating then Punjab chief minister Beant Singh in a suicide bomb blast.

There have periodically been reports in recent years that "behind-the-curtain negotiations" with the government have helped many former BKI members to return to India. Even the BKI associates like Seva Singh Lally, self-styled Khalistan president, was allowed to come to India and go back to the UK in 2019. He had also held meetings with some senior government representatives. Lally has been in touch with Wadhawa, and BKI has also never disassociated itself from him. Many ex-BKI members now often come to India despite their connection with Wadhawa.

The Sarbat Khalsa-appointed Jathedar of a parallel Akal Takht, Jagtar Singh Hawara, had also been with BKI. Lally had recently praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for declaring December 26 as "Veer Baal Diwas" to honour the martyrdom day of Guru Gobind Singh's two younger sons.

Baba Jorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh.

BKI'S NEXUS WITH ISI

BKI and Wadhawa are often linked to targeted attacks and smuggling of explosives from Pakistan into India. The nexus of BKI with Pakistan's ISI led to the RPG attack on

Punjab Police's Intelligence headquarters, according to police. Most of the alleged BKI operatives arrested in such cases have criminal records with various offences, gangster and NDPS cases lodged against them. Unlike the BKI militants of the 1980s and 1990s, these operatives refrain from claiming responsibility for their attacks, although they also do not deny their role in them either.

Nihangs 'torture' 26-yr-old to death

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 16

A GROUP of Nihang Sikhs allegedly tortured a 26-year-old man to death on the suspicion that he had kidnapped a girl. The Nihangs assaulted, thrashed and tortured the youth at Majli Kalan village of Samrala Sunday and he succumbed to injuries Monday.

Police said that nine Nihang Sikhs were booked for the alleged murder of Avtar Singh, 26, of Kuhlhi Kalan village.

Khanna SSP Ravi Kumar said that a group of Nihang Sikhs got together and assaulted Avtar Singh on Sunday at Majli Kalan village on the suspicion that he had kidnapped a girl. "The girl, who had reportedly been missing for around 10 days, and Avtar Singh were friends and used to talk often. After the girl went missing around 10 days back, the girl's family suspected that Avtar had kidnapped her."

"To clarify this issue, Avtar and his family had gone to the dera of one Nihang Gursewak Singh at Kullewal village on Sunday. From there they were taken to Majli Kalan village to talk to the girl's family and a group of Nihangs accompanied them but after reaching there, all Nihangs got together and opened an attack on Avtar suspecting that the girl was with her and he had hidden her. He died today. We have booked nine accused and all of them are Nihangs. Five of them have been arrested," the SSP said.

According to the family members, the Nihangs did not even allow them to give him some water when the victim had collapsed after continuous torture.

Bhajan Singh, father of the deceased, told the police in his statement that his son had friendship with the girl and they used to talk and chat over the phone.

Ten days ago, they got to know that the girl had eloped with some other man. However, the girl's family was suspecting that Avtar had kidnapped and



Nine Nihangs have been booked for the alleged murder of Avtar Singh

hidden her somewhere. To clarify this issue, he along with his son and other family members had gone to the dera of Nihang Gursewak Singh at Kullewal village. Further, they were taken to Majli Kalan village on the pretext of talking to the girl's family but after reaching there, more Nihangs reached the spot and started assaulting his son with swords, sticks and other weapons. They did not stop assaulting him even after he collapsed. Then he again took him back to Gursewak's dera at Kullewal where he died Monday.

After his death, the family members of the victim and other residents of various villages staged a protest outside Samrala police station and blocked traffic on Ludhiana-Chandigarh road demanding arrest of all the accused.

"We requested Nihangs to set him free as he had no knowledge about the whereabouts of the woman, but they did not listen to us. They did not allow us to meet Avtar and give him water when he collapsed after facing torture. Nihangs run their own parallel government but no one questions them," alleged Karamvir Singh, brother of the deceased.

The police registered an FIR against nine Nihangs — Kulvir Singh, Hardeep Singh, Harpreet Singh, Gursewak Singh, Balwinder Singh, Arsh, Goldy, Satwinder Singh and Sukhwinder Singh — under sections 302, 148 and 149 of the IPC at Samrala police station on the complaint of Bhajan Singh.

Samrala: Man 'thrashes' wife to death, booked for murder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 16

A MAN allegedly thrashed his wife to death at Lalodi Kalan village of Samrala Monday. She was rushed to hospital where she succumbed to injuries.

The victim was identified as Jasvir Kaur, 45. The Samrala police lodged a murder case against her husband Jagtar Singh on the statement of Karnail Singh, father of the woman.

He told the police that his daughter had married the accused 24 years ago but the couple had strained relations for the past few days.

On Saturday, he received a call from his granddaughter

(Jasvir Kaur's daughter) Sumanpreet Kaur, who informed that her father had been thrashing her mother and also strangled her with a dupatta. He immediately rushed there, but Sumanpreet had already taken her mother to the government hospital. Sensing her serious condition, the doctors referred her to a private hospital at Doraha.

On Monday, Jasvir Kaur succumbed to injuries after struggling for life for two days.

Inspector Surinder Singh, SHO of Samrala police station, said that after the woman's death, the police lodged a murder case against the accused. He added that the reason behind the murder will be ascertained after the arrest of the accused.

DSR will render farm labourers jobless: Unions

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, MAY 16

THERE ARE murmurs of protest among the ranks of farm labourers of Punjab, who say that the government's famed Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR) technique, once implemented, will potentially render them jobless.

The Punjab government recently announced Rs 1,500 incentive per acre for farmers opting for Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR), which is known for saving water, during the paddy sowing season that starts from May 20.

DSR technique is direct seeding of rice, which dictates that rice seeds are sown in the field directly rather than transplanting seedlings. A tractor-powered machine is used to drill the seeds in to the soil, reducing manual intervention to a minimal.

There is no nursery preparation in DSR technique.

On Monday, Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union (PKMU) president, Zora Singh Nasrali, said, "Instead of focusing only on DSR method to save groundwater, the Punjab government should focus its attention on water-intensive crops like cotton, maize and assure farmers that these will be bought at MSP. This will help take care of both farm labourers as well as groundwater."

Lachhman Singh Sewewala, general secretary of PKMU, added, "The government's focus should be on increasing the area



The Punjab government recently announced Rs 1,500 incentive per acre for farmers opting for DSR, which is known for saving water. *Express*

under paddy. This can also solve the issue of groundwater, while ensuring that labourers are not deprived of their earnings. At the very least, the government should have increased the number of days of guaranteed employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). But the government doesn't seem to care in the least about labourers, who will become jobless. Taking care of groundwater is important, but at the same time ensuring people are employed is also important. Daily wages should not be targeted."

He added, "In villages across Punjab, landlords already are fixing rates of paddy transplantation at Rs 3,500 per acre and have issued diktats that anyone

asking for more will not be allowed to enter their fields. It is time that government spoke out for the sake of Dalits."

Interestingly, farm labourers in various Punjab villages have also started passing resolutions stating that they will accept nothing less than Rs 5,000-6,000 per acre for paddy transplantation this time as farmers had doubled their rates of wheat straw from Rs 2,000 per trolley to Rs 4,000 per trolley. The rising inflation was another reason given by farm labourers to ask for more money for growing paddy this year.

PKMU general secretary, Sewewala, added, "Many labourers have also passed resolutions stating that they will not let migrant labour enter villages. This situation needs to be

Moga: Youth dies of shock after 'injecting drugs'; 4 booked, 2 held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 16

LUDHIANA POLICE has booked four people and arrested two men from Sadhan Wali Basti for allegedly supplying drugs to a youth, who died from alleged shock after injecting narcotics in his body in Moga on Monday.

An FIR in the case has been registered on the complaint of ASI Jaspal Singh, who said that Raj Kumar (24) of Preet Nagar, was a known user of narcotics. On Sunday, the complaint further reads, Raj Kumar collapsed after injecting himself with something

at his home. His family later found him in a non-responsive state and rushed him to Civil Hospital, Moga, from where he was referred to Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot, where he died on Monday.

Police later booked and arrested four persons — Gagandeep Singh, Surya, Khali and Mani Singh, all from Sadhan Wali Basti, the infamous colony in Moga known for its drug trade — under Section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of IPC.

Inspector Lachhman Singh, SHO of Moga City South police

Five feared drowned in Yamuna after attack by rival group

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

FIVE MEN were feared drowned in the Yamuna river at Yamunanagar as they reportedly jumped into the water to save their lives after being attacked by a rival group on Sunday evening. The Haryana Police was conducting search operations with the help of divers.

The police identified the missing youths as Sunny,

Suleman, Allaudin, Sahil and Nikhil, all aged between 19-21 and natives of Jagadhari. Their five other friends escaped when the alleged attack happened. The car, in which they had come to the river bank for swimming, was also badly damaged by the assailants, also hailing from Jagadhari, the police added.

The two groups of young men had a murderous clash two years ago. "Allaudin and others were attacked by the rival group with sharp-edged

weapons, bricks and stones. To save their lives, they went deeper into the river and are suspected to be drowned. Despite all the efforts being made by police, they have not been able to find any of the bodies yet," said Ibrahim, Allaudin's uncle.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Subhash, who is supervising the rescue operation, said: "We got information that a few young men drowned in the Yamuna river. When we reached the spot, we learnt

that it was a case of an old enmity and they were attacked by the rival group. We are investigating the matter. The search operation is still going on."

One of the survivors, Shoukeen, told mediapersons that they were on the river bank when the rival group arrived and attacked them with sharp-edged weapons and started throwing stones and bricks. He added that to save their lives, all of them jumped into the river.

Shoukeen said that most of the men who jumped into the river did not know how to swim. "While five of us managed to save our lives, our friends kept shouting for help but the armed men kept throwing stones and bricks at them and only left the spot when they were sure that all have drowned. One of our friends, who managed to come out of the water, was attacked with sticks and iron rods and is badly injured," Shoukeen told the police.

EXPRESS NETWORK

Plea on Mathura mosque to be heard ‘on Gyanvapi lines’

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, MAY 16

WHILE ALL eyes are on the Kashi Vishwanath Temple-Gyanvapi Mosque complex in Varanasi, a similar petition seeking videography of the Shahi Idgah Masjid adjacent to Krishnajanmabhoomi was recently moved in a local Mathura court.

The application seeks an advocate commissioner for assessment of the site “on the lines of (the) Gyanvapi mosque”, to determine “existence of Hindu artifacts and ancient religious inscriptions on the mosque premises”.

The application was filed in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division), Mathura, a day after the Allahabad High Court directed it to dispose of all cases related to the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah

Masjid dispute within four months.

On May 12, while disposing of a petition filed by Bhagwan Shri Krishna Virajman And Another, the High Court said: “The Civil Judge (Senior Division), Mathura, is directed to decide the aforesaid applications expeditiously, preferably within a period of four months from the date a certified copy of this order is produced before him, and after giving an opportunity of hearing to the affected parties...”

The High Court also stated in its order: “It is clarified that the court has not expressed any opinion either regarding the maintainability of the case or the merits of claim made by the petitioner.”

The next day, May 13, an application was moved in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division), Mathura, seeking appointment of an advocate commissioner to



The Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah Masjid complex in Mathura. *Express Archives*

carry out inspection of the Shahi Idgah Masjid.

Petitioner Manish Yadav, who had earlier filed an application in the High Court for early disposal of petitions connected with the disputed Mathura site, told The Indian Express: “I requested the Mathura court to appoint a senior advocate, an advocate commissioner, and get a video survey done of Shahi Idgah

immediately, because there are still remains of Hindu religion inside the mosque. These are important facts, and the Opposition can remove or delete them. The court is likely to take up my application on July 1.”

National president of an outfit called the Narayani Sena, Yadav said he had moved the high court as petitions were pending, including ones seeking

a survey of the site by the Archeological Survey of India and a direction to stop any construction at the site.

Earlier, an advocate named Mahendra Pratap Singh had filed an application in the same civil court seeking that a commission be appointed to survey the mosque.

Advocate Tanveer Khan, who is representing the Shahi Idgah Masjid, said they were waiting for the July 1 hearing of the four petitions pending in connection with the disputed site.

Meanwhile, the District Judge Court, Mathura, is likely to soon pronounce its judgment on the maintainability of a civil suit seeking removal of the mosque, claiming it was built on Krishna Janmabhoomi, the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The suit was filed two years ago by the ‘Deity and the Janmasthan (birthplace)’ and ‘next friend’ Ranjana Agnihotri,

a Lucknow resident, and others.

The petitioners have also sought cancellation of a compromising decree between the governing body of the temple complex and the management trust of the mosque in 1968. The petitioners claim that the agreement between the Shree Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sangh, Mathura, and the mosque trust was “illegal and void ab initio (not legally binding)” as the land was vested in another trust, Shree Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust, and the Seva Sangh was not authorised to act on its behalf.

Advocate Tanveer Khan said the civil court had rejected this plea in 2020, after which the petitioners had filed an appeal. “I argued that the petitioners are neither the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust nor Shri Krishna Janambhoomi Sewa Sangh, so their petition should be rejected.”



Trucks loaded with wheat at Kandla port. *Express*

Chaos in Kandla after ban: 4,000 wheat trucks in queue, 4 ships half-full

GOPAL KATESHIYA & AVINASH NAIR
RAJKOT, AHMEDABAD, MAY 16

OUTSIDE, THERE are over 4,000 wheat-laden trucks stuck in a queue to nowhere. Inside, there are four ships, half loaded with wheat and no order to sail.

The snap announcement of the ban on wheat exports has led to chaos at the Deendayal port in Gujarat’s Kutch district, with exporters and traders unsure of the fate of their cargo.

According to officials, close to 4 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of wheat stranded outside the port belong to merchants from Madhya Pradesh alone — some still in trucks, some in godowns already overflowing with wheat.

Among the held-up cargo is 60,000 MT of wheat to Egypt — the first ever consignment that was to leave the port after the Ukraine-Russia conflict began.

Last Friday, a day before the ban was announced, the port was humming with loading activity.

Officials from Egypt’s Central Administration of Plant Quarantine were there to oversee the shipment. And a delegation from Madhya Pradesh had reached Gandhidham town near the port to flag off a cereal consignment to Egypt the next evening.

On Monday, Sanjay Mehta, chairman, Deendayal Port Trust,

told The Indian Express: “There was already a lot of wheat inside the port. After the ban was imposed, trucks carrying wheat are in line outside. Many representations have come to us in this regard. Within the port, there is over 1 lakh MT of wheat.”

The port receives wheat from Punjab, UP and MP for export mainly to the middle-east and European countries. “There are over 32 large godowns within the port. Many of them are full with wheat consignments. The rentals of godown or storage charges imposed at the port have also shot up — from Rs 10 per day per tonne to Rs 25. There is no space and wheat is now lying in the open,” said Teja Kangad, president, Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The transport business is also in disarray.

“It seems like there was no planning before the Government came up with the notification prohibiting wheat export. Transporters give truck drivers and cleaners allowances and money for fuel estimating the transportation time. But thousands of drivers and cleaners are stuck as cargo from their trucks are not being offloaded. Vessels are berthed at the port but Customs is not allowing loading,” said Teja Kangad, president, Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Probe into J&K bus fire looks at use of ‘sticky bomb’

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE INVESTIGATION into the fire in a passenger bus near Katra town, in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), on May 13 that claimed four lives and left over 20 injured is veering towards a terror probe, sources said.

According to sources, circumstantial evidence suggests that the fire was an act of sabotage and the use of an IED to trigger an explosion in the bus’s fuel tank cannot be ruled out. Investigating officials suspect that a “sticky bomb”, which can be stuck to a vehicle using magnets, was used.

The bus, mostly carrying pilgrims, had just left for Jammu when it caught fire near Khanak, about 1.5 km from Katra town. Katra is the base camp for pilgrims going to the Vaishno Devi shrine.

According to preliminary investigations, the fire started in the engine of the bus, and soon engulfed the vehicle. The initial police probe termed it as a case of the engine catching fire due to a technical fault. However, following examination of the spot and the bus, security agencies suspected an IED attack by a terror group.

“There is a hole near the fuel tanks with the metal sheets bent inwards. Had it been an explosion due to a technical glitch from inside the engine, the metal sheets would have turned outwards near the hole. Also, samples picked up from the clothes of one of the victims suggests the use of some kind of explosive, although it is not clear what it is,” said a security establishment official.

Sources said the suspicion is on the use of a “sticky bomb”. “There is no material evidence to prove this, since by the time the forensic teams reached the site, the crime scene had been completely washed out in an attempt to douse the fire. But circumstantial evidence points to the possibility of a sticky bomb being used,” said an officer from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) which is conducting a parallel probe.

