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by Piyush Chaubey Sir
23 rd Aug, 2022
(11:30 AM to 2:00 PM) |
| Mathematics
by Maneesh Singh Sir
8 th Sept, 2022
(2:30 PM to 5:30 PM) | Economics
by Vibhas Jha Sir
10 th Oct, 2022
(3:00 PM to 5:30 PM) |
| Geography
by Alok Ranjan Sir
1 st Nov, 2022
(3:00 PM to 5:30 PM) | Sociology
by Raj Rai Sir
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All Clear



2.22 pm Before demolition. Tashi Tobgyal



2.30 pm The towers being demolished. Tashi Tobgyal



2.38 pm The skyline after the demolition. Gajendra Yadav

Supertech twin towers turn to rubble in 12-sec operation

MALAVIKA PRASAD, SUKRITA BARUAH & JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

TWELVE SECONDS is all it took for the Supertech twin towers in Noida's sector 93A to crumble to the ground. Delayed for months, the demolition finally took place, in line with the directions of the Supreme Court, on Sunday for violating set rules, building regulations, and fire safety norms.

The towers came down at exactly 2.30 pm, and a cloud of dust engulfed the area for several minutes afterward.

There was minor damage in the adjacent society. In a state-

THE DEMOLITION IN NUMBERS

3,700 kg of explosives used

80,000 tonnes of debris produced

50,000 tonnes of the debris will be used for reconstruction



101.2 decibels: noise during demolition

122 AQI at 2 pm and 3 pm was the same

Between 2.30 pm and 2.50 pm, Particulate Matter 10 increased from under 100 ppm to around 1,100 ppm

It fell back to under 100 ppm in an hour

A normal conversation is about 60 decibels

ment, the Noida Authority said, "A team from the Noida Authority and Edifice Engineering inspected the spot and found that no damage/defect had been incurred by the structures of Emerald Court and ATS Village. Ten metres of the boundary wall of ATS Village has been damaged and a few glass panes have broken. This will be repaired as soon as possible..."

"The demolition process took less than 10 seconds. A plume of smoke and dust rose after the buildings were demolished, and its impact was felt for 10 minutes... The authority used tankers and sweeping machines to clean the dust that settled on the roads."

Joint Commissioner of Police Love Kumar said: "It was a safe and successful demolition. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE CITY

COMMAND CENTRE TO DRONES, OFFICIALS HAD A LONG, HECTIC DAY

FOR NEIGHBOURS, DAY BEGAN WITH NERVES, ENDED WITH HOPE PAGES 6, 7

What next: Removing '80,000 tonnes' of debris in 3 months

JIGNASA SINHA & MALAVIKA PRASAD
NOIDA, AUGUST 28

THE TEAM behind the Supertech demolition in Noida now has two key tasks ahead: disposing of 80,000 tonnes of debris, and analysing data from accelerometers, black boxes and other scales placed around the demolition site.

At the demolition site, 20 monitoring systems were set up by both Edifice Engineering, which handled the demolition, and Central Building Research Institute (CBRI). Utkarsh Mehta, partner at Edifice Engineering,

said, "We have recovered a few (of these systems). The data has been collected. It will take us 1-2 weeks to recover all the systems and collate the data." Work to remove debris has been handed over to Ramky Group, with three months to complete the job. "We have been allotted 90 days to clear the debris. We are working with several authorities and the Residents Welfare Association (RWA). We spoke to the RWA as they have been suffering for a long time and will coordinate with them," Mehta said.

"Ramky Group is overhauling the debris management plan." CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Pandya's last-over six lifts India to victory in thriller against Pak



EXPRESS IN UAE

SANDIP G
AUGUST 28

INDIA WERE within touching distance, requiring just seven runs off five balls. But nerves could still jangle, and it nearly did, as they eked out only one run off two balls. The old-timers could sense a Javed Miandad-



Hardik Pandya after India won the match. Reuters

Chetan Sharma moment. But Hardik Pandya did not leave it too late. He swung the fourth ball over long-on to wrap up a famous win, one that could eliminate bitter memories of the last time they played Pakistan here, in the World Cup 10 months ago that ended in a galling defeat.

Later, captain Rohit Sharma said that at no point in the game did they surrender hope. "That's the kind of belief we want to have in this group, where you are not in the game and you still manage to pull it off. We want to make sure they have all been given enough clarity around what to do in the middle. I'll take

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



WORLD

PAK FLOOD TOLL OVER 1,000; NATIONS PLEDGE HELP PAGE 12

Conspiracies hatched to hold Gujarat back: Modi

GOPAL KATESHIYA
BHUU, AUGUST 28

CLAIMING THAT conspiracies were hatched to defame Gujarat while the state was battling natural calamities, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday asserted that the state not only defeated the same but went on to progress and emerge as an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



PM Narendra Modi in Bhuj on Sunday. Express

IARI: New virus behind mystery dwarfing of rice

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

THE INDIAN Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has confirmed that the mysterious disease resulting in "dwarfing" of rice plants, reported mainly from Punjab and Haryana, has been caused by the Southern Rice Black-Streaked Dwarf Virus (SRBSDV). The virus is spread by

the white-backed plant hopper, an insect pest, which injects it while sucking the sap from mostly young plants.

"The presence of the virus was detected both in the infected plants and the body of the vector insect, whose RNA was isolated. But the virus was not found in the seeds collected from the infected plants. The virus is specific to the phloem

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

'Fake bills', a missing partner and TMC leader's guard in new CBI chargesheet

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA & ATRI MITRA
KOLKATA, AUGUST 28

CATTLE SMUGGLING from markets in Birbhum to Bangladesh via Murshidabad, TMC leader Anubrata Mondal's alleged links to the racket's "kingpin" through a personal security guard, a handwritten diary that provided key leads, "backdated fake bills" — and a partner gone missing. These are the major findings



TMC leader Anubrata Mondal was arrested on Aug 11. File

detailed by the CBI in its third supplementary chargesheet submitted to a special court in

Asansol this month in the cross-border cattle smuggling racket between 2015 and 2017 that also

allegedly involved a "nexus" of BSF officials and Customs personnel.

The case has political implications with Mondal, who was arrested on August 11, denying the charges and the TMC describing the probe as a move by the Centre to target its leaders. The CBI's arrest of Mondal on August 11 came days after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided premises linked to former TMC minister Partha Chatterjee and associates in the alleged school jobs scam and claimed to have recovered over Rs 40 crore in cash.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CWC MEETING: VOTING OCT 17

After 21 yrs, date set: 'Anybody can contest' for Cong chief post

Anand Sharma seeks clarity on electoral rolls; party: 'no such questions' raised

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

THE CONGRESS Working Committee (CWC) Sunday decided to hold an election for the post of party president on October 17. The meeting coming in the wake of Ghulam Nabi Azad's exit from the party while levelling damaging charges against Rahul Gandhi saw some uncomfortable moments, with G-23 leader Anand Sharma raising questions over the electoral rolls.

He said there was no clarity regarding the PCC delegates or the 9,000-odd members of the electoral college, thus pointing fingers at the sanctity of the process itself. Congress president

EXPLAINED
Crucial polls

FACING CHARGES of dynasty rule from the Modi-led BJP, and questions within, the party has a task on its hand to ensure that the elections to the Congress chief post — the first since 2001 — are seen as without fear or favour.

Sonia Gandhi is learnt to have agreed with him on the need for more clarity.

Significantly, soon after the CWC announced the schedule, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

IDEA EXCHANGE

'Despite corruption charges, AAP is not willing to answer questions'

ANURAG THAKUR
UNION MINISTER
PAGE 14

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NATIONAL SPORTS DAY



Adding style to sports

Q The Central Government is giving much emphasis on sports, talent hunt and encouraging the sporting fraternity at large. What are your observations and suggestions, if any?

India is the youngest nations in the world and holds a lot of promise, especially in the arena of sports. There has always been an abundance of naturally gifted sportsmen in the country. All they need is proper training, thorough support, access to world-class sports training facilities and the right guidance. The government has taken a lot of praise worthy initiatives and is doing a commendable job to ensure that our talented athletes and sportspersons lack nothing in their pursuit for attaining excellence. India's remarkable performance in sports, in the recent times, has boosted the morale of our sportsmen and taken their desire to push the envelope even further in their respective sports. Initiatives like Khelo India, Fit India, Yoga Day etc have had huge success in building the health and fitness culture in India. We should also try and bid for Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Such international events would help in building a long term infrastructure for sports in India.

There has been an increase in medal tally at international sports competitions, such as the Olympics and CWG. According to you, has Indian sport matured, reference to some outstanding performances?

Indian sportspersons always had the talent, the dedication and the determination that play an instrumental role in helping win international sports competitions. That combined with the added advantage of an effective system along with the availability of the best infrastructure and every facility that is needed for proper training, has given them the competitive advantage to make the country proud with their spectacular performances in various sports competitions. Though we still not have achieved our due share of medals in global events like the Olympics, the results have definitely started to become visible.

India is a land of diversity, where people



With its motto, "From Indian, by Indian, to Indian", at the core of its relentless, passionate and purposeful pursuit for surpassing expectations in shaping the country's Sports Apparels and Equipments manufacturing sector, Shiv-Naresh, as a globally renowned brand, is a market leader whose name is synonymous with the ultimate destination for today's successful and stylish sportsperson. On the occasion of National Sports Day, Mr. Shiv Prakash Singh, the Director of Shiv-Naresh Sports, shared his thoughts with us.

of different religions and cultures live in harmony. In your opinion, how important is the role of sports in supporting nation-building?

At the core of nation-building is the unification of the people of a country and a shared sense of national pride among them. Since ages sports have proven to be a potent tool for nation-building. Any type of sport and at any level, never fails to bring people of a nation together in a remarkable and inexplicable way. This can be witnessed not only among players and teams participating in sports events and competitions but also among spectators, who might be from different parts of a country but forget their regional differences and unitedly root for their national teams and the players representing their country. The shared celebrations on Indian sportsmen's victories and the shared tears that are shed on their defeat, reflect the power of sports in connecting and unifying the people of our nation.

More and more women are participating

in sports and making the country proud with their outstanding performances. How do you view the future of women in sports in India?

