





FROM PAGE ONE

Neeraj Chopra  
nails silver

competition and all were good athletes. The wind was in my face (he was throwing into a headwind). So, it was difficult. But it was a learning experience. I was putting in the effort (in the first three rounds) but it (a big throw) didn't happen," he said.

In the days following the Tokyo gold, Chopra was in no shape to be on the World Championship podium. His cheat day had extended to several weeks as India poured love on its first-ever athletics gold medalist. There were many dinner invites. At one such high-profile feast, a chief minister himself prepared a rich spread for him. The diet chart that Chopra had followed in the days before the Olympics was ripped apart.

But once Chopra, Bartonietz, and long-time physio Ishaan Marwaha landed in California for off-season training in December, Project World Championship began in earnest.

"It was almost like starting from zero because there was a four-month gap, he was overweight, and had put on about 12 to 14 kilograms," Marwaha said. The days of toil paid off. Since Chopra isn't an outright power thrower, he relies on flexibility. For that, he improved arm speed, hip mobility, and ankle strength. The result was a finer technique and, in turn, more energy to sustain him through the six rounds.

"In the initial competitions, he used to get tired very fast. This year, he is not as exhausted as before (at the end of a competition). The reason for that is his throw is more efficient and his body flows well," Marwaha told The Indian Express.

Almost every coach or trainer that Chopra has worked with has mentioned his commitment and attitude. "He is over-enthusiastic in training. It is not that I tell him that 'you have to do 10 minutes' and he will step down at 9 minutes and 50 seconds. It will always be 10 minutes or beyond 10 minutes. That makes him different from other athletes, you need that dedication level," Marwaha said. Before this World Championship final, Chopra's trophy cabinet at his home in Haryana's Khandra village had the gold medals he won at the junior World championships, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, and the Olympics. Chopra had secured all those top-of-the-podium positions with a spectacular first throw.

At Eugene on Sunday, he fouled his first throw. But when it came to the crunch, he delivered. The silver proved that Chopra is no flash in the pan or a one-trick pony.

Indian athlete  
fails dope test

the July 28 to August 8 event. With her failing the drug test, the Indian women's 4x100m relay squad has been left high and dry just four days ahead of the competition.

Since two out of the six members of the relay squad have now failed the tests, the Indian team will have no injury cure. There is a possibility that 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji and long jumper Ancy Sojan, who are part of the CWG squad, will be roped in as backup runners. This has been the worst year

for Indian athletics since the 2011 doping scandal when six quarter-milers, including members of the 2010 CWC and Asian gold-winning women's team, failed tests. The then 400m national coach Yuri Ogordnik was sacked and top athletes were banned.

Since the Tokyo Olympics last year, at least nine athletes have tested positive for banned substances, including two who represented India in Japan. The list of dope offenders this season, apart from this week's names, include discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur (6th at Tokyo), Shiupal Singh (India's second-best javelin thrower after Neeraj Chopra), MRPoovamma (three-time Asian Games 4x400m relay champion), javelin thrower Rajender Singh, and young Taranjeet Kaur, who won the 100m and 200m U-23 national titles.

India has the third highest number of doping cases, according to the latest World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report released in 2021. With 152 cases across sporting disciplines, the country is only below leaders Russia (167) and Italy (157).

The Indian Express had on May 10 reported how one of the country's top 400m women runners evaded dope testers, including those from the Athletics Integrity Unit, for over a month.

House gridlock:  
Call for dialogue

"Nirmala Sitharaman is not our enemy. She is like our sister. We are not saying that she be called to Parliament and a discussion be held now. Let her recover completely. We are saying either the government agrees on a date for the discussion... or start the discussion now. Any other senior minister can reply. We are not insisting that Sitharaman should reply. Or let the discussion take place and she can reply later once she recovers," he said.

"What I mean to say is that some way out can be found, but there has to be a dialogue. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that the House functions smoothly...Solutions can be found if both sides sit together and have a discussion. But the government only believes in accusing the Opposition of not letting the House function. That is far from the truth," Chowdhury added.

Pointing out that the government often tells other countries that all disputes should be resolved through dialogue, Chowdhury said, "Why is this mantra not being implemented in the House? The government can hold a dialogue with the Opposition. At the all-party meeting, Rajnath Singh said the government was willing for a discussion on all issues. He said the government was even prepared for a discussion on the Agnipath scheme. Now the government is saying the matter is sub-judice. In India, everything is sub-judice. Most of the issues are in court. That way, Parliament will not be able to discuss anything," he said.

Chowdhury pointed out that the government had briefed the parliamentary consultative committee on defence about the Agnipath scheme. "If it was sub-judice, how was it discussed in the consultative committee? Outside Parliament, your leaders say Agnipath is a revolutionary scheme. Then why shy away

from a discussion in the House?," he asked.

Heritage 'pyaus'  
in Mumbai

A senior civic official from BMC's heritage department said: "BMC began the restoration process with these four pyaus, and several smaller projects were undertaken to restore them across the city. Going forward, the plan is to restore the remaining 18 together, so that the circuit can be launched. The costing for the project is underway, on the basis of which administrative approval will be sought. Because of the magnitude of the project, we had earlier decided to take it up in parts, and pyaus were restored as isolated projects too."

4th monkeypox  
case is in Delhi

capital's Lok Nayak hospital two days ago with rashes and a fever that had lasted two weeks. "We suspected that he had monkeypox and admitted him to our isolation ward. He has now tested positive for the infection. He is being given symptomatic treatment," a hospital official said.

The man had travelled to Himachal Pradesh before falling sick, officials said. District surveillance teams were looking into the possibility of his having contracted the infection in that state, or from a friend he had been in contact with, the officials said.

The friend too has reported a history of fever. It is yet to be determined whether the friend had travelled overseas.

The surveillance teams have so far identified 13 contacts of the case, most of them family members and the doctor who initially treated the patient. The contacts have been asked to remain in quarantine at home, officials said.

"Further public health interventions like identification of the source of infection, enhanced contact tracing, testing sensitisation of private practitioners, etc. are being carried out. A high-level review of the situation has been planned by DGHS (Directorate General of Health Services)," the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

At the meeting held later on Sunday, the joint monitoring group stressed the importance of aggressive contact tracing by district health authorities.

A senior Himachal Pradesh government official said the state was in the process of confirming the patient's travel history, following which "further measures" would be initiated.

"We have received information through media reports that the person diagnosed with monkeypox in Delhi had travelled to Manali earlier. We are in the process of confirming his travel history. The medical teams are on alert, and once the patient's visit is confirmed, further measures will be taken. The situation is under control," Subhashish Panda, Principal Secretary, Health, said.

On Saturday, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared monkeypox to be a "public health emergency of international concern", a description that it uses for only two other diseases, Covid-19 and polio.

"We have an outbreak that has spread around the world rapidly through new modes of transmission, about which we understand too little, and which meets the criteria (for the designation)," WHO director general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

More than 16,000 cases of monkeypox infection have been reported from 75 countries around the world. Globally, the bulk of the infections outside Africa have been detected in men who have sex with men (MSM).

India's first monkeypox case was reported on July 14, in a 35-year-old man who had returned to Kerala from the UAE. On July 18, Kerala confirmed its second case, in a 31-year-old male who had arrived in Kannur from Dubai on July 13, and on Friday, the third case was confirmed — in a 35-year-old man who had come to Malappuram from the UAE on July 6.

A multi-disciplinary team from the Centre was sent to Kerala to coordinate public health measures after the first case was detected.

Monkeypox is a viral infection that is mainly transmitted from animals to humans. The first human case was reported in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the disease subsequently became endemic to several West and Central African countries.

Human-to-human transmission has been previously limited, as the smallpox vaccine used for the eradication of the disease in the 1970s also protects against monkeypox. Among humans, monkeypox spreads through close contact with someone who has a monkeypox rash, but scientists are now looking at sexual transmission of the disease.

The most common symptoms of monkeypox include fever, headaches, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes, along with pox rashes that last for two to three weeks. It is a self-limiting disease, but can lead to death especially in children and those with weak immune systems. Complications of the infection include pneumonia, secondary skin infections, confusion, and eye problems.

(WITH ENS SHIMLA)

Burkapal tribals:  
Free but broken

the village kotwar that Baman's body had been found in a ditch close to where the attack had occurred," he said.

Hunga himself fled to Andhra Pradesh, where he worked as a daily-wage labourer for about a month. Then, when he felt things had quietened down somewhat, he returned to the village.

On June 3, according to the villagers, local CRPF personnel sent word of an important meeting. "Our sarpanch said it was mandatory to attend. We thought we would get jobs to build a road — and when my name was called out from a list, I was elated," Linga Sodhi (38), one of the acquitted men, said.

Names of 38 other men and 2 teenagers were called out that night, and they were called to the CRPF camp. "There, we were bundled into a police vehicle and taken for a medical test," Sodhi said. "Even at that time, I did not realise we were being arrested. I thought it was part of the recruitment process."

Hunga too was in the group of 39 men. "I realised what was happening when we were taken for the medical check-up," he said.

Then began the tribals' long struggle for justice. The village rallied around to fight for the men in jail. "We sold our cows, pigs, our land, and whatever else we had that was of value. We raised whatever we could to help those who were in jail," Madkami Linga, a village elder, said.

Muchaki Nanda, now 20, had to drop out of school after his fa-

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UPSC ESSENTIALS

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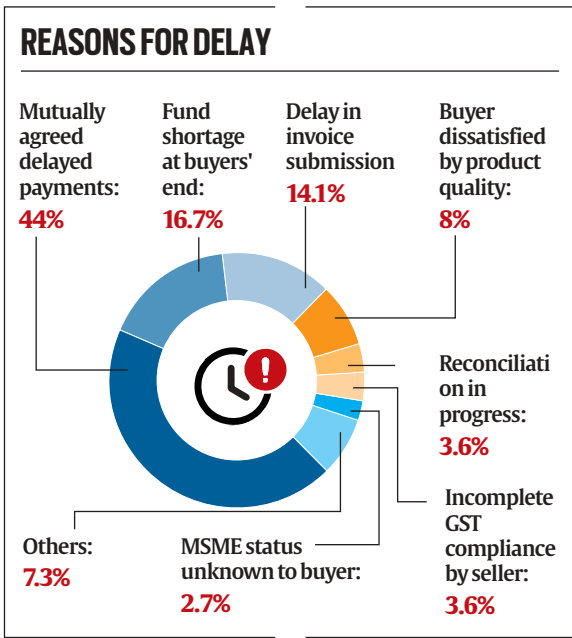
Hit by Covid, small & micro units wait  
for Rs 8.7 lakh crore in pending dues

turnover of less than Rs 5 crore. For small units, the investment limit is at Rs 10 crore and a turnover is pegged at less than 50 crore. A unit is termed medium if it has investments of up to Rs 20 crore with a turnover of less than Rs 100 crore.

Delayed payments — from customers in the private sector, government departments and public sector undertakings — are an impediment to the revival of smaller units.

A Crisil report showed that more than a quarter of India's MSMEs lost market share of over 3 per cent due to the pandemic. And half of them suffered a contraction in their earning margins because of a sharp rise in commodity prices during 2021 fiscal, compared with 2020. This is exacerbated by delayed payments.

"It is easy to ascertain the payment owed to the government sector but not to the private sector and there are reasons. One, we cannot ask the private sector to share a list and, second, the MSME units, too, would not want to complain about their clients to avoid hurting their working relationship," said a senior gov-



ernment official.

The government, in 2020, had asked both PSUs and the top 500 companies to clear their dues to units in the sector. This was done as part of the government's plan to ensure enough liquidity for MSME units along with a credit facility for the sector under the Emergency Credit Line

Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) scheme.

Despite various dikats from the Centre, the value of delayed payments to the MSME sector has increased to Rs 10.7 lakh crore until the end of calendar year 2021, according to the report.

About 81 per cent of the total amount is owed to small

and micro enterprises: Rs 4.29 lakh crore to small enterprises and Rs 4.44 lakh crore to micro enterprises.

Highlighting the severity of the problem, the report says, median debtor days beyond the legally recommended 45-day period for micro enterprises in 2020-21 was 6.5 months (195 days), compared to two months (68 days) for small enterprises; and 1.5 months (47 days) for medium enterprises.

Nitin Gadkari, then minister for MSME, had flagged way back in mid-2020 that state and Central governments, their ministries and PSUs, and major industries combined owed an estimated Rs 5 lakh crore to MSMEs.

According to information from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the share of MSME in India's manufacturing output during FY'20 was 36.9 per cent and the share of export of specified MSME-related products to all-India exports during FY21 was 49.5 per cent, as per information from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics.

ther, Muchaki Mukka, was arrested. He had some education, so he became the village's principal point of contact with the imprisoned men.

"I attended court hearings, went to meet my father and the others, and talked to the lawyer. I had no time left for studying any more," Nanda said. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit and public transport stopped, he walked for three days to the central jail in Jagdalpur, 180 km away.

In September 2020, then Chhattisgarh DGP D M Awasthi wrote to Bastar IG P Sundarraj asking him to ensure a fair trial for those who had been arrested. The trial, which had been crawling, thereafter picked up pace. The case of the tribals was strengthened after 20 out of the 45 prosecution witnesses turned hostile in court. Finally, on July 15 this year, the NIA court in Dantewada acquitted 121 accused.

"We got to know on July 16, a day after the order was passed. We were told that we would be allowed to leave the following day. After I was released, I borrowed some money and went straight to my home, only to find that my land and pigs had been sold. I have nothing left. My body has aged and become weak in these years, and farming seems too strenuous now," Madkami Linga (42) said.

With both her parents gone, Hunga's older daughter suffered an illness and turned into a para-

plegic. Baman's wife had died in 2015, and his children, then aged 8 and 6, left the village to fend for themselves in Geadam, 75 km away. "The older boy works after school to take care of his and his sibling's needs. I don't have anything to offer them," Hunga said.

There is disappointment over lost years and destroyed lives, but those who have been released do not want to blame anyone. "We are in no condition to hold grudges. At least we are alive. I am glad we finally got out, it thought I would die there," Sodhi Linga said.

Human Rights activist Bela Bhatia, who legally represented some of the acquitted men, said: "There are several such cases where following an attack, local tribals are booked along with named Maoists. This case, in which 121 have been acquitted, underlines the draconian powers that UAPA gives the police, where one can be arrested merely on suspicion. Once arrested, they become embroiled in the complicated legal procedure, which takes time and resources to fight through. These people have managed to come out, but several others are still languishing in jails."

Bastar IG P Sundarraj said: "The case is not yet closed as over 139 named Maoists are absconding. We had arrested these people based on evidence that they were aiding a banned organisation. Once we get the certified copy of the order, we will take le-

gal opinion on the future course of action. As of now, we are trying to nab the main culprits, the Maoists."

Flag campaign  
voluntary: J&K

the person responsible — the announcer — has been suspended.

Before his clarification, the following message went out through the loudspeakers on Saturday: "By order of the Anantnag District Administration, every shopkeeper is asked to deposit Rs 20 in the office that gives them trade license. It is possible that one who doesn't deposit Rs 20 can face action. So to save themselves and complete this formality, they should deposit Rs 20."

The Centre's nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign seeks to encourage people to hoist the national flag on August 15.

In Bijbehara town of the district in south Kashmir, shopkeepers were told to deposit the money by Monday noon. The announcement did not specify what action could be taken against those failing to comply.

It came after schools in Budgam district were told to collect Rs 20 from students and staff members.

"As per the directions of the Chief Education Officer Budgam, all the HOIs (Heads of Institutions) of this zone are asked to collect Rs 20 per head from the students and staff

members of the school to deposit the saem in ZEO office within four days," reads the circular issued by the Zonal Education Officer in Chadoora, Budgam. "In case of more than one student belonging to the same family, charges from only one student can be collected as per instructions."

This circular was issued last week.

Kashmir School Education Director Tasaduq Hussain Mir did not respond to multiple calls seeking comment.

Reacting to the public announcement and the circular, former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said "patriotism comes naturally and can't be imposed".

"The manner in which J&K admin is forcing students, shopkeepers and employees to pay for the national flag to hoist it as if Kashmir is an enemy territory needs to be captured. Patriotism comes naturally and can't be imposed," Mufti tweeted while sharing a video of the public announcement.

Anantnag Deputy Commissioner Singla said the announcement was made without authorisation.

"(There was) No sanction to such kind of announcement from administration," Singla told *The Indian Express*. "It is purely a voluntary campaign. Announcer did it on his own."

He said the announcer has been placed under suspension.

Labour Resources Department

Bihar Skill Development Mission

Advertisement for Empanelment under RTD Scheme  
(A Continuous Empanelment Process unless withdrawn)  
Notice No: BSDM/RFP/12/2018 (Letter No. BSDM/RFP-11/2018-318)

Bihar Skill Development Mission (BSDM), invites proposals from reputed and experienced eligible organizations (Industries/ Employers/ HR-Placement Agency/Training Partners/Start-ups/Industry Associations/Government Training Providers) for empanelment with Bihar Skill Development Mission (BSDM) as an agency for providing domain skilling and employment under Recruit-Train-Deploy (RTD) model.

This is an ongoing (Continuous) empanelment process first published vide notice No.BSDM/RFP/12/2018 dated 16.03.2018 and proposal can be submitted during office hours at **Bihar Skill Development Mission,5th Floor, Niyojan Bhawan, Patna.**

The project details, application procedure, eligibility criteria, evaluation methodology, terms & conditions and the scope of work are detailed in the scheme document which can be seen or downloaded from the “TENDERS or IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION Section” of our website: <http://www.skillmissionbihar.org>.

*Special Secretary,*  
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In Gujarat, Youth Cong  
leader held for ‘throwing  
ink’ on PM, CM poster

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, JULY 24

A Youth Congress leader in Gujarat's Bharuch district was arrested for allegedly throwing ink on a poster of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Saturday. He got bail on Sunday.

Vice-president of Bharuch Youth Congress Nikhil Shah was part of a protest by Congress at the Bharuch Collector's office on Friday to protest the questioning of party chief Sonia Gandhi by the Enforcement Directorate in New Delhi, police said.

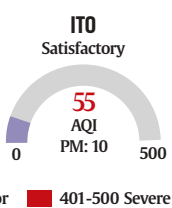
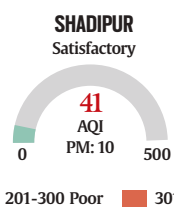
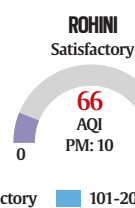
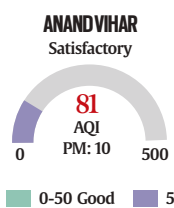
Police said Congress workers did not have permission for the protest. "The accused Nikhil Shah had secretly brought an ink pen with him during the protests. When Congress workers were staging protests at the gate, Shah threw ink at the pictures of PM Modi and CM Patel on a board-

ing of 'MY RATION' mobile application initiative of Gujarat government. He was detained on the spot," said RK Dhulkar, police sub inspector, Bharuch A Division police station.

Police said Shah was formally arrested Saturday after he was booked under IPC 505 1(b) (committing an offence to cause alarm among public) and sections of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property act.

Parimalsinh Rana, president of Bharuch district Congress Committee, told *The Indian Express*: "It is a clear way of intimidation by police to lower the morale of party workers. CCTV footage obtained from the spot doesn't show Shah throwing ink at the posters then why was he arrested? The state government through the police is trying to suppress Congress workers, they don't give us permission to protest in order to raise the issues of the common people."





0-50 Good 51-100 Satisfactory 101-200 Moderate 201-300 Poor 301-400 Very Poor 401-500 Severe

## SKY WATCH

**FORECAST: July 25**  
Generally cloudy sky.  
Light rain/  
thundershowers

**MAX: 36**  
1.2° C above normal

**MIN: 27**  
0.3° C below normal

# High-rise near DU campus: Expert panel, NGT at odds

**ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

CAN THE construction of a high-rise group housing society near Vishwavidyalaya Metro station have “adverse impacts” on the environment and the Ridge? While the National Green Tribunal (NGT) thinks it could impact the environment, microclimate, traffic density, and flora and fauna and groundwater regime of the nearby Ridge, the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) differs on the matter.

In an order issued at the end of May, the NGT had quashed the environment clearance granted by MoEFCC for the project on the grounds that it was done “without proper evaluation”. In an appeal before the NGT, Delhi University had objected to the granting of clearance for the project slated to come up at Cavalry Lane and Chhatra Marg, around 500 m away from Kamla Nehru Ridge. The University had objected to the height of the building, around 145 m or 43 floors, and raised issues about possible air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and possible impact on groundwater and the Ridge.

The private builder had applied for environment clearance thrice, with the first application submitted in 2009.

The NGT noted in its order that there is no “carrying capacity of the area to sustain any additive load in terms of air or noise levels”. Since the area is surrounded by many colleges and hospitals, the impact of “such a huge project on existing institutions of importance ought to have been examined”, according to the Tribunal. The impact of the project on the Ridge should have been considered but was not done.

The NGT order stated that “there will be unmanageable impact on traffic density and adverse impact on flora and fauna and groundwater regime of nearby



The building is proposed to be built near Vishwavidyalaya Metro station

pristine Ridge”, and “generation of particulate matter because of heavy machinery and equipment and waste management”. It added: “We find it difficult to hold that there is application of mind in granting environment clearance.”

As per the minutes of a recent meeting, the EAC on infrastructure projects considered the project. “If the present order of the NGT is accepted, as it is based on broad general aspects on Delhi ridge stability, precautionary principles, air pollution by building activities, increase in traffic etc. there can be no further developmental activities in the NCR,” it noted. The committee has recommended filing an appeal against the NGT order in the appropriate appellate court.

The project area was part of 3.05 hectares of land the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation acquired from the Defence Ministry in 2001. The Metro station was built on one hectare of land and the rest was given to a company, which is planning to build residential flats.

DU students and staff have held protests over the proposed building earlier and also raised issues over privacy concerns due to several hostels in the vicinity.

## Owner of club at Hauz Khas Village, 9 staffers ‘assault’ policemen during raid, held

**EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE OWNER of a club at Hauz Khas Village and nine of his employees were nabbed Thursday for allegedly assaulting policemen during a raid, said police. They were booked under sections of obstructing policemen in their duty, assaulting policemen and causing hurt, and later released on bail.

Police said the raid was conducted by Special Staff from Safdarjung police station at Downton Village on Wednesday after they received inputs of certain activities — “illegal disco, tobacco, hukkah bars and loud music” — at the club. Police alleged staff “resisted” and misbehaved with personnel and even attacked them with sticks and bottles and threw furniture at them.

“We have temporarily seized the club’s licences. Investigation is being conducted in the matter and the place has been shut,” said DCP (Southwest) Manoj C. Downton Village refused to comment on the issue.

According to police, three teams were sent to the club around 1 am. A senior officer, along with two-three personnel, entered the premises and found over 20-30 persons were inside. In the FIR lodged by the officer, he stated that there was loud music at the club with hukkah.