The development casts a shadow over the Amarnath Yatra which is scheduled to begin on June 30. There has been considerable concern within the government over security for the Amarnath Yatra, which will be held after two years.

RANCHI AIRPORT ROW

DGCA notice to IndiGo for ‘inappropriate handling’

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

SAYING THAT the findings of its three-member committee “prima facie indicate inappropriate handling of passengers” and “non-conformances with the applicable regulations”, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued a showcase notice to IndiGo for denying boarding to a specially-abled child at the Ranchi airport on May 7.

“The proceedings of the committee were partly held in the open and partly in camera as per the request of the affected family. The findings of the committee prima facie indicate inappropriate handling of passengers by the IndiGo staff thereby resulting in certain non-conformances with the applicable regulations,” the DGCA said on Monday.

“In view of this, it has been decided to issue a showcase notice to the concerned airline through its authorised representative to explain as to why suitable enforcement action should not be taken against them for the non-conformances,” it said. The DGCA has given IndiGo time till May 26 to respond to the showcase notice. “After hearing their submissions, appropriate action as per law would be taken,” it said.

“We have received the communication from DGCA on the matter and will respond in due course,” IndiGo said on Monday.

On May 7, an IndiGo staffer denied boarding to a specially-abled child for a Ranchi-Hyderabad flight. Two days after the incident,

the airline’s CEO, Ronojoy Dutta, had said the company was of the view “that we made the best possible decision under difficult circumstances”. “Throughout the check-in and boarding process our intent of course was to carry the family. However, at the boarding area the teenager was visibly in panic,” he had said.

The national aviation safety regulator had set up a three-member team, comprising members from the DGCA’s departments of air safety, aircraft engineering and legal, to probe the incident. The committee, which looked at the airport video footage, and spoke to passengers and airport staff as part of its probe, has submitted its report to the DGCA.

The Indian Express reported last week that the team would look into the operational and legal aspects, including the applicability of the “regulations for carriage of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility”.

The regulation being referred to is part of the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) (Section 3, Series ‘M’, Part 1), which lays “regulations for carriage of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility by air to protect them against discrimination and to ensure that they receive all assistance during their travel”.

“No airline shall refuse to carry persons with disability or reduced mobility and their assistive aids/devices, escorts and guide dogs including their presence in the cabin, provided such persons or their representatives, at the time of booking, inform the airline of their requirement(s),” it states.

PM to Yogi ministers: Manage time better, focus on karya first

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, MAY 16

AS PRIME Minister Narendra Modi made a stopover in Lucknow on Monday while returning from Lumbini in Nepal, he met the ministers of the Uttar Pradesh government and held a free-wheeling conversation with them, according to sources.

A month into his second term, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath welcomed PM Modi at his official residence in Lucknow, where he was joined by his entire council of ministers.

During his three and a half-hour-long discussion with the ministers, the PM gave them lessons in governance and time management. Sources said Modi asked them to differentiate between “karya” (work) and “karyakaram” (events and pro-



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Governor Anandiben Patel welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi upon his arrival in Lucknow on Monday. *Vishal Srivastav*

grammes), telling them to focus on “karya” first and then on “karyakaram”.

“It was a very informal discussion. The Prime Minister was giving us lessons on better governance. At first, the ministers

were seated at a distance from the PM and CM Adityanath. But after he arrived, the PM asked us to pull our chairs closer. The discussion began and he asked us about our experiences during field visits,” said a minister.

More men eating non-veg than before: NFHS data

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

AMID THE veg/non-veg debate that periodically convulses the country is a reality check: more people are eating non-vegetarian food than ever before, and the proportion of Indian men who do so has gone up sharply in the six years between between 2015-16 and 2019-21, shows an analysis by *The Indian Express* of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data.

15-49 YRS: WHO IS EATING NON-VEG, HOW MUCH					
	Year	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Never
Women	2015-16	6.1	36.6	27.3	29.9
	2019-21	5.9	39.3	25.4	29.4
Men	2015-16	5.7	43.2	29.5	21.6
	2019-21	8	49.3	26.1	16.6

(figures in %)

Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5

Data from the recently released NFHS-5, which was conducted in 2019-21, show that the proportion of men

aged 15-49 years who have never consumed non-vegetarian food — listed as ‘fish, chicken or meat’ in the survey

How are we without any ideology: Regional parties question Rahul

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

IT IS TIME the Congress reconciled with the reality that it no longer dominates the Opposition space, political parties said Monday in a sharp reaction to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s statement, at the party Chintan Shivir the day before, that regional counterparts “lack the ideology” to take on the BJP and RSS.

At a time when regional parties have held the BJP back in several states, even as the Congress has failed, one of its own allies, the JMM, said: “It is Rahul

Gandhi’s self-assessment and he is entitled to his opinion, but who gave him the authority to comment on ideology? How are we running the party without any ideology?”

The JMM and Congress run a coalition government in Jharkhand. Party spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said: “The fact remains that it is these regional parties on which the Congress is dependent for a fight or a win, be it the JMM in Jharkhand or the RJD in Bihar.”

The RJD, another Congress ally, also called Rahul’s statement “unfortunate”. Leaders of ally DMK preferred not to comment.

Less than one-fifth of Pandits under PM employment package live in secure areas

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, MAY 16

RAHUL BHAT, who was shot dead by militants in Budgam on May 11, was working under a Prime Minister employment package for migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Of the total 6,000 posts provided for Pandit migrants under the scheme, a total of 5,928 are filled up. No more than 1,037 of them live in secure accommodations.

The remaining are compelled to rent quarters outside the secure zones meant for them. They also travel long distances without security, on a daily basis, for work.

The Valley has been seeing protests by Kashmiri Pandits regarding their security following Bhat’s killing. A Revenue

Department employee, Bhat lived in a secure accommodation at Sheikhpora, Budgam — Kashmir’s oldest and biggest such colony for Pandits — but was shot at his office, some distance away.

Posts such as the one Bhat held were announced in 2008 by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, with the aim of drawing Pandit migrants back to the Valley and their eventual return and rehabilitation there. The salaries of these officials were to come from the Ministry of Home Affairs. While initially 3,000 posts were announced, 3,000 more were added later, with almost all getting filled up.

Incidentally, while the Narendra Modi government swears by the cause of Kashmiri

Pandits, and says steps like abrogation of Article 370 are a means to ensure their reintegration in the Valley, it has not introduced any scheme per se meant for the community.

The 2008 job package was itself part of an earlier scheme for return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits formulated in 2002-04, when the Atal Behari Vajpayee-led NDA government was in office at the Centre and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was heading a coalition government with the Congress in the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state.

As per the policy, each migrant Kashmiri Pandit family wanting to return to the Valley was to be paid Rs 7.5 lakh for rebuilding their houses. The Sheikhpora accommodation,



Kashmiri Pandits protest against the killing of Rahul Bhat, in Jammu on Monday. *PTI*

along with one at Vessu in Kulgam, had come up under this scheme. The families were also promised financial assistance for agricultural land if they wanted

to do farming, says Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Ashok Pandita. However, that particular scheme had failed, with only three families opting

for it and moving to Sheikhpora. Later, after the PM employment package was announced, the same accommodations were roped in for migrants who took up the offered jobs, Pandita says.

The 72 of the 6,000 posts that remain vacant under this scheme are entangled in litigation, he adds. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is the nodal agency taking care of the affairs of migrant Kashmiri Pandits staying across the country.

Apart from safety, the protesters who hit the streets following Bhat’s killing also raised questions regarding the low salaries they are paid (which are in line with what the other government staff get), particularly given the risk. Kashmiri Pandit

leader King C Bharti also questions the undertaking Pandits have to give that they will work in the Valley and not seek posting outside Kashmir, accusing the government of sending people desperate for jobs into risky positions for such meagre amounts.

Pandita says the government is cognizant of the problems and at least 5,000 more quarters are being readied for Kashmiri Pandits in secure zones “to house all employees”. “This July, we will hand over some of them. By December, we will have all the 6,700 quarters ready and accommodate all the migrant employees.”

In the interim, Pandita adds, they want the authorities to post the Class IV employees to

Jammu. At a meeting with political parties in Srinagar Saturday, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha ruled out such a possibility.

On Monday, protests by Kashmiri Pandits over Bhat’s killing continued in Ganderbal and Anantnag districts. In Anantnag, protesters set fire to effigies depicting the present government.

A resident, who was part of the protests at Sheikhpora, said they felt caged, with no freedom to move freely, or without fear. “At times, there seems no purpose to these gated colonies. Every day, we have to move out for work, without any security. Our children have to go to school. We may be safe during the night, but we are vulnerable during the day.”



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

WALK THE CHINTAN

Chintan Shivir focussed on structural changes in Congress but ignored the key question of leadership

THE THREE-DAY CHINTAN Shivir of the Congress in Udaipur didn't offer any surprises. It plotted a path to give a youthful makeover to the party and promises have been made that tickets will be restricted to one person in a family, with exceptions, of course, that help most existing families. These proposed structural changes in the organisation are necessary for the Congress, which has been in a free fall since the 2014 general election. Successive electoral defeats have turned many leaders restive. The emergence of the G-23, an informal group of dissidents, has put the spotlight on the leadership record of the Gandhi family. The Udaipur conclave, an admission of the crisis in the party, saw the invited crowd of senior leaders, parliamentarians and legislators deliberating on organisational and policy issues, but decidedly steering clear of questions concerning leadership. A clear takeaway from the conclave is that the Gandhis continue to exercise total control over the party. The G-23 fell silent.

Rahul Gandhi spoke at length in Udaipur and admitted that the party has lost its connect with the masses. This plain truth, self-evident to most people, has manifested repeatedly in the party's inability to win elections but seems to have eluded the Gandhis all this while. Rahul Gandhi blamed a poor communication strategy for the disconnect and promised a revamp. However, the loss of touch with the masses may not necessarily be the outcome of strategy. The problem also lies with the message and the messenger. Despite being out of office at the Centre for over eight years, the Congress is yet to reinvent itself as a party of the Opposition. Its politics has been more reactive than a proactive one of setting the agenda or building its own narrative. The incapacity to articulate in a coherent manner what the party stands for is curious since there is no dearth of articulate leaders in that party. While the party's message is incoherent and often contradictory, the messenger has been a failure in amplifying it or bringing clarity to the message. Rahul Gandhi, the party face for some years, will need to shoulder more than a little blame for this. The party has now announced two campaigns — a Bharat Jodo Yatra and Rozgar Do Yatra — to rebuild its ties with the people. The institutional arrangements proposed — a Social Justice Advisory Council to update the party chief on issues pertinent to the backward classes and disadvantaged social groups, a Public Insight Committee to conduct surveys on various issues and generate feedback from the public, a National Training Institute for ideological training, and an Election Management Committee — will be tested on the ground.

However, at a time when elections have also become about leaders and their image as much as their message, a party's prospects will be shaped more by the commitment and vision of its leadership than bullet points from its committees. Ideological clarity would help, but a leadership that can work 24X7 and remain accessible is necessary to inspire workers and revive the Congress. The Udaipur conclave kicked this crucial can down the party's bumpy, lonely road.

DOUSE THE FIRE

Mundka accident drives home the need to create safe working conditions in factories, end the culture of impunity

LAST WEEK'S BLAZE at a factory in outer Delhi's Mundka area that snuffed out at least 27 lives, 21 of them women, adds to the long list of avoidable fire tragedies that show the country's urbanisation story in poor light. The failings that have come to light in the four days since the incident evoke a sense of deja vu: The building did not have a no objection certificate from the fire department — more worryingly, the owners had not even applied for one — and it had only one escape route. The manufacturing unit's licence had lapsed. Though the North Delhi Municipality had cancelled the permission after it was found that the building did not meet the required criteria, the industrial activities went on with impunity even after a Supreme Court monitoring committee raised red flags. Such omissions invite questions about the municipality's enforcement mechanisms. It's also apparent that the authorities have not learnt any lesson from the Anaj Mandi fire that killed more than 40 people in December 2019 — as well as several other mishaps dating back to the Uphar Cinema Tragedy of 1997.

Localities such as Mundka and Anaj Mandi have become a prominent feature of Delhi's economic landscape — and that of several other parts of the country — in the aftermath of liberalisation. Factories exist cheek-by-jowl with warehouses, shops selling construction materials, banquet halls, and other multi-floor establishments. Largely unregulated, they are sources of livelihood for a substantial section of the city's population, many of whom live at its margins. At a time the pandemic-induced economic downturn has shrunk household incomes and the absence of social security has aggravated the difficulties of the working and lower-middle classes, many such manufacturing units offer hope of a semblance of relief from poverty. They also seem to buck the post-pandemic trend of a large number of women falling out of the labour force — as revealed by the CMIE data. However, with employers playing short shrift to basic safety codes, these workplaces turn out to be not only exploitative, they also add to the hardships faced by their employees — and their dear ones. Several families, for instance, lost their sole breadwinner in last week's fire tragedy.

Delhi's Lt Governor Anil Bajjal has ordered a magisterial investigation into the accident. The probe must, of course, fix accountability at multiple levels. But much more needs to be done. For far too long, a network of complicity has led to safety codes being flouted and building-by-laws being infringed. It's time such networks are taken apart.

1983 IN BADMINTON

Thomas Cup win is testimony to Indias rise as a power in the sport. The challenge is to build on this triumph

NOT THE ONE for hyperbole, Pullela Gopichand, the national coach and the man largely responsible for India's rise as a badminton power, called Sunday's Thomas Cup triumph the country's greatest team sport achievement outside cricket. Vimal Kumar, the soft-spoken player-turned-coach, was quick to proclaim that this moment can be to Indian badminton what the 1983 World Cup was to Indian cricket. It's hard to dispute both claims. There are shades of '83 in '22: The stories of personal struggles and redemptions, the underdog element, and beating the most successful nation in the tournament's history, 14-time champions Indonesia, to reach the top.

Writing in these pages, Gopichand recalled how during his playing days, India lost to the likes of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, and were happy merely by qualifying for the Thomas Cup. To go on and win it then — only the sixth nation to do so, showing how competitive the tournament is — is special. And this is no fluke. The title comes on the back of years of relentless hard work and an outcome of a system that has constantly churned out players who, on their day, could upset the best in the world. That even players like B Sai Praneeth, a 2019 World Championship medalist, could not even make the team, coupled with the fact that India has seven players in the world's top 50, points to the depth in men's badminton right now.

The challenge going ahead is to build on this triumph and not let the momentum slip. Badminton is one of the few mass sports that's played almost in every corner of the country. So, even though Hyderabad and Bangalore will continue to remain the hubs, it's important to establish academies that can spot and harness players from other regions in the country. Like 1983, this title isn't a culmination of a journey. It should be the beginning of a new chapter.



NEETHA N

THE FIRE at Delhi's Mundka, with a death toll of 27 persons so far — a majority of whom are women workers in informal manufacturing units — underscores yet again the invisibilities and insecurities of informal workers in the city. The fact that the antecedents of those who died are still unknown points to the invisibility and lack of identity of informal sector workers.

Reports on buildings catching fire leading to fatalities, followed by discussions on illegal constructions and unplanned infrastructural development in urban centres, have become a somewhat repetitive subject. With every such mishap, reports on how these buildings do not have required fire clearance and no-objection certificates from concerned authorities surface. Yet, such incidents keep on repeating; the harrowing stories of those who lost their dear ones are matters of public attention only for a few days, till the headlines shift.

Incidents of this sort are also opportunities for political leaders to display their concern for those who lost their dear ones with compensation and promises coming one after the other. Enquiry commissions and assurances of tightening procedures are all part of a larger script, with no substantial change at the ground level.

By now, it is understood that the root cause of the Mundka mishap is a serious lapse in following the norms in construction as the whole building had only one staircase. While this accident shares similarities with earlier incidents, the site and the victims this time deserve special mention. Of the 27 who lost their lives to this massive fire, 21 were women workers, employed in a company that manufactured and assembled CCTVs and WiFi routers. As per reports, the manufacturing unit at Mundka employed about 100 people, half of them women. Many of them are young women and the sole or primary earners in their households. The predicament of women workers here has similarities to those in the garment units of Bangladesh — including disturbing parallels with the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse.

