



Battle of Berlin

Spain go for record 4th title and England look to end a 58-year wait for major trophy in the Euro 2024 final

magazine

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Pure Politics, Bottom Line & Around the World

ROSY FIRST QUARTER

Direct Tax Mopup 20% Bigger in FY25 on Income Tax Boost

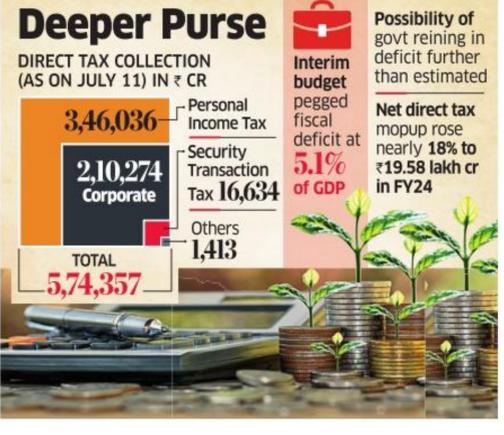
Jump in collections during Apr 1-Jul 11 to help in meeting fiscal deficit target

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Direct tax collections surged nearly 20% from a year earlier to ₹5.74 lakh crore in FY25 so far, riding a jump in personal income tax flows. This should provide the government with more fiscal flexibility in the budget for this fiscal year, which will be presented on July 23.

Personal income tax collection is seen rising further, with some individuals expected to pay taxes with the returns for FY24. The last date for filing income tax returns is July 31 for the assessment year 2024-25.

"Corporate profits continue to surge, and these are reflected in the first quarter advance tax collections," said Rohinton Sidh-



wa, partner at Deloitte India. "Strong collections... indicate the possibility of the government reining in the fiscal deficit" further than estimated. In the interim budget for FY25, the government had pegged the fiscal deficit at 5.1% of gross domestic product (GDP). Net corporate tax collection for the fiscal as of July 11 was ₹2.10 lakh crore, an increase of 12.5%,

while net personal income tax collection was up 21.4% to ₹3.46 lakh crore, according to data released on Saturday.

The Centre collected ₹16,634 crore in securities transaction tax (STT) during April 1 and July 11 on the back of the booming stock market and increased trading — more than double the ₹7,285 crore in the same period last year.

Other direct taxes — including the equalisation levy, fringe benefit tax, wealth tax and banking cash transaction tax — netted ₹1,413 crore.

The Income Tax Department has issued refunds aggregating to ₹70,902 crore in the fiscal year so far, 62.5% higher than those issued last year.

Gross tax collection before refunds was ₹6.45 lakh crore, up 23.2% from a year earlier.

The interim budget pegged direct tax collection at ₹21.99 lakh crore for the full fiscal year.

Personal income tax contributed ₹3.61 lakh crore to gross collections, while corporate tax added ₹2.65 lakh crore.

INTEREST PAYMENT BEFORE JULY 20

Centre to Pick up Bond Dues Tab for MTNL

Telco misses fund transfer to escrow account amid tight liquidity; govt planning debt rejig

Kiran Rathee & Bhaskar Dutta

Mumbai: The government will step in to pay interest on Mahanagar Telecom Nigam (MTNL) bonds, allaying fears of a sovereign default after the state-owned telco failed to transfer sufficient funds to an escrow account on schedule, said people with knowledge of the matter.

The borrowers will be paid according to the rules laid out by the Department of Economic Affairs, they said. "Whatever amount is due will be paid before the due date, which is July 20," a senior official told ET on condition of anonymity.

In July 2023, MTNL had raised ₹2,480 crore through non-convertible debentures at an interest rate of 7.59%. The due date for semi-annual interest payments is July 20.

According to a structured payment mechanism signed by MTNL, the Department of Telecommunications and securities trustee Beacon Trusteeship, the telco firm was supposed to deposit the funds 10 days before the due date.

On Thursday MTNL informed the stock exchanges that it did not have sufficient funds.

In an update on Friday, India Ratings & Research said the breach of condition of the debenture trustee deed is considered as a default, according to the intimation received by the agency.

With no deposits by the end of Friday, MTNL trustees are likely to have invoked the government of India guarantee by sending it a notice of invocation. According to the payment structure, the government is now required to deposit the funds in the trust and retention account at least three days before the due date.

Separately, the government is working on restructuring

BOND PAYMENT STRUCTURE

T MINUS 30TH DAY: Trustees inform MTNL, govt of due date for payment

- T - 10: Trust & retention a/c to be funded by MTNL
- T - 8: Trustee invokes govt guarantee if trust account not funded
- T - 3: Last date for govt to deposit funds

T = due date for interest/principal payments (July 20)

Source: India Ratings & Research

ROBERT RAVI IS INTERIM CMD OF BSNL

MTNL's ₹28,000-30,000 crore debt, said people in the know. "Work is on for the debt restructuring. It will be done soon," said an official, who did not wish to be identified.

Once the debt is restructured, all operations will be transferred to BSNL as well as some employees, while others may be given voluntary retirement.

India Ratings has an outstanding rating of 'IND AAA(CE)/stable on the MTNL bonds, based on the presence of a pre-default guarantee from the parent, which is the government. The ratings firm on Friday said it was monitoring developments and would take rating action accordingly.

Unsupported Rating >> 7



PM Narendra Modi with Nita, Anant, Radhika and Mukesh Ambani

Bright Lights Dazzle on the Night of Rites

Glitzy, glamour, lights and laughter — it was a night to remember at the Shubh Aashirwad (divine blessings) ceremony of Anant Ambani and his radiant bride, Radhika. As guest of honour Prime Minister Narendra Modi blessed the young couple, the who's who from the business world, politics and celebrities descended at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai. Proud parents Nita and Mukesh Ambani pulled out all the stops to make sure it was pure magic at this monsoon wedding.

DETAILED COVERAGE >> 3

AMID DEMAND SLOWDOWN

EVs Plug into PE Recharging Infra

At \$754M, funding into sector sees a 17% surge so far this year

Electrified!

Some deals in Jan-June 2024

- Invested by Exedy in Omega Seiki Mobility: \$150M
- Investment by GEF Capital Partners in TI Clean Mobility: \$70M
- Raised by Battery Smart, a swapping player, from Leapfrog Investments: \$65M
- Lohm mopped up from Singularity VC and other investors: \$54M
- Raised from the NIF by Mahindra Last Mile Mobility: \$50M

Source: Ostara Advisors

Policy Uncertainty >> 7

Mumbai: Private equity (PE) firms are ramping up investments into India's electric two- and three-wheeler industry to gain a share of the emerging market. This comes amid a slowdown in electric passenger vehicle sales in the first six months of 2024 from the year earlier due to higher prices, range anxiety and inadequate charging network. Electric cars are also facing competition from hybrids, experts say.

Total funding announced in the first half of 2024 surged nearly 17% to about \$754 million. This includes inflow of \$423.5 million into the electric two- and three-wheeler industry, and small commercial vehicle makers, as well as \$330 million in the EV ecosystem which includes EV financing, battery swapping, charging infrastructure, EV fleets, battery

AFTER WORLD DOMINATION, A SMOOTH SHIFT

Long Single, Rare Malt Finds Love Back Home

Rich Indians drinking in small-batch, luxury editions of desi malts

Indulekha Aravind

Bengaluru: Exclusive collector's editions and rare expressions of Indian single malts, earlier solely targeted at the international market, are increasingly finding space in the bar cabinets of the affluent back home.

Diageo India's The Godawan 100, of which only 48 bottles were available for sale in India, was sold out, despite a price tag of close to ₹1 lakh. The Bagheera, released this March by Amrut Distilleries and available only in Gurgaon, sold close to 600 bottles in less than a month, with prices starting at ₹25,000 and going up to ₹40,000.

While the Rampur Signature Reserve was not available outside travel retail (duty-free outlets) in India, maker Radico Khaitan says Indians were instead picking it up abroad.

A Matter of Pride >> 7

Women RAISING their Skills Game in Drive to Thrive

The Future of Work

BIG SURGE

700% increase in no. of GenAI course enrolments for women learners over last yr at Coursera

WHY'S UPSKILLING IMPORTANT

It is often a counter-cyclical phenomenon during economic downturns

Highest enrolment rates are typically seen during specific career stages, such as mid-career transitions

870% uptick in no. of women upskilling in GenAI courses for leadership roles — up from 653 to 6,386 — at platform

Banking, IT Services and Consulting are sectors seeing surging interest from women

Professionals are upskilling like never before as they bet on potential of AI

Neil Ghai

New Delhi: Women professionals in India are betting big on the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in arming themselves to break through the glass ceiling, upskilling experts said.

Shravan Goli, strategic advisor, Coursera, said the surge in enrolments for AI and generative AI courses among women in India is a measure of how highly rated AI skills in the modern workforce are.

Comparing the June quarter with the same period a year ago, he said, "When I think about overall GenAI course enrolments for women learners in India, it's about a 700% increase."

At Coursera, the number of women in India upskilling themselves in GenAI courses for leadership roles in the same period ballooned from 653 to 6,386. "GenAI-for-executives course enrolment by women learners in India has seen an 870% increase in Q2 of 2024 compared

to Q2 of 2023. So, both are phenomenal," Goli said.

The engagement in advanced programmes is particularly evident in executive-level courses at Upgrad. Mayank Kumar, cofounder of Upgrad, pointed out that the executive doctorate programmes in generative AI and digital leadership have enrolled over 150 women leaders in less than a year. "Over 95% of our enrolments come from professionals with eight-plus years of experience, reiterating the demand for continuous learning even after spending a substantial career span within the workforce," he said.

Integrating AI skills is not merely about learning new technologies but also about applying them to achieve strategic advantages in leadership roles. "AI skills are particularly transformative for leadership roles as they enable leaders to harness data-driven insights, automate processes, and make informed decisions that can propel their organisations forward," Kumar said.

Kashyap Dalal, COO of Simplilearn, said they had observed a similar trend.

Breaking the Glass Ceiling >> 7

Immigration Continues... to the United Snacks of India

Be it bhujia, chivra or the multi-named fried and spiced peanuts — they're more than a match for potato chips on the tidbits smorgasbord

Sagar Malviya

Mumbai: Time is only whetting the appetite for traditional and branded packaged snacks — on the table and in the market — as value sales of sev bhujia and namkeen matched those of western munchies during 2023-24 too.

The latter comprise potato wafers and finger sticks. Products such as bhujia, dal, chivra, chanachur and fried nuts accounted for half the salty snacks sales of about ₹50,800 crore during the financial year, with both overseas and domestic companies pushing namkeen in the hinterlands, industry executives said, citing NielsenIQ data.

The trend has been expanding much faster post-pandemic as Indian snacks accounted for 49% of total salty snacks sales in 2021-22 as well as 2022-23. In terms of volume, traditional snacks account for nearly 56% of the overall market. "Indians have a general taste for ethnic food, which is now reflected in snacks as well," said Suresh Goel, chief executive of Bikanervala Foods, which owns the eponymous brand as well as Bikano.

More than a decade ago, potato chips and finger sticks accounted for nearly two-thirds of the snacks market, controlled primarily by Pepsi Frito Lays and ITC Foods.

"Earlier, western snacks sold by big companies had deeper reach, which is getting reversed as traditional snack makers expand their distribution and penetrate smaller villages," said Goel.

By volumes, traditional snacks have been the bigger segment for many years now. That's mainly because they offer larger quantities for a similar price point, the most popular being ₹5 and ₹10 packs.

Nearly 40% of the snacks market is controlled by 3,000-odd smaller or regional players, which give more value to consumers in terms of extra grammage and are also more agile in launching products.

Shift to Packaged Products >> 7



Centre Strengthens L-G in J&K Admin; Oppn Slams Move

MHA says transaction of business rule, not J&K Reorganisation Act, amended

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: The Union home ministry has enhanced the powers of the lieutenant governor (LG) after amending the transaction of business rules under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. In a late evening clarification, officials said that the notification regarding transaction of business rules was not an amendment to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, as some media reports suggested, but a simple amendment to the transaction rules issued to avoid any ambiguity.

The notification did not in any sense alter the balance of powers as enshrined in the law, which has been passed by Parliament and upheld by the Supreme Court, they said. The amendments came into force on July 12, the date of the publication in the Official Gazette – a move in anticipation of the speculated assembly election in J&K. Officials said the decision is in line with the other union territories.

As per section 32 of the Act, the legislative assembly may make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the state list, except the "police" and "public order", or the concurrent list in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

As per section 53 of the Act, the LG



The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve better than a powerless and rubber stamp CM who will have to beg the L-G to get his/her peon appointed

OMAR ABDULLAH
NC vice president

shall exercise his functions in his discretion in a matter which falls outside the purview of powers conferred on the legislative assembly, related to all-India services and Anti-Corruption Bureau and any other matter required under any law to act in his discretion.

The functions of the LG have been clearly defined and delineated in the Act and these reflect in the transaction of business rules, officials said, adding that the notification was me-



The increased powers given to the Jammu and Kashmir L-G suggested a dim outlook for the restoration of a full-fledged statehood in the near future

JAIRAM RAMESH
Congress general secretary

ant to provide more clarity on the processes so as to enable smooth administration of J&K.

President Droupadi Murmu gave approval to the amendments, exercising the power conferred by Section 55 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, read with the Proclamation dated October 31, 2019, issued under Section 73 of the Act, said a notification issued by the ministry. The President also approved

amendment to the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019. "These rules may be called the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (Second Amendment) Rules, 2024," said the notification.

