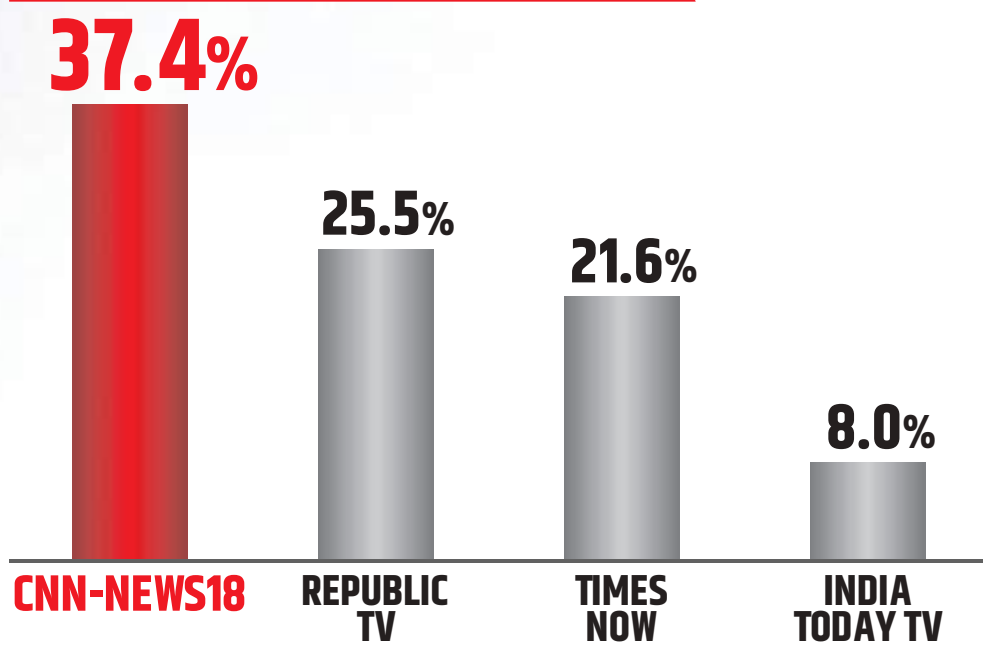


CNN-NEWS18 RACES AHEAD OF TIMES NOW & REPUBLIC

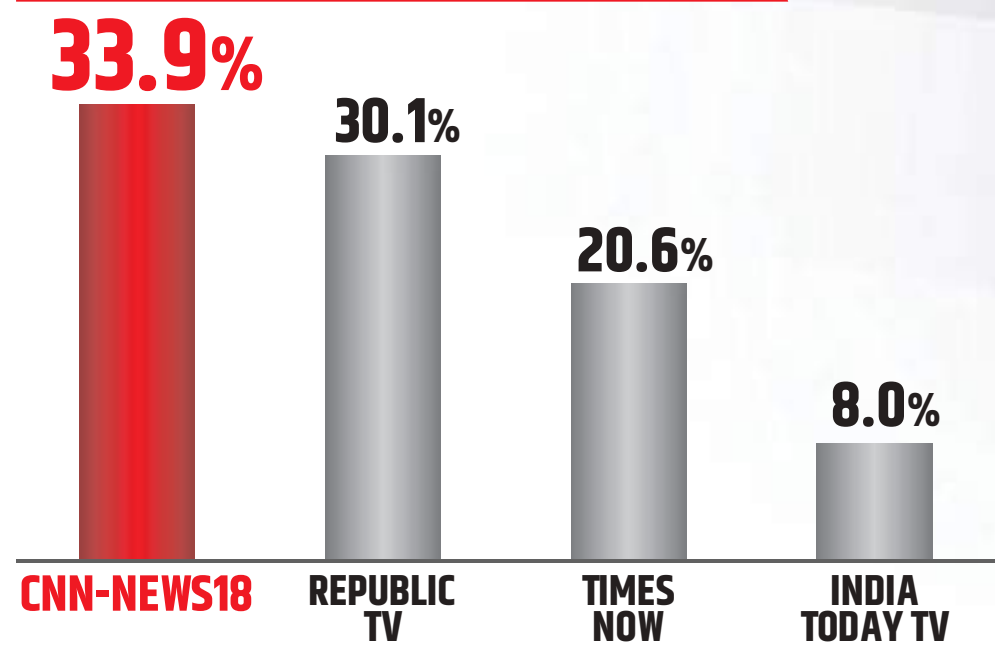
NO.1 OVERALL BY A WIDE MARGIN

FULL WEEK - MARKET SHARE %



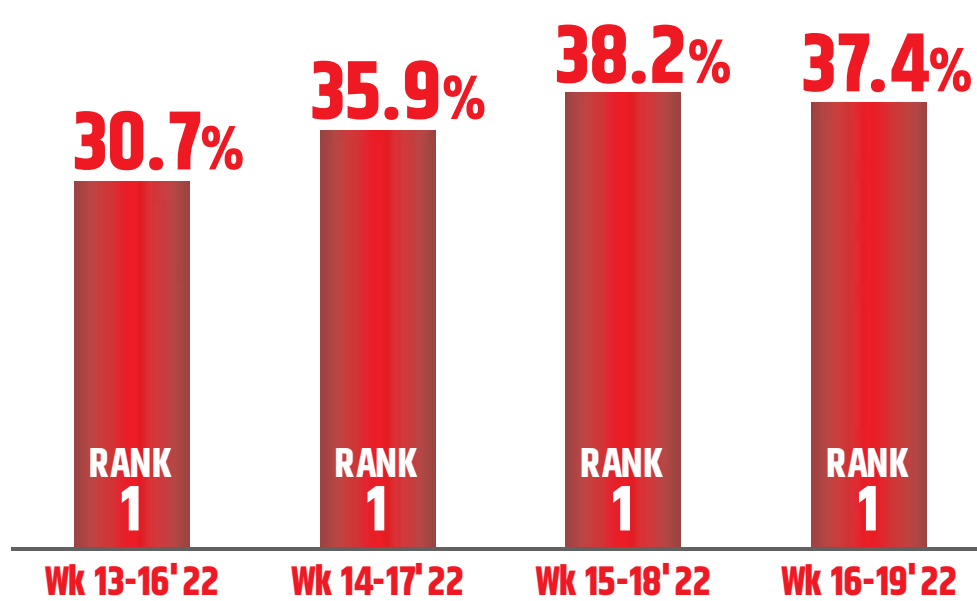
LEADS IN PRIME TIME TOO

1800-2400 HRS - MARKET SHARE%



AND GROWING WEEK ON WEEK*

RANK & MARKET SHARE



Source: BARC India | Mkt: India | TG: 2+ | Period: Wk 16-19'22 Rolling Avg. *Period: Rolling 4 Weeks as mentioned | Market Share basis AMA
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No. 507/III/OPS/CTB/2022 Date: 20/05/2022

E-tender Notice

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

Bid Publish Date	Pre-Bid Meeting	Bid Due Date
23.05.2022	06.06.2022 Time 14:00 Hrs.	23.06.2022 Time 15:00 Hrs.

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 will be updated only on the above website and shall not be published in the newspaper.

Sd/-
Managing Director
Chhattisgarh Tourism Board

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

- Name of the work: Construction & Maintenance of PMGSY-II (Batch-II) for the Package No-CR-21-005 & CR-21-145-47 2021- 22 5th Road & Bridge works in the district of Mayurbhanj
- Total No. of works: 01 No. (One)
- Estimated Cost: Rs. 510.00 lakhs (approximately).
- Eligible Class of Contractor: As per annexure.
- Period of Completion: As per annexure.
- Other details: -

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O.C.C.E.R.W. Circle, Baripada	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Baripada	PMGSY Online N.C.B. No. 227	27.05.2022 at 11:00 A.M.	16.06.2022 up to 5:00 P.M.	15.06.2022 up to 1:00 P.M.	17.06.2022 at 11:00 A.M.	30/06/2022

Further details can be seen from the website: www.cgstatecg.in
Any Corrigendum/ Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender website only.
Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle, Baripada
CIPR- 25151/110012/2223

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- I, CHANDIGARH
SCD 33-34-35, First Floor Sector 17-A, Chandigarh

Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.
Exh. No. 6199 PUBLICATION SUMMONS Case OA No. 1497/2019
HDFC Bank Vs. Suparan Bishnoi

1. Suparan Bishnoi S/o Baldev Singh H.No. 252, Village Gurpal Tehsil Abchar, Fazilka, Punjab
2. Rajiv S/o Inderjit H.No. 2, Village Gurpal Tehsil Abchar, Fazilka, Punjab

WHEREAS, OA/1497/2019 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/ Registrar on 10/03/2022.
WHEREAS, this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said application under section 19(4) of the Act, read with rule 5 of the Act, for recovery of debts of Rs.80,34,958/- (Application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).
In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:-

- to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
- to disclose Particulars of properties or assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
- you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the Application for attachment of properties;
- you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal;
- you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and Properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.

You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 05-07-2022 at 10.30A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date: 07.04.2022 Sd/-
Signature of the officer Authorised to issue Summons

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



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

NIKHAT ZAREEN
WORLD CHAMPION BOXER
PAGE 9

SPORTS

UMRAN MALIK EARNS FIRST INDIA CALL-UP FOR SOUTH AFRICA T20 PAGE 15

PM IN TOKYO TODAY

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

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

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden will have a "constructive and straightforward" conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the "impact" of Russia's "brutal invasion of Ukraine", US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on Sunday, ahead of their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo on May 24.

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
CHENNAI, MAY 22

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

Quoting a US official, the *Financial Times* reported that the initiative, to be announced by

the four leaders of the Quad at the group's Tokyo Summit, will bring together existing surveillance centres in Singapore, India, and the Pacific to create a tracking system for illegal unregulated and unreported fishing (IUUF) in the Indo-Pacific region.

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

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



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

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

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

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

PM MEETS THOMAS CUP WINNERS

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

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

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

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

THE EID Namaz was not conducted on roads for the first time in UP, and "the volume of the mosque loudspeaker has gone down" following the state's recent crackdown, Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday while referring to his government retaining power in the elections this year.

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

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

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

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

BENGAL 'SSC SCAM'

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

ATRI MITRA & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, MAY 22

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

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

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

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

EXPRESS NETWORK



ASSAM: DAY AFTER POLICE STATION, TORCHED, HOMES OF 'CULPRITS' RAZED P8

BJP'S ARJUN SINGH RETURNS TO TMC P8

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

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, MAY 22

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

But not everyone is on the same note. One group of scholars in



Most of the hymn groups perform on the harmonium. File

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

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

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

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

"The harmonium was an CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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WEB EXCLUSIVE



'HE DOESN'T BEAT ME, HE FORCES SEX TO BREAK MY SPIRIT': THREE WOMEN RAPED BY THEIR HUSBANDS SPEAK OUT

The Delhi HC split verdict on criminalisation of marital rape has stirred up debate on violation of consent within a marriage. Here are the stories of three survivors, with very different lives and journeys – and a common pain

LIFESTYLE



BEHIND THE ART
Why is Mona Lisa so famous? What led it to having most expensive insurance policy?

TECH



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EXPRESS



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Mihir Vasavda is joined by Shivani Naik to speak about the unexpected performance of India, how team bonding off the court affects the game and what we can expect next

FROM PAGE ONE

Inquiry report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sinha allegedly handed over a "bunch of fake recommendation letters" to WBBSE president Ganguly "on four to five occasions" after the "expiry of the panel". The Bag Committee report is learnt to have found that Ganguly issued instructions to a subordinate for the preparation of appointment letters based on these forged letters and bypassed the "normal chain of hierarchy" and did not send the recommendation letters to the Board's Appointment Section. Instead, the appointment letters

were allegedly handed over to Ganguly himself or to the WBSSC officials who were part of the alleged scam at the Commission's new office in Kolkata's Salt Lake area.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harmonium

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Singh.