There are thousands of unregistered/informal industrial units in cities like Delhi without any data on the number of workers employed

Capital fire

Without accountability for employers, improving working conditions, tragedies like Mundka fire will recur

Exposure to such employment provides limited opportunities for personal or economic advancement, with monotonous repetitive work filling the day. The large turnover and women's withdrawal from the labour market are signs of extremely poor working conditions that many women cannot sustain for long. Absence of leave, including maternity leave and long working hours, are important concerns for women workers who also have to shoulder the housework and care responsibilities of their families, forcing them to eventually leave such workplaces.

and the conditions of their employment. These workplaces are known to violate all norms, including basic labour laws. Informality and precarity define such workplaces where the quality of jobs is not a concern for those who are looking for employment. Women's work participation rates have declined sharply over time, with Delhi having one of the lowest (14.5 per cent for age 15 and above as compared to 28.7 per cent all-India in 2019-20). The pandemic has added to women's difficulties in finding jobs and such workplaces reveal the conditions under which women workers get employed. The profile of workers shows that many are young in their 20s or 30s — the age categories that suffice our discourse on women's development and empowerment. They are forced to join the labour market in low-paid and highly-informal jobs because of their migrant status and poor economic conditions. There is often a clear separation of tasks for men and women. Women workers are mostly into packing or are helpers — categories that are the lowest skilled as per the job classifications in such units.

Owing to the perception that workers employed in packing or as helpers undertake jobs that do not require much skill, wages are kept very low while the labour pool remains massive. With the pandemic and the resultant decline in work opportunities and household income, women are compelled to join employment to compensate for the loss of employment or declined income of male household members. Many of the workers who died joined the factory after the pandemic, pointing to the desperation that many poor households are facing. Working conditions, in general, are not often defined in such units with low and varying wages, long working hours, absence of any leave, including maternity leave and a lack of other basic facilities. In a city where living expenses have soared, with a monthly wage of Rs 6,500-7,500, a dignified life is beyond imagination. It is important to note that many women workers are often the sole earners or primary earners of their households. Working in contested spaces in

dusty, shady and stingy rooms, without any safety precautions, gloves or masks is a common scene in these sweatshops. Basic workplace requirements such as the provision of drinking water and toilet facilities are often denied to workers.

Exposure to such employment provides limited opportunities for personal or economic advancement, with monotonous repetitive work filling the day. The large turnover and women's withdrawal from the labour market are signs of extremely poor working conditions that many women cannot sustain for long. Absence of leave, including maternity leave and long working hours, are important concerns for women workers who also have to shoulder the housework and care responsibilities of their families, forcing them to eventually leave such workplaces.

Poorly ventilated workplaces, operating from dilapidated buildings are aplenty in the city and even by basic norms of occupational safety requirements, these workplaces are not to be "operational". Such workplaces are often a source of additional income for the enforcement machinery, with employers and the administration least bothered about the lives of workers. There are anxieties about how the new labour codes will add to the vulnerability of informal workers. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSHC) would replace existing regulations soon and this would worsen the conditions of informal workers as many of these small units would be left to themselves to follow prescribed safety conditions and can go unaccountable.

These sweatshops, which are part of our understanding of economic development are traps for women workers. The fact that it offers some respite from poverty and also from cultural restrictions on women also needs to be understood. But without any accountability of employers and a lack of political will to improve working conditions, we might end up allowing many more such horrific accidents.

The writer is professor, Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi



YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

FOR LONG, Lumbini and its people felt uncomfortable, even angry, over the projection of the Buddha as Indian. There was also the feeling that it was being treated unfairly by Indian tour handlers. Package deals for tourists and pilgrims from across the world would only make a fleeting visit to the Buddha's birth place, before being herded back to Buddhist shrines in India, denying Nepal its due economic gain.

Nearly eight years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to address this issue when he told Nepal's Constituent Assembly that the Buddha was born in Nepal. On Buddha Poomima on Monday, Modi made a trip to Lumbini, becoming the first Indian PM to do so. He offered prayers at the Mayadevi temple, believed to be the Buddha's birthplace, in the company of highly-respected Buddhist masters, and then laid the foundation for the International Buddhist Conference and Meditation Centre.

The trip, a month after Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India, is being projected as a "cultural visit" but there are many who call it India's late awakening from a deep diplomatic slumber. Delhi has been indifferent to the deep inroads China has been making in Nepal. Modi landed at a newly-built helipad close to the Mayadevi temple, avoiding the Gautam Buddha International Airport, built with a soft loan from China and co-incidentally inaugurated by his host earlier in the morning on the auspicious day.

China first offered to spend \$3 billion to

BRIDGE TO THE BUDDHA

PM Modi's Lumbini visit attempts to make up for Delhi's past indifference to Nepal

The trip, a month after Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India, is being projected as a 'cultural visit' but there are many who call it a India's late wake up from a deep diplomatic slumber. Delhi has been indifferent to the deep inroads China has been making in Nepal. Modi landed at a newly built helipad close to the Mayadevi temple, avoiding the Gautam Buddha International Airport, built with a soft loan from China.

build up Lumbini as the world peace city under the aegis of its NGO — Asia Pacific Exchange and Foundation — co-opting Maoist leader Prachanda as its vice chairman. China has also built a monastery in the core area of the Lumbini Development Project. China's offer to develop it as the World Peace Centre and construct a railway line connecting Tibet and Kathmandu is as yet in abeyance, but not completely given up.

The increased presence and influence of the US and the European Union, along with India, has become more pronounced in Nepal's domestic politics — especially following the political changes of 2005-06. China retaliated with a matching presence and economic investments. This has had an impact on internal politics and policy-making in Nepal. But unlike its competitors, China's outlook had depth and took into account multiple dimensions. Lumbini, thanks largely to China, has now become sort of a microcosm of the competing international forces in the country.

India first reacted to the Chinese presence in Lumbini on November 8, 2011, in the wake of enthusiastic publicity by the Chinese about the World City initiative. At a dinner table, Dr Karan Singh's discomfort was palpable. The senior Congress leader was then in Nepal. "How far is Lumbini from the Indian border?" he asked. "Not even 10 km away," former King Gyanendra Shah had responded. Singh, apparently under instructions from the government in Delhi, told the media the next day that India was keen to

undertake the project with the promise of bestowing upon Lumbini the status it deserved.

How much Modi's visit to Lumbini will make up for Delhi's indifference is yet to be gauged. The two sides agreed to develop a Buddhist circuit, linking shrines located in the two countries with Lumbini occupying a prime position. India also agreed to set up the Dr B R Ambedkar Chair in Lumbini University, with around 1,000 students, including from China, enrolled.

Modi, by befriending Deuba, has made an effective attempt to repair the damage in bilateral ties that took place between 2016 and 2021 when he and his then Nepali counterpart K P Oli fell out. India not only refused to welcome Nepal's constitution promulgated in September 2015, but also launched an economic blockade for 134 days. Deuba, who is also the chairman of the Nepali Congress, recently accepted Modi's invitation for his party and the BJP to establish fraternal relations — something the Chinese Communist Party tried with the unified Communist party of Nepal. Modi's visit to Lumbini and the laying of the monastery's foundation may give India a foothold and cultural space. But that provides zero guarantee that it will be able to outdo its competitors, including the West and China, who are already deeply entrenched in Nepal.

The writer is a senior journalist based in Kathmandu



MAY 17, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

PRELIMINARY TALKS
A 30-MINUTE PRELIMINARY exchange of views between the leader of the Indian delegation, Eric Gonsalves, and the leader of the Chinese delegation, Fu Hao, and the conciliatory speeches they made at the dinner Gonsalves hosted in honour of the visitors set the tone for the tone for the Sino-Indian talks opening the next day. Both Gonsalves and Fu, in their carefully prepared speeches warmly expressed their governments' desire to improve relations. And significantly, both of them underscored the understanding the two governments have already arrived at that the border dispute is the central issue the resolution of which is important for the normalisation of relations between India and China. The problems that

India and China faced in today's world can be better faced if they devised a basis for co-operation and fully normal relations, Gonsalves said.

MINISTRY GUIDELINES

THE UNION HOME Ministry has asked ministers of state governments not to make statements on communal disturbances in their areas. The Home Ministry has recently sent "exhaustive guidelines" on prevention and control of communal disturbances and for promotion of communal harmony to the states and union territory administration." It has suggested that ministers should not comment on any agitation likely to lead to communal dissatisfaction. Once distur-

bances start, ministers should not express their views on the cause of the disturbances and they way they were being dealt with because this was bound to affect steps taken by the local administration.

MISSING CANDIDATES

WEST BENGAL CHIEF minister Jyoti Basu has asked police to intensify the search for the two election candidates and an agent who have been missing since May 14. Kashi Kanto Moitra, a Janata candidate, Gopal Chandra Sarkar, a Congress (I) nominee and Moitra's election agent, Shibu Choudhury, did not return home after election campaigns. Police have meanwhile found the car in which Sarkar was reportedly abducted.

THE IDEAS PAGE

Bound by geography

Developments in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan underline need for India to reframe regional ties, work with its neighbourhood



RAJA-MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS — in Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan — underline the geographic imperative that binds India to its neighbours in the Subcontinent. Together, they should remind the region's leaders that working with the logic of geography has become an unavoidable necessity amidst the deepening regional and global crises accentuated by Russia's war in Ukraine.

As higher oil and food prices trigger inflation and popular unrest across the region, more intensive regional cooperation is one of the tools for managing the new dangers. The last few weeks have seen some positive trends in that direction as well as enduring negative policies that defy the logic of geography.

Last week, the Indian High Commission in Colombo was quick to scotch wild speculation that the former strongman prime minister of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa was fleeing to India. We don't know if Mahinda Rajapaksa, a target of the people's outrage for the terrible mismanagement of the economy, was actually planning to take a short flight out of Lanka. If he did, India would be the natural first destination given the geographic proximity.

Now put on the exit control list in Colombo, Mahinda might not be travelling any time soon to India and pay his regular obeisance to his favourite deity, Lord Venkateswara in the Tirumala hills. But India has had a long tradition of hosting political exiles from the region. Whether it was the Dalai Lama from Tibet or Prachanda from Nepal, Delhi has welcomed leaders from the neighbourhood taking shelter in India.

There is a dangerous flip side to this positive tradition in the Subcontinent. India has paid a high price for the decision in the early 1980s to train and arm Sri Lankan Tamil rebels. That, hopefully, is an exception rather than the rule in India's emerging neighbourhood policy.

While India's muscular meddling in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka did not succeed in realising the Tamil demands, it unfortunately contributed to the deep distrust between Delhi and the Sinhala nationalists. As a consequence, the geographic imperative became a casualty in Colombo.

But the current crisis in Sri Lanka raised hopes for transcending the internal ethnic divide in the island nation and rebuilding political confidence between Colombo and Delhi. To be sure, positive sentiments driven by crises do not always last. But Delhi's unstinting support — both material and financial — for Colombo during this unprecedented economic and political crisis has generated much goodwill in Sri Lanka. This offers a major opportunity to reframe Delhi's ties with Colombo.

If India's relations with Sri Lanka underline the importance of continuous tending of political geography, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit this week to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha in Nepal, highlights the immense possibilities of cultural geography in reshaping the Subcontinent's regional relations.

The idea of a "Buddhist circuit" connecting the various pilgrimage sites across the India-Nepal border has been around for a long time. Given the massive size of the global Buddhist



C R Sasikumar

population — estimated to be more than 500 million — and the wider international interest in the historic sites, it is surprising how long it has taken Delhi and Kathmandu to come together in developing the Buddhist circuit.

That China has built a new airport near Lumbini and Modi is avoiding it points to the turbulent triangular dynamic between Delhi, Kathmandu, and Beijing. Even more consequential has been the deep discomfort of a large section of Nepal's political class — especially the communists that have dominated Kathmandu in the last two decades — with the India relationship.

The return of the Nepal Congress to the helm and its readiness to deepen ties with India has also opened the door for a recalibration of Delhi's ties with Kathmandu. Revitalising the shared cultural geography inevitably involves better management of economic geography. The last few years have seen the Modi government step up on infrastructure development on the Indian side and accelerate transborder transport and energy connectivity in the eastern subcontinent.

Religion and culture are deeply interconnected in South Asia. Developing all religious pilgrimage sites across the region, and improving the transborder access to them could not only improve tourist revenues of all the South Asian nations, but could also have a calming effect on the troubled political relations between nations.

Despite their frozen bilateral political relationship, Delhi and Islamabad had agreed to open the Kartarpur corridor at the end of 2019 across their militarised Punjab border. The corridor makes it easier for Sikh pilgrims to visit the shrine in Kartarpur in Pakistan, where Guru Nanak founded the Sikh faith. There is much more to be done on reconnecting the Subcontinent's sacred geographies — including the Ramayana trail and Sufi shrines.

While parts of the region are aligning their policies with the geographic imperative, Pakistan would seem to be an exception. Some would say, Islamabad's policies are deliberately anti-geographic. Consider, for example, the recent controversy in Pakistan over the routine appointment of a "trade officer" in its high commission in Delhi.

Facing a barrage of media criticism, the new government led by Shehbaz Sharif had to clarify that it was not planning to improve trade ties with India. Given the depth of its macro economic crisis and massive inflation, one

Religion and culture are deeply interconnected in South Asia. Developing all religious pilgrimage sites across the region, and improving the transborder access to them could not only improve tourist revenues of all the South Asian nations, but could also have a calming effect on the troubled political relations between nations.

might have thought Pakistan would want to expand trade ties with India in its own economic interest. But Pakistan's politics are hard-wired against the logic of geography.

An attempt at limited trade liberalisation with India after the two countries signed a ceasefire agreement in February last year was overruled at the last moment by Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Muslim League's Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistan People's Party's Asif Ali Zardari — who back the present government in Islamabad — have, in the past, supported normal trade relations with India, but could not get the army's consent.

While General Qamar Javed Bajwa, the current Chief of Army Staff, had called for a reset of relations with India, Imran Khan pulled the plug on trade liberalisation. His argument was that Pakistan can't trade with India unless Delhi reversed its 2019 constitutional changes in Kashmir.

Now Imran is on the streets campaigning against the "imported government" (from the US which, according to the former PM, conspired to oust him from power). He could chew the government up if it opens up to trade with India. The army, long viewed as a decisive arbiter in Pakistan's political and policy disputes, seems divided on how best to manage the current crisis.

This leaves Shehbaz little room for creative policy making that can ease some of Pakistan's current economic problems. Meanwhile, the young Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who has taken charge of Pakistan's Foreign Office, is tied down by his bureaucracy's staple of Kashmir cliches.

Delhi had little reason to believe that Pakistan's new government can alter its self-defeating policy towards India. But it must continue to bet that the geographic imperative will eventually prevail over Islamabad's policies. Pessimists in Delhi will say the word "eventually" means nothing for policy-making today. But optimists would say India must continue to find ways to work with Pakistan.

Realists might want to argue that current trends in the Subcontinent point to India's growing agency in shaping its neighbourhood and that Pakistan will not forever remain an exception. For Delhi, the policy question is whether India can do something to hasten the inevitable change in Pakistan.

The writer is Senior Fellow, Asia Society Policy Institute, Delhi and a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Most Asian countries wish the US can contribute more to the region rather than engage in moves to weaken the region. Washington should listen to ASEAN instead of indulging in a zero-sum game and regarding its relations with ASEAN as playing a seesaw." — GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

On sedition, a beginning

Centre has done well to display leadership in a matter that has divided the country in recent years



RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

IT IS rare that the prime minister himself conveys, in a pending proceeding before the apex court, his clear and unequivocal views about respecting human rights, protecting civil liberties and further respecting the freedoms granted to the people of India. It was refreshing to find the categorical assertion by the PM in an affidavit: "One of India's strengths is the diverse thought streams that beautifully flourished in our country." In the 75th year of our Independence, as our nation is marking "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav", PM Modi has appealed to Indians to work harder to shed our colonial baggage, which includes colonial laws and practices.

These are not empty words only for an affidavit. Under his leadership, nearly 1,500 old colonial-era laws have been scrapped. About 25,000 compliance rules which were creating hurdles, have been removed and many offences that were a hindrance to development have been decriminalised. There was also in the affidavit a profound statement of great intent: "Laws and compliances which reeked of a colonial mindset have no place in today's India."

With this background, it was conveyed, that the Government of India has decided to re-examine and reconsider the provisions of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code which deals with sedition. The history of the sedition law in India is in many ways unique. During the British Raj, it was part of the penal law from the very beginning. The British government in India not only framed the law, defining various offences, but also made sedition a very serious offence, punishable with imprisonment for life and a fine. The definition of sedition was a little vague, whereby any attempt to bring hatred or contempt or attempt to excite disaffection towards the government constituted sedition. Disaffection includes disloyalty and feeling of enmity. Sedition was designed to perpetuate the hold of the British on the people of India, and any attempt at disloyalty was enough for the offence.

Great leaders of the freedom movement became the targets of the law. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first person to be convicted of sedition in colonial India because the British government thought that his writings in his celebrated Marathi newspaper, *Kesari*, were causing disaffection against the British Raj. He was imprisoned for 18 months. Even Gandhiji, in 1922, was sentenced to six years for his article in *Young India* on the charge of "attempting to excite disaffection towards his majesty's Government established by law in British India". Many others were also prosecuted and convicted.