“One person... identified as Ravinder Sharma came... he’s the owner (manager) of the said bar. I, along with my staff, told him about my identity... and asked about the validity of licences to run his bar... he got angry and started abusing us...,” claimed the officer in the FIR. Police claimed Sharma turned hostile and refused to show the documents. “... Meanwhile, HC Pankaj and HC Sunil and other staff entered the Downton bar after hearing us shouting. The (bar employees) assaulted us with their hands... and threw tables/chairs/bottles on us... (bare employees) hit us with rods, sticks and steel pipes due to which I and my other team-mates (sustained) injuries,” alleges the FIR.

Senior officers said local staff was called and the employees were overpowered.

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## Students unhappy with CBSE results can apply for rechecking from July 26

**EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

STUDENTS WHO are not happy with their CBSE class X and XII grades and want to get them verified or re-evaluated can apply for the same starting Tuesday.

The board released the final results for classes X and XII Friday, and the online application process for verification of marks will start Tuesday. However, they can only apply for verification of their Term 2 marks.

When the board shared Term 1 exam results with schools earlier this year, students were able to convey their dissatisfaction

with those marks to the CBSE at the time and appeal for rechecking. The board has taken a special decision that if their Term 1 marks were increased after the recheck, they would be taken into consideration for the final result, but if marks were decreased, their original and higher marks would be counted for the result. According to the board, this decision was taken “looking into the special circumstances under which Term 1 exams were conducted”.

However, with Term 2 results, any change in marks after verification or re-evaluation will be final and counted in their final results.

## Action plan for EV charging infrastructure to be rolled out

**EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE DELHI government will host the fourth Delhi Electric Vehicles (EV) Forum on August 10 where the ‘Charging Infrastructure Action Plan for Delhi’ will be launched.

Delhi’s Electric Vehicle policy was put in place two years ago and since then, the share of EVs in the total vehicles purchased has been increasing.

In 2022, the sales of EVs have averaged close to 10% per month.

“This is by far the highest in India, with March 2022 witnessing a high of 12.5%. This is a steep rise over 2019-20 when EVs accounted for only 1.2 percent of new vehicle sales,” a statement issued by the Dialogue and Development Commission said.

“The Delhi government has been continuously incorporating voices of the e-mobility ecosystem in the EV policy, and we will felicitate the stakeholders in the upcoming forum for their contributions towards making the Delhi EV policy an exemplary success so far,” said Delhi transport minister Kailash Gahlot.

**Government of India**  
Department of Atomic Energy  
Nuclear Fuel Complex  
ECIL Post, Hyderabad-500062

**CANCELLATION OF ADVERTISEMENT**  
Advt. No.: NFC/02/2022 inviting applications for 5 posts of Technical Officer/D in various disciplines stands cancelled with immediate effect.

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(Affiliated to The Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University)  
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The last date for sale of applications to the Bachelor of Visual Arts Courses has been extended upto **05.08.2022** and Submission of filled up applications is extended till **12.08.2022 at 5.00 PM**. Application Forms and Prospectus can be downloaded from [www.tn.gov.in](http://www.tn.gov.in) & [www.dipr.tn.gov.in](http://www.dipr.tn.gov.in) websites.  
Please see the prospectus for further details.

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“சென்னைக் கல்நுது கல்நுதிருப் அமைச்சுத்தொகுப்பு, சாதுகமைப் பறித்து சரித்திரம் படைப்பெய்தம்.”

**भारत सरकार/Government of India**  
**अंतरिक्ष विभाग/Department of Space**  
**भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन/Indian Space Research Organisation**  
**विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र/VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE**  
तिरुवनंतपुरम/Thiruvananthapuram - 695 022

**विज्ञापन सं. वीएसएससी-320 दिनांक 25.07.2022**  
**ADVERTISEMENT NO. VSSC-320 DATED 25.07.2022**

विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र (वीएसएससी), तिरुवनंतपुरम की अंतरिक्ष भौतिकी प्रयोगशाला (एसपीएल), जो भारत के प्रमुख अनुसंधान संस्थाओं में से एक है, में कनिष्ठ अनुसंधान अध्याता (जेआरएफ) के पद के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं। Applications are invited for the position of JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOW (JRF) tenable at one of the premier research institutions in India, the Space Physics Laboratory (SPL) of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram.

पद का नाम Name of Position	पदों की संख्या No. of positions	अनिवार्य अपेक्षाएं / Essential Requirements
<b>कनिष्ठ अनुसंधान अध्याता (जेआरएफ)</b> <b>JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOW (JRF)</b>	17	(क/अ)सभी सेमेस्टर्स के औसत के रूप में कुल न्यूनतम 65% अंक या 10 प्वाइन्ट के स्केल में न्यूनतम 6.84 या समकक्ष के सीजीपीए/सीपीआई ग्रेडिंग के साथ भौतिकी/अनुप्रयुक्त भौतिकी/इंजीनियरी भौतिकी/अंतरिक्ष भौतिकी/वायुमंडलीय विज्ञान/मौसम विज्ञान/ग्रहीय विज्ञान में एम. एससी. डिग्री। M.Sc. Degree in Physics/Applied Physics/Engineering Physics/ Space Physics/Atmospheric Science/Meteorology/Planetary Sciences with minimum 65% marks as average of all semesters in aggregate or CGPA/CPI grading of 6.84 on a 10 point scale or equivalent. या/OR सभी सेमेस्टर्स के औसत के रूप में कुल न्यूनतम 60% अंक या 10 प्वाइन्ट के स्केल में न्यूनतम 6.5 या समकक्ष के सीजीपीए/सीपीआई ग्रेडिंग के साथ वायुमंडलीय/अंतरिक्ष/ग्रहीय विज्ञान/ अनुप्रयुक्त भौतिकी/इंजीनियरी भौतिकी में एम.एस/एम.ई/एम.टेक। M.S/M.E/M.Tech in Atmospheric/Space/Planetary Sciences/Applied Physics / Engineering Physics with minimum 60% marks as average of all semesters in aggregate or CGPA/CPI grading of 6.5 on a 10 point scale or equivalent. (ख/ब) आवेदकों को निम्नलिखित में से किसी एक में योग्यता भी प्राप्त होनी चाहिए: 1. नेट-लेक्चरशिप सहित सीएसआईआर-यूजीसी राष्ट्रीय पात्रता परीक्षा। 2. एमएचआरडी द्वारा आयोजित इंजीनियरी में स्नातक अभिषमता परीक्षा (नेट)। 3. संयुक्त प्रवेश स्क्रीनिंग परीक्षा (जेस्ट)। Applicants should also have qualified one of the following: 1) CSIR-UGC National Eligibility Test, including NET-Lectureship. 2) Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE) conducted by MHRD. 3) Joint Entrance Screening Test (JEST).

आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने हेतु विस्तृत सूचना तथा दिशा-निर्देश के लिए कृपया वीएसएससी वेबसाइट <http://www.vssc.gov.in> देखें। आवेदकों को सभी सूचनाएं ई-मेल/वीएसएससी वेबसाइट के माध्यम से ही दी जाएंगी। For detailed information and guidelines for submission of applications, please visit VSSC website <http://www.vssc.gov.in>. All communications with the applicants will be made through e-mail/VSSC website only.

आवेदन मात्र ऑन-लाइन द्वारा ही प्राप्त किए जाएंगे तथा ऑन-लाइन आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने हेतु दिनांक 25.07.2022 को 1000 बजे से दिनांक 08.08.2022 को 1700 बजे तक वेबसाइट खुला रहेगा। Applications will be received on-line only and the website will be open from 25.07.2022 1000 hrs to 08.08.2022 1700 hrs for submission of online applications.

## adani Electricity

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**Suggestions/Objections on Petition of Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd.-Distribution seeking transfer of assets within the SEEPZ SEZ area located in Andheri East, Mumbai to AEML SEEPZ Ltd. (Case No. 3 of 2022)**

- Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd.-Distribution (**AEML-D**) has filed a Petition u/s 17 (3) of the Electricity Act, 2003, read with Regulation 8.8 of MERC (General Conditions of Distribution Licence) Regulations, 2006, seeking transfer of its entire assets within the SEEPZ SEZ area located in Andheri East, Mumbai to AEML SEEPZ Ltd. (**ASL**).
- The Commission has admitted the Petition on 20 July, 2022 and directed AEML-D to publish a Public Notice under Section 64 (2) of the Electricity Act, 2003 for inviting suggestions/ objections from the Public through this Notice.
- Vide Order dated 6 June, 2022, the Commission has taken on record the deemed Distribution Licensee status of ASL for SEEPZ SEZ area. To enable ASL to distribute and supply power in SEEPZ SEZ area located in Andheri East, it would be necessary to transfer the existing distribution and supply assets of AEML-D in the said area in favor of ASL.
- The assets transferred to ASL will be decapitalised in the books of AEML-D and the burden of the cost of the said assets shall no longer be borne by the consumers of AEML-D. The value at which assets will be transferred, along with associated long-term and short-term liabilities, shall be determined as per Books of AEML-D in accordance with the relevant Acts and Regulations, at the time of carve out of ASL accounts from AEML-D as on the date of effectiveness of specific terms and conditions of Distribution license, as may be issued by the Commission. However, as on 31 March, 2022, the value of assets as per Regulatory Books, which are located within the SEEPZ SEZ area in Andheri East, is as follows:

Particulars	Rs. Cr.
Value of asset as on date of capitalization	35.47
Accumulated Depreciation till date	18.34
Normative Debt	7.57
Regulatory equity balance	10.64

- Copy of the Petition (in English) along with its Annexures and Enclosures can be obtained on payment of Rs. 100/- (or CD for Petition in English) along with its Annexures and Enclosures at Rs. 50/- with a written request from the following office of AEML:

Address	Telephone	Email
Mr. Vivek Mishra, Adani Electricity Mumbai Limited, CTS 407/A (New), 408 (Old), Village Eksar, Devidas Lane, Off SVP Road, Borivali (West), Mumbai - 400103	Tel: +91 – 22 - 50549999	vivek.g.mishra@adani.com

- The soft copy of the Petition along with all Annexures and along with the replies to data gaps, in downloadable format (free of cost) is available on AEML-D website [www.adanielectricity.com/corporate/regulatory](http://www.adanielectricity.com/corporate/regulatory).
- The Commission has directed AEML-D to invite Suggestions/ Objections from the public on the above Petition through this Notice. In response to the Public Notice published, every person who intends to file suggestions/objections can submit the same in English or Marathi language in writing through electronic means/Email: [ehearing@merc.gov.in](mailto:ehearing@merc.gov.in) / [secretary@merc.gov.in](mailto:secretary@merc.gov.in) addressed to “The Secretary, Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission, 13th Floor, Centre No. 1, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400 005 within 21 days from the date of publication of this Notice (**Date: 25 July, 2022**) along with proof of service on Mr. Vivek Mishra, Additional Vice President, Business-Regulatory, Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd., CTS 407/A (New), 408 (Old), Village Eksar, Devidas Lane, Off SVP Road, Borivali (West), Mumbai 400103 [Email: [vivek.g.mishra@adani.com](mailto:vivek.g.mishra@adani.com)]
- If the sender/ objector who has submitted his comments/suggestions as per para 7 above, wants to be heard in person in e-Public Hearing, then he should specifically mention the same at the time of filing of suggestions/ objections. In such cases, submission of valid email ID and Mobile number would be mandatory. The Commission, at its sole discretion, may permit such sender/ objector to be heard in the e-Public Hearing. All participants attending the e-Public Hearing shall follow the provisions of the Commission's Guidelines for attending e-Public Hearing through video conference notified on 17 September, 2020.
- E-Public Hearing shall be held through video conference on **13 September, 2022 at 10.30 am**, when AEML-D's Petition for asset transfer will be considered. No separate notice will be issued for the purpose.
- AEML-D shall reply to each of the Suggestions/Objections received within three days of the receipt of the same but not later than **19 August, 2022** for all the Suggestions/ Objections received till **16 August, 2022**. Stakeholders can submit their rejoinders on replies provided by AEML-D either during the e-Public Hearing or latest by **16 September, 2022**.

**Place:** Mumbai  
**Date:** 25 July, 2022

sd/-  
Kishor Patil  
Sr. Vice President  
Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd.









# हैप्पीनेस क्लास में सीखा जो, पूरी दिल्ली को सिखाएंगे वो

**8 lakh** students  
will teach **40 lakh** Delhiites  
the importance of **happiness**

On the occasion of completing 4 years of the happiness curriculum, the Delhi government will be celebrating Happiness Utsav from 14th-29th July. You are invited to visit your nearest Delhi Govt school and be a part of the celebration.





# 6 GOVT & POLITICS



## FLAGGING GENDER ISSUE

PERCEIVED AS a predominantly male organisation, the RSS has been trying hard to shed the image. On Sunday, RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale even flagged the issue at an event. Speaking at the International Conference on Harnessing Indian Agriculture for Domestic and Global Prosperity, organised by the RSS in Delhi, Hosabale said, "This seminar should have had some participation from women. There are no woman speakers either." The lack of participation from women at RSS events had also been flagged by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in the past. Hosabale on Sunday was also not very pleased with the delay in the programme and started his address by saying that programmes should end in time. It was later revealed he had a train to catch and was getting delayed.

## CAPITAL BUZZ

THREE WAS much interest in Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's Delhi visit on Sunday. There was talk that the high command would meet him as also his bete noire and state minister T S Singh Deo as the tussle between them had flared up, prompting the latter to relinquish crucial portfolios. But Baghel was closeted with leaders from Himachal Pradesh, the election-bound state of which he was recently made senior observer, along with observers Sachin Pilot and Partap Singh Bajwa. It was decided that Baghel will visit the state on August 7 and 8. Baghel left for Raipur in the evening after the meeting. Deo, on the other hand, is expected to reach Delhi. It is to be seen whether the high command gives him a hearing.

## KEEPING AWAY

THERE WAS a time when IT Parliamentary committee meetings were a battleground for the BJP and the Opposition MPs. BJP MP Nishikant Dubey used to spearhead the ruling party offensive against the opposition in the Shashi Tharoor-led IT committee, which in the past had taken up a number of controversial issues, including Pegasus and the summoning of Facebook officials after the Wall Street Journal report that the social media giant had ignored incendiary content from the ruling BJP. Dubey had more than once written to the Lok Sabha Speaker, seeking the removal of Tharoor. However, Tharoor was re-appointed as the chairman of the IT panel. A miffed Dubey then stopped attending the IT panel meetings. He has not attended the around half-a-dozen IT committee meetings held since last September.

## Goa bar row: Irani sends notice to Cong leaders, seeks apology

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
ASSAGAO, JULY 24

A DAY after the Congress alleged that Union Minister Smriti Irani's daughter ran an "illegal" restaurant-bar in Goa, the minister on Sunday served a legal notice on the Congress and its leaders Pawan Khera, Jairam Ramesh and Netta D'souza, demanding an apology and asking them to "cease and desist from dissemination of defamatory, derogatory, false and misleading information/allegations" against her and her 18-year-old daughter.

During a press conference at the Congress headquarters in Delhi on Saturday, Khera had said: "In Goa, a restaurant run by her (Irani) daughter, it has a bar... it is accused of procuring a licence fraudulently. The licence is in the name of a person who died in May 2021 and... was procured in June (2022). In the name of that person, Irani's daughter took the licence."

Irani had hit back, calling it a "malicious" accusation. She said her daughter was the target only because "her mother does press conferences against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi".

In the 11-page notice issued on behalf of Irani, Kirat Singh Nagra, partner, DSK Legal, on Sunday demanded an apology from the Congress leaders within 24 hours, unconditional withdrawal of the allegations from social media platforms and "assurance that all record of the allegations are permanently deleted" and never circulated in the future.

"In case of failure of Addressees (Congress leaders) to do the acts mentioned in preceding paragraph... our client would be constrained to initiate appropriate civil and criminal proceedings against them for such illegal acts..." the legal notice read.

Goa Excise Commissioner Narayan M Gad had issued a show-cause notice to Silly Souls



**In the legal notice, Smriti Irani has asked Congress to desist from disseminating false information against her and her daughter.** PTI

Café and Bar on July 21 based on a complaint filed by lawyer Aires Rodrigues, who alleged that the eatery's liquor licence was renewed in the name of one Anthony Dgama—his death certificate, issued by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, was annexed to Rodrigues's complaint. Gad had sought a reply from the restaurant in seven days.

In Panaji on Saturday, the Congress had shared with the media a video clip of a purported show in which Irani's daughter was interviewed as a "young entrepreneur" and Silly Souls Café and Bar was introduced as "her restaurant".

The legal notice said Irani's daughter "has never been involved in running a bar in Goa". "She has never applied for any licence for "running" any bar or for any business enterprise. Moreover, she has not been served with any show cause notice from Excise Department, Goa, to date," it added.

Meanwhile, the Congress' youth wing activists protested outside the Silly Souls Café in Assagao on Sunday. Goa Congress leader Amarnath Panjikar said: "Irani needs to answer some questions. Let her say this is not her restaurant or that of her family. We will prove it's hers. We will show Irani her own Instagram posts from the past and those of her daughter."

## 23RD KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS CELEBRATIONS

# Joint theatre commands for tri-services soon: Rajnath

Says India will emerge victorious in case of any war; reiterates PoK part of India

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, JULY 24

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Sunday announced the setting up of "joint theatre commands" so as to have an enhanced coordination among all three services of the country's armed forces.

"Drawing a lesson from the co-ordination seen between the Army, Indian Air Force and the Navy during the Kargil war, we have decided to set up joint theatre commands in the country," he said, while addressing a function organised by Jammu and Kashmir People's Forum, an offshoot of the RSS, in connection with the 23rd Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrations at Gulshan Ground here. "The work in that direction is going on at a fast pace," he said.

Referring to India's victory over Pakistan in the 1999 Kargil war, he said they would emerge victorious again if a war happened in future.

Pitching for reclaiming Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Singh said it is part of India and will continue to remain part of this



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a programme commemorating Kargil Vijay Diwas, in Jammu, Sunday. PTI

country. "PoK is a part of Indian territory and will continue to do so. How is it possible that Baba Amarnath (Lord Shiva's form) is in India and Maa Sharda Shakti is across the Line of Control," he said.

Referring to the Sharda Peeth, which has the ruins of a temple to Hindu goddess Saraswati, also known as Sharda, Singh said how can Shiv Saroop (Amarnath) be on this side of J&K and Shakti Saroop (Sharda) in PoK side.

"God should give better sense to Pakistan. I cannot say beyond that," he said.

Without naming Pakistan or China, Rajnath said: "During the Kargil war, many foreign powers reminded India of Pakistan's nuclear power, but it was not acceptable to us to succumb to any foreign pressure and we emerged victorious," he said, adding: "I can say with confidence that in future also, if foreign powers dared to

look at India and if there is a war, India will be victorious again."

Pointing out that India's defence forces had a lot of contribution in maintaining the present day geographical map of Jammu and Kashmir, he said in the Army, many operations had happened, were happening and would happen in the future, if needed. While there had been no major activity by Pakistan against India in 1950s, China had undertaken a number of operations in Ladakh.

The 1962 war had made it clear that the Chinese intentions were not good, he said, adding Jawaharlal Nehru was the PM at that time. "Many people criticise Nehru on that count," he said.

"I too come from a particular party and I do not want to criticise any (former) PM... I do not want to raise a question mark on the intention of any (former) PM because I know that there cannot be anything wrong in anybody's intentions, there can be deficiencies in their policies," he said, adding: "But we could not make up for the losses suffered then." However, India was no longer a weak nation, he said. **WITH PTI INPUTS**

## V-P POLLS

## Alva reaches out to CMs of Assam, Delhi, Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

LAUNCHING HER campaign for the Vice-President elections, opposition candidate Margaret Alva on Sunday spoke to Aam Aadmi Party chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seeking his party's support. She also reached out to the chief ministers of BJP-ruled Assam and Karnataka.



Margaret Alva

In the presidential elections, opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha got only 208 votes of MPs while President-

elect Droupadi Murmu bagged 540. The Vice-President is elected by an electoral college consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament.

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said Alva's conversation with Kejriwal, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj S Bommai were "very cordial and friendly given her long political career and associations".

The Aam Aadmi Party, which supported Sinha, is yet to reveal its mind on the Vice-Presidential elections. Incidentally, Sarma in a Twitter post said Alva spoke to him and "I politely told her that I'm not a member of the electoral college. As such I have no role in the election of the Vice-President of India."

Alva replied: "As part of my campaign for V-P, I'm reaching out to leaders from across political parties. Mr Sarma is an old friend & we've worked together long enough for him to know that after 30 yrs in Parliament, I know what constitutes the electoral college. We had a nice chat though!"

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, JULY 24

THE RASHTRIYA Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress have been through their fair share of ups and downs in Bihar over the years. In recent times, the ties between the two parties have gone mostly downhill as the Congress's vote share eroded steadily and the RJD cemented its position as the principal Opposition party in the state.

Over the weekend, the relationship between the estranged allies hit turbulence again after a Congress spokesperson accused the RJD of evoking the "fear of the BJP and the RSS among Muslims"



12 Janpath all decked up to welcome its new resident, outgoing President Ram Nath Kovind, who will be shifted to this bungalow in New Delhi with his family on Monday. Abhinav Saha

## FAREWELL ADDRESS TO NATION

# Mother nature in deep agony: Kovind gives climate warning

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

OUTGOING PRESIDENT Ram Nath Kovind, in his farewell address to the nation on Sunday, warned that the climate crisis could endanger the future of the planet.

"Mother nature is in deep agony, and the climate crisis can endanger the very future of this planet. We must take care of our environment, our land, air and water, for the sake of our children. In our daily lives and routine choices, we must be more careful to protect our trees, rivers, seas and mountains as well as all other living beings. As the first citizen, if I have to give one advice to my fellow citizens, it has to be this," he said in his address.

President-elect Droupadi Murmu will take oath on Monday to become India's 15 President. Last week, she became the first tribal woman to be elected to the country's highest office.

In his address to the nation a day before he demits office, Kovind thanked the launch



Kovind pays tribute at Rajghat on Sunday. Express

ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.

"Next month, we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of Independence. We will enter the 'Amrit Kaal', the 25-year period leading to the centenary of Independence. These anniversaries are milestones on the journey of the Republic, a journey to discover its potential and to offer its best to the world. In modern times, the glorious journey of our country commenced with the awakening of nationalist feelings during colonial rule and the launch

of the freedom struggle," he said. "I have always strongly believed that no other country has been as fortunate as India in having a galaxy of leaders, each of whom was an exceptional mind, within a span of a few decades in the early 20th century," he added.

Kovind also took a trip down memory lane and recalled his earlier days when the country had just achieved independence and said, "There was a fresh wave of energy to rebuild the country; there were new dreams. I too had a dream, that one day I would be able to participate in a meaningful way in this nation-building exercise."

"A young boy living in a mud house could not have any idea about the highest Constitutional office of the Republic. But it is a testament to the strength of India's democracy that it has created pathways to let each citizen take part in the shaping of our collective destiny."