The changing face of the country has also found its expression in the field of sports, with women who aspire to build their careers in sports, receiving unprecedented levels of support from all corners of the society and astounding us with their phenomenal performances. This is a welcome change. The women of our country have the potential to exceed expectations in every area of life, including sports. It can be said with certainty that the future of women in sports in India is brighter than ever. Their increased participation in all types of sports is only helping break certain stereotypical notions, promoting gender equality in sports and inspiring more and more girls to pursue their dreams. In the recently concluded Commonwealth Games, 2022 of the total 22 gold medals won by India, eight were won exclusively by women, including a his-

toric win at Lawn Bowls.

As a premier sporting accessories brand, how is Shiv Naresh supporting sports in India leveraging it to global standards?

Rigorous practice and intensive training helps athletes break records and accomplish their goals. Besides this, functional and innovative sportswear provides a competitive edge to sports persons, bringing them a step closer to their objective of winning. Hence, like the renowned global sports brands we are building technology in our products. New and innovative fabric technologies are being used to help the wearer improve his performance. Fibers that are light weight, soft, easy to maintain, do not shrink, and dry quickly are normally used. We are also launching a new range of footwear for runners and specialized footwear for sports like badminton, tennis, cricket, hockey and football. We have also undertaken projects for building running tracks, hockey fields, badminton and tennis, football fields etc in various states which are at par with global standards



What is the latest in product range that Shiv Naresh had researched developed and launched in the market, particularly in India?

We have an exciting pipeline of new and Innovative Products and Categories. Diversifying into newer Growth Categories in Footwear, Women etc. We have also developed a roadmap to achieve our sustainability vision. For us, Green is the new Black for the future.

What differentiates Shiv Naresh from rest of its competitors across markers of cost, quality, range and durability?

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What are your Expansion Plans?

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GONE IN TWELVE SECONDS



Tashi Tobgyal

Command centre to drones, officials had a long, hectic day

MALAVIKA PRASAD
NOIDA, AUGUST 28

ALL EYES were on Noida as the Supertech twin towers were demolished at 2.30 pm Sunday leaving a large dust cloud in its wake. A deafening roar was heard as the implosion happened and slight tremors were felt in areas lying in the vicinity of the towers.

In the hours leading up to the demolition, the vicinity saw a flurry of activity with top officials taking stock of preparations from an incident command centre, drones monitoring the towers, and tankers and anti-smog stationed to carry out the clean-up. Roads in the exclusion zone, including those right outside such as portions of Gehja road and Jaypee flyover, had heavy police barricading, with entry restricted to the general public. An incident command centre was parked on Jaypee flyover where Noida Police, along with traffic police personnel, had been monitoring the situation since early Sunday.

The incident command centre was a hub of activity — two large LED TVs fed CCTV footage of cameras placed around the twin towers, personnel monitored the on-ground situation, along with radio equipment through which all police personnel were connected to the centre.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, DCP (Central Noida) and Incident Commander Rajesh S said, "The incident command centre is a mobile unit. We get feed from seven CCTV cameras positioned around the exclusion zone, which is being monitored at the centre. We have two traffic police personnel who are monitoring traffic and giving live updates, including diversions and congestion points... We have one expert from radio department. There are five incident sub-commanders who will communicate with me through radio. Before the demolition, I will take an okay signal from all incident sub-commanders, and six people who are allowed at the site will conduct a final round of inspection. There is an initiation point which is around 100-120 metres away from the towers, where I will be present at an incident command

post. Once the sub-commanders give okay signals, I will give a signal to the blast team and the countdown will begin."

DCP Traffic Ganesh Prasad Saha was also present at the flyover and monitored traffic along the Noida-Greater Noida expressway and other areas via CCTV footage. On the impact of demolition on traffic, Saha said earlier in the day, "Since 7 am the roads around the towers were barricaded and entry of vehicles/persons was prohibited. People who are evacuating are allowed to do so but other than them, no one can enter the vicinity of the towers. Traffic on Noida-Greater Noida expressway is normal at the moment. The expressway will be shut down 15 minutes before the demolition. Post demolition, once dust settles down, we will try our best to open the expressway in half an hour. Managing closure of the expressway will be the biggest challenge for the Noida Police. A lot of commuters use it to reach the airport or for long journeys, for them, we have laid down diversion schemes. Google Maps has an auto-update so commuters can access alternate routes."

Several key faces, including Utkarsh Mehta and Mayur Mehta of Edifice Engineering, the firm responsible for razing the towers, were spotted entering the centre, along with an official from Jet Demolition. Joint Commissioner of Noida Police, Love Kumar, was also seen inspecting preparations. Addressing the press, Kumar said, "A 400-500 metre exclusion zone has been created, which has been



Traffic along the Noida-Greater Noida expressway and other areas was monitored via CCTV footage. Abhinav Saha

The twin towers, Apex and Ceyane, came down at exactly 2.30 pm, after months of preparation, and a plume of dust engulfed the area for 15 minutes. Monojit Majumdar

barricaded and entry of people is prohibited... Ambulances have been positioned at strategic points. Post-blast cleaning equipment by Noida Authority has been put in place along with fire tenders. Residents from both Supertech Emerald Court and ATS Village have been evacuated. Evacuation has been carried out and ensured by committees formed by RWAs. Only a few people who are involved in the demolition preparations are on site, they will also be evacuated before the time allotted for demolition."

At noon, water tankers were seen arriving at the flyover just as Noida Police commissioner Alok Singh arrived at the command centre. District Magistrate Suhas LY was also present, who along with Singh took note of preparations and the on-ground situation accessible through the centre. Addressing the press, Singh

said, "For the past six months, preparations have been carried out by several agencies for the demolition. Noida Police will follow orders of the Supreme Court to the best of their abilities. We have created an exclusion zone, and all living beings from this zone have been evacuated including pets and strays. Sub-incident commanders are inspecting assigned areas, and we are also monitoring on-ground situation through this command centre. Edifice Engineering has factored in the distance between one of the towers in Emerald Court and the twin towers, and in case there is an emergency, the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) teams have been strategically deployed to look after it." Singh then went to meet NDRF officials.

At around 1.30 pm, CEO Noida Authority Ritu Maheshwari arrived at the centre. With around half an hour left for demolition, Noida Police sent drones towards the towers to take a final look around. Countdown began with barely minutes to the demolition, and with a deafening noise the towers came down. Dust was seen flying into the parks facing the towers, and it began to dissipate shortly after.

At this point, large anti-smog guns were switched on. As part of the dust management plan of the Authority, tankers began spraying roads with water. Around 4.30 pm, mechanical sweeping machines and sanitation staff were deployed for the cleaning process with more water tankers.

Expert recounts: When the explosives went off, I said 'thank you, lord'

JIGNASA SINHA
NOIDA, AUGUST 28

"WHEN THE 3,700 kg of explosives went off, I said 'thank you, lord'. We are all very emotional right now... Placing different explosives at different places, deciding magnitude and mass of these — all done to minimise damage... it was challenging," said Jet Demolition managing director Joe Brinkmann about the Supertech twin towers demolition on Sunday. Over 3,700 kg of explosives was used, and the explosion was carried out with the waterfall implosion technique.

"We can't blast everything thumbs down. It has to be in a way that all rubble falls a bit distant from each other. If we dropped everything straight down, the rubble would have fallen at much more distance, impacting buildings and lives. Also, there would have been a higher ground vibration and higher air blast," said Joe.

For the South-African company, the Supertech towers is their second biggest project (in terms of the height of the building). The biggest demolition was the one in Johannesburg in 2019 — the company demolished the Bank of Lisbon, a 108-metre-high

EXPLAINED

The explosives used

OFFICIALS said different types of explosives with different masses were placed in the towers. "As per our calculations, we placed them differently and strategically. Mainly, PETN and emulsion explosive were used. We need to match explosives with the breaking effect. In some special areas, the emulsion was used. In the building, lower floors have more reinforcement. As we are drilling specific holes, so usually PETN is used, but emulsion is also used to fill holes better in lower floors," said Jet Demolition managing director Joe Brinkmann. Similarly, explosives with more mass were placed on the lower floors as those have stronger columns. On the upper floors, fewer mass explosives were placed.

Other types of explosives used were Solar coal. Electric detonates and shock tubes were also used. The tubes were placed in a way that some had a 0.5-millisecond explosion capacity, while others had a 7,000-millisecond capacity.

building, in less than 30 seconds. However, Joe and his team had much more difficulty demolishing the Supertech towers that are nearly 100 metres tall. "It's weird because the closest building to the bank was hardly 78 metres. In Noida, the closest building was 9 metres but it was still a difficult task. Here, we have a robust concrete structure filled with steel reinforcement," said Joe.

The company worked closely with Edifice Engineering, the firm

in charge of the project. Edifice's partner Utkarsh Mehta called the explosion 'a planned fall'. "We were apprehensive that rubble will touch the ATS tower compound wall as the twin towers are oblong shaped. The wall was damaged but that was it. The closest building being 9 metres away from the towers was not damaged. We had anticipated the rubble will fall towards ATS and on the roadside, and the results were the same. The ATS building is safe.

From tomorrow, excavators will be used to remove debris. Two are already in place. Since the size of the rubble is big, it will be first broken down into smaller pieces. It will then be segregated. Pure concrete will be sent to one plant and steel to another. Over 100 workers will be deployed every day," he said.

Edifice claimed 9 metres of the boundary wall was damaged at ATS. Nearly, 900 bricks and several windows were also damaged. Edifice will be working with the Ramky Group for debris management. The latter has a plant at Noida Sector 18, where all debris will be collected and processed to make blocks, bricks or slabs.

"When 60% of Ceyane tower was down, Apex building started crumbling. Everything happened in 10-12 seconds. The debris is not even two floors tall as it is scattered. None of the parks or residential areas were damaged," said Mehta.

His team put over 10 black boxes and 70-80 crack gauges to study the damage on Emerald Court and other buildings. "We have analysed three crack gauges, and the cracks which were there before and today were almost the same. Since no debris went there, there can't be damage," added Mehta.

SOME STILL PAYING OFF LOANS

'Still waiting for refund': For buyers in twin towers, demolition is cold comfort

ARNAV CHANDRASEKHAR
NOIDA, AUGUST 28

THE DEMOLITION of Supertech twin towers is cold comfort for those who bought homes in Apex and Ceyane, with some of them still waiting for compensation.

"I had originally invested in a property worth Rs 42 lakh in the Ceyane tower, in 2010. When the structure was declared illegal, it was a blow to my entire family. Both the builders and the Noida

Authority are responsible. If it was illegal, it should not have been approved in the first place... it just became a tower of corruption," said real-estate businessman Punjit Marwaha (53).