In the 'Transaction of Business Rules', sub-rule 2A has been inserted after sub-rule (2) in rule 5. It says, "No proposal which requires previous concurrence of the Finance Department with regard to 'Police', 'Public Order', 'All India Service' and 'Anti-Corruption Bureau' to exercise the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor under the Act shall be concurred or rejected unless it has been placed before the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary".

In the principal rules, after Rule 42, Rule 42A has been inserted giving the LG power to appoint the advocate general and law officers for the union territory.

As per the new rule, "Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs shall submit the proposal for appointment of Advocate-General and other Law Officers to assist the Advocate-General in the court proceedings, for approval of the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister."



Trying to Turn The Tables

The Mahayuti (grand alliance) was in disarray after the Lok Sabha fiasco, but the state government, eyeing the assembly polls, has rolled out various initiatives, including free power to farmers and Rs 1500 to women each month. In the assembly, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde mocked the opposition by saying they would be constructing additional hospitals in the state to treat all the opposition leaders for their "stomach ache" caused by all the new programmes they had implemented.



Headlines to Get Attention

Sanjay Raut, a Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP, is always surrounded by reporters because he frequently provides bytes and statements that create headlines. Raut is aware of this, which is why, on Friday, when he saw the BJP's Chandrakant Patil at the assembly premises, he drew Patil towards him and suggested that the two come together again. Raut's statements were a brilliant word play for the media, which tried to figure out whether Raut was advocating that the BJP and UBT reunite again. Raut later stated, while speaking to the media, that nothing should be interpreted from his statements.



Skydiving to Boost Tourism

Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Shekhawat went skydiving on Saturday at Narnaul, Haryana, to celebrate World Skydiving Day and to promote adventure tourism in the nation. Afterwards, the minister remarked that the skydiving experience was quite remarkable.

Cong, Trinamool Gain in 1st Bypolls After LS Election

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: Congress and Trinamool Congress made gains in the first set of bypolls covering 13 assembly seats across seven states since the Lok Sabha election. Congress and TMC won four seats each while BJP bagged two seats with Aam Aadmi Party, DMK and an independent candidate getting one each.

The good news for Congress came from the hilly states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand where the party won two seats each. In Himachal, chief minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu further consolidated his position by winning two of three seats.

Three independent MLAs, who had switched to the BJP from Congress, were contesting on these seats. Sukhu's wife Kamlesh Thakur won from Dehra seat. The party bagged Nalagarh constituency as well. BJP's sole win was in Hamirpur where party candidate Ashish Sharma won the seat.

Following the strong bypoll performance, Congress has regained 40 seats in the 68-member Himachal assembly which it had won in 2022. BJP

has 28 MLAs after Saturday's result. In Uttarakhand, Congress won Badrinath and Manglaur. Badrinath Congress MLA Rajendra Bhandari had joined the BJP and was contesting on a BJP ticket. Manglaur seat got vacant after the death of sitting BSP MLA Sarwat Karim Ansari.

Congress wrested the seat from the

Of 13 seats, Opposition parties win 10 seats, BJP 2 & independent 1

In Madhya Pradesh, BJP maintained its winning record by wresting Amarwara seat from Congress. Amarwara sitting Congress MLA Kamlesh Shah joined the BJP and was contesting as BJP candidate. This is Congress's second defeat in Chhindwara after it lost the Lok Sabha polls.

In Bihar, there was a prestige battle between the ruling JD (U) and the RJD for Rupauli assembly seats. However, the results came as a setback for both the ruling alliance as well as the opposition. Former LJP (Ram Vilas) leader and independent candidate Shankar Singh won the election.

In Tamil Nadu, ruling DMK wrested Vikravandi seat from the PMK.

10-2 Win to Deter Defections, Boost Oppn Confidence

ET ANALYSIS

CL Manoj

New Delhi: The INDIA bloc's 10-2 victory against the ruling BJP and its allies in the assembly by-elections, with the 13th seat going to an independent in Bihar, was marked by the strategic gain to the opposition alliance from the defeat of several of its erstwhile MLAs who had defected and fought on the BJP ticket.

The by-election results declared on Saturday showed that the opposition parties had thwarted the BJP's hitherto successful strategy of weaning away opposition MLAs, making them resign from the assembly and helping them win bypolls on their 'lotus' symbol. The trend reversal could serve as a deterrent against defections, thus rendering the results more significant than the simplistic narrative of ruling parties in states mostly retaining the upper hand in bypolls. The outcome also means the opposition parties will go to the upcoming state elections with enhanced confidence.

Commenting on the Congress victories, party president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "These victories show that the people have now completely rejected the arrogance, misgovernance and negative politics of the BJP. This is also strong evidence of the falling political credibility of Modi and Shah."

Of the two seats each the Congress has won in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, three seats were those where the party had suffered defection of sitting MLAs to the BJP. While the Congress avenged the defection by retaining the Badrinath seat in Uttarakhand, the party wrested Manglaur from the BSP. Not only did the BJP lose both seats in the party-ruled Uttarakhand, but it also suffered a larger reversal given the party had swept all five Lok Sabha seats in the state.

"The by-election results showed the people rejecting the BJP's manipulative and horse-trading politics in many states. The results also show the continuing trend of public opinion turning in favour of the Congress and our INDIA alliance," said Kumar Selja, All India Congress Committee general secretary in-charge of Uttarakhand.

Of the three bypolls in Himachal

Pradesh necessitated by the defection of the three independent MLAs, who were the associated members of the Congress in the assembly, the Congress won two by avenging the defectors fighting on BJP tickets. These included the Dehra seat won by the party for the first time in more than 30 years, through chief minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu's wife, Kamlesh Thakur. Even as the BJP won the third seat through a slender margin, the Congress, whose state government was on the brink due to recent defections of its MLAs in two batches, has won most of those seats in back-to-back bypolls to cement its majority at 40 in the 68-member assembly.



However, the Madhya Pradesh Congress continued with its poor run as it failed to retain the Amarwara seat, where its defector MLA won on the BJP ticket.

After dashing the BJP's hopes in West Bengal as it failed to retain the Mamata Banerjee-led All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) retained all three assembly seats - Raiganj, Ranaghat Dakshin and Bagda (along with Kaniklata where sitting party MLA had died) - from where the BJP had engineered defections and resignations of sitting AITC MLAs.

The Aam Aadmi not only won the Jalandhar West seat in Punjab by defeating its defector MLA who fought on the BJP symbol, but also used a former BJP member to avenge the defection. In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK retained the Vikravandi seat by defeating the BJP ally PMK with a massive margin.

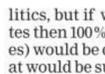
Quota Leader Patil to Work Against Ruling Maha Alliance

Our Political Bureau

Mumbai: The deadline set by Maratha leader Manoj Jarange Patil to the Mahayuti government to include the Maratha community under the OBC category expired today. Jarange said the ruling parties would face such a heavy defeat in the assembly polls that they would 'forever repent' if his demands were not implemented.

Maharashtra assembly polls are to be held in October-November.

"We would put candidates in all the 288 constituencies of the state and ensure that all their (ruling party MLAs) lose the elections. We don't want to enter politics, but if we put up candidates then 100% you (ruling parties) would be defeated. The defeat would be such that the ruling alliance would be repenting for life if they don't accept our demands," warned Patil. He had given a deadline of July 13 to the state government to implement two of his demands, including putting all Marathas in the OBC category by recognizing them as Kunbis.



'We would put candidates in all the 288 seats and ensure all their (ruling party candidates) lose polls'

Cong Promises Action After cross-voting in MLC polls

Krishna Kumar

Mumbai: It's deja vu again for the Congress unit in Maharashtra as at least 7-8 party MLAs cross voted during the Friday's MLC polls leading to the defeat of a candidate supported by the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance (MVA). Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole claimed the Congress MLAs who cross voted in favour of the ruling alliance candidates have fallen in a 'trap' laid by the party.

Notwithstanding Patole's claims of a trap laid for the MLAs, there are plenty of red faces in the Congress leadership in the state as this was the second occasion where the Congress MLAs cross voted. In 2022 there was cross voting for the MLC polls that precipitated the fall of the MVA government and led to a full-fledged inquiry by the Congress top brass that indicated that almost a dozen MLAs had crossed voted.

"The official candidate of our alliance is defeated, what kind of trap is this that has hurt us more than the offending MLAs," said a Congress MLA and party leader.

In 2022, there was cross voting for the MLC polls that precipitated the fall of the MVA gov't

Internet Cut Amid Ethnic Tensions In Tripura

Bikash Singh

Guwahati: Authorities imposed prohibitory orders and deployed a huge contingent of security forces as ethnic tensions continued in the tribal-dominated Ganda Twisa in Tripura's Dhalai District on Saturday. The Internet has been snipped and large gatherings have been banned in the district and four people have been arrested.

Officials said the attackers burnt houses, vandalised and looted shops and homes at Ganda Twisa on Friday night when Parameshwar Reang succumbed to his injuries after being assaulted by some miscreants on July 7.

The Tripura home department suspended mobile Internet services in Dhalai district till Saturday midnight to prevent circulation of messages, videos and photographs.

Former Tripura chief minister Manik Sarkar discussed the Ganda Twisa situation with Chief Minister Manik Saha and requested him to take appropriate measures to control the situation.

India abstains From UNGA Resolution Against Russia

Dipjan Roy Chaudhury

New Delhi: India abstained from a resolution in the UN General Assembly that urged Russia to immediately end its operation in Ukraine and urgently withdraw its forces and other unauthorised personnel from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

The 193-member UN General Assembly adopted the resolution on Thursday with 99 votes in favour, nine against and 60 abstentions, including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Egypt, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, South Africa and Sri Lanka and the Central Asian states. Those who abstained included SCO and BRICS member states.

The resolution was titled "Safety and security of nuclear facilities of Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant". The resolution demanded that Russia "immediately cease its aggression against Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders".



Key members of Global South including Saudi, UAE, Brazil & 5 Africa abstain from resolution

NDA Govt Gives Stability & Investors Know it: PM

Modi inaugurates, lays foundation stones of projects worth ₹29,000 cr in Mumbai

Our Political Bureau

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday credited the record rise in India's stock markets to small and big investors being "happy" as they know that "only the NDA government can give stability".

"Small and big investors in the country have welcomed our third

term; they know that only the NDA government can give stability. Immediately after taking over as the Prime Minister, I had said that we would work three times faster, and today we are seeing it happen," Modi said. He was speaking at the NESCO centre in Goregaon after laying the foundation stone and unveiling a slew of infrastructure projects in Mumbai and neighbouring regions

worth Rs 29,000 crore. Modi attacked the opposition saying his government had created record employment in the country and attributed a Reserve Bank of India report to say that in the last three to four years, 80 million new jobs were created.

"In spite of the Covid pandemic, we have created a record number of jobs. RBI has given a detailed report that in

the last three to four years, 80 million new jobs have been created. The figures have shut the mouths of those spreading false narratives on the issue of employment," Modi said.

"Those spreading false narratives are enemies of investment, infrastructure and India's development. Their entire policy is to betray the youth and to stop employment and now they are being exposed," he added.

Modi's Visit Shows Our Relations With Russia Not Legacy Holdout

We will cooperate with Russia for our interests as we would others; Modi's Ukraine peace message consistent with India's position since hostilities began in 2022



DB VENKATESH VARMA

That Prime Minister Narendra Modi's much-anticipated and watched journey to Moscow, his first bilateral visit following the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, was opportune and overdue tells something about India-Russia ties. PM Modi and President Vladimir Putin, two of the most experienced world leaders, discussed bilateral relations and the fast-changing worldwide landscape in a five-hour conversation. If personal connection between the leaders is the diplomatic measure, the first day was successful. PM Modi received Russia's highest

civilian decoration, the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle.

PM Modi's last visit to Russia, for the 2019 Vladivostok summit, signalled India's participation in the Russian Far East to establish fresh leverage to counter Chinese dominance in North East Asia. A maritime corridor from Vladivostok to Chennai to connect to the Northern Sea route was meant to protect India's Arctic energy and commodity interests. Five years later, with little implementation, the 2024 summit revisited several 2019 projects.

New consulates in Yekaterinburg and Kazan will strengthen India's diplomatic ties in Russia's key regions. Bilateral relations will regain momentum only if projects in energy, fertilisers, and commodities are converted into long-term agreements. Doing so will require private sector involvement. Both governments should encourage enterprises that are willing to break new ground in investment and joint ventures, building leverage in fast-changing



global marketplaces that lasts longer than trade partners.

If trusted geographies and resilient supply chains in the energy, petrochemicals, nuclear and other high-tech fields are important, Russia fits the bill to a T. Russia should view India, one of the

fastest-growing large economies, as a safe investment with guaranteed returns. Given the extended lifespan of Russian-made military equipment in India, defence will remain a factor. Both sides would need to focus on new types of collaboration, such as joint re-

search and production in India for the Indian market and third-country exports, like the AK 203 assault rifle. As India deepens its space collaboration with the US and others, the best days may be over. Fear of US secondary sanctions has slowed banking, financial, and shipping connectivity. Just as we need new activism to take advantage of the market space vacated by European companies in Russia, and we need to engage with the US on the main policy of its Russia sanctions policy—China buys Russian markets and industries cheaply.