"If that Ram Nath Kovind from village Paraunkh is addressing you today, it is solely thanks to the inherent power of our vibrant democratic institutions," he said.

the party seemingly in a decline in Bihar, senior leaders such as state Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha and Congress Legislature Party leader Ajit Sharma seldom take on the RJD on ideological grounds.

The two parties came together in the late 1990s after the BJP and the JD(U) formed an alliance. With the Congress's upper caste, Dalit, and Muslim votes, and the RJD's Muslim-Yadav politics, the two parties tried to set up an alliance of convenience. But the coalition's performance was not consistent. Its best showing was in the 2004 Lok Sabha polls when the RJD won 22 seats and Congress got three. The Congress's best performance was in the 2015 Assembly polls



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Mukhyamantri Parishad meeting, at BJP headquarters in New Delhi, Sunday. PTI

## PM asks BJP states to boost business environment, push sports culture

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Sunday asked all BJP Chief Ministers to push sporting culture in their states, ensure 100% coverage of all central schemes and boost the business environment in the country even as he emphasised upon improving ease of doing business in their respective states.

The Prime Minister held a meeting with Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states at the party headquarters here to deliberate on the developmental work being done by them.

"Attended a meeting with @BJP4India Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers. This meeting gave us the opportunity to discuss best practices in the states, how to further strengthen the reach of Central schemes and more," the Prime Minister tweeted after the meeting.

The meeting was attended by 12 CMs and eight Deputy CMs apart from BJP president J P Nadda, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav and Vinay Sahasrabudhe, who heads the party's good governance cell.

"During the meeting, the PM emphasised better implementation of some of the key schemes and initiatives of the government viz. Gati Shakti, Har Ghar Jal, Svamitva, DBT implementation, Government eMarketplace, especially in the BJP-ruled states," the BJP said in a statement.

According to the party, talking about rural areas, the Prime Minister spoke about the significance of Gobardhan scheme and

the need to further popularise the initiative. He underlined the positive impact of nano fertilisers on crop productivity, and spoke about increasing its usage, the party said. He stressed on the need to ensure saturation-level coverage of all key schemes and said that BJP-ruled states should take a lead towards this, it added.

"The PM put significant emphasis on the need to ensure ease of doing business. He spoke about several initiatives taken by the government towards this. He encouraged states to take steps towards further boosting the business environment in the country," the BJP statement said.

In the backdrop of ongoing World Athletics Championship, the Prime Minister also asked the Chief Ministers to ensure that their states accord due importance to sports and ensure provision of best facilities for encouraging participation and engagement of youth in large numbers, BJP leaders said.

He emphasised that BJP-ruled states should aim to become known for their sports culture. He also talked about the significance of all towns, villages and cities marking their foundation days.

"During the meeting, progress of various welfare schemes and development programmes of the Centre in these states were reviewed. Strategies to ensure last-mile delivery of welfare schemes, usage of e-governance systems to ensure greater accountability with zero pilferage, prioritising outreach of schemes to remote areas and achieving 100% coverage of eligible beneficiaries were discussed. The progress of Amrit Sarovar Mission and preparation for Har Ghar Tiranga campaign were also reviewed," the BJP statement said.

## Kerala: Cong decides to bring back UDF ex-allies

SHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
JULY 24

CONGRESS IN Kerala on Sunday adopted a resolution to expand the party-led United Democratic Front (UDF) by bringing back the allies which had left the coalition and by politically exploiting the unrest among allies of ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF).

The resolution was adopted after the party held a two-day brainstorming session, Navsankalp Chintan Shivir, in Kozhikode on the lines of the national-level event held in Udaipur in May.

Announcing the decisions taken at the event, Congress state president K Sudhakaran said, "Many people who are with the LDF are contacting us. Many of them are restless. We would politically exploit that situation

to expand the UDF."

He said the UDF would not shut doors on any party, including those who have left the coalition in the past. Many Left parties cannot continue in the LDF as the present government is pursuing extreme right-wing policies and ideologies, he said. "The second consecutive regime of the LDF delivered disaster for Kerala. Congress is ready to take up the responsibility to help Kerala overcome that crisis," he said.

Referring to the gold smuggling scandal, Sudhakaran said CM Pinarayi Vijayan is facing several allegations. But for the support of the BJP government at the Centre, he would have been forced to quit. The attack on the office of Rahul Gandhi [by CPI-M student wing SFI] was done only to appease the masters in Delhi," he alleged.

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**EXPLAINED**  
**Worst phase in ties ever**

BARRING PERHAPS the 2009 general elections that the two parties did not contest together, the current phase seems to be the worst the RJD-Congress ties have ever been. The two parties came together in the late 1990s after the BJP and the JD(U) formed an alliance.



# EXPRESS NETWORK

## BRIEFLY

### BIHAR

**Firecracker blast kills five, injures six in Saran**

Patna: Five persons were killed and six others were injured in a blast in an illegal firecracker unit being run from a home in Saran on Sunday afternoon. Two of six injured people have been referred to Patna Medical College and Hospital with serious injuries. Saran DM Rajesh Meena said, "Five bodies have been recovered after the blast so far; six others are injured. Primary investigation suggests that an illegal firecracker unit had been running from the house". An FSL team from Muzaffarpur has reached the spot. **ENS**

### ANDHRA PRADESH

**Two Bengaluru police officers die in accident**

Bengaluru: Two police officers from Bengaluru died in a road accident after their car hit a barrier in Andhra Pradesh Sunday. While the two officers, Sub-Inspector Avinash, and constable Anil Mulik, died on the spot, the driver, Maxwee, died later. Another SI Dikshith L, constable Sharanabasava, who were in the vehicle, sustained injuries and undergoing treatment at CMC Vellore. The officers were on the road after receiving a tip-off of drugs being moved into Bengaluru. **ENS**

### JAMMU & KASHMIR

**Four dead, many injured as vehicle rolls down gorge**

Banihal/Jammu: Four people died and many were injured in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Sunday when the vehicle they were travelling in skidded off a road and rolled down a gorge, officials said. The accident took place on a link road in the Higni-Badarkoot belt, they said. The dead were identified as Haza Begum and Abdul Rasheed, residents of Shagan Ramsow, Zahida Begum and Mushtaq Ahmed. **PTI**

## IIT Madras in talks to set up campus in Tanzania; Nepal, Lanka too send requests

**SOURAV ROY BARMAN**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

AN OFFSHORE campus of IIT Madras in Tanzania is among the options on the government's table as it works on a plan to ensure the country's premier engineering institutes have a presence on the world map.

The recommendations made in a draft report prepared by a 16-member committee — headed by IIT Council standing committee chairperson Dr K Radhakrishnan — are acting as a possible roadmap for the expansion plans, according to officials privy to the developments.

IIT Madras Director Prof V Kamakoti told *The Indian Express* that apart from Tanzania and other African countries, the institute has also received requests from Sri Lanka and Nepal for

campuses to offer courses in emerging areas such as data sciences and artificial intelligence as well as energy systems.

"IIT Madras is in discussions with multiple countries, including Tanzania, regarding offshore campuses. We are considering many of these places. For African countries, programmes in mining are very important. In Nepal, there are demands for courses on energy systems. Courses in data sciences are in demand everywhere," Prof Kamakoti said.

Discussions are underway to figure out if individual IITs should make forays abroad, or multiple IITs should jointly attempt to do so. Prof Kamakoti was among the seven IIT directors in the Radhakrishnan committee. Efforts are also being made to study the market demand in some of the countries which have placed requests for

getting offshore campuses of Indian institutions.

"We are looking at what sort of courses can be offered. There may be some country-specific courses on offer, as for some countries, some topics can be of relevance. We will be arriving at different models based on feasibility, employment potential in those countries," Prof Kamakoti said.

While initially, postgraduate courses might be offered in the proposed satellite campuses, the idea is to eventually scale them up to offer the flagship undergraduate degree courses taught in the IITs. The status of IIT Madras as an Institution of Eminence also puts it at a position of advantage while expanding abroad.

For admissions at the UG level, apart from JEE-Advanced scores, Scholastic Assessment Test or SAT scores might also be considered. The usage of SAT

scores in admissions was among the suggestions made by IIT Delhi in its proposal to establish campuses in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. IIT-Delhi's proposal, which remains pending with the government, states that its overseas campuses will offer four-year UG courses with an annual intake of up to 240 students in four branches based on SAT scores.

"As far as postgraduate programmes are concerned, we have our own entrance test and interview. The mechanism is well established. For UGs, we are looking at multiple options," Prof Kamakoti said.

A joint degree model has already been approved by the UGC under which every higher educational institute, including the IITs, can tie-up with foreign universities to offer degrees.

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### UTTAR PRADESH

**Rs 14-crore property owned by MP Afzal Ansari attached**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
LUCKNOW, JULY 24

IN A joint operation by Ghazipur district administration and the local police, properties worth Rs 14 crore and owned by sitting MP Afzal Ansari were attached under the Uttar Pradesh Gangster and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act. Police said during the preliminary inquiry it was found that the properties were amassed through illegal means.

Afzal Ansari is the elder brother of sitting Mau Sadar MLA Mukhtar Ansari who is currently lodged in jail.

Afzal Ansari was elected as an MP on a Bahujan Samaj Party ticket in the 2019 parliamentary elections.

Superintendent of Police, Ghazipur, Rohan Botre said, "The action against Afzal Ansari was taken after a case was lodged against him under the Uttar Pradesh Gangster and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act in 2007."

The four attached properties are located in different villages under the limits of Bhamwarkol police station in Ghazipur district. After attaching the properties, the administration also put up a board on the land announcing their seizure.

### BENGAL SCHOOL JOB SCAM

## HC directs ED to move Partha to Odisha AIIMS

**Agency sought arrested minister's transfer from state-run hospital**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, JULY 24

A DAY after West Bengal Commerce and Industry Minister Partha Chatterjee, arrested in connection with the alleged school job scam, was admitted to government-run SSKM Hospital in Kolkata, the Calcutta High Court on Sunday ordered the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to shift him to AIIMS Bhubaneswar through air-ambulance early Monday morning.

In its order, Justice Bibek Chaudhuri stated, "...our experience as a common man with regard to the role of the doctors attached to the SSKM Super speciality Hospital is not a happy one. In the recent past, more than one high-ranking political leaders belonging to the ruling party were arrested or directed to appear before the Investigating Authority for interrogation, and they successfully avoided interrogation by... taking shelter in the said hospital. When they found that there was no possibility for the Investigating Agency to interrogate the suspects having strong political background..., they were discharged from the hospital. They avoided even appearing before the Court on the strength of the medical report issued by the said hospital authority."

"Under such background and considering the fact that the accused is the senior most Cabinet Minister in the State of West Bengal having immense power and position, it would not be impossible for the accused with the aide of other political executives to take shelter under the garb of serious illness and medical treatment to evade interrogation,"

**FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



Arpita Mukherjee being produced in a Kolkata court on Sunday. She was remanded in one-day custody of the Enforcement Directorate. (Partha Paul)

Justice Chaudhuri added.

Partha Chatterjee was admitted to the SSKM Hospital on Saturday evening on a local court's order, hours after he was taken into custody by ED officials. Chatterjee had complained of "uneasiness" after he was sent to two-day ED custody.

But the ED approached the Calcutta High Court against the local court's order to shift Chatterjee to SSKM. The ED claimed that the lower court's order "was not in accordance with the law", adding that if Chatterjee was unwell, he should have been sent to Command Hospital, instead of SSKM.

On Saturday evening, Chatterjee was examined by a team of senior doctors from nephrology, cardiology, and endocrinology departments. Several tests, including ECG, were conducted on him after he was hospitalised and admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU).

He was later moved to a cabin of the cardiology department and was being treated there. Cardiologist Dr Saroj Mondal was heading the team of doctors looking after Chatterjee.

"He (Chatterjee) is stable. Some tests have been conducted and he is being administered medicines," said a senior official of SSKM.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
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## A behind-the-scenes look at Uber Files at Explained session today

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

SINCE ITS launch in India nine years ago, Uber has aggressively expanded in the country, disrupting and reshaping the cab-hailing industry, steering itself through rough waters in the wake of the Uber rape case in 2014 and increased Government scrutiny to transform itself into a \$44-billion global transportation giant with operations in 72 countries.

An investigation by The Indian Express, in collaboration with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) offered a rare glimpse into the company during its tumultuous days of expansion steered by flamboyant and brash co-founder, Travis Kalanick, to reveal that the company used stealth technology to bypass regulators; tapped into a sprawling lobbying network; and aggressively cut corners as it drove through loopholes in law and regulation.

Ritu Sarin, Executive Editor (Investigations) of The Indian Express, Dean Starkman, Senior Editor of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and David Pegg, Investigations correspondent of



The Guardian, London, will take you behind the scenes of this global investigative project at the next session of Explained Live on "Behind the Uber Files" on Monday at 6 pm.

They will be in conversation with Rakesh Sinha, Executive Editor (News Operation) of The Indian Express. They will take you through their findings of the Uber Files, a leak of 182 gigabytes of data that were obtained by The Guardian newspaper from Mark MacGann, a whistleblower who provided the newspaper with 124,000 company records.

The records are from the 2013-17 period, and are mainly internal company emails (83,000), as well as memos, presentations, and WhatsApp messages.

The investigation carried out by The Indian Express shows the cavalier manner in which the company's top executives reacted to the allegation of rape by an Uber driver in New Delhi in December 2014.

While officially expressing

### TMC demands time-bound probe

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, JULY 24

TRINAMOL CONGRESS on Sunday demanded a time-bound probe into the ED's case against senior minister Partha Chatterjee.

"The party demands time-bound investigation in the case," party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh told reporters, maintaining that central agencies' probes in some cases had been going on for several years. He said the CBI had been investigating the Saradha case since 2014 while the Narada case, which unfolded ahead of the 2016 elections, had yet to reach any conclusion.

Such delays were not acceptable, he said, adding that the TMC's rivals would "use it as a tool to cast aspersions" on the party. "If the ED produces any proof of its allegations and the court accepts it, the TMC and the government will initiate steps against any leader, however big he may be."

Asked about Arpita Mukherjee, he said, "We have got the ED version... money has been recovered. TMC has no relation with this money. The person from whose residence this has been recovered is not from the TMC."

## Fresh cracks in Meghalaya's ruling coalition after police raid on farmhouse owned by BJP leader

**TORA AGARWALA**  
GUWAHATI, JULY 24

A POLICE raid at a farmhouse in Meghalaya's Tura has led to fresh cracks in the state's ruling coalition — the National People's Party-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance, in which the BJP is a partner.

On Saturday, the Meghalaya Police said a special operation at a farmhouse in Tura, owned by militant-turned-politician Bernard R Marak, now the vice-president of the BJP's Meghalaya unit, had revealed that the premises was being "run as a brothel".

The operation was launched following a complaint registered in February, when a minor girl was allegedly sexually assaulted

in the farmhouse.

In a statement on Saturday evening, police said they detained 73 youths, including 23 women, and rescued five minors from the farmhouse belonging to Marak, who was "evading arrest".

A case was registered against Marak under the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act, 1956. He has said "nothing untoward" was happening on his property.

Currently an elected member of the Garo Tribal Autonomous District Council, Marak is a former militant of the now-disbanded Garo insurgent group Achik Nationalist Volunteer Council (B), which fought for a separate Garo state.

During the eight-hour-long raid, bottles of illicit liquor, 500 packets of unused condoms and



BJP's Meghalaya vice-president Bernard R Marak

contraceptive tablets, Rs 37,000 in cash, 37 vehicles, 47 mobile phones and incriminating documents were found, police said. The police statement said that "five children (four boys and one girl)" were found "locked inside dingy cabin-like unhygienic rooms" and in "a state of shock".

Police said Marak had "more than 25 criminal cases" registered against him. "Even after the disbandment of the outfit, he has been indulging in criminal activities like extortion from traders of Tura market, criminal intimidations, arms smuggling, prostitution, illegal sale of liquor, illegal sale of lottery tickets, encroachment on other's property," the statement said.

In a video statement on Sunday, Marak said there was a "threat to his life". "I am not absconding or evading arrest, but I am just trying to be safe and bring out the truth to the public," he said.

The BJP leader said that a "planned conspiracy" was afoot to "malign" his image by the Conrad Sangma-led NPP. "The BJP is now accepted in the state. This has created insecurity among other political leaders, especially Conrad Sangma, who has directed the police to file a case against me and gun me down," he alleged.

Marak said "nothing untoward" was happening on his

percentage of 99.81%.

The board had not conducted Class XII examinations last year because of the volatile Covid-19 situation and had devised an alternate assessment scheme, and 99.76% candidates had passed.

While all regions have achieved a pass percentage over 99%, the southern region has the highest success rate with a pass percentage of 99.81%.

Marak said "nothing untoward" was happening on his

persons under IPC sections 153-A (1) (promoting enmity between groups), 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 341 (wrongful restraint), and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief).

The namaz clip had triggered a social media campaign against the mall, with allegations that it had employed mostly members of the Muslim community. In response, the mall's management released a statement saying "over 80 per cent" of its staff was Hindu.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah at an event in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Express

## Ahmedabad station to be developed on Modhera Sun temple model: Shah

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDHINAGAR, JULY 24

THE AHMEDABAD Railway Station at Kalupur in Ahmedabad City will be developed on the theme of Modhera Sun Temple in the next five years, Union Home & Cooperation Minister Amit Shah announced Sunday.

The Sabarmati Railway Station will also be developed in a grand manner while providing connectivity to destinations of South India, the Gandhinagar Lok

Sabha MP added.

"Today, along with numerous developmental works done, I guarantee you that our Ahmedabad's railway station, too, will (be developed). You just (wait and) see Ahmedabad Railway Station after five years. (Narendra) Modiji has visualised it, Ahmedabad's railway station will be developed as grand as Modhera Sun Temple," Shah said while addressing a public function to dedicate a sports complex and lay foundation stone for various developmental projects worth Rs

211 crore in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency near Manipur village in Ahmedabad district. Modhera Sun Temple is located in Mehsana, neighbouring Ahmedabad district. Built in the 11th century during the Chalukya dynasty in honour of the Sun God, it is a major tourist destination in North Gujarat.

He said: "Trains that don't go to South (India) from Sabarmati will also be connected. We are going to make sure that passengers bound for South India get trains from Sabarmati."



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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, JULY 25, 2022

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

## WORDLY WISE

WE ARE THE FIRST GENERATION TO FEEL THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE LAST WHO CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. — BARACK OBAMA

*The Indian* **EXPRESS**

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## FIELD OF CONCERN

Falling rice acreage in eastern India is symptom of a larger problem with environmental, equity, fiscal dimensions

FARMERS HAVE PLANTED about 16.4 per cent less area so far under rice compared to last year at this time, despite overall kharif crop acreage going up. The reason is rainfall deficiency of 44-59 per cent across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Gangetic West Bengal, even as the country as a whole has recorded 11 per cent surplus precipitation from June 1 to July 24. The monsoon's revival in much of the South Peninsula, Central, West and Northwest India has helped boost sowings of most kharif oilseeds, pulses, coarse cereals and cotton. However, poor rains in the Gangetic plains have led to delayed transplanting of paddy by farmers, many of whom had even raised nurseries during the first half of June. The seedlings from those have aged or gone dry and are not suitable for transplanting. Farmers will, then, have to undertake fresh nursery sowing of shorter duration varieties, which would yield less grain per acre.

All this will translate into lower rice production, although it is possible that the losses in eastern India may be significantly offset by output from other regions. Rice, unlike wheat, is not only grown over a wider geography both south and north of the Vindhyas, but also in the kharif as well as rabi season. Given that, the wheat story — of an unexpected decline due to a sudden surge in temperatures from mid-March — is less likely to be repeated in rice. Also, with current stocks in government godowns being three-and-a-half times the required minimum buffer, the supply situation in rice should be quite manageable. If at all restrictions on exports are necessary down the line, these should be in the form of tariff or minimum sale price, as opposed to outright ban on shipments.

Less area getting planted under paddy in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal is, nevertheless, disturbing from a different standpoint. This whole belt, together with Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam, has sufficient groundwater resources for sustainable rice cultivation. But the absence of irrigation facilities, whether canals or three-phase electricity supply at consistent 440 volts, means that farmers there are mostly at the mercy of the monsoon rains. This is in contrast to Punjab, Haryana or Telangana farmers, who are able to grow paddy on the back of free power and assured government procurement, even while sucking their water tables dry. The water footprint of rice production is lower in the eastern states, whose farmers, unfortunately, receive little by way of irrigation or minimum price support. That many of them may end up not planting paddy this time is a symptom of a larger problem with environmental, equity and fiscal dimensions.

## ADDRESS THE SKEW

IITs and IIMs must take enabling measures to expand pool of SC, ST and OBC candidates for PhD programmes

DATA SHARED LAST week in Parliament by the Ministry of Education shows that India's elite business schools and technology institutions are way short of fulfilling their social justice-related commitments in doctoral programmes. The number of students from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and OBC communities accepted for the PhD programme in the IITs and IIMs in the past four years were below the constitutionally mandated norms. The Central Educational Institutions (Reservations in admission) Act, 2006 mandates 15 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 27 per cent quotas for SC, ST and OBC students. But many IITs maintain that since there is no fixed sanctioned annual intake for PhD programmes, they cannot follow the reservation policy. IIMs have a somewhat different explanation: Reserved category vacancies are not filled because of the dearth of suitable candidates. In both cases, the troubling spinoff of the deficits is that the faculties of these institutions do not reflect the country's social diversity.

The number of PhD applications to IIMs from students of SC, ST and OBC communities increased only marginally in the past four years. In case of the IITs, this increase was more appreciable. But the pool of applicants continues to be shallow. This means that even though the percentage of accepted applications is roughly the same across the reserved and general categories, the intake of students from disadvantaged sections is way below the mandated norms. A job, not research, is usually the top priority for a large section of students from marginalised sections. But research, whether in technology, economics, or any other field, is unlikely to make meaningful difference to the lives of India's weaker sections if students from these communities are not adequately represented in laboratories and classrooms. The government has been aware of this imperative. In 2017, in a letter to IIM Ahmedabad, it asked the institute to "focus on having more fellows from SC, ST and OBC communities so that they can become prospective faculty members". However, instead of instituting enabling measures, the IIMs, in 2019, requested the government to exempt them from reserving faculty posts for socially and economically weaker sections.

The government's 2019 data shows that 48 per cent of IIT dropouts were from reserved categories. In the case of IIMs, this was much higher — 62 per cent. A large body of scholarly literature points out the need for providing special assistance — in classrooms and outside them — to students from communities that have a long history of being discriminated against. But the introduction of such measures in India's elite academies remains patchy, at best. It's a neglect that a country aspiring to be a knowledge economy leader can ill-afford.

## FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



PRAKASH SINGH

THE GOVERNMENT HAS launched an Agnipath scheme for the armed forces of the country with a view to make these a leaner force without compromising on their combat abilities. A similar scheme is perhaps called for with regard to the All India Services (AIS).