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

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

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

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

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

"Do we need to shun the harmonium? There was only the rabab at the time of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Then came the saranda

and taus. The harmonium and tabla came with changes in time. Now electric instruments have come," he said.

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

RSS event

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

Adityanath referred to the BJP retaining power in UP, and spoke about his government's achievements, especially in law and order in the context of communal clashes occurring in some other states amid a string of religious festivals last month.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Modi and Kishida are likely to meet on Tuesday, as per the current schedule. "Economic cooperation between India and Japan is an important aspect of

our Special Strategic and Global Partnership," Modi said. During the March Summit, the two leaders had announced their "intention to realize JPY 5 trillion in public and private investment and financing over the next five years from Japan to India", he said.

Modi said he would also meet with Japanese business leaders "with the goal of further strengthening economic linkages between our countries". A series of meetings with leaders of Japanese industry – including Nobuhiro Endo, chairman of IT and electronics company NEC Corporation, Tadashi Yanai, chairman/president & CEO of the clothing brand UNIQLO, Osamu Suzuki, Adviser, Suzuki Motor Corporation, and Masayoshi Son, board director at Softbank Group Corp. – are lined up for Monday afternoon, followed by a roundtable with Japanese business leaders in the evening.

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

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

identify such elements." (WITH AVISHEK G DASTIDAR)

Navy info

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

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

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

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

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

The two other data fusion centres likely to be involved in this initiative are the Singapore Navy's Information Fusion Centre, and the Australia-sponsored Pacific Fusion Centre, set up in 2019 in Port Vila in Vanuatu.

In recent years, IUUF has been seen as growing into a bigger threat to maritime states than international piracy. Studies have said that unregulated and underreported fishing are bigger challenges than illegal fishing, as they deplete stocks and deprive vulnerable regional economies of an important food source.

In a January 2021 paper, the American think tank Brookings called IUUF "a national security concern" that "may indeed become an increasingly important mission for the United States and its security partners and allies around the world, and most certainly those in the Indo-Pacific."

The paper ("National Security Imperative to Tackle IUUF", Michael Sinclair) argued that Chinese fishing practices presented "a truly unique and dire" threat.

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

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

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

KCR

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

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

"The way you launched the agitation and continued the fight till the end, and forced the Centre to withdraw the farm laws – I bow to those farmers and their leaders. We cannot bring back those who were martyred. But we can say that the entire country empathises with you."

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

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

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

Earlier, Mann set the tone of the function, hailing the farmers for ensuring that the farm laws were repealed.

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

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

Chandigarh

Contractual MC employee beaten to death over minor road accident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

A 26-YEAR-OLD contractual employee with the Municipal Corporation (MC) was beaten to death over a minor road accident in Mani Majra on Saturday night. The victim was identified as Suraj Kumar, a resident of Valmiki Mohalla, Mori Gate. The victim was also working in a wedding band, along with his family members.

Police have arrested one of the assailants identified as Rajesh Kumar out of the four. Two others were identified as Soankaar and Rahul. Police said that accused Soankaar is a wine contractor. He is the brother of a former councillor. Police said that the other accused will be arrested shortly.

The crime was captured in the CCTV cameras installed near Children's Traffic Park near Main Bazaar. In the CCTV camera footage, Suraj was seen crossing a road when all of sudden, four men coming from the opposite direction attacked him around 11:20 pm. Sources said that one of them was carrying an iron/brass knuckle punch and hit the victim on his face. The camera footage shows



The family members of Suraj Kumar (left) on Sunday. *Express*

the victim falling on the road and the accused kicking him. Three of them were masked and the fourth one was wearing a helmet.

"There was a scuffle between the victim and one of the assailants over the issue of a minor road accident yesterday evening. The car of the victim was hit by

the two-wheeler of one of the assailants. Later, both parties reached a compromise. In the night, they again called the victim and attacked him. He was rushed to Mani Majra Civil Hospital in a private vehicle by his uncle, who witnessed the crime. Doctors declared him brought dead," a police officer said.

Meanwhile, family members of the victim agreed to perform the last rites of the victim after assurance from the police that the accused will be arrested shortly. A case was registered at Mani Majra police station.

Mohali: Two 'drug peddlers' held for attacking police party out to arrest them

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, MAY 22

A POLICE team of Kurali (Sadar) police station came under attack from two alleged drug peddlers when they had gone to Ratangarh Simbal village to arrest them. The incident happened on Saturday afternoon. The police arrested two alleged drug peddlers who were involved in the attack. They were identified as Hardeep Singh and Davinder Singh both residents of Chintgarh village in Ropar district.

Two police personnel were injured in the incident and were

admitted at Kurali Civil Hospital, including ASI Jaspal Singh and Constable Harjinder Kaur.

A police officer requesting anonymity told The Indian Express that an unidentified caller informed them on the helpline number about the sale of drugs in the village, which was later found to be correct.

The police team reached the village and found that two men in a Maruti Swift car were roaming in the village suspiciously, following which they were signalled to stop the car. However, the accused, in a bid to escape, hit the police team.

Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI)

Kewal Krishan, stated in his complaint that the police personnel however overpowered the culprits and recovered 200 grams white powder from them.

"The police party was checking the area and some villagers had informed about a car bearing Chandigarh registration number roaming in the village, the police party then signalled the driver to stop and the incident happened. The drugs were recovered from inside the car," a police officer investigating the case said.

The police officer said that they were verifying whether the accused were booked in any

criminal case in the past. He added that the accused had gone to meet their clients in the village and the police would soon identify the source from where the drugs were procured.

A case under sections 307 (attempt to murder), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter a public servant from discharge of his duties), 186 (whoever voluntarily obstructs any public servant in the discharge of his public functions), 323 (assault) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered at Kurali (Sadar) police station.

Armed men attack youth in Mubarakpur, 25 booked

Mohali: Around two dozen armed men attacked a man at his residence in Mubarakpur near Dera Bassi and left him seriously injured. An old enmity was said to be the reason behind the attack. Police booked 25 persons in this connection.

The man injured in attack was identified as Rahul (22). Rahul was sitting outside his room on Saturday and at around 9 pm when a group of around 25 men with swords and rods attacked him.

Rahul was seriously injured in the attack and was admitted to GMCH, Sector 32, Chandigarh, where his condition is said to be serious. The entire incident was captured in CCTV cameras.

Rahul's family alleged that some identified persons had attacked their home three days ago and they had also informed the local police but no action was taken. In-charge of Mubarakpur police station, Balbir Singh, said they registered a case and raids were on to nab the culprits. He added that there has been no laxity on the part of the police. **ENS**

Cycling to success: Hard work and no shortcuts reason for Arshdeep's India selection

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

ON SUNDAY evening, Punjab Kings medium pacer Arshdeep Singh called his mother Baljeet Kaur prior to the IPL match against Sunrisers Hyderabad. While Kaur was in her evening prayers, her son would share the news of his selection in the Indian squad for the five-match ODI series against South Africa. Soon, it became a virtual celebration with team-mates Harpreet Brar and Baltej Singh joining the phone call.

Arshdeep, who has impressed one and all with his control and economy, especially during the death overs, has been named alongside pacers Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel, Avesh Khan and Umran Malik.

"Arshdeep calls me prior to every match and did so this evening as I was doing a path. He told me, 'Mom, wadhai howe, I have been selected in the Indian team.' I could not hold my tears and it was when his team-mates joined the call and started doing bhanga in the team bus that I realised how big the moment it is for Arshdeep. He never tires and the only thing he would ask me is to massage him after his training sessions," Baljeet told The Indian Express.

"So, it will mean now I have to give him longer massage sessions when he comes home to



Arshdeep Singh

prepare for India (laughs). It has been a tough journey for him and to see him wearing the India cap will be the biggest joy for us."

Son of security officer Darshan Singh, the young Arshdeep would be initiated into cricket by his father, who observed him bowling inswing at practice sessions in a park near their Kharar residence. Singh would get him enrolled under coach Jaswant Rai in Chandigarh, which meant that a young Arshdeep would cycle from Kharar to Chandigarh twice a day for training.

"When Arshdeep joined the academy, I was impressed with his ability to swing the ball. He had a high-arm action and his height too was good at that time. I remember that he would try to ball all the six balls in an over differently. He wasn't accurate at that time but his ability to bowl inswing made me think that this guy can go far in his career," members Rai.

There was one incident that

made the coach sure that the youngster will play for India one day. "It was summer and Arshdeep reached a bit late for morning practice, which starts at 5:30 am. When I asked him, he told me, 'Sir, koi vi punishment de do.' After the practice session, I noticed that his cycle in the parking lot was missing. I asked him about his cycle and he told me that his cycle had broken and he had come walking to the academy from his home in Kharar. He could have told me earlier but he chose not to. That day made me believe that he has the passion to play for India," says Rai.

QUICK GRADUATION

While the youngster would be a part of the U-19 World Cup-winning team in 2018, where he would only get to play two matches and picked three wickets, Arshdeep would make his Vijay Hazare Trophy debut the same year before being picked by Kings XI Punjab in 2019 on the insistence of then coach Mike Hesson. Three wickets in three matches was followed by Singh having an impressive IPL in UAE in 2020, where he picked nine wickets with an economy rate of 8.77 to finish as the third-highest wicket-taker for the side. Last year, Arshdeep emerged as the second-highest wicket-taker for the team with 18 wickets in 12 matches at an average of 19.00.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Puri elected chairman of CRAWFED again, stresses role of RWAs in city development

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

THE ANNUAL general body meeting of Chandigarh Residents' Associations Welfare Federation (CRAWFED) was held Sunday at Community Centre in Sector 37, Chandigarh, under the chairmanship of Hitesh Puri. Puri was elected chairman for a second term. The meeting was attended by representatives of more than 100 RWAs across Chandigarh. The agenda of the meeting was to submit report card of CRAWFED; presentation and approval of accounts statement from the general house; address by the chairman; announcement of elections of new body of CRAWFED.

Puri thanked the general house for the support provided to him and his team during his term. He emphasised the role of RWAs in city development.

The names of all three election commissioners were unan-

FOSWAC: Bittu re-elected chairman, promises to work for people welfare

Chandigarh: The annual general body meeting of FOSWAC was held Sunday at Community Centre, Sector 19, Chandigarh. The meeting was attended by 268 members of different federating associations. The main agenda of the meeting was election of the chairman and the executive committee for the next term.

Baljinder Singh Bittu was unanimously re-elected as chairman of FOSWAC for another term of two years. In a resolution adopted with a

voice vote, the General House authorised Bittu to constitute his team with a free hand.

In the absence of general secretary JS Gogia, the meeting was conducted by Pardeep Chopra, executive member of the FOSWAC.

Dr K S Chaudhary, president of RWA, Sector 38 W, spoke about the need and necessity of unanimity in any organisation for its efficient working. Amardeep Singh from Sector 39 appealed to the house to support Bittu for another term unanimously.

imously approved by the general house who took the responsibility of conducting elections. The names were Rajesh Rai, Wing Commander N S Malhi and K L

Sachdeva. Puri along with his team stepped down from their posts and gave charge to the election commissioners for holding elections.

BRIEFLY

2 held in land grab case

Panchkula: Police arrested two people in a land grabbing case on Saturday. The arrested were Rambhool, of Pinjore, and his wife, Kavita. Ramesh Chand reported that Rambhool came to his house and said his land was shortlisted by a company, offering Rs 77 lakh. They said a token amount will be given and the rest after registry. Ramesh was paid Rs 9 lakh, and he transferred the property. The accused later sold some of the land.

