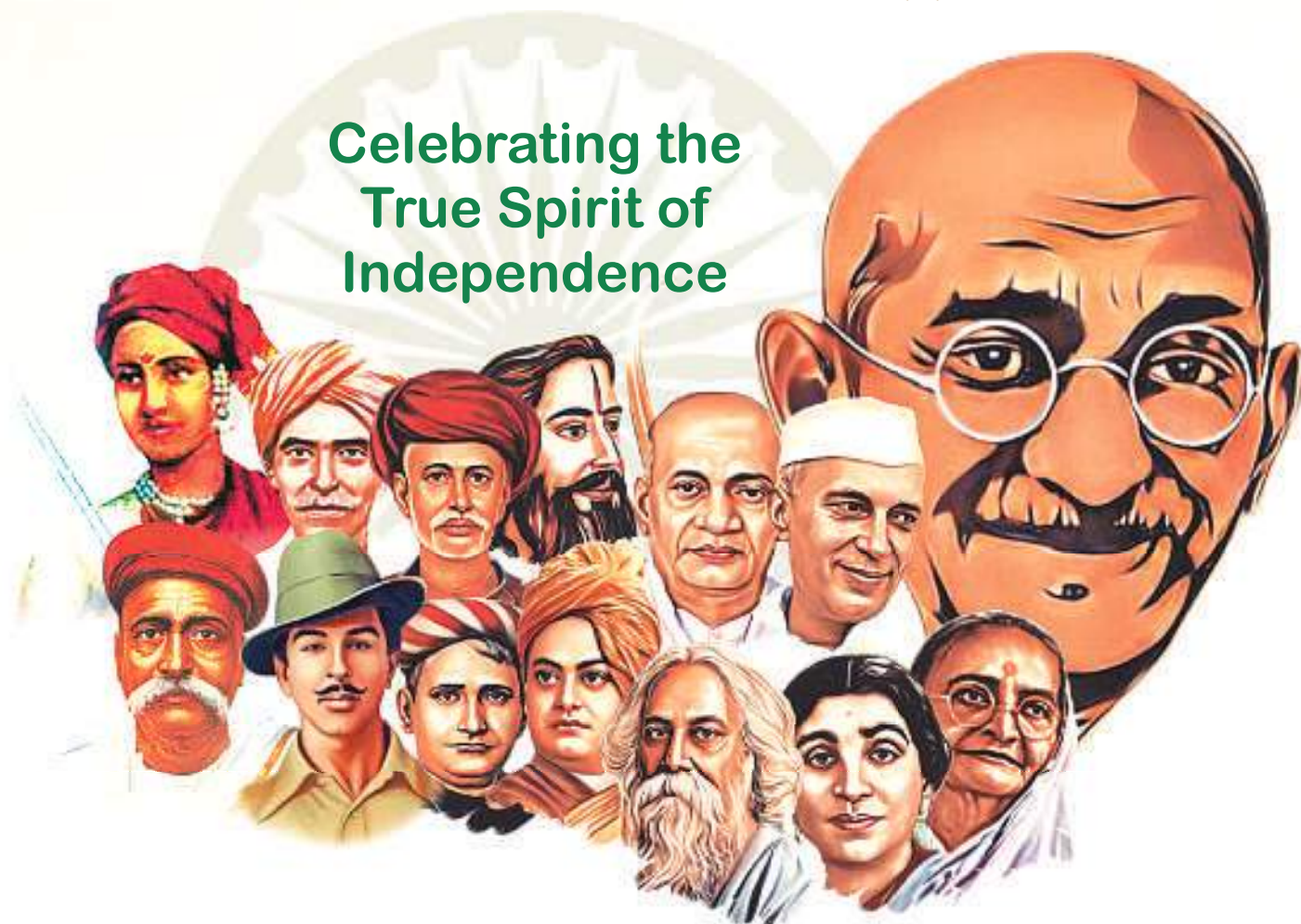


# Swatantra Bharat Vajrotsavalu

## Telangana State

08-08-2022 to 22-08-2022

Celebrating the  
True Spirit of  
Independence



### Telangana State plans for grand celebrations for 15 days to commemorate India's 75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence

Government of Telangana has decided to conduct the 75<sup>th</sup> year of India's Independence in a grand manner. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana Sri K. Chandrasekhara Reddy has called for a grand tribute to the valiant Freedom Fighters who sacrificed their life for India's freedom and to carry out the vision of these great leaders by taking up development and welfare of all citizens. Today, Telangana has gained the reputation nationally as the best governed Welfare State. Telangana shines with uninterrupted 24/7 power supply and a strong stable governance ensuring proper development and welfare of all religions, castes and communities. Telangana has emerged as the most preferred destination for investment and real estate.

The state is striving hard to realise Mahatma Gandhi's dream of self-sustaining Gram Panchayats by developing Model (Adarsh) villages and Urban Local Bodies. As India celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence, Telangana is becoming the role model for the nation.

**Government of Telangana extends hearty greetings to the people on this momentous occasion.**

### VAJROTSAVAM DAY-WISE SCHEDULE

Date	Programme	Date	Programme
08-08-2022	Inauguration at HICC, Hyderabad by Hon'ble Chief Minister	16-08-2022	Telangana Rashtra Samoochika Jateeya Geeta Alapana.(Singing of National Anthem in all GPs / Municipalities at a designated time) To be arranged in all GPs / ULBs in coordination with SPs / CPs. Kavi Sammelanam in all Districts
09-08-2022	Commencement of Distribution of National Flags to all Households, National Flags will be delivered to Collectors, organize function at Dist. HQs with Hon'ble Ministers for commencing distribution, Collectors to send it to mandals & GPs, Ensure distribution to each & every household, Ensure it is hoisted on all households, Flag code to be followed during hoisting.	17-08-2022	Blood Donation Camps at District HQs, To be organised in coordination with DM&HO, NGOs with at least 75 Donors.
10-08-2022	Vanamahotsavam - Planting of saplings, Setting up of 'Freedom Parks', Take up planting of saplings in all GPs / ULBs	18-08-2022	"Freedom Cup" Sports Tournaments for employees / Youth. To be organised for employees at Mandal level, District level in Coordination with Sports Department.
11-08-2022	Freedom Run - Organise 'Freedom Run' at all Mandals / ULBs in coordination with Police Department	19-08-2022	Distribution of Fruits / Sweets at Hospitals / Old Age Homes / Orphanages/ Prisons
12-08-2022	Jateeya Samaikyata Raksha Bandhan Local TV networks to be requested to telecast patriotic programmes	20-08-2022	'Rangoli' on the theme of Patriotism by SHGs & Women (In all GPs / ULBs)
13-08-2022	Rallies by students / NCC / NSS/Scouts & Guides / Employees with Flag & Placards. Congregation at big ground & release of tricoloured balloons in all GPs / ULBs	21-08-2022	Special Session of Assembly. Special Meetings of ZPP / MPP / GP. Special Meetings of Municipal Corporations / Municipalities.
14-08-2022	Janapada Kalakarula Pradarshanalu in all Dist. / Constituency HQs, Folk artists performances to be arranged in coordination with Telangana Samskruthika Sarathi.	22-08-2022	Valedictory Programme at LB Stadium at Hyderabad.
15-08-2022	Fireworks: In the evening, fireworks to be arranged in all Dist. HQs. Independence Day Celebrations		

Independent India's Brightest State - Telangana











Gold medallist Eldhose Paul (left) and silver medallist Abdulla Aboobacker Narangolintevida. AP

## India's double dose in triple jump: Eldhose, Abdulla bag gold, silver

SHIVANI NAIK  
AUGUST 7

ELDHOSE PAUL started with a dawdling, please-turn-to-page 2

distance of 14.62 metres when competition in the triple jump final started at the Commonwealth Games. He had made the finals of the World Championships a fortnight ago but with no 17-m jump to his name ever, there was no halo. On Sunday, Paul's sub-15m first jump, and a career-best of 16.99m, put him in the flanks of the two fancied Indians — the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

### TRACK & FIELD MEDALS

THE TALLY: EIGHT, SO FAR

Gold: Eldhose Paul (triple jump)

Silver: Abdulla Aboobacker (triple jump); Avinash Sable (steeplechase); Priyanka Goswami (race walking); Murali Sreeshankar (long jump)

Bronze: Annu Rani (javelin); Sandeep Kumar (race walking); Tejaswin Shankar (high jump)

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## Ayodhya MLA and Mayor named in dist authority's list of 'illegal' land dealers

SHYAMLAL YADAV  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

AYODHYA CITY Mayor Rishikesh Upadhyay, MLA from the district's Sadar constituency Ved Prakash Gupta and former legislator from Milkpur constituency Gorakhnath Baba are among the 40 persons named by the Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA) as "illegal colonisers" of land plots and building infrastructure in such land.

The list, released on Saturday, is signed by Ajay Bharti, Lekhpal, Ayodhya Development Authority. ADA Vice Chairman Vishal Singh Sunday told news agency Press Trust of India, "The list of 40 people who illegally bought land and got construction work done in the authority area was released Saturday night."

When contacted, Singh told *The Indian Express*, "Inquiry has to be conducted about persons behind. List is premature and has been purposefully leaked, it seems. It's wrong."

Gupta and Upadhyay were



The Indian Express report published on December 22 last year

among more than a dozen buyers of land parcels investigated by *The Indian Express* on December 22 last year. They included local MLAs, close relatives of bureaucrats who have or were serving in Ayodhya then, and local revenue officials whose job was to authenticate land transactions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

### NITI AAYOG GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

## All states had Covid fight role, federal structure is a model for world: Modi

Chief Ministers of Bihar, Telangana, Delhi, Tamil Nadu skip meeting



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs the 7th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog on Sunday. PTI

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

EVERY STATE has played a "crucial role" in India's fight against Covid and the country's federal structure and cooperative federalism have emerged as a "model for the world" during the pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday.

Speaking at the NITI Aayog's Governing Council meeting, the Prime Minister also gave credit to state governments which, he said, focused on grassroots delivery of public services to the people through cooperation across political lines.

"Every state played a crucial

role according to its strength and contributed to India's fight against Covid. This led to India emerging as an example for the developing nations to look up to as a global leader," the Prime Minister said, according to a press release issued by NITI Aayog.

This was the first physical meeting of the Governing Council since the onset of the pandemic, with the 2021 meeting held via video conferencing.

Sunday's meeting was attended by 23 Chief Ministers, three Lieutenant Governors and two Administrators, and Union Ministers. The Chief Ministers of Bihar, Telangana, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Mizoram,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

What Opp states want: More IAS officers, MSP guarantee, GST exemptions

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

IN THEIR time allotted for intervention at the meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog, Chief Ministers of Opposition-ruled states raised a range of issues: legal guarantee on Minimum Support Price for farm output, shortage of IAS officers, GST exemptions, higher allocation of funds for states, and adequate consultation with states on policy issues.

The CMs from Congress-ruled Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, and Left-ruled Kerala, called for an extension of compensation from shortfall in revenue due to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax. The Punjab CM from Aam Aadmi Party sought a legal guarantee for MSP, the Trinamool Congress-ruled West Bengal CM flagged need for more IAS officers, and the Jharkhand CM sought a special package to deal with the repercussions of rain deficit, according to sources.

Telangana CM K Chandrababhan Rao, who did not attend the meeting on Sunday,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

### Kabhi KUSTI, kabhi DUM!



Amul Have freestyle

## Satellites 'no longer usable' as ISRO's first SSLV launch develops glitch

ANONNA DUTT  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE MAIDEN flight of ISRO's newly developed Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) suffered a setback on Sunday, with "data loss" at the terminal stage, after three stages had "performed and separated" as planned. The satellites ended up being placed in an elliptical orbit, and are "no longer usable".

While the three solid fuel-based propulsion stages worked normally, the satellites were injected into a wrong orbit, due to failure of logic to identify a sensor failure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**Explained** Targeting a new market

WHILE ISRO has already had successful launches of satellites using its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicles, it is targeting the SSLV market with this vehicle, which places satellites into the 500-km low Earth orbit.

ISRO'S SSLV HOPES, SETBACK PAGE 9



**IDEA EXCHANGE**

'Neeraj is India's best ever athlete. People didn't celebrate me 19 years ago but now there's support'

**ANJU BOBBY GEORGE**  
LONG JUMPER, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL WINNER, VICE-PRESIDENT, ATHLETICS FEDERATION OF INDIA  
PAGE 13

## JD(U) calls Chirag, RCP 'plots against Nitish', says nothing final on 2024 LS election tie-up

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, AUGUST 7

ON A DAY that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar skipped a meeting of the NITI Aayog Governing Council by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the JD(U) again put the BJP on notice over their increasingly fractious alliance.



JD(U) chief Rajiv Ranjan Singh

Claiming "two conspiracies" against Nitish in recent times, JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh a.k.a. Lalan Singh

said the question of whether the two parties would contest together in coming polls was far from settled. "Who knows what will happen tomorrow? Anything can happen to me tomorrow. Why (talk about) 2024 (Lok Sabha polls), ask about 2029?"

Singh's statement came just a week after the BJP quoted

Union Home Minister Amit Shah as telling a party meeting in Patna that the BJP and JD(U) would contest the 2024 Lok Sabha and 2025 Assembly elections together. It was seen as a placatory gesture by the BJP towards Nitish.

Claiming plots against the Bihar CM, Lalan Singh said: "Two conspiracies were hatched

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Cop who never stopped looking for missing girl: 'Meri Pooja bhi mil gayi'

PAGE 1  
ANCHORSMITANAIK  
BENGALURU, AUGUST 7

IN 1980, Rajendra Dhond Bhosale was a constable at Yellow Gate Police Station, when a phone call from home informed him of his sister's dowry death. She was a young bride and he, a 23-year-old helpless brother in his first posting with Mumbai Police.

Since then, Bhosale has never let a criminal case involving a woman drop. "In every such case, I see my sister," he says.



So when Pooja Gaud, a seven-year-old who went missing on January 22, 2013, remained the only girl that Bhosale, as the officer in charge of the missing bureau, couldn't trace till the day he retired, he left

the force a miserable man. Pooja's became the second photograph he carried in his wallet at all times, alongside his sister's.

Last Friday morning, when he was informed that Pooja had been found, he didn't let his



(Left) Pooja Gaud (in blue); and retired policeman Rajendra Dhond Bhosale. @MumbaiPolice and Express Archive

emotions take over. Instead, after what seemed like a long pause, he became the policeman he always was: "Let me confirm. If she is found, they must have taken her for identification, then

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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FROM PAGE ONE

PM Modi

the L-G of Puducherry, and the Administrator of Chandigarh, did not attend the meeting.

Telangana CM K Chandrashekhar Rao had said he would skip the meeting to protest “the Centre’s attitude”, and objected to the Prime Minister “dismissing welfare schemes as freebies”. Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai had cancelled his trip after testing positive for Covid on Saturday.

The meeting was held primarily to discuss issues such as crop diversification, implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) and urban governance. It started at around 10 am and went on till 4.30 pm, with interventions by CMs and L-Gs lasting around five hours. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh moderated the states’ interventions.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar gave a presentation on India’s presidency of the G20 summit from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023.

While NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Berry said discussions on the ongoing controversy around “freebies” did not take place during the meeting, several states raised concerns around minimum support price for farmers, a shortage of IAS officers, a review of GST and increased allocation of funds for states, among other things.

NITI Aayog CEO Parameswaran Iyer said they will increase outreach to states on how to collaborate with them further.

Crop diversification, in particular, was a key point of discussion. India’s dependence on imported edible oils, currently around 50 per cent, and how to bring that down to around 25 per cent was also discussed at the meeting. Increasing production of some pulses was also discussed — while import dependence on pulses is much lower at 7-8 per cent, there is a deficiency of masoor and arhar.

The PM said that each state should focus on promoting its trade, tourism and technology, and called for them to reduce their dependence on imports.

He also said that while GST collection has improved, there is still a lot of potential to increase it. “This requires collective action by the Centre and states. It is crucial for strengthening our economic position and becoming a \$5 trillion economy,” he said.

Speaking on the NEP, Modi said the policy has been formulated after considerable deliberations. He said that all stakeholders should be involved in its implementation and a clear, timebound roadmap developed.

Modi also spoke about India’s G20 presidency and called it a “unique opportunity” to show India beyond Delhi.

Opp states

had said on Saturday that he would skip it to protest “the Centre’s attitude”; he also objected to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “dismissing of welfare schemes as freebies”. At a press briefing later in the evening, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Berry said there were no discussions around “freebies”.

Sunday’s Governing Council meeting was attended by 23 CMs, three Lieutenant Governors and two Administrators and Union Ministers. The CMs of

Bihar, Telangana, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Mizoram, the L-G of Puducherry, and the Administrator of Chandigarh did not attend the meeting.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said legislation on subjects in the Concurrent List should be initiated only after “adequate consultation”. The Centre should desist from legislating on items in the State list, he said. He also called for a review the decision to impose GST on essential items and revocation of restrictions on borrowing limits of states.

Vijayan also sought financial assistance for enhancing palm oil processing infrastructure and requested that the Centre’s share of assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) be increased since the cost of materials has risen significantly, especially along the state’s coastline. He called for a time-bound completion of road projects and early clearance of proposals for rail and air traffic projects.

Pointing out that Chhattisgarh could suffer losses to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore due to GST implementation, CM Bhupesh Baghel demanded five-year extension for compensation grant for states. He said the state has received around Rs 13,000 crore less in Central taxes in the last three years. He demanded reimbursement of over Rs 11,800 crore — expenditure incurred to eliminate Left-wing extremism, and also sought a specific policy to allocate additional resources to states like Chhattisgarh.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann requested the Centre to extend a special package for the state on par with industrial packages given to hilly states. He rejected the Centre’s committee on MSP, saying it was dominated by “armchair economists who don’t have any knowledge about agriculture”. He called for the reconstitution of the MSP committee and also asked for a special package to increase the water carrying capacity of canals in the state.

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren urged the Centre to issue a special package for the state to deal with rain deficit this year. He said only 13 lakh of the 38 lakh farmers in the state have received benefits of the Kisan Credit Card as banks are delaying process. More than 10 lakh applications are still pending in various banks, he said. He also requested reinstatement of the limit for forest clearance by the state.

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot reiterated the state’s demand for declaring Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project as a national project. He said the change in financial participation pattern of Centrally Sponsored Schemes has led to additional burden on states. He also said the Centre should extend the period of GST compensation by five years from June 2022 to June 2027 and demanded release of Rs 3,780 crore towards GST compensation.

ISRO

A statement from the space agency said: “SSLV-D1 placed the satellites into 356 km x 76 km elliptical orbit instead of 356 km circular orbit. Satellites are no longer usable... Failure of a logic to identify a sensor failure and go for a salvage action caused the deviation.”

The statement said a committee would look into what had gone wrong and expressed confidence about ISRO coming back

“soon” with SSLV-D2.

In a video statement, ISRO Chairperson S Somanath said: “The vehicle took off majestically with the burning of the first stage and the subsequent S2 and S3 performed very well. The performance was very good in the mission and finally when it reached the orbit at an altitude of 356 km, the satellites separated. However, we subsequently noticed an anomaly in their placement in orbit.”

When a satellite is placed in such an orbit, it cannot maintain course for a long time and falls off. “The satellites have already come down from that orbit and they are no longer usable,” Somanath said.

He added that while a detailed analysis was awaited, they believed a logic that exists in the rocket to identify a sensor had failed. “But for that problem, we couldn’t see any other anomaly. Every other new element that has been incorporated in this rocket performed really well, including the propulsion stages, overall hardware, its aerodynamic designs, new-generation and low-cost electronics, control system, new separation systems, the entire architecture of the rocket... everything has been proven for the very first time in the rocket,” Somanath said.

He added that they looked forward to the recommendations of the expert panel on why the setback had happened. “We hope that with small corrections and further, the re-validations of those corrections through an adequate number of tests, we will come back for the next development flight of SSLV-D2 very soon.”

The new rocket was carrying an Indian Earth Observation Satellite, EOS-02, weighing 145 kg and AzaadiSat, made by 750 schoolgirls to celebrate 75 years of Independence under SpaceKidz India, weighing 8 kg.

Triple jump

rocker, white headband-wearing Praveen Chitravel and the compulsive 17m-plus hop, skip and jumper Abdulla Aboobacker Narangolintevida.

Modestly built, and a slow starter, Paul gave no indication that a monster 17.03m was in the offing, till he leapt and flew further than anyone in that morning medal session. It was a distance that would have seen him finish sixth at the last Olympics in Tokyo. In Birmingham, that meant a rare 1-2 for India at an international track and field event, with Paul taking gold and Abdulla the silver even as Chitravel missed the bronze.

Poised to study BSc Chemistry at MA College in Kerala’s Kothamangalam, Paul, who had once backed himself to bowl quickly in cricket at school in Ernakulam, had endured two disappointing years at the start, when his triple jump distance of 13.80m kept him out of his college team. He ran cross-country on an uphill course, and even tried the most difficult of events, pole vault, to fill up the hollowness of not making any headway in a sport he loved. Jumps Dronacharya coach T P Ouseph then got down to sorting out his disjointed technique.

On Sunday, too, Paul, who was one of the shortest of all triple jump entrants at the Alexander Stadium, lost balance and struck a jarring rhythm on his opening jump. The 17-m-bar-

rier wasn’t playing on his mind. But then, the 25-year-old is known to be a quick-learner. In only his second overseas meet, he had picked up the warm-up patterns of experienced jumpers from the World Championships at Eugene in Oregon, US. Domestic competitions rarely have qualifications or the hour-long warm-up that international meets afford. It also meant Paul had to quickly learn to peak within just three jumps, something he’d found difficult. Wisened and hopeful after the Worlds, the CWG beckoned, though most attention was on his two “17m” team-mates. Into this mix went Bermuda’s energetic jumper Jah Pernchef, who set the early marker with a 16.92m in his opening jump.

The first Indian to really threaten to take the lead was the junior-most Chitravel, the lanky, ambitious jumper who reckons he will match Neeraj Chopra’s gold feat at the next Olympics in Paris. He jogged up to 16.89 in his third jump, even as Abdulla was building up momentum with each progressive jump.

Eldhose, though, followed up his 14.62m with a quiet 16.30m, before stomping forth for his personal best of 17.03m, in turn breaching his personal best.

“My coach always says, focus only on personal best, not even medals. Today I did, and a medal came. But we were going for gold-silver-bronze as a pack. Knowing that gave us confidence,” Paul said later of the almost “Amar-Akbar-Anthony” turn for India on the podium.

Paul’s grandmother Mariamma, who raised him after his mother passed away, always told him, “Be a good person.” He was playing the team surge here for India.

Abdulla would bring on his 17.02m on his fifth attempt even as Chitravel and the Bermudan faded as the afternoon wore on, the latter settling for a bronze for his 16.92m opener.

In the 1970 Commonwealth Games, Mohinder Singh Gill had won a triple jump bronze and followed it up with a silver in 1974. Suresh Babu, who picked a long jump bronze in 1978, had been a triple jumper, too. Thereafter, the triple jump was among a bunch of disciplines identified to target in Indian athletics, along with walking, 400m and javelin. The sprints, hammer throw, pole vault and high jump were considered tough for medals at the highest levels, but triple jump got a bunch of foreign coaches, with local Kerala and Punjab coaches providing the raw material with their technically efficient training.

Arpinder Singh and Ranjith Maheswary later made headway in the event, but it was only in the last few seasons that the Indian triple-Sundae pack started pushing the limits for 17m-plus jumps.

The original “Amar-Akbar-Anthony” troika that Abdulla remembers was him, Paul and Karthik Unnikrishnan, who graduated from college ranks to inter-Services. Abdulla joined the Air Force under renowned coach Hari Krishna, and Paul joined the Navy, and the 2018 inter-department brought out the best in the young jumpers as they began pushing each other.

“There is no rivalry between us. We are brothers. In triple jump, we only have to improve ourselves,” Paul said. “We adapt to each other, and never disagree,” said Abdulla, the gentle

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**The Sandip Roy Show:**  
Unanswered questions about Cheetah Project

Eminent conservationists Ravi Chellam and Prerna Bindra join host Sandip Roy to discuss the scientific, logical and ethical concerns of bringing Cheetahs to India.

jumping giant who won silver. He’s a chicken biryani person, and Paul a beef-parotta lover. While Paul’s favourite Netflix pick over the last few months has been the Birmingham-based “Peaky Blinders”, Abdulla digs Malayalam actor Vishnu Unnikrishnan’s movies and his version of the comedy thriller “Amar Akbar Anthony”.

Abdulla studied Economics at the same college as Paul. Both have benefitted from jumping coaches who stress on amicable friendship rather than needing each other. “Frankly, we don’t need all that drama of enmity,” Paul said.

Both share videos of the legendary Jonathan Edwards, and trade tips on how to get better. On Sunday, Paul advised Abdulla to go fiercer on the attacking phase and draw out the 17.02m that brought India silver.