PM Modi's message of peace with respect to the Ukraine conflict, conveyed to President Putin, could not have come as a surprise to the Russian side. It is consistent with India's position since hostilities began in 2022. Indian peace stance adds an important dimension to global conversations on the Ukraine conflict, which will eventually end in a negotiated

settlement, partly on the battlefield and partly as a deal between Russia and the US on Ukraine's future, the fate that sadly awaits all proxies when wars end.

The Moscow visit is also significant for India's standing amongst the big powers. For Russia, India's relationship is valuable since it has no conflicting basic interests and has significant power potential. For India, at a time when consolidating our strategic cooperation with the US is more complex than expected, the Russia connection provides strategic comfort. However, if India and Russia want their strategic partnership to last, they need at least a couple of new bilateral mega projects of long-term significance.

For this to happen, Russia would

need to stop considering China as the only partner for large projects and start seeing India as an option to a Chinese-dominated Asia. India should dispel the Indo-American discourse's presumption of 'good behaviour' that makes us look over our shoulders when dealing with Russia, which our strategic community has unfortunately allowed to flourish. Russia and the US must stop their increasing conflict, which creates global disequilibrium that helps China. A quick negotiated resolution to the Ukraine crisis would help restore global balance. This was the strategic essence of the PM's peace message.

PM Modi's Moscow visit showed the world that our relations with Russia are not a legacy holdout. Going forward we will work with Russia for our interests just as we would with others. The PM's visit signalled India's entry into the big league of global geopolitics.

(The writer served as India's ambassador to Russia from 2018-21)

ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES

BSNL's CMD Denied Extension, DoT's Robert Ravi to Take Charge

Govt's move follows chargesheet filed against PK Purwar and some other senior BSNL officials

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The government has named senior telecom department official Robert Jerard Ravi as chairman and managing director (CMD) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam (BSNL), along with Mahanagar Telephone Nigam (MTNL) and Bharat Broadband Network (BBNL) for a period of six months.

According to an order issued by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, the government has decided to not extend the tenure of Pravin Kumar Purwar, current CMD of BSNL beyond July 14.

"Entrustment of additional charge of the post of CMD, BSNL along with CMD, MTNL and CMD, BBNL to Ravi A Robert Jerard, D.D.G (SR), DoT for a period of six months w.e.f. July 15, 2024, till January 14, 2025, or until further orders, whichever is earlier," the order said.

During the period of holding additional charge, Ravi will not be entitled to any additional remuneration, the order added. Purwar was also handling the additional charge of MTNL and BBNL. His five-year tenure ends on July 14.

Although Purwar had one more year still left in his service in BSNL, the Centre decided against giving him an extension as CMD, following which he retired at the end of his tenure, said officials familiar with the

matter. The government has not given a reason for not extending Purwar's tenure.

People cited above said the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has filed a chargesheet against Purwar and some other senior BSNL officials. The step followed an inquiry, which showed certain alleged irregularities in the conduct of some BSNL officials.

"The chargesheet is being sent to the central vigilance commission (CVC) for vetting and after getting a go-ahead from there, action may be taken against the officials," one of the persons said.

"Since an inquiry is ongoing, the government might have thought of bringing a new person on board to steer the company," a second official said. DoT, BSNL and Purwar didn't respond to ET's queries.

Purwar's five-year tenure was marked by the state-run firm being awarded three revival packages by the government. Under him, the company was working towards the rollout of 4G services utilising indigenous technology developed by CDoT and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

Delay in launching 4G services is being cited as the main reason for the state-run telco rapidly losing ground to private telcos. BSNL has been trying to launch 4G since 2019.

However, a tender for 4G upgradation was cancelled by BSNL in 2020 following a government mandate to select only local companies.



Robert Jerard Ravi

Piyush Goyal to Meet G7 Trade Ministers in Italy Next Week



FILE PHOTO

India to showcase immense trade and investment opportunities it offers during meeting

PTI

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will hold bilateral meetings at Reggio Calabria in Italy next week with his counterparts from G7 nations and discuss ways to boost trade and investments, an official statement said on Saturday.

Reggio Calabria is a coastal city in southern Italy. The Group of Seven (G7) industrialised nations are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US. These meetings aim to explore new avenues for trade and investment, resolve bilateral trade issues, and deepen economic cooperation, it said.

Goyal will hold these deliberations on the sidelines of the outreach session of the G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting (July 16-17) in Italy.

"During this visit, Goyal will also engage in bilateral meetings with the trade ministers of G7 countries and other participating nations in the outreach session, reinforcing India's commitment to global trade and investment partnerships," the commerce and industry ministry said.

It added that India would showcase the immense trade and investment opportunities that it offers. In the outreach session, the minister will highlight India's vision for global trade and supply chain resilience, reforms and initiatives undertaken by India to enhance the ease of doing business and attract foreign investments.

The visit also assumes significance as India is negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) with the UK and the European Union (EU). Talks for a trade agreement between India and Canada were halted last year due to political issues. Over half a dozen rounds of talks have been held between the countries on the trade pact so far.

Adani Eyes Port in Vietnam to Tap Trade Opportunities

APSEZ secures an 'in-principle' nod from Vietnamese govt for a greenfield project

Billionaire Gautam Adani plans to build a port in Vietnam as the Indian conglomerate seeks to develop infrastructure overseas to tap opportunities from increasing trade.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has secured an "in-principle approval from the Vietnamese government" for a greenfield development in Da Nang, Karan Adani, managing director of the company, said in an interview. The project, which will have container terminals and multiple berths to handle various types of cargo, is at an early stage of planning and the total investment required hasn't been finalised yet, he said.

This will be the fourth international port asset for the Adani group after Haifa in Israel, Colombo in Sri Lanka and the Port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. On Friday, Adani's new mega port in southern India saw the arrival of its



ISTOCK

maiden mother ship and the company wants to accelerate the expansion of the facility in a bid to grab a bigger share of the international maritime trade that's currently dominated by China.

"The idea is to make India a maritime hub," Karan, the elder son of Gautam Adani, said. "We are targeting countries that are high on manufacturing or high on population, which will lead to high consumption. We are focusing on export volumes in these countries."

Adani Ports is the largest port operator in India. It gets about 5% of its total volume from international operations and wants to increase the ratio to 10% by 2030, Karan Adani said.

The company is looking at opportunities in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Africa, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Vietnam and Cambodia as these are regions where trade is coming to India, he said. **Bloomberg**

Eldeco Infra Buys Land Parcel Nr Noida Airport

Realtor pays ₹96.8 crore for 20k sq mtr area

Faizan Haidar

New Delhi: Eldeco Infrastructure and Properties has acquired a 20,000-square metre land parcel near the upcoming Noida International Airport for ₹96.86 crore through an auction held by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority.

Meanwhile, another Noida-based developer, Purvanchal Projects, has purchased a 40,000 square metre land parcel for ₹149.47 crore.

Both land parcels are designated for group housing projects, with plans for high-rise developments.

In addition, Eldeco Infrastructure and Properties recently acquired 2.7 acres of land for Rs 110 crore and 8.5 acres for ₹165 crore in Gurgaon's Sector 80 through an auction conducted by the Haryana State Industrial & Infrastructure Development Corporation.

The company has been on a land acquisition spree lately, securing a



FILE PHOTO

36,000 square metre plot in Greater Noida West for a 750,000 sq ft residential development with an investment of ₹250 crore, as well as 14.5-acre and 18-acre parcels in Sonapat for plotted and villa development.

The company recently secured ₹350 crore in funding from HDFC Capital Advisors Limited for their joint platform that executes residential projects across the country.

This is the platform's third round of funding in as many years, bringing its corpus to ₹850 crore, with an expectation to generate ₹8,000 crore from 17 projects.

DMart's Q1 Net Profit Up 17.5% at ₹774 crore

PTI

New Delhi: Avenue Supermarkets, which owns and operates the retail chain D-Mart, on Saturday reported an increase of 17.4% in consolidated net profit at ₹773.7 crore for the June quarter, helped by improvement in sales from general merchandise and apparels.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹658.7 crore in the April-June period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Avenue Supermarkets.

Its revenue from operations was up 18.6% to ₹14,069 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹11,865.4 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal.

Avenue Supermarkets' total expenses in the June quarter were up 18.6% to ₹13,056.6 crore.

Avenue Supermarkets' total income was ₹14,110.7 crore, up 18.5% in the June quarter.

The A-List: Blessings and Wedding Wows



(From left) Devansh and Avarna Jain, Sanjiv and Preeti Goenka, along with Shashwat Goenka



Nita and Mukesh Ambani welcome Shankaracharya of Dwarka Peeth



Ajay and Swati Piramal



Shah Rukh Khan with Gauri Khan and Suhana



John Kerry with Tony and Cherie Blair



Kumar Mangalam Birla with Neerja Birla, Advaitesha (extreme left), Aryaman and Ananya



Amitabh Bachchan with Nikhil Nanda and Navya Naveli Nanda



Adar Poonawalla with Natasha, Cyrus and Darius



Salman Khan



Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde



Kim Kardashian



Alia Bhatt

PIONEERING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

How Satya Nadella Became Tech's Steely Eyed AI Gambler

Nadella sees AI boom as an all-in moment for his co and rest of tech industry. He aims to make sure Microsoft, which was slow to dot-com boom and whiffed on smartphones, dominates this new technology

Seattle: Earlier this year, Satya Nadella hammered out a deal that surprised everyone outside his inner circle at Microsoft.

Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, had his eyes on a Silicon Valley startup called Inflection AI. The company's CEO, Mustafa Suleyman, was one of the founders of the pioneering artificial intelligence company DeepMind. He had raised more than \$1.5 billion in funding and hired top researchers for his new company, but he had a not-so-great reputation as a boss. Inflection also didn't seem to make any money.

Microsoft still shelled out more than \$650 million to license Inflection's technology, hired most of its staff and put Suleyman in charge of a more than \$12 billion chunk of Microsoft's business. It was, to put it mildly, risky.



ON A MISSION Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella

Risky bets on AI have become a habit for Nadella. Over the past five years, he has committed to investing \$13 billion in another aggressive young company called OpenAI, even though it hadn't yet made much money. And he told all of his lieutenants to find ways to build AI into Microsoft's many products, even though the technology didn't always work correctly.

But he had his reasons. Though it could be years before he knows if any of this truly pays off, Nadella sees the AI boom as an all-in moment for his company and the rest of the tech industry. He aims to make sure that Microsoft, which was slow to the dot-com boom and whiffed on smartphones, dominates this new technology.

Microsoft's investors like the gamble so far. The tens of billions Nadella has spent on AI over the past two years has pushed Microsoft's worth up 70% to more than \$3.3 trillion, making Microsoft one of three companies (with chipmaker Nvidia, another AI star, and Apple) vying to be the most valuable publicly traded company in the world.

The notion that Nadella is a steely eyed risk-taker with a grand vision for AI can be hard to square with his history as a low-key boss in an industry full of corner-office peacocks. A 56-year-old engineer who came up through the ranks of Microsoft to become its CEO about a decade ago, Nadella was credited with restoring Microsoft's luster after a yearslong slump under his more famous predecessor, Steve Ballmer.

Nadella still speaks like a passionate engineer. In a recent interview with The New York Times that was conducted over Microsoft's Teams videoconferencing software, he lit up as he described investing in OpenAI because "it's not like a Hadoop workload." He said he chose to infuse OpenAI's technology into Microsoft's Bing search engine first because "the graph traversal is sort of graph unification." (Translation: OpenAI had complex computing needs, and AI would eventually tie Bing to other programs.)

Nadella rid Microsoft of many of Ballmer's mistakes, including writing off most of the disastrous \$8 billion acquisition of phone maker Nokia in 2014. He put Microsoft software on Apple iPads and iPhones, which Ballmer was loath to do. He embraced the concept of freely available open-source software, which Ballmer called a cancer, and he made Microsoft's cloud computing business into a powerhouse.

But Nadella was still "looking to make some big bets, and he was exploring all kinds of different things," said Penny Pritzker, the former U.S. commerce secretary who is on Microsoft's board of directors. He paid \$69 billion to acquire video game publisher Activision Blizzard, despite considerable resistance from antitrust regulators around the world, and made a stumbling detour into the metaverse. Then AI came along. It was, Nadella believed, the game changer he had been looking for.

In early December, Nadella met with Suleyman for hours in his office at Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington. He also vetted Suleyman with Reid Hoffman, a Microsoft board member and venture capitalist who was a co-founder of Inflection, according to two people with knowledge of the conversations. In February, he secretly dined with Suleyman on Microsoft's campus.

Less than a month later, Nadella finalized the deal. He flew down to Silicon Valley, where Inflection was based, and waited in the wings of a Hyatt hotel conference room, as Suleyman told his employees that they were being absorbed into Microsoft, according to a person in the room. As stunned employees processed the news, one of the braver hands asked how Inflection's ambition would not be snuffed out by Microsoft's bureaucracy.

The real question, Nadella retorted, was: "Do you have the courage to actually induce hunger in someone of our scale and size?" "That's like, why am I at Microsoft after 32 years?" he said. "Because I have the hunger to make sure this company stays relevant." **NYT**

The tens of billions Nadella has spent on AI over the past two years has pushed Microsoft's worth up 70% to more than \$3.3 trillion



Indulekha Aravind

The data on data centres in India converges on one point: there is no stopping its growth. This January, Adani Enterprises signed an agreement with the Maharashtra government for a ₹50,000 crore investment to set up a 1 gigawatt (GW) data centre, apart from ₹5,000 crore for a 100 megawatt (MW) data centre in Telangana. Tech giant Meta, ET reported in April, would open its first data centre in India on a 10-acre campus in Chennai. Meanwhile, Google's parent company Alphabet is reported to be in talks for its first captive data centre in India in Navimumbai. A report by ratings agency CareEdge in May estimates that India would double its data centre capacity from under 1 GW now to 2 GW by 2026, while another by Cushman & Wakefield in June forecasts that by 2028, India will have thrice the installed capacity, at 3.29 GW.