Marwaha said based on the Supreme Court order that buyers were to receive a refund with 12.5% interest, he is owed a sum of over Rs 80 lakh. "For part of the value owed to me, I've been provided a plot in another one of Supertech's properties. A sum of Rs 31.5 lakh is still pending...

Seeing the towers come down was not pleasant, since my hard-earned money is invested."

Accountant Kshitij Verma (43), also a flat owner, agreed: "We took a loan to get a property worth Rs 26 lakh in 2011. We thought everything was legitimate and formalities were done. The stress of the matter took a toll on my father's health. We are still waiting for the refund, since without it we cannot buy another property, and the whole time we have been paying interest."



Residents watch the demolition, Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

Supertech had earlier said they had not made deviations from the building plans, and had acted in accordance with the then building-by-laws. They added that a Supreme Court order had found the building unsatisfactory on "technical grounds" and that they respected the apex court order.

"We... are committed to deliver to remaining homebuyers under the scheduled time frame. We assure all our home buyers that the order of the Supreme Court will not affect any other

project," the group said. Another homebuyer, Bholu Nath Verma, was among the luckier ones: "We had paid Rs 40 lakh for a flat in Ceyane in 2009. We've been paid back the money owed except for a balance of Rs 4 lakh."

UK-based Shobhit Gupta (45), who works in retail, said, "We had taken a Rs 50 lakh loan in 2009. When the original order came, it was frustrating as it was supposed to have been properly approved. We were offered an installment-based plan, but were not confident

about it. So we opted to take another Supertech property in exchange for the one we'd bought."

Commenting on the demolition, he said, "In a way, there was also a sense of closure after the towers went down. But at the same time, we couldn't get the flat we wanted and had paid for. In the end, I think it's a lesson for society that such a thing could happen, with norms being flouted."

When asked about the refunds, a Supertech spokesperson declined to comment.



(From left) Gaurav Mehrotra, safety incharge at Emerald Court; residents watching the demolition; evacuees being welcomed at their temporary stay; Nirmal Tandon, Emerald Court Ladies Association president, spent the day in her daughter's home in Silver City. Malavika Prasad/Tashi Tobgyal/Sukrita Baruah

BJP, SP spar over project

Lucknow: As the Supertech twin towers were demolished Sunday on orders of the Supreme Court, the ruling BJP government in Uttar Pradesh and the main Opposition Samajwadi Party got into a war of words.

In a tweet on Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya wrote, "The twin towers of Noida are a living example of corruption and anarchy during Akhilesh Yadav's and SP's tenure in power. Today, under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and under the BJP government, the building of corruption will be demolished. This is justice and rule of law."

The SP hit back, tweeting from its official Twitter handle: "Listen Keshav Prasad Maurya. The ones responsible for this building of corruption is the BJP. Because Supertech gives donations to BJP and they also sit with BJP people and work as middlemen. You should swear that you have not received money from Supertech and are not partners in their corruption." **ENS**

For Supertech neighbours, day began with nerves but ended in hope

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

WITH 30 seconds to go for 2.30 pm, a group of Supertech Emerald Court residents, gathered on a terrace in a nearby residential complex, began a countdown.

They came down to "... 5, 4, 3, 2, 1," but nothing happened. Amid murmurs, all their gazes remained fixed on the twin towers located in the residential complex in which they live. Around 40 seconds later, a muffled boom was heard and the towers began to collapse into clouds of dust. Shivani Goel (59) and Mamata Agrawal (57) — walking partners — held on to each other, until Agrawal began clapping and was joined by several other residents.

"I had been feeling anxious since morning, like I felt when I was a child and had an exam later in the day," said Goel. "I was praying to god for it to go smoothly. I was feeling most nervous for the people whose homes are in the building just a few metres away from the towers. But when I saw them go down, it looked like I had imagined it would go," she said.

Till 7 am on Sunday, cars streamed out of the Supertech Emerald Court complex and the neighbouring ATS Greens Village as the last remaining residents evacuated their homes before the demolition. A majority of residents had left the previous night.



Temporary arrangements for evacuees. Abhinav Saha

While many residents headed to the homes of their relatives or friends or to hotels, some of them decided to spend the day at neighbouring complexes which had opened up their clubhouses to accommodate the evacuees for the day.

"This is a battle we have been fighting for 10 years, we can't leave it at this last step. We should be here to see the demolition and to help other residents," Naresh Agarwal (62), treasurer of the Emerald Court Residents Welfare Association, said before the demolition. He and his wife spent the day at Parsvnath Prestige complex, barely half a kilometre away from the site.

"We have to be close to give confidence to all the other residents. We want to live as a community... My home is barely 30 metres from the demolition site but I am 100 per cent confident," he said.

F A Khan (62), his wife and

son spent the day in another neighbouring residential complex, Silver City. "It's a case our society has fought for 10 years and won, and we wanted to see its end. Watching it on TV is a different thing. I am sure our society will flourish after this. We used to not get any sunlight or wind in our home because of the towers," he said.

Most residents who were spending the day in neighbouring complexes had arrived with minimal belongings. Ekta Gupta said all she brought with her to Parsvnath Prestige were a fresh set of clothes for her family of four, in case they needed to spend the night there for any reason. For Gupta, the day was especially weighty. While her family lives on rent in another building in the Emerald Court complex, they own a flat in the Apex tower, one of the buildings which were demolished.

"It's a strange feeling that it will be coming down after all these years. We are one of the families which still have not received any refund for our flat," she said.

Soon after she settled her family in their place of shelter for the day, Gupta began looking around for a good vantage point to view the demolition.

At the Parsvnath Prestige society, gardeners were put to work to prune some trees to ensure a clear vantage point from the

ground as well. But most Supertech residents made their way to the terrace by 2.15 pm.

The residents' welfare association of Parsvnath complex had made arrangements for residents in six rooms at its clubhouse with mattresses laid down at the squash court, table tennis room, and 'ladies spa'. They had also arranged for breakfast, lunch, evening snacks and tea throughout the day for the residents.

"Around 150 people had confirmed they would spend the day here today but we made arrangements for some additional people, just in case," said RWA president Rajnish Nandan.

At Silver City, the RWA had set up cots and mattresses on the floor of their large clubhouse hall, and had also arranged breakfast, lunch and snacks.

While the air appeared to have cleared 20 minutes after the demolition, the primary worry for residents remains whether the dust will affect them.

Nirmal Tandon (79), president of the Emerald Court ladies club, spent the day in her daughter's home in Silver City. "I have been sharing newspaper clippings on precautions and potential health hazards with my club members. My only concern is the after effect of the dust, especially on senior citizens. I will spend a few days in my daughter's home, I'm not hurrying back to mine," she said.

Some residents return home: 'No damage, just some dust'

ARNAV CHANDRASEKHAR
NOIDA, AUGUST 28

HOURS AFTER the Supertech twin towers were brought down in a controlled demolition, residents of the adjoining Supertech Emerald Court Society began to trickle back in, with some pleasantly surprised at the lack of damage and glad to see their worries laid to rest.

For home caterer Ekta Gupta (45), it was a relief to see her home unscathed when she returned around 8 pm — the tower she lives in, Bluestone 2, is within 50 metres of the demolished towers. "There was no damage... We had taken precautions for windows and glass items using bubble wrap but it was not necessary — the plan went perfectly. The only issue we are facing is dust in the balcony," she said.

Her relief was bittersweet — Ekta is among those who had bought a flat in the demolished buildings. "We had taken a loan and bought one for Rs 40 lakh in Apex tower. We are still waiting for the compensation," she said.

Another resident, school uniform supplier Priyanka Gupta (47), was impressed by the relative cleanliness of the society — she, too, only had to deal with dust in her balcony. "The sky is clear, and I don't have any difficulty breathing," she said.

Not everyone has returned though. Priyanka said, "In my tower, Emperor 3, I think I am one of the only people to return. There aren't many people in the neighbouring tower either. I hear some residents made vacation plans."

At Aspire 4 tower, home-maker Mamta Agrawal (57) was all praise for residents of neighbouring society, Parsvnath Prestige, where she and many others stayed while waiting out the demolition. "They treated us very well... it was almost like a *baraat*." "Nothing in her home was damaged, though she now faces the task of unpacking household items. "We had packed and taken some things just in case, but it seems nothing went wrong."

Other residents are taking a more cautious approach. Nirmal Tandon (79), president of the Emerald Court Ladies Association, is waiting out the night in her daughter's home in Silver City, instead of returning to her home in the Emperor 2 tower.

She said, "We saw a lot of dust and heard window panes got cracked somewhere. But we've been told a lot of workers were sent to clean the society, so hopefully it will be clean. Tomorrow I will send my driver to check how the situation is, and how much dust is there. Being a senior citizen, one has to be health-conscious."

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NATIONAL SPORTS DAY



Celebrating the Successful Phase of Sports in India

"IT is not my country's duty to push me ahead. It is my duty to push my country ahead." These words of Indian field hockey legend, Major Dhyan Chand Singh, reflect the zealous dedication, unwavering resolve, heightened sense of purpose and the single-minded pursuit of excellence that is ingrained in every Indian sportsperson, who is driven by immense national pride to exceed expectations as a global sports representative of the country.

The occasion of the forthcoming National Sports Day, on the 29th of August, provides us the perfect opportunity to celebrate the achievements, victories, grit, dedication and the hard work of our country's sports personalities. India has been celebrating its National Sports Day annually since 2012 on August 29 to commemorate the birth anniversary of the renowned Indian field hockey phenomenon, Major Dhyan Chand Singh, who has been rightly hailed as "The Wizard" of hockey owing to his prowess that was instrumental in India bringing home the gold medal in Olympics in the

years- 1928, 1932 and 1936 and him scoring over 1000 goals in his illustrious career.

The commendable performance of the Indian team in the recently held 2022 Commonwealth Games in England's Birmingham, where India won a total of 61 medals, has given every Indian an added reason to rejoice on our 10th National Sports Day. The 210-member strong team that represented India at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, competed in 16 sports and did the nation proud by winning a total of 22 gold medals, 16 silver medals and 23 bronze medals, which helped India gain 4th position in the competition. The fact that Indian sportswomen won 23 medals, reflects the changing face of the country, where more and more women are feeling empowered to break the mould and participate in sports and are also receiving the support that they need to pursue and flourish in their sports careers. The motivation of our sportspersons is at an all-time high. India is witnessing an unprecedented level of success in various tournaments and winning accolades in all



types of sports. The various initiatives taken by our government for promoting sports in the country have aided in fostering an environment where sports is thriving.