“It could have been gold-silver-bronze. But that’ll happen soon,” said Paul. He goes on to add that the Neeraj Chopra gold has had a rub-off effect on Indian track and field. Three medals from the last Commonwealth Games in Australia’s Gold Coast are now eight — and Chopra isn’t even in Birmingham.

Ayodhya

The Indian Express investigation in December last on politicians and kin of officials who bought land in Ayodhya after the Supreme Court verdict clearing construction of Ram Temple. While Gupta’s nephew Tarun Mittal bought 5,174 sq m in Barhata Manjha on November 21, 2019, for Rs 1.15 crore, on December 29, 2020, he bought 14,860 sq m in next-door Maheshpur (Gonda), nearly 5 km from the temple site, for Rs 4 crore. Upadhyay had bought 1,480 sq m on September 18, 2019, for Rs 30 lakh.

The Uttar Pradesh government had set up a one-member committee to inquire into the land transactions by public representatives and government officials, but the findings of the report submitted to the government in January this year, are not yet in public domain.

When contacted, Ved Prakash Gupta said, “The Lekhpal has no power to issue such a list. I have no role in any land deals.” City Mayor Upadhyay said, “Such lists are released after proper investigation only. We have no role in any such illegal land deals.”

A week ago, on July 31, Ayodhya MP Lallu Singh, also from the BJP, had written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath demanding an SIT probe into the illegal sale and purchase of land

ticket, forcing his parliamentary tenure to an end.

Continuing the attack on R C P Singh, a former IAS officer, Lalan Singh said on Sunday: “What does he know about the struggles of the JD(U)? Who knew him before Nitish Kumar? He did not become the JD(U) president but was made one. I, too, did not become the national president but was made one. I am a caretaker and a caretaker is not an owner. The JD(U) has one owner, he is Mr Nitish Kumar.”

Reacting to Lalan Singh’s remarks against him, R C P Singh said he should clarify the conspiracies against Nitish Kumar he was talking about.

He added that it was not correct that he had joined the Narendra Modi Cabinet on his own. “It was Lalan Singh who first told me that Amit Shah had called the CM with the request that the JD(U) join the Union Cabinet. When I met the CM, he said that I should take oath and Lalan Singh would be made the JD(U) president,” R C P Singh said.

On the land purchase allegations, he said he had not bought any plots himself, and his daughters were independent, income tax payees since 2010, and had done so on their own. Asked if he could join the BJP, he said: “All my options are open.”

Lalan Singh was asked about the protests against the Modi government over inflation led by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. “If Tejashwi thinks there is inflation and it concerns people, why should we oppose him?” he said.

Chirag Paswan had contested the 2020 Assembly elections separately from the NDA, fielding candidates in seats where the JD(U) was fighting. Many in the party believe he was propped up by the BJP.

Asked who he thought was plotting against the Bihar CM, Lalan Singh said: “We will speak about it at the right time. Everyone knows about it.”

In another barb at the BJP, the JD(U) leader said: “We stick to our position of 2019 about not joining the Union Cabinet. Nitish Kumar has been clear about it.”

The JD(U) itself had always stood by the BJP, Lalan Singh said. “We supported the NDA president, vice-president nominees.”

On R C P Singh, once Nitish’s close aide and No.2 in the party, leaving the JD(U) on Saturday, Singh said the exit was very much on the cards. “R C P Singh had been with us but his mind was somewhere else.”

R C P Singh quit the JD(U) soon after the party accused him of buying 47 land plots in Nalanda in the name of his family members. Earlier, the JD(U) refused to give him a Rajya Sabha

day! Just this last entry!”). The tea boy followed him around — unsure where Bhosale will eventually sit or if he will even sit.

No one, nothing, intrigued me more that day. Not even the commissioned Sunday story.

“Don’t bother talking to me, they call me mad,” he said when I attempted to speak to him.

An Inspector in the station gave me sketchy details of the last case Bhosale was trying to detect before his retirement. Having researched it, I returned a few times but Bhosale’s only reply was: “Running mein hoon (I’m in a hurry)”. Once when he spotted me from a distance, he hid, and another time walked into the loo. He finally promised an interview after he had hung up his uniform.

He kept his promise and sat in the room where I had first seen him: A dejected 58-year-old refusing to open the page which had the case details of Pooja Gaud. The others left the room to allow him his grief.

In the seven years since, he never ceased looking for Pooja. In the beginning, our phone calls involved discussing leads and angles. Later, they involved prayers, and lately, philosophy, questioning life and destiny.

Initially, a news report about girls rescued in trafficking cases in any state meant he would either call the state’s police himself or prod me to make the calls. This was interesting at first, but my reporter’s cynicism took over, while he stayed resolute. On days when I tried to change the topic, he would persist. “My family scolded me today for talking to Pooja’s photograph,” he told me once. “Are they going to make your *putla* (statue) for all this dedication?” a relative asked him. “You are retired. You know what it means. Retired from the police,” his wife reminded him.

Every time he returned to Mumbai from Khed in Ratnagiri he followed a fixed itinerary: Meet Pooja’s parents, offer them hope, take their prayers to different places of faith. He never failed to check on updates with the family. And he did this diligently every year.

Until a week ago.

“*Chadar bhi chadaya hai. Makhdum Ali Baba ke dargah mein*,” he said over the phone last week, speaking of his visit to the patron saint of Mumbai Police in Mahim. “*Iss baar police station ko bhi haath lagaya our pranam kiya*,” he said the next day, of his visit to DN Nagar Police Station.

Early this year, Bhosale had started wondering if he would still be alive when Pooja was found. “*Time bhi hamesha running mein hain*,” he had told me when he found Pooja’s father had passed away. “Her uncle, her father and I travelled to several states looking for her... I want to be there the day Pooja is found.”

He was at a relative’s place in north Mumbai when he heard the day was here. The first person he ran to inform was his wife. “I gave her a *chummi* (kiss) on the cheek. I have never done this in public,” he says.

Later on Friday night, he opened his wallet to tell his sister that Pooja, now 16, had been found. “I cried a lot,” he said, crying again. “The lone missing girl I couldn’t trace... I told my sister that God helped me keep my promise to her.”

Bhosale feels those who joined hands to bring Pooja back, including the woman who helped her track her past and reconnect with her family, are the real heroes. He is hoping to meet Pooja once “all the police procedures” are done and the investigation is complete. “Besides, I need some days to collect myself,” he says.

“I spoke to Pooja’s mother this morning. She kept repeating ‘*Meri Pooja mil gayi*’... It’s a different kind of relief to hear a mother finally find peace,” he says. “It’s only after the call was over and I had disconnected it that I told myself, ‘*Meri Pooja bhi mil gayi*.’”

## New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

### E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible firms/contractors registered with for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.no.	Job no/Work name	Amount
1.	04/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2022-23, M/o Park (Annual R/o Jhula, benches, painting and other allied work in park of different sectors of horticulture Division-Ist) Noida.	Cost Rs. 48.87 Lacs
2.	50/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2021-22, M/o Green Belt (R/o boundary wall and other civil work parallel to Nala sector-37) Noida.	Cost Rs. 31.28 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 16/08/2022 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 17/08/2022 at 11:00 AM.

S.no.	Job no/Work name	Amount
1.	12/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2022-23, M/o park (R/o Footpath fritwash and SFRC grill in central park of sector-105) Noida	Cost Rs. 48.81 Lacs
2.	23/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2022-23, D/o Green Belt & RSP Sector-50 with two year maintenance.	Cost Rs. 84.73 Lacs
3.	24/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2022-23, M/o park, Green Belt & RSP in Sector-104 and 107 with two year maintenance.	Cost Rs. 89.39 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 22/08/2022 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 23/08/2022 at 11:00 AM.

**Office:**  
Sec-39, Noida

**Director (Hort.)**  
Noida

## CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

## राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, मध्यप्रदेश

( लोक स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, मध्यप्रदेश शासन )

लोक रोड नंबर 3, माधवराव सप्रे मार्ग भोपाल-462003

विज्ञा.क्र.:रा.स्वा.मि./मा संसा./सेल-1 /2022/5407

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, के अन्तर्गत (शिशु स्वास्थ्य पोषण कार्यक्रम) हेतु म.प्र. राज्य के मूल निवासियों से संविदा महिला पोषक प्रशिक्षण के 18 पदों हेतु आवेदनपत्र आमंत्रित करता है।

उपरोक्त संविदा पदों हेतु किये जाने वाले सेवा अनुबंध 31 मार्च 2023 तक के लिये होगा, जिसे आगामी वर्षों की वार्षिक कार्ययोजनाओं में स्वीकृति अनुसार नवीनीकृत किया जा सकेगा।

भोपाल, दिनांक: 03/08/2022

18 पदों हेतु आवेदनपत्र आमंत्रित

क्र	पदनाम	रिक्त पद	मासिक मानदेय	अनिवार्य शैक्षणिक योग्यता/वांछनीय शैक्षणिक योग्यता	आयु सीमा
1	संविदा महिला पोषक प्रशिक्षण	18	14,000/- रुपये प्रतिमाह	बी.एस.सी. फूड एवं न्यूट्रिशियन या बी.एस. सी. क्लीनिकल न्यूट्रिशियन एवं डायटेटिक्स या बी.एस.सी. होम साइन्स (फूड एवं न्यूट्रिशियन) -:-अनुभव:- न्यूनतम 2 वर्ष का कार्य अनुभव (शासकीय/अशासकीय संस्था में न्यूट्रिशियन कार्य का अनुभव)	21-40 वर्ष अधिकतम आयु सीमा में ( अनुसूचित जनजाति, अनुसूचित जाति, अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग, निशक जन महिलाओं ( अनारक्षित/आरक्षित ) अधिकतम आयु सीमा में 5 वर्ष की छूट ) (01/01/2022 की स्थिति में )

आवेदन सेम्स लिमिटेड के वेब पोर्टल [www.sams.co.in](http://www.sams.co.in) के माध्यम से किया जा सकता है, आवेदन के लिए लिंक दिनांक 18/08/2022 से उपलब्ध की जायेगी। ऑनलाईन जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि 19/09/2022 है। ऑफ लाईन आवेदन किसी भी स्थिति में मान्य/स्वीकार नहीं किये जावेंगे।

2. पद हेतु आरक्षण निम्नानुसार होगा:-

पदनाम का नाम	संविदा स्वीकृत रिक्त पदों की संख्या	अनारक्षित	आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर वर्ग	अनुसूचित जनजाति	अनुसूचित जाति	अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग	निःशक्त जनों के लिए
संविदा महिला पोषक प्रशिक्षण	18	6	1	3	3	5	बी. एच. एच. एच. ओ. एच. एम. डी.

● दिव्यांगजन का आरक्षण शैक्षणिक (Horizontal) के आधार पर 06 प्रतिशत का प्रस्ताव तैयार किया गया है। निःशक्तजनों के लिए कुल रिक्तियों में से 06 प्रतिशत पद दिव्यांगजन के लिए आरक्षित है, जिस श्रेणी का दिव्यांगजन पदों के लिए चयनित होगा उसे उसी श्रेणी हेतु मान्य किया जावेगा। यह पद प्रत्येक श्रेणी की बिना वर्ग/अपन नियुक्तियों में सम्मिलित है।

3. निम्नलिखित प्रारूप में नहीं किये गए अथवा अपूर्ण आवेदन स्वयमेव निरस्त माने जायेंगे।

4. अंतिम तिथि के पश्चात प्राप्त होने वाले आवेदन पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

5. मिशन संचालक, राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, म.प्र. किसी भी आवेदन को बिना कारण बताये स्वीकृत निरस्त करने अथवा प्रक्रिया को निरस्त करने का अधिकार होगा।

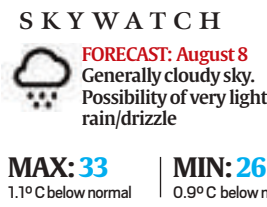
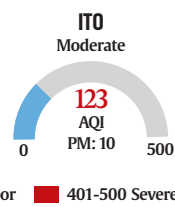
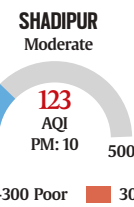
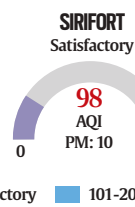
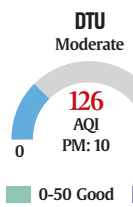
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मिशन संचालक  
राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन  
मध्यप्रदेश

कोरोना से बचने की तीन बातें बहुत जरूरी, टीका लगवाना, मास्क पहनना और अपना ना दो गज दूरी।

New Delhi





# 2-hour rain leaves Gurgaon submerged

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
GURGAON, AUGUST 7

ASPELL of moderate rain for over two hours on Sunday morning caused severe waterlogging in many parts of Gurgaon. Several vehicles broke down, pedestrians had to wade through knee-high water, and traffic was hit as water inundated key roads and internal sector areas.

According to data from the district administration, Gurgaon received 19 mm rainfall till 5 pm. Traffic Police officials said waterlogging was reported at Golf Course Road, Rajiv Chowk, IFFCO Chowk, MDI Chowk, MG Road, Signature Tower, Basai, Subhash Chowk, near Huda City Centre Metro station, Manesar bus stand, Hanuman Chowk, Sector 4/5 Chowk, Krishna Chowk, Sector 21/22 road, near Wazirabad traffic signal, AIT Chowk, Kanhai Chowk, near Mayfield Garden Chowk, Artemis Chowk, Sheela Mata road, South City 1 and at stretches of NH-48.

“Some pockets of Gurgaon received heavy rainfall today and waterlogging issues were reported in several areas. In most of these, water levels receded within one-two hours. On Golf Course Road, one of the societies was pumping out a large volume of their internal stormwater which added to waterlogging on this stretch. Waterlogging was reported by Sector 28 residents & the GMDA team installed pump sets to address the issue. Similarly, pump sets were also deployed in Basai. Meanwhile, construction of additional road gullies is underway near Sun City



Waterlogged road outside Sadar police station in Gurgaon, Sunday. PTI

society. No underpasses were flooded...,” said Vikram Singh, executive engineer, GMDA.

According to experts, inadequate drainage infrastructure, urbanisation and disappearing water bodies and lakes due to concretisation, change in land-use patterns, disruption of natural drains, encroachment at stretches along stormwater drains and choked drainage lines were major reasons for flooding across the city every year.

Sewa Ram, an urban transport systems design expert and faculty member at the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) in Delhi, said, “Over the years, concretisation has taken place either on top or in the route of natural drains, which blocks natural course of water... In several areas, drainage lines are choked due to construction debris or encroachment, so they do not have sufficient capacity to carry heavy surface runoff during monsoons.

If the drainage network is discontinuous, roads will be submerged with rainwater. Drainage infrastructure has not been designed to withstand a high intensity of rainfall.”

At present, Gurgaon’s rainwater is disposed from three master stormwater drains — leg 1, leg 2 and leg 3 (Badshahpur drain), with Badshahpur drain accounting for over 60% of the drainage network carrying runoff from over 24,000 hectares of land. These collect rainwater and channel it into the Najafgarh drain in Delhi. Experts said Gurgaon, located at foothills of the Aravallis, earlier had hundreds of water bodies, lakes and bunds (embankments) — indigenous structures — in low-lying parts which acted as natural drainage columns by storing water, and prevented flooding.

According to a report from the district administration from 2018, Gurgaon had over 640 wa-

ter bodies in 1956 which reduced to 251 by 2018.

One of the worst affected stretches is the service lane on Khandas-Narsinghpur stretch on NH-48 and low-lying areas of Laxman Vihar and Sector 4A. Officials said water accumulates in these areas due to topography, adding that a long-term solution for Khandas lies in the construction of leg 4 of the 5.5-km stormwater drain between Vatika Chowk and NH-48, whose tender has been floated recently.

Officials said flooding occurred due to heavy intensity of rainfall in a short span of time. “We are working on rejuvenating water bodies to solve waterlogging,” said an official.

Parts of South Delhi too received heavy rain Sunday morning. The city did not see any rain between 8.30 am on Saturday and 8.30 am on Sunday. After that, Palam, Ayanagar, and Pusa Road witnessed a heavy downpour.

## In Delhi, officials keep eye on Yamuna level

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

PRE-EMPTING AN increase in the Yamuna water level amid rain, the Northeast Delhi district magistrate has asked Delhi Police to increase police deployment round-the-clock around flood-prone areas.

“According to the forecast by the Central Water Commission, Yamuna water level is likely to increase and reach 201.5 metres (as against the warning level of 204.5 metres) between 6 pm to 8 pm. It may further rise slightly by tomorrow. For constant monitoring of the situation, it is requested that sufficient police personnel be deployed round-the-clock at all flood-prone locations in the district to keep people living in low-lying areas

safe and away from the river,” read the letter sent to DCP Northeast by DM Geetika Sharma.

There are a total of nine flood-prone and low-lying areas in Delhi — Old Iron Bridge, Kisan Basti towards ISBT, Kisan Basti towards Seelampur, Usmanpur Pusta, Garhi Mandu village, MCD toll at Sonia Vihar, Annapurna Mandir, Sabhapur bus terminal and Badarpur Khadar Village.

Sharma also directed all district SDMs to deploy sufficient civil defence volunteers at vulnerable locations to coordinate with police.

Officials added that all districts have also prepared district-wise disaster management plans for evacuation and to prevent incidents like fire emergencies and flooding.

# Man with ‘Islamic State links’ arrested by NIA from Delhi’s Batla House

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday arrested a man from Batla House on charges of being an alleged active member of the Islamic State (IS). The accused has been identified as Mohsin Ahmad, a resident of Bihar’s Patna.

Ahmad was arrested after searches were conducted at his premises and elsewhere Saturday in a case pertaining to “on-line and on-ground activities of the ISIS” registered by the agency on June 25.

“Accused Mohsin Ahmad is a radicalised and active member of ISIS. He has been arrested for his involvement in collection of funds for ISIS from sympathisers in India as well as abroad. He was sending these funds to Syria and

other places in the form of cryptocurrency in order to further the activities of ISIS,” the NIA claimed in a statement Sunday.

Last Sunday, the agency conducted searches at 13 locations across six states in the case. “NIA conducted searches at 13 premises of suspects in six states viz. Bhopal and Raisen districts in Madhya Pradesh; Bharuch, Surat, Navsari and Ahmedabad districts in Gujarat; Araria district in Bihar; Bhatkal and Tumkur City districts in Karnataka; Kolhapur and Nanded districts in Maharashtra; and Deoband district in Uttar Pradesh in the case pertaining to activities of ISIS,” the NIA had said in a statement then.

The agency had said searches conducted had led to the seizure of “incriminating documents/material”.

On the same day, the NIA had also conducted searches in



Mohsin Ahmad in NIA custody. Praveen Khanna

Thiruvananthapuram district in Kerala in the case pertaining to the arrest of one Sathik Batcha, who was arrested in February along with four others in Tamil Nadu.

According to the NIA, the accused had allegedly hatched a con-

spiracy for threatening the general public and police officials and also attempted to allegedly murder police personnel during checking of their Scorpio car when they were intercepted on February 21, 2022.

“The accused persons were also involved in inciting hatred for secession of a part of India and had intended to disrupt sovereignty and territorial integrity of India by forming outfits like ‘Khilafah Party of India’, ‘Khilafah Front of India’, ‘Intellectual Students of India (ISI)’ and associating themselves with the proscribed terrorist organisations ISIS/Daesh and Al Qaeda,” the NIA had claimed in a statement.

The case was earlier registered by Tamil Nadu Police and later taken over by the NIA this year. Searches led to the seizure of digital devices and incriminating documents, the NIA statement said.

## Revamp one road per week: L-G Saxena to NDMC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

DELHI LIEUTENANT Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena Sunday launched the “one road, one week” initiative and directed the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) to revamp 15 key roads falling under its jurisdiction on a priority basis, said officials.

Under the initiative, the civic agency will choose one road every week and undertake repairs and maintenance along with making footpaths, pavements and central verges pedestrian- and commuter-friendly. As part of this initiative, Tilak Marg, Bhagwan Das Road and the area around Supreme Court will be repaired and beautified.

After launching the programme, Saxena personally visited the stretches and took stock of ongoing work like laying interlocking blocks, pruning trees, painting grills and road markings. Officials said the L-G has directed them to undertake the work comprehensively rather than in a piecemeal manner.

“He issued directions to carry out repair of footpaths; whitewash/painting; beautifying railing, ramps, curb stones, central verges; proper maintenance of electrical poles; and removal of encroachment at the earliest,” said officials, adding that the L-G also stressed on maintenance and safety of green stretches, as well as daily sweeping and cleaning of roads.

The NDMC has further been asked to post pictures of work done on its website, including “before and after” pictures of the project.

Further, pointing out that 26% of air pollution on account of PM 2.5 results from dust generated from roads, pavements, footpaths, central verges and construction and demolition activities alone, the L-G directed officials to complete work immediately without any delay.

## गांधी स्मृति एवं दर्शन समिति

भारत छोड़ो आन्दोलन की वर्षगांठ

# तिरंगा पद यात्रा

## मंगलवार, 9 अगस्त 2022

### प्रातः 10 बजे

## लाल किले से चांदनी चौक

सैकड़ों बच्चों के साथ आप भी भाग लें  
तिरंगे झंडे वही दिए जायेंगे।

## विजय गोयल

उपाध्यक्ष, गांधी स्मृति एवं दर्शन समिति

कार्यालय नम्बर : 011-23012843  
9821016404

### Breakfast habits that could be impacting your gut health

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## Man ‘electrocuted’ while charging e-rickshaw

New Delhi: A 34-year-old man died after he was allegedly electrocuted while charging an e-rickshaw in Outer Delhi. Police said the deceased, Mahender Singh, worked at the e-rickshaw charging station.

DCP (Outer) Sameer Sharma said, “On Saturday, we received information from a hospital about

Mahender. He was brought in by his employer, who claimed he suffered an electric shock. He succumbed to his injuries and died.”

During enquiry, it was found that Mahender worked at the station in Chander Vihar. While he was charging an e-rickshaw, police said, he received an electric shock. ENS

### NTPC Limited

(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

CIN: L40101DL1975GOI007966

Regd. Office: NTPC Bhawan, SCOPE Complex, 7, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi- 110003

Tel. no.: 011-24360959; Fax: 011-24360241

Email: ntpcco@ntpc.co.in; Website: www.ntpc.co.in

#### NOTICE TO THE SHAREHOLDERS OF NTPC LIMITED IN RESPECT OF THE 46<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- Notice is hereby given that the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Members of the Company will be held on **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 at 10:30 A.M. (IST)** through Video Conferencing (VC) / Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM), to transact the business as stated in the notice dated 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.
- In line with the applicable circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Securities and Exchange Board of India, Integrated Annual Report including Notice of 46<sup>th</sup> AGM, Standalone and Consolidated Financial Statements, Auditors' Report and Directors' Report for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2022 has been sent to the shareholders of the Company through emails at their registered e-mail addresses. Notice of the 46<sup>th</sup> AGM and Integrated Annual Report are available on the Company's website viz. [www.ntpc.co.in](http://www.ntpc.co.in) and on websites of stock exchanges i.e. [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com). Notice shall also be available on the e-voting website of Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) i.e. [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com).
- In compliance with Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is pleased to provide remote e-voting facility to its Members enabling them to cast their vote electronically for the resolutions as set forth in the AGM Notice dated 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 through the e-voting services provided by CDSL.
- The remote e-voting period will commence on **Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 at 9:00 A.M. (IST) and ends on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. (IST)**. The e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL, for voting thereafter. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by the member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently. The detailed procedure / instruction for remote e-voting are contained in the Notice of AGM.
- A person whose name is recorded in the Register of Members or in the Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as on the **cut-off date i.e. 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2022** only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting / e-voting at the AGM.
- Any person becoming the member of the Company after the dispatch of Notice of AGM but on or before the cut-off date can also cast their vote by following the instructions of remote e-voting and e-voting at AGM as contained in the Notice of AGM.
- A member may participate at the AGM through VC/OAVM even after exercising his/her right to vote through remote e-voting but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again. Members may note that the facility of e-voting shall be made available at the AGM.
- The Board of Directors has appointed Shri Sachin Agarwal, Partner, Agarwal S. & Associates or in his absence Ms. Garima, Partner, Agarwal S. & Associates, Company Secretaries, as the Scrutinizer, for conducting the e-voting/e-voting and remote e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner.
- Members are requested to read the instructions pertaining to e-voting as printed in the AGM notice carefully. If you have any queries or issues regarding attending AGM through VC & e-voting, you may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (‘FAQs’) and e-voting manual available at [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com), under help section or write an email to [helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com](mailto:helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com) or contact Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Sr. Manager, (CDSL) Central Depository Services (India) Limited, A Wing, 25<sup>th</sup> Floor, Marathon Futurex, Mafatlal Mill Compounds, N M Joshi Marg, Lower Panel (East), Mumbai - 400013.
- To support green initiative, members who have not registered their e-mail address so far or who want to update their e-mail address, are requested to approach their respective DP (for demat holding) or with Beetal Financial & Computer Services Pvt Limited (for physical holding), for receiving all communications electronically.