India is still a minnow compared with US, the market leader in data centres. Northern Virginia alone has a capacity of over 8 GW, says Vivek Dahiya, head-data centre advisory team (Asia Pacific), Cushman & Wakefield. But as data centres in India grow in number and capacity, it is likely that it will have to grapple with an important question: will its cities, which are already water-stressed, be able to support this scorching pace of growth of a sector considered to be water-guzzling?

Across the world, it's a challenge playing out in regions facing a water shortage, exacerbated by drought, resulting in friction with local communities in areas like Arizona in the US and Santiago in Chile. Experts in water conservation say this is a question India's policymakers might want to address early on, with the sector poised for exponential growth.

ON THE RISE

Data centres are variously described as the beating heart of the digital economy, its reservoir and backbone. Apart from housing an organisation's IT applications and services, it is also where all the data we generate when we use various applications, whether making a digital payment or binge-watching a show, are stored and processed.

"Over the last 10-20 years, colocation firms, which are service providers, have come up, renting out rack space (in data centres), similar to WeWork (renting out cubicles)," says Dahiya.

Then there are the hyperscalers, or the large cloud data centres, operated by the likes of Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud Platform. The rise of generative AI is further supercharging the growth of the segment. India may have been late to the data

Thirst Trap

Data must be the new oil, but data centres need water. What will be their impact on our water-stressed cities? Can alternative cooling technologies mitigate the problem?

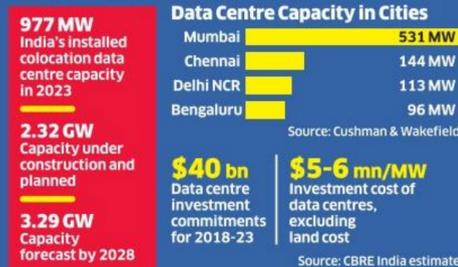
The data centre industry in India has taken into account that water will be scarce. They are moving in the direction of air-cooled chillers"
VIPIN JAIN,
president-data centre operations, CtrIS Datacenters



centre party but it's now catching up, thanks to a host of catalysts—from the increasing amount of data consumed by India's estimated 800 million internet users to growing digitisation across the board to recent legislation in the form of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act and the requirement to store and process data locally. "At one point, countries which had good airports and ports prospered. In today's digital economy, countries which have the right data centre infrastructure—which will be the heart of the digital economy—will gain from that economically," says Vipin Jain, president-data centre operations, CtrIS Datacenters, which is planning to increase capacity 2.25 times in the next three years.

COOL DOWN

For this segment in a hurry, the question of sustainable water use arises due to two reasons: one, its need, typically, for large quantities of water for cooling (apart from as a source of power) because of the heat generated in its functioning. It is critical for a data centre to maintain a temperature of around 22°C. "Data centres consume significant amounts of water for cooling purposes. Systems like evaporative cooling and chiller plants require continuous water supply to maintain optimal server temperatures," says Praveen Ramamurthy, chair, Interdisciplinary Centre for Water Research, Indian Institute of Science (IISc). In water-based chillers, the conventional mode of cooling, water is cooled in a central chiller and circulated through pipes and coils to cool the air in the data centre.

**DATA ON DATA CENTRES****Water Table**

Two, data centres in India are located in some of its biggest cities, most of which already face water supply issues, as this summer underlined. Over half the data centres are located in Mumbai and 15-18% in Chennai due to the proximity to submarine cable connectivity. Mumbai also has a significant presence of banking and finance sectors that are important customers of data centres. In a 2021 report by industry body Nasscom, titled, "India: The Next Data Center Hub", water shortage was cited as a high-risk factor for data centres in Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi, and moderate-to-high risk for Mumbai.

The amount of water a data centre needs for cooling depends on the cooling technology used, its location, efficiency measures and capacity. A commonly cited figure from a 2021 study published in *Nature* estimated that a 1 MW data centre that reduces air temperature by cooling water "can use around 25.5 million litres of water per year", or 68,600 litres a day. This would mean a 20 MW data centre would need about 1.37 million litres a day if it uses a water-intensive cooling solution. Meanwhile, daily water supply is just over 1,000 million litres in Chennai, about 1,500 million litres in Bengaluru and close to 3,000 million litres in

Mumbai, with demand pegged higher. "India's water issues arise from the fact that we have 18% of global population but only 4% of water resources," says Sahana Goswami, senior manager-water resilience team, WRI India, adding that about 80% of water we use is in the agriculture sector. In the case of water use by data centres, it will be better to pre-empt a crisis, she says.

Adding to the issue is the fact that there's no national policy on water use by data centres. The only mention of water in a 2020 draft national policy is a line saying that states shall be encouraged to set up data centre parks with necessary infrastructure, including

availability of water. "It's very important we get good policy around data centres because it's critical infrastructure," says Goswami.

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES

Stakeholders say data centres in India have factored in the shortage of water in Indian cities. For instance, multinational digital infrastructure company Equinix, which entered the Indian market in 2020, uses only air-cooled chillers here instead of water-cooled chillers. "We decided to use air-cooled chillers because India has had years of drought and if we cannot get water, data centres face the risk of not being able to operate at all. Our customers cannot run that risk," says Manoj Paul, MD, Equinix India.

CtrIS says it is also increasingly using air-cooled chillers. "The data centre industry in India has taken into account the fact that water will be scarce. Considering this, data centres here are

In India, we do not deploy water-based chillers. India has had years of drought and if we cannot get water, data centres face the risk of not being able to operate at all, which is a huge risk"
MANOJ PAUL, MD,
Equinix India



moving in the direction of air-cooled chillers," says Jain.

Web Werks, which has announced facilities in Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra in a joint venture with global operator Iron Mountain, also says it uses cooling solutions that minimise water consumption. "Our data centres use air-cooled chillers for cooling, which sustain water utilisation over a longer period of time," says Nikhil Rathi, founder and CEO, Web Werks-Iron Mountain Data Centers.

Anand Kulkarni, director, CRISIL Ratings, says its initial analysis suggests that the type of data centres in India "don't use much water-cooled

chillers, hence the use of water is limited".

To cut down on the use of water and power for cooling and increase efficiency, companies globally are exploring different technologies, such as liquid immersion cooling. Here, the server is dipped in a tank filled with a dielectric coolant (which does not conduct electricity) that absorbs and dissipates the heat generated.

With increased deployment of AI, where processing requirements are much higher and the heat load will proportionally go up, the use case for liquid cooling would strengthen.

However, Sachin Bhalla, VP-secure power, Greater India, Schneider Electric, which provides cooling solutions to data centres, says the switch to liquid cooling would not be simple. "If you want to bring about liquid cooling, you have to change the type of servers you use. The end customer who is actually taking up data centres has to take the call whether they want to opt for it and order the hardware and advise the data centre builder accordingly."

Still, companies are experimenting. "Immersion cooling is the most efficient but also the most difficult to implement. There are risks because you are talking of liquid in the data hall. But we are trying it out in 100 centres across the globe," says Paul. "We have started designing our new data centres, which can be fully cooled with liquid cooling. We are also working on liquid cooling solutions with some of our existing clients," says Jain.

Microsoft, which has three data centres in India, did not comment specifically on water use when contacted, only saying, "Microsoft started its data centre journey in India in 2015 and has three data centres, one each in Mumbai, Pune, and Chennai. It plans to open a fourth in Hyderabad that is expected to be operational by 2025." In its 2024 environmental sustainability report, the company said one area where it was not on track was in "Reducing water use and replenishing more water than we consume in our datacenter operations". But the report also mentioned that its new data centres are "designed and optimized to support AI workloads and will consume zero water for cooling".

While the expansion of data centres in India brings significant technological and economic benefits, it is crucial to balance this growth with sustainable water management practices, says Ramamurthy. Locating data centres in areas with ample water supply or access to non-potable water sources, developing and enforcing regulations to ensure sustainable water usage practices, including mandatory recycling and limits on groundwater extraction, he says, can help manage the water footprint of data centres and alleviate any pressure on water-stressed cities.

indulekha.aravind@timesofindia.com

Nupur Amarnath

Nora Ephron wrote in *I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman*: "Oh, how I regret not having worn a bikini for the entire year I was 26. If anyone young is reading this, go, right this minute, put on a bikini, and don't take it off until you're 34." A lot of Indian women—26 years and above—seem to have taken Ephron's advice. The appeal goes beyond the bikini. And it's women who are taking the plunge.

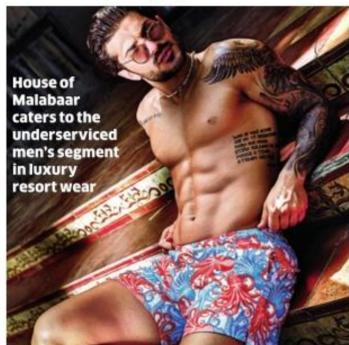
Delhi-based executive Deborah Soares says most swimwear brands disappointed her until she found Spirit Animal, a brand cofounded by Kriteesha Jain, which felt fresh and was size inclusive as well. The suit suited Soares, who just likes to chill by the pool.

That the swimsuit wearer—and the segment—is coming of age in India is evident from a simple scroll on Instagram. According to industry figures, India's swimwear market is pegged at ₹200 crore and is growing at 15-20% year-on-year. Earlier, if you wanted to buy a swimsuit, you would have to wait till you travelled abroad, beg your NRI relatives, or get it from the grey market. But the times have changed.

And who better to understand it than Shivan Bhatia and Narresh Kukreja? They were the first to notice this niche segment in 2010 when they founded their luxury holiday brand Shivan & Narresh (S&N). Kukreja, founder & creative director, says when they started, there was no competition in this category. He says, "The customers have matured now. They have a keen understanding of their preferences, trends and body types. Unlike in 2010, they no longer require ex-

Suitable Swimsuits

India's swimwear segment is buoyant, thanks to beach holidays, social media rush and body positivity push



House of Malabaar caters to the underserved men's segment in luxury resort wear

High-quality swimwear can be made at lower price points if designers with small minimum orders can access good factories, but that isn't the case in India"
ANJALI PATEL MEHTA,
founder, Verandah



tensive guidance." Designer Saaksha Bhat of Saaksha and Kinni, who has recently dipped her toes in the category, says swimwear could be the next big thing in India. "With so many Indians travelling frequently and especially to tropical islands, we are seeing a big demand for swimwear," she says. Indians are indeed



Studio Verandah uses sustainable fabric ecomyl for swimwear

Sustainability is gaining traction, given swimwear's polyester-based nature. But swimwear differs from fast fashion in utility; swimsuits are worn repeatedly due to their fit and functionality"
NARRESH KUKREJA,
founder & creative director, Shivan & Narresh



Today, our bikinis are selling faster than one-piece. The demand exceeds all other designs by 80%. And it's as much in XL and XXL segments"
RIDHI PATEL,
founder, Cocopalms Swimwear

travelling like never before. Hotel Association of India president KB Kachru said in May that they estimated a 40% surge in summer travel. Search data from Airbnb in March found that beachfront, followed by amazing views and pools are the most searched-for categories by Indian guests. South Goa featured as a top search as well.

DIVING IN

Travel wardrobe is the driving force behind the demand for swimwear in India. In fact, after Covid, many entrepreneurs jumped right into the swimwear segment.

Like Rishi Baweja and Bhaavya Bhatnagar, both 35, of Nadi Nadi. Baweja and Bhatnagar, who had done finance and fashion design, respectively, started the swim and resort wear brand in 2021. The growth in online shopping during the pandemic was a push. When Bhatnagar couldn't get her swimsuits from Net-a-Porter delivered in time for a Goa trip, they decided to make some at their workshop in Shahpur Jat in Delhi, and Nadi Nadi was born. With a starting

India's Swimwear Market ₹200 crore
Source: Reports

price of ₹6,000 for a swimsuit and ₹2,500 for separates, Nadi Nadi's repeat customer rate is over 50%.

Says Baweja, "One of the pluses is that we give customisation options. From the beginning, we have been growing at 60-70% year-on-year." They are open to event-specific opportunities like bachelorettes, girls trips and destination weddings.

Krishna Kilachand, cofounder of Mumbai-based House of Malabaar, wouldn't mind some of that wedding pie. The 37-year-old and his business partner Shalin Shah started their luxury resort wear line in November 2023 to cater to the underserved men's segment. With shorts starting at ₹4,500 and fabrics from South Korea and Japan, Kilachand says men's swimwear was a conscious decision. "Around the pandemic, stayouts and swimming as an activity grew and men wanted to indulge and buy multiple pairs of swimwear." He says that men as shoppers were a revelation as many go for colours, even neon.

Men are looking for options beyond the regular, agrees Ridhi Patel of Kochi-based Cocopalms Swimwear. The 41-year-old started it in 2022. "Very few brands cater to men as there's not enough profit margin as men are price-conscious," she says. Patel, who also offers surf suits for men and women, says European brands don't cater to the big hips and busts common in India. Even in

menswear, you don't get really big sizes. One of the surprising trends she noticed was bikinis selling out quickly, including XL and XXL sizes.