House broken into in Sec 44

Chandigarh: Unknown persons broke into a house in Sector 44 D and stole two mobile phones and an LED TV on Friday. The owner Balwan Singh Nain, registered a case at Sector 34 police station.

Over 20 phones stolen

Mohali: Kapil Dev of Jujhar Nagar reported that unknown persons stole 20 to 22 mobile phone after breaking glass of his cabin at his shop in Sector 35 A. **ENS**

Dispute with landlord? 5 women among seven booked for attacking family

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, MAY 22

THE SOHANA police booked seven persons including five women for allegedly assaulting a family in Sector 91. The incident happened on Saturday. The police are yet to make any arrests.

The complainant in the case told the police that he has been living in Sector 91 on rent and around a dozen people allegedly barged into his house, assaulted him, his wife and two

daughters and also misbehaved with his younger daughter. The complainant said that there has been a dispute with the landlord of the house, however, he does not know if the attackers have anything to do with him.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, the complainant said that he did not know the attackers and had called the police helpline number. "The attackers also misbehaved with the police personnel," the complainant said.

Acting on the complaint,

Sohana police registered a case under sections 323 (assault), 452 (lurking house trespass), 294 (Obscene words in public), 354 (outraging modesty of woman, 186 (whoever voluntarily obstructs any public servant in the discharge of his public functions), 506 (criminal intimidation) 148 (rioting) and 149 (unlawful assembly) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against Veer Thakur, Anil Kumar, Pallavi Dutt, Sudarshan Dutt, Davinderpal Kaur, Anchal and 8 to 10 unidentified persons.

RPG attack: Court extends custody of weapon supplier

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, MAY 22

THE DISTRICT and sessions court extended the police custody of Nishan Singh - an accused in the Rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack at the Intelligence headquarters of Punjab Police to nine days. Nishan Singh was produced in the court of a duty magistrate on Sunday.

Nishan Singh had allegedly provided the RPG to the attackers. He was arrested by the Faridkot police a day after the attack but in another case. In a police investigation later, they found that he was linked to the attack.

The investigation also uncovered that he had sold 12 sophisticated weapons to different people in Punjab apart from supplying weapons to different gangs and was in contact with

people from across the border. Police or yet to recover those weapons.

Nishan is also accused of providing shelter to two of the attackers and was in touch with the main conspirator of the attack, Canada-based Lakhvir Singh alias Landa.

The rocket launcher used in the Mohali attack was smuggled from across the border and received by Lakhvir Singh's contacts in Tarn Taran district.

Middukhera murder: Family demands more security

JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP
MOHALI, MAY 22

THE FAMILY members of slain Youth Akali Dal (YAD) leader Vicky Middukhera alleged threat perception from the gang members allegedly involved in the murder. The family demanded their security be increased. Vicky's elder brother Ajaypal Singh Middukhera told *The Indian Express* that a few days back, he informed the police his family has a threat.

Ajaypal added that those ar-

rested were involved in cases of murder, extortion and attempt to murder and have also murdered witnesses in other cases, in the past. "The arrested shooters in past killed witnesses in their cases. I have demanded increase in my security. At present the police have provided to security personnel to me, but I feel it is not sufficient," he added. The district police arrested three alleged shooters of Vicky identified as Sajjan alias Bholu, Anil alias Lath and Ajay alias Sunny. **FULL REPORT ON**
www.indianexpress.com

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NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

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

Director

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Bank of Baroda

NOTICE

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

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

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

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

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

For Bank of Baroda
Sanjiv Chadha
Managing Director & CEO

Place: Mumbai
Date: 23.05.2022

28/02-23

6 REGION

Himachal CM on AAP: 'Woh pahad nahin chadh payenge'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, MAY 22

CHIEF MINISTER Jai Ram Thakur Sunday said the Aam Aadmi Party has no future in the hill state. "Woh pahad nahin chadh payenge (They won't be able to climb hills). Recently they (AAP) state unit was dissolved because of their lack of political vision for Himachal Pradesh. Political scenario in Punjab was different. People of Himachal Pradesh are not used to blame games as being played by AAP," said Thakur while interacting with the media during the evening session of Media Mahamanthan conclave entitled "Baat Bharat Ki" (Voice of Nation) on the completion of 75 years of publication of two weeklies Panchjanya and Organiser (English) in New Delhi.

The day-long conclave witnessed the participation of eight chief ministers of the BJP-ruled states: Uttarakhand, Haryana, Manipur, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. Highlighting the journey of the weeklies, Thakur remembered Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, who was the founder of Panchjanya, and the late prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who became the first editor of Panchjanya in 1948 and under whose guidance these publications gained more recognition.

He said that the state government has achieved many milestones in health, education and



Himachal CM Jai Ram Thakur with his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar at the conclave in New Delhi on Sunday. *Express*

social service sector. The state government had launched Grihini Suvidha Yojna to benefit the poorest of the poor by providing them smoke-less chullahas. "We have also launched Mukhya Mantri Swablamban Yojna for the youth aged between 18 and 45 to encourage them for self-employment, like

opening of restaurants and fitness centres. There is a provision of providing 25 to 30 per cent subsidy up to the investment of Rs 1 crore for purchasing machinery and equipment for running the business. Under the scheme, women aged between 18 and 50 years are being provided subsidy up to 35 per cent."

The state government has also launched Mukhya Mantri Shagun Yojna under which a sum of Rs 31,000 was being provided as financial assistance to girls of BPL families, the CM said, adding that Himachal is the first state to provide 50 per cent reservation to women in Panchayati Raj institutions.

In the field of health, the state government launched Mukhya Mantri Sahara Yojna to benefit around 20,000 beneficiaries with serious ailments. The CM also briefed about other welfare schemes launched for the welfare of the people.

Thakur congratulated mediapersons who were honoured on the occasion for maintaining the highest standards of profession in print, electronic and digital media. He said that it is the foremost duty of the journalists to highlight social issues and put the facts before the people.

The CM appreciated the announcement of the Central government to give subsidy up to Rs 200 per LPG cylinder to benefit over nine crore beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana. Around 1.37 lakh beneficiaries in Himachal would also be benefited by this, he added. The beneficiaries would receive subsidy on 12 cylinders. He welcomed the Union government decision to bring down the price of petrol by Rs 9.50 and that of diesel by Rs 7. He also welcomed the decision of fertiliser subsidy of Rs 1.10 lakh crore in addition to Rs 1.05 lakh crore.



Women use an umbrella to protect themselves from rain, as they walk along the Ridge in Shimla, Sunday. *Pradeep Kumar*

'WATER THEFT' AT BARKATWAH CANAL

Sukhbir Badal says 32 farmers booked in false case, seeks cancellation of FIR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 22

SHIROMANI AKALI Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal on Sunday asked Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to immediately order cancellation of an alleged false case registered against 32 farmers of Fazilka district, who were booked in a water theft case despite the canal distributary running dry.

In a statement released here, the SAD president said it was

shocking that 32 farmers of Chak Sotrian, Chak Majindinwala, Dhand Karyal, Arianwala, Bahmaniwala and Chak Totianwala have been falsely implicated in a theft case on charges of stealing water from the Barkatwah minor distributary. Badal said the irrigation department officials, who were failing in their duty to provide requisite water to farmers of the state, were victimising farmers including Akali workers. Those booked also include four brothers of SAD leader Hans Raj Jossan.

Badal said the AAP government was not only failing to provide timely water in the state canals but was also not checking the inflow of industrial and sewage pollutants into the Satluj and Beas rivers. "We have witnessed how the entire water has been polluted and rendered black at Harike Headworks only a few days back. Instead of taking action in this matter and ensuring supply of clean water for both irrigation and drinking purposes to farmers of Ferozepur, the government is victimising

farmers. We will not tolerate this discrimination against farmers. If the false case are not withdrawn, the party will launch an agitation against the vendetta driven AAP government," the SAD president added.

Badal also demanded that water supply be started in all canal distributaries immediately to ensure farmers are able to sow paddy in time. He also demanded smooth and uninterrupted supply of power, saying rampant power cuts had destroyed the livelihood of farmers.

What is 'storage gain' in wheat and why Punjab procurement agencies don't want to shell it out

AFTER CENTRE relaxed the Fair and Average Quality (FAQ) norms for wheat procurement this season raising the permissible limit of 'Shrivelled and Broken grains' from 6% to 18%, Punjab's state procurement agencies (SPAs) are now seeking a waiver of 'storage gain'. If allowed, the waiver in actual

terms would stand at around Rs 150 crore for the current season. What is 'storage gain' and why do Punjab agencies want a complete waiver, **ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA** explains. Excerpts:

What is 'storage gain' in wheat?

Wheat, considered a 'living grain', tends to gain some weight during storage. This is known as 'storage gain' and it mostly happens due to absorption of moisture. There are three parts of the grain—bran (outer layer rich in fibre), germ (inner layer rich in nutrients) and endosperm (bulk of the kernel which contains minerals and vitamins). The moisture is mostly absorbed by endosperm.

Who compensates whom for 'storage gain'?

State procurement agencies, which purchase and store wheat at their facilities, are required to

give one kg wheat extra per quintal to the FCI, the Centre's nodal agency for grain procurement, to compensate for storage gain. While 20% of wheat, procured by the FCI and the SPAs, is moved immediately after procurement, it is usually on the remaining 80%, which is moved out after July 1 every year, that storage gain has to be accounted for due to longer storage duration.

What is the storage gain calculation for this year?

This year 96 LMT wheat was procured in Punjab by all agencies. As 80% of this figure comes to 76.80 LMT, it means that storage gain would be around 7.68 lakh quintals on this. At MSP rate of Rs 2,015, it would cost state agencies

Rs 154.74 crore if they are unable to supply 7.68 lakh quintals extra during movement of 76.80 LMT wheat. Sources said FCI deducts that amount during final settlement of dues to balance the books.

EXPLAINED

Why do state agencies want a waiver this year?

They argue that grain procured this year is both shrivelled and broken and therefore will not gain much weight.

Vinod Kumar Sharma, the president of Joint Coordination Committee of Punjab SPAs, which has demanded storage gain waiver, said: "Due to shrivelled and broken grains, the size of endosperm is small, which is usually above 75%. So, this will lead to less absorption of water as compared to wheat procured without FAQ

norms relaxation earlier." A major reason to seek this waiver is also the fact that the SPAs in Punjab are already cash-strapped.

Is this FCI vs SPA fight new?

Till 1986-87, the SPAs kept the entire 'storage gain'—actual grain—of the procured crop and handed the rest to FCI. In 1999, Punjab Cabinet set one kg gain per quintal as storage gain and said that this would go to the state, not to SPAs. FCI then protested and said that the procurement was done using Centre's money so the 'gain' belonged to the FCI. Around 2004, it made norms on the lines of Punjab's 1999 decision and fixed the storage gain quantity. State procurement agencies have called FCI's method unscientific, and have demanded a region-wise 3-year study of climatic conditions, storage facilities to come up with a method to determine storage gain.

Fire breaks out at godown of hosiery unit in Ludhiana

Ludhiana: A major fire broke out at the godown of a hosiery unit in Jain Complex on Bahadur Ke Road of Ludhiana on Sunday. While raw material worth lakhs got gutted, no casualty was reported.

Panic gripped the residents around 6.15 am when the security guards of the godown rushed outside after witnessing flames in the godown. They then alerted Sunil Jain, owner of Jain Amar Readymade Garments, who further informed the fire department. The fire department rushed

fire tenders to the spot and in the meantime the workers of the neighbouring units tried to douse the flames by spraying water from the roof top of their units.