For a fast-growing economy, such as India, where the sports industry has attained a faster growth than the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and where 66% of the total population is below the age of 35 years, the future of sports holds immense potential. Apart from having access to world-class training facilities and receiving training from experts, nutrition is a key factor that makes all the difference in a sportsperson's journey to success. Steadfast Nutrition, India's premium sports nutrition brand, has established itself as the most trusted and preferred choice of athletes, sportspersons and

sports enthusiasts globally, who are looking for high-quality supplements. Mr Aman Puri, the founder of India's fastest-growing sports nutrition brand- Steadfast Nutrition, says, "Supplements give you an edge in your training when taken along with a healthy diet. They make it easier to obtain the nutrients needed to build muscle and improve stamina and performance."

Steadfast Nutrition, which has revolutionized sports nutrition in India, has been committed to making top-grade nutritional supplements easily accessible to Indian sportsmen. The brand has catapulted various Indian athletes to award-winning performances in countless national and international sports events, including the Olympics. Indian Steadfast Athletes of international repute include:

Nilakanta Sharma:
The Indian hockey team's mid-fielder helped his team win a silver in the Commonwealth Games 2022. The

27-year-old Steadfast Athlete has contributed immensely to the team's performance since he broke into the senior squad in 2017. Nilakanta has established his position in the team owing to his perfect balance of offensive and defensive. He credits his tremendous form to hard work and Steadfast Nutrition's energy and recovery supplements. He says, "Hockey is a physically demanding sport. One cannot do without taking supplements."

Priyanka Mohite:
The 30-year-old made India proud by becoming the first Indian woman to climb five peaks above 8,000 m. The Steadfast Athlete ascended the third highest peak in the world, Mount Kanchenjunga, which is 8586 m above sea level. Priyanka says there was no food at high altitudes, and she used Steadfast Peanut Butter and a protein supplement, Power Active, to keep her going in the

crucial final 2000 m climb.

Dalima Chhibber: The defender in the Indian Women's Football team has made a mark for herself in the Indian team ever since she made her debut for India at the South Asian Games in 2016. Dalima, who was awarded the Most Valuable Player of the Tournament at the 2019 SAFF Women's Championship, emphasizes the importance of healthy diet, good nutrition and supplements, which according to her, are integral to an athlete's performance and recovery.

Our National Sports Day is a time to reflect on how with the power of right nutrition and the best training our sportsmen can go from strength to strength. It is also a day to acknowledge and celebrate sports' unique ability to not only contribute to the growth of India's economy but also help boost national integration among our diverse population.



Saluting the Spirit of Sports & Fitness Enthusiasts

on the occasion of

NATIONAL SPORTS DAY



14 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

AAP is a party of highs and lows — high on liquor, lies and deceit, and low on morals and ethics. It has become a habit for them to shoot and scoot. Have you got the answers to the five questions we have raised to them on the liquor scam?



WHY ANURAG THAKUR

One of the prominent young leaders of the BJP and a four-time Lok Sabha MP from Himachal Pradesh, Anurag Thakur, who has headed the youth wing of the party and was MoS for Finance and Corporate Affairs during the COVID-19 pandemic, is at present Union Minister for Information and

Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports. Former president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Thakur is a voice of the government and has been at the forefront of the BJP's political attack on Aam Aadmi Party on the excise policy, which has now been withdrawn.



We should check how many freebies are being given and if they are only for political gain or for things that are necessary... There should be a debate on how many freebies can a particular state give out

Liz Mathew: I have been seeing you since you were just an MP, then, the head of the youth wing of the party, then you became MoS, handling the Finance Ministry during a crisis like the pandemic, then you became a Cabinet Minister. What have been the challenges in this journey?

My father was a professor in Jalandhar and wanted me to join the Armed Forces. But at the age of 11, I ran away from home for a couple of days to play cricket. I started playing for Jalandhar district, then became captain of Punjab, but my father suffered a heart attack. I was the eldest son and he wanted me to leave cricket and do something else. So I started an export house with my cousins at the age of 20. I moved again and became a cricket administrator. I never thought of joining politics but contested a by-election and entered the 14th Lok Sabha. I was lucky enough to be re-elected in the 15th, 16th and then the 17th Lok Sabha.

Liz Mathew: Both in the Finance Ministry and in Youth Affairs and Sports, there have been many challenges. So what are the big things that you are focusing on right now?

If I were to talk about finance, I think it was a great learning experience for me because of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nobody knew what to do, how to get out of it, the way forward, but after 7-10 days I started meeting the Prime Minister every morning — me, Nirmalaji (Nirmala Sitharaman) and Amit bhai (Amit Shah). There were day-long meetings, starting at 9.30 in the morning, with only a lunch break for an hour-and-a-half. In that time, I had to go home, eat lunch, and call at least 10 to 15 district DCs or SPs or ministers. Every minister was given a state or a couple of states to speak to various people to get feedback for what was happening in the states.

(Coming to sports), it is a state subject so we have limitations. I can give something for the elite athletes, I can start a few more centres, I can handhold the federation for their annual calendar and the training expenses, I can allow them to host big events like we did for the Chess Olympiad. We have the support of the Prime Minister to make India a sporting nation but it's a state subject and that creates a big challenge.

Liz Mathew: What do you feel about consolidation of corporate power in the media and what's your take on what has happened in the last one week?

Any Indian can invest in any company, I believe. And there is nothing new in corporates investing in companies.

Liz Mathew: But when there is consolidation of corporate power in the media.

Nobody forced them to get the corporate on board. Can I restrict corporates? Can I restrict institutes to invest? No. If they're doing it as per the law of the land, as per the policy, one should be open to looking at that.

Liz Mathew: Many people have apprehensions about the way the media is going and the impact that it will have on democracy. As a politician, what do you feel about it?

I have a lot of faith in the Indian media. There should not be any fear. I think there's enough competition in this field. I personally feel they should be technology-driven. People should be paid well because of the kind of hard work they put in. I see people waiting for hours just to take a byte, or for a 20-second video.

Ritu Sarin: So what in your view are the challenges before the Indian media today? Are you concerned about our falling rankings in the World Press Freedom Index? We were 142 last time, we are 150 now. I believe the government has also set up a committee to try and improve it. So is this one area of concern, and what are the other areas?

There's a big question mark on the people who did the survey. Did they meet any of you when they did the survey? The credibility also comes from the organisation and the people they meet in India. Nobody's putting pressure on anyone to restrict anyone... There might be a few people from different political parties who might be reaching out for favours. I'm not going to comment on them. Since five days they haven't answered the five questions asked. We are talking about *Ram rajya*, they are talking about *rum rajya*.

Ritu Sarin: So this ranking doesn't have much credibility in your view? And is it true that a committee has been set up

'Despite corruption charges, AAP is not willing to answer questions. They're drunk on power'

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Thakur, on AAP and its contentious excise policy, consolidation of corporate power in the media, and dynasty politics. The session was moderated by Deputy Political Editor Liz Mathew



Anurag Thakur, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, in conversation with Liz Mathew, Deputy Political Editor, *The Indian Express* Abhinav Saha

to try and improve the ranking?

If my country's media doesn't have any difficulty and can work freely and the environment doesn't impose any restrictions on them, then India doesn't need a certificate from any other country. If you think we have restricted you in any way, then I'm here to listen to you. But if anyone comes with an agenda and gives a rating, I don't want to comment on it. It doesn't affect me.

Sandeep Dwivedi: In the Commonwealth Games we won medals in disciplines where we generally, historically, didn't do well. So now there is this push for India going for events where there are more medals, like athletics and swimming. As a minister, what is your vision? Do you want to focus on your traditional strength or want to take this big leap? And how will you do that?

There are new disciplines, games where India has started doing very well, where we didn't see any medal in the past. We have put in effort towards the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, by pumping in money, taking care of their boarding, lodging and training facilities, not only locally but globally, their participation in events locally as well as globally, everything is taken care of by the Government of India. In addition, six lakh rupees per annum is given as an out-of-pocket allowance, which has never happened before.

Second is the Khelo India Youth Games and the University Games, which created a pipeline or bench strength for future events. Corporates are also pitching in by starting their academies or centres, or picking a few players to help them financially. I personally feel our players should get more leagues and tournaments. Another is a trainer's programme to train our trainers to the next level. Third is research and development — we should pump in more money there.

Liz Mathew: Now that elections in Himachal Pradesh are nearing and seeing that you take on the AAP every day, are you going for a bigger role in state politics?

AAP is a party of highs and lows — high on liquor, lies and deceit, and low on morals as well as ethics. It has become a habit for them to shoot and scoot. Have you got the answers to the five questions we have raised to them on the liquor scam? No, I, as a BJP MP, have the right to ask questions on the liquor scam. But the accused in the scam, (Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister) Manish Sisodia, and the kingpin of the liquor scam, Arvind Kejriwal, did not say even a word on the questions raised by the BJP in the last five-seven days. Their first Health Minister (Satyendar Jain) is in jail,

their Health Minister in Punjab (Vijay Singla) is facing corruption charges and is also in jail. Despite the corruption charges, they've abandoned decency. They're drunk on power. They're not willing to answer any questions.

Liz Mathew: In the AAP press conference, they raised some allegations against the BJP. You raised some allegations, you said it was a quid pro quo. This money has gone to Punjab. You both don't give us any proof or evidence that this money was spent in the Punjab election. Where's the proof or evidence?

Proof is in the documents of the Delhi government. I'll ask you one thing, why was there a deviation from the policy? They (the expert panel) had given a notice on October 25, 2021 to the companies... what action was taken? There were clear recommendations that the manufacturer, retailer and distributor cannot be one. The commission (for the government) was raised from 2 to 12 per cent. Why was it raised? Where has the money gone? When poor people were running away from Delhi (during the Covid lockdown), the Delhi government had given Rs 144 crore (in the form of waivers) to liquor vendors. It should have gone to the Delhi exchequer. Why were they refunded? Not a single person from AAP has answered these questions. All they say is that this is a beautiful policy. If it was such a good policy then why has it been rolled back? AAP has swindled money. They've been unjust to the people of Delhi.