Significantly, during the making of the

Constitution, December 1, 1948, K M Munshi moved an amendment in the Constituent Assembly proposing sedition be dropped "as constituting a restriction on right to freedom of speech and expression particularly in the context of the painful experience to punish Indians by the British authorities for even innocuous expressions and criticism of colonial government." Article 19(1)(a)(g) provides for various freedoms including freedom of speech and expression while clause 19(2) to (6) enumerates provisions for constituting reasonable restrictions on the exercise of such rights.

It must be noted that in none of the said clauses is the offence of sedition mentioned as grounds for "reasonable restriction". There are expressions like "interest of sovereignty and integrity of India", and security of state public order but not sedition. Sedition simply means "deshdroh". Yet, it has continued in the IPC. There have been judgments from various high courts in this regard but a constitution bench of the Supreme Court delivered a judgment in 1962 (*Kedarnath Singh vs The State of Bihar*) where it held that "unless accompanied by incitement or call for violence criticism of government cannot be labelled Sedition".

There has been genuine criticism about why this colonial-era provision should be a part of our statute. The Congress party, which claims to be the inheritor of the freedom movement, never tried to scrap this law though it ruled India for nearly 60 years. Certain freedoms are fundamental under our constitutional scheme.

There have been cases of rampant abuse and the latest is a hilarious instance from a particular state where singing the Hanuman Chalisa amounted to sedition. Surely, there is a need for a review of the law. India, in the 75th year of its independence, is strong and stable enough to decide in a free, fair and objective manner whether the offence of sedition is needed or not, and if so under what form with strong guidelines to prevent its misuse, and clearly enunciate the circumstances in which it can be invoked. The PM has trusted the process by which so many old laws have been repealed, offences decriminalised and thousands of compliance burdens removed. All this was done in a peaceful manner with due consultation. This is the institutional strength of India. I am quite sure the same process will entail a relook at the whole issue of sedition to the satisfaction of all concerned where a healthy balance is maintained between respect for human rights and civil liberties and the compelling need to fight terrorism, and separatism and whose clear agenda is to break India.

I must conclude with a word of gratitude for the PM for demonstrating extraordinary leadership in a matter that has divided the country for the last few years. Let's hope the inner strength of the country will help us arrive at a healthy conclusion. Equally, the Supreme Court has shown judicial statesmanship by agreeing with the government's request to give time for the review and by passing appropriate interim protections in the meantime.

The writer is a BJP MP and former Union Law Minister

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LOSING THE WAR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Blame it on Putin' (IE, May 16). With no swift end to the Russia-Ukraine War as Putin, the aggressor, expected, alliances are being drawn and redrawn. Russia's aggressive posturing is making the hitherto neutral nations like Sweden and Finland worried for their safety. The two countries are thinking of joining NATO, which may not strengthen the organisation, but will, definitely, help in projecting it, and, in consequence, the US, as a force to be reckoned with. Russia may be winning the battles in the ongoing crisis, but it is losing the war.

Vijai Pant, Hampur

DATA QUALITY

THIS REFERS TO the article. 'What number hide' (IE, May 14). The availability of reliable and transparent data has been a serious issue in India for a long time. Well before the Covid data controversy, there were questions raised over GDP calculation accuracy, expenditure survey data quality and others. These disputes over the accuracy of numbers arise largely on account of a paucity of quality and reliable information, which results in widely differing estimates and measurements. Unless a credible and consistent quality data infrastructure is built, these unseemly debates will keep recurring, and worse still, lead to

wrong inferences and policies.

Hemant Contractor, Pune

KNEE-JERK RESPONSE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Caught with chaff' (IE, May 16). Strangely unaware of ground reality, Minister of Commerce Piyush Goyal came up with sweeping statements painting a rosy picture of wheat output in the current season, despite indications to the contrary. Now, taking food security as the reason, a blanket ban on wheat exports has been hurriedly imposed, adversely affecting not only the exporters and grain traders but also the farmers. A better solution could have been to gradually cap the exports so that the global supply chain does not get abruptly disrupted. Such knee-jerk reactions speak of a government not willing to take the arduous route of assuredly managing farm production and hurting its own image as a global supplier of grains.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurgaon

A GREAT WIN

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'India Thomas Cup champs: Who would have thought?' The Team' (IE, May 16). Our badminton team's winning of the Thomas Cup is in a class by itself. It was the result of laudable teamwork and coordination.

Y G Chouksey, Pune



SUBIMAL BHATTACHARJEE

ON APRIL 28, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) issued "directions" under Section 70-B(6) of the Information Technology Act 2000 (IT Act) relating to information security practices, procedure, prevention, response and reporting of cyber incidents. These directions have brought about a wide-ranging expansion in the scope of obligations of the above requirements compared to the Information Technology (The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team and Manner of performing functions and duties) Rules, 2013 (Rules). Among the activities in which compliance is sought by service providers, intermediaries, data centres and body corporates are the synchronisation of computer clocks to the network time protocol set at the National Physical Laboratory and National Informatics Centre (NIC), mandatory reporting of all cyber incidents within six hours of noticing or being brought to their notice in the prescribed format, designating point of contact and notifying CERT-In and undertaking to perform such actions for cyber security mitigation when notified by CERT-IN, maintaining all logs of all ICT systems up to 180 days within Indian jurisdiction and for data centres, virtual private network service providers, cloud service providers and virtual private server providers to maintain all records of their users and usage for a minimum of five years.

While the overall thrust towards a robust

The cybersecurity burden

CERT-In directions on cybersecurity compliance are rushed

cyber incident reporting and security regime is prudent, some of the provisions in the absence of clarification from CERT-In have raised concerns amongst industry observers and cyber security experts. For some time now, CERT-IN has been struggling to get information and incident reporting from service providers, intermediaries as well as body corporates as per the rules and its mandate under section 70B(4) of the IT Act. This was impacting its responsibility as a collector, analyser and disseminator of information on cyber incidents as well as coordinating incident responses and emergency measures. So, it took recourse to the directions, which strangely do not differentiate between the scales and nature of the incident. Some cyber incidents are far more common and occur regularly. An organisation might receive hundreds of phishing emails and the effort to notify each would drastically increase their compliance cost. It would also be interesting to know what CERT-In's strategy will be for dealing with commonplace cyber incidents and its own capacity enhancement in terms of handling the compliance sought.

A window of 60 days has been provided before implementation of these compliances begins. Given the scale of the revamp, this might be too short a window. The government must look at the concerns that arise from such directions and work out a realistic time scale. The ugly episode of the Twitter incident

around compliance with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, last year is a stark reminder of the pitfalls of rushing in compliances without factoring in concerns. In this case, there will be multiple companies even from the MSME sector that will take time to set up systems for compliances.

All covered entities also have to mandatorily enable logs and maintain them for 180 days within the Indian jurisdiction. At present, most entities maintain logs for around 30 days, and in order to maintain logs for 180 days, the additional data storage device cost would be huge. Similarly, data centres, virtual private server providers, cloud service providers and virtual private network service providers will need to retain additional information for five years or more after the cancellation or withdrawal of registration. The virtual asset industry too will have to maintain all KYC records and details of all financial transactions for five years. The compliance cost in each case is going to rise substantially.

Many of the entities will have to shift their servers geographically as well as add excess storage capacity. Most importantly, the recruitment of additional manpower for compliance may take far longer. A realistic timeline would be six months, which would allow the entities to effectively migrate to the new regime. The penalty for non-compliance is stiff (including

up to one year of imprisonment and monetary fines). But it is also unfair to create unrealistic deadlines for industry.

This is also going to significantly affect organisations that have maintained their servers offshore, although the move is in line with the government's stated objective of localising data storage. But what cannot be denied are privacy concerns. With VPNs and virtual asset wallets being asked to store and share KYC and transaction data, these concerns become evident. VPNs have been successful for corporates as well as individuals because they address privacy concerns. There have been very few instances where these tunnels have been used for criminal activities and support from the providers was not obtained by law enforcement authorities. In the absence of legislative backing for data protection, which has been on the anvil for more than two years, the question is: How will the user have any say on which information can be held back or how his sensitive personal information is being protected?

While CERT-In has been proactive in recognising the changing frontiers of technology and trying to deal with hitherto unknown cyber threats, it is wanting in terms of a graded approach to ensuring compliance.

The writer is a defence and cybersecurity analyst

TOP OF THE WORLD



US President Joe Biden.

USA

Biden acts to deploy troops to Somalia

Washington: President Joe Biden signed an order on Monday to redeploy hundreds of US troops to Somalia to counter the Islamic extremist rebel group al-Shabab. US troops will be repositioned from elsewhere in Africa to train and provide other support to Somali forces in their fight against al-Shabab, which is considered the largest and wealthiest affiliate of the al-Qaida extremist organisation. The decision to station forces again in Somalia, rather than rotate them in and out, is intended "to maximise the safety and effectiveness of our forces and enable them to provide more efficient support to our partners," National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in announcing the redeployment. **AP**

LEBANON

Early results: Hezbollah sees election losses

Beirut: Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group and its allies appear to have suffered losses in this week-end's parliamentary elections with preliminary results Monday showing their strongest opponents picking up more seats and some of their traditional partners routed out of the legislature. Despite the apparent setback, Hezbollah and its main Shia ally, the Amal group of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, are likely to retain the 27 seats allocated to the sect. It was not clear, however, whether the Iran-backed group and its allies would hang on to the majority they have held since 2018. **AP**

UK

4 men infected with monkeypox in London

London: British health authorities say they have identified four "rare and unusual" cases of the disease monkeypox among men who appear to have been infected in London and had no history of travel to the African countries where the smallpox-like disease is endemic. In a statement Monday, the UK's Health Security Agency said an investigation had begun into how the men became infected and whether they had any links to each other. Three of the men are in London and one is in northeast England. Last week, Britain reported three earlier cases of monkeypox. **AP**

NEPAL

In a first, Britisher scales Everest for 16th time

Kathmandu: Kenton Cool, a 48-year-old British national, has scaled the world's highest peak Mount Everest for the 16th time, becoming the first non-Nepalese to do so, a media report said on Monday. Cool, who hails from Gloucestershire, a county in South West England, reached the top of Mount Everest for the 16th time early on Sunday morning. *The Guardian* reported, citing the Instagram page of Cool. **PTI**

ERDOGAN OPPOSES NORDIC MOVE, MACRON SHOWS SUPPORT

Putin appears to back off threats as Sweden decides to join NATO

AGENCIES

STOCKHOLM/KYIV, MAY 16

VLADIMIR PUTIN appeared to climb down on Monday from Russia's objections to Sweden and Finland joining NATO, saying Moscow had no issues with them entering the US-led military alliance they now aim to join in reaction to his invasion of Ukraine.

Though the Russian leader said Moscow would take action if NATO were to move more troops or hardware onto the territory of its new members - steps Finland and Sweden have both already ruled out - he said NATO's expansion itself was not a threat.

"As far as expansion goes, including new members Finland and Sweden, Russia has no problems with these states - none. And so in this sense there is no immediate threat to Russia from an expansion to include these countries," Putin said.

The comments came after Sweden on Monday decided to join Finland in seeking NATO membership. "Russia has said that it will take countermeasures if we join NATO," she said. "We cannot rule out that Sweden will be exposed to, for instance, disinformation and attempts to intimidate and divide us," the PM said.

Putin, however, had stated that, "The expansion of military infrastructure into this territory would certainly provoke our response. What that (response) will be - we will see what threats are created for us." "Problems are being created for no reason at all. We shall react accordingly."

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Swedish and Finnish delegations should not bother coming to Ankara to convince it to approve their NATO bid. President Emmanuel Macron of France welcomed Finland and Sweden's decision to apply for NATO membership, saying in a statement that their accession would reinforce security for "Europe as a whole."

A resident next to a flooded area after Ukrainian military forces opened a dam to flood a residential area to stop advance of Russian forces to Kyiv on Sunday. *Reuters*

MCDONALD'S RETREATS FROM MOSCOW

Russian forces fall back in northeast Ukraine

REUTERS

RUSKA LOZOVA, MAY 16

UKRAINIAN TROOPS have pushed Russian forces back from the northeastern city of Kharkiv and some have advanced as far as the border with Russia, Ukrainian officials said on Monday.

The developments, if confirmed, would signal a further shift in momentum in favour of Ukraine. And in another setback for Putin, McDonald's Corp, the world's largest fast food chain, said it was pulling out of Russia because of the conflict. The world's largest burger chain, which owns about 84% of its nearly 850 restaurants in Russia, will take a related non-cash charge of up to \$1.4 billion following its sale.

On the battlefields near Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, interior ministry adviser Vadym Denisenko said

Ukrainian troops were mounting a counter-offensive. "It can no longer be stopped... Thanks to this, we can go to the rear of the Russian group of forces," he said.

Ukraine's defence ministry said on Monday the 227th Battalion of the 127th Brigade of Ukraine's Territorial Defence Forces had reached the border with Russia. The governor of the Luhansk region in Donbas, Serhiy Gaidai, said the situation "remains difficult", with Russian forces trying to capture the town of Sieverodonetsk.

Russia said on Monday that it had agreed to evacuate wounded Ukrainian soldiers from the bunkers below the besieged Azovstal steel works in Mariupol to a medical facility in the Russian-controlled town of Novoazovsk. "An agreement has been reached on the removal of the wounded," the Moscow defence ministry said in a statement.

EU to offer Kyiv new loans to plug urgent needs

FRANCESCO GUARASCIO

BRUSSELS, MAY 16

THE EUROPEAN Commission is set to propose on Wednesday a new package of financial aid to Ukraine, including new loans to provide immediate liquidity to Kyiv and commitments for the long-term financing of the country's reconstruction, officials said.

The size of the short-term financial support is still being defined but two officials familiar with the discussions told *Reuters* they expected it to roughly cover Ukraine's financial needs for two months, largely through loans.

A third official said the money would come from the EU budget and from EU governments, dismissing earlier talk that the funds could be raised in the market with the issuance of joint bonds backed by the EU budget.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated in April that Ukraine needed around \$5 billion dollars a month for at least three months to plug the immediate financial shortfall caused by Russia's invasion.

The Fund's chief, Kristalina Georgieva, has called for this support to come in the form of grants rather than loans.

The scale of EU support will depend also on how much G7 countries are willing to contribute. A meeting of finance ministers of the Group of Seven major economies is scheduled in the second half of this week, just after the Commission is expected to unveil its proposals.

A spokesperson for the EU declined to comment on the new package. **REUTERS**



FRANCE

MACRON PICKS ELISABETH BORNE AS PM

French President Emmanuel Macron picked Labour Minister Elisabeth Borne as his new prime minister on Monday as he prepares for legislative elections in June - only the second time in 30 years that a woman has got the job. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Jean Castex handed in his resignation, paving the way for a cabinet overhaul after Macron's re-election in April.

People wait in a queue to buy petrol at a closed fuel station in Colombo on Monday. *Reuters*

Sri Lanka down to last day of petrol, says PM

In first televised address, he says nation needs \$75 million forex to pay for imports

REUTERS & AP

COLOMBO, MAY 16

SRI LANKA'S new prime minister said on Monday the crisis-hit nation was down to its last day of petrol, as the country's power minister told citizens not to join the lengthy fuel queues that have galvanised weeks of anti-government protests.

Ranil Wickremesinghe said in his first televised address to the nation the country urgently needed \$75 million in foreign exchange to pay for essential imports. "At the moment, we only have petrol stocks for a single day. The next couple of months will be the most difficult ones of our lives," he said. "We must prepare ourselves to make some sacrifices and face the challenges of this period."

Two shipments of petrol and two of diesel using an Indian credit line could provide relief in the next few days, he added, but the country is also facing a shortage of 14 essential medicines.

"Request the public not to queue up or top up in the next three days until the 1,190 fuel station deliveries have been completed," Power Minister Kanchana

EXPLAINED Crisis in nation

IN HIS ADDRESS, the PM said the country's financial health is so poor that the government has been forced to print money to pay the salaries. He said about \$75 billion is needed urgently to help provide people with essential items, but the country's treasury is struggling to find even \$1 billion.

Wijesekera said on Monday.

Wickremesinghe said "I have no desire to hide the truth and to lie to the public. Although these facts are unpleasant and terrifying, this is the true situation. For a short period, our future will be even more difficult than the tough times that we have passed." "We will face considerable challenges and adversity. However, this period will not be long," he said, adding that countries with which he has spoken have pledged to help in the next few months.