According to the fire officer Kartar Singh, around 20 fire tenders were rushed to the spot and it took fire fighters over 6 hours to control the flames. He added that it was a double storey building and the fire remained at the ground level. The godown was full of garments. The reason is suspected to be a short circuit.

ENS

Haryana: Two shot dead while travelling in car

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HISAR (HARYANA), MAY 22

TWO MEN, travelling in a car, were shot dead near Puthi Samain village on Sunday, police said.

The unidentified assailants have fled, they said, adding the victims, both aged around 25 years, died on the spot.

Police said the deceased have been identified as Sandeep and Amit, both residents of village Nindana under Meham police station in Rohtak district.

On getting information about the incident, the police have reached the spot.

MAN AMAN SINGH
CHHINA

CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

THE CBI investigation into the recruitment scam of officer cadets at Services Selection Board (SSB) is in progress and several Army officers who were prima facie found to be involved in the scam continue to remain under suspension from service. In a recent order, the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) has refused to interfere with the suspension of a Lt Colonel of the Army Air Defence Corps (AAD) who is alleged to be the "mastermind" of the scam.

As many as 23 people, including several Army officers, jawans, cadets and civilians were booked in an FIR in March 2021 by the CBI following a complaint in this regard from the Additional Directorate General of Discipline and Vigilance in Army HQs in this regard. A case was registered against these people under Section 120 of the Indian Penal Code along with Sections 7, 7A, 8 and 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act for criminal conspiracy, demand of undue advantage, taking illegal gratification etc.

Lt Colonel MVSNA Bhagavan had moved the principal bench of the AFT in New Delhi seeking quashing of the suspension orders issued for him as well as other restrictions placed on him. He was posted at the SSB Kapurthala from 2015 to 2019 and was then posted to the Army Air Defence Centre.

In October 2020 he was sanctioned study leave at Vishakhapatnam and when the SSB Kapurthala scam broke his study leave was cancelled by the Army Training Command (ARTRAC) HQs in Shimla and he was posted to Army Air Defence Centre where he was suspended and kept under open arrest.

The officer has contended that he was being illegal kept under suspension and open arrest despite the fact that there was no evidence against him and that a CBI raid at his residence had revealed nothing incriminating. He had also contended that his suspension has been extended on various occasions with the latest three month extension of suspension



Army Chief General Manoj Pande takes over as Honourary Colonel of 61 Cavalry. *Army*

being ordered in March 2022 and that he could not be kept under suspension for more than 90 days without formulation of a charge sheet.

MILITARY
Digest

The AFT order mentions that the officer had been identified as the "mastermind" of the scam with one JCO, Naib Subedar Kuldeep Singh, as middleman. A report by a Brigadier of the Additional Directorate General of Discipline and Vigilance also identifies the officer as a middleman and he is alleged to have received bribes for selection of officer cadets.

The AFT has also noted that the officer had earlier approached the Andhra Pradesh High Court on two occasions and had not got any relief from single bench and then a double bench, before he approached the AFT and has dismissed the petition.

Integrated Battle Groups being tested in Exercises

The concept of Integrated Battle Groups (IBG) is being put through the paces of a test bed in field conditions and troops, armour and allied arms and services elements with a view

to making the transition to the new method of fielding a formation in battle. The former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen Bipin Rawat, was very keen to have the IBGs set up and deployed and it is one of the few proposals of his which is reaching completion after his demise.

Recently, an exercise was held under the Western Command where the offensive manoeuvres of newly test bedded IBGs of the Yol-Based 9 Corps was held. A major challenge of IBGs will be to maintain the cohesiveness of the technical arms and the combat support arms.

Army Chief picks up honorary Colonelcy of Sikh LI, 61 Cav and RR

As is customary, the new Chief of Army Staff, Gen Manoj Pande has taken over as the honorary Colonel of the Regiment of Sikh Light Infantry, 61 Cavalry and the Rashtriya Rifles (RR).

With the exception of the Sikh LI, all Chiefs are honorary Colonels of Regiment of 61 Cav and RR. Since Gen Pande is from the Bombay Sappers who have special ties with the Sikh LI, they appoint Honourary Colonels from each other. He is the 23rd Army Chief to take over colonelcy of the mounted Cavalry Regiment, 61 Cavalry.



CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED
Corporate Office : No.2, Dare House, 1st Floor, NSC Bose Road, Chennai 600 001.
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Contact No: MR. AMIT MALIK -9356861616

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower /Co-Borrower/ Mortgagee (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the **Symbolic** possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Cholamandalam investment and Finance Company Limited** the same shall be referred herein after as **Cholamandalam investment and Finance Company Limited**. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis through E-Auction.

Account No. and Name of Borrower, Co- Borrower, Mortgagees	Date & Amount as per Demand Notice U/s 13(2)	Descriptions of the Property / Properties	Reserve Price, Earnest Money Deposit & Bid Increment Amount (In Rs.)	E-Auction Date and Time, EMD Submission Last Date, Inspection Date
Account No.- X0HECIG00001744185 1. RAKESH KUMAR R/O HE-247-A, PHASE-7, MOHALI-160068 2. MOHIT KUMAR R/O HE-247-A, PHASE-7, MOHALI-160068 3. NISHA DEVI R/O HE-247-A, PHASE-7, MOHALI-160068	07-06-2021 Rs. 24,72,308/- as on 05-06-2021	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF THE RESIDENTIAL HOUSE NO. HE 247-A, PHASE-7, MOHALI.	Rs. 22,00,000/-, Rs. 2,20,000/-, Rs. 25,000/-	29-06-2022 at 11:00 am to 1:00 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 min each), 23-06-2022, 22-06-2022 to 23-06-2022, up to 5.00 PM.
1. All Interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website https://chola-lap.aucti ontiger.net & https://www.cholamandalam.com/auction-notices . For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may contact M/s. e-Procurement Technologies Ltd.; Contact Mr. Ram Sharma Contact number : 8000023297/ 079-35022182. email id : ramprasada@auctiontiger.net , support@auctiontiger.net 2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit https://chola-lap.auctiontiger.net & https://www.cholamandalam.com/auction-notices to take part in e-auction.				
THIS IS ALSO A STATUTORY 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002				
Date: 23-05-2022 Place: Chandigarh			Sd/- Authorised Officer M/s Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited	

7 REGION

ANOTHER BOREWELL TRAGEDY IN PUNJAB

6-yr-old boy falls 95 feet down, loses life after struggle of 9 hrs

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, MAY 22

NINE HOURS at a depth of 95 feet — that is what it took to snuff out the life of a six-year-old boy who fell into a borewell around 9 am on Sunday. The incident happened at Khosla Balanda village under Dasuya sub-division of Hoshiarpur district. The victim, Hritik, was playing in a field. Suddenly, a pack of stray dogs appeared on the scene. To save himself from the canines, he climbed a borewell shaft, which was around 2.5 feet over the earth. The shaft was covered with a jute bag and when the boy sat on it, he slipped into the borewell.

The district administration immediately swung into action after getting information. The National Disaster Response Force and Army were called in and they launched a rescue operation. A JCB machine was pressed into service to dig up a tunnel towards the borewell so that the boy could be pulled out. Volunteers from Sangrur district too came forward to help in the rescue operation.

After a struggle of nine hours, the boy, who had fallen upside down, was pulled out but he could not survive. He was immediately rushed to hospital where he was put on life-saving support to revive him but doctors declared him dead. The doctors said that he died due to asphyxiation. The parents of the boy, who are migrant labourers, were not around when the boy fell into the borewell. Later, his mother Vimla Devi was brought to the rescue operation site and was asked to talk to her son so that he could hear her voice



During the rescue operation at Khosla Balanda village under Dasuya sub-division of Hoshiarpur district on Sunday. *Express*

and feel some relief. He had two brothers and two sisters.

Hoshiarpur Deputy Commissioner Sandeep Hans, who had been at the spot since morning, said: "It is unfortunate. We tried our best to pull him out but the boy was stuck at a depth of 95 feet. We called NDRF and Army teams for the rescue operation." He added that high-flow oxygen was supplied into the well and through camera they saw the boy was lying in a semi-conscious condition. The government announced a grant of Rs 2 lakh to the family of the boy. A post-mortem examination was yet to take place.

GUIDELINES FOR BOREWELLS

A couple of years back, The Supreme Court had issued guidelines for abandoned/under-repair/newly constructed borewells/tube wells to prevent fatal accidents involving small children. According to these, if a borewell is abandoned at any

stage, a certificate from the department concerned is a must and such data should be maintained in the District Collector or Block Development Office.

Further, fencing around borewell is a must at the time of construction/repair. According to the hydrology wing of Punjab agriculture department, filling up abandoned borewells with clay, sand, boulders and pebbles up to ground level is a must.

The owner of the land, before taking any steps for constructing borewell or tubewell, must inform in writing at least 15 days in advance to the authorities. Registration of all the drilling agencies is mandatory with the district administration or other authorities concerned. Even former chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh had asked all districts to do a survey and file a report on open borewells in Punjab after the death of two-year-old boy Fateh Veer Singh of Sangrur district, who had fallen into a borewell in June 2019.

My Cabinet gave land to Brahmin body, no one can snatch it: Hooda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

FORMER HARYANA Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday said that his cabinet had given the land of Pahrwar village to the Gaur Brahmin organisation and said no government can take it away.

He said that the land belonged to the Gaur Brahmin organisation, it is theirs and will remain so.

"The state cabinet had taken a decision for this land after following the law. The Congress government had given land on lease to the institution for 33+33+33 years at a nominal rate. Even today the institution has the right on the land. If the BJP-JJP government decides to change this decision, the Congress will strongly oppose it," he said.

The former CM said the entire tenure of the present government has been full of failures. "Unemployment is setting new records in the state every day, but instead of giving permanent jobs to the youth, the government is exploiting them in the name of Kaushal Nigam. Due to rising unemployment, crime is also increasing continuously, the law & order situation in the state has completely broken down and no one is feeling safe today," he said.

Hooda again raised the issue of farmers and said demands and problems of the farmers are also constantly being ignored by the coalition government in Haryana. "Despite repeated demands, the government did not give a bonus of Rs 500 on wheat to the farmers, even as the price of wheat in the international market is skyrocketing. The farmers of the country and the state should also get the benefit of this," he said.

He added that farmers' issues were discussed in detail during the recent Congress Chintan Shivir where the party deliberated upon the import-export policy of farmers' production. "It was decided that the policies of import-export should be done keeping the interest of farmers on top of the agenda," he said.

Hooda said the government, which had promised to double the income of farmers by 2022, has only doubled cost and debt. "There was also a serious discussion on making farmers debt free in the Congress Chintan Shivir. It was decided that a National Commission would be constituted for this. We also decided that in case of non-payment of loan, no farmer's land would be auctioned. Apart from this, it was agreed to give many more concessions including free electricity to the farmers," he added.

Haryana CM does not do any work by applying his mind: BJP MP Arvind Sharma

SUKHBIR SIWACH
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

BJP LOK Sabha MP Arvind Sharma, who had defeated Deepender Singh Hooda in Rohtak in the 2019 parliamentary polls, said on Sunday that Haryana needs a Chief Minister from the Brahmin community while calling Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar a CM who "doesn't do any work by applying his own mind".

While addressing a function held by Brahmin community members in Pahrwar village of Rohtak, four-time MP Arvind Sharma said: "Fifty-six years back

when Haryana was formed in 1966, Pt Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was the first CM of the state. But for how many months did he remain? — six months. Mhare saade char sal kab dyoge bhai (When will the remaining 4.5 years of Chief Ministership be given)? I will speak to Modi ji and Amit Shah ji. I have not talked about this till now... I don't want anything for myself. I want to serve the people. I want to be a sewak, not a leader of Brahmins. I want the strength to execute work on my instructions. There was a time when there were Brahmin CMs in ten states out of 20-22 states."