Aakriti Grover, founder of Flirtatious, is not surprised. "The market size has grown tremendously due to social media and people owning their natural bodies online."

Simran Choudhary, CEO of Ordinaire, says, "Catering to a wide variety of body shapes and sizes is critical." The designs that are doing well include high-waist bikini bottoms for heavy hips, ruching to accentuate a smaller one and maillots for a sculpted look.

Says Kukreja: "There is a growing body awareness and body positivity among consumers. Everyone is inclined to experiment, seeking uniqueness."

A factor driving growth, says Grover, is better accessibility to fabrics. One of most common is ecomyl, made entirely from waste such as industrial discards, fabric scraps and fishing nets. Sustainability is a trend in this segment.

Anjali Patel Mehta of luxury resort wear label Verandah launched swimwear in 2019. She uses ecomyl. Mehta, a swimmer, says, "Swimwear is a technical garment made to last many wears in water." She says most factories cater to large brands which leaves independent designers crafting swim that is often seen as fashion and doubles up as bodysuits. Verandah's swim is manufactured in small batches in a women-run factory in Italy. Meanwhile, Siddharth Mahajan, CEO & director of S&N, is not worried about the diverse landscape of brands. "This diversity expands the market segment significantly. As more people embrace travel and indulge in holidays, there's a natural increase in demand for such products," he says. The wave is just rising—they need to ride it now.

nupuramarnath@timesofindia.com

Let's Football!

(But Is That Really Our Goal?)

Each time there's an international football tournament like the World Cup or Euro, the old question crops up: when will India...? A look at India's inability to play the Beautiful Game—and what can be done

Indrajit Hazra

On July 1, the smart, suave, knowledgeable, passionate, lovable—and sleep-deprived—followers of top-notch international football across the length and breadth of this well-populated, cricket-junkieland were agog discussing the previous night's two Euro group matches.

Jude Bellingham's 95th minute goal—and England's lacklustre performance against Slovenia—was discussed threadbare as if it was Gareth Southgate's waistcoat. Also hogging the Monday tika-chatter was Spain's impressive win against Georgia, Rodri's performance especially garnering rave reviews from those who know that the "j" in "La Roja" is pronounced as an "h".

The same day, FC Barcelona stopped all its football academies across Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Pune. Without giving any reason for its departure, the club stated on its website a fortnight before that the families of all the kids in its programme—which started operations in 2010 allowing "thousands of youngsters... [to] learn to play football in the Barça style and with the club's values"—had been informed of operations being shut down.

Titled, "Thank you for everything, India", the notice sounded more like "So long, and thanks for all the fish." It seemed like 14 years since arrival, the aliens had left finding no intelligent footballing life in the vast playground of Planet India.

And there we have it, that old chestnut coming up again—apologetically, with embarrassing astoundment, not even with a mention in the Vedas to find solace of past Indic grandeur—every time there's an international football tournament like the Euro or World Cup: When will India be a "world-class" footballing nation? For the more statistically minded, the variant: Why can't a nation of 1.4 billion rustle up 22 footballers who can compete on the world stage?

First, the convoluted answer: That's like asking why India, with the world's largest population, has been unable to make ravioli a top food choice like momos. It's the variation of the Infinite Monkey Theorem: if you let a monkey hit the keys of a typewriter at random an infinite number of times, eventually the monkey will type out the entire works of Shakespeare. With an almost infinite 1.4 billion, will our Messi or Zidane eventually arrive? No.

And then the short answer: Because India doesn't really want to be a football biggie at all. Our Taylor Swift is cricket.

Granted, the world's most popular sport is not our most popular sport—despite the interest you may hear of from footie pockets in Kerala, Goa, the north-eastern states and Bengal, and Delhiites who still reminisce about Marshal Tito.

But a collective "meh" shouldn't stop anyone from pursuing excellence. After all, it's not as if shooting is a popular sport in India—outside Bulandshahr; at any rate. Yet, that never stopped Abhinav Bindra from winning World and Olympic titles for the men's 10 m air rifle event. This isn't

politics where everything is boiled and served soft as "mandate".

The problem is that while being an excellent football spectating nation (even if 1% of 1.4 billion follow football, that's 14 million football watchers, the population of Kevin de Bruyne-Jérémy Doku's Belgium), India's football enthusiasts have shown feeble signs that they want to belong to an excellent football playing nation. The consumer/spectator is king here, not the practitioner.

Currently No. 124 (among 210 countries) in the Fifa men's ranking and No. 64 (among 119 countries) in the women's ranking, India may have a critical mass that wants it to be good enough to play in the World Cup. But it's woefully short of a critical mass of footballing performance. And if wishes were talent, beggars would boot up.

GROUND UNREALITY

Joy Bhattacharjya enjoys his football on telly as much as the third next man. But unlike the third next man, he was director, Fifa Under-17 World Cup, which India hosted in 2017. Which, as coincidences go, pitted England against Spain in the final at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata, where there was a 16-year-old lad by the name of Phil Foden who scored the winning goal after England came back from a 0-2 deficit.

For Bhattacharjya, almost everything about the future of Indian football boils down to investing in kids. "Just see the number of competitive games they play abroad," he says. Our youngsters barely get to play enough Junior/Little League matches. Fact: In Europe and Latin

America, kids play at least 70-90 competitive games a year. In India, the same age group plays 20-30 games. Don't just do the math, do the muscle memory, too.

Bhattacharjya, who was also KKR team director and remains an East Bengal supporter, tells me how things did start picking up during the early days of Praful Patel's tenure as All India Football Federation (AIFF) president from 2009. But after he faced political misfortunes, things slid back to where they had been.



The problem is that while being an excellent football spectating nation, India's football enthusiasts have shown feeble signs that they want to belong to an excellent football playing nation

Ground Unreality:

For quality football to be played, the young must be trained over a stretch of crucial years. But the ecosystem is not there. Can be tackled by bona fide football academies and little/youth leagues

Pitch Upwards, Not Head Downwards:

Football needs to grow organically, not top-down like in showpieces such as ISL. This means ensuring young players' footballing trajectories are not broken midway

Empty Midfield:

Football is played by mofussil kids or rich kids—the middle-classes have yet to get genuinely interested in it. Grit and hard work is better hardwired in kids from tougher backgrounds

Football Pvt Ltd:

Progress is being made, slowly, despite state interest, not because of it. Private players, more mindful of results and ROI, are making inroads, some beyond the gratuitous CSR spend on sports

Set the Pitch:

Evidence suggests that the Northeast is a genuine incubator. This means building infrastructure, an ecosystem and a full pathway for the young talent there

FIELD VISION



WHERE INDIA STANDS

No. 124 among 210 countries in Fifa men's ranking

No. 64 among 119 countries in Fifa women's ranking

Manu P Toms & Vikas Dandekar

For Dr Vinod Abichandani, it wasn't any different from the rest of us. "Unnerving days with terrible news all around." That is how he recalls the pandemic. It was 2020, and Abichandani was stuck at home. A diabetologist with an MD and an MSc in endocrinology from the University of South Wales, UK, he has had a busy practice in Ahmedabad for four decades. During Covid-19, he used the free time to revive his academic interests. That is when he came across arguments that green jackfruit has anti-diabetic properties. He had many patients with diabetes, including one at home—his wife.

She suffered from diabetes, hypothyroidism, fatty liver and obesity. Abichandani ordered a pack of green jackfruit flour from Jackfruit365, which landed at his door in a couple of days.

By then Jackfruit365 founder James Joseph was popularising his green jackfruit flour as a product that can help "control blood sugar levels". He had won the India government's national startup award in the food processing category. He had also presented a paper in the American Diabetes Association (ADA), and got it published in the international scientific journal *Nature*.

From early 2021, Abichandani and wife started taking two tablespoons of jackfruit powder daily. They would mix it with their chapatti flour, butter milk and lassi. He saw a substantial reduction in his wife's blood sugar, cholesterol, triglycerides and body weight. Her fatty liver condition also reversed considerably.

Abichandani claims her grade-2 fatty liver became almost normal. From 66 IU, it had come down to 46 IU (below 45

Jack of All Foods?

A recent study has shown green jackfruit flour could fight fatty liver and liver cancer in mice. A clinical trial is needed to throw light on its efficacy in humans

international unit per litre in liver function test is considered normal range). Abichandani became an ambassador of green jackfruit.

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) has an estimated prevalence among 38% adults in India. It is a major public health concern. Earlier this week, Dr Jitendra Singh, minister of state for science and technology, said, "As an endocrinologist myself, I understand the nuances of fatty liver and its relationship with diabetes and other metabolic disorders."

Doctors have been looking for effective dietary and nutraceutical interventions in the absence of easily available drugs. It was only in April that Rezdiffra, the first drug for the treatment of NAFLD to receive FDA approval, became available in the US. Saroglitazar, a drug that is available in the Indian market, does not have FDA approval.

It is in this context that outcomes like Abichandani's experience came to the attention of a section of the scientific community. But the Indian health sector, which is in constant battle with folk-cure practices and quackery, approaches such food-based solutions with a high degree of scepticism. To

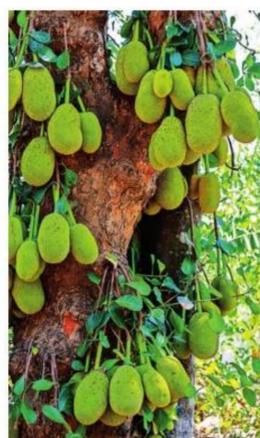
earn widespread acceptance, such nutraceutical interventions require very strong evidence and scientific explanation. A small section of doctors, scientists and researchers thought that clinically proving the efficacy of green jackfruit in fighting fatty liver was worthy a try.

MICE FROM HYDERABAD

Sixty mice were transported from HyLasco Bio in Hyderabad to a biochemical laboratory at JSS Medical College in Mysuru in December 2022. HyLasco is a licensee of US-headquartered Charles River, which provides a host of laboratory services to pharmaceutical industry, especially animals for research. The diet of the mice was developed and prepared by Research Diet in the US and imported by Labex Corporation.

It was Divya P Kumar, an associate professor at JSS, who brought these mice to Mysuru. Kumar, a PhD from Virginia Commonwealth University, had conducted extensive biomedical research in fatty liver in the US and India.

She wanted to find whether what Abichandani saw in his patients could



be replicated in the noise-free, pre-clinical model where the mice would be free of any confounding factors. Thirty mice were given a normal chow diet or generic grain/cereal diet used for rodent studies. The other 30 were given a "western diet"—a high-fat diet with a lot of sugar. In layperson's terms, it was a McDonald's diet, equivalent to a fat burger and a large glass of Coke. It contained 41% sugar and 21% fat. By the 12th week, the weight of the mice that

were fed the western diet was double that of their counterparts.

From the 12th week, half of the mice in these two groups were given a small amount of green jackfruit flour as part of their daily diet.

The mice were divided into four groups—mice that were fed normal diet; mice that were fed normal diet and green jackfruit flour; mice that were fed western diet and green jackfruit flour; and mice that were fed western diet and wheat.

At the end of the 24th week, there wasn't any difference between the first two groups—the mice that were fed normal diet and those fed normal diet mixed with green jackfruit flour. But among the western diet-fed mice—the third and fourth groups—the ones that had 5% jackfruit in their food showed significantly lower body weight than the other group. Their average body weight was about 8 gm lower than that of the mice that did not have green jackfruit in their menu. The average liver weight was 3.04 gm for mice consuming western diet and jackfruit, as against 3.72 gm for those having western diet and wheat.

Kumar also conducted a study on the effect of jackfruit on liver tumour for a section of the mice. She found that among the western diet-fed mice, the ones that did not have jackfruit flour had six times more liver tumours than their jackfruit-eating counterparts.

"Jackfruit significantly reduced body weight, liver injury, insulin resistance, and alleviated obesity, steatosis, inflammation, fibrosis and tumour development in western-diet mice compared to placebo groups," according to a paper on the study produced by Kumar and her team of researchers.

Placebo group here refers to mice that were fed western diet and wheat.

Their study found that jackfruit activated AMPK, an enzyme that reduces fat storage, and inhibited MAPK, an enzyme that is responsible for cellular proliferation or tumour. Green jackfruit reduced fatty liver and stopped liver tumour in Kumar's mice study. "Our findings present strong evidence of jackfruit's therapeutic potential in the prevention of MASH (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis or advanced fatty liver disease) and MASH-HCC (hepatocellular carcinoma or liver cancer)."

Joseph, who partnered with Kumar for the nearly two-year-long study, presented the paper at the American Society for Nutrition conference in Chicago last week. It is undergoing peer-review now. Four years ago, Joseph had presented the paper on the efficacy of green jackfruit in medical nutrition therapy in diabetes treatment at the ADA conference. The paper was based on a randomised clinical trial on 40 diabetes patients at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Srikakulam.

Chennai-based diabetologist and medical scientist Dr V Mohan, too, had highlighted jackfruit's efficacy in diabetes management.

CAN IT BE REPLICATED IN HUMANS?

However, the wider medical community is still waiting and watching. Mumbai-based diabetologist Dr Debashis Das says these are early days to establish the therapeutic efficacy of green jackfruit powder in the management of diabetes. "Current available research data shows green jackfruit powder may have a potential

Talent is there but the ecosystem, the culture is missing. Far too many times, the journey is broken for young, prospective footballers"

KISHORE TAID, cofounder-CEO, Talisman

Jetlagged, after returning from a work trip from England, he sums up the Indian footballing story of "broken journeys" Taid had earlier mentioned. Not too long ago, Chatterjee booked an Urban Company massage session. While chatting with the very deft masseur, the two started talking football.