For and on behalf of  
NTPC Limited  
Sd/-  
(Nandini Sarkar)  
Company Secretary

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 7/8/2022

### Leading the Power Sector

### HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED

Registered Office: Petroleum House, 17, Jamshedji Tata Road, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020

Tel: +91-22-22863900 Fax: +91-22-22872992

E-mail: [corphq@hpcpl.in](mailto:corphq@hpcpl.in) Website: [www.hindustanpetroleum.com](http://www.hindustanpetroleum.com)

CIN: L23201MH1952GOI008858

#### NOTICE OF THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

##### Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company will be held on Tuesday, August 30, 2022 at 11.00 a.m. (IST) through Video Conferencing (VC) / Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM), in compliance with MCA circulars / Companies Act / SEBI Regulations (collectively referred to as Statutory Provisions) as applicable, to transact the business as set out in the Notice of AGM. The proceedings of the AGM shall be deemed to be conducted at the Registered Office of the Company.

##### Notice of AGM and Annual Report

The Notice convening the AGM and the Annual Report for FY 2021-22 containing Financial Statements, Auditors' Report, etc. have been e-mailed to Members whose registered email IDs are available with the Depository Participants (DP) / Registrar & Transfer Agents (RTA). The aforesaid documents can also be accessed on the websites of the Company at [www.hindustanpetroleum.com](http://www.hindustanpetroleum.com) Stock Exchanges at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) & [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and e-voting agency M/s National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com)

##### E-Voting through Electronic Means:

Pursuant to the applicable Statutory provisions, the Company has arranged the provision of remote e-voting facility to its Members through NSDL as under:

Remote e-voting	Prior to AGM	During AGM
Commencement	Thursday, August 25, 2022 [From 9.00 a.m. (IST)]	Tuesday, August 30, 2022
End	Monday, August 29, 2022 [Till 5.00 p.m. (IST)]	Tuesday, August 30, 2022 (15 minutes post end of AGM)
Cut-Off date (for eligibility to vote)	Tuesday, August 23, 2022	
WebLink to access	<a href="https://www.evoting.nsdl.com">https://www.evoting.nsdl.com</a>	
e-voting Event Number	EVEN - 120709	

Members are requested to kindly refer to the procedure for e-voting as mentioned in the Notice of the AGM.

##### Notes:

- A person whose name appears in the Register of Members/Beneficial Owners as on the cut-off date i.e. August 23, 2022 only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting at the Annual General Meeting.
- The Voting Rights of Members shall be in proportion to the Equity Shares held by them in the paid up Equity Share Capital of the Company as on August 23, 2022
- Members who have not registered their email address or any person who becomes a Member of the Company after despatch of the Notice of AGM but before the cut-off date for e-voting i.e. August 23, 2022 can email the request to the Company at [corsecy@mail.hpcpl.co.in](mailto:corsecy@mail.hpcpl.co.in) by quoting the Folio No. / DP-ID Client ID for obtaining copy of the Notice and Annual Report. Such Members are requested to follow the instructions given under the Notes to the Notice of AGM to obtain login ID & Password for remote e-voting.
- The Members who have cast their votes by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend/participate in the AGM through VC/OAVM but shall not be entitled to cast their votes again.
- The Members who shall be present in the AGM through VC/OAVM facility and have not cast their votes earlier through remote e-voting and are not otherwise barred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote during the AGM.
- The remote e-voting shall not be allowed, in any case, beyond the scheduled date and time.
- Members who are desirous of inspecting the Statutory Registers/Documents forming part of Annual Reports can write to the Company on email ID [corsecy@mail.hpcpl.co.in](mailto:corsecy@mail.hpcpl.co.in) upto the date of AGM.
- Members who would like to ask questions during the AGM need to register themselves as a Speaker by sending their requests mentioning their name, Folio No. / DP-ID Client ID, email ID, Mobile Number to [corsecy@mail.hpcpl.co.in](mailto:corsecy@mail.hpcpl.co.in) from August 23, 2022 (9.00 a.m. IST) to August 26, 2022 (5.00 p.m. IST). Only those Members who have registered themselves as a speaker will be allowed to express their views/ask questions during the AGM.
- In case of any queries, Members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and the e-voting User Manual for Shareholders available at the Download section of NSDL at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) or call on Toll Free No. 1800 1020 990, and 1800 22 44 30 or contact Mr. Amit Vishal / Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, NSDL at the designated email ID at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in)

##### Record Date, Payment of Final Dividend and Deduction of Tax at Source (TDS)

Payment of Final Dividend @ Rs. 14 per share of face value of Rs. 10 each for the Financial Year 2021-22 will be paid after deduction of tax at source as applicable within 30 days from the date of its declaration at the AGM to those Members whose names appeared in the Register of Members/BENPOS as on the Record date Tuesday, August 23, 2022 fixed for this purpose. The detailed communication sent through email regarding Dividend, TDS applicability and submission of tax exemption documents can be accessed <https://www.hindustanpetroleum.com/dividend-information>

Place: Mumbai  
Date : August 6, 2022

By the order of the Board,  
Sd/-  
V. Murali  
Company Secretary

Wash hands frequently and thoroughly  
Wear reusable face cover or mask  
Maintain Physical Distance

कार्यालय नम्बर : 011-23012843  
9821016404



## 6 THE CITY



VACCINATIONS IN  
LAST 24 HOURS  
**25,468**



PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: **464**  
OXYGEN SUPPORT **108**  
VENTILATOR SUPPORT **15**

DELHI TOTAL  
CASES  
**19,69,527**

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	<b>9,406</b>	<b>9,033</b>
ICU BEDS	<b>2,119</b>	<b>2,021</b>

\*Total active cases in Delhi

	Aug 6	Aug 7
Cases	<b>158</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Deaths	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>

GURGAON

Cases	<b>402</b>	<b>0</b>
Deaths	<b>406</b>	<b>0</b>

## BRIEFLY

## Businessman abducted over repayment of loan, 2 held

**New Delhi:** A 45-year-old businessman was allegedly abducted after he failed to repay a loan of Rs 25 lakh, said police, adding that they arrested two men. Amrutha Guguloth, DCP (New Delhi) said, "The complainant told us he... took a loan from the accused last year. They came to his office and threatened him. He was manhandled, wrongfully restrained and kept under fear (threatened) to get the payment. He repaid the loan." Sources said he was abducted in his car and later dropped outside his office. **ENS**

## Maiden test run of first RRTS train-set held

**Gurgaon:** The National Capital Region Transport Corporation has conducted the maiden test run of the RRTS train-set on its depot tracks at Duhai in Ghaziabad, the transport body said on Sunday. The first RRTS train-set had arrived at Duhai depot in June from its manufacturing unit in Savli in Gujarat.

## International immigration racket busted

**Gurgaon:** With the arrest of a Mumbai-based agent and a passenger, Delhi Police on Sunday claimed to have busted an international immigration racket involved in sending people abroad on forged passports, a senior officer said. **PTI**

## POLICE CHIEF SAYS FAMILY PROVIDED SECURITY

# Man who abused Noida woman still on the run, his henchmen turn up at her society

Incident comes day after BJP assured residents of action; MP Mahesh Sharma says feel embarrassed to say it's our govt

**ARNAV CHANDRASEKHAR**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

A GROUP of men, allegedly supporting Shrikant Tyagi, who was booked by Noida Police on Friday after he was caught on video pushing and abusing a woman during an argument, barged into the Grand Omaze residential society in Noida's Sector 93B late Sunday evening.

Tyagi continues to remain on the run.

The chaos came a day after BJP MP from Gautam Budh Nagar, Dr Mahesh Sharma, met residents along with Manoj Gupta, district president of the BJP in Noida, and Sharda Chaturvedi, the party's Mahila Morcha Adhyaksh, and assured them of strict action against Tyagi. The BJP has been countering reports that Tyagi is a leader with the party, and Sharma reiterated this on Saturday.

On Sunday night, the MP was back at the society, along with area MLA Pankaj Singh. In a video from Sunday evening, surrounded by people, Sharma can be heard speaking on the phone, where he says that police reached the society after he made calls to the senior police officials. "We are here and are ashamed to say that we are in the government (*humein sharmindagi mehsos ho rahi hai kehete hue ki hamaari sarkaar hai*)... Find out how 15 men entered the society... There can be nothing more shameful than this," he is heard saying.

According to residents, several men entered the housing society around 8 pm after giving a wrong address. "Around 8 pm, several goons entered after giving a wrong address to security officials at the main gate. They then started asking people for the address of the woman who Tyagi had



(Clockwise from left) Police at the society after the men barged in; BJP MP from Gautam Budh Nagar, Dr Mahesh Sharma, at the society on Sunday night; Shrikant Tyagi remains on the run; the argument was over planting of plam trees at the society

abused. Residents alerted the RWA and members of the security team. Police were called. Meanwhile, several residents surrounded the goons and started questioning them. They said they were here to support Tyagi," said Manish Gupta, a RWA Board member.

The woman had on Saturday told *The Indian Express* that the incident had been harrowing for her and her family. Speaking to BJP leaders, she had also pressed for his arrest.

Noida Commissioner of Police Alok Singh and MLA Pankaj Singh were among those who met her on Sunday night.

"I have asked the Joint CP to delist the company providing security to the society. There were lapses in providing security. Outside the society, security

arrangements are being tightened. We are increasing number of police personnel posted in the area... We have also provided security to the woman and her family. We are taking action against Shrikant Tyagi under the Gangster Act," Police Commissioner Alok Singh told reporters. Earlier, police had issued a statement saying they had detained 5-6 men for questioning. FIRs are being filed against them, police officials said.

"We will take action if someone has entered the premises by misrepresenting themselves. Police are looking into it and action may be taken against the residential complex security agency as well. We are strengthening the security arrangement, it will be strengthened further. Action will be taken if any lapses have taken place," Pankaj Singh said.

## On FB and Instagram, accused has following in the thousands

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

81,000 FOLLOWERS on Facebook and 52,400 on Instagram — social media profiles purportedly belonging to Shrikant Tyagi, who abused and pushed a woman in a Noida residential society on Thursday, describe him as the National Executive Member, Bharatiya Janata Party Kisan Morcha.

In photos shared on Instagram in 2019, he is pur-



portedly seen with BJP president J P Nadda, former UP Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya, and addressing a Vijay Sankalp Rally from the stage. Many posts have hashtags such as #Elections2019, #BJPIndia and #BJPMission4UP.

On the Facebook page, the most recent post is dated August 5 and congratulates people on the two-year anniversary of the Bhoomi Pujan at the Ayodhya Ram Temple site.

The BJP has strongly denied any links with Tyagi. On Saturday, when Gautam Budh

Nagar MP Mahesh Sharma met residents of the society and was questioned about Tyagi's alleged association with the party, he said, "I want to assure you that this man is not associated with our party. He may have clicked a photo with a party leader; that's a separate issue... Tyagi's background is subject of investigation but in my entire political life, I have never seen this man in any programme of the party. He should be given the strictest punishment. Tyagi is neither a member nor a worker of the party."

# Never got support from Delhi govt despite living in city for 20 years, says CWG medallist

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

WRESTLER DIVIYA Kakran, who won a bronze medal at the ongoing Commonwealth Games, Sunday tweeted that despite practicing and living in Delhi for the past 20 years, she had never been awarded any money by the state government, nor has she received any help till date.

She was reacting to CM Arvind Kejriwal congratulating her for the latest win. "I thank the honourable Chief Minister from the bottom of my heart for congratulating me. For the past 20 years, I have lived and practiced wrestling in Delhi but till now, I have not been awarded any money or received

any help from the state government," she tweeted. "It is my request that you honour me just the way you honour other players, who despite being from Delhi play for a different state," she added.

Responding to the tweet, AAP national spokesperson, Saurabh Bhardwaj, said, "The whole country is proud of you, sister. But I can't remember that you played for the state of Delhi. You have always played for Uttar Pradesh. But a player belongs to the country. You do not expect any awards from Yogi Adityanath ji. I am sure the Delhi CM will listen to you."

A government spokesperson, in an official statement, said, "The Delhi government respects all sportspersons in the country and wishes for a bright future for



Wrestler Diviya Kakran won a bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games. **PTI**

them. Diviya Kakran plays for Uttar Pradesh at the moment. If she has played on behalf of Delhi, or has been part of any sports scheme in Delhi or has applied for any such scheme, the state government will certainly look into what she has said."

This is not the first time Kakran told Kejriwal she has not got the support she expected from Delhi. Speaking at a felicitation ceremony after her Asian Games win (bronze medal) in 2018, Kakran had told Kejriwal she did not get support during preparation. "When I won a medal in Asian championships, nothing was done for me. I come from very tough circumstances. You need to think about supporting poor children. Today you have called us

here but when we need it the most, no one helps us... if we get support when we need it, we can give our 100% and even get a gold. When I won a medal during CWG, you had called and said you will help us. I had asked for support for training for Asian Games but nothing happened. I sent a letter stating the things I wanted but after that no one even took my calls. Today I am getting accolades but when I wanted it, I didn't get support. Please think about the children who are starting out now... Delhi has got very few medals. Look at Haryana, they give medalists Rs 3 crore. Delhi has now decided to raise the amount from Rs 20 lakh to 1 crore," she had said. Kejriwal had assured to support her at the time.

## IMEI blocking, better tech: How cops plan to stop phone snatching

**JIGNASA SINHA**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

WITH THE city seeing an increase in street crime, especially phone snatching cases, the Delhi Police is planning to team up with internet service providers and the department of telecommunications to block stolen or robbed phones through the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number.

Senior police officers said they will note down the stolen/robbed phone's IMEI number on a server and block the device immediately. This will act as a deterrent for criminals as they can no longer use the device, they said.

According to police, a total of 4,660 snatching cases have been reported in the city this year between January 1 and June 28. There has been an 11-15% increase in street crimes as compared to last year, with interstate gangs targeting mostly senior citizens and women, police said. The robbed phones are sold to "receivers" in and around Delhi who then resell them in other states, they added.

"It's a menace and we have come up with the idea to immediately register data of all stolen phones and upload it on our servers and Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems. In a testing period of one month, we were able to block more than 950 IMEI numbers/phones. This way, the phone is of no use to the accused and the receiver will not be able to make money," said a senior officer at the police HQ.

In March, the former police chief at a crime-review meeting had encouraged DCPs to upload IMEI details of stolen phones on CCTNS and police website.

"The gangs thrive on profits they make by selling stolen phones every day. If we block the IMEI with help from internet service providers and our servers, the thieves will be left clueless and will have to discard the phone. Soon, receivers will also stop buying phones from thieves," added the officer.

Police are also helping victims register on the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) to block

EXPLAINED

Unique code

International Mobile Equipment Identity is a unique digit code used to trace a phone in case of theft. Each device has an IMEI number that can be checked on the phone, online or on the phone's box.

their stolen phones.

Some challenges, however, remain. A senior police officer posted in the Northern Range, who refused to be named, said, "We take complaints, register FIRs and ask the complainant if she/he wants to block the IMEI number. Many times, the victims don't agree because once the device is blocked, the accused won't be able to use it and will discard it and the person will never get their phone back. Instead, we are now enhancing our servers to trace the phones once a new SIM card is inserted."

The cyber-crime unit said a few gangs have also started formatting stolen phone. "Mobile phones which don't have a flexible operating system can be broken into. There is software that can change IMEI numbers of the phones as well. This might cause trouble for law-enforcement agencies in blocking stolen devices," said an officer.

### 2 involved in stealing, reselling phones after altering settings held

Meanwhile, police busted an interstate gang by arresting two men who allegedly change IMEI numbers of stolen phones using special software and resell the devices at Chandni Chowk market.

Police found that the accused, Sameer (24) and Azim (21), who are trained in repairing phones/devices, have been 'actively' robbing phones in Delhi and UP. Police said 66 such phones were recovered from one of their hideouts, along with a laptop, on which police found the software. The main accused, a Dehradun-

based engineer, who has been running the gang for at least three years, is on the run.

On July 22, police received a complaint of phone theft at Welcome police station. With help of CCTV footage and local enquiry, the two men were arrested outside Jafrabad Metro station. They allegedly had the stolen phone and were on a stolen bike, said police.

DCP (Northeast) Sanjay Sain said, "We found that they worked with a 10-12 member gang. They would not only steal phones but also alter the settings and sell them in local markets. The IMEI numbers were being changed using third-party software."

Explaining the modus operandi, the DCP said, "They have men who steal or rob phones from crowded areas. They collect all phones, unlock them using the software, and change the IMEI number and other settings. To evade arrest, they would even change the body of the device and sell it to their associates."

Their associate, who is also on the run, would further sell the phones in Karol Bagh and Chandni Chowk, police added. A raid was conducted at one of their hideouts in Jafrabad and police found a HP laptop, an LCD-separator machine, camera glass, a glue machine, and registers along with 50 mobile phones, police said. Another raid was conducted in the area and police recovered 15 phones and 40 back panels (of phones).

The machines were used to dismember the phones and change camera glass, back panels and screens to give them a new look, police further said.

"All were robbed phones. We had to take out their IMEI numbers and put them on the server. So far, 18 of the recovered phones have been linked to FIRs lodged in Delhi and UP. The machines and panels show the accused were changing the body of the devices with spare parts. We are looking for the gang leaders and other accused," said the DCP.

The recovered cases are from Paharganj, Kalkaji, Karol Bagh, Mukherjee Nagar, Hapur and Ghaziabad among other places.

# Terminated for protesting, 884 anganwadi workers, helpers struggle to make ends meet

**AISWARYA RAJ**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

AS KANTI, an anganwadi helper who lost her job four months ago, walked into her colleague's two-room house, her friends who had already assembled for a meeting said, "*Kanti nahi kranti hai woh*." With a grimace, she replied, "My life is anything but revolutionary." One of the 884 anganwadi workers and helpers terminated from their jobs on March 13, Kanti is yet to find another job.

The staffers were sacked following a month-long protest to press for better wages.

Kanti (48), who had been working as an anganwadi helper for 30 years at the time, said: "The order came on WhatsApp on March 14, dated the previous day. I could not comprehend the reason. It was my right to protest, and it cannot be the grounds on which they fire us."

A single mother, she lives with one of her two sons at Shankar Marg in Fazalpur, who ekes out a living by selling toys.

"My husband died two months ago. I haven't been able to get another job," she said. Showing her near-empty wallet, she said, "Look how big my purse is, but it does not have anything."

After the matter reached the Delhi High Court in March, the Delhi government assured the bench that it will not terminate any more workers or helpers in connection with the strike.

When asked if the government would consider taking back the terminated persons, its lawyer, Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the government would try to take a compassionate view but the petitioners "should not put a gun on my head".

In February, the then Women and Child Development Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam announced that honorariums for anganwadi workers and helpers will be increased to Rs 12,720 and Rs 6,810 respectively and said this hike will be implemented from March 1.

Protests, however, continued as protesting workers found the increase too low and their demands such as healthcare cover-



They were sacked after a month-long protest to press for better wages. **Archive**

age and PF were not met. This was till the termination notices started trickling in March.

Anita (32), another single mother, had been working as a helper for 15 years when she was terminated via a letter on WhatsApp, later sent by post, that read, "... (she) was reported to have been continuously absenting from duties and also admitted to have been an active participant in the strike, agitation and dharna... services have been hereby terminated with immediate effect." She

started working in 2007 for a salary of Rs 750, which was Rs 4,839 the last time it was credited to her bank account, in January.

"Apart from a widow pension since my husband's death four years ago and odd jobs like rakhimaking, my family has no income. On many days, we eat at a gurdwara langar nearby. I don't have a ration card either. We have to rely on dry ration my son brings from his school. The Union (Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union) helps me financially at times," Anita said.

Anganwadi helpers' job entails ensuring attendance of children in areas assigned to them, serving food, and overseeing their hygiene. They work in the sector of early childhood care, under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) which focuses on the development of health and nutritional status of children between 0 to 6 years of age.

Delhi has 10,392 workers and 10,739 helpers.

During the pandemic, they also had to do door-to-door delivery of ration, check in on the

health of children and do rounds in areas under anganwadi limits.

"We were not provided with masks or any protective gear, and transportation and other costs were met from our own salary of Rs 4,839. People have misbehaved during these surveys. We have neither job security nor safety while carrying it out," said Binla (42), whose children's tuition fees were earlier paid by her income. She was posted at ICDS Shakarpur. "My husband earns a pittance from his shop. The entire home runs on it now," she said.

On July 16, a delegation met L-G V K Saxena and submitted a memorandum. "Nothing has happened after that; we are still awaiting a response from his office," Anita said.

Though the Delhi government sent out 11,942 show cause notices for participating in the strike, termination orders came for 884. Workers and helpers say they have no knowledge of why these 884 were singled out.

A government spokesperson refused to comment on the matter.



# 7 GOVT & POLITICS



## DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



### THE EXCEPTION

IN THE Vice-Presidential polls, the Opposition may have fielded a candidate against Jagdeep Thakkar knowing fully well that it was a losing battle but once the NDA candidate won, almost all senior opposition leaders — among them Sonia Gandhi, Sharad Pawar, Sitaram Yechury, Akhilesh Yadav, Tejashwi Yadav — congratulated him. However, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did not put out any congratulatory message on her social media handle. There were a flurry of tweets from her congratulating the CWC medal winners. The Trinamool Congress had abstained from voting in the Vice-Presidential elections, drawing flak from some of the Opposition parties. In fact, Margaret Alva, while congratulating her opponent, noted that some Opposition parties had chosen to directly or indirectly support the BJP in an attempt to derail the idea of a united Opposition.

### ON PAPER

IT HAS been close to three months since Congress president Sonia Gandhi set up a political affairs group, as announced by her at the Udaipur Chintan Shivir. She had included G 23 leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma in the panel, which in her words was to be an advisory group that would meet regularly to discuss and deliberate upon political issues and challenges before the party. Incidentally, the group has not met even once since its formation. Sonia had made it clear that the group would not be a collective decision-making body. Besides Azad and Sharma, the group has Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Ambika Soni, Digvijaya Singh, K C Venugopal and Jitendra Singh as members.

### THE JIBE

AS JANATA Dal (United)'s internal fight became public after the party accused its former chief R C Singh of "huge irregularities" in immovable properties, prompting him to quit, Lok Janshakti Party national president Chirag Paswan took a jibe at Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday. Chirag said despite Nitish admitting that Singh indulged in corruption, he calls himself "Sushashan Babu". The IJP chief added, "There is now discord in the house of the one who broke the house of others."

### HARYANA

## Sampat to join Cong today, keen to take on Bishnoi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 7

FORMER HARYANA minister Sampat Singh will again join the Congress in the presence of former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda in Chandigarh on Monday. The former minister is keen to contest against Kuldeep Bishnoi, who recently joined the BJP after leaving the Congress, from Adampur constituency whenever a bypoll takes place there. Bishnoi, who was representing the Adampur seat in the

Assembly, resigned from the Vidhan Sabha membership before joining the BJP.

Singh, a six-time MLA, had recently met senior Congress leader K C Venugopal in the presence of Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda and expressed his keenness to be back join the grand old party.

On Sunday, he held a meeting of his supporters in Hisar who too supported his plan to join the Congress.

Ahead of October 2019 Assembly polls, Singh had left the Congress to join the BJP.

## Govt plans special airport desks, simplified visa norms for overseas patients

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

INTERPRETERS, SPECIAL desks at 10 airports, simplified visa norms, a multi-lingual portal and are going to be the highlights of the government's 'Heal in India' initiative to boost medical tourism.

The 'Heal in India' initiative aims to position the country as a global hub for medical and wellness tourism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to announce it on August 15 and the Health Ministry is putting finishing touches to its various aspects and measures for ease of overseas patients.

"In a bid to boost medical travel and provide end-to-end patient journey facilitation, the government will deploy language interpreters and set up health desks at the 10 identified airports for queries related to medical travel, transport, boarding and lodging among others," one of the sources said.

The 10 identified airports are — Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam, Kochi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Guwahati — see higher footfalls of patients from these 44 countries, the sources said.

## SEVENTH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF NITI AAYOG



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union ministers and Chief Ministers at the NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

## Kerala, West Bengal flag need for better Centre-state cooperation

THE SEVENTH meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chief Ministers of many states. Here's what some of the CMs said:

### Chhattisgarh

Modi praised the Godhan Nyay Yojana initiated by the Congress-led government in Chhattisgarh, saying the scheme is in the interest of farmers as vermi-compost prepared from cow dung helps in increasing productivity of the field.

Addressing the meeting, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel suggested that MGNREGA should be implemented in rural areas located near cities and cities with population of less than 20,000. He reiterated the state's demand of GST compensation, transferring of the amounts collected as 'additional levy' from coal block companies and reimbursement of expenditure of Rs 11,828 crore made by the state government for eradication of Left Wing Extremism. The GST compensation grant should be continued for the next five years, he said.

### Kerala

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the Union government needs to address challenges of cooperative federalism.

He said legislation on subjects in the Concurrent List should be initiated only after adequate consultation with states, and the Centre should desist from making legislation on items in the State List.