POLICE SAY WOULD-BE BOMBER ARRESTED

Pak: Foiled suicide attack against Chinese nationals along CPEC

ASIF SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD, MAY 16

PAKISTANI POLICE arrested a would-be suicide bomber who planned to blow himself up near a convoy of Chinese nationals along the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a police statement said.

Monday's arrest came two weeks after a woman suicide bomber blew herself up on a university campus in the southern port city of Karachi, killing three Chinese teachers and their Pakistani driver. Police arrested the militant in southwestern Balochistan province that borders Afghanistan and Iran, the statement said.

She belongs to the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which has started using women militants as suicide bombers, police said, a new phenomenon for counter-terrorism police who are more used to dealing with such attacks by Islamist militants. "The woman wanted

Shehbaz assures more security for Chinese citizens

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured China that his government is determined to take all necessary measures for the enhanced security and safety of Chinese nationals in Pakistan and affirmed his "firm resolve" to fast track projects under the \$60 billion CPEC. **PTI**

to target a convoy of Chinese nationals," police said, adding the attack was planned along a route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Police recovered explosives and detonators from the woman and investigated her, revealing her plans to target Chinese nationals. No other evidence was produced to support their accusation. **REUTERS**

N Korea's Kim orders military to stabilise supply of Covid drugs

Seoul: Leader Kim Jong Un has ordered North Korea's military to stabilise distribution of Covid-19 medicine in the capital, Pyongyang, state media said.

Drugs procured by the state were not reaching people quickly, Kim told an emergency politburo meeting on Sunday, before visiting pharmacies near the capital's Taedong River, state news agency KCNA said.

Kim ordered immediate deployment of the "powerful forces" of the army's medical corps to "stabilise the supply of medicines in Pyongyang City", it added.

Among shortcomings were a lack of adequate drug storage, salespeople unequipped with the proper sanitary clothing and hygiene falling short of standards, Kim said. He criticised the "irresponsible" work attitude, organisation and execution by the cabinet and the public health sector, it added. **REUTERS**

US deaths from Covid hit 1 mn

CORONAVIRUS CASES are spreading at an alarming rate across the US, particularly in the Northeast and the Midwest, as the country's death toll nears the one million mark.

An average of over 90,000 new cases are now being identified each day in the US, a 60 per cent increase from two weeks ago. And in much of the Northeast and Midwest, daily new-case reports have already surpassed the peak of last summer's Delta surge.

Hospitalisations are increasing across the country, though more slowly than new cases. The number of patients with coronavirus in American hospitals surpassed 21,000 over the past week, but still a 23 per cent rise from two weeks ago. Health officials across the Midwest are beginning to warn high-risk people to once again wear masks indoors and to get booster shots, as counties in several states move to higher-risk Covid-19 community levels. **NYT**

Imran's security beefed up after 'assassination' plot claims

Islamabad: The Pakistan government on Monday beefed up security for former PM Imran Khan, two days after he claimed that there was a plot to assassinate him, according to a media report.

Khan claimed on Saturday that a "conspiracy" to assassinate him was being hatched in Pakistan and abroad, warning that if anything happens to him, the people will come to know about the perpetrators through a video message he has recently recorded and placed in a safe place.

At Khan's residence in Bani Gala, 94 security officers will be deployed, of which, 22 men will be from the Islamabad police and 72 from the Frontier Constabulary, the report said, quoting the spokesperson of the interior ministry. **PTI**

PLAN REPRESENTS STEP TOWARD COUNTRY'S GOAL OF ACHIEVING NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS BY 2050

New Zealand to help pay for cleaner cars to reduce emissions

NICK PERRY

WELLINGTON, MAY 16

NEW ZEALAND'S government said on Monday it will help pay for lower-income families to scrap their old gas guzzlers and replace them with cleaner hybrid or electric cars as part of a sweeping plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The government said it plans to spend 569 million New Zealand dollars (\$357 million) on the trial programme as part of a larger plan that includes subsidies for businesses to reduce emissions, a switch to an entirely green bus fleet by 2035 and curbside

food-waste collection for most homes by the end of the decade.

"This is a landmark day in our transition to a low emissions future," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a statement. "We've all seen the recent reports on sea level rise and its impact right here in New Zealand. We cannot leave the issue of climate change until it's too late to fix."

The plan represents a step toward the pledges the nation made under the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change and New Zealand's stated goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Ardern, who was scheduled to launch the plan but cancelled

An electric vehicle charging station and car share parking in Auckland. *AP*

after testing positive for Covid-19 late last week, said every community and sector had a role to play and that reducing reliance on fossil fuels would help shield households from volatile price hikes.

The plan also sets a target of reducing total car travel by 20% over the next 13 years by offering better transportation options in cities as well as improved options for cyclists and walkers.

The programmes will be paid for from a 4.5 billion New Zealand dollar (\$2.8 billion) climate emergency response fund. Officials said over time, money collected from polluters would pay for the programmes rather than taxes from households.

The most significant emissions reductions for the period ending December 31, 2025 will come in the energy, industrial and transport sectors, government documents said, adding every sector will have to play a role.

But the plan remained short on some details, including for the gas guzzler replacement plan which the government said would be finalised over the coming months. And some critics said it continued to give an easy ride to the nation's huge agriculture industry, which creates about half of the nation's total greenhouse gas emissions but is also vital to the economy as the nation's biggest export earner.

"Some of the policies announced, like the cash-for-clunkers system, are proven to be dogs and have been tried and failed overseas," said David Seymour, leader of the libertarian ACT Party. Seymour said consumers should be able to choose how they reduce emissions through the market-based emissions trading scheme.

According to Reuters report, the new Emissions Reduction Plan "delivers the greatest opportunity we've had in decades to address climate change but also move to a high wage, low emissions economy that provides greater economic security by creating jobs," Ardern said. **AP**

SECTOR WATCH
INSURANCE

Disclosure norms eased for foreign reinsurance branches, Lloyd's

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, MAY 16EXPLAINED
Where do they invest

IN A surprise move, the insurance regulator has relaxed the disclosure requirements of foreign reinsurance branches (FRBs) and Lloyd's India as part of "rationalisation of compliance" standards.

The regulator said FRBs and Lloyd's India are now exempted from disclosing financial details and underwriting performance through NL40 format. However, according to experts, the latest measures will lead to opaqueness in the functioning of reinsurance branches in India.

Irdai said FRBs and Lloyd's India need not publish the half yearly and annual revenue account, profit & loss account, balance sheet and analytical ratios as mandated in the captioned circular in the newspapers. "However, they may continue to publish a true and accurate abstract of the various returns for the purpose of publicity on a voluntary basis pursuant to provisions of Section 25 of the Insurance Act, 1938," it said.

FRBs and Lloyd's India provide reinsurance support to the direct insurers and the insurers do conduct their due diligence on the FRBs while entering reinsurance contracts with them, Irdai said. "The necessary information on financials is also made available through public disclosures on the respective website of the FRBs. Reinsurance business is B2B segment and the policyholders do not deal with the reinsurers," it said in a circular to the CEOs of insurance companies.

"Transparency is equally important. Discontinuing uploading NL40 appears to be a retrograde step in this era of transparency. Whether the FRBs in India have provided any significant advantage to the market as compared to the services rendered by international reinsurers who do not have a branch India is a matter that requires frank study and analysis," said former Irdai Whole-time Member KK Srinivasan.

Traditionally, the FRBs and Lloyd's India do not invest in equity instruments and they mainly invest in government

FOREIGN REINSURANCE branches (FRBs) and Lloyd's India do not invest in equity instruments and they mainly invest in government securities and debt markets.

Based on the investment exposures of the branches of foreign reinsurers and Lloyd's India, Irdai has granted exemption to entities, whose investment policy does not permit the investment in equity, from the application of common stewardship code, disclosure requirements and returns.

The entities, whose investment policy allows equity investment but have not made any investment in equity, the code is applicable. However, a NIL return will be a sufficient compliance for the same, Irdai said. "Other entities have to comply with the prescribed requirements."

Irdai has dispensed with the Form NL 40 on disclosure of underwriting performance but advised insurers to file the said format to the Authority.

"In any case FRBs don't bring in any significant FDI in to India unlike joint venture insurance or reinsurance companies incorporated in India. If the Ukraine war escalates, the threat of FRBs clamping up if India does not yield to the pressure of joining America and the western powers against Russia, is quite high. The role played by FRBs and the extent of our market dependence on them requires study and more critical monitoring," Srinivasan said.

"NL 40 gives some important ratios line of business wise. For FRBs preparation and uploading of NL 40 in their website is simple and easy. In this era of disclosure and transparency exempting FRBs from uploading NL 40 seems a hasty step," he said.

"The Authority has received representations on the rationalization of compliance requirements of FRBs as they are not directly dealing with the retail customers," Irdai said.

BROADLY, SOUTHERN STATES, EXCEPT TELANGANA, SEE LOWER-THAN-NATIONAL LEVEL RATE

Rural pinches more in high inflation states

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

AS RETAIL inflation surged to an 8-year high of 7.79 per cent in April, individual states recorded a divergent trend with southern states of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, alongside Punjab and Delhi, seeing a perceptibly lower-than-national level inflation rate, while states such as Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Assam trending mostly above the national level.

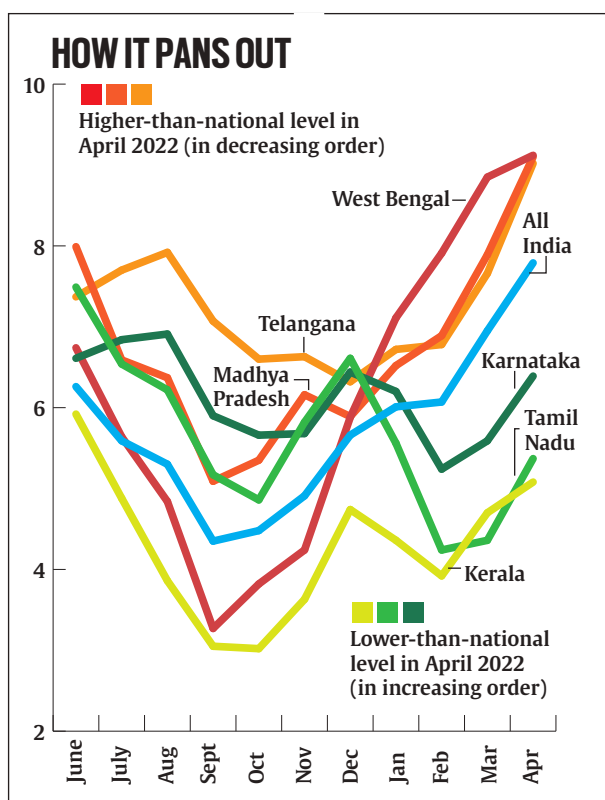
Retail inflation has persisted above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) inflation target for the fourth straight month, with price levels rising to an 8-year high of 8.38 per cent in rural areas in April while urban inflation was at a 18-month high of 7.09 per cent. Incidentally, a number of states recording higher inflation rate over the national level are displaying a higher inflation trend in rural areas as against the urban areas.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation data for the last 11 months shows Kerala as the only state that has consistently remained below the all-India inflation level, while Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Jammu & Kashmir have stayed above the national level all

throughout. States/UT such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab and Delhi, which had remained above the national inflation level in at least five out of the last eleven months have now trended below the national level at least for the last three months. States such as West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan which had remained below the all-India inflation till December 2021 have now picked up pace to rise above the national level in the last three months (four months for Jharkhand).

Possible reasons include the cushion of subsidies routed through the public distribution system across income levels in some of the southern states. Also, states with lower urbanisation rates end up spending more on food and fuel, while those with more urban areas end up spending a higher share on services.

The disaggregated data reveals that most of these states, which have a higher inflation rate over the national level, are displaying a higher inflation trend in rural areas as against the urban areas. West Bengal has seen double-digit rural inflation over the last two months while rural inflation in Assam has also topped the national level over the last three months even as urban inflation remains below the national level.



Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Jammu & Kashmir too have recorded a higher rural than urban inflation in last 3 months at least.

Inflation rates for April-May 2021 were not considered, as the

government only provided state-wise indices and not inflation rates since all-India indices for these two months were imputed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Among states, the highest weight in CPI is of Maharashtra (13.18 per

cent), followed by Uttar Pradesh (12.37 per cent), Tamil Nadu (7.25 per cent) and West Bengal (7.09 per cent). "The first set of shocks to inflation have been broadly felt through food and fuel. Typically, poorer parts have a higher proportionate spending on food. About 60-80 per cent of the total spending in states with less urban areas or lower incomes would be on food, fuel, health and education. At the margin, there could also have been logistics-related shocks. Southern India, which has a higher per capita income than the national average could be spending more on services," Rahul Bajoria, chief economist, Barclays, said.

The decision to not reduce Value Added Tax on fuel in some of these states could also be an additional factor for higher fuel inflation. Services, as per the latest CPI data, have gained sharply with miscellaneous goods and services jumping to a 115-month high of 8.03 per cent in April and household goods and services rising to a 105-month high of 7.97 per cent.

There could also be the cushion of subsidies routed through the public distribution system seen across income levels in some of the southern states, especially on food items that constitute a big chunk of CPI inflation weightage. "States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu have a strong public distribution

system, wherein subsidised food may be helping cushion the impact of higher food prices," Devendra Kumar Patil, chief economist, India Ratings, said.

"Items which have price sensitivities to substitutes are gaining such as ghee prices that have been moving up, with upward movement in prices of cooking oil. Also, chicken prices have gained as feedstock prices have gone up globally and after a supply-scare was seen in Andhra Pradesh, which is the hub for meat, poultry and pisciculture. Fruit prices also gained to 8.4 per cent in April as against our expectation of 7.4 per cent, which could be seen as a result of the heat wave," Bajoria said.

Wheat, protein items (chicken in particular), milk, lemon, cooked meal, chillies, refined oil, potato, chillies, kerosene, firewood, gold and LPG are contributing to overall inflation in a substantive manner, an SBI Research report said.

"Kerosene has seen a sharp spike, almost 35-40 per cent month-on-month increase. Household use is limited and mainly used for industrial purposes. There has been a massive drop in kerosene consumption over last 10 years but since it is not subsidised in most parts, any price movement gets reflected substantially in inflation," Bajoria said. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

LIC to list today: GMP in negative

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 16

SHARES OF Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) will be listed on the stock exchanges on Tuesday, slated to be the country's largest, amid worries about market volatility and listing performance of the corporation.

Despite gloomy sentiment, the offer got better-than-expected subscriptions figures. "Unofficial grey market premium (GMP) is trading down into the negative territory mainly on the back of depressed global markets which are in the bearish zone since Russia-Ukraine war," said Prashanth Tapse, vice president (research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

"Everything depends on market conditions... market discount indicates that the stock may be listed at a moderate to discounted price. However, we expect a listing with a 7 per cent discount to a 3 per cent premium," said Ravi Singhal, vice chairman, GCL Securities Ltd. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

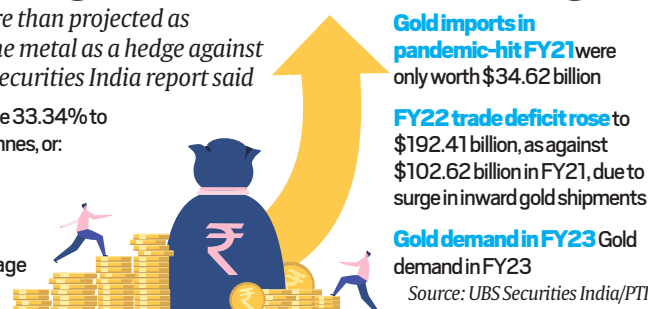
'Spiraling inflation may boost gold demand among households as a hedge'

Gold demand may rise more than projected as households may snap up the metal as a hedge against spiralling inflation, a UBS Securities India report said

GOLD IMPORTS IN FY22 rose 33.34% to \$46.14 billion in FY22 to 837 tonnes, or:

1.5 times above pandemic low in FY21

12% more than pre-pandemic average of FY16-20



Holcim CEO rules out capital gains tax on sale proceeds

RAJESH KURUP
MUMBAI, MAY 16

HOLCIM CEO Jan Jenisch on Monday said the company's \$10.5-billion sale of its stakes in Ambuja Cements and ACC to the Adani Group will not attract any capital gains tax. "According to our analysis, it is a tax-free transaction... there is no capital gains or any other tax for this transaction. I don't know if any complication arises, but we assume that we will get this 6.4 billion (Swiss francs) as net proceeds," Jenisch said in an analysts' call on Monday.