The AIS have rendered excellent services to the country despite the severe constraints under which the officers function. However, we have reached a stage when some radical rethinking is required. Services have an inbuilt tendency to proliferate. It is true that government activities today cover a much wider spectrum, that welfare schemes are now undertaken on a massive scale, and that law and order problems have become far more complex. To cope with the increasing responsibilities, there has been a steady expansion of the civil services. Yet, there is a huge sense of dissatisfaction over their performance. Some bureaucrats have gone to the extent of suggesting that the IAS should be scrapped. No one has suggested the abolition of police because, howsoever inefficient it might be, its total absence would result in lawlessness and chaos. However, the fact remains that people are generally dissatisfied with the performance of the police and there are credible complaints about its brutality, third-degree methods and extra-judicial killings.

It has been noticed that once an officer is selected for the AIS, he/she develops a smug attitude that his/her career for the next 30/35 years is now secure and that, under normal circumstances, he/she would be able to reach the top level. There is no pressure to perform, no incentive to innovate, and no desire to excel. No wonder, many of these officers become laid-back and are, most of the time, feathering their nests. There is no *agni* in them.

Senior officers of the IAS and IPS have gone to the Supreme Court for reforms in the civil services and the police. The judiciary has, from time to time, given directions

# Expand Agnipath

Centre must extend idea to All India Services. It will make bureaucracy more performance-oriented

The GoI should think of an Agnipath scheme for the All India Services (AIS). It is suggested that the performance of all AIS officers should be subjected to a strict review at three stages — once when they have completed 15 years of service, then after 25 years of service, and, finally, after 30 years of service. The reviews should be with the objective of weeding out 25 per cent of officers at the first stage, 10 per cent officers at the second stage and 5 per cent officers at the third stage. Weeding out should be for poor performance, charges of corruption, any other misconduct of a serious nature, or for being physically unfit.

for reforms but these have not been implemented in letter and spirit with the result that there has been hardly any change in the ground situation. Reforms are going to be a long haul.

Meanwhile, the services continue to acquire flab. To give an example, Uttar Pradesh today has 14 officers in the rank of Director General of Police (DGP) and 42 in the rank of Additional DGP. There was a time when one Inspector General was the head of the entire UP Police. The bureaucracy is even fatter. UP has 29 officers in the rank of Chief Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary, 28 officers in the rank of Principal Secretary, and 61 Secretaries. It is the same story across the country. Not that things are better at the Centre. The Government of India has nearly 91 officers in the rank of Secretary (excluding those in the PMO, Niti Aayog and National Security Council Secretariat) and 21 in the rank of DGP.

The AIS have become very, very top-heavy. In fact, there are a number of officers who are holding top positions but have very little work to do. This makes them frustrated. As a result, many of them are politicking most of the time with a view to getting a top post in the bureaucratic mainstream. There is jockeying and lobbying for the highest positions. It is almost a cut-throat competition. What makes this distressing is that a number of these officers are of just average calibre or even mediocre. As one senior officer said in jest, "horses and donkeys, all manage to reach the top under the present system".

Under these circumstances, the GoI should think of an Agnipath scheme for the AIS. The performance of all AIS officers should be subjected to a strict review at three stages — once when they have completed 15 years of service, then after 25 years of service, and, finally, after 30 years of service. The objective of the reviews should be to weed out 25 per cent of officers at the first stage, 10 per cent officers at the second

stage and 5 per cent officers at the third stage. Weeding out should be for poor performance, charges of corruption, any other misconduct of a serious nature, or for being physically unfit.

Screening at each stage will have to be very rigorous and the mechanism to do so must be impartial. It will have to be doubly ensured that the officers are not victimised for political reasons. The officers may be given copper/silver/golden handshakes at the three stages.

The periodic trimming of services would ensure that officers become performance-oriented, acquire new skills and a flair for innovation in administration. The complacency and smugness, which we presently notice, would disappear in a majority of cases. There would also be less jostling at the top; the top would, in fact, become lighter. It would also ensure that the structure of services becomes pyramid-shaped and not the trapezium it is now. The All India Services Rules will, of course, have to be amended.

The weeding out at different stages can be done by a panel, which may comprise retired judges, officers of impeccable integrity drawn from different services, and distinguished members of the civil society. The panel should have representation from all the states of the country — it may have 40 to 50 persons. Every time the review is undertaken, three to five from the panel should be chosen by lottery, taking care that they are from states other than the one whose officers' performance is going to be reviewed. If an officer feels aggrieved by the decision of the panel, he should be able to approach a tribunal.

There would be fierce resistance to this scheme from within the AIS. The services, however, need a shake up. The officers deserve an injection of *agni*.

*The writer is a former DGP of BSF, UP and Assam Police*



POOJA PILLAI

# RRR Is Not A HISTORY LESSON

*Demanding that an entertainer also be historically accurate is a fool's game*

AT THE 68TH Academy Awards in 1996, the historical war drama *Braveheart* picked up the night's two big awards — Best Picture and Best Director for Mel Gibson, who also played the lead role of 13th-century Scottish rebel leader, William Wallace. Never mind that the film had been roundly panned by historians for being inaccurate on several counts — from the blue paint that Wallace and his followers wore on their faces (about 1,000 years after the Picts had actually worn it to fight off the Romans) to depicting Wallace as having picked up arms against the English because they had murdered his wife. Many detractors argued that the film even got its name wrong: "Braveheart" was the term used to describe King Robert the Bruce, not Wallace.

For a movie-going audience, however, burly men with blue face paint and clad in kilts (also historically inaccurate) going to war over a dead woman makes for a far more compelling story than the actual events. Even the name of the film, accurate or not, is enticing. They're not at the movies for a history lesson — they're there to be entertained. One could argue that the whole point of a film — particularly if it is a mainstream fiction entertainer — is to tell a compelling story. Facts, even if relevant, be damned. This is why the brouhaha over a British history professor's unfavourable review of the SS Rajamouli blockbuster *RRR*,

All the noise aside, though, the question of whether or not filmmakers have a duty to historical accuracy is important, and one that comes up repeatedly. But it is one that can only be answered if we know that a particular filmmaker, when making a movie set during a specific period of history, makes a claim to accuracy. This Rajamouli has expressly not done.

which is set in the early 20th century when India was still a colony, seems overblown.

In his now-viral review, Robert Tombs complains that *RRR* "slanders" the British by showing them "roaming the country casually committing crimes", calling it "a sign of absolute ignorance or of deliberate dishonesty". Not surprisingly, Indian social media blew up with counter-accusations of the "deep denial" of colonial crimes by yet another "white boy" with even Winston Churchill, predictably, being dragged into the controversy.

To Tombs, *RRR* is just another "nationalist myth" where the British are "cast in the role of villains" because "It's a way that quite a few countries make up heroic stories about themselves." But couldn't the same thing be said about, for example, the 2017 film *Victoria and Abdul* or even the Netflix series *The Crown*, both of which have been accused of whitewashing colonialism to cast their imperial "heroes" in nobler light? In fact, British public memory is marked by wilful amnesia about the actual brutalities of colonialism and its long shadow. The school curriculum in the UK is notoriously silent about the empire, with generations of school children growing up having little to no knowledge about it.

All the noise aside, though, the question of whether or not filmmakers have a duty to historical accuracy is important, and one that comes up repeatedly. But it is one that

can only be answered if we know that a particular filmmaker, when making a movie set during a specific period of history, makes a claim to accuracy. This Rajamouli has expressly not done. Even before *RRR*'s release, he had said in interviews that there are no historical facts in his film, only imagination, his biggest liberty being the depiction of the friendship between Komaram Bheem and Alluri Sitarama Raju, two men who, in real life, had never even met. Perhaps Rajamouli believes his duty is towards his audience, making sure that they are entertained, and towards his producers, doing his best to help them make money.

In his manifesto, *The Minnesota Declaration: Truth and Fact in Documentary Cinema*, German filmmaker Werner Herzog wrote, "Facts cannot be underestimated as they have normative power. But they do not give us insight into the truth, or the illumination of poetry." Rajamouli's historical epic, with heroes who perform physics-defying stunts and a tiger that cowers when a human being roars back at it, is obviously not a documentary film (which is also, arguably, not a form that is wedded to "facts"). But it does offer an insight into a truth: If a film that is designed to simply please its audience achieves this end, demanding that it also be faithful to historical facts is a fool's game.

*pooja.pillai@expressindia.com*

## JULY 25, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

### CM's HOME BOMBED

CERTAIN UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS, suspected to be extremists, hurled two bombs into the ancestral home of Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh at Jandiala village, about 20 km from Jullundhūr. There was no loss of life or property. The miscreants used the cover of night to flee. The police arrived on the scene an hour after the incident.

### PRESIDENT'S PLEA

PRESIDENT N SANJEEVA Reddy, has expressed concern at the conduct of public affairs, and warned those in power that the people, whose disillusionment was

daily growing, would not accept it for long "if we make a mockery of it." In a farewell message to the nation broadcast, Reddy the country's present political scenario gave little cause for satisfaction. Reddy made a plea for the emergence of an effective opposition.

### BHINDRANWALE ARMS

PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER Darbara Singh indicated that steps were underway to force the supporters of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to surrender their illegal arms. He said: "A few arms have already been recovered and you will see within a few days the steps we take to get more illicit arms out of Sant Bhindranwale's sup-

porters." Darbara Singh said the culprits involved in the recent killings and other sabotage cases have been identified and a number of them have already been arrested. Some of them escaped abroad and the state government has approached the Centre for their extradition.

### BEIRUT BOMBED

SYRIAN MISSILES SHOT down an Israeli Phantom fight-bomber in eastern Lebanon as Israeli jets and artillery pounded West Beirut for the third straight day. The military command in Tel Aviv said the two pilots of the downed plane bailed out safely and were captured by Syrian troops in control of Bekaa valley.





# THE IDEAS PAGE

## A President for the Republic

Droupadi Murmu's election underlines the weakening grip of the elite on India's political culture. It is a sign that its democracy is evolving beyond the European model



RAKESH SINHA

WHAT IS THE significance of Droupadi Murmu becoming President of India? The answer to this question has more to do with vital issues of social democracy and republican spirit than with ideological or political divides. The spotlight during presidential polls had so far been on the individual contestants and the process was seen as a test of the political hegemony of the ruling party. The debate now has shifted from personality-centred politics to republicanism. While the former indicates elitism, the latter is fundamentally associated with political activism at the grass roots.

This change also underlines the cardinal difference between the Nehru and Modi eras. Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the Indian sovereign democratic republic without disassociating with European values, which was a reason for his emphasis on remaining a part of the British Commonwealth — despite stiff nationalist opposition. Narendra Modi discarded European values imposed on Indian political processes. For him, politics is about the masses.

Murmu — as both a woman and tribal leader — has the exceptional advantage of understanding and experiencing grass roots-level democratic institutions, in which she has worked. She struggled in a system where social hierarchies and economic inequality worked against her. She belongs to the community of tribal people who constitute 8.6 per cent of India's population and are spread across the country. This section of society has been the most marginalised since the colonial era. Tribal people's per capita income, literacy rate, and health indices show their increasing marginalisation. The displacement of more than 50 lakh tribal people since Independence has aggravated their misery. However, their contributions to the freedom movement and national economy were as significant as any other section of society. From Tilka Majhi (Jharkhand) to Tirot Sing (Meghalaya), many displayed their patriotic fervour by standing against British colonialism.

The dignity of tribal communities was undermined by the colonial regime — they were contemptuously called "Animists" till the 1911 census. In addition to socio-economic upliftment, tribal communities needed recognition of their dignity and an appreciation of their role in national life. The Modi government declared the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, the most revered nationalist tribal leader, as "Janjatiya Gaurav Divas". Murmu's election as President, then, is the realisation of an unaccomplished task of the Indian republic.

The powers and position of the Indian President prevent the office from becoming a power centre. It does, however, have a definite role as a symbol of republican virtue — a virtue that overcomes the limitations and compulsions of the party system. The President is, of course, a non-confrontational office. But, undeniably, it can be a vigilant custodian of the Constitution. The first President of India, Rajendra Prasad, was a freedom fighter and Indian



CR Sasikumar

politics witnessed the battle between the then President and Prime Minister (Nehru) over their respective philosophies. The President's office remained a captive of the ruling party when Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency in 1975. The office became the battleground when there was a split in the Congress in 1969 and both factions used the presidential election to prove their strength. Indira Gandhi's choice — V V Giri — defeated the official candidate, N Sanjeeva Reddy, by a thin margin of about fifteen thousand votes.

Murmu's election is also significant because it challenges the elite domination of India's political culture. This is one reason that our parliamentary democracy has not evolved. Democracy has, no doubt, expanded social horizons and embraced realities that are increasingly getting reflected in our discourses as well as in representation in legislatures. However, metropolitanism continues to hold sway. It is here that Modi's leadership marks a great leap: It has been instrumental in deconstructing the elitist democracy. Murmu's choice is intrinsically related to this process of democratisation.

The first sign was the democratisation of the Padma awards, which were earlier seen as the province of the eminent, shining stars from different fields. Since 2014, they have recognised common people, with uncommon accomplishments. Tulsu Gowda from the Halakki tribe, Meghalaya's Trinity Saioo and Assam's Jadav Payeng are now all Padma awardees. This is a recognition of the dignity of common people's service to the nation. The Indian republic is a voluntary union of civilisational legacies and constitutional obligations. For decades, we remained captives of the European model and tried to evolve incrementally. But every society has to proceed in accordance with its demographic and cultural characteristics. Nelson Mandela changed the political culture of South Africa and the US took centuries to elect its first black president. This is a symptom of the limits of the European-Western model. India's rich legacy of democracy, since the Vedic period, remained in the footnotes of our textbooks.

Opposition parties have failed to perceive that the horizontal expansion of democracy does not herald republicanism. B R Ambedkar had said that without social democracy, political democracy would remain hypocritical and lack the conviction required to bring about egalitarianism. A tribal woman being elected to the highest office is not a symbolic gesture or an apolitical elevation. It is a realisation of the country's collective conscience that tribal communities deserve more than they have received from the Indian state. Therefore, her choice attracted the support of political parties which are opposed to the BJP. President Droupadi Murmu illustrates the advancement of social democracy.

Our republic will not be complete if we do not access our own civilisational legacies, beyond constitutional obligations. This began in 2014.

Opposition parties have failed to perceive that the horizontal expansion of democracy does not herald republicanism. B R Ambedkar had said that without social democracy, political democracy would remain hypocritical and lack the conviction required to bring about egalitarianism. A tribal woman being elected to the highest office is not a symbolic gesture or an apolitical elevation. It is a realisation of the country's collective conscience that tribal communities deserve more than they have received from the Indian state. Therefore, her choice attracted the support of political parties which are opposed to the BJP. President Droupadi Murmu illustrates the advancement of social democracy.

Economic advancement or political participation is not the only criteria to fulfil the constitutional obligations towards a community. A recognition of their historical role and an appreciation of their social and cultural values are equally important. India's huge tribal population now finds its role in the republican and democratic system of the nation recognised.

It is a devaluation of both the dignity of a community, as well as an undermining of its civilisational contributions when doubts are raised about the capability of a grass roots worker. Independence was won and the nation's culture has been sustained by its grass roots.

The President's office is above party politics. Despite the contest for the post, Murmu's election shows the collective will of the people. As the President, she has to now live up to this trust. The election also shows that as democracy marches, it overcomes prejudices, destroys privileges and leaves behind politics shorn of ideas. This transformation in democratic thinking and process will have far-reaching effects. The opportunity arising from the discourse of the presidential election should be utilised for achieving the goals of social democracy.

*The writer is a BJP Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha*

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The government should consider fast-tracking the planned construction of a vaccine plant which will be useful for all vaccine-related purposes in the future — including developing our own vaccines against Monkeypox, which could potentially prove to be life-saving."  
— **DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH**

## US-India tango

Deeper defence and technology cooperation are key to shifting the India-US partnership into the next orbit in new world order



RAJEEV MANTRI

IN A 2009 interview, former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew anticipated the rise of a multipolar world and opined that "the Indians are going to be themselves, they will never be everybody's lackey". The senior statesman rebuffed suggestions of the 21st century as a bipolar era dominated by the US and China, cast in the mould of the US-Soviet rivalry, and was prescient in foreseeing the emergence of a multipolar world, well before it was obvious.

The possibility of India's continuing rise over this century seems to be on a stronger wicket today than it was a decade ago, marred as the early 2010s were by political instability and economic turmoil. But such tectonic shifts are, by definition, not hostage to ephemeral forces of the moment — in the extant case, they are part of a larger reversion to the mean, with Asia once again taking its place as the geo-economic epicentre of the world.

Prior to the era of colonial exploitation followed by self-inflicted stagnation due to communist economic policies adopted across the region, the ancient civilisations of India and China dominated the world economy. This was not due to large populations alone — there existed a deep history of scientific innovation and technological prowess, which spread by osmosis and intercourse from the East to the West. The West, led principally by Great Britain, then stole a march over Asia with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. A pyrrhic victory for Britain in the Second World War marked the formal transfer of the Western bloc's leadership to the US, which later became the preferred destination for high-quality human capital migrating out of Asia because of the government-enforced economic hara-kiri committed by leaders like Mao, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

Cut to the 2020s, and there is a transformed landscape, nothing like what existed even 20 years ago. China is now home to a manufacturing-led and technology-driven economy, competing head-on with the US in areas like biotech, robotics, artificial intelligence, and advanced materials. India, which faced an economic setback when the liberalisation process largely came to a halt between 2004-2014, is back on its feet, with consistent commitment and concerted policy action focused on building domestic capabilities in critical technologies as well as in key manufacturing industries and pursuing important structural economic reforms.

The confusion between the US-China and India-China relationships has also been clarified. From seeing non-democratic China as a benign partner, the US now sees it as a threat, the present preoccupations in Europe notwithstanding. India, which for a time welcomed Chinese involvement in its economy, has also recalibrated after the 2020 Galwan face-off.

Triangular romances are always awkward, and though decisive clarity on who stands where took time to crystallise, it is welcome. Unlike India and the US, which

are both well-established republics with deep democratic cultures, China is "a party with a state attached to it", to use the pithy and evocative description by former Foreign Secretary, Vijay Gokhale. Being inextricably linked by geography, Beijing's ambition to dominate its periphery and proximate region is of particular concern to India.

Given this background, India and the US are natural allies to confront the challenges posed by an expansionist and aggressive China in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. There are clear signals of unprecedented cooperation between the two countries in areas like national security, defence production and most prominently, new-age information technology and internet industries where American financial firms and blue-chip corporates are contributing growth capital as well as know-how.

For the India-US strategic partnership to shift to the next orbit, closer cooperation in scientific research and critical emerging technologies is imperative, as the recently concluded India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue recognised. In particular, as some American lawmakers highlighted when providing India with a specific exemption under Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) — a federal law that seeks to impose sanctions on countries that engage in military trade with states such as Russia — that the American defence industry should contribute to reducing India's dependence on Russian armaments and equipment.

Connected to the expansion of defence-industrial ties is the broadening of technology collaboration in areas like artificial intelligence, drones, advanced materials, space technology, semiconductors, and biotech in India, beyond the consumer tech and software sectors. The Indian government's efforts to promote venture capital investment and entrepreneurship in these frontier technology sectors should be seen in this larger strategic context.

The tone, tenor and trajectory of the India-US relationship are proving to be unlike any that the US has had before — strictly speaking, India is not a part of the geopolitical and cultural West yet is "westernised" enough to be comfortable in that bloc. Additionally, unlike some other countries in the Indian Subcontinent, India never has been nor will be anybody's lackey. Demographic and economic trends firmly position India as a global force that will have the weight to stride alongside America and China, who would constitute the other two geopolitical — and ideological — poles over the 21st century.

Lee Kuan Yew remarked in the same 2009 interview that the US would have to share leadership with China and India in the second half of the 21st century and "make space" for them. Events over the last decade have clarified the landscape further. India and the US are — and should be — closely aligned in addressing the threat posed by an authoritarian party controlling a state. Indeed, the combined financial firepower, human capital, and technology prowess available between the two countries would place the world on a safer and more stable plane. The India-US partnership is, in that sense, not a nicety but a necessity for the new multipolar world order.

*The writer is managing director of Navam Capital and co-founder of the India Enterprise Council*



GAURAV GOGOI

## Beijing Coma

Government must stop appeasing China to protect its image

THE 16TH ROUND of talks between India and China at the Corps Commander level has ended with no sign of a Chinese withdrawal from eastern Ladakh. This came on the heels of talks on July 7 between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that failed to show any results. While the MEA's statement following the meeting called on China "to complete the disengagement from all remaining areas", the Chinese statement made no reference to Ladakh whatsoever. Instead, it discussed Chinese concerns over Ukraine. We have reached such a sorry situation that the Chinese don't even bother to acknowledge India's demands.

More than two years after the border crisis with China began in eastern Ladakh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strategy can be summed up as DDLJ — deny, distract, lie, justify. Speaking at an all-party meet on June 19, 2020, only four days after we lost 20 brave Indian soldiers in Galwan, the PM gave China a clean chit. He said: "Na yahan koi hamari seema main ghus aya hai, na hi koi ghusha hua hai." Yet, somehow, India has lost control of 1,000 square kilometres of territory where our troops could earlier patrol but are now either blocked by Chinese troops or are no longer able to enter because of disengagement agreements.

The BJP government uses the euphemism of "friction points" to describe the border situation. Please explain to the people of India why there is "friction" if Chinese troops are not in control of our territory.

The PM's need to protect his image has also tied the government in knots: The Ministry of Defence in August 2020 was forced to take down a document on its website that directly contradicted the PM and admitted that "the Chinese side transgressed in the areas of Kugrang Nala, Gogra and the north bank of Pangong Tso lake". In November 2020, the MEA "took note" of a US report that China had built a 100-home village in disputed territory in Arunachal Pradesh, and that it would never accept China's "illegal occupation" of our territory. However, the then Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) contradicted this stance and denied any Chinese construction on our side.

Previous Congress governments had a clear policy to repel Chinese intrusions — a quick, focused counter that creates bargaining space and facilitates Chinese withdrawal. This was done in Nathu La (1967), Sumdorong Chu (1986) and Chumar (2013), leading in the third case to a Chinese pull-out from Dopsang after three weeks.

After its initial blunders, this government also did well to authorise the Indian Army to occupy positions in the Kailash Range south of Pangong Tso on the night of August 29/30, 2020. However, the government gave up these advantageous positions in February 2021 without insisting on a full Chinese withdrawal and a return to the status quo. Former Corps Commander Major General Raj Mehta (Retd.) described this premature withdrawal as a "grave mistake".

Clearly, India's stance has become reactive rather than proactive. Our statements have even stopped referring to the status quo as an objective. Over two years, India and China have also engaged in 10 rounds of talks at the foreign ministry level under the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). During this period, China has cemented its control with an unprecedented military build-up in Aksai Chin most recently including 5G networks up to the LAC, five new heliports, a large bridge across Pangong Tso and a notable increase in air activity. This expansion is aimed at giving China the capability of quick escalation and rapid manoeuvre in eastern Ladakh. It is clear that the Chinese are being hyper-aggressive, while our leadership prefers to deceive the Indian people

under its DDLJ strategy.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's policies are deepening our economic dependence on China: India's imports from China hit an all-time high of \$94 billion in 2021-22. As chief minister, Modi himself once said: "The problem is not on the border but in Delhi."