Referring to the June 3 Supreme Court verdict, which made one km of eco-sensitive zone mandatory for all protected forest tracts, the Chief Minister said the Centre should have legal remedies in this regard.

He also sought completion of national highway development in



PM Narendra Modi interacts with Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot and Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel at the NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. PMO

the state in a time-bound manner.

### West Bengal

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday emphasised that the Centre should look into the demands of the state governments "more seriously" and no policies should be forced on them.

She stressed that there should be a "greater cooperation" between the Centre and the states. Banerjee also said that state governments should not be pressurised to implement the National Education Policy.

### Haryana

Urging the Union government to promote natural farming in the country, Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar narrated how his state's per-capita income is the highest among the major states of the country.

Khattar assured NITI Aayog cooperation of the state "in achieving the target of India becoming a \$ 5 trillion economy".

"Despite being a small state Haryana has made a significant contribution to the country's economy. Per capita income of Haryana is Rs 2,74,635, which is

highest among the major states. Haryana is also included in the leading states of the country on the parameters of economic development...", he said.

### Punjab

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann presented the case of farmers of the state by underlining the need for making Minimum Support Price (MSP) a legal guarantee and ensuring foolproof marketing system for alternative crops.

He said that as agriculture is no longer a profitable venture so farmers are facing a serious crisis. Mann said that all out efforts must be made to bail out the farmers from this situation for which the Union government must step in.

### Maharashtra

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday emphasised reforms for ushering in greater transparency and accountability in functioning in urban local bodies. Under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the state government will launch an integrated web portal as a single delivery platform for all notified

micro-municipal services of the urban local bodies on August 15.

Shinde also highlighted the steps taken by the state for the implementation of the National Education Policy and said that his government was fully committed to the effective rollout of this education policy.

### Rajasthan

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot reiterated the state's demand for declaring Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) as a national project.

Gehlot also said the change in financial participation pattern of centrally sponsored schemes has led to additional burden on the states. He also said the Centre should extend the period of GST compensation by five years from June 2022 to June 2027 and that about Rs 3,780 crore of GST compensation, which is still pending with the Centre, should also be released to the state.

### Uttar Pradesh

Reiterating his government's resolve to make Uttar Pradesh a \$1 trillion (Rs 80 lakh crore) economy in the next three years, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday credited PM Modi's guidance and leadership for the "success of the state".

Adityanath said that his government was working in a planned manner towards achieving the "challenging" goal of making Uttar Pradesh a \$1 trillion (Rs 80 lakh crore) economy with a "focus on making the state's infrastructure world-class".

The CM added that the work of the GIS survey in 17 municipal corporations was in progress to improve the financial condition of the municipal bodies, due to which doubling of house tax is possible by the end of this financial year.

ENS & PTI

## Gehlot says death penalty for rape leading to murders, faces backlash

DEEP MUKHERJEE  
JAIPUR, AUGUST 7

A CONTROVERSY has erupted over Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's statement that ever since death penalty was introduced for rape, there had been a rise in assault victims being murdered by accused to prevent them from testifying.

Opposition parties, including the BJP and AAP, as well as the Delhi Commission for Women slammed Gehlot for his remarks.

Speaking in Delhi on Friday, on the sidelines of the Congress protest against price rise, Gehlot said: "Rape ho rahe hain bachchiyon ke saath mein. Aur bachchiyon ka jabse kar diya hai ki bhai usko phansi ki saza milegi, Nirbhaya ke baad mein... uske baad mein hatyayin bahut zyada hone lag gaye hain bachchiyon ki. Rape karne wala dekhta hai ye to gavah ban jayegi kalmere khilaaf (Rapes are happening against girls. And since death penalty was introduced for accused, after Nirbhaya... a lot of girls are being murdered. The rapist fears that tomorrow she will become a witness against me)."

The CM added: "Toh woh rape bhi karte hain aur hatya bhi kar dete hain bachchiyon ki. Poore mulk mein, main dekh raha hoon jo report aa rahi hai, ye ek bahut khatarnak trend hai (So the accused rapes and also murders the girl. I can see this in reports coming from across the country, this is a very dangerous trend)."

## UP minister accused of taking away conviction order copy, police say 'examining' complaint

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 7

A DAY after Uttar Pradesh Cabinet minister Rakesh Sachan allegedly took away a file of a court order after he was held guilty in a 1991 Arms Act case, Kanpur Police on Sunday said they are "examining" the contents of the complaint filed by the court reader. The police are yet to file an FIR on a complaint lodged by the court reader.

Sachan, meanwhile, denied the charge and told ANI news agency that he would appear before the court on Monday to present his side of the story.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Joint Commissioner of Police (Kanpur) Anand Prakash Tiwari said: "An inquiry is being conducted by Assistant Commissioner of Police (Kotwali)... On the basis of the inquiry report, further action will be taken."

A court in Kanpur had fixed Saturday for the pronouncement of judgment in the 1991 case and had summoned the minister.

"As per the complaint filed by the court reader, the presiding officer held Rakesh Sachan guilty in the case and started the hearing on the quantum of sentence. When the presiding officer went inside his chamber, Sachan's lawyer sought the file to check



Rakesh Sachan

the order. In the meantime, Sachan left the court premises with the order copy," a senior police officer said.

Denying the charges, the minister told ANI: "I had gone to court on Saturday to attend the trial of the case pending against me. My lawyer had asked me to come to court. I reached the court around 11.00 am. Since I had to attend other engagements, and it was getting late, my lawyer filed an exemption application. I left the court around 12.00 noon. I don't know what happened in court... After I returned, I came to know about all these allegations through media and newspapers."

"Will go to court tomorrow (Monday) and present my side. I will follow what the court orders," he added.

According to the prosecution, a case was filed against Sachan on August 13, 1991 after he failed to show the licence for a rifle, which he was carrying with him. Sachan had then claimed that the rifle belonged to his grandfather, added the prosecution.

## Nitish skips NITI meet, 4th such Central event in 3 weeks

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, AUGUST 7

BIHAR CHIEF Minister Nitish Kumar skipped the NITI Aayog meeting held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. Sources close to the CM said Nitish, who recently recovered from Covid, wants to avoid travel as "a matter of precaution".

This is the fourth Central meeting since July 17 that the Bihar CM has stayed away from, amid strained relations with ally

BJP. On Sunday, one of its senior most leaders, R C P Singh, who had run afoul with Nitish over accepting a Cabinet berth at the Centre, quit the JD(U).

While Nitish joined Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao in staying away from the NITI Aayog meeting, he was scheduled to attend a 'National Handloom Day' function in Patna on Sunday, along with Deputy CM Tarkiahoore Prasad and Industries Minister Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain.

Nitish also has a Janata



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar

Durbar on Monday.

Earlier, he kept away from a meeting of CMs called on July 17 over matters concerning the national flag, by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. On July 22, Nitish chose not to attend the farewell dinner hosted by PM Modi for outgoing President

Ram Nath Kovind. On July 25, he also skipped the swearing-in of NDA candidate Droupadi Murmu as President.

JD(U) sources said Nitish was upset over "overt political posturings" by the central BJP leadership at a two-day national meeting of all its frontal organisations held in Patna on July 30-31. Even though Shah talked about "contesting the 2024 Lok Sabha and 2025 Assembly polls in alliance with the JD(U)", the Bihar CM noted that several second-rung lead-

ers continued to talk "too much about repeal of Article 370 and nationalism", issues that Nitish is not comfortable with.

A BJP leader admitted that Nitish not attending the NITI Aayog meeting did not send a good signal.

However, BJP national spokesperson Guru Prakash Paswan played down Nitish's absence from the meeting. "There is absolutely no point in reading too much politics into this. We will continue to serve the people of Bihar...", he said.

## Jal Jeevan mission: A Maharashtra village holds a lesson for the rest of India

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 7

PIMPALGHAR-RANJNOLI, A village situated in the industrial belt of Thane district's Bhiwandi tehsil along the Mumbai-Nasik highway, has used funds under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to ensure that all 842 families in the village get tap water connection. In other words, each of the 5,644 residents of the village has access to 55 litres of water every day.

Under the JJM, the central government, in partnership with states, aims to provide potable water in adequate quantity and prescribed quality on a long-term basis to every rural household, including in tribal areas of the country, through tap water

connection by 2024.

With industries mushrooming all around it, Pimpalghar-Ranjnoli has been a preferred residential destination for labourers from different parts of the country. But as more and more labourers came to the village, water demand rose sharply.

"It was necessary. One cannot live without water. Women benefited the most due to this initiative. Earlier we used to spend half a day in ensuring water availability for the household chores. But that is all a thing of the past now," said Sulochana Bhagat, former sarpanch of the village.

Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, the village used its funds — around Rs 7 to 8 lakh — to lay down the pipelines.

What is equally remarkable about Pimpalghar-Ranjnoli's achievement is the fact that the village has effectively ensured that residents pay the user charges for tap water. Often, such

initiatives and success stories fail because local authorities fail to bring about a discipline where people pay the required user charges. In the absence of such user charges, many similar initiatives become unsustainable.

Each connection gets a water bill of Rs 100 per month.



Receipt of the village water bill. Pimpalghar-Ranjnoli has a 90 per cent bill payment record. Express

According to G L Chowdhari, the Village Development Officer of Pimpalghar-Ranjnoli, the village has a 90 per cent bill payment record.

"Village gets a bill of around Rs 25,000 to Rs 27,000 from

BMC every year and we try to pay the full amount without any dues," he said. The village gets its water from pipelines running through villagers' fields that take water to Mumbai from dams in Thane district.

Not satisfied with its achievements, the village is also extending its efforts towards reducing water wastage.

At Pimpalghar-Ranjnoli, each household gets water in the morning — from 7 am to around 11 am.

"Earlier, when we had less water, it was used carefully. Now, many times, taps remain open, wasting water. I roam to close running taps and tell people that we must save water. Convenience cannot make us irresponsible," said Vicky Patil, who works with

the gram panchayat.

While Pimpalghar-Ranjnoli can stand out as a model for the rest of the country, it is part of a broader effort by the state government to implement JJM. Maharashtra is one of the leading states in the country in implementing the JJM.

As per the data from the central government, almost 71 per cent of households in Maharashtra have access to a tap connection; the national average is just under 52 per cent. By this metric, Maharashtra ranks ninth after Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Andaman and Nicobar islands, Punjab, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Manipur.

"Around 90 per cent of the villages in the state already had at least one tap. It helped us in

planning the mission. Our challenge was to ensure that every household in the village gets the tap water," said Hrishikesh Yashod, Mission Director, JJM, Maharashtra.

The state has planned 37,422 schemes within JJM at an estimated cost of Rs 20,968.79 crore in Zilla Parishads (ZPs). As of July 25, Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for 31,430 (84 per cent) schemes are ready. Out of these, technical sanctions for 26,278 and administrative approval for 22,597 have been given. A total of 19,156 tenders have been issued.

The state has issued work orders for 12,438 schemes. Out of the total schemes, 1,914 are complete while work on remaining 10,057 is ongoing. **FULL REPORT ON** [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



# Quasi-judicial power to bureaucrats: Not new, says Fadnavis

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 7

Meanwhile, the jail officials got the commode inside Chatterjee's cell repaired.





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# Why food inflation may ease faster than expected

International prices falling the most since Oct 2008 and a good monsoon back home make it a possibility

**HARISH DAMODARAN**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE GLOBAL economy is “past peak inflation”, according to Elon Musk. The CEO of Tesla believes “inflation is going to drop rapidly” and prices of commodities going into electric vehicles “trending down in six months”.

What he’s projecting is already happening in food. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s Food Price Index (FPI) averaged 140.9 points in July, 8.6% down from its previous month’s level and marking the steepest monthly drop since October 2008.

The FPI hit an all-time-high of 159.7 points in March, the month that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24. The latest index reading is the lowest since the 135.6 points of January, before the still-ongoing war.

Between March and July, the FPI has cumulatively declined by 11.8%. This has been led by vegetable oils and cereals, whose average prices have fallen even more, by 32% and 13.4%, respectively. The vegetable oil price index has been particularly volatile (see chart).

## Global factors

There were four major supply-side shock drivers of the great global food inflation from around October 2020: weather, pandemic, war and export controls.

The weather-related shocks included

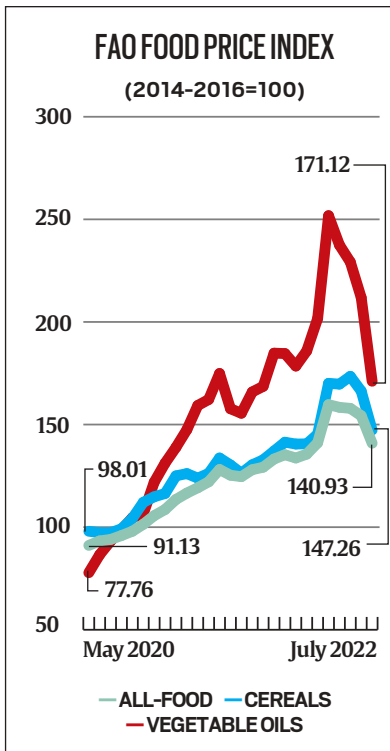
droughts in Ukraine (2020-21) and South America (2021-22), which especially impacted sunflower and soyabean supplies, and the March-April 2022 heat wave that devastated India’s wheat crop.

The pandemic’s supply-side impact was felt the most in Malaysia’s oil palm plantations, where harvesting of fresh fruit bunches is done mainly by migrant labourers from Indonesia and Bangladesh. As Covid-19 resulted in many of them flying back, output from the world’s second largest palm oil producer and exporter fell.

The Russo-Ukrainian War led to supply disruptions from the two countries that, in 2019-20, accounted for 28.5% of the world’s wheat, 18.8% of corn, 34.4% of barley and 78.1% of sunflower oil exports.

Export controls were first imposed by Russia in December 2020, prompted by domestic food inflation fears arising from record hot temperatures. Shortage concerns at home triggered similar actions in palm oil by Indonesia (the No. 1 producer-cum-exporter) and in wheat by India during March-May 2022.

That perfect storm, from all four shocks coming one after the other, now seems to be receding. Its most obvious symbol is the resumption of exports from Ukraine via the Black Sea. The UN-backed agreement for unblocking of this critical trade artery of the global agricultural trade also provides for unimpeded shipments of Russian food and fertilisers. Russia alone is expected to export



40 million tonnes (mt) in 2022-23 (July-June), up from last year’s 33 mt.

But it isn’t Ukraine and Russia alone. Indonesia, since late-May, has lifted its ban on palm oil exports. This, even as the US, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay are set to harvest bumper soyabean crops. Not for nothing,

## AREA SOWN UNDER KHARIF CROPS\* (LAKH HECTARES)

	2022	2021
Rice**	231.59	267.05
Pulses	116.45	119.43
■ Arhar	39.80	44.43
■ Moong	30.99	30.23
■ Urad	31.83	33.87
Coarse cereals	160.37	154.40
■ Bajra	65.17	56.68
■ Maize	75.75	76.34
■ Jowar	12.65	12.62
Oilseeds	174.79	173.82
■ Groundnut	41.09	44.39
■ Soyabean	117.51	115.10
■ Sesamum	11.09	11.21
Cotton	121.13	113.51

Note: Only individual crops with more than 10 lakh hectares area shown;

\*As reported on August 5 and for corresponding period of last year.

\*\*As on July 29 and for corresponding period of last year.

the price sentiment has changed. It’s most visible in edible oils, where roughly 60% of India’s annual consumption requirement is met with imports. In the last three months, the all-India modal retail price is down from Rs 175 to Rs 150 per kg for soyabean oil and from Rs 165 to Rs 142.5 for palm oil.

## Not just global

Global apart, there are domestic reasons for expecting a considerable easing of food inflation.

The most important is the southwest monsoon. Cumulative rainfall during the current season from June to August 7 has been 5.7% above the historical long-term average for this period. Almost all agriculturally-significant areas – barring Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal – have received good rains. The prospects for the coming days seem equally encouraging, with a low-pressure area forming over northwest Bay of Bengal off the Odisha-West Bengal coasts – and another one forecast after mid-August.

Above average rainfall has boosted acreages under most crops this kharif (monsoon) season. The exceptions, as the table shows, are rice (transplanting has taken a hit from deficient rains in the Gangetic Plain states), pulses and groundnut (their area getting diverted to cotton and soyabean).

However, rice stocks in government godowns, at 47.2 mt as of July 1, were 3.5 times the necessary “buffer” for this date. That, plus paddy being grown in the rabi (winter-spring) season as well, should make the overall rice situation manageable.

The same goes for availability of pulses. Chana (chickpea) is selling in wholesale mandis at Rs 4,400-4,600 per quintal, below its minimum support price of Rs 5,320. Government agencies are holding some 3 mt of chana and 100,000 tonnes of masur (red lentil), as against 2.2 mt and 25,000 tonnes, respectively, a year ago. International exportable surpluses, primarily from Canada

and Australia, are also higher than last year’s by about 0.5 mt each for both pulses. In urad (black gram), too, July-end stocks in Myanmar are estimated at 0.3 mt, approximately 0.1 mt more than a year ago.

“There could be problems in arhar (pigeon-pea) because of less acreage and no additional exportable supplies (from Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi and Myanmar). But the Narendra Modi government’s decision to allow duty-free imports of arhar, urad and masur till March 31 will keep a lid on overall prices,” said an industry source.

## Trending down

All in all, there are compelling reasons for food inflation in India to “trend down”, even if not “drop rapidly”. This is already being seen in edible oils. Increased soyabean and cotton production, courtesy of the monsoon, should improve availability of oil-cakes. These, along with maize, are key ingredients in animal and poultry feed. A good monsoon would also mean more fodder and water for animals, further reducing livestock input costs and inflationary pressures on milk, egg and meat. That’s not all.

Current water levels in the country’s major reservoirs are 5.9% higher than a year back and 25.1% above their last 10 year’s average storage. If the monsoon delivers reasonably in the second half, the benefits of groundwater recharge would also flow to the rabi crop. And assuming no fresh setbacks in the Black Sea, the RBI’s monetary policy committee may not have to further hike interest rates.

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## What is Lumpy Skin Disease, the viral illness spreading among cattle



Since 2019, several LSD outbreaks have been reported in Asia. Reuters

**RISHIKA SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

OVER THE last few weeks, over 3,000 cattle have died in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab due to a viral infection called the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).

The National Dairy Development Board has supplied 28 lakh doses of goat pox vaccine to the three states.

## The disease

According to a report by GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation), the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) is caused by a virus called Capripoxvirus and is “an emerging threat to livestock worldwide”. It is genetically related to the goatpox and sheeppox virus family.

LSD infects cattle and water buffalo mainly through vectors such as blood-feeding insects. Signs of an infection include the appearance of circular, firm nodes on the animal’s hide or skin that look similar to lumps.

Infected animals immediately start losing weight and may have fever and lesions in the mouth, along with a reduced milk yield.

Other symptoms include excessive nasal and salivary secretion.

## Previous outbreaks

The disease has been endemic in most African countries. But since 2012, it has spread rapidly through the Middle East, Southeast Europe and West and Central Asia. Since 2019, several outbreaks of LSD have been reported in Asia. In May this year, Pakistan’s Punjab also reported the deaths of over 300 cows due to LSD.

In September 2020, a strain of the virus was discovered in Maharashtra. Gujarat too has reported cases over the last few years, sporadically. Currently, the point of concern is the number of deaths being reported.

## Risk to humans

The disease is not zoonotic, which means it does not spread from animals to humans. However, according to doctors, “milk produced by an infected animal will be fit for human consumption after boiling or pasteurisation as these processes will kill the viruses, if any”.

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**AMITABH SINHA**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

IT WAS one of the most keenly-awaited launches of recent years. The maiden flight of the SSLV or the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle, India’s newest addition to its rocket fleet, had been postponed several times in the last three years. The pandemic played its role, but there were delays from ISRO’s side as well.

On Sunday, the rocket finally embarked on its first flight, carrying two satellites, including an earth observation micro-satellite called EOS-02. But the flight did not go on expected lines. After a successful lift-off and separation of its three stages, the flight deviated from its script. The two satellites, EOS-02 and one built by schoolgirls called AzaadiSat, were put in an orbit different than intended, and were rendered unstable.

“The satellites have already come down from that orbit and they are no longer usable,” ISRO chairman S Somanath said.

This was the second setback in two years for the new series of earth-observation satellites that carry the name EOS. Last year, the EOS-03, a powerful earth observation satellite riding on GSLV-F10, was lost due to a launch failure.

The less-than-perfect flight on Sunday puts a cloud of doubt over the new rocket that is being billed to become ISRO’s main launch vehicle in the coming years. Somanath did try to play it down saying, apart from that small anomaly, every new element incorporated in this rocket had performed very well and that ISRO was satisfied with the way the systems had performed.

But considering the fact that ISRO has been banking heavily on the development of SSLV, Sunday’s flight is no doubt a big disappointment, especially since the space agency has been able to schedule just six

launches in the last three years.

There is a reason why SSLV is seen as the mainstay rocket for ISRO in the coming years.

It is a rocket that can be assembled within 72 hours, by a team of just 5-6 people. A rocket that costs at least one-tenth of those currently in use. A rocket that can enable a space launch from India every week. And, it is a rocket that caters specifically to the small and micro satellites that constitute over 90% of all satellites being launched these days.

## Era of small satellites

For a very long time, small satellites – anything weighing between 5 and 1,000 kg – have had to remain content with hitching a ride to space on rockets commissioned to carry some other, larger satellites.

The timeline of such launch used to be dictated by this larger, primary, satellite, whose interests would take precedence. But with more and more businesses, government agencies, even universities and laboratories beginning to send satellites – nearly all of them falling in the category of small satellites – to space, the constraints of a piggyback ride have started to hurt.

In fact, the demand for the launch of small satellites has increased at a rapid pace in the last eight to ten years, thanks to the ever-growing need for space-based data, communication, surveillance, and commerce. Estimates suggest that tens of thousands of small satellites would be launched in the next ten years.

Satellite builders and operators, therefore, do not have the luxury to wait for months to get a berth on a rocket, or pay very high travel costs. Projects like Starlink of SpaceX or OneWeb, for example, are putting together a constellation of hundreds of satellites.

As a result, the demand for dedicated rockets that can be launched frequently, and can offer cheap rides to space, is growing.



ISRO’s Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) during its launch from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota, Sunday. PTI

This is also a lucrative business opportunity for agencies with launching capability like ISRO, because most of the demand comes from companies that are launching satellites for commercial purposes.

Several new players, both in the government as well as private sector, have begun to offer launching services. In India, where the space sector is fast being opened up for the private sector, at least three private companies are developing rockets that can launch small satellites into space. It is to cater to this demand, and to grab this business opportunity, that ISRO has developed the SSLV.

## More launches

In a good year, ISRO makes 5-6 launches with its PSLV and GSLV (Geospatial Satellite Launch Vehicles) rockets. These rockets typically take 70-80 days to assemble.

Dozens of people work on the assembly, and each of these cost tens of millions of dollars. Though many of these also carry commercial satellites, the revenue generated is not commensurate with the costs incurred.

The SSLV is meant to change all this. This rocket is supposed to have a quick turnaround time, usually less than three days. It can be assembled on-demand, at short notice, and at a fraction of the cost of the existing launch vehicles. The SSLV would have the capability to carry satellites weighing up to 500 kg to the lower earth orbits (up to altitudes of 1,000 km from earth’s surface) which is one of the most sought after places in space for positioning of satellites.

But more importantly, it is likely to drastically increase ISRO’s launch rate. ISRO officials have said they are looking at 50 to 60 launches every year with the SSLV. That would practically be one launch every week, a sharp contrast from the 2-3 launches every year that ISRO has been able to manage.

## EVERYDAY HEALTH

# How better protein intake makes your diabetes meal plan healthy

## EXPERT EXPLAINS



**DR AMBRISH MITHAL**

From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight

DO PROTEINS have a role in diets for diabetes? Expectedly, when we talk about diabetes and meal planning, we mostly focus on carbohydrates, commonly referred to as ‘carbs’. Diabetes is also called ‘sugar’ in common parlance as the connection between sugar and diabetes is strong and embedded in our minds. Not just that, people with diabetes also talk about reducing carbs in the diet. But they often miss out on the importance of proteins.

There are three “macro” nutrients in our diet – carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Proteins are the building blocks of our body

and are vital for growth, muscle and bone development. They are also important constituents of hormones and many enzymes at the cellular level, and are key to building a strong immunity. About half of the proteins in our body are in our muscles. Proteins are also broken down by the body into glucose and used for energy – a process known as gluconeogenesis.

India is a carb-loving country. In general, our protein intakes are sub-optimal. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the daily recommended intake of protein for an adult is 0.8-1 gm per kg body weight. This means that for a 70 kg average Indian, about 56-70 gm protein should be consumed daily. Most Indians are way below this figure, often not even reaching 50 gm a day. This impacts our muscle mass. Studies have shown that Indians at all ages have low muscle mass (sarcopenia) as compared to populations with better protein intakes.