Tax experts said Holcim may not have to pay capital gains tax for the bulk, if not all, of the \$10.5-billion

proceeds from the sale as it will sell the shares in the Indian companies to the Adani family's offshore special purpose vehicle (SPV) through a Mauritius-incorporated entity. This will likely give the Swiss company the cover of India's tax treaty with the island nation. The India-Mauritius double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) was revised bilaterally in May 2016 to remove the tax waivers prospectively, make it on a par with other DTAs and check its rampant use for tax avoidance in India. However, a carve-out is still available for investments made prior to April 1, 2017. Holcim acquired the cement assets in India 17 years ago.

Holcim and its subsidiaries ex-

ecuted the share purchase agreement with Adani's SPV Endeavour Trade and Investments for the sale of its shareholding in Mauritius-based Holderind Investments, which in turn holds 63.19% stake in Ambuja Cements. The Holcim entity also agreed to sell 54.53% stake in ACC, of which 50.05% is held through Ambuja Cements. Capital gains from the sale of these stakes to the overseas SPV won't be taxed in India. However, it is not clear if the sale of 4.5% stake will also be routed through Holderind Investments or any other entity based in either Mauritius or Singapore. The benefit is now available only for investors from these two countries, subject to the cut-off date of April 1, 2017. **FE**

Adani makes open offer for 26% each in Ambuja Cements, ACC

Mumbai: Adani group on Monday made an open offer to acquire a 26 per cent stake each in Ambuja Cements and ACC Ltd from public shareholders after announcing a \$10.5-billion deal to acquire Holcim's India business.

Through its Mauritius-based subsidiary Endeavour Trade and Investment, the group has made an open offer at Rs 385 per share for Ambuja Cements Ltd and Rs

2,300 per share for ACC Ltd. For Ambuja Cements, the open offer to its public shareholders is for acquiring up to 51.63 crore equity shares, representing 26 per cent of the expanded share capital, aggregating to a total consideration of Rs 19,879.57 crore. While for ACC, the offer is to acquire up to 4.89 crore shares held by public shareholders, representing 26 per cent of the expanded

share capital, aggregating to a total consideration of Rs 11,259.97 crore. This would be "subject to the receipt of the Required Statutory Approval," Adani group said.

The open offer has been triggered after the execution of the share purchase agreement between Adani group and Holcim to buy controlling stake in the latter's India business. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

Bose proposes to repay Zilingo's \$40-mn debt

SALMAN SH
BENGALURU, MAY 16

ZILINGO'S CO-FOUNDER Ankita Bose, who was recently suspended from her position at the B2B e-commerce start-up, is exploring recompensing the company's entire outstanding debt worth \$40 million. This would provide her with an option to gain more equity in the firm, two people aware of the discussions said.

However, according to an investor in a venture debt firm based in Asia, Bose's endeavour to acquire more shares in the company could be met with a pushback from the board, and eventually lead to a legal tussle if the warrants were to be sold to her.

Sources said Bose had already reached out to Varde Partners and Indies Capital with a term sheet to pay back the entire pending loan amount. Varde and Indies provided a \$40 million loan to Zilingo under her leadership in July 2021, which is valid till July 2023. **FE**

Terra backer to compensate some users

Hong Kong: Luna Foundation Guard (LFG), a Singapore-based non-profit organisation designed to maintain TerraUSD's price, said Monday it spent the bulk of its reserves trying to defend its dollar peg last week and would use what little remained to compensate some users who had lost out.

The token's crash last week sent cryptocurrencies crashing, as bitcoin traded below \$30,000 on Monday. **REUTERS**

TO TAKE UP NEW ROLE WITHIN GROUP, SAYS CO

Srinivasan quits as MD of Aditya Birla Capital

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 16

ADITYA BIRLA Capital Ltd (ABCL) on Monday said Ajay Srinivasan has decided to step down as MD and CEO of the company as he had "expressed his desire to take on a new role within the group".

According to a media report, serious allegations of corruption and mismanagement, including front-running and insider trading, have been levelled by a whistleblower against ABCL and Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC. In an exchange filing, ABCL said, "The company received a complaint in which certain allegations were made about Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC and its employees. As per the Aditya Birla group policy, an independent Committee was formed to investigate the allegations."

"The committee did not find any merit in the allegations. There was no allegation whatsoever, made against Ajay Srinivasan, by the said employee," a company spokesperson said.

"In so far as Srinivasan stepping down is concerned, it is clarified that he had expressed his desire to take on a new role within the group, after having served as chief executive for over 14 years," the person said, adding, "A role is being crafted at the group level in consultation with him."

"A story has appeared, this morning, based on insinuations of vested interests. These insinuations/ allegations are bereft of facts," the company said. The board of ABCL recently appointed Vishakha Mulye as the next CEO. ABCL is the holding company



Ajay Srinivasan has stepped down amid reported whistle-blower allegations of corruption. *via company*

for the financial services businesses of the Aditya Birla Group. Its overall AUM across asset management, life insurance and health insurance businesses grew 16 per cent on-year to Rs 3,72,423 crore as of December 2021.

On Monday, ABCL fell 5 per cent to Rs 95.05 while Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC dove 7.44 per cent to Rs 452.30 on the BSE.

ABCL further stated, "There have been no employee exits at Aditya Birla Capital and Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, as a fallout of these malicious allegations. Girish Patil left the company to pursue better prospects outside the group. Vineet Maloo moved internally within Aditya Birla Group, in line with the group's policy of career progression."

"The reference in the article associating his new role with the AMC business is not correct and misleading. Further, it is also not correct as mentioned in the article that Girish Patil is related to Mahesh Patil. Girish Patil and Mahesh Patil are not related to each other in any manner," it added.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Solar glass duty

New Delhi: The Commerce Ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) recommended continuation of anti-dumping duty on Chinese solar glass, also known as "textured tempered coated and un-coated glass", for two years.

Annual reports

New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India has relaxed compliance rules for entities with listed non-convertible securities from dispatching physical copies of annual report to debenture holders till December-end.

BoE member

London: UK-based academic Dr Swati Dhingra has been named the first Indian-origin woman to be appointed external member of the Bank of England's interest rate-setting panel. **PTI**

PGCIL deal

New Delhi: Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) has acquired the project special purpose vehicle (SPV) - Khetri Narela Transmission Ltd after emerging successful in the Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) by the government. **ENS**

Era of higher interest rates; encourage cut in duties on fuel: CII

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 16

THE CONFEDERATION of Indian Industry (CII) on Monday said an immediate measure to ease inflation could be to moderate taxes on fuel products, which constitute a large share of the retail pump prices of petrol and diesel.

"CII would encourage Centre and state governments to collaborate in reducing these duties," CII president Sanjiv Bajaj said. The Reserve Bank decision to raise benchmark interest rates and the likelihood of a good monsoon will help in containing inflation, Bajaj said, addressing his maiden press conference after taking over as the industry body's chief.

"I do believe that we are now in an era of higher interest rates. This will help us in bringing down inflation, at least a part of that going forward," he said, adding that various factors combined with the hope of a strong monsoon "should put us in a better place" by the second half of the year for policymakers to decide where inflation and interest rates move.

Bajaj said the rise of inflation has two aspects — demand and supply side. "RBI has already started the cycle of taking interest rates up and we should expect interest rates to continue moving up



CII president Sanjiv Bajaj *File*

in the coming year. We would expect from the RBI a clear direction to how they are going to address interest rates. Hopefully in the next monetary policy review we should be able to hear from them something to that extent," he said.

"Global headwinds and inflation will have to be countered with robust policy reforms, both domestic and external sector reforms, to unlock the growth potential of the economy."

"CII expects the GDP growth in a range of 7.4-8.2 per cent in 2022-23, with the outlook critically hinging on the trajectory of global crude oil prices."

"Global headwinds and inflation will have to be countered with robust policy reforms, both domestic and external sector reforms, to unlock the growth potential of the economy," he said.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

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Tender No. **5/2022-23/PHC/KNR** (Re-Tender). Deposit work-KIIFB-18-19-Improvements and providing BM & BC to Payyanur-Ambalathara-Kanayi-Maniyara Vayal-Mathamangalam road - KWA utility shifting - Replacing the existing transmission and distribution line poles of WSS to Payannur Municipality. EMD: **₹2,00,000**
Tender fee: **₹11,800**. Last date for submitting tender: **30-05-2022, 02:00 pm**
Ph: **0497 2705902**. Website: **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**

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

TELLING NUMBERS

Alcohol consumption in India: trends across states, age groups

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION among both men and women is higher in rural India than in urban India, the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), 2019-21 has found. Overall, 1% of women aged 15 and over drink alcohol, compared to 19% of men in the same age group. This breaks up into 1.6% (rural) and 0.6% (urban) among women, and 19.9% and 16.5% respectively among men.

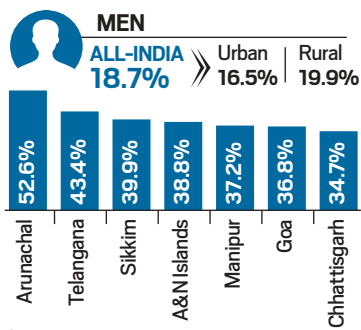
Of all states, Arunachal Pradesh has the highest proportion of both men (53%) and women (24%) who drink alcohol. Among women, Arunachal Pradesh is followed by Sikkim (16%); among men, it is followed by Telangana (43%). Besides Arunachal and Telangana, alcohol consumption among men is higher (40% and above) in upper Brahmaputra region of Assam, districts in Jharkhand and Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, and the Chhota Nagpur region of Jharkhand and Odisha.

The level of alcohol consumption among men is 30-40% in parts of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, and a few districts of Odisha. It is below 30% in the remaining parts of India, and the lowest in Lakshadweep (0.4%).

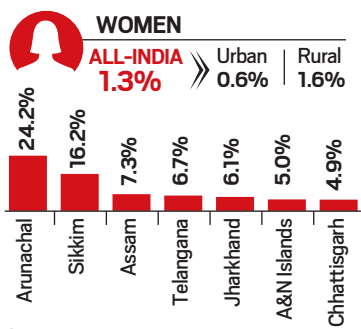
Alcohol consumption is more common among those from the Scheduled Tribes than from any other caste/tribe groups; this is true of both women (6% consumption among STs) and men (33%). Among religious groups, the proportion of men who drink alcohol is higher among those belonging to "other religions" (47%) than among those belonging to the Hindu (20%), Muslim (5%), Christian (28%), Sikh (23.5%), Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist (24.5%) and Jain (5.9%) religions.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

% of population aged 15 and over who currently drink alcohol, as reported



Lowest consumption: Lakshadweep 0.4%, Gujarat 5.8%, J&K 8.7%, Rajasthan 11.0%, Maharashtra 13.9%, UP 14.5%



Lowest consumption: Kerala 0.2%, J&K 0.2%. In 9 states/UTs, alcohol consumption among women is 0.3%.

Source: NFHS-5

THIS WORD MEANS

PROTECTED MOBILITY VEHICLES

Army has floated an RFI for such vehicles. What protection do they provide, and where will they be deployed?

THE ARMY last floated a request for information (RFI) to purchase Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMV) for high-altitude areas above 4,000 m, and for deserts and plains. After getting responses, it is expected to float a request for proposal (RFP) in November, followed by trials.

PURPOSE: The PMV is a wheeled armoured personnel carrier. It provides troops protection from mine blasts and sudden attacks with small arms.

WHAT ARMY WANTS: The RFI specifies that the RMVs should be able to carry ten personnel in addition to the driver and co-driver with each person carrying a combat load of not less than 30 kg. The PMVs should have ballistic protection and provide protection from grenade and mine blasts. They should have a maximum speed of 90 kph on road and 40 kph on cross-country terrain, and be able to operate in temperature range of 40°C to -15°C in high-altitude areas, and be able to ford in water at a depth of 1,000 mm, it said. The Army wants the RMVs to have a weapon mount to enable a 7.62 mm Light Machine Gun (LMG) to be fitted, and 11 firing ports — five on either side and one at the rear.



An Infantry Protected Mobility Vehicle jointly developed by TASL and DRDO. Indian Army

WHERE IT'S MADE: India has the capability of producing PMVs. Last month, the Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), handed over the first Infantry Protected Mobility Vehicle (IPMV) to then Chief of Army Staff, Gen MM Naravane. TASL, the first Indian private sector company to produce such carriers, has developed the IPMV in collaboration with the DRDO. These are produced at the TASL's Pune establishment.

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA

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SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Today, the Supreme Court will hear an appeal against the video survey of Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque. A Muslim body says the survey violates a 1991 law. What is this law, and what has the SC said about it earlier?

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G.
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE SUPREME Court will on Tuesday hear a challenge to the order of a civil court in Varanasi directing a videographic survey of the Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal in the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque complex.

The principal contention of the Committee of Management of Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, the organisation that has filed the appeal, is that the order of the Varanasi court — which was upheld by Allahabad High Court on April 21 — is "clearly interdicted" by The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

What is the Places of Worship Act, and what are its provisions?

The long title describes it as "An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

Section 3 of the Act bars the conversion, in full or part, of a place of worship of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination — or even a different segment of the same religious denomination.

Section 4(1) declares that the religious character of a place of worship "shall continue to be the same as it existed" on August 15, 1947. Section 4(2) says any suit or legal proceeding with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on August 15, 1947, pending before any court, shall abate — and no fresh suit or legal proceedings shall be instituted.

The proviso to this subsection saves suits, appeals and legal proceedings that are pending on the date of commencement of the Act, if they pertain to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship after the cut-off date.

Section 5 stipulates that the Act shall not apply to the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, and to any suit, appeal or proceeding relating to it.

At least two petitions challenging the Act — filed by Lucknow-based Vishwa Bhadra



The Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi. In the foreground is the shikhar of the Kashi Vishwanath temple. Renuka Puri/Express Archive

Pujari Purohit Mahasangh and some followers of Sanatan Vedic Religion, and advocate Ashwini Upadhyay — are pending before the Supreme Court. The law has been challenged on the ground that it bars judicial review, which is a basic feature of the Constitution, imposes an "arbitrary irrational retrospective cutoff date", and abridges the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

The court issued notice on Upadhyay's petition in March 2021, but the Centre is yet to file its reply.

Under what circumstances was the 1991 law enacted, and how did the government justify it?

The Act was brought by the Congress government of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at a time when the Ram temple movement was at its peak. The Babri Masjid was still standing, but L K Advani's *nath yatra*, his arrest in Bihar, and the firing on *kar sevaks* in Uttar Pradesh had raised communal tensions.

Moving the Bill in Parliament, then Home Minister S B Chavan said: "It is considered necessary to adopt these measures in view of the controversies arising from time to time with regard to conversion of places of worship which tend to vitiate the communal atmosphere... Adoption of this Bill will effectively

prevent any new controversies from arising in respect of conversion of any place of worship..."

What has the BJP said about the Places of Worship Act and the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque dispute?

The main opposition BJP opposed the Bill. Then MP Uma Bharti said "maintenance of *status quo* as in 1947 in respect of religious places is like closing eyes similar to that of pigeons against advancement of cats. This...will mean preservation of tensions for the coming generations". She referred to the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque dispute: "Was not the intention of Aurangzeb behind leaving remnants of the temple (he destroyed) at the site of mosque, to keep reminding Hindus of their historical fate and to remind coming generations of Muslims of their past glory and power?"

During the movement for the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the VHP-BJP often spoke of "liberating" the temples at Varanasi and Mathura as well. A popular slogan of the time was, "*Ayodhya toh bas jhaanki hai, Kashi Mathura baaki hai*" (Ayodhya is just a preview, Kashi and Mathura are yet to come)."

After the Supreme Court's unanimous 2019 verdict giving the disputed land in

Ayodhya to Hindus, however, the RSS sought to distance itself from demands for similar movements in Varanasi and Mathura. Ayodhya was an "exception", it said.

Responding to specific questions on the issue, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat told reporters: "The Sangh is not associated with any movement, it is associated with human development. Because of a historical backdrop, the Sangh got associated with this (Ramjanmabhoomi) movement as an organisation. It is an exception. Now we will again be associated with human development and this movement will not remain of concern to us."

What did the Supreme Court say about the Places of Worship Act in its Ayodhya judgment?

The constitutional validity of the 1991 Act was not under challenge, nor had it been examined before the Supreme Court Bench that heard the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit. Even so, the court, while disagreeing with certain conclusions drawn by the Allahabad High Court about the Act, made specific observations in its support.

"In providing a guarantee for the preservation of the religious character of places of public worship as they existed on 15 August 1947 and against the conversion of places of public worship, Parliament determined that independence from colonial rule furnishes a constitutional basis for healing the injustices of the past by providing the confidence to every religious community that their places of worship will be preserved and that their character will not be altered," the court said.