"The chap knew a lot," recalls Chatterjee. "He knew the players, the coach, he was talking in very knowledgeable specifics. I asked him how he knew all this." It turned out the masseur had played first division football, also with players now in the national side.

"What happened?" he asked the young man. It turns out that during a game in a particularly rough football pitch, his knee gave in. "He was out. He couldn't afford better treatment. He recovered, but never got back to play professionally. Football's loss, Urban Company's gain," Chatterjee notes wryly.

PITCH UPWARDS

India, if serious, needs better infrastructure, and what Taid calls an "entire pathway". Which is where private

interest in the sport comes in. It is making a slow, but palpable difference.

"By design, politically elected football administrators have motives that may not be aligned to improving standards," says Taid with the understatement of a false nine. "Private players, especially those serious about where their CSR money is going, bypass this old structure. They are result-oriented." He knows, having partnered with the likes of fantasy sports startup Dream Sports and IDFC Bank.

Taid, an IIT computer science alumnus and ex-Morgan Stanley investment banker, adds that without tech it is impossible to manage scale. Scale is what scouting for footballing talent needs. EnJogo, a full-stack football learning app of which Taid is also CEO, is one entry point.

FIRST SET THE PITCH, THEN PLAY

What Indian football continues to face now is a classic chicken-and-egg problem. Everyone who knows the landscape knows there is talent. But how does one bring it to the football boot camp? And how can you ensure that you will provide the support that is needed to hone such a talent over time? A 15-16-year-old usually vanishes into the void like a spelling bee champion who never makes it as an accomplished writer when he is 30.

Talent is distributed quite evenly like pixie dust. But the grit, determination and hard work that is required to attain a certain level in football—in any sport—is better hardwired in kids from tougher backgrounds. For them, playing football isn't just a hobby, or a trip to the San Siro, but a career option.

Chatterjee narrates another story about a boy from Mizoram who was good enough to qualify for a camp. At the time of confirmation, when Chatterjee's team tried to get in touch with him, he was nowhere to be found. Then, just in time, he showed up. "He had got up on the top of a bus, travelled 10 hours, took a train to Kolkata and showed up. He didn't speak a word of Hindi, Bengali or English. Ultimately, the wife of a member of the club the camp was held in, who was from Mizoram, did the translating."

Unlike individual sports, football is a trickier sport for sponsors to put their money where their RoIs are. "Control over, say, a Bhavani Devi is far easier than over national football team," says Bhattacharjya, referring to the fencer who qualified for the 2020 Olympics and who is supported by GoSports Foundation via the Rahul Dravid Athlete Mentorship Programme.

But despite the gloom and doom—and seasonal interest in a Viksit Footballing Bharat that disappears faster than you can say, "Let's Football!"—things are moving. "More 2 to 8, than 0 to 100," in Chatterjee's frustrated words. Even at the grassroots level, the old "kick-and-run" football is giving way to a passing game, says Taid.

The goal may still be very far away. But we could be on the way to taking the ball out of our own net. Till then, let's spectate on tonight's Spain-England Euro final.

indrajit.hazra@timesofindia.com

WHY SO MUCH BUZZ OVER A BUDGET EXERCISE, KOLA VERI DI?

In our age of hype, GoI's annual stocktaking and 'dreaming' ceremony is the original hype-fest - in reality, it's more about spreading 'feel-good' vibes than any economic joys

DATA CRUNCHER



ATANU BISWAS

It's that time of the year again when everyone works themselves up to a froth to get excited about the annual budget. What is essentially a government announcement is converted into a mighty show of intent. Short of sringas being blown to declare a royal missive across the kingdom, much goes into making b-day a B-Day.

'Don't be so critical... actually it's a good budget if you don't view it from the economic angle' read the caption of a June 1980 'You Said It' cartoon by RK Laxman. That, too,

was a Lok Sabha election year, and finance minister R Venkataraman proposed new tax and some relief measures.

He disclosed that there would be no 'significantly adverse impact' on the economy as a result of leaving a huge deficit unattended. The budget increased the I-T exemption level and made items like TV, controlled cloth, toothpaste, and soap cheaper, giving the common man - and Laxman's Mrs Common Man - reason to rejoice without looking at the 'economic angle'.

Those 'thrilling days' are long gone. Undoubtedly, GST has had the biggest impact on the budget. Since most commodities are under GST, the budget's greatest quick thrill has disappeared. However, the structure and exemptions of I-T are relevant to the common man and remain within the budgetary domain. There are several pre-budget speculations every year regarding potential tax cuts, most of which don't materialise.

But are a few thousand rupees more in additional tax exemptions worth the hullabaloo? Well, such relief induces more of a feel-



BUZZZET, RAJASTHAN SHOWS THE WAY

good factor than any meaningful economic assistance for individuals.

GoI presents suggested goals, proposed financial objectives, and policy updates for that year. Why on earth should that be of such interest? Why so much buzz, KolaVeri Di? Is there still much mystery hidden inside the red briefcase - now a red pouch - that the FM opens in Parliament as if to say, 'And the Best Picture Oscar goes to...?' Indeed, there are times when a budget's gross impact might be extraordinary due to

some landmark decisions and policy announcements. The nation has had its share of revolutionary budgets.

► 1986 VP Singh's CSB (Carrot'n'Stick Budget) marked the beginning of the end of licence raj and established MODVAT, the precursor of GST.

► 1991 Manmohan Singh's EB (Epochal Budget) marking the official start of liberalisation. It reduced excise and customs duties and was the blow for licence raj.

► 1997 P Chidambaram's DB (Dream Bud-

Short of sringas being blown to declare a royal missive, much goes into making b-day a B-Day

get, where, to recover black money, GoI announced a voluntary disclosure of income scheme. The maximum marginal income rate was also slashed.

► 2000 Yashwant Sinha's MB (Millennium Budget) laid out a roadmap for the growth of the IT sector.

While Nirmala Sitharaman's 2021 Budget is widely referred to as the O-in-a-C (Once-in-a-Century) budget due to its enhanced focus on privatisation, robust tax collections, and investment in infra and healthcare, her 2022 budget had the real opportunity to go down in history. Although we'll have to wait a few more years to evaluate its effectiveness, that 'crypto budget' had the potential to usher in a new era in the digital economy, whose seed was sown by Arun Jaitley in his 2018 budget.

Only some budgets have the potential to be revolutionary. None of the five Manmohan Singh budgets or eight Chidambaram bud-

gets that followed their 1991 and 1997 ones matched in their impact.

Overall, an FM has a unique opportunity to spread the passport to 'dream' via the country's economy and lifestyle through a budget exercise. Rarely does an FM succeed in utilising that opportunity. A budget outlining a policy for AI or semiconductor manufacturing later this month could be considered 'historic'.

So, yes, a budget goes well beyond your and my personal I-T calculations, or the sudden increase in price of umbrellas or diamond rings (still outside GST's purview). A budget may well become society's 'open sesame' mantra. However, all the buzz around it is almost always about inconsequential things made to look very consequential. In our age of hype, the budget exercise is the big daddy of them all.

The writer is professor of statistics, Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata

FILM FATALE



ANNA MM VETTICAD

Couching Questions, Not-So-Hidden Misogynist Dragons

Poser you won't hear: do you demand women sleep with you to bag your films?

It's the best of times, it's the worst of times, it's the age of women protagonists, it's the age of misogyny in media coverage of women artists.

The Western press is currently in a tizzy over the love between a plus-sized woman (Nicola Coughlan) and a slim man (Luke Newton) in the streaming series Bridgerton. Forbes described it as a 'mixed-weight romance,' a term I have never seen applied to the decades of American TV shows featuring thin women and tubby men as couples. Others have openly mocked Coughlan. Meanwhile, Newsweek wandered in from the Stone Age to denounce Taylor Swift for being 'unmarried and childless' at 34.

As fossilised as these opinion pieces are, they pale in comparison with the Indian YouTuber who insulted actor Hannah Reji Koshy to her face during promotions for the Malayalam film DNA co-starring Ashkar Saudan.

Anchor: Does one get opportunities in cinema by sleeping around?

Ashkar, who was also present, responded with irritation. The anchor shushed him. Her query was for Hannah, she said. Words were exchanged. She went into attack mode. 'Hannah, have you slept around to get roles?' she asked.

The humiliating question elicited a furious reaction from Hannah. The anchor yelled, accusing her of endorsing male domination by allowing Ashkar to reply repeatedly. Hannah walked out. So did he.

Film PR has plumbed such abysmal depths that at first, as I gather from social media chatter, viewers assumed the fight had been staged for publicity with the assent of all parties involved, and that a friendly Part 2 would follow. Instead, the interview was taken down. Next came a bizarre explainer-cum-'apology' video from the anchor claiming she was 'triggered' by Hannah's initial silence because she herself had acting dreams that she abandoned after being propositioned in the film industry.

That was her justification for badgering a woman actor instead of predators.

The targeting of Coughlan, Swift and Hannah are reminders that conservatives worldwide view women in entertainment as fair game. The fracas with Hannah is also a lesson in how never to conduct an interview.

Examining sensitive topics in an interview calls for humaneness, intelligence and maturity on the part of the interviewer. An actor who has not caused public harm cannot be interrogated in the way a corrupt politician or unscrupulous industrialist should be. A question about sexual harassment cannot be articulated in the same tone to a probable survivor as it should be to an abuser. Though hearing from women about unwanted sexual advances by men at work could help us understand power equations in a profession, such issues must be broached with sensitivity.

The discourse around the casting couch is largely centred around women who allegedly 'slept their way to the top', rather than male bosses who encourage or demand sexual favours from subordinates or get violent. To ask a woman if she has given in to such demands to further her career scrapes the bottom of the barrel of victim blaming.

Film personalities are routinely quizzed about the 'casting couch', while political and corporate bosses are rarely asked about their organisations' sexual harassment policies. Irrespective of the field, these questions are almost always directed at women, the YouTuber's aggression towards Hannah being an extreme example of this convention. Interviewers, thus, burden women with the task of speaking for what is primarily male conduct. They also perpetuate a misconception that men are never victims.

Now let us talk about the power equation within the interview under scrutiny. Hannah is an award-winning actor and a rising star. It's safe to bet that this YouTuber is unlikely to have demeaned a senior woman star in the same fashion. And, of course, no anchor would dare to randomly ask any man: do you demand that women sleep with you before they are cast in your films? Perhaps, this should be called mixed-weight interviewing.

The writer is author of *The Adventures of an Intrepid Film Critic*

TOO OLD TO ROCK'N'ROLL, AND YET...

We're witnessing the first generation of old pop-rock stars - this means redefining our idea of stars more than of age

RED HERRING



INDRAJIT HAZRA

Young newspaper readers, and tall pygmies. As you may have gathered over the last few weeks, age has been quite the topic of conversation between intermittent fasting. On one end of the age spectrum, there's been this growing clamour from over-70 Democrats that 81-yr-old Joe Biden remove himself from the US presidential race because his tactical act of zoning out during the first Joe vs Don debate didn't quite get sponsors hitting the polka floor.

Then, more recently, we had 16-yr-old Spaniard in the works, Lamine Yamal, who turned a gerontic 17 yesterday. On Wednesday at the Euro, he wowed old, young, and chartered accountants who were born aged 40, not just with his right-left sway and then evaporating right foot curler into the French net, but also with his general demeanour that would make any fixed deposit mature faster.

But in all this talk of old and young age, I realised that the folks caught in a tight time warp are many pop and rock stars of a certain vintage. We are witnessing the first generation of aged youth icons.

There was a time when pop-rock's pri-

mary job was to extol youthfulness. In the early days of rock'n'roll, the likes of Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Bill Haley, Elvis created a rift - the generation gap - between young people and their older variants. The USP of this tidal force was to accentuate this rift, play up one's chronological rawness and take a stab at age. Ageism was prescribed rage against the ancien régime.

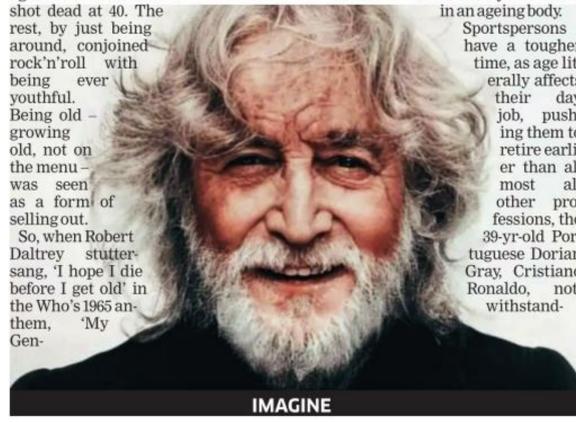
In the pop cultural universe, dead-at-42 Elvis' hips never needed replacing. Chuck Berry, who passed away in 2017, aged 90, was frankly believed to have died as a legend in the B&W age. John Lennon was shot dead at 40. The rest, by just being around, conjoined rock'n'roll with being ever youthful. Being old - growing old - not on the menu - was seen as a form of selling out.

So, when Robert Daltrey stutter-sang, 'I hope I die before I get old' in the Who's 1965 anthem, 'My Gen-

eration', he really meant it. Now aged 80, I'd bet my George Solti-Vienna Philharmonic recording of Mozart's Requiem that he avoids listening to it.