The event was called to restore a piece of the land for the

Its MP part of Brahmin show of strength, Haryana BJP keeps close watch

SUKHBIR SIWACH
CHANDIGARH, MAY 22

WIELDING AXES, a few thousand Brahmins gathered in the village of Pahrwar village in Rohtak district on Sunday to demand the restoration of a lease of 16 acres of land for the community so that they can build a temple, school, college and hospital on the land.

A senior BJP leader from the Brahmin community told *The Indian Express* that this was probably the first time the community had engaged in a public show of strength at this scale while also displaying the axe, or farsa, which is the weapon of "Brahmin icon" Parshuram (the sixth incarnation of Hindu god Vishnu). The event in Pahrwar, which is a Brahmin-dominated village, was organised by former AAP state president Naveen Jaihind who had called on 1,000 members of the community to bring along a brick and an axe to the programme. According to the protesters, in 2009 the Bhupinder Singh Hooda-led Congress government approved the village panchayat's proposal to give the 16 acres of land on lease to the Gaur Brahmin organisation. Five years later, when the BJP came to power, Pahrwar became a part of the Rohtak Municipal Corporation. The authorities cancelled the lease as



Manohar Lal Khattar

some stipulated norms were allegedly not fulfilled.

"The members of the Brahmin community are running from pillar to post but the government has not handed over the land to them," said Jaihind. "Now, Rs 8 crore (as development charges) are being sought from the Brahmins. We are not going to give a penny to the government."

A few days ago, the former AAP leader used an excavator to remove a corporation board placed at the site and claimed the land for the community. A senior government official admitted that the matter was not handled properly.

With Sunday's event, the matter has now emerged as a rallying point for Brahmins in Haryana. At the demonstration, BJP MP Arvind Sharma, who defeated the Congress's Deepender Singh Hooda from Rohtak in 2019, hit out at Manohar Lal Khattar, saying the chief minister "doesn't do any work by applying his mind". He also said the state had not had a Brahmin CM since Pandit Bhagwat Dayal

Sharma 56 years ago.

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Lt. General (retired) DP Vats said Brahmins were the second-largest community in Haryana after Jats. There seems to be a growing sentiment in the community that it should have a bigger share of power. At the moment, Mool Chand Sharma is the only Brahmin Cabinet minister in the Khattar government. Apart from Sharma, Sonipat MP Ramesh Kaushik is the only other Brahmin BJP MP in the Lok Sabha while Vats is the only Brahmin BJP MP from Haryana in the Upper House.

With Sharma pitching for a Brahmin CM in a state where the politics of caste in power has usually revolved around the factor of Jats and non-Jats, the BJP is closely monitoring the developments. Party insiders said the government does not want to display undue haste in the matter to avoid the impression that it was under pressure. Some BJP leaders also spoke of a Congress connection to Sunday's event, pointing out that the Pahrwar event falls in Hooda territory.

Asked why the government did not restore the land lease, a senior BJP functionary said, "The land will be given to the community certainly after completing the due process."

Vats said there should not be any delay in returning the land to the community.

Wait ends, farmer families get Telangana CM's help

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, MAY 22

TELANGANA CM K Chandrashekar Rao's visit to Tagore Theatre in Chandigarh was attended by families of farmers who died during the farm law protests. They waited to receive the promised Rs 3 lakh from the Telangana CM. About 400 families have also received Rs 5 lakh compensation from the previous Congress-led Punjab government. A look at the lives of nine families who were at the event:

Dhanna Singh

AGE AT TIME OF DEATH: 45
DISTRICT: Mansa
VILLAGE: Khiyali Chehlan
DATE OF DEMISE: Nov 27, 2020

Dhanna's death was the first during the agitation at the Delhi borders. During the wee hours of November 27, 2020, a convoy of tractors from Punjab was on its way to Delhi when a vehicle hit the trolley of one of the tractors from the rear end. Dhanna, who was in the trolley, fell on the road and was crushed to death. He died in Bhiwani even before he could march with other farmers to the Delhi border. His wife Manjit is working as a class four worker in a government school; her son, who is class nine, studies in the same school. Manjit got the job on compassionate grounds after her husband died. She also got Rs 5 lakh from the Punjab Government, Rs 4 lakh from the Haryana government and Rs 1 lakh from SGPC. She has two more daughters.

Jai Singh

AGE AT TIME OF DEATH: 37
DISTRICT: Bathinda
VILLAGE: Tungwali
DATE OF DEMISE: Dec 17, 2020

Jai Singh, a marginal dairy farmer, died of cardiac arrest at the Tikri border near Bahadurgarh.

"He (Jai) had gone on November 26 along with other farmers. My elder son and other relatives were also with him. He had eaten food at a protest morcha on December 16, 2020, but never got up on December 17



morning. His widow Kulwinder Kaur got a class four category job in the Deputy Commissioner's office, Bathinda," Kuldeep Singh, Jai's 70-year-old father said. The family got Rs 5 lakh compensation from Punjab Government and a job for Kulwinder Kaur.

Baldev Singh
AGE AT TIME OF DEATH: 65
DISTRICT: Sangrur
VILLAGE: Ballian
DATE OF DEMISE: Dec 9, 2020

Baldev got sick due to the intense cold weather conditions at the Singhu border in December 2020;

the morcha was still in the process of being set up. He got a chest infection and died on December 9, 2020, just a few days after the agitation started, told Gurmeet Singh. His family is yet to get a government job as announced by the previous Congress government but has received Rs 5 lakh compensation.

Ajaib Singh

AGE AT TIME OF DEATH: 62
DISTRICT: Bathinda
VILLAGE: Ghudda

DATE OF DEMISE: Feb 17, 2021



Ajaib Singh, a marginal farmer died during the wee hours at the Tikri border when he was hit by a vehicle while trying to get into a tractor-trolley. "The fog was very heavy in the early morning hours when this accident happened," said Gurdeep Singh, Ajaib's father. Ajaib's wife Amarjeet Kaur lives with Gurdeep and his family while Jagjit Singh, Ajaib's elder son got a job on compassionate grounds in the Tahsil office as a peon and the family got Rs 5 lakh relief from the Punjab Government as well.

Gurdas Singh

AGE AT TIME OF DEATH: 68
DISTRICT: Bathinda
VILLAGE: Chudda
DATE OF DEMISE: Feb 17, 2021



Gurdas also died in the same accident along with Ajaib on the same date. "Farm agitation is a thing to be remembered by our generations: the human cost of this agitation can be judged by the after-effects of the loss of a family member... compensations cannot fill the void of humans," said Gurdeep Singh. Jashan Singh, Gurdas Singh's grandson, has passed class 12 and is waiting to get a job from Punjab Government on compassionate grounds.

Gurmair Kaur, Amarjeet Kaur, Sukhwinder Kaur
AGE AT TIME OF DEATH: 62, 55, 55
DISTRICT: Mansa
VILLAGE: Kheeva Diyalu Wala
DATE OF DEMISE: Oct 28, 2021

The trio were sitting on a road divider waiting for an auto-rickshaw in the early morning hours of October 28, 2021, at the Tikri border when a truck ran over them, told Jageer Singh, a resident of Kheeva Diyalu Wala. All three were from marginal families and were regular in local dharmas at Mansa. Their family members went to Chandigarh to collect the compensation.

PTI teachers protest outside minister's residence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 22

NEARLY SIX months after Delhi chief minister and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal visited Mohali in the run up to Punjab Assembly elections and promised jobs to the agitating unemployed teachers, members of the teachers union in Punjab protested outside the residence of education minister Gurmeet Singh Meht Hayer in Barnala on Sunday alleging that the AAP government has forgotten its promise.

The unemployed teachers, who are demanding jobs as Physical Training Instructors (PTI) in state government schools, alleged that in November last year, Kejriwal had met protesting teachers in Mohali and promised that once AAP comes to power in Punjab, the merit list for recruitment of 646 PTI teachers, which is lying pending since 2011, will be issued on priority.

"It was only after Kejriwal's assurance that we had come down from the water tank in January, almost after spending three months atop the water tank. He was also accompanied by Bhagwant Mann and Gagan Anmol Maan. But now when AAP is in power, it seems they have forgotten all their promises," said Sippy Sharma, one of the unemployed teachers. Meanwhile, police used mild force to disperse protesting teachers outside the residence of the education minister in Barnala on Sunday. Later they were promised a meeting with the minister on June 2.

Mann leads over 15k cyclists to garner awareness against drugs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, MAY 22

PUNJAB CHIEF Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday led more than 15,000 cyclists in a massive drug awareness rally from the grounds of GGS School located in Sangrur.

Addressing the gathering after flagging off the event, the CM said that Sangrur is the land of revolutionaries and on Sunday, the people of Sangrur had once again gathered for a noble cause.

He said that the aim of the rally was to create awareness against drug menace among the youth who fall prey to drugs unknowingly.

Quoting that "an idle brain is a devil's workshop", Mann said that with more employment opportunities there will be no space for drugs in the society.

"Our social bonding is so strong that any seed could germinate on the land of Punjab but the seed of hatred will not germinate here at any cost. And if our health and mind will be fit then we will together put the state on a high growth trajectory," CM said.

The CM said that in the coming days more such awareness initiatives will be embarked on the larger level to promote physical and mental health.

Mann said that his government is working on multiple plans to eradicate drugs from the society, adding that more rehabilitation centres and clinics will be opened for the better treatment of drug-affected patients.

The CM added that thrust will also be laid on providing em-



CM Bhagwant Mann with cabinet minister Harpal Cheema and other officials at the cycle rally to create awareness against drug menace in Sangrur on Sunday. *Gurmeet Singh*

ployment opportunities to the youth which would help in keeping them away from drug menace. Expressing concern over the depleting water table, he said that both water and air — the precious natural resources of the state have been polluted.

Mann said that his government will start awareness drive to motivate the farmers for crop diversification. The CM said that now the Centre has also agreed to implement Price Support Scheme for procurement of moong crop from Punjab Govt for Rabi season 2021-22.

Meanwhile, SSP Sangrur Mandeep Singh Sidhu thanked the CM for leading the initiative.

Brahmin community where they can build a temple, college and hospital. The function was held to mark Parshuram Jayanti and members of the community came wielding axes in their hands on the call of former AAP state president Naveen Jaihind. The event was also broadcasted from Jaihind's Facebook account. Congress MLA Kuldeep Vats, JJP MLA Ram Kumar Gautam and independent MLA Balraj Kundu also participated in the event.

In the rally, Sharma alleged that Ram Bilas Sharma was "cheated" when he was not made Chief Minister in 2014 after the saffron party had first time secured a majority in the

state. Arvind Sharma said, "A cheating took place in 2014. I am not against the selection of (Manohar Lal) Khattar (a Punjabi) for the post of Chief Minister. Punjabis too are our brothers. But what mistake had Ram Bilas ji made in 2014 for him to be cheating so badly. The government was formed by using his (Ram Bilas) name. Everything took place because of his name. But when the turn to make CM came, he was thrown out like a kanta, he was ignored."

Calling the community leaders to aspire for bigger posts, Sharma said, "Our (community) leaders ask for the posts of chairman and members. They have for-

Don't befool farmers: SAD kisan wing chief to CM Mann

Chandigarh: Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) kisan wing on Sunday asked CM Bhagwant Mann "not to befool farmers with grandiose announcements that their moong crop would be procured when the central government had only agreed to procure 4,585 metric tonnes of lentil, which only amount to 10-15% per cent of the anticipated production".