"The law addresses itself to the State as much as to every citizen of the nation... The State, has by enacting the law, enforced a constitutional commitment and operationalised its constitutional obligations to uphold the equality of all religions and secularism which is a part of the basic features of the Constitution. The Places of Worship Act imposes a non-derogable obligation towards enforcing our commitment to secularism under the Indian Constitution. The law is hence a legislative instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution... The Places of Worship Act is... a legislative intervention which preserves non-retrogression as an essential feature of our secular values."

EVERYDAY AGRICULTURE

Fair & average quality wheat: norms, relaxation

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR MAY 16

THE CENTRE on Sunday relaxed the Fair and Average Quality (FAQ) norms for wheat in the ongoing rabi marketing season in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh by a factor of three, raising the permissible limit of "shrivelled and broken grains" to 18% from the existing 6%. Unseasonal heat in March, when the rabi crop goes through its grain-filling stage, has led to shrivelling, making the grain unfit for procurement as per the usual quality norms.

Procurement norms

Every year, before procurement begins in this region in April, the Storage and Research division of the Department of Food & Public Distribution in the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, notifies specifications to ensure the quality of the procured wheat. This year, wheat con-

taining up to 0.75% foreign matter, 2% damaged grain, 4% slightly damaged grain, 6% shrivelled and broken grain, and 12% moisture was cleared for procurement.

The specifications are implemented at the time of procurement by personnel from the quality control wing of the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

Grain that looks good

FAQ wheat is fully developed, and has a proper lustre. The main varieties are golden or pale yellow, the grain is not dark, and it does not have any streaks. It is properly dry, and meets all nutritional conditions, the values of which are tested in the lab in case of doubt.

"If a layman takes a handful of wheat and finds the grain is shiny and beautiful, it would usually mean that the wheat meets FAQ," an FCI quality control inspector said. The QC wing conducts physical and chemical analyses during the procurement process, and on the stored crop, the inspector said.



FAQ specifies texture, colour and content of wheat grain. Express Archive

Previous relaxations

The government has in the past relaxed norms for moisture content and loss of lustre following heavy rain during the harvesting season, when ripe crops were flattened, and the grain turned blackish. This is the first time, however, that such a major relaxation has been

allowed for shrivelled grain, FCI officials said. They could not recall a previous relaxation for shrivelled grain of more than perhaps 1-2%.

Is the wheat bad?

The relaxation of procurement parameters to "reduce the hardship of farmers and avoid distress sale of wheat" does not mean the quality of the grain is bad. "The grains are smaller in size, but there is no loss of quality. The quality control wings of both FCI and the government have carried out several tests on the shrivelled grain, and found only weight loss, not a loss of quality," a senior FCI officer said, adding that this wheat will now be called "Under Relaxed Specifications (URS) wheat" instead of FAQ.

Several senior scientists at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, also said the shrivelling has caused only loss of yield and lower milling recovery, not deterioration of quality or nutritional value, and the protein content of the grain remains intact.

What Bilawal's US visit means for Pakistan's relations with the West

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI, Foreign Minister of Pakistan in the new "unity government" of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, is scheduled Monday to leave on a visit to the United States. It is expected that the visit will repair ties between the two countries, which have been in limbo for over a year, and which reached a low with former Prime Minister Imran Khan's accusations that the Biden Administration was behind his ouster.

Pakistan and US

Given the military-security establishment's stakes in Pakistan's foreign relations, the spadework for the 33-year-old's first solo official visit abroad as Foreign Minister was done by ISI Director-General Lt General Nadeem Anjum, who was in Washington last week and held meetings with US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and CIA head William J Burns.

The two visits are the first high-level contact between the two sides since last

September, when Pakistan's then National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf and ISI chief Faiz Hameed got a cold reception while visiting Washington following Imran Khan's rhetoric, especially his description of US troops' departure from Afghanistan as Afghans "breaking the shackles of slavery".

An urgent reset in the ties is important from Pakistan's point of view. The military-security establishment has deep historical ties with its counterparts in the US. It does not want to lose this. Also, repairing ties with the US could help Pakistan regain influence over the Taliban in Afghanistan as its interlocutor with the West.

The new civilian regime needs assistance from Western-led lenders as it looks to repair a crumbling economy. Pakistan has now seen that money is no longer on tap from the Gulf countries. The Chinese too have been reluctant to lend any more to Pakistan for fear that it will not be able to repay, reportedly refusing a \$6-bn loan for a CPEC power project recently.

For the US, the new government in Islamabad provides an opportunity to get back into a region that it exited in August 2021 after handing over Afghanistan to the

Taliban. Concern has grown that IS-K is now established in the mix of terror groups operating in Afghanistan, and the term "Afpak" is back in vogue in the US. Pakistan's hold over the Taliban was never complete, and is less so now. But the US believes that Pakistan could still provide essential help to stabilise the country, which in turn would help the US secure its interests at a time when Washington's focus is on Ukraine.

After four years without one, the US named an Ambassador in Islamabad in February this year. Pakistan's controversial appointee, Sardar Masood Khan, took charge only a couple of months ago when the Biden Administration greenlighted the appointment after a four-month wait.

Coming of age

Bhutto is travelling to New York at the invitation of Secretary of State Anthony Blinken for a foreign ministers' meeting on world food security being hosted by the US and UN in the context of the war in Ukraine, but the two are expected to hold bilateral

discussions on the sidelines.

While the Pakistan establishment expects the young Oxford-educated foreign minister to make an impression in Washington, the visit is also an opportunity for Bhutto, who has to lead the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) into a general election within months, to demonstrate to both the *jiyalas* (as loyal PPP workers are called) and the sceptics that he can wear the mantle of Benazir Bhutto and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Ever since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto turned his stints as foreign minister (to President Ayub Khan, and later, from 1971 to 1977) into grand international theatre tuned to domestic political constituencies, the Foreign Ministry is where ambitious politicians have hoped to grow as they cut their teeth on Pakistan's tricky civil-military equations.

Bhutto's charge as Foreign Minister comes at a time when Pakistan's diplomacy, not just with the US, but with the entire Western world, is in disarray.

Imran Khan's ill-timed visit to Moscow on the day Russian President Vladimir



IN FACT





Tiger Woods will be teeing off in his second Major championships of the year.

Woods back in spotlight, Mickelson still in shadows

REUTERS
TULSA (USA), MAY 16

TIGER WOODS will be back in the global golf spotlight when the PGA Championship gets underway this week but defending champion Phil Mickelson, his great rival and the player he has been tethered to throughout much of his career, will not. Woods and Mickelson are to golf what Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal are to tennis, athletes in the twilight of their careers but still the most compelling figures in their sport and guaranteed ratings grabbers. The PGA Championship, which begins on Thursday in Tulsa, Oklahoma, had all the makings of one of those special sporting occasions when old rivals collide. After nearly losing his right leg in a car crash 15 months ago, Woods made his return to competition at the Masters in April and will take the next step in his extraordinary comeback at Southern Hills Country Club. Mickelson, who has kept a low profile since his controversial comments about a Saudi-backed global golf circuit, has not played anywhere since February but looked like he might return in Tulsa when his name appeared on the field list. But Mickelson, who became golf's oldest major winner last year when he won the PGA Championship just shy of his 51st birthday, said on Friday he would not play, becoming just the third PGA champion not to defend his title after Woods in 2008 and Ben Hogan in 1949, both of whom bowed out due to injury. There will be plenty of other storylines and great golf played at Southern Hills, most of it from a pack of hard-charging twenty-somethings, including Masters champion and world number one Scottie Scheffler, but Woods is unlikely to be pushed from the

spotlight. The 46-year-old won the PGA Championship the last time it was staged at Southern Hills, hoisting the Wanamaker trophy for a fourth time in 2007. While Woods always plays to win, few expect him to add to his tally of 15 majors this week. Woods worked the golf world into a frenzy at the Masters when he carded a one-under par 71 in his first round of competitive golf since his horror car crash. He would make the cut but four rounds on Augusta National's undulating layout proved too much as the 15-times major winner closed with six-over 78s on Saturday and Sunday, his worst-ever scores at the Masters. Woods will hog much of the spotlight but will not carry the same pressure as the likes of world number one Scheffler and Jordan Spieth, who has an opportunity to complete the career Grand Slam. Spieth missed the cut at the Masters for the first time in his career but has been golf's hottest player since, winning at Hilton Head Island and finishing second at his PGA tune-up. If the 28-year-old can triumph at the PGA Championship, where his best result was runner-up in 2015, he would join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Woods in golf's elite club of Grand Slam winners. The pressure is also building on Scheffler, who heads to a layout he has touted as his favourite course. When the year began Scheffler was still chasing a first PGA Tour win. He now has four, a Green Jacket, the world number one ranking. A win at the PGA would saddle him with talk of a rare Grand Slam sweeping all four majors in a single season. "For Jordan to win the career Grand Slam at still a young age, he's got to throttle that back," said twice US Open champion Curtis Strange

WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIP

Famous victory for the secretive boxer

Family came to know about Manisha's boxing talent only after she got gold at district meet

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

AS A youngster, Manisha Moun would accompany her elder brother to the volleyball ground at the RKSD College Stadium in Kaithal without telling father Krishan Moun. While her father only knew about her practising judo at the venue apart from playing volleyball, Manisha would be training under boxing coach Rajinder Singh.

It was around this time that Krishan suffered the first of his heart attacks and the farmer-cum-tractor mechanic had to worry about the medical expenses apart from the needs of his three children.

Those tough times were recalled on Monday when 24-year-old Manisha secured her maiden world championship medal with a 4:1 split decision win over Mongolia's Namuun Mankhor in the 57 Kg category at the IBA Women's World Boxing Championship in Istanbul, Turkey.

"Our family wanted Manisha to go outside so she would often accompany her brother to the volleyball stadium. But we did not know that she was approached by coach Rajinder Singh, who got her enrolled into boxing. When she became district champion within two years, we got to know about her feat, and I praised her in front of all my relatives and neighbours. So far, she has won more than 40 medals but this one, whatever colour she brings home, will be special for us. She told me that a medal in Turkey will be no less than an Olympics for us and I am glad that she has proved herself," an emotional Krishan told *The Indian Express*.

While her father owned a 1.5-acre farm apart from working as a tractor mechanic in their village, Manisha's interest in boxing meant that the family had to look for funds to support her training. While a young Manisha would often bring some prize money from local boxing tournaments to mother Usha Rani, the family faced a tough time in those years when Krishan suffered his first heart attack and spent more than a month at the PGIMER in Chandigarh. "She was a child at that time and would not understand my condition. She would tell us that she is going to training but would always ask her mother about my health. Whatever prize money she won, she would give to her mother," remembers Krishan.

Coach Gurmeet Singh, a trainee of



Manisha, 24, secured her maiden world championship medal in the 57 kg class.

While Manisha would often bring some prize money from local tournaments to mother Usha Rani, the family faced tough times when her father suffered a heart attack.

Rajinder Singh, who has been training Manisha since 2014 remembers her early days in boxing. "Is ladki main zanoon hai kuch seekhne ka (This girl has the passion to learn). At that time, we had fewer female boxers at the academy and would train her with boys. It also meant that she would take part in cross-country runs every week in which she would finish in the top three in the 21-km country run. It helped her build stamina and she maintains the habit of running cross-country events even now. She has always been a fan of 2006 Commonwealth Games champion Akhil Kumar and her left punch is just like Akhil with a bit of an open guard," says Singh.

Steady progress

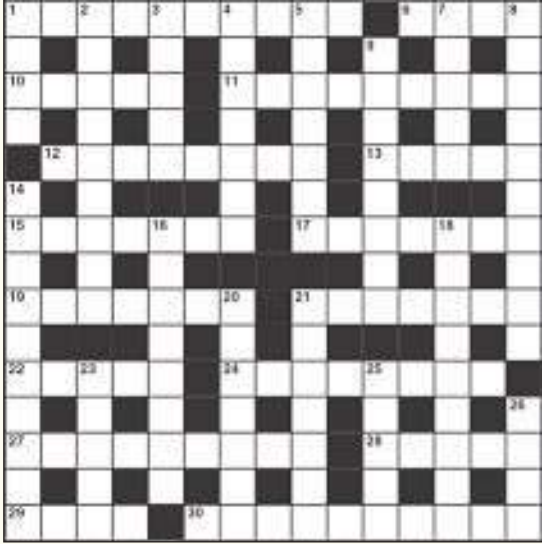
A silver at the junior Haryana boxing championships in 2013 was followed by successive All India Inter-University titles in 2016 and 2017 before Manisha won three international medals in 2018. It was the year when she would win the trials for the 2018 World Championships in Delhi, where she would reach the quarter-finals before losing to 2016 world championship silver medalist Stoyko Petrova of Bulgaria. During her campaign, Manisha would score wins over two-time world championship medallist

Christina Cruz of USA and 2017 world champion Dina Zhalaman of Kazakhstan. She would win a bronze at the Asian Boxing Championships in 2019.

Then came the setback of an elbow injury in 2019 before she decided to shift to the 57 Kg category, where she would compete against the likes of former world youth champion Sakshi Chaudhary, former world medallist Sonia Lather and Sonia Chahal. "She would start her career in the 50 kg category and once she felt confident, she chose 54 Kg as her best weight. The 2018 Nationals silver medal gave her confidence ahead of the world championship trials in 2018 and she could have won a medal in Delhi. She often watches videos of her bouts against Christina and Dina and would observe her mistakes during the rehabilitation period after her elbow injury. When she was dropped from the TOPS scheme recently, she was a bit disappointed as her family's financial condition is not that good but this medal will hopefully ensure that she gets back into the scheme," says coach Satvir Kaur, who has been in several national camps with Manisha.

The pugilist will now face Irma Testa of Italy in the World Championship semi-finals and her father will be watching the bout with the family at their village. "Sometimes, I would spend extra hours at the tractor shop to earn more money even though Manisha would often ask me to come home early. But then we had loans to repay. She always hands her prize money to me or her mother till now but for us the biggest prize is her medals. The only thing she is fond of while at home is cleaning the house and making space for her medals. This medal will be the brightest of all of her medals till date," her father says.

CROSSWORD 4742



- ACROSS**
- Game for an old school get-together (5,5)
 - Items given for storage in a bank (4)
 - Lie about showing true grit (5)
 - They work with a will (9)
 - Instrument puts old man in confusion (8)
 - Unusual Roman dwelling house (5)
 - It's near breaking up and showing distress (2,5)
 - Hide at one time found in California (7)
 - They're told to go to blazes (7)
 - Wine forced on some Irishmen (7)
 - One who gets up part of the stairs (5)
 - Determined to give poor Rose an instrument (8)
 - After work, quiet or music is timely (9)
 - Got an order to dance (5)
 - How Beethoven finished a set of four notes (4)
 - Prettiness in a constantly recurring form (10)
- DOWN**
- Bird making harsh sound (4)
 - Tribal rag turns out to be rock (9)
 - Return and surrender (5)
 - With one point each, one more becomes redundant (7)
 - Cocaine distilled from the sea (7)
 - Lend beauty to part of a head ornament (5)
 - Pacific islander (10)
 - Asked to appear at court? (8)
 - Seek earthly riches? (3,3,4)
 - Ens amid wayward lovers (8)
 - Being in the wrong scene, exit (9)
 - Foster may run true to form (7)
 - Gets better of teachers (7)
 - Brown monkeys climb all around one (5)
 - A deal with America for plant (5)
 - Place appointed for a picket (4)

Solutions Crossword 4741: Across: 1 Tanning, 5 Which, 8 Stringent, 9 Car, 10 Each, 12 Unchaste, 14 Callow, 15 Harass, 17 Nominate, 18 Str, 21 Out, 22 Reeled off, 24 Mused, 25 Melange. Down: 1 Taste, 2 Nor, 3 Inns, 4 Greens, 5 Watchman, 6 Incessant, 7 Harness, 11 Cellmates, 13 Cornered, 14 Conform, 16 Stream, 19 Rifle, 20 Seal, 23 Own.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS 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 the answer for the given quip.