And ay, there's the rub - the Baby Boomer generation now has the Old Brown Shoe (old people will get this Beatles reference) on the other foot. And not all of them are taking to age kindly. Seeing Madonna - of 'Like a Virgin' fame - at the non-Biden-able age of 65 look, post-botox and other cosmetic conflagrations, like a wax mannequin in a heatwave is not body-shaming. It's recognising someone in thrall of the cult of youth while in an ageing body.

Sportspersons have a tougher time, as age literally affects their day job, pushing them to retire earlier than almost all other professions, the 39-yr-old Portuguese Dorian Gray, Cristiano Ronaldo, notwithstanding.



IMAGINE

Because they are the first ones whose bodies tell them, 'Boss... chronology samjhiye.'

'It's better to burn out, than to fade away,' sang the now-78-yr-old Neil Young. The likes of Kurt Cobain, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Amy Winehouse - members of the infamous '27 club,' an informal list of artists and celebrities noted for their high-risk lifestyles who died at 27 - did indeed burn out, rather than take the long road paved with cellular degradation that most of us have taken, or will take.

At the disjointed core of it all is the old person desperately trying to stay young. An 80-yr-old-Keith Richards now looking like an 180-yr-old turtle is far more natural to behold than the paunch-ridden, eye-bagged boomers looping on Classic Rock, and behaving the way they think they look, and vice versa. Instead of hoodwinking time, they give it a Grand Guignol spotlight.

As Ian Anderson wryly predicted in the 1976 Jethro Tull song:

'The old rocker' wore his hair too long
Wore his trouser cuffs too tight
Unfashionable to the end
Drank his ale too tight
Death's head belt buckle, yesterday's dreams
The transport caf, prophet of doom
Ringing no change in his double-sewn seams
In his post-war-babe gloom
Now he's too old to rock and roll
But he's too 'young to die.'

At the tender age of 53, I know I'm not kidding.

indrajit.hazra@timesofindia.com

Taste Currywurst & Defeat In a Berlin Biergarten

Watching the Spain-Germany Euro QF among Germans is a nice, calm revelation

NO FILTER



RUCHIR JOSHI

Germany had been sailing through the Euro Championships, with only one team more imperious than them - the Spanish. Unfortunately, the draw meant they couldn't meet each other in the final. So a QF meeting had to do.

From the morning you could see everyone and everything sporting the German tricolour, kids wearing Die Mannschaft kits. One German friend booked us a table in a restaurant-cum-biergarten where we had a prime view of the huge screen. 'Please get there early!' he had said. And sure enough, he was already there protecting our group's table when I reached.

Under the awning of the beautiful gravel courtyard, the other tables behind us quickly filled up. When Germans want to feel good they eat the abominable currywurst. Sure enough, two people at our table order a plate each.

Sampling it off their plates, I concede to myself that this isn't the worst currywurst I've had. The French fries are blamelessly

good, helpless accomplices in a crime not of their making. The slices of sausage a.k.a. wurst also bear a smaller share of the culpability. What are they to do if some cook - after West Berlin chef Hertha Heuwer invented the dish in 1949 - wants to inundate them in a 'curry souse,' a kind of red-brown ooze that usually tastes of tomato, onions and uncooked industrial garam masala?

The sauce here was better than at other places. The masala had been cooked in, and the sausages were of good quality.

The game began, the football expectedly of very high quality. The crowd in the garden was partisan, but not crudely so. Every now and then when a Spaniard did something good, they went, 'Bbboaff!' as if to say, 'Look at the power of what we are up against!'

The wine at our table went down nicely, surrounded by a forest of rising and falling beer glasses. As the second half began, I needed to explore the facilities. So, I went inside the almost empty restaurant. The place was a typical Berlin hybrid.

The crowd was partisan, but not crudely so. When a Spaniard did something good, they went, 'Bbboaff!'



DURING BETTER TIMES

There was a very German menu with the beer-garden vibe outside. The inside was an old-style jazz and blues venue, the walls covered with photos and posters of great musicians.

A small stage had a couple of guys warming up, tuning their guitars and testing their drums, oblivious to the commentary and chatter coming through the open doors. I head back outside when there's a huge crash of sound. 'How'd he do that with the drums?' I think. But then my brain powers back up.

'Bbooaaff!' 'Aber Nein!' 'Scheisse!' 'Olmo! Nein!' I get to the table through a blast of upbeat dependency that only German fans can produce when their team goes one down with 39 minutes still to play. Dani Olmo has scored the opener for Spain and the Germans respond like an exploded ball-bearing.

The pressure builds, the educated, reasonably middle-class viewers loosen their throats, glasses shatter, the commentators suddenly start inserting English phrases in their quickened commentary: 'Very quick and clever, genau!' 'Ja, safety first, ja' and pointing out details like 'Joselu... in Stuttgart geboren'.

As regular time winded down and defeat became a possibility, the crowd went quiet. We were suddenly watching with an added soundtrack: 'Baby please don't go!' wailed the singer from inside, 'You know I looove you so!'

It seemed Joshua Kimmich and Florian Grill hear the song through the screen and combine to snatch and equalise in the 89th minute.

More wine comes. The garden is now swimming in confidence. But alas, alas and alas. It's Spain's Mikel Merino who has the last word, leaping up and spreading into a Spiderman creature before snapping a header into goal.

NO OFFENCE Morparia



ET Sunday Crossword 0072

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9				10			
11				12			
13			14		15	16	17
18							22
19				20	21		
23		24			25	26	
27							28
29							
30							31

- ACROSS**
- Grasping figures, miners are back with note (8)
 - Small fruit, say, that's delivered after dinner? (6)
 - Harbour barrier won't upset prosperous place (4,4)
 - Caravanner's device that may work loose at brow? (6)
 - Bachelor has thrown party (4)
 - Last course suits a boy around Rugby (5,5)
 - Fleet Street's into pure fantasy but staunch here (8,5)
 - Means to spread rumours in ex-president's paper? (4,9)
 - Milk suppliers' barriers protect ruined friary (5,5)
 - Recess in church, perhaps eastern part (4)
 - Clearly show evidence of French not being essential (6)
 - Don's away undergoing surgery at present (8)
 - Salad ingredient also includes meat but no energy (6)
 - Grandfather clock? (3,5)
- DOWN**
- Rich men, Poles, with a shilling between them (6)
 - Ties up tracts of open countryside (5)
 - Pests that constitute group after 9 (4)
 - Approaching sign for visitors in hospital? (7)
 - Professionals earn money in concerts (5)
 - She and I'll maybe collect media and art decoration (9)
 - In Darwin's study he tried resolving story finally (8)
 - Last platform in India that is held by British Rail (4)
 - Try Hampshire river (4)
 - Black mood upset Miss Prism when rector left for Spain (9)
 - The flower of our estate (3)
 - E.g. Hamlet's quiet son (4)
 - Law-abiding - i.e. don't be criminal (8)
 - Foal injured cob (4)
 - Oral problem? Stick lubricant over blackhead (7)
 - It may detect source of smoke in church, say (6)
 - It's powered by wind, variable 8 in Germany (5)
 - Air in church shakes lamps (5)
 - Lure 50% of bass with it (4)
 - 24 Yacht, 26 Psalm, 27 Ball, 21 Gunboat, 22 Sensor, 17 Bed, 18 Obedience, 16 Urge, 15 Unpleasant, 11 Biter, 7 Endless, 8 Hierarchy, 11 Biter, 3 Rats, 4 Toward, 6 Forms, 10 Noddy, 1 Noddy, 2 Moods, 20 Toward, 21 Moods, 13 Rats, 25 Rats, 29 Present (8)
 - 13 Last course suits a boy around Rugby (5,5)
 - 15 Fleet Street's into pure fantasy but staunch here (8,5)
 - 19 Means to spread rumours in ex-president's paper? (4,9)
 - 23 Milk suppliers' barriers protect ruined friary (5,5)
 - 25 Recess in church, perhaps eastern part (4)
 - 28 Clearly show evidence of French not being essential (6)
 - 29 Don's away undergoing surgery at present (8)
 - 30 Salad ingredient also includes meat but no energy (6)
 - 31 Grandfather clock? (3,5)



Caesar Salad: It's Turning 100!

The menu classic has a birth date? You bet! On July 4, the salad hit the big 1-0-0. The salad was an impromptu creation from Italian immigrant Caesar Cardini at his restaurant in Tijuana, Mexico, in 1924 for a crowd of hungry Californians escaping Prohibition. Cardini tossed together Romaine leaves, garlic oil, Worcestershire sauce, lemons, eggs, and Parmesan cheese. Voila, a star was born.

But why all the fuss? Unlike other vintage dishes from the early 20th century, Caesar salad remains a favourite. About 35% of US restaurants have it on the menu, and nearly 43 mn bottles of Caesar dressing were sold last year alone.



GETTY IMAGES

Ooh. So how are they celebrating the milestone birthday? Tijuana's marking the milestone with a three-day food and wine festival and a statue of Cardini himself. Caesar's - an elegant restaurant Cardini opened in Tijuana a few years after the salad was born - says it still makes as many as 300 Caesar salads each day.

Any tasty twists? The origins of the salad are hotly contested. Some say it was actually the creation of Livio Santini's mother, one of Cardini's chefs and a fellow Italian immigrant. Others believe Cardini's brother Alex invented it, using limes and anchovy paste. Alex's version, known as 'Aviator's Salad,' was reportedly served to airmen from a San Diego base.

So, what happened to Cardini's legacy? After Prohibition ended, business in Tijuana took a hit, prompting Caesar Cardini to move his family to Los Angeles in 1935. There, they started bottling their famous Caesar dressing at home, eventually founding Caesar Cardini Foods Inc. In 1956, after Caesar's death, his daughter Rosa took over the company, expanding the line to include 17 other dressings. In 1996, T Marzetti acquired Cardini Foods and continues to sell Caesar Cardini's brand dressings today.

Text: Team ET Sunday

0072

©The Daily Mail

'Strawberry', Reasoning Tech by OpenAI, in Development

ChatGPT maker OpenAI is working on a novel approach to its artificial intelligence models in a project code-named "Strawberry," according to a person familiar with the matter and internal documentation reviewed by Reuters.



As per an internal document, the project could deliver advanced reasoning capabilities.

The project, details of which have not been previously reported, comes as the Microsoft-backed startup races to show that the types of models it offers are capable of delivering advanced reasoning capabilities.

Teams inside OpenAI are working on Strawberry, according to a copy of a recent internal OpenAI document seen by Reuters in May this year.

Reuters could not ascertain the precise date of the document, which details a plan for how OpenAI intends to use Strawberry to perform research.

The source described the plan to Reuters as a work in progress. The news agency could not establish how close Strawberry is to being publicly available. Reuters

NO CONFIRMATION whether Deif, Salama dead or alive; Hamas says attack 'unprecedented' Israeli Strike Targeting 2 Hamas Leaders Kills 90, Injures 300

Israel targeted Mohammed Deif and Rafia Salama, two of the alleged masterminds behind the October 7 attacks, in a deadly air strike in the Khan Younis area of Gaza, according to an Israeli official.

At least 90 people died and another 300 were injured in the attack, according to the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza.

Military chief Deif ranks second only to Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' top leader in Gaza; Salama is the commander of Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade.

The official, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly, couldn't confirm whether Deif and Salama were injured or killed in the strike early Saturday morning.

On its X account, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said "two senior Hamas terrorists and additional terrorists" had hidden among civilians in the area. It didn't give the names of the Hamas operatives.

DISPLACED PEOPLE TARGETED

Witnesses said that the air strikes targeted a building in the Mawasi area and surrounding tent camps west of Khan Younis, in the southern part of the Gaza strip, where displaced Palestinians have taken



Palestinian women mourning over the shrouded bodies of three children killed in an Israeli bombing in the central Gaza Strip AFP

shelter following IDF operations in Rafah and other parts of the strip.

Separately, Yoav Gallant, Israeli defense minister, said he held an operational situation assessment with the IDF Chief of the General Staff and director of the ISA (Shin Bet) on Saturday.

Local media reported that Israel

has stepped up alertness in case of retaliation from Hamas or Iran-backed Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. The Israeli official said that the IDF struck a fenced, open area that was a Hamas-run compound, in which Deif and Salama were believed to be located.

The strike carried out based on high-quality intelligence gathered



Local media reported that Israel has stepped up vigil in case of retaliation from Hamas or Hezbollah

by the IDF and ISA that aimed to target militants alone, the official said.

IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari said the location of the compound "demonstrates Hamas' cynical use of the civilian population. They have used the humanitarian area to hide but we attacked what we knew was a Hamas compound in this area and that alone."

HAMAS DENIES CLAIM

Hamas denied Israel's claims that it was targeting group leaders. The militant group called the strike an "unprecedented and dangerous escalation".

Israel launched a punishing war against Hamas in Gaza following the October 7 attacks on southern Israel in which almost 1,200 people killed and 250 abducted - 120 of whom are still being held in Gaza.

Hamas, which does not differentiate between civilians and militants, says that over 38,000 people were killed in the war. Bloomberg

Iran President-elect Eyes 'Constructive Relations' with West

Calls for getting nation 'out of its isolation'

Iran's president-elect Masoud Pezeshkian said he looks forward to improved relations with European nations, even though he accused them of reneging on commitments to mitigate the impact of US sanctions. Pezeshkian won a runoff election against ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili last week.