In a written statement, SAD kisan wing president Sikander Singh Maluka said "Punjab was set to produce 4.75 lakh metric tonnes of moong and the centre had agreed to procure only 4,585 metric tonnes. This minuscule procurement, which is also riddled with riders like maintenance of a revolving fund equivalent to 15 per cent of the sanctioned procurement, will fail to manage the huge lentil produce which is expected in markets shortly". **ENS**

Warring takes a dig at Mann, asks what AAP govt is doing for farmers

Chandigarh: PPCC president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring on Sunday took a dig at Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal for their "showmanship and double standards over relief to the families of those farmers who lost their lives during the year long agitation against three central farm laws". **ENS**



Chandigarh



8 EXPRESS NETWORK

Breach in canal causes scarcity of water, delays cotton sowing

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, MAY 22

OVER 200-FT breach in Sirhind feeder at Thandewala village of Muktsar district which occurred on May 9 has caused scarcity of water for both irrigation as well as drinking purposes in the area and delayed cotton sowing.

The Sirhind feeder provides water to districts of Faridkot, Ferozepur, Muktsar and Fazilka. "Cotton sowing is on these days. It should have been done by May 15 but because of no water supply in this area, it has been delayed further. Department aimed to have 4 lakh hectare area under cotton this year but till now only 3 lakh hectare has been brought under cotton. Last year, it was around 3.25 lakh hectare area. Now we are hopeful that water will soon be released and farmers can get water supply for crops," said an official from the agriculture department.

The breach has affected drinking water supply as well. "Our area is dependent on canal water only as groundwater is unfit for drinking. But due to the breach in a major canal of the area which further supplies to distributories, we are not even getting drinking water supply," said Rajinder Singh, from Dhrangwala village of Balluana constituency of Fazilka district. "Many villagers are purchasing a 5,000 litres of tanker worth Rs 1000. These tankers are arranged by people by taking water from far-off canals or from underground bores."

Former SAD MLA Kanwarjit Singh Rozy Barkandi said simi-

lar was the situation in urban areas of Muktsar. "People are arranging tankers as water supply department is hardly giving any supply. Their reserve stocks seem to be completely over."

However, Amarjeet Singh Bhattal, excutive engineer of water works department, Abohar, said: "As of now we are rationing water supply to the area residents. We have 90 water tanks in parts of Fazilka. While some of them have drinking water supply of two days, others have drinking water supply for five to 10 days. We will be meeting canal department officials to chalk out a plan for drinking water supply. We are hopeful to get some alternative solution till the canal is under repair."

On May 14, Punjab's Water Resources Minister Brahm Shankar Zimpa visited the canal to take stock of the situation, which was five days after the breach happened. On Tuesday, Rajasthan's Water Resources Minister too came to Thandewala as water of Sirhind feeder had gone inside Bikaner canal running parallel to Sirhind feeder due to which water supply to Rajasthan via Bikaner canal has also been hit. The Bikaner canal was under repair when this breach had occurred. Farmers of Rajasthan visited the breach site on Saturday and Sunday because Rajasthan does not have tubewell supply like Punjab.

"Both canals should be running with water supply or both should be closed together. If one is closed and the other is having water supply, such incidents are likely to happen," said an officer of the agriculture department.

Arjun Singh returns to TMC in jolt to Bengal BJP

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, MAY 22

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

Singh's return to the TMC nearly three years after he had left the party ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections is yet another blow to the BJP in West Bengal, plagued by the exit of several MLAs and leaders since its defeat in the last year's Assembly elections in the state. The BJP also conceded that Singh leaving the party was a huge loss for them. "What can we say if someone wants to do politics for their personal benefit. But it's a huge loss (to the party)," BJP national secretary Anupam Hazra said.

Addressing a press conference after joining the ruling TMC in the presence of its national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee at his Camac Street office in Kolkata, the Barrackpore MP said, "The way TMC is working on the development of Bengal is worth appreciating. I am from the jute mill

area where people have been suffering due to the Centre's unjust jute policies."

The BJP is losing ground in the state because its politics is limited to air-conditioned rooms and social media, he claimed. "The BJP as an organisation is limited to Facebook. It is not possible to do politics only on Facebook. Ground politics is important in Bengal. I am back in the party as I was facing problems working for the development of the people of Bengal," he added.

On holding the MP's post as a BJP member, he said, "Two TMC MPs who joined the BJP should first resign from the post first. If they do, I too will resign. If the party asks me, I will resign in a minute." Abhishek Banerjee said on Twitter, "Extending a warm welcome to Arjun Singh who rejected the divisive forces..."

Singh has been targeting the Centre, claiming that it was neglecting the jute industry of West Bengal. He had even threatened to hit the streets if the issue of jute price capping was not resolved. The Jute Commissioner had revoked the decision to cap the prices of jute.

Gujarat to appeal against trial court orders to recover relief amount in 3 SC/ST Act cases

State govt goes against opinion of own legal department, says no provision to take back relief

PARIMAL DABHI
GANDHINAGAR, MAY 22

THE GUJARAT government has decided to go against the opinion of its legal department and appeal against the judgments of a special trial court in Banaskantha ordering authorities to recover compensation that had been paid to some Dalits under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The special trial court had, in separate judgments, acquitted the accused in three cases of charges under the Act, and or-

dered the state authorities to recover the compensation paid to the Dalit complainants or victims. It had directed contempt of court proceedings if its orders were not complied with.

However, the state government has decided to appeal against the same in the Gujarat High Court, overruling an opinion by its legal department, in "public interest". A decision in this regard was taken recently by Social Justice & Empowerment Minister Pradip Parmar, and approved by the office of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

The legal department has ap-

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

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, MAY 22

AUTHORITIES IN Assam's Nagaon district Sunday demolished the homes of five families that were allegedly involved in setting fire to a police station the previous day.

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

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

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

who were involved in setting fire to the police station", police officers said.

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

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

He added that video footage was being analysed to identify the



A bulldozer demolishes a house in Nagaon Sunday. ANI

others involved. Asked if the home-owners were sent a notice about the demolition, Singh said notices fell under the jurisdiction of the district administration.

The Indian Express reached out to Nagaon DC Nisarg Hivare but his phone was switched off.

However, another district official, who did not wish to be iden-

tified, said they had not received any written communication or instruction from the office of the DC regarding the demolition, and that no notice was sent from the circle office to the village.

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

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

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

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

Family members of Islam alleged that police demanded Rs 10,000 and a duck as a bribe for his release. A villager said, Islam's wife and niece visited the police station with a duck on Friday night, but was asked to arrange money by the police. "When they returned the next morning, they found he was unwell and took him to the dispensary nearby. The case was referred to the civil hospital but he died on the way," said the resident.

Special DGP Singh said he had advised the Nagaon SP to probe if those accused had links with banned terror or jihadi outfits.

Shutting madrassas, bringing UCC is for benefit of Muslims: Himanta at RSS event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

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

"If India is a Union of states, what about the 5,000 years of rich history? When Congress called itself Indian National Congress and held meetings across India, did it mean it as a Union of states? By calling it a



Assam CM at the event to mark 75 years of *Organiser and Panchajanya*

Union of states, Rahul Gandhi is speaking of breaking up the country. Indirectly he is encouraging secessionist sentiments. It is no different from what ULFA says, only the language used may be different," Sarma

said at an event in Delhi commemorating 75 years of RSS-linked magazines Panchjanya and Organiser.

"But it is not his fault. He may be taking tuition from someone from JNU and learning these things," he said.

Speaking at an event in London Saturday, Gandhi had said India is a Union of states as described in the Constitution.

Sarma had earlier been with the Congress for 22 years. He said betraying the Gandhi family is viewed as betraying the nation in Congress, while in the BJP, the nation is above the party.

The Assam Chief Minister, who initiated a controversial

move to shut down government-funded madrassas in the state, said the word "madrassa" should go extinct if Indian Muslims are to progress in education. "If you want to teach religion, you do that at home. In schools, you learn science, mathematics..."

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



SHAH IN ARUNACHAL

Home Minister Amit Shah with Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu at a rally in Namsai district. Shah said the people of the state are filled with patriotism and greet each other with 'Jai Hind' instead of the usual 'Namaste'. PTI

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

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

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

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

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

Among Central universities, DU leads the chart with over 6 lakh applications, followed by Banaras Hindu University (BHU) with 3.94 applications and Allahabad University with 2.31 lakh applications. Lucknow-based Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University trails closely behind with 1.49 lakh applications, Jamia Millia Islamia University, which had initially

EXPLAINED A new platform
CUET, PROPOSED in the NEP 2020, provides a single platform for students to pick multiple courses and universities. The test scores will be used by many universities for UG admissions.

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

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

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

Other cases of alleged encounters may face legal scrutiny

REENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD MAY 22

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

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

The Justice V S Sirpurkar Commission was set up by the Supreme Court to probe the deaths of the four accused in the rape and murder of a veterinar-



At the site of the December 2019 encounter. File

ian at Chattanpally in Shadnagar on the outskirts of Hyderabad on November 27, 2019.

The Telangana government, which was under pressure from people to bring the alleged rapists to instant justice in the rape and murder, did not condemn the alleged encounter killing of the four accused, two of whom are now proven to be minors.

While the Cyberabad Police was then hailed for the alleged encounter, senior minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav had said

that the police action could not have happened without the support of the government.

As the Sirpurkar Commission posed tough questions during its investigation and took to task policemen whose answers were inconsistent, in August last year, the state government transferred IPS officer V C Sajjanar, who was Cyberabad Police Commissioner when the alleged encounter killing happened, to the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation.

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

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, MAY 22

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

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

A JD(U) source said: "Since there had been subtle posturing from RCP Singh himself and



Nitish Kumar and RCP Singh

some senior leaders reacting to it, Nitish Kumar is the only competent person to take the final decision on the matter."

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

Rajiv Ranjan Singh later took over as JD(U) national chief.

"Nitish Kumar is caught in a piquant situation. If he renominates RCP, it may displease not just Rajiv Ranjan Singh but a large part of the party cadre. RCP has little hold in party organisation as only three of his 32 candidates could win 2020 Assembly polls. And if RCP is not renominated, he will lose his ministerial berth in six months," said a JD(U) leader.

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

WORLD BOXING CHAMPION
NIKHAT ZAREEN

‘People told my father that boxing was a men’s sport’

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



WHY
NIKHAT ZAREEN

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

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

I have two older sisters and a younger one, who is seven years junior to me. Both my elder sisters are physiotherapists and were not interested in sports. I had always been interested in sports and used to be a bit of a tomboy those days, hanging out with the boys. I had a boyish short hair too and preferred wearing T-shirt and jeans. Nobody thought I was a girl. Perhaps, I became strong because I have been, what you would call, “rough-and-tough” since childhood.

Before boxing, I was into athletics. Since there were no proper facilities and coaches, I would accompany my father to the Collector’s Ground where many competitive sports took place. I saw girls in every sport except boxing. I remember asking my father why there were no girls in the ring and if only boys could box? And he said, “no beta, girls can also box but people think they don’t have the guts to do so. That’s why they don’t send their girls to learn boxing.”

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

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



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Still, I was a kid in a junior level championship. The elite level is very different. The competition is better and the pressure, higher. In the juniors, you don’t know your opponent – all you can think about is to enter the ring, beat the opponent and win the bout. But in the senior category, you know about your opponents’ styles, strengths and weakness. So, you end up having to plan your moves strategically. There is a lot more pressure on your mind at this level. And yet, I managed to win the gold medal for my country. I am really happy about that. Hopefully, I can continue to work hard like this and keep winning medals.