There are several prevalent myths around protein consumption like ‘patients with dia-

betes should not consume much protein’; ‘protein-rich diets may harm your kidney’; ‘protein is difficult to digest and leads to weight gain’; and also the argument that protein is ‘only for body builders’. Some of these myths come from the Western world where protein intakes are much higher than India. Excess protein intake can be a concern in these countries, but for Indians it is a struggle to meet the normal protein requirement.

## Protein intake and diabetes

When you eat carbohydrates in combination with protein (or fat), it can take longer for your body to convert the carbs into glucose, leading to lower post-meal blood sugar levels in patients with Type 2 diabetes.

Although 1 gm of protein provides four calories, the same as carbs, it reduces the calorie intake by providing satiety, which also helps in blood sugar control.

A low-protein diet leads to muscle loss which increases the risk of falls and fractures in elderly diabetics. Such individuals could in

## PROTEIN ON YOUR PLATE

	SERVING	PROTEIN
Chicken	100 gm	30 gm
Fish	100 gm	22 gm
Cooked soyabean	100 gm	12 gm
Egg	1 large	6-7 gm
Milk	200 ml	7 gm
Dal/beans	1 bowl	5-6 gm
Curd	1 bowl	4 gm

any case be more prone to a fall because of nerve, muscle and eye involvement due to long-standing diabetes. Further, low muscle mass is a contributor to insulin resistance.

Recent data suggests that low muscle mass – and low protein intakes by inference – promote development of fatty liver disease, which can lead to liver cirrhosis, even cancer.

made in the human body and are required to be taken through the diet. These are called essential amino acids.

The best sources of proteins are dairy products like milk, curd, paneer as well as eggs, meat, fish and poultry because they have all the essential amino acids.

Vegetable sources of proteins include lentils, beans, and nuts. Soyabean is an exceptional source. If you are vegetarian, consume dairy and dals. If you like the taste, add soya bean. If you are vegan, please have a nutritionist calculate your protein intake and ensure you don’t fall short.

A combination of cereals, millets and pulses provides most of the amino acids, which complement each other to provide better quality proteins.

A variety of proteins always helps. One good principle is that every time you have a meal, search for the protein in the plate.

*Dr Ambrish Mithal is the Chairman and Head, Endocrinology and Diabetes, Max Healthcare*



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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2022

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

GOOD INTELLIGENCE WORK WAS GRADUAL AND  
RESTED ON A KIND OF GENTLENESS.

—JOHN LE CARRÉ

*The Indian* **EXPRESS**

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## COLOMBO'S SELF-GOAL

Chinese military vessel at Hambantota is a spectre that threatens the new equilibrium in India-Sri Lanka relations

IF SRI LANKA did not know or understand this sufficiently before, hopefully it does by now — Delhi has a really serious problem with Colombo's do-we-care attitude to its security concerns. Since it came to light that a Chinese military vessel, the Yuan Wang 5, was to call at Hambantota Port on August 11 and stay over for a week, India had been pressing its grave concern over this to Colombo. After a tense week of negotiations between the two South Asian neighbours, Sri Lanka has told the Chinese that the visit of the ship "be deferred until further consultations are made on this matter". The Sri Lankan note verbale appears to convey that the matter is still open for negotiation, but it would be unfortunate if Colombo believes it can invite the ship back at a later date. China's Yuan Wang vessels are strategic platforms, and they form part of the People's Liberation Army support force. A vessel of its surveillance reach has never before sailed in the waters that Yuan Wang wishes to access. The Sri Lankan attempt to pass it off as a "research vessel" on an innocuous refuelling stop was either naive or disingenuous, but in either case, self-defeating.

China vs India on its soil is hardly a sporting fixture that Sri Lanka can watch from the ringside without getting hurt itself. This is the second time in 19 months that Colombo has tried to make light of India's security concerns on account of the Chinese presence in Sri Lanka. Last January, the Sri Lankan government awarded a renewable energy project on three islands close to the Tamil Nadu coastline, to a Chinese firm. It took much diplomatic energy on India's part, and a commitment to develop the same project through a grant, to have that decision reversed. India's massive assistance to Sri Lanka since January was certainly not tagged with the note that Colombo should stop being friends with Beijing. But a cavalier attitude to India's real security concerns is a sure way to lose Delhi's goodwill at a time that Sri Lanka needs it most.

The timing of the Foreign Ministry's clearance to the ship reinforces a worry that is true for India's entire neighbourhood. Instability in any country in the region, whether that is Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan or Afghanistan, tends to impact India adversely and in unexpected ways. The Chinese ship apparently got its clearance from the Foreign Ministry on July 12. This was three days after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had to flee in a navy boat as a sea of people stormed his official home. Clearly, there were some who believed that the political vacuum in Sri Lanka was ripe for exploitation. Who exactly gave that clearance should be a matter of interest in Colombo, as that person was not just acting on behalf of interests inimical to India, but against the interests of Sri Lanka as well, by trying to sabotage the new equilibrium in the relationship.

## WELCOME, VICE PRESIDENT

Jagdeep Dhankhar needs to reach out to those who didn't vote for him — that's the spirit of the House he chairs

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR WAS elected the 14th Vice-President of India on Saturday. His huge victory margin indicates that he managed to draw support even from the Opposition ranks, a fact underlined by the Prime Minister in his congratulatory message. This could be seen as an endorsement of Dhankhar's credentials as a leader to hold high office as much as it signifies the failure of the Opposition to stay together in an important political contest.

The V-P, as the chair of Rajya Sabha, has the onerous task of conducting important legislative business in a very polarised House. The immediate task for the new V-P would be to take the Opposition into confidence and, while drawing the line on discipline, to ensure that it's done with an intent to accommodate rather than exclude. Dhankhar's formidable record as a politician — he was a Union minister in the Chandra Shekhar ministry in 1990, MLA in Rajasthan and Governor in West Bengal — and a lawyer — he is a senior advocate in the Supreme Court — should stand him in good stead in the V-P's office. He joins an illustrious group of leaders — from philosopher-statesman S Radhakrishnan to the much-liked Venkaiah Naidu — who upheld the dignity of the office and won the respect and admiration of MPs across party lines. Unfortunately, Dhankhar's tenure as Governor of West Bengal was marked by frequent run-ins with the TMC government. That's an image he may need to live down as V-P since this office, like that of the Governor, expects its occupant to rise above partisan interests and preside over the Upper House in a fair and objective manner. In fact, the TMC, the second-largest opposition group in Parliament after the Congress with 36 MPs, took a narrow-minded decision to abstain from the V-P election. Earning his spurs in a coalition era, Dhankhar, surely, should let that history come in the way as he engages with the Opposition, which includes the TMC. The TMC, too, should realise that Rajya Sabha isn't the place to fight its old Raj Bhavan battles.

The challenge for Dhankhar, however, would be to persuade the government to allow the Opposition its say in the Rajya Sabha — his pre-BJP career as a Janata and Congress legislator should come in handy. The onus of making Parliament more productive lies with the government, which needs to reach out to the Opposition to facilitate the smooth functioning of both the Houses. Dialogue and debate are essential features of parliamentary democracy and the executive ought to walk that extra mile to engage with the Opposition and ensure that the latter contributes to legislating. Unfortunately, that's not been the case in recent times: The current session itself has been marred by the suspensions of more than 20 Opposition MPs. Dhankhar may have to don the robe of not only an impartial arbiter but also a persuasive negotiator whose primary intent shall be to protect the Rajya Sabha's sanctity as an inclusive and participatory legislative space. Welcome, Mr Vice President.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



SAUGATA BHATTACHARYA

IN ITS LATEST meeting, the members of the monetary policy committee voted unanimously to increase the policy repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.4 per cent. This was in line with the RBI's views on the need for pre-emptive action and a front loading of rate hikes to quell the second-order effects in the face of repeated supply shocks. The repo rate was 5.15 per cent in February 2020. So, in effect, the RBI's policy has not only been normalised, but has actually tightened compared to the pre-pandemic level. Even the lower bound of the rate corridor, the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate, at 5.25 per cent is now above the pre-pandemic repo rate.

While the policy rate hike was widely expected, more anticipated were the MPC and the RBI Governor's forward guidance on the trajectory of policy — on both monetary policy and liquidity instruments. So, how do we see monetary policy evolve over the rest of the year and beyond?

The first signal was on the stance of policy. Given the front loading of rate hikes, retaining the policy stance rather than shifting to "neutral" was a bit surprising. The reasons for one MPC member differing on this will become clearer after the minutes of the meeting are released. However, reading between the lines, this retention of stance might be interpreted as being a bit more hawkish than "neutral", which implies that rates might be both increased or cut, depending on economic conditions. This might have been construed as a signal that rates had risen to a "neutral" point. The governor reinforced this by emphasising that with the growth momentum expected to be resilient, monetary policy should "persevere further in its stance ... to ensure inflation moves closer to the target of 4 per cent". Hence, further tightening is on the cards.

But by how much? First, now that policy is largely normalised, the pace of tightening is likely to moderate. The urgency of aggressive rate hikes and tightening of liquidity has somewhat moderated, although risks remain. Going forward, more conventional increases of 25 basis points are likely. Second, RBI's research suggests that the "real natural rate" — the rate at which policy is neither

RBI, government must act in coordination during an economically challenging period

Now that policy is largely normalised, the pace of tightening is likely to moderate. The urgency of aggressive rate hikes and tightening of liquidity has somewhat moderated, although risks remain. Going forward, more conventional increases of 25 basis points are likely. Second, RBI's research suggests that the 'real natural rate' — the rate at which policy is neither loose nor tight — is 0.8-1 per cent. This operative interest rate is usually the three-month T-bill rate, which in 'normal' times averages 10-15 basis points above the repo rate.

loose nor tight — is 0.8-1 per cent. This operative interest rate is usually the three-month T-bill rate, which in "normal" times averages 10-15 basis points above the repo rate. Considering that monetary policy is calibrated over a one-year horizon and using the RBI's inflation forecast of 5 per cent for the first quarter of 2023-24, the "natural" repo rate will be around 5.85 per cent. Considering the tightening phase of the current cycle, the terminal repo rate — the level at which monetary policy will pause — is likely to be around 6.25 per cent.

But all this will depend on evolving inflation and growth conditions. The RBI's growth projection for 2022-23 has been retained at 7.2 per cent, with growth frontloaded in the first half. CPI inflation is still forecast to average 6.7 per cent.

Inflationary pressures are likely to wane in the second half of 2022-23, particularly if the recent drop in industrial metals prices persists over the next few months. IIM Ahmedabad's Business Inflation Expectations Survey (BIES) shows cost inflation expectations, while still high, are moderating. A more or less normal monsoon might help in keeping food prices stable. However, risks remain. Demand for consumption goods seems to be resilient, enabling some further pass-through of input costs. Activity in domestic services sectors has also improved, largely as pent-up demand which confers greater pricing power. Combine this with tight labour markets and rising wage costs in some tech-oriented sectors.

Consequently, domestic growth prospects seem robust. High frequency indicators of economic activity have recovered after some weakness in June. In addition to resilient demand, there is evidence of a closing of the "output gap". The RBI's survey shows manufacturing capacity utilisation at 75.3 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021-22 (relative to its long-term average of 73.7 per cent); this is likely to have moved up even higher thereafter.

However, global growth and trade are forecast to significantly slow down in 2022 and 2023, largely due to aggressive tightening by G-10 central banks and a slowdown

in China. The IMF predicts global trade volume (both merchandise and services) to slow to 4.1 per cent and 3.2 per cent in 2022 and 2023, down from 10.1 per cent in 2021.

With world growth and trade flows moderating, along with a drop in commodities prices, India's export growth is likely to be lower than last year. The current account deficit remains a concern. Although India's external balance sheet remains quite robust, as is evident from various balance of payments and debt metrics, and reportedly low unhedged foreign currency borrowings continued tightening by global central banks, particularly the US Federal Reserve over the rest of 2022, will keep India's external financial conditions tight and likely limit portfolio capital flows. However, there are some signs emanating from these central banks that the hitherto front-loaded tightening might moderate going forward. This will take some pressure off the rupee, though, exchange rate volatility management will remain a part of the overall monetary policy management framework.

As part of this framework, during the earlier phase of policy normalisation and the recent tightening, liquidity management has played an important role in influencing short-term money market interest rates. The current latent surplus liquidity — the existing funds with banks and the Union government's unspent revenues parked with RBI — is over Rs 5 lakh crore. While the extent of liquidity surplus during the Covid months has come down, these levels are still much higher than RBI estimates of non-inflationary levels of surplus, which is around Rs 1.8-2.4 lakh crore. We do expect that this will gradually fall with cash withdrawals and some potential RBI dollar sales in the coming months.

The central bank, in coordination with the government, has ensured an orderly evolution of economic conditions during a very complex and challenging environment. The exit process now will also need the same adroit use of policy instruments.

*The writer is Executive Vice President and Chief Economist, Axis Bank. Views are personal*

## SINKING FILMS, FADING STARS

With multiple big-budget flops, it's time to slash high actors' salaries, pay the writers



SHUBHRA GUPTA

ONE OF THE oldest sayings in the movie business is that it's never the film that fails, it's the budget. Film industries everywhere, especially Hollywood and Bollywood which make movies for the maximum numbers possible, are strewn with the carcasses of films that spiralled so madly out of financial control that they were dead before arrival, the empty seats in theatres on the opening day being just the last nail in the coffin.

We don't have to look too hard to find such a film. Two weeks back, *Shamshera*, produced by Yash Raj Films and headlined by Ranbir Kapoor, crashed at the box office. It wasn't as if it enjoyed a buzzy first weekend and then petered out gradually as so many films do: The audience just didn't show up from day one. Reports that the film had to be pulled out of screens on the opening day were not just shocking, but almost unprecedented.

In 2009, the same producer and star had come together to make *Rocket Singh: Salesman Of The Year*. The film gave us a salesman who lives and learns life lessons in a film which is sharp, satiric and surprising. It is Ranbir's best performance, and, creatively speaking, a burnished feather in the Yash Raj cap. The film tanked, but it is one for the ages, making its way into best film lists year after year.

You could argue that a box office failure is a box office failure, but not all movies die unsung. Some live on in our hearts, regardless of what their collections were, and *Rocket Singh*

is one of those. Its failure drove Yash Raj back towards the tropes-and-cliche laden masala movies which, ironically enough, the audience had begun turning its back on around the same time. *Shamshera*, which cobbles together elements from many of YRF's own films, with Kapoor present in nearly every scene and playing the double role of father and son, is nothing but stale, regurgitated masala which comes roaring out from under its spectacle and scale.

It's not just the debacle of *Shamshera*, a film that was meant to pull Bollywood out of its current doldrums, that has the film industry reeling. Before this, it was the Akshay Kumar-starrer *Samrat Prithviraj*, another YRF film, which also reported empty theatres after the first week. And yet another Kumar-helmed film, *Bachchan Paandey* sank without a trace, earlier this year.

Just what is going on? While a handful of films from the south, *Pushpa: The Rise*, *RRR*, and *KGF: Chapter 2*, have done great business all over the country in their dubbed and subtitled versions, much-anticipated Bollywood films have fallen by the wayside. There are many ways to parse these failures, but amongst Bollywood's biggest bugbears is the star fee, which weighs heavy on the film's budget. By all accounts, the salary of even the biggest stars in the South Indian film industries is balanced with the rest of the production costs. In Bollywood, good intentions and lousy budgets seem to be joined at the hip.

Speaking off the record, one of Bollywood's biggest producers had told me that an A-list male star fee (the female stars are still struggling for pay parity) is nearly half of the film's cost, which is why so many of these stars have started their own production companies, in order to get their own fee off the table. Only they can afford to hire themselves.

He need not have been so circumspect. The scourge of the star fee has always been an open secret in an industry so heavily dependent on getting a face to green-light their projects that nothing else seems to matter, and especially not the most important element that can make or break a film: The writing.

There is no other way to say it: Bollywood is crashing and burning. The only way to roll back from this disastrous scenario is to institute a few urgent course corrections. First, slash that unconscionably high star fee and spend all that left-over money to pay those who can write. If you listen to those who have been trying to break into Bollywood with their scripts, you hear dispiriting tales of don't-call-us-we'll-call-you, and radio silence after. How long will it take for the so-called stars of today who have no way to justify their fees in the face of a missing audience to realise that the real star is the writer?

Give me a *Rocket Singh* over a *Shamshera*, any day.

*shubhra.gupta@expressindia.com*

## AUGUST 8, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

### PRESS FREEDOM DEBATE

HOME MINISTER R Venkataraman expressed himself against any exercise of unbridled freedom by the press and asserted that there was a need to regulate freedom of expression. Responding to a noisy discussion on the curtailment of press freedoms in states such as Bihar, he said that Article 19 (2) of the Constitution allows the state to impose reasonable restrictions. The Opposition leaders, in contrast, described the Bihar amendments to the penal code as a "black bill" passed by a corrupt government. Venkataraman said that the Bihar government's decision owed to two incidents. The first was the allegation

that the CM had bathed in the blood of 100 goats at a tantrik's advice. The other was reports of a well in Bihar Sharif being poisoned.

### OPPOSING ASSAM POLLS

THE ASSAM AGITATION leaders have told the election commissioner that it is their constitutional obligation to oppose elections in the state if foreigners are allowed to participate in them. They have asked the EC to not make any preparations for the elections till the Centre initiates concrete measures on the foreigners issue. The detection of foreigners should constitute the first step in the electoral process, they said.

### ITALY PM RESIGNS

ITALIAN PM Giovanni Spadolini announced his resignation after 405 days in office, bringing to an end Italy's 41st government since 1945. The resignation came after socialist members of his cabinet quit over the parliamentary defeat of a petroleum tax plan.

### PM TO VISIT AMITABH

INDIRA GANDHI WILL visit the 40-year old Amitabh Bachchan who is waging a life and death battle in a Bombay hospital after an accident on a film set. This will be a private visit and she will be accompanied by Rajiv Gandhi.



# THE IDEAS PAGE

## The wrong diagnosis

India's tax-GDP ratio is not too low as claimed by conventional wisdom — indeed, it is much higher than expected. Time for debate to shift to quality of expenditures



SURJIT S BHALLA

ONE OF THE stylised beliefs in India, and amongst some leading economic commentators both in India and abroad, is that our tax/GDP ratio is lower than what it “should” be. Many ills are laid at the door of this hypothesised low tax/GDP ratio. It is conjectured that we have a lower rate of investment, a higher fiscal deficit, and lower GDP growth — and all because the tax ratio is too low. There can be reasonable doubts about the presumed links, an issue on which I have relatively little to say. For the record, I have long argued that there is no empirical evidence to indicate a causal relationship between tax ratios or fiscal deficits and growth — or even a statistical relationship. There is, however, a well-established relationship between investment and growth.

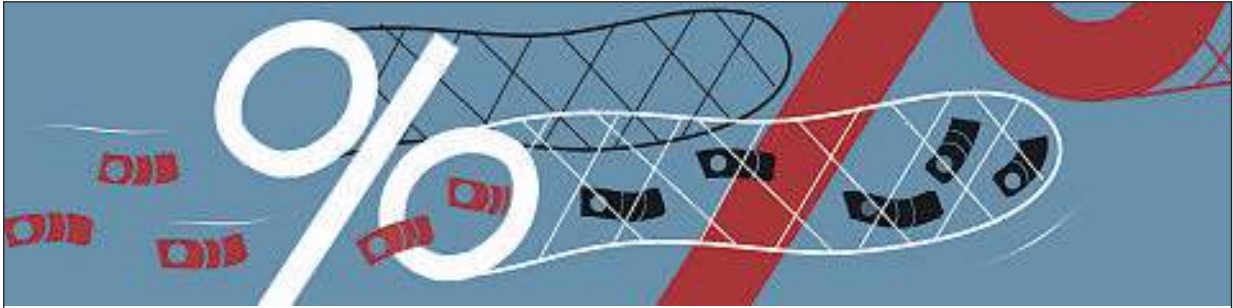
Proceeding, there are three important fiscal variables in the economy — taxes, fiscal deficit, and debt. They are inter-related — lower tax revenue means higher fiscal deficit, for the same level of expenditures, and higher deficit means higher debt. All three, directly or indirectly, are assumed to affect growth and/or inflation. The relationships are complicated, and have provided grist for a number of PhDs, with many more to come. Our goal in this article is to look at the first of the trinity — the tax/GDP ratio (hereafter Xtax). We look at Xtax in an uncomplicated way, just facts, and interpret the evidence.

Two common observations on Xtax for India — first, it is low at around 10-11 per cent of GDP and it has stayed at close to that level for the last 20 years. In 2019, it hit a decade low of 10 per cent of GDP, the same as in 2014. Second, in comparison with our peers, it is much lower. Hence, logic dictates that we should strive to increase Xtax.

But which country should we compare India with? A common observation (surprisingly also offered by economic experts) is to look at the tax-GDP ratio in G20 countries. This is the beginning of a set of misinterpretations committed either knowingly, or unknowingly. Because simple logic dictates that tax collected is a function of the average level of per capita income. Per capita income in the G20 varies from around \$2,100 (India) to around \$65,000 (US). But before going “there”, there is a more fundamental issue that needs to be resolved. The 10-11 per cent figure for India is the tax/GDP ratio for taxes administered at the central level. Taxes in India, as in many other large, especially federal, countries, are collected at both a federal and state level. And many economies have local (municipal) taxes as well. The tax collected is the sum of all these taxes. That is the Xtax that needs comparison.

Until now, collecting such disaggregated data for a large set of countries was, well, impossible. In a recent web publication, the IMF has come to the rescue and for which kudos are due. On their World Revenue Longitudinal Data set (<https://data.imf.org/?sk=77413f1d-1525-450a-a23a-47aeed40fe78>) data are presented for all countries, from 1990-2019.

In this pre-pandemic year, among G20 economies, India's tax-GDP (Xtax) ratio of 16.7 per cent was higher than that of China (15.9 per cent), Mexico (14.1 per cent), Indonesia (11.0 per cent), Saudi Arabia (5.9 per cent) and



GROSS TAX COLLECTION/GDP RATIO 2011-2019 : INDIA IS HIGHER THAN ‘NORMAL’

REGION	Per capita GDPs in 000	MEANS 2011-2019 WEIGHTED BY SHARE IN WORLD			
		Tax/GDP %	Predicted Tax/GDP %	TaxGap %	Fiscal Deficit/GDP %
Advanced Economies	49.2 %	22.5 %	23.5 %	-1 %	-4 %
East Asia	10.7 %	16.6 %	19.3 %	-2.4 %	-1.9 %
Russia and East Europe	11.5 %	21.5 %	20.6 %	0.9 %	-2.3 %
Latin America	10.4 %	18.2 %	19.5 %	-1.3 %	-3.9 %
Middle East and N Africa	10 %	17.3 %	20 %	-2.6 %	-5.1 %
South Asia	1.7 %	15.5 %	15.6 %	0 %	-6.7 %
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.4 %	16.9 %	15.2 %	1.6 %	-3.9 %
Above (104 countries)	26.7 %	19.5 %	20.8 %	-1.3 %	-3.6 %
INDIA	2070 %	16.9 %	15.6 %	1.2 %	-7.2 %

Source: IMF World Revenue database, <https://data.imf.org/?sk=77413f1d-1525-450a-a23a-47aeed40fe78>  
Resource Rich economies, population < 3 million not in sample

Predicted tax/GDP based on a regression of tax/GDP ratio on log per capita GDP PPP

Illustration: C R Sasikumar

Turkey (15.9 per cent). While reassuring, such a simple head-to-head comparison is not very meaningful. A more informative indicator of whether a country is taxing too much or too little in comparison with others is to look at the tax-GDP ratio adjusted for PPP per capita income (and excluding resource-rich economies like Russia and Saudi Arabia and countries with population less than 3 million). Prediction via a simple regression of Xtax on log PPP per capita GDP can yield one estimate of the tax gap — the difference between actual and actual adjusted for level of income.

The table reports the averages for 104 countries for the period 2011-2019. The world average tax gap is -1.3 per cent; India is +1.2 per cent for the nine years 2011-2019. So, India's tax GDP ratio averages 2.5 percentage points more than an average economy. Among 70 Emerging economies (excluding AEs and countries belonging to the former Soviet Union), India's rank is 20 — Xtax in India is higher than 50 peers on a systematic basis. Zich evidence, therefore, that India's tax/GDP ratio is too low. For every year for which data are available 1990-2019, India has had a positive tax gap — there is little evidence that a higher tax/GDP ratio helps growth.

But this is all before the tax collection revolution post-2019 (a structural change?), a subject matter to which we now turn.

*Corporate tax cut 2019:* For years, the advocacy in India was to increase revenue from corporate tax (one of three major components of tax revenue, the other being income and indirect taxes). The slogan: India Xrat was low, so raise corporate and income tax rates. “Because the rich should pay more taxes”; because inequality was increasing, and high, and because such higher taxation would lower the fiscal deficit and increase growth. A small minority had argued the opposite — that higher corporate tax rates stifle investment, increase tax unemployment, and lower growth.