If men could only know each other, they would neither ____ nor ____
-Elbert Hubbard (7...4)

MNAEE
DTIIO

EEEDLT
AILYHZ

SOLUTION: ENEMA, IDIOIT, DELETE, HAZILY
Answer: If men could only know each other, they would neither hate nor hate

SUDOKU 4837

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4836



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Please don't sit around thinking how unfair life can be. Mars, the planet of excess energy, has passed on, and that imaginative and awkward squad, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, will now leave you in peace for a little longer. Meanwhile, Saturn will continue to keep you in your place.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
The Sun is still maintaining your social profile, reminding you that it is important to get other people to see that your way of doing things is best. With a charm like yours, how can you fail? Only by not taking care of every single detail, that's how.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
The first thing to say is that there is a shortage of epoch-making planetary aspects at the moment. The result is that you may begin to see yourself as more in control of your life than you have been for quite some time. If you do, that's a sign that you may come unstuck very soon.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
There's one thing you want more than anything else in your life, and recently it has seemed that you have been about to achieve it. However, if you have fallen at the last hurdle, can you wait for another two months? Current developments may open your eyes to the broader picture.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Don't back away from problems at work. People in all areas of your life are waiting for you to make yourself clear and demonstrate that you are able to cope with any amount of practical difficulty. People you live with could get intense, so don't let anything surprise you.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
You seem to be quite preoccupied with personnel changes on the work front. Seeing as that radical sign Aquarius is involved, you may be concerned to increase your independence and sense of personal responsibility. And it means you may have to strike out on your own.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
A series of powerful planetary aspects has been keeping your personal affairs in a state of flux. However, Venus, the planet of love is bringing help from near at hand. And that help may be more practical than you think. In the meantime, sort out cash questions while you can.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
If you are absolutely determined to assert your authority, there seems to be little to stand in your way. The Moon combines with the Sun to strengthen an already solid personal position, much to your relief. The best advice is to take a creative approach, but keep other people on your side.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
The Sun and Mercury are casting their benevolent rays over your family affairs. You are never certain about your foundations – emotional and otherwise. Yet, really, you have little to worry about. Probably the best area to focus on is the effect your public commitments have on your private affairs.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Have you realised that the obstacle you faced last week was a hurdle to leap over, not a brick wall to stop your progress? By now, you must be well on your way to establishing your life on an entirely fresh footing. Today's Venusian alignments should help balance your emotions.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
This may well be a challenging and upsetting time, but graceful Venus will bring support and sympathy from close friends. The best thing you can be told is that your fears and worries are illusory. And the best thing you can do is wait until you have a clearer picture.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Pisceans have a reputation for being too sensitive by half. The only way to get the most out of your current situation is to lay yourself on the line and learn to accept criticism in the spirit in which it is meant. In other words, there may be something genuine for you to learn.

Nikhat, Parveen also advance to semi-finals, secure medals

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

NIKHAT ZAREEN (52kg), Manisha (57kg) and Parveen (63kg) continued their stellar run at the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships in Istanbul on Monday by advancing to the semifinals but five other Indians bowed out after suffering quarterfinal losses. Confirming their first World Boxing Championships medals with a place in the semifinals, Nikhat out-punched England's Charley-Sian Davison 5-0 while young Parveen got the better off Shoiria Zulkaynarova of Tajikistan with an identical margin.

Manisha, on the other hand, dispatched Mongolia's Namuun Monkhor in a hard-fought quarterfinal by a 4-1 split decision.

However, it was the end of the road for Nitu (48kg), seasoned campaigner Pooja Rani (81kg), Anamika (50kg), Jaismine (60kg) and Nandini (+81kg).

Continuing her stellar run from the prestigious Strandja Memorial tournament where she won the gold earlier this year, Nikhat handed India its first medal at this year's tournament with an impressive victory.

"My opponent was taller than me today, so my strategy was to block her right hand which is her strength. I am delighted to give India the first medal, hope I can win the gold," Nikhat said after the bout.

The former junior world champion will next square off against Caroline De Almeida of Brazil, who thrashed the 2018 Commonwealth Games silver winner Carly McNaul of Ireland by unanimous decision.

In the fourth Indian bout of the day, Parveen initially seemed hesitant to attack and looked out of depth but as the seconds ticked away and coach Bhaskar Bhatt and the support staff encouraged her to go forward and attack from the sideline, the Haryana boxer gained confidence to notch up a memorable win. She will be up against Ireland's Army Broadhurst in the semifinal. Anamika and Jaismine fell short of securing medals on their debut appearance at the world event after enduring 0-5 and 1-4 losses respectively. Anamika lost to Rio Olympic bronze medalist Colombia's Ingrid Valencia and Jaismine succumbed to Rashida Ellis of USA. Nandini was handed a 0-5 loss by Morocco's Khadija Mardini in her opening bout.

Shock, anger and grudging respect for Indian shuttlers

Watching the unheralded team lift the Thomas Cup, badminton powerhouses Indonesians, Malaysians and Danes wonder what went wrong for their men

SHIVANI NAIK
MAY 16

INDIA'S THOMAS Cup victory sent some seismic waves through South-East Asian powerhouses and European big daddies of badminton. India can chuckle a tad and wink a bit this week, or have the proverbial last laugh. But there was a hint of a scoff and grudging respect as Malaysia, Denmark and Indonesia came to terms with being handed losses by the first-time finalists in the 2022 edition.

Here are some snippets of the fallout that erupted in two proud shuttle nations from the straits, and the Scandinavian behemoth boasting of Olympic champ Viktor Axelsen.

Taufik lets it rip

Indonesian legend and universal favourite Taufik Hidayat, couldn't hold back an almighty rant when he took to *Instagram* to post his thoughts under a video of a glum looking team clutching their silvers on the podium.

The 2000 & 2002 Thomas Cup champ had found a scapegoat in the singles coach - with the classic gripe: Where is the coach?!

His post read (translated): "Team Thomas Cup. Thank you for reaching the best possible position of a final. Surely, they are disappointed with this defeat, but one thing is to be noted always: it's a mental, physical battle... and where is the Indonesian men's singles coach? Does Indonesia not have a better and more qualified coach? How long do you want this to last, PBSI?" Addressing the federation, Indonesia's last Olympic singles champion tore into the incumbent, after Anthony Ginting and Jonatan Christie had lost their matches.

This soon turned into a 'Who's wiser?' scrap as a social media follower compared his bruising tone to the more restrained reaction from Malaysian Lee Chong Wei, who basically urged patience while the Malaysians rebuilt their side. Not unlike India and Pakistan who both lose and then snipe at each other while a third country wins at cricket, Indonesian and Malaysian fans started venting against each other, much



As Indians savoured the historic win, Indonesian and Malaysian fans started venting against each other, much like the famous rivalry of the 1970s.

like the famous rivalry of the 1970s.

Indonesia coach under fire

Indonesia's singles coach Irwansyah did cop criticism the day after, though moving images of him consoling Ginting and Christie, and his efforts to help make the finals seemed to have earned him a longer rope. *Detik Sport* quoted him as saying, "The players in the future will be given more opportunities to appear in international championships. This is part of the regeneration process."

Doubles coach Herry Iman had a more rous-

ing defence of his troops: "We have to accept this defeat as part of the learning process. Last year we won, we are happy. This time we lost, so we have to accept it," *Detik* quoted the coach nicknamed the Fire Dragon. "Defeat should not make us dissolve in sadness. But we must rise again to look to the future. Whatever the result, India deserve to be congratulated," said Herry.

The King mourns

Liem Swie King, a contemporary of Prakash Padukone with many storied battles, lamented the loss to India, in what was a dis-

believing tone. *Detik* quoted him wondering: "Three Indonesian players were ranked below Anthony Ginting & Co. In fact, based on the track record of the two countries' meetings, Indonesia was supposed to have been quite dominating. But that advantage was not utilised by the defending champions. Yes, it must be evaluated why we lost. The performance until the final was extraordinary. I didn't think that I would lose to India!" the 1976, '79 and '84 Thomas Cup champ exclaimed. "Yes, that's right, India is also good, I just didn't think it was... with this history, that they can

Chirag Shetty, who was a thorn in the flesh of Mohammad Ahsan and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo, found himself on the dartboard of Indonesian netizens, after his pumped-up face was captured in a photograph, staring at the sole Minion.

win in the Thomas Cup. Physically (Indonesian players must) improve (because) every time they play three games, they lose a lot," said Liem. "(So) you can't just have skills, it must be complete play," he stressed.

Nasty nickname

Chirag Shetty, who was a thorn in the flesh of Mohammad Ahsan and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo, found himself on the dartboard of Indonesian netizens, after his pumped-up face was captured in a photograph, staring at the sole Minion. Manning the net with aggressive energy, Shetty had clearly rattled the fancied pairing as it wilted - or so Indonesian fans were convinced.

His swivel serve came in for more carping: they nicknamed him '*Kang Delay*', the serve delayer. A loss in doubles for a country that boasts three pairings in the Top 10, including Nos. 1 and 2, was a whiplash on dazed Indonesian faces. Kevin had earlier remarked about those tense moments: "In the second game, when they were leading 19-13, Indians played like they had nothing to lose. They were so hard to put down."

Malaysia in soul-searching mode

Lee Chong Wei did ask for accountability though, speaking to *Straits Times*. But first was a compliment for Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy, who handed Malaysia a 3-2 loss in the quarters. "I don't think we would have stood a chance even if we fielded Daren (Liew). Srikanth was oozing with confidence, he was untouchable. Neither (Ng) Tze Yong or Daren could beat him.

"Jun Hao fared poorly against a more-experienced Prannoy. To win the Thomas Cup, it takes a collective effort from everyone in the team. We certainly need to improve our

singles depth if we want to challenge for the title. Having been the singles coaching director for a few years now, (Wong) Choong Hann has to be held accountable and explain," Lee told ST.

He proceeded to suggest an Indian style trial: "Perhaps, it's time we looked into having a selection trial for the men's singles in order to make it fair to all, especially with many independent players outside the national team." Malaysia's team event specialist Chong Wei Feng added to ST: "India developed a huge pool of singles players, you got to give them credit. They have five singles in the world top 30 and more than 10 in the top 100."

Boe hero; Hoi on backfoot

Denmark's only bright spot in the finals was India's doubles coach Mathias Boe, who told TV2 Sport: "I have to find my dance shoes and see if I can show them how to make a quiet and calm charming Viennese waltz." Clearly the Dane couldn't match step with the wild *Bhangra* and freestyle moves of Chirag & Co.

Elsewhere, national coach Jakob Høi, was left defending his decision to field Rasmus Gemke ahead of seasoned HK Vittinghus. "We've been in dreamland, and when you are, and it's bursting, it's hard to get up again. Respect for the boys on and off the field, but we were not good enough today," he was quoted by *TV2 Sport*, adding that India had negotiated conditions better: "No, I do not regret anything," he stressed.

Gemke spoke of feeling wretched as Indians rushed onto the court to hug Prannoy. "It was hard to stand in there when the Indians stormed onto the field, and I knew it was over," he said.

Late charge by Delhi Capitals takes them to the top four

SYNOPSIS: Mitchell Marsh steers his side to a competitive score, and Shardul Thakur's slower ones hold off a fighting PK to take DC to No 4 in the table

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
MUMBAI, MAY 16

Shardul Thakur's four strikes first brought Delhi Capitals back into the game and then cut short a late fightback by Punjab Kings to deliver a crucial 17-run win that took his team to fourth position on the table, with 14 points and the fourth-best net run-rate so far.

Marsh carries DC again

In DC's previous match at the same ground four nights ago against Rajasthan Royals, Mitchell Marsh had powered seven sixes in a match-winning 89 off 62. That knock, though, had come in the chase with the ball coming on better than it had in the first innings. Against PK, Marsh had to come in the second ball of the match after David Warner's golden duck.

With a 6-3 field set to protect the shorter boundary, Marsh still took on the longer side when the bowling became too predictable, seeking to force the bigger hit. He first lofted Kagiso Rabada over the farther cow-corner rope. Later when the spinners too continued to bowl wider to the longer off side, he rocked back, waited and made sure he beat the sweeper with his cut. And when Marsh gets the power and timing right, the size of the boundary rarely matters. Marsh can get tied down by spin, but to his credit, he didn't let the dot balls pile up, running 23 singles, and hence, didn't have to take large risks to break free.

He had his couple of moments of good fortune, though. A mishit off Arshdeep Singh just cleared a jumping long-on, and another off the left-armier tickled into the wide long-off boundary despite a valiant dash-and-dive to attempt to catch it from Shikhar Dhawan.

How difficult it could be, and how well Marsh had played, was evident when he failed to clear deep midwicket on the shorter side off a Rabada slot delivery in the 19th over. So short Marsh had fallen that the fielder had to run in to complete the catch.

Marsh's exit meant DC took just ten off the last two overs, but they'd still managed to set a competitive target of 160.

Panic after powerplay

Courtesy swift bursts from Sarfaraz Khan - opening for the first time in the IPL - and Jonny Bairstow, the powerplay had gone almost equivalent for both sides. DC had scored 59 for 2, PK were on 53 for 1 with three deliveries remaining in their

IPL TABLE						
TEAM	M	W	L	PT	NRR	
GT	13	10	3	20	0.391	
RR	13	8	5	16	0.304	
LSG	13	8	5	16	0.262	
DC	13	7	6	14	-0.255	
RCB	13	7	6	14	-0.323	
KKR	13	6	7	12	0.160	
PK	13	6	7	12	0.043	
SRH	12	5	7	10	-0.270	
CSK	13	4	9	8	-0.206	
MI	12	3	9	6	-0.613	

powerplay. However, Shardul Thakur first sent back Bhanuka Rajapaksa; two balls later, he bowled one that was close to cut, but Shikhar Dhawan tried to and went caught behind.

Three balls later, the DC spinners struck with their tricks. On a dry pitch where turn was available, Axar Patel foxed Mayank Agarwal with a straighter one; the line was on the stumps, Mayank Agarwal still went for a late steer and had his stumps rattled.

In the next over, Kuldeep Yadav slid it straight past an advancing Liam Livingstone to have him stumped by a long way.

Thakur intervenes decisively

At 61 for 5, the bulk of the PK batting was gone but the asking rate wasn't steep, and wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma would take his side close with a 34-ball 44.

With 39 needed off the last three overs, Rovman Powell made a critical save on the straight boundary.

He leaped to catch what was an otherwise certain six from Jitesh and hurled it back in time as he went over the rope to keep the damage to just a single.

Jitesh went for another six in the over but this time, Thakur had got the knuckle ball right, and Warner surged forward from long-off to take a sharp, low catch.

PK would go down swinging. Now Rabada mowed Thakur over the shorter deep-midwicket rope. Next ball, Thakur sent the wide bouncer wider towards the longer side, and Rabada swatted it straight to long-off. Down to 131 for 9 after 18, PK were finally out of the game.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi Capitals 159 for 7 (Marsh 63, Sarfaraz 32, Livingstone 3-27) beat Punjab Kings 142 for 9 (Jitesh 44, Thakur 4-36, Axar 2-14, Kuldeep 2-14) by 17 runs

Road gets tough for Bangalore

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

ONE PLAYOFF spot is officially taken by Gujarat Titans. The next two positions are Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants' to lose. Battle is intense for the one remaining place.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

M: 13, PTS: 16, NRR: 0.304

A win against LSG have all but secured a playoff place for Royals. Only two more teams can now get to 16 points. One of them, RCB, have a negative net run rate.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

M: 13, PTS: 16, NRR: 0.262

Successive losses by big margins have pulled Super Giants' net run rate down to 0.262 from 0.703. And yet, KL Rahul's troops sit pretty because of their far superior net run rate.

DELHI CAPITALS

M: 13, PTS: 14, NRR: 0.255

On the face of it, DC now are in a straight fight with RCB. If they win their last game against Mumbai Indians, they will be through, thanks to their very impressive net run rate. If they lose and RCB win against Titans, DC will be knocked out.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

M: 13, PTS: 14, NRR: -0.323

Despite being on 14 points, the final group league fixture is a win-or-bust for RCB. Still, they will not get there if DC secure a victory. In the playoffs scrap, RCB have the worst net run rate among all the aspirants.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

M: 13, PTS: 12, NRR: 0.160

KKR will have to hope that no other team reaches 16 points.

PUNJAB KINGS

M: 13, PTS: 12, NRR: -0.043

Defeat to DC sort of put paid to their playoffs hopes. Punjab Kings' chance now lies in DC, RCB and KKR losing their respective final league fixtures, while they beating SRH.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

M: 12, PTS: 10, NRR: -0.270

Sunrisers are hoping against hope that no other team gets to 16 points and they win massive against MI and Punjab Kings. For example, even if they beat the two by 30 runs each, they won't have a positive net run rate.

Inflation: How bad is it for you, and India's growth story?

In conversation with

Neelkanth Mishra
Part-time Member Economic Advisory Council to PM and Co-Head of Equity Strategy, Asia Pacific and India Equity Strategist, Securities Research, Credit Suisse

Anil Sasi
National Business Editor
The Indian Express

In the growth-inflation trade-off, the focus has clearly shifted to reining in prices.

A fortnight ago, the RBI hiked the key policy rate by 40 basis points, the first in four years.

Given the worries about domestic food prices, India has already banned wheat exports.

With the Russia-Ukraine war still unravelling, fuel prices may remain elevated.

Tough measures like more interest rate hikes and liquidity absorption in coming months will kill whatever little demand India is seeing now.

Is stagflation - low growth, high inflation - looming large?

20 MAY 2022

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