The PM must correct his course and take the nation into confidence about the China threat. He should hold a press conference along with the defence minister and the external affairs minister to explain the current situation, followed by a White Paper. There should be a dedicated briefing to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence on the China situation, and a two-day debate in Parliament.

The government should also appoint a full-time CDS, a position that has been vacant for seven months during a critical period for our national security. And it should withdraw the Agnipath scheme that threatens to demoralise our troops at a time of high national security threat.

The Congress party's stand is crystal clear: The status quo ante prevailing on the LAC prior to May 5, 2020, must be restored at all costs.

*The writer is Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### OPPOSITION UNITY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Abdicating space' (IE, July 23). The TMC's abstention from the V-P election will further Jagdeep Dhankhar's chances at the office. Dhankhar and the TMC had been at loggerheads ever since he came to occupy the Raj Bhavan. Even if that had not been the case, the TMC would have not supported the BJP nominee. Its move illustrates that the Opposition camp is in disarray. Its expectation of being consulted is not wrong. It should, however, keep aside this grievance, justified though, for the sake of Opposition unity.

**Samiul Hassan Quadri, Bikaner**

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Abdicating space' (IE, July 23). It is high time that the various opposition parties to paper over their differences and consolidate the fight against the ruling BJP. Internecine conflict will only serve the political ends of the ruling forces and further diminish the space available for the Opposition to fulfil its role. There's still time for the Opposition to work as a united group that has the ability to register its presence vis-a-vis the BJP. Without it, there is no way for us to check the ruling government's powers.

**Devendra Awasthi, Lucknow**

### GST HIKE

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Opposition disrupts Lok Sabha over price rise, GST on packaged food' (IE, July 23). The imposition of GST on essential goods such as wheat, pulses, maize and other commodities will only add to the economic burden of the common people. This will especially take a toll on the earnings of the economically disadvantaged sections of the country, who will now have to shell out a major chunk of their income for necessities. The question is: When the government has a variety of non-essential commodities for GST hikes, what was the pressing need to slap taxes on basic food items and grains?

**Aanya Singhal, Noida**

### FREE VACCINES

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'WHO sounds highest alarm level for Monkeypox as cases climb' (IE, July 24). The occurrence of monkeypox in many parts of the world and the concern raised by the WHO should be kept in mind. The present unvaccinated population remains vulnerable as the smallpox virus and monkeypox virus are cross-protective. The need of the hour is free universal vaccination.

**SS Paul, Chakdaha**



# 10 IDEA EXCHANGE

## NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

User harm is a reciprocal concept of safety and is different for different people. For example, online gaming can be a hostile environment for women. Then there are crimes unique to cyberspace, where children are bullied and gaslighted



### WHY RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Ever since Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State for Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, joined the Narendra Modi government last year, he has been the ambassador of the Digital India campaign. He was also co-in charge of the digital campaign for the Uttar

Pradesh assembly elections earlier this year, which played a key role in reaching out to the voters with their welfare schemes, and was instrumental in BJP's return to power in the state. Presently, Chandrasekhar is in consultation with various stakeholders on the proposed changes to the Information Technology Rules, 2021



For every fundamental right, there are restrictions when it comes to issues of national security. Besides, the opportunity for a judicial review of every government order always exists for a platform that's impacted

**Liz Mathew: What is the tangible result of the Skill India campaign at a time when unemployment has become an issue although the government says that 1.07 crore people were skilled in 2021. How will it impact young voters?**

Since the Skill India launch in 2016, about 3.2 crore youth have been skilled, upskilled and reskilled. They have acquired capabilities for either micro entrepreneurship or self-employment. The Periodic Labour Force Survey mapping unemployment shows that from 2017 to the time before the pandemic broke out (2020), the unemployment numbers were declining steadily. Then Covid-19 led to workforce disruption. In our sample surveys, we found that 67-70 per cent of those who go through short-term training programmes get employment.

**Liz Mathew: The requirement for the workforce keeps changing. What are we doing to make them employable?**

Skilling is a demand-driven programme and is developed in partnership with the industries that are going to be the employers. Currently, for example, in the inventory of skills offered by the Skill India ecosystem, there are more than 5,000 types of job roles that range from blue collar to white collar, from carpenters to AI engineers. So, a spectrum of skills is available.

**Liz Mathew: The Periodic Labour Survey shows a drop in the women workforce. Is the government concerned about this?**

Post-Covid, there has been a deep disruption and change in the type of workforce required by the industry and its composition. For example, one of the almost non-negotiable requirements in the workforce today is digital skills, regardless of whether you are a carpenter or a factory shop-floor worker. Today, more and more women are now participating in the workforce through the remote model. For example, in the IT sector, out of the eight-nine lakh people that have been recruited this year, 4.5 lakh are women. In the electronics and manufacturing industry, with two lakh additional jobs, almost 80 per cent are women. And these women are getting skilled, not just on the ground in the plant, but also digitally.

**Liz Mathew: Before the Uttar Pradesh elections, you were meeting start-ups and entrepreneurs there. You have also been asked to go to Gujarat, now an election-bound state. How does this government ensure that beneficiaries of its programmes transform into a support base?**

In a month, I visit about four or five campuses around the country, in places like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. I tell them a few facts of the India story. In the late 1980s, there was this narrative about Indian democracy that of the Rs 100 that went from Delhi, Rs 15 reached the beneficiary and Rs 85 was the commission or the cost of governance because of leakages and corruption. In 2022, that narrative has been turned around. Today, Rs 100 goes from here to a PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, or an MGNREGA or DBT, the same amount reaches the account of the beneficiary without any leakage, delay or intermediation. Through technology, we've changed that. The economic model that we built was dependent on 10-11 groups. Today, you have about 90,000 start-ups and 100 unicorns that are worth billions of dollars, all expanding the economic pie and diversifying the economic make-up.

**Soumyarendra Barik: What is your idea about user harm' on the Internet, particularly India-specific ones like online pornography, revenge porn, child porn and so on...**

Currently, we are in discussion about the IT Act and future legislation. Our ambition, post-Covid, is to build a trillion-dollar digital economy, which will need global standards and cyber laws. The IT Act is a 22-year-old vintage law and has served its purpose. What are the boundary conditions that we want to think about when we do this? I have put down four principles — openness, safety, trust and accountability — as key to creating a world-class law that we deserve and need.

User harm is a reciprocal concept of safety and is different for different people. For example, online gaming can be a very hostile environment for women. Then there are crimes or user harm unique to cyberspace, where children are getting bullied and gaslighted. Should they be made part of the Act or not? That's a conversation worth having.

**Soumyarendra Barik: Recently, Twitter filed a case against some of**



Rajeev Chandrasekhar in conversation with Liz Mathew, Deputy Political Editor, *The Indian Express*, at the Idea Exchange. *Gajendra Yadav*

**your blocking orders. One of the biggest criticisms of Section 69 A is that the nature of those orders is kept confidential. Doesn't it contradict the openness you are talking about?**

For every fundamental right, there are restrictions when it comes to issues of national security and law and order. Besides, the opportunity for a judicial review of every government order always exists for a platform that is impacted. If you have a problem with anything that the government does under Section 69 A, you can go to court, which is what one platform has done. When the IT rules came out, and we said the originator is an important part of what we expect from platforms' accountability, they went to court. A judicial review of everything the government does is a fundamental right available even to a San Francisco-based platform. But to start equating openness to that is a flawed argument. Openness is what the government has to deliver to the consumer, which is that no platform or no pipeline to the platform will gatekeep the Internet vis-a-vis the consumer. There should be no power that distorts the open nature of the Internet, forces someone in a particular direction, encourages him to go to one island on the Internet and dissuades him from going to others.

Our Constitution guarantees Articles 14, 19 and 21 as fundamental rights. If a platform sitting somewhere says I can de-platform you, mute you, and violate Article 14 simply because its rules are authored in San Francisco, I would very respectfully tell them, it's not going to happen.

**Liz Mathew: In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, big tech firms have played to the tune of a particular government and blocked the Internet. How has this influenced your discussions on the IT law?**

The Internet today represents a far more economically valuable aspect of our lives than it was 10 years ago. Therefore, we have every reason to be very invested in the fact that rules and laws must allow an orderly growth of the Internet so that no country can undermine our digital economy in the way Russia's digital economy or the Internet has been undermined. The weaponisation of the Internet and social media platforms are all legitimate issues for us to be aware of. But we don't need to be paranoid. Around 1.2 billion Indians are going to be using the Internet in the next two years through 5G and BharatNet. Unlike China, we don't firewall our internet, our internet is plugged in.

**Ritu Sarin: How concerned are you as a minister about the frequent internet shutdowns because of the law and order situation? India would**

**be on top of the charts in that respect.**

This characterisation that India is at the top of the charts is a bit of a misnomer. If you see shutdowns as a percentage of the total internet connections in India, we are still a minuscule number. More than 800 million Indians today are connected online. Nobody talks about China because they don't report anything there. Studies have shown that the virality, velocity and reach of disinformation is 10 times more than that of regular information. The first 30 years of the internet story was about it being this good place. But the Internet today genuinely represents a lot of harm and criminality. Don't view internet shutdowns as some binary between free speech and non-free speech. Even in free speech, there are restrictions in Article 19 (2). If the Internet has been shut down to prevent the larger problem of law and order and incitement, it is a very legitimate tool that the governments of the day will use.

**Shyam Lal Yadav: The government claims that the nearly five lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) were started for essential services but at present some of these are being promoted to sell some models of cars.**

CSCs were an internet extender to enable people to access digital public services in areas where there was no internet coverage. Today, almost every state government has its own network and skilling five crore Indians through PMGDisha has meant that even a woman in a rural household knows how to access the internet. So, the traditional role of the CSC has come down significantly and it is a private company, owned by banks and multiple other companies.

**Shyam Lal Yadav: In the exposé on Uber, we found it had signed an MoU with a CSC and another with the National Skill Development Corporation**



**(NSDC). Both are your departments. Did you ask your officers about it?**

A lot of these tech companies escaped regulation all over the world by constantly masquerading or pushing the innovation image. Inherently, all across the world, the relationship between government and big tech has been one of trust. It is only now that we've woken up to the fact that tech can also mean harm. We are a much smarter country now. For every private sector company like Uber that has not delivered on scaling promises they've made, there are many who have done great things. Recently, Toyota and NSDC signed an agreement where 35,000 rural and tribal youth would be skilled and employed by Toyota in its service stations and dealership network.

**Ritu Sarin: On the Uber files, you hinted that you may want to look at more regulations or amendments. Could you elaborate? Second, the kill switch has been used 13 times in this current investigation in several parts of the world. Are Uber or other firms using this technology in India?**

I didn't know that somebody would go to this level of having a kill switch that basically flips out a part of your operation. That is, in my opinion, an innovation of the wrong kind. This is not going to be possible at all, going forward. That's why an accountability framework is important. The government is never going to scrutinise the apps. We will be relying on consumers to basically point out if an app is doing things right or wrong. Then they will be prosecuted and penalised under the new law.

**Pranav Mukul: A lot of problems in this new internet economy have to do with foreign companies and money. The internet is also taking centre-stage in trade negotiations and cross-border data flow. Are there discussions between countries on this?**

There will never be a situation where all laws are in place because the very nature of tech is that you don't know what will happen tomorrow. A legislation enacted today will be found wanting tomorrow

These are now global issues. Next year, we are taking over the G-20 and will talk about how data localisation, as a response to the weaponisation of the internet, squares up against cross-border data flows.

**Anil Sasi: Is there a solution to decoding who the originator is without breaking encryption?**

Yes, of course. Our response to the WhatsApp petition is in the public domain. We don't buy the argument that the originator automatically implies encryption. There are many ways of tagging packets that do not snoop on or deep dive into the packet itself. You can tag an original packet. They argue that they will have to re-engineer our system. If an intermediary decides to have anonymity and wants Section 79 protection against prosecution for illegalities, and when an illegality is committed, say you cannot identify who started the illegality, then the substance of that argument is that no laws apply in cyberspace. This isn't a sustainable proposition, be it in India or anywhere.

**Anil Sasi: There has been slow action on the Data Protection Act and we are still vague about cryptocurrencies. Don't you think investment decisions are impacted because of these delays?**

There will never be a situation where all laws are in place because the very nature of tech is that you don't know what will happen tomorrow. Therefore, any legislation that you enact today will be found wanting tomorrow. Our approach to everything in the tech space is that we want to do this right even if it takes a few extra months so that the framework holds good for multiple years.

There is no grey area at all on cryptocurrency. Under FEMA, nobody can own cryptos unless they take RBI's permission and buy the dollars through the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). You cannot access the rupee gateway to crypto because that is a violation. And because there is no Indian crypto, the government has said the RBI will launch the digital rupee. This will be the only recognised digital currency in India that is exchangeable into rupees.

On data protection, our position is very clear. The current bill was designed in 2018 and post that, we've had start-ups led by young people. One of the articles of faith for us in the government is that we do not want any legislation, proposed or existing, to come in the way of this momentum of the start-up and innovation ecosystem. We are looking at the Bill that has been characterised as being compliance-heavy. We don't want it to create a hurdle for start-ups.

**Shobhana Subramanian: Why are we so worried about start-ups? This is a**

**much larger issue concerning an individual's dignity and personal life.**

I just want to clarify that in the new law nothing changes on privacy, which is a fundamental right. If your privacy is violated today, as a citizen, you have recourse in the court of law. The Bill just defines the dos and don'ts for companies that collect data from individuals. The lack of this Bill or its delay do not change your fundamental right. I disagree with you that the start-up system should be left on its own. The digital economy is a legitimate goal. And I don't see this as a binary at all.

**P Vaidyanathan Iyer: Many social media websites put out information though they are not news sites. Does the government look at them as news generators or content aggregators?**

Legally, there is a broad definition of an intermediary. It is the layer between the consumer or the enterprise and the internet. So, anybody who's a gatekeeper of the internet is an intermediary. With the contemporary architecture of the Internet, there are different types of intermediaries. There are telecom TSPs and ISPs, and there are pipes to the net. Then there are e-commerce-type platforms, social media platforms and content aggregator platforms. And now, there is a new category called fact-checking platforms. All these are different in terms of their functionality. One of the suggestions is that we have a broader classification of intermediaries and have different rules and regulations for them.

**Liz Mathew: Now that the BJP is focussing on the southern states, do we see more of the activities of your ministry there?**

Our plan is not linked to politics. For example, we have moved the digital opportunities from the four or five big cities to 25 smaller cities. Digital India Genesis focusses on the next wave of start-ups in Tier II and III cities. And these will be pan-India.

**Soumyarendra Barik: Do you think having broad blanket exemptions for the government could also end up posing a threat to people's privacy?**

The government will always have exemptions because a fundamental right is not an absolute right. Besides, contexts are dynamic. So far, exemptions were only for national security, law and order and incitement but now you have the pandemic and health emergencies. There are purists of privacy, who say that the same exacting standards applied to the private sector, whose entire motivation for data collection is monetisation, should apply to the government, whose data collection is aimed at better governance and delivery of services. These are two very different objectives.



# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, JULY 25, 2022

# E. EXPLAINED



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## Why monkeypox is spreading, but not as fast as Covid-19

ANONNA DUTT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE DETECTION of monkeypox on Sunday in a 34-year-old Delhi resident, who had no history of international travel, marks India's first case of local human-to-human transmission. This comes a day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), its highest level of alarm.

### What does declaration as a PHEIC mean?

A PHEIC is declared for "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response".

The declaration for monkeypox came amid growing cases worldwide, with the viral infection spreading to regions where monkeypox had never been detected before. There have been 14,533 probable and laboratory-confirmed monkeypox cases reported from 72 countries this year until July 20, according to the WHO, increasing from 3,040 cases across 47 countries recorded in the beginning of May. Deaths have been low at five — three from

Nigeria and two from the Central African Republic, countries where the disease was already known to occur before this outbreak.

### Where has monkeypox occurred before?

Monkeypox is not a new disease like Covid-19, which emerged in 2019. The first monkeypox infection in a was identified human in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo in a nine-month-old boy. Most infections initially were caused by interaction of humans and animals in rural, rainforest regions of the Congo basin. Before the 2022 outbreak, rising cases was being reported from Central and West Africa. The first outbreak outside Africa happened in 2003, when the United States saw over 70 cases.

### What do we know about the disease?

Monkeypox is a self-limiting viral infection, with symptoms lasting 2–4 weeks. The case fatality ratio ranges between 0 and 11%.

The most common symptoms include fever, headache, muscle ache, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes, along with rashes that last for 2–3 weeks. Although mostly mild, it can lead to complications and deaths in children and those with a weak immune system. Complications include pneumonia, secondary skin infections, sepsis, encephalitis, and



International passengers being screened at Chennai airport after the first case was detected in neighbouring Kerala last week.  
PTI

infection in the cornea leading to blindness.

### Can vaccines work against it?

The monkeypox virus belongs to the same family of orthopoxviruses as smallpox, now eradicated. Orthopoxviruses are cross-reactive, meaning that existing smallpox vaccines and therapeutics can be used for monkeypox.

Although most monkeypox cases are treated symptomatically, an antiviral agent known as tecovirimat developed for smallpox may be used. The US, which has recorded over 2,800 cases, is using two vaccines meant for smallpox. Jynneos with two doses is allowed for use in adults, while ACAM2000 uses a live,

attenuated form of a different orthopoxvirus and is meant for protection of high-risk individuals for smallpox such as lab workers.

"Vaccination against smallpox was demonstrated through several observational studies to be about 85% effective in preventing monkeypox. Thus, prior smallpox vaccination may result in milder illness," according to the WHO.

The mass vaccination campaign against smallpox had ceased in 1980. "Most of those who are in their 40s must have received the smallpox vaccine at birth and might be at a lower risk of getting infection. Most cases occurring in people below that age group supports the hypothesis," said Dr Ekta Gupta, pro-

fessor of virology at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Diseases.

All four cases reported in India are in people in their early to mid-30s.

### Why is there a surge now?

From animals to humans, the infection is known to get transmitted through direct contact with blood, bodily fluid, or lesions in the infected animals. Human-to-human transmission can happen either through large respiratory secretion or contact with lesions of the infected person or contaminated objects.

However, unlike with say influenza or Covid-19, transmission of monkeypox through respiratory droplets needs prolonged face-to-face contact. That usually happens only in the case of families and healthcare workers.

"It is not as transmissible as Covid-19, so it is unlikely to lead to an outbreak like that as well. However, the recent spread could be linked to declining herd immunity from smallpox vaccination. It was always expected that the vaccine immunity will go down, but we did not anticipate that the animal strain would take over," said Dr Gupta.

She stressed a need to investigate whether the Covid pandemic might have impacted the immune system in a way that may have made

people more susceptible to other infections.

Over the years, the transmission chain — the number of successive person-to-person infections — has increased from six to nine. Dr Rosamund Lewis, the WHO's lead expert on monkeypox, has called for research to see whether there was a change in the virus, or whether this was happening because of the declining number of people immunised against smallpox.

### Is monkeypox sexually transmitted?

Although the WHO says it is unclear if the infection is transmitted sexually, it is under investigation with almost all cases in the current outbreak being reported in gay or bisexual men. A recent analysis of 528 persons from London, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, shows 98% of those infected were gay or bisexual men and suggests transmission in 95% cases happened through sexual activity. In 29 of 32 persons whose semen was analysed, monkeypox DNA was found.

"It is unclear whether it is sexually transmitted, but the infection might be transmitted more while having sex due to increased skin contact and many people with the infection reporting lesions in the genital regions," said Dr Gupta.

## THIS WORD MEANS

### MARBURG VIRUS DISEASE

Disease similar to Ebola fever; an outbreak announced in Ghana. What are the symptoms, and treatment?

AT A time when the global public is weary from battling the coronavirus pandemic, and has been recently alarmed by the spread of monkeypox, there's an outbreak of yet another lethal viral disease. Ghana has announced the country's first outbreak of Marburg virus disease after two people died on June 27 and 28.

**THE DISEASE:** The disease is similar to Ebola in its spread, symptoms and progression, although it is caused by a different virus, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Fruit bats are considered to be the hosts of the Marburg virus, although researchers say it does not cause them illness. Even though it has not spread widely, Marburg has been deadly, with case fatality rates ranging from 24-88%, depending on which strain people contract and the management of cases, according to the WHO. Ebola case fatality rates are nearly the same.

The Marburg virus can spread through direct contact with blood, secretions or other bodily fluids from infected people, according to the WHO. It can also spread through contact with contaminated surfaces and materials like bedding or clothing.

**SYMPTOMS:** Marburg can cause severe viral haemorrhagic fever, which interferes with the blood's ability to clot. The incubation period ranges from two to 21 days, and symptoms begin abruptly with high fever, severe headache and severe malaise, according to the WHO. Other symptoms can include muscle aches, diarrhoea, nausea, lethargy and bleeding through vomit, faeces and from other body parts.

Marburg is not contagious during the incubation period, according to the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control. Severely ill patients often die eight or nine days after the onset of symptoms, according to the WHO.

"Mortality is very high. And there's no asymptomatic Marburg," said Dr John Amuasi, who leads the global health and infectious disease research group at the Kumasi Center for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine in Kumasi, Ghana.

**TREATMENT & DETECTION:** There are



The Malburg virus. United States CDC

no vaccines or antiviral treatments for the disease, medical experts said, but hydrating patients and treating their specific symptoms can improve their chances of survival. Marburg can be detected through antibody, antigen and polymerase chain reaction tests, health organisations said.

**OUTBREAKS:** Marburg was first detected in 1967, when outbreaks of haemorrhagic fever occurred simultaneously in laboratories in Marburg and Frankfurt in Germany, and in Belgrade (now in Serbia) — in cases that were linked to African green monkeys imported from Uganda. Other cases have since been found in Angola, Congo, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, according to the World Health Organization, and now in Ghana.

The two cases in Ghana are the only ones reported this year. The two patients, aged 24 and 56, who both died, were men working on arms. They were not related, and they were in different parts of the Ashanti region of Ghana, Dr Amuasi said.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

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HARISH DAMODARAN  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

FROM A peak of \$642.45 billion on September 3, India's foreign exchange reserves have dipped to \$572.71 billion as of July 15. That's a fall of almost \$70 billion in just over 10 months.

How have the reserves depleted so much so fast? To answer this, one must first understand how they got accumulated in the first place. A country typically accumulates forex reserves when its earnings from export of goods and services exceed payments against imports. The current account surpluses result in a build-up of reserves, as the central bank mops up all the excess foreign currency flowing into the country.

The most obvious parallel one can draw is with households or firms, whose excess of incomes over expenditures or retained profits get added to their savings or reserves. Just as these savings/reserves are available for use by other households, firms and the government, the current account surpluses of a country may be invested in other countries. In the process, it becomes a net exporter of 'capital', in addition to goods and services.