Nihal Koshie: Whenever there is this debate by the BJP about dynastic politics, the Opposition brings the example of BCCI where you have relatives of officials taking over from them. What do you have to say about it?

I'm glad you raised this question. But are they democratically elected by the

members of the BCCI? Yes, they are. Voters have elected them. They are not appointed. There's a big difference.

Harikesh Sharma: How do you see the removal of popular leaders like Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Nitin Gadkari from the top decision-making body of the party?

It's an ongoing process. Once it was Atal Bihari Vajpayee, LK Advani and Murlu Manohar Joshi. From time to time, the party takes decisions that are in its favour. If the party decides that we should leave our ministerial post and work as party workers in a state, we will happily accept that. This is BJP's speciality. This is why Narendra Modi is the PM of the country while the Gandhis have only captured their party. Now Ghulam Nabi Azad and several veteran leaders have resigned from the Congress because the party is not able to escape the clutches of one family. This is the difference between the BJP and other parties.

Harikesh Sharma: Will the BJP welcome Azad?

He is a senior politician, he can take his own decisions. Give him some time to decide. I have good personal relations with him. This is one of the advantages of being in Parliament. I have good relations with senior and junior leaders. I have good relations with Rahul Gandhi too.

Liz Mathew: There is no camaraderie between the ruling party members and the Opposition benches now. Even in states, every other regional party has this complaint that the federal structure is in danger and the BJP is using its brute majority to just bulldoze things.

I enjoy very good relations with others. I think Central Hall is one place where people don't restrict themselves just to their party members but engage with oth-

ers too. There is an exchange of ideas in Central Hall and outside also. Earlier, politicians were there in Parliament for a long time. Today, there is churning because new faces are entering Parliament.

Divya A: In the recent Punjab Assembly elections, AAP had massive success. Do you think their plank of health and education will resonate with Himachal Pradesh and later Haryana?

I request you to visit Punjab today. You will see the scene on the ground after four months. (There have been) more than 30 murders in broad daylight. It has the worst law and order situation. Whether people are comfortable under AAP rule in Punjab or not, I request you to do a survey on that. They talked about corruption, but they had to kick out their Health Minister in Punjab within two months. People have seen the mohalla clinic turn to mohalla *theka* (liquor shop). You can't find medicines there but you can find booze at every doorstep. Nobody's looking at that model. They won't win a single seat in Himachal Pradesh. The people of Himachal have understood how the arrival of AAP in Punjab has led to crime, murders and corruption.

Divya A: This government is using social media in a big way to reach out to people. There's a perception that at times it is being used to delegitimise mainstream media. At times, questions are raised on individual journalists.

Fake news sometimes creates tension in society. It's very important to cross-check news. If fake news about our friendly nations is being published, it is against India. Those activities are illegal. More than 102 such web portals, YouTube channels and websites have been banned. None of them were from mainstream media. We should ban websites and YouTube channels and flag videos that spread fear, superstition and rumours. If an individual is running an outlet that is publishing credible news, we have no problem with that.

Vandita Mishra: You spoke about AAP and both Sisodia and Kejriwal, whom you called the kingpin of corruption. I see two issues here. One of propriety — as a senior minister, you are pronouncing on a chief minister and also on a state minister. The second is due process — as a minister who has to promote the practice of due process, when you say that a CM is corrupt, where is the due process?

If Kejriwal has any morality left, then he should answer the five questions I raised. Kejriwal is the kingpin of corruption and Sisodia is also involved. I will continue to

say that till they prove their innocence.

Aakash Joshi: Today, political parties, including AAP, take such maximalist positions in political speeches. Though necessary, do you think it will hamper the work the Centre and states have to do together as part of cooperative federalism?

When we were in the Opposition, I had to make a speech on the Commonwealth Games (CWG) scam. After the speech, a Congress leader got 10 other leaders of her party to my table in the Central Hall and told them she felt proud of what I had said. If I criticise the Congress, it's not as if we stop talking. It's only about highlighting what you have done and getting it into the public domain, whether it's in Parliament or on the street. I don't have an individual fight with anyone.

Liz Mathew: What's your take on the *revdi* or freebies culture?

We should check how many freebies are being given and if they are only for political gain or for things that are necessary... For example, when Telangana was formed, it had a lot of money. Today, it has a loan of around Rs 2 lakh crore. Where did the money go? Did it lead to any asset creation or was it spent on freebies? There should be a debate on how many freebies can a particular state give out.

Liz Mathew: Do you see giving rations to 800 million people as freebies?

It was the need of the hour because during the pandemic people were under a lockdown, they had no income.

Liz Mathew: When you hear about dynasty politics, do you feel uncomfortable?

Not at all. I got an opportunity to contest because I did well in the field of sports. My father's name is Prem Kumar Dhumal, my name is Anurag Singh Thakur, and my sons names are Udayveer and Jaiditya Singh. My sons don't use my surname. I don't use my father's name. But I'm proud of my father and what he has achieved as a farmer, professor and CM, and the way he did clean politics for more than four decades. Yes, I had an advantage. But when you talk about dynasty, it's about the political parties that are run by families. It's not about one seat... There they are holding power from Mulayam Singhji to Akhilesh (Samajwadi Party), from Karunanidhi to MK Stalin (DMK). Similarly, N Chandrababu Naidu to others (TDP), from Mamata Banerjee to Abhishek Banerjee (TMC) and Pandit Nehru to Indira Gandhi to Rajiv Gandhi to Sonia Gandhi to Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi (Congress)... They are holding power for so many years.



I got an opportunity to contest because I did well in the field of sports... Yes, I had an advantage. But when you talk about dynasty, it's about the political parties that are run by families. It's not about one seat

Kane leads Spurs to win over Forest; Gerrard under fire

REUTERS AUGUST 28

HARRY KANE missed a penalty but scored twice to surpass 200 league goals in his career and give Tottenham Hotspur a 2-0 victory at Nottingham Forest that kept up their strong start to the Premier League season.

Forest, who have signed 17 players for about 150 million pounds (\$176 million) since promotion, made the early running before Spurs' prolific striker silenced the crowd with a low fifth minute strike from inside the penalty area.

Later, Kane uncharacteristically missed a penalty, before making amends with a close-range header in the 81st minute. That was his 201st club goal: 187 in the Premier League, nine in the Championship and five in League One.

Spurs' third victory in four games, plus one draw, left them third in the Premier League on 10 points - two behind north London rivals Arsenal who have had a flawless start.

Forest, roared on at a raucous City Ground which waited 23 years for top-flight football to return this year, had plenty of possession and chances. Lewis O'Brien forced a smart save while Morgan Gibbs-White shot just over. But Spurs are the counter-attack masters, and both Kane and strike partner Son Heung-min could have struck more.

Gerrard consoles fans

Aston Villa manager Steven Gerrard said he could understand some fans booing following a 1-0 home defeat by West Ham United on Sunday. Villa's third loss in four Premier League games. Gerrard's side were the better team in a dull first half but lacked attacking spark and were then undone late on by a deflected Pablo Fornals shot that looped over Emiliano Martinez.

Villa have managed only three goals in their opening four games and with leaders Arsenal away on Wednesday followed by a meeting with champions Manchester City, a poor start might be about to get even worse for Gerrard. "I have been in the game long enough. If you lose three games out of four it is not the start the supporters wanted and certainly not the start I wanted," he said. "Of course, I understand. I have two ears and I hear a lot of things. I heard the fans' frustration."

"So yeah, I pick up everything."

KEY RESULTS table with scores for Forest vs Tottenham, Wolves vs Newcastle, and Aston Villa vs West Ham.

The search for Serena's successor

Consistency has been rewarded for much of the 2022 WTA season but a US Open favourite is hard to pick

NAMIT KUMAR AUGUST 28

FEW CAN question Serena Williams' claim to the title of the greatest tennis player of her generation, and she did it with some style. Her dominance was unwavering throughout her career which saw her win 23 Grand Slam titles and end five years as the World No.1, but what was most remarkable was the consistency.

In the upcoming weeks, ahead of the Williams' US Open swansong, much will be made of her legacy, on and off the court. And a defining aspect of that legacy, an enduring reminder of her greatness, will be the consistency of her results on tour.

By 2007, Williams had already won seven Majors - four in a row between 2002-03 - which would have put her among some of the greats of the game. But in the next 12 years, the American did not fail to reach the final of at least one Grand Slam. She was undoubtedly the best player on the tour, and she had the results to show for it. The same can't be said about the players lining up to lift the US Open title next week.

Consistency has been rewarded on the women's tour this year. Iga Swiatek tops the list for match wins in 2022, which saw her 37-match winning streak take 4 WTA 1000 titles and a second French Open crown. Simona Halep, back from injury purgatory under a new coach, is second.

She opened the year with a title, reached the semifinals in Wimbledon, and won her first hardcourt title in 5 years at the WTA 1000 in Toronto this month.

Ons Jabeur, and Beatrice Haddad Maia are tied at third, and both produced their best on grass. Jabeur converted by reaching final at Wimbledon, backing up titles in Madrid and Berlin, as well as a final in Rome. In Cincinnati last week, Caroline Garcia became the first qualifier to win a WTA 1000 title. But the fact that she is fifth on this list shows that the result was less of a shock, and more of a reward for her consistency.

Swiatek is now the undisputed World No.1. Jabeur and Halep have consolidated their places in the top 10. Haddad Maia has risen nearly 70 places in the rankings since the start of the year, and Garcia is a few good results away from qualifying for the year-end Championships. Despite all of the consistent performances, the US Open feels more open than ever.

The same can be said about the men - both pre-US Open Masters tournaments were won by unseeded players - but in Rafael Nadal, who remains unbeaten at the Grand Slams this year, there is a clear favourite. In Carlos Alcaraz, there is a teenage sensation to support, and in Daniil



By 2007, Williams had already won seven Majors - four in a row between 2002-03 - which would have put her among some of the greats of the game.

Medvedev, despite a poor run to the Open, there are expectations on the defending champion and World No. 1.

Much of the unfairly perceived lack of quality in women's tennis recently has been due to the frequent chaos in the Majors. Consistency may be reflected in the rankings, but there is more attention and coverage in the two-week period of a Grand Slam - which used to be Williams' domain - than most of the year combined. The top players have not capitalised on that attention.

Who after Serena?