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

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

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

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

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

(Laughs) *Sab Hyderabad ki biryani aur haleem hi hai* (It’s all in Hyderabad’s biryani and haleem). I guess every athlete gets nervous. The quality of a champion is how she deals with that pressure and nervousness. Even I was nervous about the world championship. I was nervous about how I would play against my opponent, whether I would be able to make her play according to my style and dominate her or whether she would trap me in her boxing style. Such thoughts always come to mind. I won all my bouts with unanimous decisions and I am happy about it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA
BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

BALANCE AND CHECK

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

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

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

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

WELCOME RELIEF

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

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

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

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

FREEZE FRAME



E P UNNY



AMITABH MATTOO

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

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

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

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

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

in politics; and safety for women.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AN EXCEPTIONAL JUSTICE

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



ANUP SURENDRANATH AND ADRIJA GHOSH

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

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

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

the batteries would be put. This reveals the violent reality of our criminal justice system — that statements and evidence are manipulated to secure convictions. It also demonstrates the dangers of conferring extraordinary police powers under the garb of national security legislation. Again, in 2017, Justice KT Thomas, one of the three SC judges who had upheld Perarivalan’s conviction, acknowledged “serious flaws” in the CBI investigation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAY 23, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO



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

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

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

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

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

The carbon footprint cost

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



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH
BY RITIKA JUNEJA AND
ASHOK GULATI

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

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

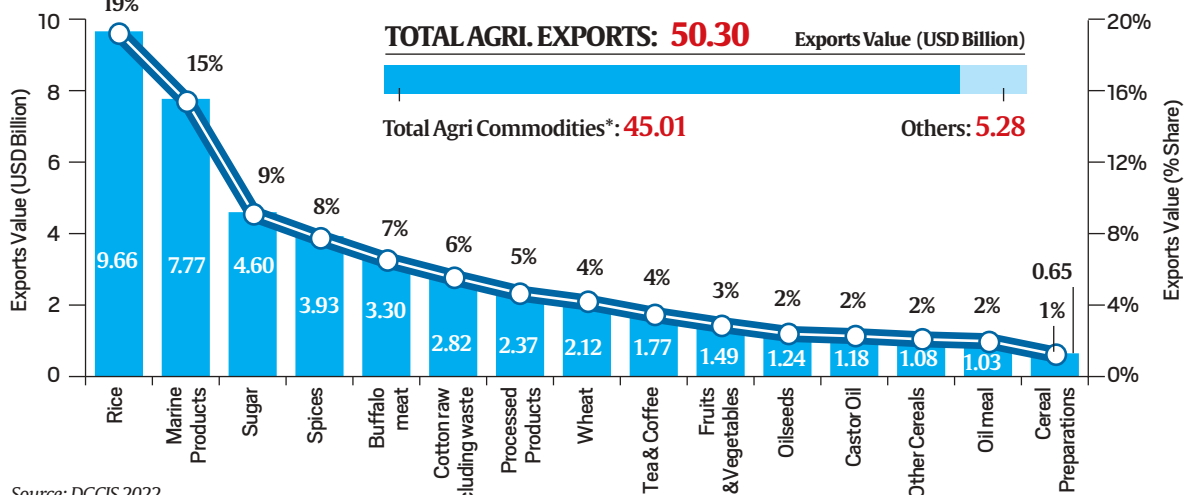
Let's take the case of rice first. India's exports of 21 MMT constituted 41 per cent of a global rice market of 51.3 MMT. Interestingly, when most of the other commodity prices were surging in global markets, the price of rice (Thailand supplies 25 per cent) collapsed by about 13 per cent from \$484/tonne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

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

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



EXPORTED AGRI COMMODITIES FY2022*



Source: DGCIIS 2022

TOTAL AGRI. EXPORTS: 50.30 Exports Value (USD Billion)
Total Agri Commodities*: 45.01 Others: 5.28

Illustration: C R Sasikumar; Graphics: Ritesh Kumar

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

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

Juneja is Consultant and Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor at ICRIR



RAJSHREE CHANDRA

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

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

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

It's about criminalising dissent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

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

A civilisational question in Gyanvapi

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



ABHINAV PRAKASH SINGH

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOR DIGNITY

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

Hemant Contractor, Pune

BIASED CENTRE

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is National Vice-President, BJYM

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

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

LAW NEEDED

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

H Upadhyay, via email

NOT IN OUR STARS

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

LR Murmu, Delhi

TOP OF THE WORLD



At a polling station in Bangkok, Sunday. AP

THAILAND
Bangkok votes for governor 1st time since coup

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

IRAN
Revolutionary Guard colonel shot dead

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

FRANCE
New minister for the disabled accused of rape

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

ZELENSKY SEEMS TOUGHEN SANCTIONS

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

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

REUTERS
KYIV, MAY 22

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

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

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

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

Speaking to the same parliamentary session, Ukrainian



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

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

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

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

the twin cities of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, interior ministry adviser Vadym Denysenko told Ukrainian television.

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

Ukraine's lead negotiator,

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

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

Fate of 2,500 POWs from Mariupol plant stirs concern

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

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

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



US President Joe Biden arrives in Tokyo on Sunday. Reuters

Biden visits Japan to launch economic plan to counter Beijing

REUTERS
TOKYO, MAY 22

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

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

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

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

Biden on Monday plans to roll out the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), a programme to bind regional countries more closely.

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

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

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

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

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

Bilawal in China: Need to resolve disputes in S Asia

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

This is Bilawal's maiden visit to China after he took over as foreign minister following the fall of the Imran Khan-led government last month. While reaffirming their strong support for each other's "core interests", both sides reiterated that a peaceful and prosperous South

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

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

Bilawal also sought to strike a chord with the Chinese people by highlighting his mother and grandfather's efforts in building the ties between the two countries. PTI

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



EXPRESS IN CANNES

SHUBHRA GUPTA
MAY 22

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

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

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

echoes of this kind of anger against 'outsiders' everywhere. In this microcosm set in a small European town is a larger story which speaks to snow-balling provincialism, xenophobia, and ugly racism. RMN makes a powerful case for blurring boundaries between people.

'Brother and Sister'

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

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

'The Godfather'

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

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com



COUNTER VIEW

A resident fixes a banner on a balcony in Davos, Switzerland, to protest against the World Economic Forum. The WEF, an event that sees the world's business and political elite hobnob for days, is back two years after the Covid-19 pandemic struck. Reuters

Sri Lanka minister warns to stop fuel delivery after arson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, MAY 22

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

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

Minister of Power and Energy Kanchana Wijesekera

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

SEEKING HELP TO CURE DEPRESSION USING HALLUCINOGENS SUCH AS TOAD POISON

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

ERNESTO LONDOÑO
TIJUANA, MEXICO

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

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

The wife of a Navy bomb dis-

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

Kristine Bostwick, 38, a former Navy corpsman, said she hoped that putting her mind through ceremonies with mind-altering substances would help her make peace with the end of a turbulent marriage and perhaps ease the migraines that had become a daily torment.

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

A growing body of research into the therapeutic benefits of

psychedelic therapy has generated enthusiasm among some psychiatrists and venture capitalists.

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

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



A ceremony initiating the psychedelic retreat. Meredith Kohut/ NYT

of psychedelics.

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

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

tending for free, courtesy of the Heroic Hearts Project and the Hope Project. The groups, founded by an Army ranger and the wife of a Navy SEAL, raise money to make psychedelic therapy affordable for people from military backgrounds.

The Mission Within, on the outskirts of Tijuana, is run by Dr. Martin Polanco, who since 2017 has focused almost exclusively on treating veterans.

Dr. Polanco said he had treated more than 600 American veterans in Mexico. "They understand what it takes to achieve peak performance."

In the beginning, he said, he treated male veterans almost exclusively. But recently, he started receiving many requests from fe-

male veterans and military wives and began running women-only retreats.

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

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

medical use. The third, psilocybin mushrooms, may be taken legally in ceremonies that follow Indigenous traditions.

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

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

13 ECONOMY

POLICY WATCH EXTERNAL DEBT

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

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, MAY 22

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

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

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

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

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

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

NRI deposits down \$2.87 bn

Mumbai: Outstanding non-resident Indian (NRI) deposits in India fell by \$2.875 billion to \$139,020 billion in the financial year ended March 2022 as against \$141.895 billion a year ago, according to the latest RBI data.

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

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

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

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

FOCUS ON DISCLOSURES, COMPLIANCES FOR NEW-AGE COS

Front-running: Sebi likely to soon initiate stringent action

SANDEEP SINGH
MUMBAI, MAY 22

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

While on the primary market

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

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

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

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

since the last funding round.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

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

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

TOTAL ORIGINAL COST of implementation of the 1,579 projects was ₹21,95,196.72 cr and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be ₹26,78,365.62 cr, which reflects overall cost overruns of ₹4,83,168.90 cr (22.01 % of the original cost)

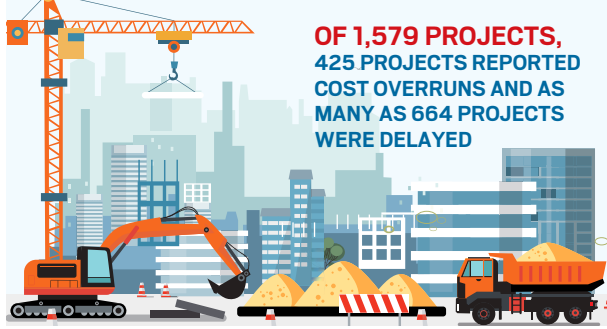
EXPENDITURE INCURRED on these projects till March 2022 stood at ₹13,88,760.73 cr, which is 51.85 % of the anticipated cost of the projects

NUMBER OF DELAYED PROJECTS decreased to 561, if delay is calculated on basis of latest schedule of completion

Source: MoSPI/PTI

Cost overruns of ₹4.83 lakh cr impact 425 infra projects

As many as 425 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of more than Rs 4.83 lakh crore, as per a Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation report



BRIEFLY Infra projects

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

SIAM on CNG

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

'GST Council'

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

'Specialty steel'

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

'Paytm bank'

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

CoinSwitch calls for regulatory 'peace, certainty'

REUTERS
DAVOS, MAY 22

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

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

Amazon: FRL independent dirs facilitated fraudulent stratagem

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

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

"Users don't know what will happen with their holdings - is government going to ban, not ban, how is it going to be regulated?"

ASHISH SINGHAL
CEO, COINSWITCH

Forum in Davos.

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

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

'To boost production outside China, Apple may turn to India'

REUTERS
BENGALURU, MAY 22

APPLE INC has told some of its contract manufacturers that it wants to increase production outside China, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

India and Vietnam, which are already sites of Apple production, are among the countries short-listed as alternatives, it added.

Apple last month forecast bigger supply problems. The re-



An Apple store in Shanghai, China. Reuters file

port said Apple is citing China's strict anti-Covid policy and other reasons for its decision. Apple de-

clined to comment to *WSJ* and couldn't be reached by *Reuters* on Saturday.

'Govt considering spending \$26 billion more to fight inflation'

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

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

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

Retail inflation rose to an eight-year high in April.

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

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

The government did not comment outside office hours.