In a series of articles starting with ‘Maximise revenue, minimise tax’ (IE, July 13, 2019) Karan Bhasin and I argued against the

In September 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman lowered the corporate tax rate by around 10 percentage points. This was one of the largest corporate tax cuts in world history. Unfortunately, the pandemic struck a few months later and disrupted world economies. However, now, three years later, we can assess the efficacy of this bold experiment in Modi 2.0. For the three months April-June 2022, corporate tax revenues, y-o-y, are up 30 per cent. Using fiscal 2019-20 as a base, corporate tax revenue has increased by 66 per cent, GDP by 33 per — an average tax buoyancy of 2.0 over three years. Tentatively, the tax-GDP ratio in the fiscal year 2022-23 will average over 18 per cent in India, a level close to Japan and the US.

heightened Indian wisdom. We argued that to increase tax revenue, we needed to decrease tax rates. (Incidentally, I had also argued that demonetisation would have a very positive effect on tax compliance a week after November 8, 2016!) We were dubbed Laffer curve groupies and faced criticism (and ridicule!) from more knowledgeable “experts” who said that empirical evidence around the world (for example, the US) meant that if tax rates were lowered, revenues would decline, the fisc would increase, as would inequality. A triple whammy that is best avoided.

In September 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, going well against Indian established conventional wisdom, lowered the corporate tax rate by around 10 percentage points. This was one of the largest corporate tax cuts in world history. Unfortunately, the pandemic struck the world a few months later and disrupted world economies. However, now, three years later, we can assess the efficacy (or not) of this bold experiment in Modi 2.0. For the three months April-June 2022, corporate tax revenues, y-o-y, are up 30 per cent. Using fiscal 2019-20 as a base, corporate tax revenue has increased by 66 per cent, GDP by 33 per cent — an average tax buoyancy of 2.0 over three years. The previous largest tax buoyancy was in 2006-7 when the world was buoyant — and this was when the world was Covid-depressed! Tentatively, the tax-GDP ratio in the fiscal year 2022-23 will average over 18 per cent in India, a level close to Japan and the US.

What the data conclusively show is that the debate on the Indian economy should shift away from simplistic notions (borrowed from the West?) of the tax-GDP ratio being low in India. The debate should shift to expenditures, and quality of expenditures (and perhaps to reform of the direct tax code). In this regard, PM Modi's suggestion that freebies be critically examined is most timely and welcome.

The writer is executive director, IMF representing India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Views expressed are strictly personal

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“Arguments that tribal codes or religious customs disallow the Taliban from kicking out their ‘guests’ hold no water. If the group wants international legitimacy, along with other actions, cleansing the country of foreign terrorists must be on top of the agenda.”  
—DAWN, PAKISTAN

## Ringfence PMLA from executive

Centre has weaponised money laundering law to target political opponents. SC has been blind to this threat to democracy



RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA

THE PMLA JUDGMENT has resulted in stellar commentary by some very credible voices. A core concern that merits greater attention is the invidious threat to democracy that the agency poses post this Supreme Court judgment. This is not a presumption but a stark reality. Consider the following: In August of last year, the Supreme Court asked the Narendra Modi government how many legislators were being investigated under the PMLA. Of the 122 sitting and ex-legislators, barely three names belonged to the ruling BJP. Does this represent an absence of offenders in the ruling party? Of course not. What it represents is the selective misuse of the agencies.

A similar number of cases is pending with the CBI against leaders of the Opposition. Consider also the cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and CBI that go into cold storage as soon as the leaders in question join the ruling party. Innumerable examples stand out in West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Goa and so on. This establishes how the draconian abuse of process by the ED has come to the point of being a punishment in itself.

The cardinal constitutional duty of the Supreme Court is to defend the Constitution against the might of the administrative executive as also the abuse of legislative majority to cripple fundamental constitutional guarantees. Abuse of the PMLA and its creature, the ED, does both. A simple question to ask is: Did the Court redress this diabolical attack on changing the scales of democracy by the grossest abuse of the PMLA law by the ruling government? The answer is clearly no.

What the Court failed to realise is that the ED has become a tool in the hands of a regime to consolidate and remain in power as also to seek revenge. Recall the raids on former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's relatives around the time of the Punjab election. Or the raids on (and arrest of) D K Shivakumar around the time the government in Karnataka was toppled. Or on Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut as the government in Maharashtra was illegally toppled. The wholly unfounded harassment and questioning of Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for days together, illegal barricading of their houses and the arrest of former Home Minister P Chidambaram in the past are glaring examples of revenge-seeking for actions taken in Gujarat during the UPA government. That this context was factored into the Court's reasoning is very unfortunate.

Another point the Supreme Court has failed to realise is these agencies can move much faster and cause far more devastation, than what courts can remedy with imme-

diated action. Courts can only intervene post an action. What happens in cases like *National Herald* where the agency has been investigating the allegations for the better part of a decade? Over 100 questions have been asked and answered in over 50 hours of questioning. Yet no FIR has been produced, no ECIR, no chargesheet. What can the leaders who are being harassed seek as relief from the courts?

Consider also the abysmal rate of convictions. Only 23 persons have been convicted by the agency, leading to a reported conviction rate of just 0.5 per cent. Review this in the context of the massive jump in ED actions. There have been over 3,010 ED raids between 2014, when this government came to power, and now, in contrast to 112 raids in the 10 years of the UPA government. So many valuable public resources are deployed with little to no result. The argument that the process is slow holds little water when you consider the dedicated resources the ED has and the special courts (adjudicating authority and the PMLA appellate tribunal) constituted to hear just the matters before it. It is a different matter that the government has not appointed a judge to head the PMLA appellate tribunal for the last two years. This is because conviction is not the objective. Intimidation is the end goal.

This is part of a larger and more sinister design. Last December, the Modi government introduced a law that allowed the Centre to extend the terms of the directors of ED and CBI up to a total of five years each. However, these extensions would be given in episodic and piecemeal increments of one year at a time. This would rob the officers of total autonomy and render them entirely vulnerable to the whims of the executive. B R Ambedkar had emphasised the importance of fixed tenures to ensure that the officer could not be influenced by the threat of removal or inducement of reward. This principle was reiterated in the *Vineet Narain* and *Alok Verma* judgments of the Supreme Court. What was even more brazen about this law was that it was brought about to defeat a Supreme Court judgment, which specifically directed that the term of the current ED director could not be extended. I challenged this law and the Supreme Court is currently examining it.

Due process requires accountability. It requires that an agency answers for excesses and that its processes be subject to the disinfectant of sunlight. In the case of the ED, with its draconian powers of seizure and arrest, deployed at the singular command of a government inebriated on power, the Court has, in effect, permitted them to draw a veil over their activities. This is a cancerous tumour for a healthy democracy.

The law needs to be ringfenced, perhaps even repealed, now that we have seen what it can do in the hands of a government which so brazenly prizes its political survival over national interest. We realise our error in believing that the law would always be open to judicial scrutiny as it was in our time. We hope that the Supreme Court realises its error before it is too late.

The writer is a Member of Parliament and general secretary of the Indian National Congress



SHIKHA AGGARWAL

FEW EVENTS IN international politics better exemplify the volatile cocktail of geopolitical contestation, competing nationalisms, and domestic political compulsions than the recently-concluded visit of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, to Taiwan. While the US and Taiwan acted as per the democratic rationale of their policies, China's actions had to follow the dictates of its communist system.

The Party-state established by the Communist Party of China (CCP) in 1949 was premised upon a “social contract”, albeit with CCP characteristics, with the Chinese people. This contract underpins the party's legitimacy within the Chinese body politic. Therefore, it is as much a survival strategy by the CCP as it is a governance technique. As the Party evolved from a revolutionary entity to a governing establishment, this contract too transformed — the lofty romanticism of “liberation” was replaced by the imperatives of “peaceful development”. Today, this socialist utopia is defined by the “national rejuvenation” ideal. Interestingly, the Taiwan question remained a constant feature of the various avatars of this contract.

Though an old political jargon, national rejuvenation under Xi Jinping is the clarion call of a civilisational state and not merely a cherished ideal of a republican experiment or Communist state. In this version, national rejuvenation is both flexible in its ideological scope and expandable in its territorial ambitions. Importantly, the nationalist rationale of the re-

## Xi and the Taiwan question

Nancy Pelosi's visit must be seen in context of CCP's national rejuvenation project

juvenation construct is not sourced from narratives of victimhood suffered during the “century of humiliation”; it is located in the glory of an imagined past, and is thereby both more assertive and aggressive in its orientation.

In addition to being a nationalist project, national rejuvenation is equally a personal investment by Xi. Successful reclamation of every entity and ideal that belongs to the landscape of “rejuvenation” could seal his position as the leading figure within the CCP pantheon. Therefore, China's increasing belligerency towards Taiwan needs to be located within the dynamics of CCP's political expediency, Chinese nationalism, and Xi's ambitions.

While Pelosi's visit was not a first by a US House Speaker, the logic of “rejuvenation” politics warranted a belligerent response from the Chinese side — regimes that aspire to claim the pre-eminence of antiquity cannot be perceived as compromising on their “core interests”, either by a domestic audience or the international community. In this paradigm, any act that facilitates Taiwan's recognition as a political entity is anathema as it violates the spirit of national rejuvenation, and, thereby, the contract between the CCP and the Chinese people.

Though the visit and its effect on US-China relations have implications for Xi's leadership, they do not necessarily impact his plans for the upcoming 20th Party Congress. While there are sources of criticism and dissatisfaction with Xi's foreign and economic policies within the higher echelons of the CCP, the Chinese presi-

dent has meticulously invested his last two terms in dominating the institutional framework of both the Party and state. Therefore, there is limited scope for any elite dissatisfaction to take the form of an effective opposition against Xi in the immediate future.

Further, the democratic logic of a direct correlation between policy criticism, fluctuating public opinion and the prospects of a leader cannot be extrapolated upon the Leninist structure of the CCP in its entirety. The Central Committee that will choose China's next leadership line at the 20th Party Congress will have the highest number of delegates from the provincial party committees. As mentioned in an earlier article (‘Extraordinary Power of Xi, IE, June 15), most of the newly-elected provincial party chiefs hold work experience in provinces where Xi earlier served as the party chief. Furthermore, the delegates from all contingents shall be indirectly vetted by the Organisation Department which is headed by Chen Xi, a long-time confidant of the President.

While Xi's prospective third term appears to be largely immune from the visit, he might have to confront some serious criticism from the party elders at the upcoming CCP meeting at Beidaihe. This criticism could be most serious on two substantive points in Pelosi's address at the Presidential Office. Pelosi referred to “self-determination” as one of the core values of US-Taiwan relations. And as highlighted by a retired senior Indian diplomat, she used the formulation “the people of Taiwan” instead

of “people on Taiwan” as mentioned in the Taiwan Relations Act. The significance of this departure in diplomatic parlance will not be lost on the Party elders.

Since the Taiwan question is intrinsically intertwined with the legitimacy of the CCP, and Xi's personal agenda, China will not launch an outright war until the military balance favours the US. Moreover, with an almost-guaranteed third term, there is limited utility for any war over Taiwan for Xi at the moment.

At the same time, the strategic community needs to take cognisance of the non-military methods being professed by the Chinese leadership and academia to realise the goal of national rejuvenation and, thereby, the resolution of the Taiwan question. A noteworthy development was the Central Conference on United Front Work (UFWD,) held from 29-30 July. At this conference, Xi urged the UFWD to develop an action plan to foster pro-unification sentiments within the Taiwanese public, businesses and intelligentsia.

As the CCP marches ahead with its imperialist project to subsume Taiwan, the Taiwan question shall continue to remain the defining feature of international politics in the years to come.

Aggarwal is a Senior Fellow at India Foundation. She is currently based in Taipei as a Visiting Fellow at the National Chengchi University. She is also a Huayu scholar at NTNU

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### IRON CURTAIN

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Who needs media in New India?’ (IE, August 6). Since 2014, the clampdown on the media in India has increased exponentially. There has been a concerted effort by government bodies and officials to discourage honest reportage. The arrests of journalists; levelling them with serious charges of being national security threats; and denying reports of organisations like “Reporters without Borders” which infer that India's press freedom is on a downward slope are some of the examples that an iron curtain has been unfurled between the press and people.  
Nischal Vats, Sultanpur

### TIME FOR REFORM

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘Bangladesh raises fuel prices by 50%, stokes inflation fears’ (IE, August 7). The increase is the highest since the country's independence in 1971. Many in Bangladesh fear that their country could face a fate similar to Sri Lanka, given the rising trade deficit and foreign debt burden. Bangladesh has also taken on foreign loans in recent years to fund what critics call “white elephant” projects, which are expensive but unprofitable. There is an urgent need for policy interventions and reform.  
SS Paul, Chakdaha

### MAINTAIN DISTANCE

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘PLA military

drills simulate attack, says Taiwan as Beijing warns US’ (IE, August 7). The US has time and again proven to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. After Ukraine and Afghanistan, its action in Taiwan just goes to prove the same. With its imprudent decisions, it has only dented its credibility as a world power. Despite warnings by China, the US has only played with fire to further its political ends at home.  
Aanya Singhal, Noida

### V-P'S TASK

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘Vice-President Dhankhar’ (IE, August 7). NDA nominee Jagdeep Dhankhar was elected the 14th Vice-President of India, making him the first BJP nominee for the post to not have started his political journey in the Sangh Parivar, having drifted into the saffron camp after a stint in the Lok Dal and then Congress. Though the outcome of the vice-presidential contest was almost certain, Dhankhar's victory was rich in symbolism as it signalled the continued dominance of BJP, with all key constitutional posts — the President, VP and LS Speaker — held by the party. It also proved to be a big blow to the anti-BJP camp, which had pitched the VP polls as a battle of ideologies between the keepers of the Constitution and those who undermine it. To prove his critics wrong, Dhankhar will have to forgo his BJP affiliation and keep the values of the second highest constitutional post in the country intact.  
Sanjay Chopra, Mohali





## UNITED KINGDOM

## NIGERIA TO GET BENIN BRONZES BACK

The Horniman Museum and Gardens, London, Sunday said it will transfer 72 items looted in the 19th century to Nigeria. It comes as cultural institutions in Britain are under pressure to repatriate artifacts acquired during colonial era

## TOP OF THE WORLD



Gustavo Petro was a member of the M-19 guerrilla group, file

## COLOMBIA

## Ex-rebel sworn in as President in historic shift

COLOMBIA'S FIRST leftist president will be sworn into office Sunday, promising to fight inequality and heralding a turning point in the history of a country haunted by a long war between the government and guerrilla groups. Gustavo Petro, a former member of Colombia's M-19 guerrilla group, won the presidential election in June by beating conservative parties that offered moderate changes to the market-friendly economy. His victory was also exceptional for Colombia, where voters had been historically reluctant to back leftist politicians who allied with guerrillas. **AP**

## AUSTRIA

## Iran nuclear deal negotiators say talks optimistic

TOP NEGOTIATORS in renewed talks to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal indicated Sunday they are optimistic about the possibility of reaching an agreement to impose limits on Tehran's uranium enrichment. "We stand 5 minutes or 5 seconds from the finish line," Russian Ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov told reporters outside Vienna's Palais Coburg, four days into the talks. He said there are "3 or 4 issues" left to be resolved. Ulyanov said: "I cannot guarantee, but the impression is that we are moving in the right direction." **AP**

## AFRICA

## 20 killed in 'militant attack' in east Congo

SUSPECTED ISLAMIST militants killed around 20 people in attacks on two villages in eastern Congo over the weekend, the army and a local human rights group said on Sunday. Fighters believed to be from the Allied Democratic Forces killed residents and burned houses in Kandoyi and Bandiboli villages in Ituri province late on Friday and early on Saturday, said Christophe Munyanderu, coordinator of the local group Convention for the Respect of Human Rights. **REUTERS**

## PLA CARRIES OUT ISLAND SATURATION ATTACK DRILLS

## China, Taiwan warships shadow each other as Beijing set to hold regular drills

Amid 'cat and mouse' in high seas, Taiwan says detected 66 aircraft in strait, puts missiles on stand-by

## AGENCIES

TAIPEI, AUGUST 7

CHINESE AND Taiwanese warships played high seas "cat and mouse" on Sunday ahead of the scheduled end of four days of unprecedented Chinese military exercises launched in reaction to a visit to Taiwan by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Chinese state television, however, cited a commentator Sunday and reported that the Chinese military will from now on conduct "regular" drills on the

eastern side of the median line of the Taiwan Strait.

About 10 warships each from China and Taiwan sailed at close quarters in the Taiwan Strait, with some Chinese vessels crossing the median line, an unofficial buffer, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

The PLA Sunday also continued realistic combat-scenario joint exercises in the sea and air space around Taiwan, practicing island capturing drills in Taiwan Strait, state-run *Global Times* reported.

Pelosi's visit last week prompted an infuriated China to



A man reads a newspaper reporting on the Chinese drills, in Beijing, Sunday. AP

test launch ballistic missiles over the island's capital and the cutting of some areas of dialogue

with the US. A commentator on Chinese state television said on Sunday night that the Chinese military would now conduct "regular" drills on the Taiwan side of the line, saying the "historic task" of China's reunification "can be realised".

As Chinese forces "pressed" the line, as they did on Saturday, the Taiwan side stayed close to monitor and, where possible, deny the Chinese the ability to cross, said the person with knowledge of the situation who declined to be identified. He described the manoeuvres as high seas "cat and mouse".

## EXPLAINED

## Options running out

WHILE CHINA'S spectacle of might may likely discourage Western leaders from embarking on a Nancy Pelosi-like visit to Taiwan, it is likely to deepen skepticism in Taipei that there can ever be a peaceful settlement under Xi Jinping.



The death toll reached 31 on Sunday, Gaza officials said. AP

## Gaza flare-up: Israel, Palestinians 'agree to Cairo-brokered truce'

## NIDAL AL-MUGHRABI &amp; DAN WILLIAMS

GAZA, JERUSALEM, AUGUST 7

ISRAEL AND Palestinian militants have agreed to a truce in Gaza from Sunday evening as mediated by Cairo, sources said, after a weekend-long pounding of Palestinian targets by Israel triggered longer-range rocket attacks against its cities.

An Egyptian security source said Israel had agreed to the proposal, while a Palestinian official familiar with Egyptian efforts said the ceasefire would go into effect at 1900 GMT Sunday.

Spokespeople for Israel and Islamic Jihad, the faction it has been fighting in Gaza since clashes erupted Friday, did not confirm this, saying only that they were in contact with Cairo.

Gaza officials said 31 Palestinians, at least a third of them civilians, had so far been killed. The rockets have paralysed sent residents in cities including Tel Aviv and Ashkelon to shelters.

On Sunday morning, Islamic Jihad extended its range to fire toward Jerusalem in what it described as retaliation for the killing of its southern Gaza commander by Israel. **REUTERS**

## UNENDING CONFLICT

The violence marked the most serious escalation in Gaza since an 11-day war in May 2021. Here's a look at past flare-ups in the Gaza Strip:

**DEC 27, 2008:** 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis reported killed after Israel launches 22-day military offensive in Gaza

**NOV 14, 2012:** Israel kills Hamas's military chief of staff, Ahmad Jabari, and eight days of rocket fire and air strikes follow

**JULY-AUGUST 2014:** The kidnap and killing of three Israeli teenagers by Hamas leads to a 7-week war which killed 2,100 Palestinians in Gaza and 73 Israelis

**MARCH 2018:** More than 170 Palestinians are reported killed in several months of protests.

**MAY 2021:** 250 people in Gaza and 13 in Israel during 11 days of fighting.

## CARRYING GRAIN UNDER PASSAGE DEAL

## First ship that left Ukraine won't dock in Lebanon on time

## REUTERS

BEIRUT, AUGUST 7

THE FIRST grain ship to leave a Ukrainian port under a deal brokered last month will not arrive in Lebanon on Sunday as planned, the Ukrainian embassy in Lebanon said.

The Razoni left Odesa on the Black Sea early last Monday carrying 26,527 tonnes of corn and was set to dock on Sunday in the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli, according to Ukrainian officials and Lebanese port authorities.

But the Ukrainian embassy in Lebanon told *Reuters* on Sunday the ship was "having a delay" and "not arriving today," with no details on a new arrival date or the cause of the postponement.

Shipping data on MarineTraffic.com showed the Razoni off the Turkish coast on Sunday.

The shipment was made possible after Turkey and the United Nations brokered a grain and fertiliser export agreement between Moscow and Kyiv last month - a rare diplomatic breakthrough in a drawn-out war of attrition.

The UN had warned that the halt in grain shipments from Ukraine through the Russian-dominated Black Sea could prompt outbreaks of famine around the world.

The Joint Coordination Center

## U.N. WATCHDOG WARNS ON UKRAINE NUCLEAR PLANT

THE HEAD of the International Atomic Energy Agency raised grave concern about shelling at a nuclear power plant in Ukraine, as its military said Russian forces had attacked dozens of front-line towns.

The fighting over the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in the south, captured by Russian forces in the opening stage of the war but still run by Ukrainian technicians, has raised the prospect of a wider disaster.

"I'm extremely concerned by the shelling yesterday at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, which underlines the very real risk of a nuclear disaster," IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said in a statement. **REUTERS**

(JCC), which will oversee the export of Ukrainian grain, said the ship would be used as a trial run, with information from Razoni's crew used to fine-tune procedures for the next shipments.



## CUBA BATTLES OIL STORAGE BLAZE

Cuba drew help from Mexico and Venezuela Sunday as firefighters struggled to douse a raging fire set off by a lightning strike at an oil storage facility in Matanzas city. One person has died so far, while 121 people are injured and 17 firefighters are missing. **AP**

## China seeks meet with SL on research ship

After India raised concern, Colombo sought delay in docking of Chinese vessel

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, AUGUST 7

CHINA'S EMBASSY in Colombo sought an urgent meeting with senior Sri Lankan authorities after Colombo sought a deferment of the planned docking of a high-tech Chinese research vessel at the strategic Hambantota port over which India raised concerns, sources said.

The Chinese space and satellite tracking research vessel

'Yuan Wang 5' was scheduled to dock at the Hambantota Port from August 11 to 17, weeks after Sri Lanka witnessed a major political turmoil following massive mass protests over the country's worst economic crisis in decades.

A 'third-person' note from Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry to the Chinese embassy in Colombo dated August 5 says "the ministry wishes to request that the arrival of the vessel Yuan Wang 5 in Hambantota to be deferred

until further consultations are made on the matter."

The Chinese embassy in Colombo sought an urgent meeting with the higher Sri Lankan authorities to discuss the issue after receiving the note from the Foreign Ministry seeking a delay in the visit, sources said.

Some Sri Lankan news portals also reported that Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe held a closed-door meeting with China's Ambassador Qi Zhenhong after Colombo sought

a deferment of the planned docking. But the President's Office denied the media reports.

The southern deep-sea port of Hambantota is considered strategically important for its location. The port, located in the hometown of the Rajapaksa family, has been developed largely with Chinese loans.

India has informed Sri Lanka that the docking of the high-tech Chinese research vessel could pose a threat to its national security.



General Michael E Langley

## After 246 years, US Marine Corps gives 4 stars to a Black officer

*Washington:* The first African American four-star general in Marine Corps history, General Michael E Langley, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marines in 1985.

The Marine Corps, which traces its roots to 1775, did not accept Black men until 1942.

The American military services were not desegregated until after President Harry Truman's order in 1948. Three decades later, the first African American Marine was promoted to one-star general, in 1979.

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin announced in June that President Joe Biden had nominated Langley for appointment to the grade of general.

"The milestone and what it means to the Corps is quite essential," Langley said during Saturday's ceremony, according to a Marine Corps report. "Not because the mark in history, but what it will affect going forward, especially for those younger across society that want to aspire and look at the Marine Corps as an opportunity." **AP**

## China's Yi in town, Dhaka seeks help in repatriating Rohingya refugees

## JULHASALAM

DHAKA, AUGUST 7

BANGLADESH ON Sunday sought cooperation from China to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar during a visit by Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who promised better trade ties, investment and support for infrastructure development in the South Asian nations.

China had used its influence in Myanmar to broker a November 2017 agreement to repatriate about 700,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled persecution in Myanmar in August that year.



Yi with Bangladesh foreign minister Abdul Momen. AP

Despite attempts to send them back, the refugees refused, fearing danger in Myanmar, which was exacerbated by the military takeover last year.

Yi arrived in Dhaka on Saturday evening and met with

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen. They discussed bilateral and global issues before his departure on Sunday morning, said Shahriar Alam, Bangladesh's junior minister for foreign affairs.

Bangladesh has strong relations with China, but maintaining close ties with Beijing is challenging for Bangladesh, which also balances diplomatic and trade relationship with both India and the United States, China's main rivals.

Amid recent tensions between China and Taiwan, Bangladesh issued a statement reiterating its support for the "one-China" policy. **AP**

## Pakistan forms 5-member team in funding case against Khan's party

## SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 7

PAKISTAN'S TOP investigative has formed a five-member special monitoring panel to coordinate with zonal teams probing the prohibited funding case against former PM Imran Khan's Tehreek-i-Insaf party, as authorities expanded the probe into the matter, according to a media report on Sunday.