### The outlier

Table 1 shows the top 12 countries holding the highest foreign exchange reserves at the end of 2021. Nearly all of them run large and persistent current account surpluses. Take China, whose \$2.1 trillion cumulative surpluses over a 11-year period have helped build a \$3.4 trillion official reserve chest. Or Germany, whose current account surpluses totaling about \$3.1 trillion over 2011-21 have been mostly exported as capital rather than getting accumulated as reserve.

India is an outlier (along with the US and Brazil) among the countries that have accumulated sizeable forex reserves. Only in one out of the 11 years — 2020 — has it run a surplus on the current account of its balance of payments. Its \$638.5 billion reserves in 2021 were despite current account deficits aggregating over \$400 billion during the 11 years. The reserves have been built through import of capital; in other words, from others' and not its own current account surpluses.

The capital flows attracted by India have not only financed its excess of imports over exports, but also contributed to an accretion to the official reserves. The US and Brazil have had similar stories, albeit with current account deficits larger than India's and even relative to

TABLE 1

### FOREX RESERVES VS CURRENT A/C BALANCES (\$bn)

	FOREX RESERVES*	CURRENT A/C BALANCE**
China	3427.93	2101.96
Japan	1405.75	1452.55
Switzerland	1109.82	587.81
US	716.15	-5099.10
India	638.48	-400.44
Russia	632.24	723.21
HK	496.87	164.97
S Arabia	473.89	594.12
S Korea	463.28	805.34
Singapore	425.10	633.63
Brazil	362.21	-612.80
Germany	295.74	3079.49

\*2021; \*\*Cumulative from 2011 to 2021.

Source: World Bank.

their reserves. Moreover, forex reserves and current account balances hardly matter to the US, when it is the owner of the reserve currency used in most international transactions.

### Sources of accretion

Between March 31, 1990 and March 31, 2022, India's forex reserves rose from \$3.96 billion to \$607.31 billion. Table 2 gives the sources of this rise over four eight-year periods. More than 50% of the \$603.35 billion accretion has happened in the last eight years coinciding with the Narendra Modi government's tenure.

In none of the four periods, however, has reserve accumulation been an outcome of export of goods surpassing imports. On the contrary, the combined merchandise trade deficit during the eight years from 2014-15 to 2021-22 was close to \$1.2 trillion. This deficit was partly offset by a net surplus of \$968 billion on the "invisibles" account of the balance of payments. Invisibles mainly comprise receipts from export of software services, remittances by overseas Indians, and tourism. In India's case, these receipts have always exceeded payments on account of interest on loans, dividends, royalties, licence fees, foreign travel and assorted business and financial services.

The invisible surpluses have by and large contained the country's current account deficits to manageable levels, with some periods (1998-99 to 2005-06) and individual years

TABLE 2

### SOURCES OF INCREASE IN INDIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES (IN BILLION US DOLLARS)

	1990-91 TO 1997-98	1998-99 TO 2005-06	2006-07 TO 2013-14	2014-15 TO 2021-22
1 Trade Balance (1a - 1b)	-72.469	-165.135	-1051.316	-1176.895
(a) Exports	207.273	472.412	1857.615	2555.150
(b) Imports	279.742	637.547	2908.931	3732.045
2 Net invisibles	37.527	165.189	713.252	967.989
3 Current Account Balance (1 + 2)	-34.942	0.054	-338.064	-208.907
4 Capital Flows*	57.887	117.133	479.750	544.290
5 Overall Balance (3+4)	22.945	117.187	141.686	335.383
6 Valuation Effect	2.460	5.068	10.915	-32.297
7 Rise in Reserves (5+6)	25.405	122.255	152.601	303.086

\*Including from International Monetary Fund.

Source: Reserve Bank of India.

(2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2020-21) even registering surpluses. Manageable current account deficits in combination with capital inflows — averaging \$25.2 billion and \$68.4 billion respectively in the last 10 years — have led to India's forex reserves going up in all but five out of the 32 years from 1990-91 to 2021-22. These five years were 1995-96, 2008-09, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2018-19.

Besides current account deficits and capital flows, there is another source of reserve accretion or depletion: valuation effect. Foreign exchange reserves are held in the form of dollars as well as non-dollar currencies and gold, whose value is, in turn, influenced by movements in exchange rates and gold prices. A depreciation of the US dollar or higher gold prices, then, causes valuation gains in the existing stock of reserves. A strong dollar or fall in gold prices, likewise, brings down the value of the non-dollar portion of the reserves.

### Where reserves are headed

India's merchandise trade deficit amounted to \$70.8 billion in April-June 2022. This could cross \$250 billion for the whole fiscal. Net invisible receipts touched an all-time high of \$150.7 billion in 2021-22, as against \$126.1 billion and \$132.9 billion in the preceding two years. Given the impending recession in the US and Europe, which might have a bearing on software exports, net invisibles are likely

to be closer to \$140 billion this fiscal.

Either way, the current account deficit would be upwards of \$100-110 billion, breaking the previous records of \$88.2 billion in 2012-13 and \$78.2 billion in 2011-12. That being the case, the extent of reserve drawdown would be a function of capital flows.

In 2021-22, net capital inflows were at \$87.5 billion during April-December. But the last quarter (January-March) saw net outflows of \$1.7 billion. Given rising global interest rates and bond yields on the back of monetary policy tightening by the US Fed and other major central banks, the prospects for capital inflows — whether from foreign portfolio investors, private equity firms or start-up funds — don't seem that bright in the current fiscal too.

Out of the \$69.7 billion decline in India's forex reserves from its early September 2021 peak, \$34.6 billion has taken place in this fiscal alone. With the Reserve Bank of India showing willingness to use the reserves to defend the rupee — ensuring "orderly evolution" of the exchange rate with "zero tolerance for volatile and bumpy movements", to quote RBI governor Shaktikanta Das — a further drawdown to below \$550 billion levels cannot be ruled out.

The forex reserves were, after all, accumulated as a buffer against currency volatility, external shocks and sudden stops in capital flows. As Das recently put it, "you buy an umbrella to use it when it rains".

## Inside the minds of bees, and what we can learn from their intelligence

AAKASH JOSHI  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

HOW INTELLIGENT are various life forms compared to humans? Studies over the years have revealed a surprising depth of intelligence in several life forms and have questioned the unipolar definitions of intelligence, with *Homo sapiens* placed at the top. Elephants, it was found, can remember and revere their deceased, rats were trained to detect explosives in war zones, and dolphins are capable of mimicking human names.

In a recent addition to research on animal intelligence and consciousness, Lars Chittka, a professor of sensory and behavioural ecology at Queen Mary University of London, finds in his latest book — *The Mind of the Bee* — that bees possess not only a remarkable level of cognitive intelligence, but also a high-de-

gree sentence or "consciousness", which make them thinking and feeling beings.

### What is animal intelligence and consciousness?

Consciousness has been understood as a concept different from ordinary brain-intelligence (which commonly is known to include the cognitive ability of thinking and reasoning). It includes the ability to be "sentient" and experience feelings and emotions. The ambit and nuance of "consciousness", especially human consciousness, has been the subject matter of debate in philosophy and neuroscience. It is thought to encapsulate a sophisticated level of self-awareness and imagination — feelings and emotions that allow us to perceive ourselves, while simultaneously interacting with the world around us.

The nature of animal consciousness is far more difficult to assess as humans are funda-

mentally unable to understand the minds of animals and live the world through their eyes. However, through decades of research — such as by zoologist Donald Griffin (*The Question of Animal Awareness*, 1976) — it is now accepted that animals too possess some form of consciousness. In 2012, a group of neuroscientists signed the 'Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness', which affirmed evidence of consciousness within the animal kingdom and the ability of several species to "feel" and acutely perceive their sensations.

### What did we previously know about the cognitive abilities of bees?

Among the earliest explorations into the intelligence of bees was that by the Austrian behavioural biologist Karl von Frisch, Nobel winner for medicine in 1973, who found worker honey bees use a kind of "waggle dance" for communicating with each other.



Getty Images

Subsequent research has confirmed that bees are extremely intelligent. In 2014, Hamida B Mirwan and Peter G Kevan showed that bees could learn to solve complex puzzles to access their reward — sugar. Research in 2017 by a group from Queen Mary University, London (of which Chittka was a part) concluded that bees could learn to solve a task through a rewards system and could also teach other bees to perform the same task, but while incorporating important improve-

ments in the task. Bees have also been found to be able to form democracies where a subset can communicate their decisions to a group of over 10,000. These findings debunked the idea that creatures with smaller brains were less intelligent. They showed bees were capable of social learning and collective wisdom, just as humans can transfer knowledge and learn from each other.

### What does the new book find?

Expanding on his previous work, Chittka goes beyond basic intelligence to explore consciousness and sentience in bees. He concludes that bees have a mind of their own, and have distinct personalities. They are even able to distinctly identify the faces of humans.

One experiment showed bees likely felt emotions like fear and anxiety and consequently changed their demeanour, when exposed to past locations of trauma and danger

— such as a flower on which they were once attacked by a spider. Chittka is convinced that sophistication in cognition in bees goes hand in hand with their ability to be sentient and experience "emotional-states".

### What does this mean for our interaction with bees?

Chittka argues that while protecting bees has great ecological and commercial significance, there are other ethical reasons why humanity must ensure their survival. Their sentience and ability to deeply "feel" ought to create an empathetic and moral obligation for humans. Human empathy and the social norm against causing harm are premised on our ethical obligation to not do to others, what we may consider painful when done to us. *The Mind of a Bee* makes a strong case to add sentient bees to the list of beneficiaries of human kindness and compassion.



## TOP OF THE WORLD



Rocket carrying the lab module lifts off. AP

## CHINA

## China launches lab module for its space station

CHINA ON Sunday launched one of two laboratory modules to complete its permanent orbiting space station. The Wentian was launched from tropical Hainan Island with a large crowd of amateur photographers and space enthusiasts watching. Designed for science and biology experiments, the module lifted off on the Long March 5B remote 3 rocket, and spent roughly eight minutes in flight before it entered orbit, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. A second lab module, called the Mengtian, is due to be launched in October, and both will join the Tiangong space station. Three astronauts are already living in the core module and will oversee the arrival and docking of the lab. AP

## WEST ASIA

## Israeli forces kill 2 in West Bank gun battle

ISRAELI TROOPS and special forces on an arrest mission exchanged fire with Palestinians barricaded in a house in the occupied West Bank on Sunday, Israeli police said. The local rescue service said two Palestinians were killed. Israeli police said a number of armed Palestinians were killed during the hours-long battle deep inside the city of Nablus, without specifying. Police said no Israeli forces were wounded. The Palestinian Red Crescent said the two men were killed in clashes with the military in Nablus. AP

## USA

## Parents, 6-yr-old shot dead in tent at Iowa park

A 9-YEAR-OLD boy who was camping at an Iowa state park with his parents and 6-year-old sister survived a shooting that killed the rest of his family. The Iowa Department of Public Safety identified the victims as Tyler Schmidt, 42; his wife, Sarah Schmidt, 42; and daughter, Lula Schmidt, 6, all of Cedar Falls, Iowa. Their bodies were found in their tent on Friday at the Maquoketa Caves State Park Campground. Authorities said the suspected gunman, a 23-year-old, was also found dead in the park. His motive remained unclear. AP

## AFTER AGREEMENT TO REOPEN BLACK SEA PORTS

## Ukraine works to resume grain exports despite Russian missile strike on Odesa

Port's grain storage area not hit, no major damage from strike: Ukrainian military

## NATALIA ZINETS

KYIV, JULY 24

UKRAINE PRESSED ahead on Sunday with efforts to restart grain exports from its Black Sea ports under a deal aimed at easing global food shortages but warned deliveries would suffer if Russia's strike on Odesa was a sign of more to come.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy denounced Saturday's attack as "barbarism" that showed Moscow could not be trusted to implement a deal struck just one day earlier with Turkish and United Nations mediation.

Public broadcaster Suspilne quoted the Ukrainian military as saying after the strike that the missiles did not hit the port's grain storage area or cause significant damage and Kyiv said preparations to resume grain shipments were ongoing.

"We continue technical preparations for the launch of exports of agricultural products from our ports," Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in a Facebook post on Saturday.



An armoured convoy of Russian troops in the Russian-held part of Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine, on Saturday. Reuters

Russia said on Sunday its forces had hit a Ukrainian warship and a weapons store in Odesa with missiles.

The deal signed by Moscow and Kyiv on Friday was hailed as a diplomatic breakthrough that would help curb soaring global food prices, with UN officials saying it could restore Ukrainian grain shipments to pre-war levels of 5 million tonnes a month.

But Zelenskyy's economic advisor warned on Sunday the strike on Odesa signalled that could be out of reach.

"Yesterday's strike indicates that it will definitely not work like that," Oleh Ustenko told Ukrainian television.

He said Ukraine did have the capacity to export 60 million tonnes of grain over the next nine months, but it would take

up to 24 months if its ports could not function properly.

As the war entered its sixth month on Sunday there was no sign of a let-up in the fighting.

The Ukrainian military reported Russian shelling in the north, south and east, and again referred to Russian operations paving the way for an assault on Bakhmut in the eastern Donbas region. REUTERS

## MEANWHILE

## JAPAN'S SAKURAJIMA VOLCANO ERUPTS

A volcano on Japan's main southern island of Kyushu erupted Sunday night, spewing ash and rocks. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries in nearby towns but residents were advised to evacuate. Japan's Meteorological Agency said Sakurajima volcano erupted at around 8.05 pm, blowing off large rocks as far as 2.5 km away in the prefecture of Kagoshima.



## Milley on Indo-Pacific trip: Chinese military now more aggressive, dangerous to US, allies

## LOLITA C BALDOR

JAKARTA, JULY 24

THE CHINESE military has become significantly more aggressive and dangerous over the past five years, the top US military officer said during a trip to the Indo-Pacific that included a stop Sunday in Indonesia.

General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the number of intercepts by Chinese aircraft and ships in the Pacific region with US and other partner forces has increased significantly over that time, and the number of unsafe interactions has risen by similar proportions.

"The message is the Chinese military, in the air and at sea, have become significantly more and noticeably more aggressive in this particular region," said Milley, who recently asked his staff to compile details about interactions between China and the US and others in the region.

His comments came as the US redoubles its efforts to strengthen its relationships with Pacific nations as a counterbalance to China, which is trying to expand its presence and influence in the region. The Biden administration



General Mark Milley, chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Jakarta on Sunday. AP

considers China its "pacing threat" and America's primary long-term security challenge.

Milley's trip to the region is sharply focused on the China threat. He will attend a meeting of Indo-Pacific chiefs of defence this week in Sydney, Australia, where key topics will be China's escalating military growth and the need to maintain a free, open and peaceful Pacific.

US military officials have also raised alarms about the possibility that China could invade Taiwan, the democratic, self-ruled island that Beijing views as a breakaway province. China has stepped up its military provocations against Taiwan as it looks to intimidate it into unifying with the communist mainland. AP

## WEST HAD CONDEMNED CRACKDOWN ON SRI LANKAN PROTESTERS

## Will uphold right to protest, Ranil assures diplomats amid criticism

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, JULY 24

SRI LANKA'S newly-elected President Ranil Wickremesinghe has reaffirmed his commitment to uphold the rights of peaceful and non-violent assembly, saying the protest site was left untouched in Friday midnight operation to remove protesters from the Presidential Secretariat, his office said on Sunday.

Sri Lanka's security forces forcibly evicted anti-government protesters camped outside the presidential office in Colombo in a pre-dawn raid on Friday on the order of Wickremesinghe.

Protesters were camping outside the presidential office for months, demanding the resignation of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country on July 13, and Wickremesinghe,



Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe

a key Rajapaksa ally.

During a meeting with diplomatic personnel in Colombo on Friday, Wickremesinghe said the Government will uphold both Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 14 (1) (b) of the Constitution of Sri Lanka, which governs the right to peaceful assembly, said a statement issued by the President's office.

The statement came as US

Ambassador Julie Chung had taken the Lankan government to task for the attack on the unarmed protesters. Other nations also condemned the crackdown.

"The President further explained that the instructions given by the American Civil Liberties Union stated that protesters were not permitted to block government buildings and interfere with other purposes the property was designed for," the statement said. "Addressing concerns regarding the GotaGoGama protest site, it was explained that it had not been removed by security forces, contrary to erroneous social media reports," it added.

Furthermore, the participants were also briefed by the Attorney General on the legal avenues being pursued, including producing all those arrested by the police before the Colombo Magistrate Court, it said.

## Pope heads to Canada as Indigenous groups seek full apology for abuses

## NICOLE WINFIELD

VATICAN CITY, JULY 24

POPE FRANCIS began a fraught visit to Canada on Sunday to apologise to Indigenous peoples for abuses by missionaries at residential schools, a key step in the Catholic Church's efforts to reconcile with Native communities and help them heal from generations of trauma.

Francis was flying to Edmonton, Alberta, where he was to be greeted on the tarmac by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mary May Simon, an Inuk who is Canada's



Pope Francis arrives at an airport in Rome ahead of his flight to Canada, on Sunday. AP

first Indigenous governor general.

Aboard the papal plane, Francis told reporters this was a "penitential voyage" and he urged prayers in particular for elderly people and grandparents.



At the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon city, Philippines, Sunday. AP

## 3 dead in graduation shooting at prestigious Philippines university

## REUTERS

MANILA, JULY 24

THREE PEOPLE died in a shooting at a university graduation ceremony in the Philippines' capital region on Sunday, including a former mayor from the volatile south of the country, police said.

Local Quezon City police chief Remus Medina said the shooting appeared to have been an assassination of the former mayor of the southern Lamitan city, Rose Furigay.

The suspect, who had no relatives at the graduation, was also a native of Lamitan city in Basilan province, a stronghold of Abu Sayyaf, a pro-Islamist State extremist group known for its banditry and kidnapping.

The two others killed were a campus security officer and an unidentified male, the police said.

Ateneo cancelled the graduation ceremony after the shooting.

In the Southeast Asian nation, shooting incidents are sporadic, with owners required to have permits to carry guns in public. Private security officers in the Philippines carry either handguns or shotguns, and firearms are a common sight in shopping malls, offices, banks, restaurants and even schools.

## RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT ADULTS AROUND THE WORLD SPEAK AND SING TO BABIES IN SIMILAR WAYS

## ‘Parentese’ is truly a lingua franca, global cross-cultural study finds

## OLIVER WHANG

JULY 24

WE'VE ALL seen it, we've all cringed at it, we've all done it ourselves: talked to a baby like it was, you know, a baby.

"Ooo, helloooooo baby!" you say, your voice lilting like a rapturously accommodating Walmart employee. Baby is utterly baffled by your unintelligible warble and your shamelessly doofus grin, but "baby so cuuuuuute!"

Regardless of whether it helps to know it, researchers recently determined that this sing-songy baby talk — more technically known as "parentese" — seems to

be nearly universal to humans around the world. In the most wide-ranging study of its kind, more than 40 scientists helped to gather and analyse 1,615 voice recordings from 410 parents on six continents, in 18 languages from diverse communities: rural and urban, isolated and cosmopolitan, internet savvy and off the grid, from hunter gatherers in Tanzania to urban dwellers in Beijing.

The results, published recently in the journal *Nature Human Behavior*, showed that in every one of these cultures, the way parents spoke and sang to their infants differed from the way they communicated with adults — and that those differ-

ences were profoundly similar from group to group.

"We tend to speak in this higher pitch, high variability, like, 'Ohh, heellooo, you're a baay-bee!'" said Courtney Hilton, a psychologist at Haskins Laboratories at Yale University and a principal author of the study. Cody Moser, a graduate student studying cognitive science at the University of California, Merced, and the other principal author, added: "When people tend to produce lullabies or tend to talk to their infants, they tend to do so in the same way."

The findings suggest that baby talk and baby song serve a function independent of cultural and social forces. They lend a



For the study, 40 scientists helped to gather and analyse 1,615 voice recordings from 410 parents on six continents, in 18 languages from diverse communities. Reuters file

jumping off point for future baby research and, to some degree, tackle the lack of diverse repre-

sentation in psychology. To make cross-cultural claims about human behaviour requires studies

from many different societies. Now, there is a big one.

Scientists have long argued that the sounds humans make with their babies serve a number of important developmental and evolutionary functions. As Samuel Mehr, a psychologist and director of The Music Lab at Haskins Laboratories who conceived the new study, noted, solitary human babies are "really bad at their job of staying alive". The strange things we do with our voices when staring at a newborn not only help us survive but teach language and communication.

For instance, parentese can help some infants remember words better, and it allows them

to piece together sounds with mouth shapes, which gives sense to the chaos around them. Also, lullabies can soothe a crying infant, and a higher pitched voice can hold their attention better.

In the new study, the sounds of parentese were found to differ in 11 ways from adult talk and song around the world. Some of these differences might seem obvious. For instance, baby talk is higher pitched than adult talk, and baby song is smoother than adult song. But to test whether people have an innate awareness of these differences, the researchers created a game — Who's Listening? — that was played online by more than 50,000 people speaking 199

languages from 187 countries. Participants were asked to determine whether a song or a passage of speech was being addressed to a baby or an adult.

The researchers found that listeners were able to tell with about 70 percent accuracy when the sounds were aimed at babies, even when they were totally unfamiliar with the language and culture of the person making them. "The style of the music was different, but the vibe of it, for lack of a scientific term, felt the same," said Caitlyn Placek, an anthropologist at Ball State University who helped to collect recordings from the Jenu Kuruba, a tribe in India. "The essence is there." NYT



# 13 ECONOMY

## NET HIRING STRONG, SAYS IT MAJOR

# Infosys net rises 3.1% in June qtr, raises revenue guidance for fiscal

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
MUMBAI, JULY 24

INFOSYS LTD, India's second largest IT services provider, has reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,360 crore for the first quarter ended June 2022, up 3.17 per cent year-on-year from Rs 5,195 crore recorded in the same period a year ago.

Sequentially, the profit declined 5.7 per cent in the said quarter as against a profit of Rs 5,686 crore in the March 2022 quarter.

The company's consolidated revenue stood at Rs 34,470 crore, up 23.6 per cent from Rs 27,896 crore achieved during the same quarter of the previous fiscal year. On a quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) basis, revenues were up 6.8 per cent from Rs 32,276 crore registered during the last quarter of FY22.

"Year-on-year growth was in double digits across all business



Infosys campus, Bengaluru. *File*

segments in constant currency terms. Digital accounted for 61 per cent of overall revenues, growing at 37.5 per cent in constant currency," Infosys said. Net hiring was strong at 21,171. Operating margin for the quarter was 20.1 per cent, with Free Cash Flow conversion at 95.2 per cent of net profit, it said.