Since 2020, seven different players have won the 10 Grand Slams on the women's tour. In comparison, only four have won on the men's side, and eight of those have been split between Nadal and Novak Djokovic. The narrative around men's tennis' 'Big 3' is not based on who wins the most titles, or who finishes the most years at No. 1. The Majors are what matter, and neutral fans tune in to watch the trio compete for them year after year.

There are several valid debates around men's and women's tennis: Best-of-five vs best-of-three, the huge differences in prize money away from the Slams, the poor TV deals, how the women do not get equal claim to the stage. But take out the Big 3's domination of the Majors and similar chaos is likely to ensue.

MEN'S FIRST ROUND

- (1) Daniil Medvedev vs Stefan Kozlov
(24) Francisco Cerundolo vs Andy Murray
(4) Stefanos Tsitsipas vs Daniel Elahi Galan
Alexander Sitschard vs (6) Felix Auger-Aliassime
Kyle Edmund vs (5) Casper Ruud

WOMEN'S FIRST ROUND

- Danka Kovinic vs Serena Williams
Leolia Jeanjean vs (12) Coco Gauff
(7) Simona Halep vs Daria Snigur
Tatjana Maria vs (3) Maria Sakkari
(5) Ons Jabeur vs Madison Brengle

This year's US Open is likely to be no different. A dozen different players could emerge as contenders, and there are no clear favourites. Swiatek may be the top seed, and but the dust has settled from her

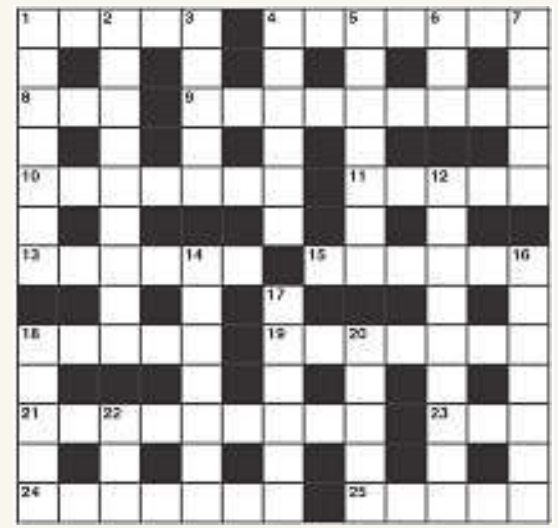
landmark summer, and a lacklustre buildup, as well as a tough quarter that has former Slam champions like Petra Kvitova, and exciting upstarts like Zhang Qinwen, could cause problems.

Halep has been solid all year, and with the Toronto title under her belt, confidence will be high. But the thigh injury that kept her out of Cincinnati last week might shake things up. She's in the same quarter as Garcia, who may be in the form of her life, but there are question marks over her ability to handle the pressure on the big stage.

Eyes are also on former champions Emma Raducanu, who is still in her first full year on tour and has struggled to keep up with the expectations that have followed her since her fairytale triumph in New York last year, and Naomi Osaka, who has not been the same dominant force she once was on hardcourts since her break last year to prioritise her mental health. They are both in the same quarter, alongside Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina and Australian Open finalist Danielle Collins, both of whom have plenty to prove.

Williams' farewell is likely to bring in the crowds, the anticipation, and the eyeballs, and rightly so. Few can argue she transcended the sport, and forever changed how women athletes are perceived. The big question, however, remains who can usher the women's game into the next generation?

CROSSWORD 4832



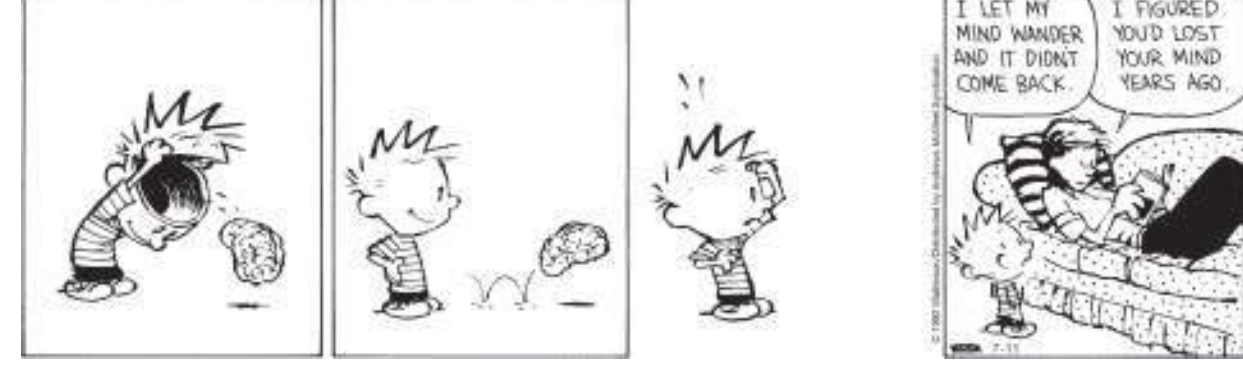
- ACROSS: 1 Quickly gets into underwear (5); 4 Was defiant in a way? Hardly! (7); 8 A snake appears so quietly (3); 9 Certainly not obtained without resources (2,2,5); 10 Gear for a new Renault (7); 11 Speak when you're spoken to (5); 13 Make harder to fathom? (6); 15 He may have set features at work (6); 18 Sailors may take a turn round them (5); 19 It's disturbing having the wrong spirit in work (7); 21 Communist and German worker no longer needed (9); 23 King emerging from bitter exile (3); 24 Many are found to follow Leviticus (7); 25 I raced around and looked (5).
DOWN: 1 Marked dates in wrongly (7); 2 Trumped in error that's indiscreet (9); 3 Like a judge with robes in disarray (5); 4 May be in leaf at last (6); 5 Shut up (7); 6 Leaves note attached to article (3); 7 What neglected study may easily become (5); 12 Pour or tip out a delightful mixture (9); 14 Concentration points to sound state of mind (7); 16 Slackened and become loose in a rush (7); 17 Animals unleashed on society? (6); 18 Restriction on a nobleman (5); 20 Ceremonies said to produce privileges (5); 22 Currency check? (3).

Solutions Crossword 4831: Across: 1 Astronomer, 8 Synod, 9 Colonel, 10 Precise, 11 Rondo, 12 Rimmed, 14 Adored, 17 Outdo, 19 Damsmen, 21 Italics, 22 Miner, 23 Greengages. Down: 2 Sunbeam, 3 Radli, 4 Nickel, 5 Mildred, 6 Run in, 7 Blood donor, 8 Supersonic, 13 Emotive, 15 Romance, 16 Cousin, 18 Twang, 20 Rumba.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

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

Word jumble puzzle with letters LTEEI, ATTNU, VITAS, DEIRFV and a grid of squares.

Sudoku puzzles: Difficulty Level 4s and 5s, with grids and solutions.

DAY TODAY BY PETER VIDAL

Daily horoscopes for Aries, Libra, Taurus, Scorpio, Gemini, Sagittarius, Cancer, Leo, Aquarius, Pisces, and Virgo.

PLAYING TODAY

TENNIS

US Open, 8.30pm, Live on Sony Sports Network

FOOTBALL

FIFA U-20 Women's WC final, 7.30am, Live on Sports-18; Durand Cup, 3pm, Live on Sports-18

BRIEFLY

Axelsen, Yamaguchi win 2nd world titles

Tokyo: Viktor Axelsen underlined his red-hot form and confidence when he won his second world badminton championship after beating first-time finalist Kunlavut Vitidsarn 21-5 21-16 on Sunday. Axelsen ran his winning streak to 37 matches, not having lost since March. Akane Yamaguchi won her second straight women's world title after overcoming Olympic champion Chen Yufei 21-12 10-21 21-14. Yamaguchi surprisingly didn't medal in her home Olympics in Tokyo a year ago but has rebounded with consecutive world crowns and the undisputed No. 1 ranking. Axelsen added to his first world title in 2017 by not dropping a game at Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium. AP

Vinerkar wins 10m air pistol T5 title

New Delhi: Ruchita Vinerkar of the Railways claimed the women's 10m air pistol T5 gold in the national shooting selection trials at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range here on Sunday. She shot 16 in the gold medal match to edge out Divya TS of Karnataka, who shot 14. Ruchita finished fourth in the qualifiers in the 294-strong field with a score of 576 after the allocated 60 shots. Divya was seventh with 574, while Maharashtra's Sakshi Suryavanshi topped with a score of 580. Haryana, however, claimed both the top spots in the junior women's T5 10m air pistol with Suruchi defeating Rhythm 17-15 in yet another close final. Suruchi had shot 568 to claim the seventh qualifying spot, while Rhythm was second with a score of 579. PTI

Green stars as Aus beat Zim in 1st ODI

Townsville: Cameron Green claimed his maiden five-wicket haul before David Warner and Steve Smith made light work of the run chase to set up a five-wicket victory for Australia over Zimbabwe in the first one-day match of a three-match series, the African nation's first one-day international series in the country since 2004. Green, took 5-33 as the tourists lost its last six wickets for 15 runs and was bowled out for 200. Australia then made light work of the run chase, as Warner scored 57 off 66 balls and Steve Smith played the anchor role of the innings to make an unbeaten 48 off 80 balls to set up the victory. AP

4 Indians make the cut in Sweden

Skafta (Sweden): Vani Kapoor and three other Indian women made the 36-hole cut at the Didriksons Skafta Open, a Ladies European Tour event, here on Sunday. Leading the Indians into the final round was Vani, who in a stretch of seven holes had five birdies on the front nine. She dropped one shot on the back nine to finish the day with a card of three-under 66. She was tied-32nd, while the other Indians making the cut were Tvesa Malik (69), Amandeep Drall (70) and Diksha Dagar (71), who all were T-45. The trio was two-over for 36 holes as the cut fell at three-over and 72 players made it. Neha Tripathi (69-69) finished four-over and Ridhima Dilawari (74-75) at five-over missed the cut. PTI

India bouncer back

India's pacers take all 10 wickets using an effective short ball strategy to put behind last year's wicketless outing in World Cup



EXPRESS IN UAE

SANDIP G DUBAI, AUGUST 28

AS BABAR Azam walked off, after he was rushed into a pull shot off Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Hardik Pandya galloped from mid-on, furiously wagging his index finger, implying that he masterminded the wicket, that it was his suggestion to bounce out the masterful Pakistan captain. Bhuvneshwar, unused to wild celebrations, nodded his head in approval.