The government had asked the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to probe the case after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in its verdict in the case on



Former Pak PM Imran Khan. File

August 2 held Khan's party guilty of getting funding from prohibited sources.

In a major setback to the former prime minister, Pakistan's election commission on Tuesday said that PTI had received funds against the rules from 34 foreign nationals, including a businesswoman of Indian origin. Khan has accused the EC of bias. **PTI**

## 4 KILLED IN ATTACK ON PTI LAWMAKER

*Peshawar:* Gunmen shot dead four people including two police in northwestern Pakistan in an attack targeting a provincial lawmaker from Imran Khan's party, police said. Malik Liaqat Khan — no relation to Imran Khan — of the PTI was wounded in the attack late Saturday. He was hospitalised in Peshawar. No one claimed responsibility for the attack. **PTI**

## SKIERS RUSH TO CONTINENT'S ONLY FREESTYLE SNOW PARK

## Tiny African kingdom has skiing as Europe swelters in summer wave

## JEROME DELAY

BUTHA-BUTHE, AUGUST 7

WHILE MILLIONS across Europe sweat through a summer of record-breaking heat, they're skiing in Africa.

Don't worry. This isn't another sign of climate change but rather the fascinating anomaly of Lesotho, a tiny mountain kingdom completely surrounded by South Africa. Lesotho has an obscure geographical claim to fame: It's the only country on Earth where every inch of its territory sits more than 1,000 me-

tres (3,280 feet) above sea level.

That gives Lesotho snow in the southern hemisphere's winters. And while cold winters aren't rare in southern Africa, snow is and ski resorts are even rarer. At an altitude of 3,000 meters (9,842 feet), Afriski in Lesotho's Maluti Mountains is Africa's only operating ski resort south of the equator.

"I've never seen snow in my life," said Kafi Mojaepelo, who traveled the short distance from South Africa for a skiing vacation she never thought she'd take. "So, this is a great experience."

Bafana Nadida, who comes from the sprawling urban town-



Visitors enjoy the snow at the Afriski ski resort near Butha-Buthe, Lesotho, in July. (right) a skier wearing a traditional blanket waits to rent ski gear. AP



ship of Soweto in Johannesburg, was delighted with putting ski boots on for the first time. He planned a day of ski lessons, taking pictures and just playing about in the snow.

Skiers and snowboarders lined up to rent the proper gear. Some were given pointers by Hope Ramokotjo, who is from Lesotho and has worked as a self-taught ski and snowboard instructor for 12 years.

"Push your heels out. Don't pull your shoulders," Ramokotjo called out to his class of keen yet inexperienced African skiers.

Afriski's Kapoko Snow Park is

the only freestyle snow park on the continent. Competitors lined up last month for the annual Winter Whip Slopestyle snowboard and ski competition. Sekholo Ramonotsi, a 13-year-old from the Lesotho city of Butha-Buthe who practices regularly at Afriski, won the junior snowboard and ski divisions.

"I would really like to ski in Europe," he said.

London-born Meka Lebohlang Ejindu said he has taught skiing and snowboarding in Austria for more than a decade and this is his first season in the southern hemisphere. "For a

competition like this to happen in southern Africa is so heart-warming," he said.

Afriski may not be at the level of Europe's vast Alpine resorts but a love of winter sports is catching. At Afriski's Sky Restaurant and Gondola Cafe, happy hour starts at 10 am and skiers and boarders party to house music, beers in hand.

Some claim the bar is the highest in Africa, although that's challenged by the Sani Mountain Lodge on the Lesotho-South Africa border. What no one can dispute is this crowd went skiing in Africa. **AP**



THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2022

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# IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

## ANJU BOBBY GEORGE

LONG JUMPER, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL WINNER,  
VICE-PRESIDENT, ATHLETICS FEDERATION OF INDIA

‘Neeraj is India’s best ever athlete. People didn’t celebrate me 19 years ago but now there’s support’

Medal-winning long jumper Anju Bobby George talks about a scientific method of grooming talent and why Tejaswin Shankar was not selected at first. The session was moderated by Principal Correspondent ANDREW AMSAN

### Andrew Amsan: How did you feel about Neeraj Chopra joining the club?

It has been a long wait. In 2003, no one believed we could win a medal at the World Championships. Then there was the pressure. If you watch the event live, you can experience it. Once you are on the track, you are alone representing your country and then have to produce your best in the final. You have to make decisions in split seconds, so you have to be that intelligent.

### Andrew Amsan: You wanted to go home because of an injury but your coach and husband, Robert Bobby George, said, “Let’s go to Paris and watch the championship....”

We spent two months in the US. The training pattern was different there, we practised at a stretch, 10 to 4, four days a week and rested. Here we did two sessions, morning and evening. There was a heat wave and I was completely exhausted. My body was not ready to accept all this because I have that kidney issue (she has only one kidney). In the last competition (before the World Championships) in Germany, I was running but it was like I was moon-walking. My jumps were completely down. We met a doctor who told me to rest for six months because of the body condition. It was a shock. I told Bobby we would go back to India. He said, “Anyway we are in Europe. Paris is a new location for you and we’ll go and watch the competition.” I said, “Okay and we can go sightseeing as well.” Then it was magic. In 20 days, he made me a World Championship medalist.

### Mihir Vasavda: You and Neeraj were in similar positions (fourth) after initial few attempts. At that stage, what goes on inside an athlete’s mind?

Sometimes, if our opponent is beyond our reach, then our mind and body will drain out. But for some of us, it’s the opposite. When the competition pressure is high, it pushes us. Such athletes have inner fire within them. Neeraj and I belong to this second category. We need good coaches as well because coaching is the key.

### Mihir Vasavda: Abhinav Bindra has won an Olympic gold, PV Sindhu and Sushil Kumar have multiple Olympic medals. But the way Neeraj has taken off, do you think he is India’s best athlete ever?

It’s a matter of debate, actually. But my view is that athletics is the mother of all sports. There are qualification marks and only those from the entire world who get them will get to compete in a major competition. Maybe 50 to 60 countries are attaining that qualification mark and are participating. Just imagine running with Usain Bolt and winning a medal! So, the level of toughness determines the best athlete. In that sense, I can say that Neeraj is the best athlete India has ever produced.

### Nihal Koshie: Tejaswin Shankar won India’s first-ever medal in high jump at the CWG. But he wasn’t selected initially though he met the qualification standard (at NCAA) because the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said he didn’t compete in an inter-State competition. As vice-president of AFI, don’t you think the federation should have been a bit more sensitive to an athlete’s needs?

I am able to understand his problems. But some of our athletes perform well a year before a major tournament and aren’t able to maintain that peak level. So, keeping that in mind, like the US, we decided that all athletes, wherever they train, would have to compete in India and show that they are up to the mark. Only then would they be included in the team.

In Tejaswin’s case, he was not communicating properly with AFI, which did not give him the permission to excuse himself from the inter-State competition. When the selection committee met, we decided that only those who were in the competition would go to the CWG. By the time the court took up the case, we tried to take appropriate action and include him in the team but unfortunately, the clearance from organisers came at the last moment.

I understand that coming from the US, competing in India is a problem but this was a decision we had taken and even the president or vice-president couldn’t change it because the other athletes would have then questioned us. But Tejaswin is really talented. I must clarify one more thing. In India, we do not use our college-level games for selection purposes. So, if we’re not taking Indian university games performances into consideration, how can we accept any other country’s college games for trials?

### Nihal Koshie: Young long jumper Shailli Singh is from Uttar Pradesh. Jumpers are usually associated with the South. DP Manu, javelin thrower, who is at CWG, is from Karnataka. Throwers are generally from the North. Does the emergence of Shailli and Manu show that talent scouts need to look beyond traditional states in a particular sport?

We used to believe that Kerala is good for sprints and jumps (mostly South India) and North India is good for throws but it’s changing. That was because all parts of the country were not getting proper support. In some parts, the girls were not able to come up before but now the awareness has increased. A lot of government programmes have encouraged kids. Not just Shailli, there are many jumpers from UP. India has a lot of talent and it’s not in a single pocket. Spotting it should be a pan-India effort.

### Sriram Veera: Just ahead of your greatest moment in 2003, you found out that you had just one kidney, which affected your recovery process. How does an athlete cope with that kind of news?

As athletes, we think we are well-built and everything is perfect. Initially, I was really surprised how I had reached so far with such a health issue. Being an internal organ, we couldn’t diagnose it from the outside, so we didn’t know how the body would react when the training became intense. It showed me that I was not that great and had to deal with it.

I hid this issue from the outside world because had I revealed it and missed a medal, people and the media would say it was because of my condition. I didn’t want that sympathy.

### Sriram Veera: You trained with Mike Powell ahead of the championships. Recently when he came to open your academy, he said you were near perfect in the air. What you needed was a little

more speed in your run-up. This kind of professional help was very difficult in your time. Has it changed now?

A lot of changes have happened because there are three tiers now, the grass-root level, middle stage and the top level. There was actually a gap between the grassroot and the top level during our time. Now, it has been bridged by Khelo India and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) at the junior and senior levels. So, if an athlete of my calibre wants to train with somebody and wants some exposure, it’s readily available. It was not the case during our time. Now from the Prime Minister’s Office, they are calling athletes, celebrating their victories and the entire country is aware of their achievements. Lawn Bowls players



## WHY ANJU BOBBY GEORGE

The long jumper had put India on the world track and field map with a bronze at the 2003 World Championships – 19 years before Neeraj Chopra’s silver last month. She is also mentoring talent at the Anju Bobby Sports Foundation and as vice-president of the Athletics Federation of India, has the responsibility of turning the country’s brightest talent into world beaters. Throughout her career, she never let anyone know that she was attempting huge feats with just one kidney or the embarrassment she felt when her jersey ran colour in the rain and she had to borrow somebody else’s kit. Yet she disregarded it all and proved the power of human will

got a gold at the Commonwealth Games. I was not even aware of the sport but they are there because they got support. I am a little jealous now because we celebrate athletes before the Games and even after they win a medal.

### Sriram Veera: You got Rs 3 lakh when you won the World Championships bronze...

I got only Rs 3 lakh and never got a chance to meet the Sports Minister. Our then President called and asked me how the competition was. The Rs 3 lakh was deposited into my account. But I got Rs 20 lakh for my performance at the Asian Games. Can you compare Asian Games and World Championships medals? Just imagine.

### Sandeep Dwivedi: Do you think India lacks a sense of proportion when it celebrates its medals? There are certain events that aren’t world class but end up getting the same kind of exposure. Do you think for prizes there should be proportion – if it’s a World Championship medal for example, it should be appreciated more?

The official World Championships and Olympics are a different tier and should be segregated. The Commonwealth and the Asian Games should be next. But unfortunately, some CWG events, like you said, don’t have the same level of competition while the Asian Games do have that. In sports like badminton and weight-lifting, the Asian Games are a tougher competition but in athletics, the Commonwealth Games are tougher. But we cannot bring prize money down based on competitions.

In my time, the Asian Games would get more importance than the World

Championship. My World Championship medal was the first the country ever won but people weren’t ready to accept that. I’m very happy that after Neeraj won his medal, people started celebrating my victory as well after 19 years. Now people realise, “Oh Anju also got a medal 19 years ago.”

### Sandeep Dwivedi: Do we have enough good coaches in India, like say Bobby, and he is still producing champions? Everywhere in the world, techniques are changing. American athletes, for example, are not running the same way as in the previous Olympics. They are changing and taking advantage of research. That isn’t happening in India.

Unfortunately, it is not the fault of our coaches. They are still following what they learnt 20-30 years ago because they aren’t getting a chance to refresh their knowledge. But do you think if we hire an American coach, he will provide athletes with all the knowledge? No, he will hide certain things. He will ask athletes to run a certain way but won’t tell them why. We are very good at technical events and winning medals at the world and Olympic levels. If we can do research according to our body and our Indian system, that will help the athlete and coaches. The book says to lift your hand and leg but nobody will teach us why we need to lift the hand or why we need to lift the leg. If we can do research in India and then educate our coaches, then we will definitely be winners. Bobby is a mechanical engineer and long jump is all about biomechanics. He can create and develop his own ideas. He’s developing something just for Shailli and that is because of his background.

### Sandeep Dwivedi: Do you think we

### have more Bobbys? He’s an engineer and expert, overall a rare guy. Rupal Chaudhary’s (medallist at World U-20 Championship) coach has said that athletes are getting offers from the collegiate system in the US to train over there. What would you advise?

Most of our talented athletes are not coming back as coaches. Only very rare species like Bobby do. To an extent, coaching is not a glamorous job. Only now they are getting fame. Badminton ace Pullela Gopichand was known but became more renowned after his protégé PV Sindhu won medals. Bobby’s name also came up after I won a medal. Yes, more than an athlete, the coach should have IQ.

### Andrew Amsan: Whenever Bobby recruits new talent, he gives them some money to get some apparel. How important is it for an athlete to look well and speak confidently?

Bobby is a perfectionist and everything, from coaching to appearances, has to be proper. Whenever a new athlete joins, he asks them to buy new attire, colourful clothes. Recently I tweeted that during my first Commonwealth Games, I wore Neelam J Singh’s competition kit because someone had stolen mine. It was double the size. I had to adjust the kit with pins and with each jump, the pins would poke me. I could hear people whispering about my attire and where I came from. I felt like a buffoon. I was in the sixth position and at that moment, I decided that I was not a bad jumper and that my ability could not be judged by my attire.

We are performers but we also need to express ourselves. If I’m not able to talk to you, then how will you know about my emotions and my struggle? These athletes come from humble backgrounds but as a mentor, it is my duty to make sure these athletes talk like me and dress like me.

There was one more instance at the Helsinki World Championships where I missed a medal by just 3 cm. I had just one white competition kit with the tricolour on the sides. It started raining, the three colours ran all over and my American friends said: “Anju, this is so amazing! Your jersey is changing colour.” That was the kind of support we got those days.

### Tushar Bhaduri: Now we have medals in judo and Tejaswin’s medal in high jump. Do you think it’s a good sign that medals are being diversified?

Earlier, it was an individual struggle to come up, because there was no collective support. But now, there is proper planning and support in India. Why is China getting more medals? Because they are properly strategizing for events. Besides, they are good at fielding teams in disciplines where there’s less competition.

Even at TOPS, we support newer sports like fencing and cycling. It’s not like only Sindhu is getting medals and we are only watching shuttle. If somebody doesn’t like shuttle, they can go and watch hockey or cycling, which was not the case before.

### Nihal Koshie: Our athletes are doing very well but doping has become a big issue because both top athletes and juniors have tested positive. How can this issue be tackled?

It is a big issue in our country now.

There are people who always tend to go for shortcuts. But the positive thing is that the Bill passed in Parliament makes NADA (National Anti-Doping Agency) a statutory body, so they can work on their own. They will get more funds and they plan to set up more testing labs in the country.

But if someone wants to take drugs, they will do it. These kinds of substances (performance-enhancing drugs) were not available in India before. Neither was there any knowledge about it. But now, everything is available at your fingertips.

If you Google, you can get all the details about such medicines. So, that’s why awareness is penetrating to the junior level. And some of the medicines, which are available only in Russia or some European countries, are coming to India. How are they reaching here? They are coming through airports. We can stop it there when it comes.

Famous athletes getting caught is not just news in India but everywhere. I used to think Marion Jones was an extraordinary athlete, winning multiple medals at the Olympics. Then I realised that she was not that great. She was just cheating. Like crime, we can’t stop it completely but still to an extent, we can prevent doping.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

I got only Rs 3 lakh, I never got a chance to meet the Sports Minister... Now achievements of athletes are being celebrated. If we can do sports research too, it will help the athlete and coaches’



# 14 ECONOMY

## SECTOR WATCH AVIATION

### Shuttle bus delayed, SpiceJet flyers start walking on tarmac: DGCA to probe

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

SEVERAL SPICEJET passengers in Delhi started walking on the tarmac after waiting over 45 minutes for a bus to arrive to ferry them to the terminal building. The flight, which arrived from Hyderabad at around 11.30pm Saturday night, was carrying 186 passengers. As per sources, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is investigating the issue.

A source said that one bus arrived shortly after landing and carried a section of the passengers to the terminal with the second one only arriving around 45 minutes later.

"The information that passengers of SpiceJet flight Hyderabad-Delhi on 6th August were forced to walk towards the terminal on foot is wrong and is denied. There was a brief delay in the arrival of coaches to ferry the passengers from the tarmac to the terminal building," a SpiceJet spokesperson said.

"Despite repeated requests from our staff, a few passengers started walking towards the terminal. They had barely walked a few meters when the coaches arrived. All passen-

## EXPLAINED Current curbs

CURRENTLY, THE DGCA has imposed a restriction on SpiceJet barring it from operating more than 50 per cent of its scheduled flights. The aviation safety regulator had ordered SpiceJet to curb its operations after the airline suffered a series of technical malfunctions on its aircraft, and the DGCA noted that the airline was not able to maintain safe and reliable operations.

gers, including those who had started walking, travelled on the coaches to the terminal building," the spokesperson added.

Currently, the DGCA has imposed a restriction on SpiceJet barring it from operating more than 50 per cent of its scheduled flights. The aviation safety regulator had ordered SpiceJet to curb its operations after the airline suffered a series of technical malfunctions on its aircraft, and the DGCA noted that the airline was not able to maintain safe and reliable operations.

## FROM DELAYED PAYMENTS FOR SERVICES TO ELECTION FREEBIES, WAIVERS

# Promise now, pay later ails power sector

With eye on reforms, Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022 to be introduced in ongoing monsoon session of Parliament

MIHIR MISHRA  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

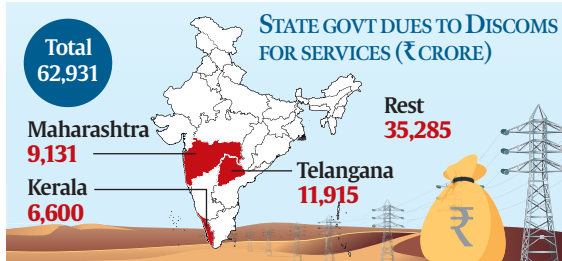
AS THE dues of power distribution companies (discoms) to power generators surge to unsustainable levels, with states holding back payments to be made to discoms for electricity supplies as well as against subsidies for free power schemes, the Centre is set to give distribution reforms a renewed push.

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022, to be introduced in the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament, is likely to push state electricity regulatory commissions to take up timely revision of tariffs and catalyse competition in the retail power distribution sector, among other provisions.

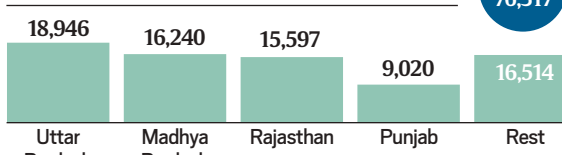
This also comes amid a renewed debate on the freebie culture and the focus on the mounting dues of power distribution companies. According to latest government data, discoms of three states — Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Telangana — owed about 57 per cent of total dues to power generating companies (gencos); followed by BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and the UTs of Jammu & Kashmir, which account for another about 26 per cent of the total dues of Rs 1,14,222 crore owed to power generation companies. Government data updated till March 31, 2022 show that states owe Rs 62,931 crore for services and another Rs 76,337 crore against cost of freebies announced by them to state discoms.

Among the states that have

## HOW IT BREAKS DOWN



## PAYMENT OWED TO DISCOMS AGAINST FREEBIES ANNOUNCED BY STATES (₹ CR)



Source: govt (figures till March 31, 2022)

defaulted on payments to discoms, Telangana leads the chart with a cumulative outstanding of Rs 11,915 crore, followed by Maharashtra at Rs 9,131 crore. BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh leads the pack among states that have not made payments to discoms for subsidies at Rs 18,946 crore, followed by Madhya Pradesh at Rs 16,240 crore. While the top three together owe Rs 65,041 crores, the next three BJP-ruled states owe Rs 29,280 crore of the total, according to PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators) data till July 31, 2022.

Maharashtra was till recently ruled by the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena and J&K is under

Central rule since they were re-constituted as Union Territories in 2019.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said last month that the votes-for-freebies culture will hurt future growth and also flagged the mounting dues of power discoms. The statement came after the Aam Aadmi Party, which has governments in Punjab and Delhi and provides free electricity in both states, announced plans to provide 300 units of free electricity if it wins Gujarat, which polls this year.

An analysis by *The Indian Express* shows free electricity announcements are not just limited to Opposition-ruled states. Key beneficiaries of free power in Tamil Nadu, Telangana and

Maharashtra are farmers, small business establishments and also private households. Among the next three, Jammu & Kashmir has, only in June 2022, cracked down on free power in the state and started installing meters. While Uttar Pradesh had, in its election manifesto early this year, announced free power for irrigation to farmers that is estimated to cost the state exchequer about Rs 2,000 crore per annum, Madhya Pradesh, in March this year, announced a one-time waiver of electricity bills valuing to Rs 6,400 crore.

Industry watchers say that the solution could be in empowering the regulators to take tariff decisions. "The problem is all across and the biggest solution

could be to empower the regulator to ensure timely tariff hikes. There should also be provisions to ensure that any freebies announced by the state should be through direct benefit transfer and not in a way that burdens discoms or power producers. Installing prepaid meters could be the first step in that direction," said Anil Razdan, former Union Power Secretary.

Tamil Nadu raised power tariffs for households as well as the industry in July this year but continued with 100 units of free power for households and free electricity to power looms. The raise was only after the Central government forced it by writing 28 times to the Tamil Nadu government insisting upon restructuring the power tariff. It said the state would not get a Central subsidy if the debts were not reduced, state's Electricity Minister V Senthil Balaji was quoted in reports.

Telangana, in April this year, announced to provide up to 250 units of electricity per month at free of cost to barber shops, laundry shops and dobhi ghats across the state. The state also provides free power to farmers.

Maharashtra's electricity board, which is reeling under severe financial strain, in November announced a 50 per cent waiver amounting to Rs 4,000 crore on pending agricultural pump electricity bills. Media reports suggested that the state, under the previous government, did discuss a scheme to provide certain units of free power to private households but this was junked.

The BJP government in Uttar

Pradesh, before the state went for poll last year, announced halving of farmers' electricity bills. The state has also fulfilled its poll promise to provide free electricity to farmers tube wells, which is estimated to cost Rs 2,000 crore to the state exchequer. UP's power distribution company has sought Rs 2,250 crore from the state that includes Rs 250 crore for implementing the pre-poll announcement.

Madhya Pradesh, another BJP-ruled state, in March this year, announced a waiver of electricity bills generated during the Covid period that will cost the state exchequer about Rs 6,400 crore.

These waivers and freebies are one of the key reasons for the problems faced by the power sector, said a banker. "The power sector's problem is freebies by states that have led to losses and delayed payments. Banks are not comfortable lending to the sector till such freebies continue," said a banker.

Banks refused to lend to the power sector despite the Power Ministry asking banks to lend to companies to import coal and help overcome the power crisis faced by the country during summers this year.

Among the states, Gujarat clearly is an outlier that has a dues of Rs 1,439 crore even lower than Haryana's Rs 1,827 crore. Notably, Gujarat carried out reforms over the years in the power sector, including metering at the feeder level. The state brought in reforms in electricity being supplied to the rural areas by keeping separate power for agriculture and for rural households.

## BRIEFLY

### Tata Motors

New Delhi: Tata Motors in a late filing on Sunday evening said its subsidiary has signed an agreement for the acquisition of Ford India's Sanand plant for Rs 725.7 crore. **REUTERS**

### Vi on tariffs

New Delhi: Vi said the industry needs to raise tariffs at regular intervals as the sector still operates at unsustainably low prices and revisions will allow it to generate reasonable returns and support future investments.

### NARCL, Srei

New Delhi: The National Asset Reconstruction Co Ltd (NARCL) has evinced interest in the loan accounts of Srei group companies, which are undergoing corporate insolvency resolution process, a top official of a state-owned bank said.

### Maruti Suzuki

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India will increase its production and aims to produce 20 lakh units in the ongoing fiscal with improving availability of semiconductors, according to company Chairman RC Bhargava. On electric vehicles (EVs), he said the Gujarat plant of Suzuki Motor Corporation will start production from 2024-25 and will be sold by MSIL. **PTI**

## 'India's outbound tourism to surpass \$42 bn by 2024'

Outbound trips from India will surpass \$42 bn by 2024 and the govt could bring about certain policy changes to boost it, as per a report by Nangia Andersen LLP in association with FICCI



### KEY SUGGESTIONS

- Increasing direct connections to popular and upcoming destinations
- Allowing foreign cruise vessels to operate on Indian waters
- Taking concerted and coordinated efforts on multiple fronts

### FASTEST GROWING MKT:

Indian outbound travel market is among the fastest growing markets globally with approximately 80 million passport level of purchasing power, especially among the middle class

Allowing foreign cruise vessels to include Indian destinations as a

stop would encourage both inbound and outbound tourism as well as increase revenue for Indian ports

### THE DIVISION:

Europe sees 20 per cent of the travellers from India's outbound traffic. 10 per cent travel to Australia and New Zealand, while the rest of the traffic is towards Southeast Asia

### With the positive response of

foreign delegations and their policies, the government may establish bilateral relations with tourist-friendly countries for both inbound and outbound tourists"

In 2021, Indians spent approximately \$12.6 billion in outbound trips, compared to \$22.9 billion in 2019. While the reason for decrease in spending could be due to the pandemic but these figures point out the huge value that can be captured from Indian outbound travellers, the report added

Source: Nangia Andersen LLP, FICCI/PTI

## Fed's Bowman: Consider more rate hikes

REUTERS

WASHINGTON, AUGUST 7

THE US Federal Reserve should consider more 75 basis-point interest rate hikes at coming meetings in order to bring high inflation back down to the central bank's goal, Fed Governor Michelle Bowman said on Saturday.