"Our strong overall performance in Q1 amidst an uncertain

economic environment is a testament to our innate resilience as an organisation, our industry-leading digital capabilities and continued client-relevance. We continue to gain market share and see a significant pipeline driven by our Cobalt cloud capabilities and differentiated digital value proposition," said Salil Parekh, CEO and MD. Infosys shares closed 1.73

## EXPLAINED Sequential fall in profit

SEQUENTIALLY, THE profit declined 5.7 per cent in the said quarter as against a profit of Rs 5,686 crore in the March 2022 quarter. The consolidated revenue stood at Rs 34,470 crore, up 23.6 per cent from the year-ago quarter.

per cent down at Rs 1,506.30 on the BSE on Friday.

"We are investing in rapid talent expansion while ensuring rewarding careers for our employees, to better serve evolving market opportunities. This has resulted in a strong performance in Q1 and increase in FY 23 revenue guidance to 14 per cent-16 per cent," he said.

"We are fuelling the strong

growth momentum with strategic investments in talent through hiring and competitive compensation revisions. While this will impact margins in the immediate term, it is expected to reduce attrition levels and position us well for future growth. We continue to optimize various cost levers to drive efficiency in operations," said Nilanjan Roy, chief financial officer. "Continued high focus on cash led to strong FCF to net profit conversion at 95.2 per cent and improvement in ROE to 31.0 per cent," he said.

TCS, India's largest IT company, recently reported a 5 per cent increase in its net profit at Rs 9,478 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal as compared to Rs 9,008 crore from the same quarter last year. However, the profit was down 4.5 per cent sequentially from Rs 9,926 crore recorded in the previous quarter ended March 2022.

## Modernisation push: Govt pitches for revamp of telecom rules

**New Delhi:** The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has floated a consultation paper on the revamp of telecom rules mainly to keep pace with the change in technology like 5G, simplify laws and promote investments, according to an official document.

The new rules will not be applicable with retrospective effect to cause any adverse impact on the relevant entity, according to the consultation paper.

"A new law on telecommunication needs to aim at establishing an enabling future-ready framework for the development of telecommunication sector and deployment of new technologies. Such a law needs to consolidate the existing laws governing telecommunication sector, while keeping in view global best practices," the consultation paper dated July 23 said.

The government has proposed that the new framework should be drafted in a plain and simple language so that any citizen is able to understand the rules.

The proposed law is envisaged to provide adequate provisions to ensure regulatory certainty and promote investment.

"This would mean continuity of licenses and authorizations under the old regime. To minimize policy disruption, such a law needs to provide for continuation of rules, guidelines, administrative orders issued under the existing regime until superseded by new rules. **PTI**

## BRIEFLY

### Coastal shipping

**New Delhi:** o provide respite to wateryway transportation from high fuel prices, the Shipping Ministry has directed all major ports to exempt coastal shipping operations from port and vessel charges for the next six months with immediate effect, an official statement said on Sunday.

### Bio-mass plan

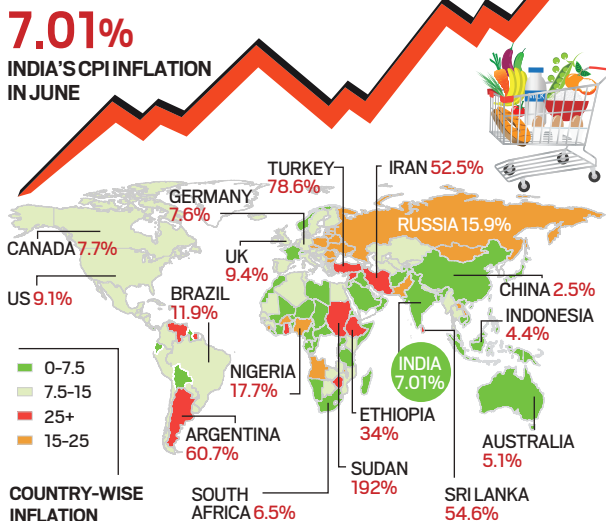
**New Delhi:** The Ministry of Power has asked states to formulate time-bound plans to ensure the utilisation of biomass for co-firing in thermal power plants ahead of the Kharif harvest season to reduce stubble burning and air pollution. **PTI**

### Yellen, economy

**Washington:** US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Sunday that US economic growth is slowing and acknowledged there was the risk of a recession, but she said a downturn was not inevitable. **REUTERS**

## 'Jan-Jun: About 90% EMs saw food inflation greater than 5%

Around 90 per cent of emerging market (EM) economies experienced food inflation greater than 5 per cent between January 2022 to June 2022, as per the latest Agri-Food Trends and Analytics Bulletin by ICRIR



**Food inflation** has been rising even faster, as per the Food and Agriculture Organization

**77%** of the countries, India, have food price inflation exceeding overall inflation

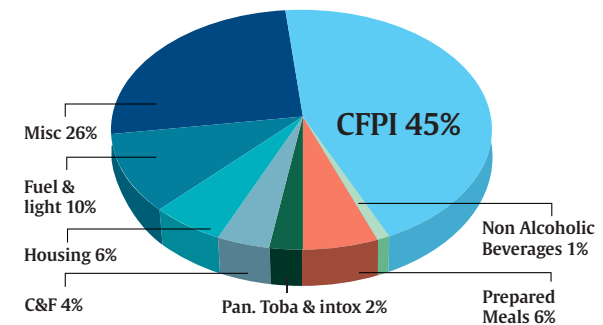
### Key factors:

- Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- Higher fuel prices driving up logistics and freight costs

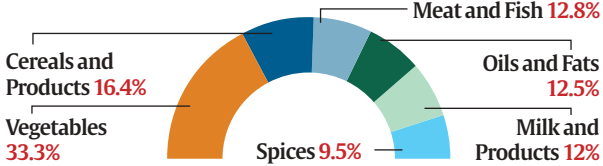
### Key suggestions:

- A combination of monetary, prudent fiscal policies and liberal trade policies to control inflation

## CONTRIBUTION TO CPI INFLATION JUNE 2022



## Sub groups contribution to CFPI inflation in June\*



*Note: C&F is Clothing & Footwear; CFPI is Consumer Food Price Index; Pan. Toba & intox is Pan. Tobacco & intoxicants; Misc is Miscellaneous; Calculations by Shyma Jose, Manish Kumar Prasad & Ashok Gulati using MoSPI data; \*remaining 3.5% includes 'Pulses and Products', 'Egg', 'Sugar and Confectionery' and 'Fruits'*

■ Dovetailing of trade policy with pricing structure and raising acreage under palm oil to help tackle soaring edible oil prices

■ Investments in agri-infrastructure and productivity enhancement through climate resilient technologies and innovative methods of cultivation

### Intended effect:

- These steps would help stabilise inflation, ensuring higher returns for farmers and affordable food for consumers

*Source: Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations; Compiled by ENS Economic Bureau*

# GST on essential items after states sought levy, aimed to check evasion: Revenue Secy

**New Delhi:** GST on pre-packaged goods/ food packets was levied after some states gave feedback of losing revenues they previously earned from levy of VAT on food items, a top government official said.

The decision to levy the tax, which came into effect from July 18, is not that of the Union government but of the GST Council. It was considered by the Fitment Committee that has officers of some states and the centre.

It was also recommended by a group of ministers (GOM) consisting of minister representatives of some states and finally by the GST council, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj told *PTI* here. In all, the GST Council, the new constitutional mechanism in the country for taking decisions on GST, took a consensus view on levy of the tax, he said. The panel, which is headed by the Union Finance Minister and comprises representatives of all states and union territories, takes decisions when everyone is on-board, he said. However, pulses, wheat, rye, oats, maize, rice, flour, suji, besan, puffed rice and curd/lassi when sold loose and not pre-packed or pre-labelled will not attract any GST.

The comments come against the backdrop of opposition parties led by the Congress stalling functioning of Parliament in the first week of the monsoon session over levying of GST on daily use items

**"So, people were misusing it. Secondly, states gave us feedback that they were losing revenues on it and not getting revenues they used to get in pre-GST regime"**

**TARUN BAJAJ**  
REVENUE SECRETARY

and other issues.

While states ruled by non-BJP parties were party to the decision taken on the levy of the tax at the Council's meeting in Chandigarh last month, vociferous protests against the levy came just as the monsoon session of Parliament was to start.

"Before GST came into place (on July 1, 2017) during the VAT regime, this (tax on essentials) was there in many states. States were getting revenue (from levying VAT on food items). Once in 2017, this new goods and services tax (GST) regime came, it was envisaged that this would continue but it was levied only on branded products when rules and circulars came out," Bajaj said.

The rules provided that the GST will not be levied on pre-packed goods if the brands gave up actionable claims on the brand. This led to some of the well renowned brands beginning to sell these items in packets that carried their brand but no actionable

claim on it and so did not attract the 5 per cent GST.

"I don't want to take names but very renowned brands in the country were not paying taxes using this particular loophole. And this was creating an arbitrage because in a FMCG product like pulses or rice which is indistinguishable, 5 per cent is a huge margin," he said. Naturally, the companies selling products under brands complained. "States also gave us feedback that we used to get a lot of money before GST came in and that we should do something," he said. He, however, did not name the states.

Eliminating the distinction between branded and non-branded products was also an exercise to simplify the tax regime and create a level playing field with minimal possibility of legal challenges. It gives parity to all brands and companies by removing any disparity, he said. "So, people were misusing it. Secondly, states gave us feedback that they were losing revenues on it and not getting revenues they used to get in pre-GST regime," he said.

"So the Fitment Committee (composed of central and state officials) sat down, got feedback. Then the Group of Ministers (from different states) sat down, got feedback. Then the Council discussed it. So it was a conscious decision taken... it was a unanimous... consensus decision," he noted. **PTI**

## Trust-based taxation resulting in improved mop-up: FM

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said that the trust-based taxation system introduced by the government has resulted in improved collections and increase in the number of return filings.

In her message on the 163rd Income Tax Day, the finance minister complimented the department for achieving the highest-ever revenue collection of over Rs 14 lakh crore in the last fiscal and expressed hope that the momentum would continue in the current fiscal too.

"The taxpayers on their part have vindicated this trust-based approach as evident from the trend of improved tax collections and increase in the number of income tax returns filed," she said.

Meanwhile, prompt redressal of taxpayers' grievances remains the top priority for the tax department, the newly appointed chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes Nitin Gupta said on Sunday.

"The taxpayers of today desire ease of compliance and prompt redressal of their issues," he said. "Alive to such changes the department has redesigned its policies and re-engineered its processes..." **WITH PTI**

## MARKET WATCH

## M-CAP OF NINE OF TOP 10 COS JUMPS

**New Delhi:** Nine of the 10 most valued firms added Rs 2.98 lakh crore to their market valuation last week amid a bullish trend in equities, with Reliance Industries and TCS emerging as lead gainers. Last week, the Sensex jumped 2,311.45 points or 4.29 per cent. **PTI**

## INTERVIEW WITH CHAIRMAN, STATE BANK OF INDIA

# 'India seems to be doing well compared to others; fuel price a challenge'



Dinesh Kumar Khara. *File*

down. The global crude price and the supply chain disruptions, which happened during Covid, are getting addressed in due course.

Even as the war poses risk, there are a couple of things. One, of course, is that it's a US Federal Reserve-induced recession in the US. Also, I think, China is still not on the growth path. These two factors will have an impact on global food prices and would keep crude prices in check.

## How do you see the credit offtake?

We have not seen demand tapering off and the retail engine has been growing at about 14-15 per cent CAGR for almost four years. We expect to see a similar kind of growth. The corporate performance has also started improving

from last quarter ended March 2022. There may be a slight blip here and there but, overall, I expect even the corporate book should be growing. Our international group last year grew almost about 15 per cent. We expect similar growth in the international book. As far as we're concerned, we have ample room in terms of availability to support credit growth. Of course, at the system level, deposit growth is lower than credit growth.

## What is driving credit growth? Which sectors are expected to drive credit demand?

Part of the credit growth is due to the working capital because the capacity utilisation has improved to 75 per cent for the economy from 69 per cent or so. The supply chain disruptions, when they get addressed, lead to improvement in capacity utilisation. Contact-heavy sectors such as tourism and aviation, which actually suffered, seem to be coming back.

Renewable energy has a huge potential. PLI, of course, is the other area of interest. Then, the focus on the infrastructure in terms of new airports that are coming up and the new ports that have been sanctioned. Infrastructure per se, including roads, is one of the major areas of growth.

## Given the inflation levels, do you see further rate hikes by the RBI?

I think those decisions will depend upon multiple variables, which they evaluate when the MPC meets. I think it's difficult to really second-guess right now.

## While there are concerns around inflation, growth and rupee, how are international

## investors looking at India?

They're all looking at India with a lot of interest. But, yes, perhaps they will wait and watch because many of them particularly, when it comes to FDI, invariably come with a very long-term perspective. Some of the long-only investors, they look at the country with a lot of interest for the simple reason of the political stability and also the way a country has got accepted globally in the recent past. I think that these are some of the reassuring factors which these investors look at.

## How is the situation on bad loans?

I won't say stress but yes, volatility is seen in metals. We'll have to wait and watch because of the global raw material issue. I

think, overall the picture seems better. But the sub-segments, of course, are very different. When it comes to SMEs, there could be some (slippages).

Overall, I don't expect the picture to be bad. And in any case, whatever was the likely stress for the re-structured accounts, we had done the provisioning to insulate the balance sheet from the future shock. So that will also give us comfort but nevertheless, in SME, wherever the cash flow disruptions have not got repaired, there could be some stress. But I think we have already adequately taken care of it. Retail segment is generally okay.

## Do you see a concern on NPA across segments?

I don't expect much... On corporates also, we don't have any challenges and we were doing aggressive provisioning. Similarly, the SME stress book also we have taken care of. We run a book of almost Rs 28 trillion. So small things here and there will happen. That's a function of the economy.

In ECLGS kind of a book also, aggressive provisioning is done. Our overall provisioning was about Rs 7,000 crore. Our ECLGS book was about Rs 20,000 crore. In the Rs 20,000 crore, about 50 per cent was in retail, which has home loans and sector mortgages and another 50 per cent was in the SME sector. When it comes to a home loan mortgage book, almost 75 per cent is that of the first-time home loan borrowers. So, it is not an investment demand, it is more of a necessity. And they are also very mindful of the fact that if at all they default, then their credit score takes a hit. *Full interview on www.indianexpress.com*

# Airline 'snags': DGCA starts 2-month-long special audit

**New Delhi:** Aviation regulator DGCA has started a 2-month-long special audit of airlines after its spot checks earlier this month found that insufficient and unqualified engineering personnel are certifying carriers' planes before their departure, officials said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) conducted the spot checks as there have been many technical malfunction incidents in Indian carriers' planes during the last 45 days.

The focus of the aforementioned special audit will be facilities like hangars and stores, equipment being used by airline personnel, airlines' quality assurance system, aircraft grounded due to lack of spare parts and maintenance control centre

## FOCUS AREAS

- The focus of the special audit will be facilities like hangars and stores, equipment being used by personnel, airlines' quality assurance system, aircraft grounded due to lack of spare parts and maintenance control centre

ance system, aircraft grounded due to lack of spare parts and airlines' maintenance control centre

tre, a DGCA order dated July 18 stated.

The special audit will also focus on availability of "sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced" manpower, duty time limitations, availability of current maintenance data for all types of aircraft, adequacy of aircraft turn-around time during transit and "multiple MEL releases", as per the order, which has been accessed by *PTI*.

MEL (minimum equipment list) releases "means an aircraft is allowed to fly with certain inoperative equipment or instruments for a specific period of time, until the repairs are done. **PTI**



CROSSWORD 4802



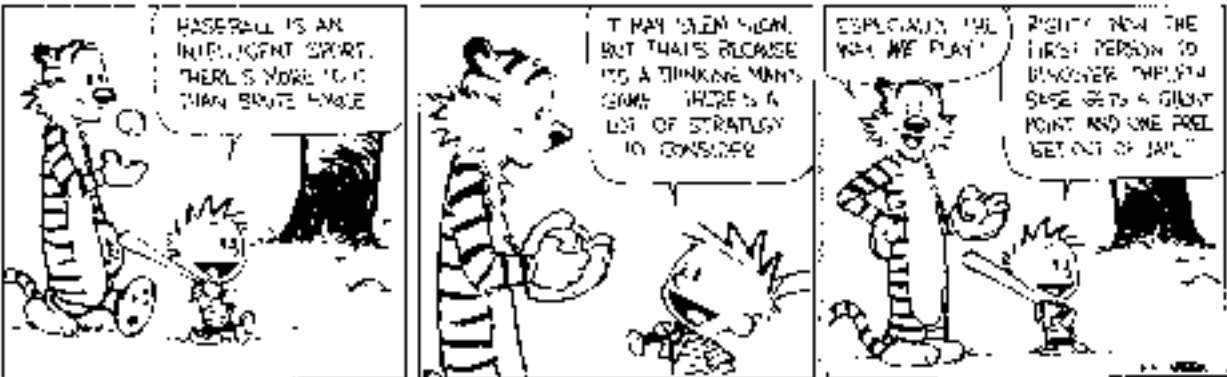
- ACROSS  
1 Reckon to keep fit (4,3)  
5 One way to apply a finish to education (5)  
8 Contemplating dining out about ten (9)  
9 Skill in particular (3)  
10 It's unchanged when returned to me (4)  
12 Remote chance a sniper may take (4,4)  
14 Euclid confused her (6)  
15 Follows directions and engages in litigation (6)  
17 You may win one on points (8)  
18 Nominally she gets five years (4)  
21 Eggs of no value (3)  
22 Billy took forty winks - that's novel (9)  
24 Wood spirit supposedly drunk in ancient times (5)  
25 A betrayal that will pack the theatre (4-3)
- DOWN  
1 Stands by for callers at Christmas (5)  
2 Unpopular art form (3)  
3 Has now moved South (4)  
4 Stand and fall over a piece of wood (6)  
5 Taking on the enemy (8)  
6 He, you and pals got involved in the theatre (9)  
7 Understatement in T.S. Eliot play (7)  
11 Speak evil of a worker wanting to do harm (9)  
13 He deals in capital investments (8)  
14 A second order of clergy (7)  
16 A poem's positive points (6)  
19 Examination on book work in ancient times (5)  
20 A love outwardly secure (4)  
23 One who get paid for Latin? (3)

Solutions Crossword 4801: Across: 1 Obituary, 5 Cast, 9 Chaff, 10 Charity, 11 Convallescent, 13 Sodium, 14 Gallon, 17 Intransigent, 20 Ice floe, 21 Teach, 22 Garb, 23 Spurious. Down: 1 Once, 2 In a word, 3 Unfavourable, 4 Recall, 6 Alice, 7 Trysting, 8 Manslaughter, 12 Aspiring, 15 Long ago, 16 Asleep, 18 Their, 19 Thus.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLD WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

Remember upon the \_\_ of each depends the \_\_ of all  
- Alexander the Great (7,4)

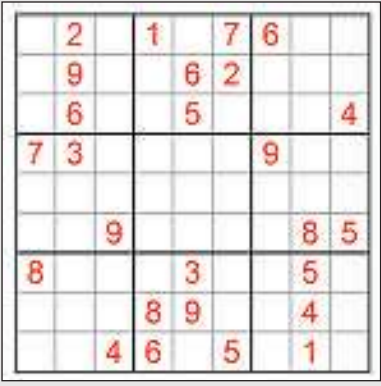
BVAEO  
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Difficulty Level 4s  
Instructions  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



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**ऊर्जा भवन, बाईपास रोड,**  
**रिकनवटी, आगरा**

ई-अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना  
अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित सामग्री को आपूर्ति कार्य कराने हेतु ई-अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा के संबंध में विस्तृत नियम व शर्तें निविदा अभिलेखों में उल्लिखित है जो ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> एवं दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि० की वेबसाइट [www.dvnl.org](http://www.dvnl.org) पर उपलब्ध कराई जा रही है। क्रम संख्या, निविदा संख्या, सामग्री / कार्य का विवरण, निविदा खुलने का दिनांक, निविदा शुल्क, धरोहर राशि (रुपये में) क्रमानुसार। 1.ईओएससी०/ए०/टी-०7 (2022-23), दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि० ऑनलाइन कम्प्यूटर द्वारा लेखा संकलन का कार्य एवं लेखा संकलन के आधार पर लाभ-हानि खाता व बैलेंस शीट तैयार करने का कार्य, 08.08.2022, रु. 1,180.00, रु. 5,100.00 निविदा में यदि कोई संशोधन अथवा निविदा खुलने की तिथि में विस्तार होता है तो इसकी सूचना सम्वन्धित ई-टेंडर वेबसाइट [etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in) पर तथा निगम की वेबसाइट [www.dvnl.org](http://www.dvnl.org) पर उपलब्ध करा दी जायेगी। अधीक्षण अधिकारी विद्युत भण्डार भण्डल, आगरा पत्रांक-2786 /ओ.ओ. नि०/आ/निविदा दिनांक 23/07/2022 राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचावें

**SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tender Notice No.: 114-ST-Tender/2022 Dated 11.07.2022  
Work: Execution of Signaling Works in connection with TTR (TVS+WCMSG) - 84 Sets.  
Tender



1. ANDERSON PETERS (GRN)  
**90.54m**  
**SERIES:** 90.21, 90.46,  
 87.21, 88.11, 85.83, 90.54

2. NEERAJ CHOPRA (IND)  
**88.13m**  
**SERIES:** X, 82.39, 86.37,  
 88.13, X, X

3. JAKUB VADLEJCH (CZE)  
**88.09m**  
**SERIES:** 85.52, 87.23,  
 80.09, 83.48, 81.31, 82.88

## Upset in relays as US, Canada win

REUTERS  
 EUGENE (USA), JULY 24

JAMAICA FIELDED the three medallists from the women's 100 metres in Saturday's World Championships sprint relay but that was still not enough to prevent a super-slick U.S. quartet taking gold to raise the biggest cheer of the week at Hayward Field.

In the men's 4x100 metres relay, a flubbed final handover cost the United States gold as Canada surged down the final straight to take the world title.

Jamaica looked formidable after bringing in their "big three" - Shericka Jackson, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Elaine Thompson-Herah - with lead runner Kemba Nelson the only survivor from their semi-final team.

The United States introduced Abby Steiner to join Melissa Jefferson, Jenna Prandini and Twanisha Terry, and after a superb series Terry ran a terrific anchor leg to bring them home in 41.14 seconds - the fifth-fastest in history.

Jamaica were second in 41.18 - the sixth-best ever - after losing fractions on a couple of stretched changeovers.

Britain were in the medal hunt until 200m bronze medallist Dina Asher-Smith pulled up injured at the end of her third leg, allowing Germany to storm through for a surprise bronze in 42.03.

Jamaica and the United States had each won four of the previous eight world titles and between them eight of the last 10 Olympic golds. Saturday's head-to-head was as mouth-watering as any of those, with the Americans hoping their well-honed teamwork could make the difference against a squad that they hoped might just be a metre of pace down after their gruelling individual campaigns. It proved to be the case as Jamaica twice had to slow a touch to collect the baton, as the Americans made no mistakes.

Prandini ran a brilliant third leg and Jamaican anchor Jackson, two days after her 200m gold, could make no impression on Terry as the United States took their Eugene gold tally to 10.