Babar's was not the only wicket the short ball from the Indian quartet was to consume as the innings unfolded. The short-pitched balls were to be the kryptonite of the top-five batsmen. Shortly after Babar departed, Fakhr Zaman lashed his bat at a wide short ball off Avesh Khan, only for the extra bounce to defeat his purpose. Then Pandya inflicted triple blows off his short balls to eject Iftikhar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah and Mohammad Rizwan and crush the backbone of the Pakistan batting line-up. Each wicket was wildly celebrated by the Indian supporters, the bowler's name chanted like a divine mantra.

Less than 10 months ago had India's bowlers failed to prise out a single Pakistan wicket on a Sunday night of utter embarrassment. This night, they had plucked all 10, and fittingly all by their pace quartet of Bhuvneshwar, Avesh, Hardik and Arshdeep Singh. Before the match, all the chatter was about how India would cope with the absence of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, arguably the most devastating cross-format new-ball pair for India ever. And at their peak, two of the finest in the world, though they could not bargain a single Pakistan wicket on that gloomy night.

Therein lies the glorious irony of India's late



Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled just one short ball in his first spell — and that fetched the wicket of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam. AP

est bowling effort. None of them had the riveting pace of Bumrah, the smouldering sharpness of Shami, neither their gifts or guile. But they had the single-minded devotion to execute their plans. They came with a plan in place

and executed it with geometrical precision, neither under-doing nor over-doing it.

Quite often, bowlers would be reluctant in deploying a new tactic — short-pitched bowling was indeed a novelty tactic by the Indian

seamers. Or in their enthusiasm they would overuse it, more so if the team has two young seamers, still cutting their teeth at the international level. But all four maintained utmost composure.

It was expected of Bhuvneshwar, one of the coolest and underrated operators in world cricket around and one who could, on current form, walk into any team in the world. Nothing fizzes him, neither his fall from grace in Test cricket — not because of lack of skill or craft but because of repeated injuries — nor the occasion that is an India-Pakistan game. Without any hype or fanfare, he has evolved into a complete T20 bowler. There is nothing he cannot do — he can bowl yorkers, bouncers, cutters, slower balls, the knuckle trick, still swing it both ways when needed, and is well-schooled in manipulating the seam, upright, scrambled, side of the hand, back of the hand, he could choose his tools at his whim. Such superfluous gifts could confuse a bowler or clutter his mind, but Bhuvneshwar does not needlessly indulge in his variations. He has a sparkling sense of clarity, the game-awareness to understand what he needs to bowl at what time. For instance, he bowled just one short ball in his first spell — and that fetched the wicket of Babar.

Surprise weapon

A lot of batsmen discount Bhuvneshwar's deception with the short ball. His bouncers are not as devilish as Shami's or as thrilling as Bumrah's. His is the most innocuous, and batsmen don't expect to be hopped around by Bhuvneshwar, not least in the early exchanges. They expect him to nip the ball around at full length. His bouncers are quicker than they expect, a reason they feel tempted to pull and not weave away as they would have to against Shami or Bumrah. They feel compelled to play before they realise that the ball is rushing them, a yard quicker, an inch higher. Just the subtle changes one needs to dismiss the world's best batsmen.

Comparatively, Pandya dispenses the short balls more frequently. So, batsmen are not entirely caught off-guard. But he is adept at bowling different types of short balls. Not quite an Andy Roberts in range but still with enough ammo to rattle batsmen. The one to Rizwan was sharp and fast, angling in deviously and

following the batsman. Rizwan tried a ramp, but the ball just kept climbing. The one to Iftikhar was more short-of-length and more of a lifter as Bumrah would bowl it. Clearly, it was his effort ball, one could hear the grunt in his follow-through. Khushdil received a staple short ball, banged in properly short and slower than the Rizwan one, but the batsman could not get under the ball. Pandya, too, mixed his lengths, usually resorting to good and short of length before blasting in the bouncer.

The only natural bouncer bowler was Avesh. He, though, tends to bowl too short and provide batsmen ample time to get underneath it. But here he was thrifter and employed the bouncer as a surprise weapon. Not to forget the impressive Arshdeep, whose mastery of angles and relentless energy troubled Pakistan's openers. He does not purchase prodigious seam movement, or whip up disconcerting pace, or possess a rich repertoire of variations, but he doesn't pretend otherwise either. That trait applies for all four pacers. They are unpretentious, even unassuming, like Bhuvneshwar, but they could collectively achieve what Bumrah and Shami could not.

SCOREBOARD: Pakistan: M Rizwan c A Khan b H Pandya 43, B Azam c A Singh b B Kumar 10, F Zaman c D Karthik b A Khan 10, I Ahmed c D Karthik b H Pandya 28, K Shah c R Jadeja b H Pandya 2, S Khan lbw B Kumar 10, A Ali c S Yadav b B Kumar 9, M Nawaz c D Karthik b A Singh 1, H Rauf Not Out 13, N Shah lbw B Kumar 0, S Dahani b A Singh 16; **Extras:** 1B, 4W 5; **Total (19.5 overs):** 147 all out; **Fall of Wickets:** 1-15 Azam, 2-42 Zaman, 3-87 Ahmed, 4-96 Rizwan, 5-97 Shah, 6-112 Ali, 7-114 Nawaz, 8-128 Khan, 9-128 Shah, 10-147 Dahani; **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-26-4, Arshdeep Singh 3.5-0-33-2, Hardik Pandya 4-0-25-3, Avesh Khan 2-0-19-1, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-32-0, Ravindra Jadeja 2-0-11-0 **India:** R Sharma c I Ahmed b M Nawaz 12, L Rahul b N Shah 0, V Kohli c I Ahmed b M Nawaz 35, R Jadeja b M Nawaz 35, S Yadav b N Shah 18, H Pandya Not Out 33, D Karthik Not Out 1; **Extras:** 0B 5LB 9W 14 **Total (19.4 overs):** 148-5; **Fall of Wickets:** 1-1 Rahul, 2-50 Sharma, 3-53 Kohli, 4-89 Yadav, 5-141 Jadeja; **Bowling:** Naseem Shah 4-0-27-2, Shah Nawaz Dahani 4-0-29-0, Haris Rauf 4-0-35-0, Shadab Khan 4-0-19-0, Mohammad Nawaz 3.4-0-33-3

Pakistan's rising star Naseem Shah: Pace, skill, fighting spirit

SRIRAM VEERA MUMBAI, AUGUST 28

ON THE eve of Naseem Shah's departure from Pakistan for the Asia Cup, his mentor and son of Abdul Qadir Suleiman Qadir told him, "Ab aapki zindagi ki udaan shuru hue hain. (The time has come now for you to fly high in your life!) These six months, starting from Asia Cup, if you perform for Pakistan, then you will also become a super star like Shaheen Shah." Naseem, Suleiman says, promised him he will do his utmost best. "Banega superstar, aap dekhna!" (He will become a superstar, you wait and watch).

Naseem took his first steps on his actualising his promise on Sunday in Dubai right away from his first over. KL Rahul hung his bat out at a skidding thunderbolt outside off to drag it back onto his stumps. He then nipped one back in to Virat Kohli before cleverly dangling one full and well outside off — Kohli's nemesis in the last year and half — and nearly had his man but the second slip clanged a difficult chance. He then hurried both Kohli and Rohit Sharma. He returned later to take out Suryakumar Yadav with a fast straight one that rushed past the attempted big hit to knock out the off pole.

Not just mentors from home rave about him but one of the brainiest pacer of them all Andy Roberts too has been keeping a close eye



Naseem Shah claimed two wickets for 27 runs against India. Reuters

on him. Seven years ago or thereabouts, Roberts had worked with Shah during a three-week pace camp in Lahore.

"Wonderful talent, I remember. Just a

young kid then. You see young talent and see some good stuff but this boy was something else. Had everything: pace, skill to move the ball, and was aggressive — he was very eager to

learn," Roberts says.

The talent and eagerness had obviously stayed with Roberts who recalled the last day of the camp. "He was almost crying, tears in his eyes that I was leaving and camp was ending. I used to wonder what happened to him."

Good and bad things have happened to him since then. In 2019, on his debut tour to Australia, a night before a tour game in Perth, Babar Azam was shaken by a WhatsApp call from Qadir's son Suleiman from Lahore. Naseem's mother had died, and Suleiman, who had taken in a fresh-faced teenager at his Abdul Qadir Academy, wanted the team to break the news gently. "Let him sleep now, no point in waking him and shock him. Please tell the manager to tell the news gently to him," Suleiman recalled telling Babar.

Not long after Roberts left, a serious back injury had Naseem worried about his future. That's when he ran into Mudassar Nazar, the former player who runs the National cricket Academy.

"Not just one but three stress fractures on the back," Mudassar told this newspaper.

"Mera kya hoga, sir? (What will happen to me?) Will I be able to play again? Will I be able to bowl as fast as before? Baccha tha, young boy, he used to keep asking and I would keep counseling him that he can if he works hard. His friends and peers like Musa Khan and Hasnain Mohammad were all going past him

and that also makes one wonder, na?"

Mudassar suggested a few course corrections: the action was modified a bit. "His front leg was going too far across at the crease, twisting his back, and that was changed. His overall strength was increased. All this means, not only did he have to do gym sessions but also change his action — and practise it a lot to make it natural." Naseem was at it for 9 months.

The real deal "To bowl fast, you need to be aggressive and you need to want to bowl fast. It causes pain to the body and you need to withstand it. It's the nuances that Mudassar strived to inculcate. "The angles, for example. How to use the crease better. I would say something about the need to bowl from round the stumps and he would quickly pick it up and do it in training. How to bowl different lengths. But I would say he was already really good when he came to me."

How far can the boy go? Couple of years ago, Mudassar Nazar predicted in this newspaper: "All the way, I would say. He is the real deal. From what I see, he has everything, it's up to him now." Roberts says.

Suleiman was at Shah's house for the mother's funeral. "I spoke to him that day. And told him 'remember how happy your mother would be. You are born to do this: be a great fast bowler, just focus on it.' What did he say? 'I will try my best. Playing for Pakistan has been my dream. Mein karoonga."