"I supported the FOMC's decision last week to raise the federal funds rate another 75 basis points," Bowman said in prepared remarks to a Kansas Bankers Association event in Colorado, referring to the Federal Open Market Committee that sets monetary policy. "My view is that similarly-sized increases should be on the table un-

"My view is that similarly-sized increases should be on the table until we see inflation declining in a consistent, meaningful, and lasting way"

MICHELLE BOWMAN  
FED GOVERNOR

til we see inflation declining in a consistent, meaningful, and lasting way."

A procession of policymakers this week have shown stiffening resolve to continue the aggressive monetary tightening, with nearly all of them making plain the central bank remains determined to

press ahead with rate hikes until it sees strong and long-lasting evidence that inflation is on track to back down to the Fed's 2 per cent target.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell already flagged last week the central bank may consider another "unusually large" rate hike at the Sept. 20-21 meeting, seen as a decision between a 50 basis-point or 75 basis-point move, with officials guided in their decision making by a stream of critical data points covering inflation, employment, consumer spending and economic growth between now and then.

Inflation has for months confounded expectations that it would ease and is now, by the Fed's preferred measure, running at

more than three times the target.

The Fed is under renewed pressure to deliver another 75 basis-point interest rate hike at its upcoming meeting next month as fresh data on Friday showed job gains unexpectedly accelerating despite soaring inflation and rising borrowing costs.

Bowman added that she still retains an open mind on the magnitude of hikes depending on how the economy evolves.

"While I expect that ongoing rate increases will be appropriate, given the uncertainty in how those data and conditions will evolve, I will allow that information to guide my judgment on how big the increases will need to be," she said.



Yangshan Deep Water Port, in Shanghai, China. Reuters file

A global factory survey released last week showed demand weakened in July, with orders and

output indexes falling to their weakest levels since the onset of the Covid pandemic in early 2020.

## IOC, HPCL, BPCL post ₹18,480-cr loss on holding fuel prices

New Delhi: State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) posted a combined loss of Rs 18,480 crore on holding petrol and diesel prices despite a rise in cost.

According to stock exchange filings by the three fuel retailers, the losses were due to erosion in the marketing margin on petrol, diesel and domestic LPG.

This wiped away gains from the record refining margin. IOC, HPCL and BPCL, which are supposed to revise petrol and diesel prices daily in line with cost, have not changed rates for four months now despite international oil prices shooting up.

They have also not changed cooking gas LPG rates in tandem with cost. IOC on July 29 reported a net loss of Rs 1,995.3 crore for the April-June quarter. On Saturday, HPCL reported its highest ever quarterly loss of Rs 10,196.94 crore and BPCL posted a loss of Rs 6,290.8 crore. The combined loss at Rs 18,480.27 crore is the highest ever for any quarter including the era when petrol and diesel prices were regulated and the government used to give subsidies to the three retailers.

During April-June, IOC, BPCL and HPCL did not revise petrol and diesel prices in line with rising costs to help the government contain inflation. **PTI**

record high last month.

July exports may also have been buoyed by pent-up demand from Southeast Asia as supply snarls eased and factories there ramped up production, Bruce Pang, chief economist and head of research at Jones Lang Lasalle Inc, said in a research note.

Moreover, amid negative real interest rate and surging inflation, some European and US customers may have frontloaded orders to ensure they had goods on hand with lower costs, he added.

Still, while export growth remained high, backed by price factors, the volume of exported goods dropped in July, said Chang Ran, a senior analyst at Zhixin Investment Research Institute.



## AKASA TAKES TO THE SKIES

An Akasa Air aircraft just before its inaugural flight at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, in Mumbai, on Sunday. Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia virtually flagged off the airline's first commercial flight, which departed from Mumbai to Ahmedabad. **PTI**

## FPIs keep up the buying as dollar index softens

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

AFTER TURNING net buyers last month, foreign investors continued their positive stance on Indian equities and invested over Rs 14,000 crore in the first week of August amid softening of the dollar index.

This was way higher than the net investment of nearly Rs 5,000 crore by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in entire July, data with depositories showed.

FPIs had turned buyers in July after nine straight months of heavy net outflows, which started from October last year. Between October 2021 and June 2022, they sold a massive Rs 2,461 lakh crore in the Indian equity markets.

Hitesh Jain, lead analyst-institutional equities, Yes Securities, said FPI flows are expected to remain positive during August as the worst for the rupee seems to be over and crude oil price seems to be confined in a range.

"Also, earnings story still remains strong where sturdy revenue growth is offsetting contraction in profit margins," he added.

According to data with depositories, FPIs infused a net amount of Rs 14,175 crore in Indian equities in the first week of August.

The change in FPI strategy has imparted strength to the recent market rally.

"The decline in the dollar in-



The BSE, Mumbai. File

dex from the high of above 109 last month to below 106 now is the principal reason for FPI inflows. This trend may continue," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Also, comments from Fed Chair Jerome Powell that currently the US is not in a recession has helped improve sentiment and risk appetite globally, said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar India.

The recent correction in the Indian equity markets have also provided a good buying opportunity, and FPIs have been taking advantage of the same by hand-picking high quality companies, he added.

FPIs have turned buyers in sectors like capital goods, FMCG, construction and power.

In addition, FPIs poured a net amount of Rs 230 crore in the debt market during the month under review. **WITH PTI**



INDIA WRAP

Annu Rani wins bronze in javelin

Annu Rani scripted history as she became the first Indian female javelin thrower to win a medal, a bronze, in the Commonwealth Games on the penultimate day on Sunday. Rani sent the spear to a distance of 60m in her fourth attempt to finish third. World champion Kelsey-Lee Barber of Australia stole the gold with a final round throw of 64.43m from compatriot Mackenzie Little (64.27m) who was leading at the end of the penultimate round. Before Rani, Kashinath Naik and Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra had won a bronze and a gold in the men's javelin throw respectively.

Kumar wins bronze in 10,000m racewalk

India's Sandeep Kumar won a bronze in the men's 10,000m racewalk event with a personal best time on the penultimate day of the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday. Kumar clocked 38:49.21m to finish behind gold winner Evan Dunfee (38:36.37) of Canada and Declan Tingay (38:42.33) of Australia. The other Indian in the fray, Amit Khatri finished ninth with a season best time of 43:04.97.

Doubles silver, singles final for Sharath

Indian table tennis legend Achanta Sharath Kamal defied age and produced a class act to reach the men's singles final at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday. The 40-year-old paddler defeated home country's Paul Drinkhall 11-8, 11-8, 8-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-8 to reach his second CWG final. Earlier in the day, the seasoned pair of Sharath and G Sathiyan was outsmarted by familiar foes Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford of England in the men's doubles final. The Indian duo had to settle for silver for the second successive edition after losing 11-8, 8-11, 3-11, 11-7, 4-11 to the English combine.

Pallikal-Ghosal bag mixed doubles bronze

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Saurav Ghosal and Dipika Pallikal won the bronze medal in the squash event of the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday. In a repeat of last edition's final, Ghosal and Pallikal hardly broke a sweat as they prevailed 11-8 11-4 over the Australian combine of Donna Lobban and Cameron Pilley in the bronze medal play off.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SCHEDULE

HOCKEY (FINAL)  
INDIA VS AUSTRALIA (5pm)  
BADMINTON

**Women's Singles Final:** PV Sindhu vs Michelle Li (1.20 pm)  
**Men's Singles Final:** Lakshya Sen vs Tze Yong NZ (2.10pm)  
**Men's Doubles Final:** Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty vs Ben Lane/Sean Vandy (3pm)  
**CWG CLOSING CEREMONY**  
**12.30 AM (AUG 9)**

# Indian cricketers implode at the final hurdle, Aussies win gold



EXPRESS IN BIRMINGHAM

SHIVANI NAIK  
AUGUST 7

THE COMMON refrain this summer had been that Indians brought a spot of happy sunshine along to the UK when they came for the Commonwealth Games. Bathed in glorious warmth that Birmingham just can't seem to get enough of, as crowds thronged stadia in the summer of sport, India's T20 cricket team wanted to steal a bit of filigreed gold in return. The women looking to have their own big 1983 Lord's moment at Edgbaston threatened to prick the Aussie bubble, but imploded at the final hurdle losing by 9 runs.

In a run chase of 162 that always looked on, the power outages from the Indians came far too often, as the big match poise would trickle out of their fight, and set them back



Harmanpreet Kaur's 43-ball 65 went in vain for India against Australia. Reuters

after Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemima Rodrigues looked, at one point, to be steering the ship safely home. The Aussies had only just enough on the board with 161-8, but chasing for the first time in the tourna-

ment against a bigger team, India had familiar ghosts haunting them, and pegging them back to yet another runners-up finish, this time at Edgbaston. Lord's over 50 overs against England,

# Punching glory

Panghal, Nikhat, Nitu land a mean combination punch to give India three gold medals in boxing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AUGUST 7

'DOOR REHNA, bas (just stay away)'.

With those words from coach Bhaskar Bhatt ringing in her ears, Nikhat Zareen charged forward from her corner as the bell rang to mark the beginning of the final round of the light-flyweight gold medal bout of the Birmingham Games.

Leading on all five cards after the first two rounds against Northern Ireland's Carly McNaul, all Nikhat had to do was stay out of trouble for the rest of the bout. She did just that, dancing and prancing around the ring, staying away from her opponent's reach, smiling and swaying – and occasionally sneaking in a mean punch – and pocketing the gold medal.

Bhatt had earlier given the same instruction to Nitu Ghanghas, who was in a similar position in her minimumweight gold medal fight against England's Demie-Jade Resztan, before the final round. For most of the last three minutes, Nitu followed the same strategy as Nikhat but the temptation to get involved was too much to avoid, and so in the last 30 seconds, she went all-in and landed three clean back-to-back combination punches to finish with a flourish.

Sandwiched between these two bouts was Amit Panghal's flyweight final against England's Kieran Macdonald. Panghal, too, was comfortably ahead after the first two rounds but at the CWG, he had spared no one. And there was no way he'd go easy on his opponent in the gold medal bout. So, even as blood gushed down Macdonald's forehead, and onto his eyes, Panghal unleashed a flurry of punches to put the result beyond any doubt.

Three finals, three unanimous verdicts, three gold medals.

While Nikhat stepped out of the ring to instantly celebrate her gold medal with wrestler and close friend Vinesh Phogat, and Nitu couldn't stop grinning and punching the air having won her first major multi-discipline medal, Panghal was more muted in his



India's Nikhat Zareen (R) in action during the final on Sunday. PTI

celebrations – just his trademark salute and a Namaste to the cameras.

After his first-round exit at the Tokyo Olympics last year, Panghal's childhood coach Anil Dhankar said at the CWG that he was out to prove a point to himself more than others. Dhankar recalled how for months after the Tokyo Games, the duo would merely look at each other and tears would start flowing.

Panghal's explosive strength

Touted as a medal contender at the Olympics, Panghal slowly began to pick up the pieces after a shock defeat and began training with junior boxers at the academy. "He was hurt, we all were. After the Olympics, he started with the basics all over again," Dhankar said on Sunday.

"The mistake he made (in Tokyo) was to play according to his opponent's style rather than sticking to his own. At the CWG, he stuck to his own type of boxing; that is, to land a punch, duck and make the opponent miss his attempt and then launch a counterattack. And that's where he's the most

dangerous."

Four unanimous decisions in four bouts en route to the gold underlined how 'dangerous' he is. Panghal would – as he did in Sunday's final – dip low, bide his time and use his incredible hand speed to unleash ferocious right-hand punches from a lower angle, a style none of his opponents were able to deal with.

Indian boxing's former high-performance director Santiago Neiva, Dhankar said, had pointed out to Panghal about the lack of sting in his punches despite the accuracy. "So, in the last few months he started performing training drills that throwers do to improve their power as well as explosive strength," Dhankar said. This included exercises like squats and short sprints.

"At the 2018 Commonwealth Games too, Amit was in the final against an English boxer. But he lost that bout because he lacked in these areas," Dhankar said. "And then, there's one big change between Amit today compared to a year ago – his willpower. He's more determined and hungrier than I've seen him in a long, long time."

MCG in 2020 and now the inaugural CWG final – the resistance put up had got progressively more optimistic. But the end result would be the same, with just two of the top order looking in control in the chase. While Harmanpreet stayed, India looked like they had a chance. Once wickets fell around her, the same old desperation, sweaty palms and slipping feet lost their grip over pacing the chase, and faltered.

The promise of a couple of boundaries – if they could back themselves to hold their nerve – could have sorted them out. But India doesn't have a full-fledged women's IPL, Australia has their Women's Big Bash, and the experience of being in these situations in their domestic league finally made the difference.

Earlier though, Harmanpreet offered India its biggest hope after Smriti Mandhana went early. It was that little Jemimah hop at the other end, completing a boundary-filler of a non-single, that would signal Harmanpreet had smashed the ball to the pink boundary ropes, and at times beyond. Edgbaston filled up to watch the big hits, and the Indian captain didn't disappoint.

There were two hits that cleared the deep midwicket and long-on fielders, Harmanpreet swept with elan and used the fast outfield to send a hot welter cannon-

balling under the cover fielder's eluded outstretched arm.

Harmanpreet & Co lit up the Commonwealth Games final with their audacious challenge of Australian hegemony, but just didn't have the arsenal or tools of destruction to boss those moments. Just like they started in the opener where they had Australia on the mat before Ashleigh Gardner rescued them, once again, the Aussies were not allowed ascendancy with a bunch of Indians ping-pong with a wicket here, a one-handed catch there.

Deepthi Sharma lifted one straight behind the bowler, to keep them going, but it was panic in the chase that put paid to all the early efforts.

Australia did the basics right, didn't try anything fancy, and banked on the Indian proclivity to go down on these situations. The run-outs came in a bunch, and pointed to not merely ill-judged singles but jangled nerves that repeated losing in the finals can trigger.

Yet, this was a stunning debut for cricket at the CWG. And it needed India in the finals to bring a final alive.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Australia 161/8 (Beth Mooney 61, Renuka Singh 2/25, Sneha Rana 2/38) beat India 152 in 19.3 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 65, Ashleigh Gardner 3/16) by 9 runs

# With speed, IQ in the ring and strength, Nitu lands gold

NITIN SHARMA  
AUGUST 7

**NITU GHANGAS**, the 48 kg Commonwealth Games gold medalist, has two things going for her – speed in the ring and her strength. These qualities left experts impressed.

Four years ago, early in his stint as India's women's foreign boxing coach Raffaele Bergamasco noticed Nitu was special. He asked the then youth coach Bhaskar Chandra Bhatt to keep him posted about her progress.

On Sunday afternoon, after Nitu won the 48 kg final against England's Demie-Jade Resztan, with a unanimous 5:0 decision, the Italian sent a congratulatory WhatsApp message to Nitu.

"When I spent time at the national youth camp in Bhopal, Nitu's skill struck me immediately. Her boxing was very simple yet effective. One thing which impressed me during the camp as well as during the two successive world youth championships was that she got rid of her opponents with her speed and physical strength, a thing which she has displayed the whole of last week," Bergamasco told *The Indian Express*.

At Birmingham, Nitu first scored an ABD win (when a boxer retires) over Northern Ireland's Nicole Clyde to move into the semifinals and assure herself of a bronze medal at least. The Irish boxer was a bit taller than Nitu but the Indian relied on slipping her punches, landing her straight punches with right uppercuts as well. In the semifinal bout, Nitu faced Canada's Priyanka Dhillon and won through RSC (Referee Stops Contest). Dhillon was a counter boxer and Nitu once again relied on her straight punches.



"Nicole was taller than me and was also a southpaw. So I had to go for an attacking style initially. My focus was on slipping her punches and going for straight as well as for the right uppercuts. Canada's Dhillon was a counter boxer and I went with the plan that I have to bring her to my range and then use straight punches and slip towards the side to avoid her punches," Nitu told this paper.

But her biggest challenge came in the final. Demie-Jade Resztan is a southpaw and a rough style boxer. Nitu had boxed against her during training bouts in Ireland prior to the games. "She is a bit shorter in height and that's why she relies on playing rough against taller opponents. My plan was to play from long range and to increase my attacks. When she came forward, I slipped towards right or left and landed counter punches avoiding the clinching initially,"

Nitu said.

Her coach at the Bhiwani Boxing Club Jagdish Singh too had a word with her before the final.

"Playing a southpaw that too in the final meant that Nitu would be under some pressure. But she did not look hesitant at all in the first round and played with an excellent ring IQ to dodge her attacks and play from long range. Regarding the 50 kg category (Olympic category), we need to work on her muscular strength and increase some speed and have more accuracy in counter attacks," Singh said.

Bergamasco too agrees with Singh. "Nitu's right guard is an advantage over others and her swiftness of the arms and strength makes her a threat in 48 kg. She needed to add more in terms of muscle structure," says the Italian.

As for Nitu, once she gets home, she would again spend watching the videos of six-time world champion Mary Kom.

# Indian women's team returns to podium

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AUGUST 7

AFTER A gap of 16 years, India's women's hockey team returned to the Commonwealth Games podium, defeating New Zealand via a thrilling tie-breaker in the bronze-medal play-off in Birmingham on Sunday.

As she usually is, India captain and goal-keeper Savita Punia was the star for India in the shoot-out, saving two, forcing a New Zealand attacker to miss the target once and ensuring another attacker did not complete her attempt in the allotted eight seconds.

After winning the silver medal at the 2006 Melbourne CWG, India's 2-1 win in the shootouts (1-1 after regulation time) made sure they did not return home empty-handed this time. The tie-breaker followed after New Zealand equalised with just 18.5 seconds remaining in the match to level the score 1-1.

However, unlike the semifinal where India lost to Australia in the shoot-outs, the team showed immense mental strength to fight back and post a win even after Sangita Kumari missed her initial attempt. Earlier in the match, Salima Tete had put India ahead in the 29th minute. Her sneaky run at the far post and an opportunistic backhanded tap-in gave India the lead, which they fought hard to protect for the rest of the match. The move that led to Tete's goal was initiated from the right. Navneet



Indian women's team celebrates after scoring on Sunday. PTI

Kaur's initial shot was blocked by the goal-keeper, the ball then fell to Sharmila Devi who was unmarked in front of an open goal, but she failed to connect but Tete made the run behind her to score from the melee.

It was Tete's third goal of the tournament but by far the most important, given that hardly anything separated the two teams until then. New Zealand piled on the pressure in search

of an equaliser and had a goal disallowed in the third quarter. India, however, never went defensive although they defended brilliantly. Even with less than five minutes remaining in the final quarter, India refused to defend deep and continued to press high to keep New Zealand from accumulating numbers in their half. They played with pace and precision, never allowing their opponent a moment to breathe. The only time they looked to alter the strategy was in the final two minutes when Lalremisiami was shown a yellow card for an infringement.

Down to 10 players, New Zealand sensed an opportunity and earned a penalty corner with just 28.5 seconds left in the match. From the resulting drag-flick, New Zealand earned a penalty stroke after the ball hit Navneet's foot in front of the goal. Olivia Merry converted from the spot, forcing a shootout.

For India, Sonika and Navneet found the target in the tie-breaker while Sangita and Neha Goyal missed their chances. New Zealand, though, missed all but one chance they took. The players, most of them in tears, ran towards the 'D' and huddled over Savita after she made the final save.

The bronze will come as a huge shot in the arm for the team, which was on an upswing following a fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics a year ago but seemed to stagnate in the last few months, with a few underwhelming performances, especially at the World Cup.

ANIL DIAS  
AUGUST 7

THE TEARS told their own story. One could see how much it meant to Bhavina Patel. She had to settle for silver at the Tokyo Paralympics – a great achievement in itself. But the para table tennis player wasn't satisfied. She wanted to win, she wanted gold.

And win is what she did and that too in telling fashion on Saturday, beating Nigeria's Christiana Ikpeoyi in straight games (12-10, 11-2, 11-9) to win gold at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The scoreline may suggest an easy outing but it was anything but that. Ikpeoyi wasn't a pushover. The first game went into extra points and Bhavina's nerves of steel came into play.

The second one she absolutely dominated. Ikpeoyi had no answers, looked flummoxed, and seemed to have almost given up. The third game was going the same way until the Nigerian suddenly decided to give a final push to stay in the match. But Bhavina managed to finish the contest in straight games.

Then, for the first time on Saturday, the Indian showed her emotions. She roared, hugged her coach Lalan Doshi and cried – tears of redemption for both of them. And what a fabulous journey it has been!

Bhavina was just a year old when her family discovered she was suffering from po-



Bhavina Patel celebrates with her coach after her victory on Saturday. PTI

liomyelitis, a disabling and, in some cases, life-threatening disease caused by the poliovirus. It affects the spinal cord, and can result in paralysis.

Her disability may have prompted ridicule in her village with people telling her that she wouldn't amount to much in life, but Bhavina kept going. Even after she was rejected in an interview for a teacher's post because of her disability.

In 2004-05, she enrolled in an ITI course at the Blind People's Association (BPA), an institution for the specially-abled in Ahmedabad. It was there that Bhavina was introduced to table tennis and it was there that she fell in love with the sport, even saying that she "felt like she could play the sport for 24 hours a day".

She started playing in tournaments and soon realised she could compete at the highest level. She competed at the National Championships and started winning gold medals. Her confidence skyrocketed and she started setting new goals after deciding to take up the sport professionally in 2008.

Playing the sport at the highest level also meant that she had to finance herself as support from the government or federations wasn't really forthcoming. Though she struggled in this endeavour, she knew that this was something that gave her a purpose in life. And she stuck with it.

She reached the World No. 2 ranking by winning the silver medal in the individual category at the 2011 PTT Thailand Open. In 2013, she won a silver medal in women's singles class 4 at the Asian Para Table Tennis Championships in Beijing. In 2017, she bagged a bronze in the Asian Para Table Tennis Championships in the Chinese capital.

Her goal was set – she wanted to win gold at the Paralympics – and she almost did. After beating World Nos 2, 3, 8, and 9 en route to the women's singles class 4 final, she fell just short against World No. 1 Zhou Ying of China. It also meant that she was yet to win a gold in a major tournament.

That changed on Saturday. That's why the tears, the roar. But it could just be the beginning of a golden journey. After all, the 2024 Paris Paralympics isn't too far away.



# CHES OLYMPIAD

# Cagey before climax

**SANDIP G**  
CHENNAI, AUGUST 7

**BRIEF SCORES:** **India** 188 for 7 in 20 overs (Shreyas Iyer 64; Odean Smith 3/33) beat **West Indies** 100 all out in 15.4 overs (Shimron Hetmyer 56; Ravi Bishnoi 4/16, Axar Patel 3/15, Kuldeep Yadav 3/12) by 88 runs.

The gap was tricky – neither too huge for the trailing teams to go all out nor for the lead-



**Gukesh D's eight-game win streak came to an end on Sunday.**

So was Nihal Sarin's game against Rauf Mamedov, a turgid affair that never turned dynamic. Raunak Sadhwani's game against Nijat Abasov too flowed at a similar tempo before the former dug deep and frustrated the Indian into a semi-blunder when he moved his pawn to b4 on the 45th turn, slitting an opening for Mamedov to launch a relatively straightforward attack. A dicey movement of Sadhwani's rook to a2 left him with no alternatives to claw back and manage a

The top boards of heavyweights drew against each other, and those on the third and fourth seemed draw-bound but for Javokhir Sindarov and Jakhongir Vakhidov upsetting Ter-Sahakyan and Robert Hovhannisyan. There was late drama and the audience would believe that there would be some more drama in store for the last two days as the tournament curls into the final bend.

**VISWANATHAN ANAND**  
NEW FIDE VICE-PRESIDENT



**This is Viswanathan Anand's maiden foray into chess administration.** AICF

The 50-year-old emphasised that he would continue to support Ukraine's cause. "I took a strong position on the tragic events in Ukraine as well as supported FIDE Council decisions regarding scaling down Russia's involvement in Fide. Moreover, while abandoning Russian partners, we have been able to find new ones around the globe, organise this Chess Olympiad [in India] and ensure financial stability for Fide. It is far from easy for me personally, but I hope that chess can re-unite people again," he said.

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