Price hikes help India Inc fight margin pressure

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 22

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

For a universe of 927 companies (excluding banks and financials), operating profit margins contracted by only 50 basis points year-on-year to 16.37 per

VOLUMES GAME

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

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

Management commentary suggests companies plan to ei-

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

CENTRAL EXCISE DUTY/CESS

Effective	Shared with states (Basic Excise Duty)	Not shared with states (RIDC, SAED and AIDC)	Total excise duty
PETROL			
Mar 2020	₹2.98	₹20	₹22.98
June 2020	₹2.98	₹30	₹32.98
Feb 2021	₹1.4	₹31.5	₹32.9
Nov 2021	₹1.4	₹26.5	₹27.9
May 2022	₹1.4	₹18.5	₹19.9
DIESEL			
Mar 2020	₹4.83	₹14	₹18.83
June 2020	₹4.83	₹27	₹31.83
Feb 2021	₹1.8	₹30	₹31.8
Nov 2021	₹1.8	₹20	₹21.8
May 2022	₹1.8	₹14	₹15.8

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

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

PROVIDING DETAILS of the cut in excise duty on fuels, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said the excise duty cut of Rs 8/litre on petrol and Rs 6/litre on diesel has entirely been made in Road & Infrastructure Cess (RIC), which is not shared with states and, hence, the burden lies with Centre. The duty cut, effective Sunday, has a revenue implication of Rs 1 lakh crore annually for the Centre, which, coupled with the earlier duty cut of November 2021, will result in a total revenue loss of Rs 2.2 lakh crore a year, she said.

"Basic ED which is shareable with states has not been touched. Therefore, the entire burden of these two duty cuts (made in Nov. 21 and yesterday) is borne by the Centre. The duty reduction made yesterday has an implication of Rs 1,00,000 cr a year for Centre. The duty reduction made in November '21 has an implication of Rs 1,20,000 cr a year for Centre. Total revenue implication to Centre, on these two duty cuts is thus Rs 2,20,000 cr a year," she tweeted.

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

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

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

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

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

EXPLAINED How it breaks up

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

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

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

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

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

ther raise prices further or offer smaller volumes for the same price to protect margins. By a rough reckoning, prices have been raised by 5-15 per cent for consumer staples, 10-12 per cent for durables, around 10 per cent for automobiles, 5-15 per cent for residential properties and around 5-8 per cent at fast food eateries. By passing on the cost increases, companies have managed to grow their top lines despite, in many cases, selling smaller volumes. For the sample of 927 firms, net sales in Q4FY22 rose 24.2 per cent y-o-y.

Hindustan Unilever, for instance, has upped prices by about 10 per cent, enabling it to report a revenue growth of 11 per cent y-o-y in Q4FY22 despite volumes staying flat. Despite a 9 per cent y-o-y drop in volumes, Eicher Motors posted a revenue growth of 9 per cent y-o-y, thanks to a 21 per cent y-o-y increase in the average selling prices (ASPs).

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

EXPERT
EXPLAINS

DR ARVINDER SINGH SOIN

From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight

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

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

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

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

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

The *Lancet* study detected adenovirus in nearly 80% of the cases. Normally, this virus is fairly harmless. It causes gastritis, diarrhoea and vomiting but so far has not caused any severe illness. But now nearly 80% of children with hepatitis have this virus. It is still not known if it is causally related. Researchers even analysed the type of adenovirus and found a

particular strain called 41F in all samples. Now this strain is typically associated with mild gastro-intestinal illness in children. So, the theory going around is that somehow the immune system of children affected by Covid have developed abnormalities or been compromised to such an extent that the adenovirus, which is normally harmless, has manifested itself severely.

It is all a little blurry right now. But as an expert in liver disease for over 30 years and as someone who does liver transplants in children literally every other day, I think the recent cases of hepatitis are related to Covid-19 in some way. It is very likely, in my view, that there is hepatitis which has previously not been seen that has come about in children because of the pan-

THE EXPERT

DR ARVINDER SINGH SOIN is the Chief Hepatobiliary and Liver Transplant Surgeon and Chairman of the Institute of Liver Transplantation and Regenerative Medicine, Medanta. He has been part of the team that has issued national guidelines on liver transplantation during the pandemic.

demic. Whether the pandemic prevented the exposure to usual antigens or whether the virus itself in a silent or infected form created the imbalance in the immune system needs to be looked into. But there has been some disturbance in children's immune systems.

Could this have been triggered by an immune response caused by Covid-19?

Covid-19 activates the immune system. Whether you are symptomatic or not, you have some antigens. Over time, they will get absorbed and stimulate the immune cells, little by little, even long after the infection is gone.

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

der will activate the enemy in a big way. With the immune system activated by the viruses and the antigen hanging around in the gut after recovery from Covid, even a minor infection caused by the adenovirus or a repeat infection of Covid can trigger a large immune response. And when a large immune response happens, the patient can get hepatitis.

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

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

What are the preventive measures?

There are two things that you can do. First,

prevent kids from getting Covid-19. That is easier said than done. We know that even without vaccination in India, 70% of them had antibodies. Second, boost immunity with nutritious food, adequate sleep and intake of vitamin and mineral supplements whenever needed.

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

When should parents visit a specialist?

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

Dr Soin spoke to Kaunain Sheriff M

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THIS WORD MEANS
STORAGE GAIN IN WHEAT

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA

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Battery-like device that captures carbon dioxide while charging

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

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



PAPER CLIP
NEW RESEARCH

amounts of energy and are expensive.

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

"We found that that by

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

Source: University of Cambridge

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

PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

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

Early life

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

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

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

"Ram Mohan did not quite make a distinction between the religious and the secular. He believed religion to be the site of all fundamental changes. What he fought was not re-

ligion but what he believed to be its perversion... (Rabindranath) Tagore called him a 'Bharatpathik' by which he meant to say that Ram Mohan combined in his person the underlying spirit of Indic civilisation, its spirit of pluralism, tolerance and a cosmic respect for all forms of life," said historian Amiya P Sen, Sivadani Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, and author of *Rammohun Roy: A Critical Biography* (2012).

First among liberals

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



Ram Mohan Roy's portrait by Rembrandt Peale. Wikipedia

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

In 1814, he started the Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends), to nurture philosophical discussions on the idea of monotheism in Vedanta and to campaign against idolatry,

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

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

Impact on India

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

and sugar — has been relatively muted.

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

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

prices have firmed up — translating into higher inflation for importing countries.

What about proteins?

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

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

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

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

Summing up

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

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

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

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rights of women, and petitioned the British for freedom of the press (in 1829 and 1830).

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

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

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Patel hopes FIFA doesn't ban India after SC intervention

ASIA CUP

Sardar's coaching debut talking point as India face Pak

MIHIR VASAVDA
MAY 22

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



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

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

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

**CALVIN & HOBBS** by Bill Watterson

MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



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9	4	6			3
3			9		
	6	8			
6	1	2		3	5
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8			4	1	6

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DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Recent unexpected developments at work have not undermined your confidence or commitment. Far from it. If your professional or worldly ambitions have been denied, I suspect that the real cause lies elsewhere. An intimate relationship could be proving costly, but a generous gesture will be worth it

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
 Today's lunar alignments are about the most intriguing that there have been for a long time. The news will be exciting, even if you are enjoying placid times. It's doubly significant for all new relationships, so go forward with hope in your heart.


SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
 All the extraordinary planetary activity now taking place must be harnessed and used to channel your noble and selfless instincts. You have a clear choice whether to go all out for personal interest or to realise that material security is, in the grand scheme of things, purely temporary.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

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

AQUARIUS (Jan 21- Feb 19)
 Today's lunar patterns are among the most striking to hit your sign for a good few months. If you're not knocked slightly off course there'll be something wrong, for it means that you're not directly in tune with your stars. After all, nobody promised it would be easy.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
 I am sure that you have been put out, pushed around and generally had your interests ignored, but then that's all part of life's rich tapestry. This is no time to complain about the world being unfair. You'll just have to live with it like everyone else.

 A helpful aspect between the Sun and Jupiter is only one of a series of benevolent planetary alignments which is causing you to think again. There'll probably be a major mystery to solve. The answers will come next month, but you might not get the full picture for another three months.

Man City eclipse rivals United to become EPL’s dominant force

SHASHANK NAIR

MAY 22

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COUNTY TO COUNTRY

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

DEVENDRA PANDEY

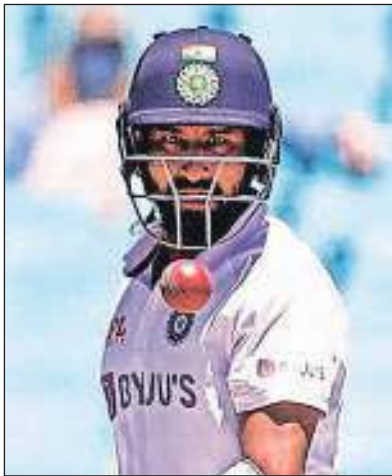
MAY 22

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

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

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

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



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

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

Umrn, Arshdeep get maiden call-ups

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

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

Hardik Pandya and Dinesh Karthik

tional selectors opted to try out fresh talent for the Sri Lanka Tests.

In February, the IPL auction had taken place, where both Pujara and Rahane had put in their names. Pujara would go unsold, and it had seemed even Rahane would, before he was picked up at his base price of Rs 1 crore, the sole bid coming from Kolkata Knight Riders. And that is where, in hindsight, the duo’s fortunes diverged.

By the time Pujara began his county stint against Derbyshire on April 14, Rahane’s IPL season had ground to a halt after only 80



Manager Pep Guardiola masterminded Manchester City’s title run. *Reuters*

3-2... No. 1

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



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

SPURS TAKE FINAL CL SPOT

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
4. Spurs	38	22	5	11	29	71
5. Arsenal	38	22	3	13	13	69

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

dominance. However, Tottenham Hotspur’s 5-0 thrashing of Norwich City ensured they remained fourth, leaving Arsenal in fifth.

The Londoners, who last played in the Champions League in 2016-17 after 19 straight years of qualifying under Arsene Wenger, will have to settle for a place in the Europa League, which itself is something of a success after they began the season with three straight defeats.

Two goals from Dejan Kulusevski for Tottenham and Heung-Min Son, and a Harry Kane header guaranteed Antonio Conte’s side a fourth-place finish and a spot in Europe’s elite club competition for the first time in three seasons.

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

FEBRUARY 19

1. MANCHESTER CITY	63 PTS
2. LIVERPOOL	57 PTS

City lose to Tottenham 3-2 while on the same day, Liverpool thrash Norwich City 3-1 to cut the deficit to six points.

FEBRUARY 25

1. MANCHESTER CITY	63 PTS
2. LIVERPOOL	60 PTS

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

PLAYING TODAY

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

MARCH 15

1. MANCHESTER CITY	70 PTS
2. LIVERPOOL	66 PTS

MARCH 17

1. MANCHESTER CITY	70 PTS
2. LIVERPOOL	69 PTS

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

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

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

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

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

LEEDS WIN RELEGATION BATTLE

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
17. Leeds	38	9	11	18	-37	38
18. Burnley	38	7	14	17	-19	35

- Brentford 1 lost to Leeds Utd 2
- Burnley 1 lost to Newcastle 2

Jack Harrison’s stoppage-time winner meant Leeds United ensured Premier League survival with a 2-1 victory away at nine-man Brentford that saw Burnley go down instead.

A Raphinha penalty gave Leeds a second-half lead but they conceded a goal from Sergi Canos in the 78th minute before Harrison fired home four minutes into stoppage time to spark ecstatic celebrations.

Burnley’s 2-1 loss to Newcastle United at Turf Moor meant Leeds finished three points above them, with 38 points being enough to ensure their safety. They had trailed Burnley on goal difference going into the final day’s fixtures.

Leeds United, who had collected two points from their previous five league games, rode their luck initially before taking advantage of their numerical superiority to set up a dramatic victory.

"I believed all the way we were going to do this," said Leeds manager Jesse Marsch.

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

Punjab Kings beat SRH to finish sixth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, MAY 22

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

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

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

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

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