In the men's relay, the Americans looked set to retain their crown until the last changeover between Elijah Hall and Marvin Bracy, who lost time with a slow exchange. Canadian anchor Andre De Grasse did not waste the opportunity and passed Bracy on the final leg, crossing the finish in 37.48 seconds.

## India's Paul finishes 9th in triple jump

Eugene: India's Eldhose Paul finished ninth in the men's triple jump final.

The 25-year-old Paul produced a best jump of 16.79m in the three attempts he had, and failed to make it to the top eight. His series read 16.37, 16.79 and 13.86m. Only the top eight finishers after three rounds get three more jumps.

Paul had become the first Indian to qualify for the triple jump final after finishing 12th overall in the qualification round with an effort of 16.68m. **PTI**

# Glad that someone has finally bagged a Worlds medal after 19 long years



BY ANJU BOBBY GEORGE

IF ONE sees the level of competition at the World Championships, it is much tougher than the Olympics. Winning in Tokyo and backing it with a Worlds medal is really great. Neeraj has proved again that he is a world-class athlete. When he made the first two throws (a foul and 82.39m), I was a little unsure of what is going to transpire. But then after his third throw, I knew something big was coming. Despite starting off poorly, he made a comeback and that is what top-class athletes have the quality to do.

Even while he was a junior, I predicted he would win an Olympic medal and also join me in the Worlds club. I know when I see the spark of a champion. I am glad that someone has finally bagged a Worlds medal after 19 long years. I have often met and spoken to



An athlete cannot win a gold every time but we have to keep trying and give our best. I have learnt a lot from the challenging situation today.

NEERAJ CHOPRA, OLYMPIC CHAMPION AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SILVER MEDALLIST

# The grind behind Chopra's glittering medals

Olympic champ was out of shape few months ago, but a smart training programme, allied with right diet and dedication, got him the Worlds silver

NIHAL KOSHIE  
 JULY 24

WATCHING A supremely athletic Neeraj Chopra add a World Championship silver medal to the Olympic gold, it is hard to believe he huffed and puffed on a 400m track in Chula Vista a few months ago. In December, a slightly podgy Chopra began getting back in shape after what seemed like never-ending felicitations. His cheat day extended to a few weeks as the who's who were waiting to host him for a meal. One chief minister cooked 'rich' food for the Olympic heroes. Soon after his proposal for an off-season training stint in the US was cleared, Chopra, his coach Klaus Bartonietz and long-time physio Ishaan Marwaha landed in California.

Project Eugene began there and then. "It was almost like starting from zero because there was a four-month gap, he was overweight and had put on about 12 to 14 kilograms," Marwaha says.

A physio and also a friend to Chopra, Marwaha has been part of his inner circle for five years. He and Chopra have stuck together through thick and thin. Marwaha was by Chopra's side when he underwent an elbow surgery three years ago, and a vital cog in the wheel in his post-Olympic to World Championships medal journey.

Team Chopra's key objectives to begin with were to lose weight and, at the same time, improve flexibility and strengthen joints. Though crucial time had been lost, Chopra is known to move mountains.

"When we reached Chula Vista, our first aim was to reduce weight. Immediately, sugar was out of the diet. No refined sugar, no sugar in drinks or adding to coffee. Sugar coming from food was fine. We reduced carbohydrates and increased protein intake during those four to five weeks. Chicken, salmon and a lot of salad was the basic source of protein. And also, eggs. Protein supplement is just an add-on. For carbohydrates, there were potatoes," Marwaha details the plan of camp dietician Mihira Khopkar.

### Low body fat percentage

The body fat percentage, a key reading for top athletes, needed correction. Chopra's was around 16 percent in December. Currently it reads 10. "For a javelin thrower, around 10 and 10.5 is good. Below that, you are going down way too much," Marwaha says.

The early steps were tougher than Chopra anticipated. He began with two to three laps of the 400m track. "It was difficult for him also because he had not run with that kind of weight. He has not been 97 kg since the time I have been with him. It was tough for him to start running long distances initially. Then we

kept on increasing the distances of his runs up to 5K."

In about two weeks, Chopra lost two kilograms. Once he began weight training, he became leaner. The protein-rich diet helped.

"We were using the time wisely. But we were not pushing. We had less time and we had to cover a lot of training. That was a little tough initially but hats off to Neeraj, he was dedicated... with the diet and everything."

Soon, every second day, Chopra tackled the Tabata circuit. The app-aided routine involves a 20-second high-intensity exercise followed by 10-15 seconds of rest. There were 10 exercises in one circuit and he did three sets. The Tabata circuit is also a Chopra favourite because of the abdomen and core workout. "I tell him to keep it to 20 seconds but sometimes he will push it to 30 seconds of work and 20 seconds rest."

The next phase involved weight training.

"There were squats, snatch, weighted lunges, and a time circuit. We made nine stations. Twenty seconds on one station and then you move to the next station. So, we worked on the cardiovascular part also and overall general strength. But we do this in the off season. We have reached almost 90 to 95 percent of what he was in Tokyo," Marwaha says.

By mid-January, Chopra started ball throws. He would stand on grass and sometimes use a javelin just to get the feel of throwing. He then moved to the runway. But major throwing began after Chopra moved to the Gloria Sports Arena in Antalya, Turkey.

Keeping Chopra's body in top shape is akin to ensuring all parts of a bow are working optimally, Marwaha says, borrowing an analogy of coach Bartonietz. "If one part of the bow is not working well, like if the hip flexors (muscles) are tight, the bow is broken at that part," Marwaha, a physiotherapist at the Inspire Institute of Sport, explains.

### 8 to 10 hours' sleep

Proper recovery after intense training, ice baths, contrast baths (in warm and cold water), deep tissue release, and a good night's sleep keep Chopra injury-free and refreshed.

"Deep tissue release is about going deep into the muscle and opening a nerve. Sometimes, I have to use my elbow also. We do a deep tissue release for him at the end of the week. Or if there is a heavy session, we do it after that also."

An ice bath follows a 'heavy session', like a long running session, and helps in healing micro-injuries in the muscles. "Usually when we want him to relax, we use a contrast one. It involves two minutes of hot and two minutes of cold."

But all recovery methods can come to naught if Chopra does not get a good sleep. Being a sound sleeper works to his advantage.



(Above) Neeraj Chopra exults during the javelin throw final on Sunday; (Left) Chopra with physiotherapist Ishaan Marwaha (right) and coach Klaus Bartonietz.

"Optimal sleep above all. About eight to 10 hours is required. He has understood that no matter how many recovery options we choose, sleep is the topmost. If you don't get proper sleep, you cannot recover well."

### Shoulder, hip, ankle

The camp at Chula Vista at the start of the off season was where Chopra worked on 'previous shortcomings' - increased flexibility of the shoulder, hip mobility and ankle strength. Not being a thrower who relies on brute power, flexibility is key for Chopra.

"If you want to keep an athlete injury-free, you need that flexibility. If the hamstring is not flexible enough for a competition, there will be an injury or a micro-tear. Neeraj is not a power thrower. He relies more on flexibility. He wants his body to be relaxed when he goes for the throw. Some throwers are power throwers, they don't need that flexibility as

they have power to push. But flexibility helps you keep away from injury," Marwaha says.

To develop a strong block (with the leading leg just before the release), ankle strength and hip mobility is vital. A flexible shoulder helps transfer the force into the javelin. If the shoulder movement is restricted, the elbow will advance and a poor release follows.

"Working on hip mobility is important because at the block, they need hip mobility at the last moment. The right hip rotation is pretty important and if it is not moving properly, your groin is under a lot of strain and your foot will drag. Your foot should rotate. If you compromise on your foot mobility, you are stretching your hamstring or the groin area."

Chopra has taken a leaf out of the book of world record holder Jan Zelezny. "Jan was very fast on his right hip and that is what we tried to achieve."

As important as hip mobility is, so is ankle

strength. "Ankle strength is also required for the block. It is extreme, 200 per cent of the body weight comes at the time of the block on the left foot. In Neeraj's case, it will be about 170 kilograms of force."

On the runway, the build-up of energy comes from the ground via the legs. "In javelin throw, 60 per cent is in the legs, only 40 per cent is the upper body. If your legs are not moving well, they are not fast and not blocking well, no matter how much strength you have in your upper body, it won't help."

What helps in keeping all the joints strong and flexible is Neeraj's attitude to training. He is not a slacker. "He is over-enthusiastic in training. It is not that I tell him 'You have to do 10 minutes' and he will step down at 9 minutes and 50 seconds. It will always be 10 minutes or beyond 10 minutes. That makes him different from other athletes, you need that dedication level."

Having to undergo an elbow surgery in 2019 made Chopra smarter and he knows the load his body can take. There was an element of risk involved in the surgery because if Chopra was not able to regain the full extension of his elbow, his career would have possibly hit a roadblock. "After eight out of 10 surgeries of the elbow, you don't get that full extension. Strength will come, but getting the range was most important. Luckily, with time and proper rehabilitation, the range came and the doctor was happy. Otherwise, he would not be able to throw."

### Smarter and wiser

Post-surgery, Chopra stopped punishing his body if he felt a strain or discomfort. He had been out of action for a year and couldn't risk another injury.

"Initially, he would just push himself through pain. Now he has matured. He knows it is ok not to train when he has not slept well. He knows there is no point doing a morning session without full recovery. He will tell us if he is feeling tightness around, say, the shoulder or the hip. If the coach says 'You have to do a 90 kg squat or 90 kg snatch' and if he feels he is not able to do it, he will give his feedback. He knows how to prevent injury."

### Switching on Chopra button

Chopra is extremely confident on the runway once the competition starts. He has been among the big throws early in competitions and others have been playing catch-up. Once inside the stadium, he enters the zone, according to Marwaha. "He is best when under pressure. If he is not under pressure, he won't be able to perform in the stadium. In one competition, we told him to just relax because it was not a major competition. But in the first two-three rounds, he could not throw well. Then he went into the zone. He had to switch on the 'Neeraj Chopra-inside-the-stadium button'. He is a different guy when he goes inside the stadium, he does not even look at us."

Is Chopra going to have a cheat day after the World Championships final? A rare day on which he can keep the salads aside and dig into pizza? The famous Chopra abstinence is gaining reputation. "On his own, he says 'no, I don't want to have it.' Because he knows how he will feel the next day."

## Anderson Peters: A one-time fast bowler

GRENADIAN ANDERSON Peters, who awed the world with three javelin throws over 90m to take gold at the World Championships when even Neeraj Chopra struggled with the headwind, was once a cricket-crazy kid. Usain Bolt would snatch that love with his record-breaking feats and turn Peters into a sprinter before injuries turned him towards javelin.

"I liked cricket. We had two seasons: cricket and track-and-field in Grenada. I would do both. I was a fast bowler. I felt I could bowl it so fast that the batsman can't even see it," he tells the World Athletics podcast.

Then Bolt intervened. "That was the year he got the world record. I wanted to be a sprinter." Injuries then put him on to javelin, where he has now started a rivalry with Chopra.

The 2016 Under-20 World Championships in Poland is where Chopra and Peters had their first big showdown. This was two years before Peters, who has studied in the United States since 2017, threw 81.95 metres to break the Mississippi state's freshman record. At the Zdzislaw Krzyszkowiak Stadium, Chopra became the junior world champion and an overnight star. His 86.48 metres was a world junior record. Johan Grobler (80.59m) of South Africa was second and third, almost unnoticed in the frenzy in India, was Peters (79.65m). He had set a national under-20 mark but back then Chopra was anointed as



Grenadian Anderson Peters celebrates after winning gold on Sunday. Reuters

the future star.

Of the three podium finishers from the U20 championships four years ago, two - Chopra and Peters - fought it out for the gold on Sunday morning.

Grobler was in Group A of qualifying, the same one as Chopra, but finished seventh with a lowly 76.30 metres. Chopra had the second-best throw of 88.39 metres in qualifying on Friday while Peters topped with 89.91 metres.

He was the defending champion in Eugene and though he failed to reach the final at the Tokyo Olympics, a 93.07m throw in the Doha Diamond League and a 90.31 at the Stockholm Diamond League, where also he pushed Chopra to second place, is testament to his form despite a nagging back injury.

What makes Peters a formidable opponent is his ability to produce a big throw even towards the end of the competition. On Sunday too, his best came in his last attempt.

### Interesting initiation

Peters has an interesting story on how his arm got used to throwing. He used stones to take aim at mangos and apples on trees as a youngster. "To me it was always a natural thing to throw. As kids, we used to regularly throw a rock to get mangoes and golden apples. Our mango trees were really high," Peters was quoted as saying by World Athletics.

He started throwing with a javelin at the age of 10.

But soon, his attention got diverted to sprints. A fellow Caribbean athlete from Jamaica was scorching the tracks.

"Usain Bolt was also on the scene at that time, so I wanted to be a sprinter," Peters said. He ran a wind-assisted sub-11 in the 100m when he was 20 and was also a member of the 4x100m relay team at the 2016 Carifta Games. But injuries forced him to get back to throwing.

Peters' other great inspiration was Walcott, the 2012 Olympic champion from Trinidad and Tobago. Peters used to study the distances Walcott threw to see how much more he had to improve. Seeing someone from an island just 30 minutes away from his becoming Olympic champion pushed Peters to become a top javelin thrower himself.



BRIEFLY

Directors of Cricket Scotland step down over racism report

**Edinburgh:** Directors of the Scotland cricket board on Sunday resigned en masse following accusations of institutional racism. The resignations came just ahead of the release of reports on an independent investigation. "The board has been totally committed to implementing the findings of this review in full to make the sport of cricket in Scotland a truly welcoming and inclusive place for all," the directors said in a letter written to the interim CEO of the governing body. "We are all truly sorry and have apologised publicly to everyone who has experienced racism, or any other form of discrimination, in cricket in Scotland," the letter further read. **PTI**

SL reach 315-6 on Day 1 of 2nd Test

**Galle:** Half-centuries by Dinesh Chandimal and Oshada Fernando helped Sri Lanka reach 315-6 at stumps on the opening day of the second Test match against Pakistan at the Galle International Stadium on Sunday. Needing to win the game to square the series, Sri Lanka opted to bat first after winning the toss. Captain Dimuth Karunaratne and Fernando gave the team a solid start adding 92 runs for the first wicket. Fernando was the stand-out performer during the stand using his feet against spin and hitting three straight sixes. The third six brought his seventh half-century in tests. **AP Briefs score: Sri Lanka 315 for 6 (Chandimal 80, Oshada 50, Navvaz 2-71) vs Pakistan**

Verstappen wins French Grand Prix

**Paris:** Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the French Grand Prix on Sunday and took a huge stride towards a second Formula One title after Ferrari's Charles Leclerc made a costly mistake and crashed out while leading. Seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton finished second for Mercedes in his 300th grand prix, with team mate George Russell third to secure their first podium double of the campaign. The victory on a hot afternoon at Le Castellet was Verstappen's 7th in 12 races this season and 27th of his career. **REUTERS**

How to cope with the long pimple

India's top paddler Manika Batra uses a unique rubber on her bats, but her doubles partners have to make adjustments if they want to land on podium

COMMONWEALTH  
GAMES, 2022  
3 DAYS TO GO

ANIL DIAS  
MUMBAI, JULY 24

TO UNDERSTAND the genius of Manika Batra, one has to go back to the time she was eight years old. She may be the 'Golden Girl' of Indian table tennis now after her feats at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia where she won four medals – two gold, one silver and a bronze – but as an eight-year-old who showed plenty of promise, she was asked to change her bat and essentially, her entire playing style.

The story goes that her then coach Sandeep Gupta asked her to start playing with long-pimpled rubber on one side of her bat. He felt that this would elevate her game further. And it did just that.

Long-pimpled rubber is essentially a defensive selection seldom used by the elite pros these days. It basically puts the opposite effect on the spin that the opponent plays. So say, if the opponent plays a backspin shot, when one returns with this rubber, the ball will have top-spin and vice-versa. How does this happen? It's because the surface of a long-pimpled rubber is covered with thin and tall conical-shaped bumps. When the ball meets the rubber, those bumps bend, thereby putting the opposite effect on the spin of the ball.

Using the rubber on her backhand side, she switches her bat mid-rally to deceive opponents. The follow-up shot after using the pimpled rubber is extremely crucial and that's where Manika's big forehand comes into play. It was this strategy that helped her win the women's singles title at the last Commonwealth Games and also lead the women's team to their first-ever CWG gold. It's the same strategy that saw her achieve her career-best ranking of 38 in May this year.

Playing doubles

When playing singles, the effectiveness of the pimpled rubber boils down to knowing



Manika Batra is the favourite for the women's singles title and her mixed doubles partner is G Sathiyan.

when to use it, how well one uses it and most importantly, how one plays the follow-up shot. Doubles, on the other hand, throws up a very challenging situation, especially if the partner doesn't normally play with long pimples. And that's the challenge for India at the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

While Manika is the favourite for the women's singles title, her mixed doubles partner is G Sathiyan and her women's doubles partner is 19-year-old Diya Chitale, who's playing in her first mega event.

Both Sathiyan and Chitale play with attacking rubbers so they have to understand Manika's game extremely well in order to know when she'll switch her bat and use the pimpled rubber.

Sathiyan and Manika won the bronze medal in Gold Coast and he says that both of them have elevated their games tremendously since then, be it in singles or as doubles partners. Though Sathiyan has never used long pimples, he told The Indian Express that it's extremely useful to partner someone who uses it. "Having your partner in mixed doubles use the long pimples is useful because not many, especially the men's players, are used to it. So, it brings out a different flavour for us on the table. We use it to change strategies or to mix up the pace.

"We use the pimple, which slows down the pace, and then use the soft rubber which increases the pace. This has been very handy

to make our opponents move back and forth," he said. Sathiyan, currently ranked 37th in the world, said that his understanding of the science behind pimpled rubber has helped him succeed with Manika.

"My understanding of the rubber is really good and so I could make decisions with Manika on that front. The follow-up shot is very crucial and so I have to know when she's going to use it. If the ball is too fast and the opponent is far away from the table, she could probably use the rubber to make them move back and forth," he said.

"We have practised many combinations of both the rubbers. It requires a lot of practice and understanding," the 29-year-old said.

Teamwork key

Believing they can do much better than their bronze at the last CWG, Sathiyan and Manika decided to work together and develop a great understanding to take their game to the next level. When asked what are the aspects they worked on, Sathiyan said they realised it was imperative they worked on their footwork. "For doubles, footwork has to be quite different. We worked a lot on that during our training camps in Chennai and Bengaluru. We needed to have a better understanding of where we are moving and more importantly, making way for our partner to come to the table. Moving in a synchronised manner is very critical."

Not only them, their respective coaches too worked together to chalk out a plan for them. "Our coaches know our strengths and weaknesses better. Their inputs really helped us understand each other's games well. And that's the most important thing in doubles," he said. If Sathiyan and Manika have a deep understanding of each other's games, Manika and Diya have barely partnered with each other, having just one session in Mumbai last week. Diya, however, said they've got along very well.

"Although we did just one session, it was really good. We were moving well. Manika's playing very aggressively now so for me it's just knowing when she's going to use the long rubber. Having played against quite a few opponents who use the long rubber, I know what to do with the next ball. I think it's going to be a good debut for me," Diya told *The Indian Express*.

Hooda shows promise as potential spin all-rounder

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
JULY 24

DEEPAK HOODA was brought into the attack in the 10th over, ostensibly as a partnership-breaker. West Indies had made a buzzing start after winning the toss as Kyle Mayers took the attack to the Indian seamers, especially ODI debutant Avesh Khan, right from the outset. Shardul Thakur conceded 13 runs in his first over. Even Shai Hope, usually a slow starter, was showing intent.

Hooda's first ball stopped a bit on Mayers and the batsman chipped back an easy return catch. The bowling change worked. In the grand scheme of things, the way Hooda bowled in this game, he offered encouragement, with an eye to the 50-over World Cup in India next year.

A second spin-allrounder will be part of the playing eleven in Indian conditions and Hooda is showing potential to be developed into one.

In the first ODI two days ago, he was used as a filler, bowling five overs and conceding 22 runs in a high-scoring game. On Sunday, in the second ODI, he bowled well enough to get nine overs, in two spells. His first spell read: 6-0-23-1 and his second: 3-0-19-0. Yet again, he went under five runs per over, at Queen's Park Oval, a ground that has relatively smaller boundaries. Credit to Shikhar Dhawan for using him well.

Hooda is not a big turner of the ball. But he bowls tight, stump-to-stump, and bowls to his field. Occasionally, he isn't afraid to give the ball a bit of air. And on Sunday, he reacted well, when the batsmen tried to take him on. His ninth over was a case in point. Nicholas Pooran, well set by then, launched him over long-off for a six. The West Indies captain was ready to cut loose. But Hooda responded well with a couple of dot balls. He dragged back the length a little, bowled straighter and didn't allow the batsman to free his arms.

Hooda has already announced his arrival in T20Is, as a batsman, scoring 205 runs in six games, including a century, at a strike rate of 172.26. It wowed the fans to the extent of criticising the team management on social media, when he was dropped to accommodate Virat Kohli in the T20Is in England. In the 50-over format, Hooda has been given the role of a finisher, at No. 6. He looked a tad uncomfortable in the first ODI, scoring 27 off 32 balls. But batting at No. 6 is a difficult job in white-ball cricket and it takes time to get into the groove.

Hard-hitting is Hooda's forte. If he chips in with some overs of tight off-spin, the 27-year-old can be a serious option for the second spin-allrounder's slot, playing alongside Ravindra Jadeja. It's early days, but there's a player who can be groomed to emulate Yusuf Pathan's role at the 2011 World Cup, with the



Deepak Hooda has already announced his arrival as a batsman in T20Is, scoring 205 runs in six games. *Sportspics for BCCI*

next 50-over showpiece still more than a year away. As rotation has become the order of the day in Indian cricket, Hooda has emerged as a positive.

Pathan was pretty effective during India's 2011 World Cup-winning campaign, offering depth and balance. After that, Kedar Jadhav played that role for a period. At the moment, Axar Patel is Jadeja's back-up in terms of left-arm spin, but he is not a genuine all-rounder. Hooda is essentially a batsman, who can be used up the order and also at the death. His presence gives the team the required flexibility. A lot, though, will depend on how he shapes up in the next few months, but maybe, the team management can think about giving him a few games at a stretch, even after the big guns return. The second seam-allrounder, beyond Hardik Pandya, remains an area of concern however. Thakur is being used in that role in this series, but the medium pacer is leaking runs, although he has a knack of taking wickets. In the first ODI, he took the important wickets of Shamarh Brooks and Mayers in quick succession, but gave away 54 runs in eight overs. On Sunday, he returned with 3/54 from seven overs, as West Indies posted 311/6. Hope laid the foundation with 115 off 135 balls in his 100th ODI. Pooran scored 74 off 77 deliveries. The Caribbeans have lost seven ODIs on the spin and are desperately seeking course correction.

**Brief scores: West Indies 311/6 (Shai Hope 115, Nicholas Pooran 74; Shardul Thakur 3/54)**

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