An overenthusiastic 'keeper, a star whose poor form goes under the radar

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER



Avesh's efforts pay off

The other day at the training session, Avesh Khan was incensed as he was made to put through an extended spell of catching practice under the searing Dubai sun. After a while, he threw the ball in anger and implored the support staff to give him a break. At one instance, he refused to run for a coach, angering the fielding coach, who put him through further drills. But the effort Avesh put in, though reluctantly, paid off. Not one of the safest catchers in the team, he perfectly judged Mohammed Rizwan's ramp, kneeling down in sync with the dipping ball and getting his palms and eyes right under the ball. After the catch, he flashed a sheepish grin and gestured towards the Indian dressing room.

New cool king in town

Hardik Pandya knows he is a cool cat. At times, he lets people know it too. He hit the match-winning six, accepted a bow from Dinesh Karthik, looked up at the dressing room and signalled a 'telephone ring' kind of wiggle.

The same wiggle that Shah Nawaz Dahani does after taking wickets though perhaps there was no connection between the two here. As it would happen, Dhani was one of the first players he would bump into after that celebration, and there ensued a sweet moment between the two. Smiles and animated happy faces. But the coolest moment happened after the third ball of the final over. He had just moved outside leg stump and tried to smash it through the off side but couldn't beat the infield. He then looked across at Karthik, shut his eyes and nodded his head — the Indian way to say 'all is well, hum hain na, it's all cool, nothing to fret'. And next ball he smashed the orb over the wide long-on boundary. Ravindra Jadeja, who played a screamer of a knock, also raved about Pandya. "He was very clear when he came to bat. He said, I will play my shots no matter what."

A mixed start for Kohli

Edged a wide one, dropped. Flirted with a well-outside off ball, missed. Inside-edge,



Hardik Pandya celebrates the dismissal of Pakistan's Iftikhar Ahmed. AP

missed the stumps. Mistimes a drive, falls just clear of mid-off. That was Virat Kohli's initial few moments at Asia cup. After a few months where he was left ruing his luck — once he even threw his head to the skies and cried out, "What else do you want me

to do?", is luck turning his way? There was one stunning shot in all this iffy play and miss. The first bouncer from a Pakistani bowler, after India had picked so many with them, was eagerly awaited and when Shanawaz Dahani, called "trump card for Pakistan" by Waqar Younis, bounced one short, it didn't quite rise as much as he perhaps envisaged. Kohli swivelled into a fiery pull, way in front of the square, and with lot of time on his hands.

Nawaz's redemption

In 2017, Pakistan's left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz was suspended for two months after admitting to the charge of failing to report a suspect approach by a bookmaker in Pakistan Super League. "Nawaz was charged with a single violation, on one occasion, which he failed to disclose to the PCB vigilance and security department, full details of the approaches and invitations received by him to engage in corrupt conduct," the PCB had said then. He married next year to a Diagnostic Radiographer Izdihaar who lives in South Africa. Slowly, his cricketing life returned to tracks as he made his way to Pakistan team in 2019. Perhaps, his biggest day in international cricket came today, in two balls to be precise, taking out Rohit

Sharma and Virat Kohli. He was just hit for a six over cow corner by Rohit but persisted in his teasing trajectory. First Rohit holed out to long-on and off the first ball of his next over, he had Virat Kohli, perhaps trying to go inside-out with spin to a ball from middle and leg, but instead holing out at long-off.

Rohit's travails



the middle today. Rohit got stuck, had a few close shaves against Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf, attempted an ungainly heave against Shah Nawaz Dahani and mistimed a whack off Mohammad Nawaz on the leg-side that landed between two fielders in the deep. He was on six off 15 balls, when the release shot came — a six over long-on against Nawaz. It proved to be a false dawn, as Rohit

departed a couple of balls later, falling prey to a miscued lofted drive against the left-arm spinner. The opener made 12 off 18 balls. He has now scored just two half-centuries in his last 11 international innings.

A keeper captains dread

Captains dread over-optimistic wicket-keepers. And Babar Azam has one in the form of Mohammad Rizwan. In Rizwan's utopian world, anything that passes the batter is caught behind and a pad thud is equal to lbw. Plus he also has the acting skills that could get him a role in serious cinema. At least once an over he would break into a victory dance, it is such a convincing act with potential to con the most seasoned of umpires. So when Ravindra Jadeja missed a pull shot and the ball reached Rizwan's hands, as expected the celebrations started behind the stumps. Babar looked confused. Having played with Rizwan for a long time, he knew he needed to be careful. There seemed a seed of doubt in the Pakistan captain's mind but the prospect of getting the wicket of Jadeja was tempting. DRS showed Jadeja hadn't edged. Rizwan was sheepish but he seemed to be indicating the din in the stadium. You can never win with Rizwan.



'PADAK LAO, PADAK BADHAO'

Haryana, the Nation's sports factory

Following an impressive performance by Haryana sportspersons in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games (CWG), CM Manohar Lal applauded the players and urged youths of the state to pursue sports as a career



INDIA won 61 medals in the recently concluded Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2022 and secured the 4th position in the tournament. A good share of the country's medal tally was due to the talented sportspersons from Haryana, who won 20 medals- 9 Gold, 4 Silver and 7 Bronze medals.

Among the Gold medal winners from Haryana were the wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Deepak Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Ravi Dahiya and Naveen Kumar, Para Powerlifter Sudhir, Boxers Amit Panghal and Neetu Ghanghas, Wrestler Anshu Malik, boxer Sagar Ahlawat and Shefali of the Indian women's cricket team, and national hockey-team players Abhishek and Surendra won silver medals for the country.

Similarly, Pooja Sihag, Pooja Gehlot, Deepak Nehra and Mohit Grewal won a bronze in wrestling, Boxer Jasmine Lamboriya and athlete Sandeep Poonia won the bronze medal for our country. Savita Punia, Jyoti, Monika Malik, Nisha Warsi, Neha Goel, Udit, Navneet, Sharmila and Sonika from Haryana were part of India's women's hockey team which won the bronze medal.

Haryana Chief Minister (CM) Manohar Lal has urged the sportspersons of the state to perform even better in the times to come with the slogan Padak Lao Padak Badhao. Lal has urged the youth of the state to pursue sports as a career. The CM said that India's ambition is to top the next CWG in the medal tally. This can be definitely achieved by the players of Haryana, he added. He also called upon the players of the state to imbibe the five vows given by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, who, along with Home Minister Amit Shah, have praised Haryana's sports policy and sportspersons, the CM said. Haryana is the sports capital of the country that is inspiring the rest of the country.

At a function organised in Gurugram, the CM gave cash prizes and mementoes to CWG winners and participants from the state. Gold medalists received a cash prize of Rs 1.5 crore, Rs 75 lakh for silver medalists and Rs 50 lakh for bronze medalists. Sportspersons who were placed at the fourth position in their competitions were given Rs 15 lakh. Participants received Rs 7.50 lakh. In the Birmingham Commonwealth Games-2022, a total of 29 players including the players included in the Indian women's hockey team from Haryana have won medals. According to the sports policy of the state, a total cash prize of Rs 25.8 crore was awarded to them. In addition, the players were also given job appointment letters.

STATE RESOUNDS WITH JUBILATION

Lal said that the sportspersons of Haryana are being discussed all over the country. They are also appreciating the Haryana government's policy that provides incentives and preparation facilities right from the school level. There is a festive atmosphere in the entire state due to the achievements of the players.

The CM said Sudhir is the first Indian to win a gold medal in Para Powerlifting. In the Indian women's hockey team, which won the bronze medal, almost nine of the 11 players are from Haryana, he said. Poonia, who hails from Sirsa, led the Indian hockey team as the captain, he added. "The players



from Rs.5,000 to Rs.20,000 per month. The government provides Rs 20,000 per month to Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award winners and Rs 5,000 per month to Bhim Award winners.

EXCELLENT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SPORTS PREPARATION

To develop a sports culture in the state, the government has built excellent infrastructure from the village level to the state level. "In the last eight years, we have spent about Rs 526 crore to develop sports infrastructure in the state. To develop a sports culture among children, 1,100 sports nurseries are being opened in the state. This will benefit about 25,000 budding players in the state. A scholarship of Rs 1,500 per month will be given to the players between the age group of eight to 14 years and Rs 2,000 per month to the players between the age group of 15 to 19," said Lal. The state government has been working on a policy to groom the players from childhood. He said that work is on to develop a Sports University at Rai in Sonapat.

HARYANA AWARDS THE HIGHEST CASH PRIZE TO PLAYERS

Among the other states of the country, Haryana gives the maximum cash prize money to medal-winning players. A Haryana State Development Fund has been formed to provide cash prizes and other facilities to the medal-winning players in the state. Cash prizes worth more than Rs 335 crore have been provided to sportspersons. In the Olympic Games, a cash prize of Rs 6 crore was awarded to the gold medalists, Rs 4 crore for the silver medalist and Rs 2.5 crore for the bronze medalist. Haryana is the first state in the country, which has made arrangements to give an advance amount of Rs 5 lakh to the player for preparation as soon as they qualify for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Medal winners in Paralympics and Olympic, Asian and Provision Games have also been given cash prizes. The cash award for sportspersons with disabilities is at par with able-bodied sportspersons. A new policy has also been implemented for the mountaineers of the state who climb the world's 10 highest mountain peaks. The climbers will be given a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh and a Grade-C certificate in the sports category.



SAKSHI MALIK
GOLD IN WRESTLING



BAJRANG PUNIA
GOLD IN WRESTLING



NITU GHANGHAS
GOLD IN BOXING



AMIT PANGHAL
GOLD IN BOXING



ANSHU MALIK
SILVER IN WRESTLING



SAGAR AHLAWAT
SILVER IN BOXING



SANDEEP KUMAR
BRONZE IN 10000M RACE WALK



MOHIT GREWAL
BRONZE IN WRESTLING



POOJA SIHAG
BRONZE IN WRESTLING



DEEPAK NEHRA
BRONZE IN WRESTLING



of Haryana won 28 per cent of the total medals for the country. If hockey is also included in this, then it increases to 32.7 per cent," he said.

SPORTS AS A NEW CAREER PATH

Lal said that the state government has provided several facilities and incentives to nurture the sports talent of the youth. This has given birth to a new sporting culture in the state. The state government

has framed the Haryana Outstanding Sportspersons (Group A,B & C) Service Rules 2021 to ensure employment for the players. For them, 550 new posts have been created in the sports department. Moreover 190 sportspersons have been given government jobs. The government has reserved class one to class four government posts for sportspersons. The honorarium of sportspersons who win Arjuna, Dronacharya and Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratan Awards have been increased