The 69-year-old has called for "constructive relations" with Western countries to "get Iran out of its isolation", and favours reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and global powers.

The United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018, reimposing sanctions, which led Iran to gradually reduce its commitment to the terms of the deal. The agreement aimed to curb nuclear activity, which Tehran maintains is for peaceful purposes.

ARTICLE IN ENGLISH DAILY

In an article published last Friday in the English daily *Tehran Times*, Pezeshkian said that after the US pullout from the 2015 deal, European nations committed to trying to salvage it and mitigate the impact of US sanctions. "European countries have reneged on all these commitments."

"Despite these missteps, I look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries to set our relations on the right path, based on principles of mutual respect and equal footing," he added.

Pezeshkian said the two sides could explore "numerous areas of cooperation" if the Europeans "set aside self-arrogated moral supremacy coupled with manufactured crises that have plagued our relations for so long."

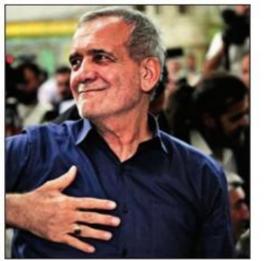
European Union spokeswoman Nabila Massrali had earlier congratulated Pezeshkian on his election, saying the 27-member bloc was "ready to engage with the new government in line with EU policy of critical engagement".

The death of ultraconservative president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash necessitated the July 6 election, which was not due until 2025. In the runoff, Pezeshkian secured about 54% of the vote against Jalili's roughly 44%, with a turnout of just under half of Iran's 61 million electorate.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Pezeshkian is a heart surgeon whose only previous government experience was as health minister about two decades ago.

He is considered a "reformist" in Iran, and was the only candidate from that camp allowed to stand in the election, for which all



Masoud Pezeshkian addressing his supporters in Tehran following the July 6 election AP

European countries have reneged on all these commitments. Despite these missteps, I look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries to set our relations on the right path, based on principles of mutual respect and equal footing

MASOUD PEZESHKIAN Iranian President-elect

contenders were approved by Iran's Guardian Council. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say on all major policy issues in the country.

Under the hard-won 2015 deal, Iran agreed to freeze its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of the crippling international sanctions.

After the US withdrawal and reimposition of sanctions, Iran gradually began reneging on its own commitments to the agreement.

'WON'T RESPOND TO PRESSURE'

"The United States also needs to recognise the reality and understand, once and for all, that Iran does not — and will not — respond to pressure," said Pezeshkian, who is set to be sworn in on July 30.

The parties to the 2015 deal with Iran saw it as the best way to stop the Islamic republic from building a nuclear bomb. European Union members France and Germany were also party to the deal, along with Britain, China and Russia.

The European nations tried to salvage it, but Iran accused them of perceived inaction. Under Raisi, Iran sought improved relations with China and Russia. AFP

After Moscow Hits Out on Espionage Arrests, Oz PM says 'Back Off'

Sydney: Moscow accused Australia of inciting "anti-Russian paranoia" for charging a Russian-born operative with espionage, prompting Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Saturday to tell Moscow to "back off".

The married couple, who hold Australian citizenship, were arrested on charges of working to access material related to Australia's national security, though no significant compromise was identified, the Australian Federal Police said on Friday.

"There is widespread information about the arrest in Brisbane of the spouses Kira and Igor Korolev, who have Russian and Australian citizenship, on charges of attempting to spy for Russia," the Russian embassy in the capital Canberra said in a statement to Russia's RIA state news agency on Friday. "The purpose of this campaign is obvious — to raise a new wave of anti-Russian paranoia here, distract Australians from the numerous failures of the policies of the ruling Labor Party," it said.

Albanese on Saturday said Russia needed to "stop interfering in domestic affairs of other sovereign nations". "Russia can get the message, back off. Russia engages in espionage here and around the world," Albanese said in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland state, according to a transcript.

Australia, one of the largest NATO contributors to Ukraine since Russia's 2022 invasion, announced a A\$250 million (\$170 million) military aid package for Kyiv on Thursday at a NATO summit in Washington.

The embassy requested written information from the Australian authorities on the couple's situation and was considering "appropriate measures of consular assistance", the Australian Broadcasting Corp reported on Saturday. The embassy did not immediately respond to Reuters request for comment.

CUSTODY TILL SEPTEMBER 20

The Korolevs appeared in Brisbane magistrate's court Friday, court filings show, charged with a count each of preparing for an espionage offence, which carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in jail. The charges are the first under laws introduced in 2018. Reuters

Musk Donates to Trump, Tapping Fortune to Swing 2024 US Race

Billionaire Elon Musk has donated to a super political action committee working to elect Donald Trump to the White House, a major gambit by the world's richest person to make his imprint on the US political landscape.

Musk has contributed to a low-profile group called America PAC, according to people familiar with the matter, who requested anonymity to detail his plans. It's unclear how much Musk has given, but the people characterized the figure as a sizable amount. The PAC is next required to disclose its list of donors on July 15.

The move highlights the growing influence of a tech mogul who tops the Bloomberg Billionaires Index with a net worth of \$263.6 billion and his shift from a self-described political independent — who said he preferred to stay out of politics — into a figure who regularly uses his X social-media platform to espouse right-wing views and assail Democrats.

Separately, Ken Griffin and Paul Singer, Republican billionaires who have criticized Trump, met with the former president to discuss donating to his campaign, according to people familiar with the discussions.



Though Elon Musk has yet to publicly endorse a candidate, his decision to open his pocketbook could give the Republicans a major boost Reuters

Neither Singer nor Griffin has made any commitment and no decision has been made about whether to contribute to Trump's reelection, according to sources.

The money injection from Musk comes at a time when Trump has overtaken his rival, President Joe Biden, in fundraising with the help of deep-pocketed Wall Street and corporate donors. Biden's own money raising has fallen off after a calamitous debate that led prominent Democratic donors to put away their checkbooks.

Musk has yet to publicly endorse a candidate in the 2024 race, but his decision to open his pocketbook presents an opportunity for

him to become a financial juggernaut for Republicans. Multiple requests for comment to Musk were not returned. The Trump campaign declined to comment. Chris Guber, America PAC's treasurer, declined to comment.

BIDEN CAMP HITS OUT

"Arrogant billionaires only out for themselves are not what America wants or what America needs," James Singer, a spokesman for the Biden campaign, said in a statement. "Elon knows Trump is a sucker who will sell America out, cutting his taxes while raising taxes on the middle class by \$2,500." Bloomberg

A Matter of Pride

From Page 1

Rampur Signature Reserve had a limited release of 400 bottles and carried a price tag of close to Rs 5 lakh. "Indians today love to travel so they pick up these [Indian] collectors' editions either from travel retail or local markets in the United States, Singapore, the European Union or Dubai," said Sanjeev Banga, president, international business, Radico.

The broader Indian single malt success story is one factor shaping this, with whiskies picking up multiple awards, global accolades, and accounting for over half the category sales last year.

"This is something that's been building up because the category itself is doing very well. And people want to try something special from a particular distillery," said Rakshit N Jagdale, managing director, Amrut Distilleries.

When the company launched its collector's edition Amrut Fusion X, it had initially set aside 60 bottles for Bengaluru.

However, after enquiries started pouring in, the company increased it to 72, cutting down another country's quota.

Jagdale said the company is currently working on what will be India's oldest single malt, a collector's edition Amrut is aiming to launch at the end of the year.

For the well-heeled Indian, these liquids also represent something unique.



Whisky clubs are doing their part in creating awareness about collector's editions

"The affluent community in India is clearly looking at bespoke experiences — the more bespoke and rooted to the native land the proposition is, the higher the value," said Vikram Damodaran, chief innovation officer, Diageo India.

For some, it's also a matter of pride.

"You feel really proud that you get extremely good single malts in India," said Bengaluru-based research scientist and entrepreneur Dr Rakshit Palalochana.

A self-confessed lover of rare whiskies, Dr Palalochana picked up the Godawan 100 collector's edition to add to his single malt collection of which about a fifth is currently Indian.

Meanwhile, the whisky clubs that have come up in different parts of the country are also doing their part in creating awareness about collector's editions

and limited editions.

"These clubs showcase it to members and talk about the product with people who really appreciate the liquid," said Siddhartha Sharma, founder, Piccadilly Distilleries, makers of the Indri single malt.

Its Diwali Collector's Edition last year was priced at a relatively modest Rs 8,500, but it went up to double and triple the price in outlets in Gurgaon. "We released it predominantly for the overseas market with only about 600 bottles for India but that sold out quickly," says Sharma.

JOSTLING FOR PREMIUM TAG

While a lot of the allocation of premium expressions used to primarily be for the international market earlier, with more Indian single malt companies now, there would also be more jostling to occupy that premium cache in the customer's mind, said Vikram Achanta, founder, Tulleeha, a drinks education and consulting firm.

"And a collector's edition gives the rest of their portfolio a certain amount of sheen," Achanta added. The potential, added Damodaran, is promising.

"The size of the HNI (high net-worth individual) population in India is the same as the overall population of the United Kingdom above legal drinking age. That's the market for highly rooted, bespoke experiences."

Policy Uncertainty

From Page 1

Other funding deals include \$50 million raised by Mahindra Last Mile Mobility from the National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF); \$54 million by Lohum, a battery recycling firm, from Singularity VC and other investors; and \$65 million by Battery Smart, an EV battery swapping company, from Leapfrog Investments.

Electric two-wheeler sales in the country increased 21% from a year earlier during January-June 2024 to 527,254 units, according to the government's Vahan portal.

Electric two-wheeler penetration saw a rise of 6% in June as compared to 5% in May.

"Despite the policy uncertainty in the last few months, cumulative sales of electric two-wheelers

Shift to Packaged Products

From Page 1

"While existing companies upped their game in traditional snacks, we saw regional players gradually become national players," said Krishnarao Buddha, senior category head, Parle Products.

and three-wheelers have grown during January-June over the same six-month period last year, driven by greater availability of good quality products that deliver performance, strong word of mouth around TCO (total cost of ownership) specially in the commercial vehicle segment, and ease of charging as two- and three-wheelers do not require special charging infrastructure on a daily basis," said Vasudha Madhavan, founder of Ostara Advisors.

However, electric passenger vehicle (PV) sales fell 13.5% from a year earlier in June, adding to a marginal drop in May. Sales during the January to June period declined 20% to 46,845 vehicles. It marks a sharp reversal for an industry that surged 135% in the first half of 2023.

Falling sales have sparked fears that the Indian market may be following trends in many Western nations where electric car sales are showing signs of slowing down, forcing companies to alter their production schedules and investment strategies.

More than half of electric PV makers reported lower sales in June. To be sure, these are on a very low base and the limited choice and high pricing could be potential sales deterrents.

"We would acknowledge that fleet owners and the commercial vehicle sector have faced challenges around higher upfront costs for EVs as well as finding appropriate sources of financing," said Abhishek Poddar, India country head at Macquarie Group.

Fleet operators are also worried about technology risk and the need to upskill their staff for setting

such as potato chips. Riblon and gathia, sold under brands such as Kurkure, and extruded or puffed snacks, like cheese balls, are the other two. Experts said after the Covid-19 pandemic, consumers have been increasingly buying branded namkeen instead of loose products from bakeries, due to the hygiene factor.

So, the boom in branded namkeen is driven by consumers upgrading, rather than shifting from western snacks.

Haldiram's has a presence in nearly all snacking categories, although it is still skewed towards ethnic. In 2023-24, its snacks sales hit Rs 12,161 crore, up 18% year-on-year. In comparison, PepsiCo's snack sales grew 14% to Rs 7,336 crore, while Gujarat-based Balaji Wafers saw sales of Rs 5,931 crore, an increase of 12% year-on-year.

Unsupported Rating

From Page 1

On July 3, India Ratings downgraded MTNL's unsupported rating to 'IND D' from 'IND B minus/stable'. This is what it would be rated without the Central government's ownership.

Crisil Ratings, too, downgraded MTNL's unsupported rating, bringing it down to 'Crisil D' from 'Crisil B minus'.

"The downgrade in the unsupported rating reflects the delay by the company in servicing debt for June 2024 owing to stretched liquidity," the rating agency said.

The rating factors in the continued deterioration in operating performance and sustenance of weak financial risk profile," Crisil added in its July 5 note.

For the January-March period, the state-owned telecom reported a loss of Rs 817.58 crore, as compared to a loss of Rs 745.78 crore in a year-ago period.

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

From Page 1

The chief operating officer credited the boom in artificial intelligence (AI), among other factors, for the increased participation of women in upskilling. "In the last couple of years, the trend we have seen is that roughly women participation in our programmes has gone up from about 35% or so to 40%-plus," said Simplilearn's Dalal.

There is heightened interest among women in sectors such as banking, IT services, and consulting, he said. Dalal highlighted the importance of keeping up with technological changes. "The only way to navigate and make sure that you have a career trajectory that's getting you to a leadership position is all about being on top of change," he added.

Simplilearn's data on women seeking AI programmes indicates that 69% do so to learn new skills that will help them find a new job, while 27% seek growth or promotion in their current role.

ENROLMENT IN AI PROGRAMMES

Notably, around 30% of women in the 25-35 age group, typically mid-senior level managers, enrol in these programmes. "If there is a glass ceiling that exists, then some of these tools really arm you to break through it," Dalal said on the role of AI and generative AI (genAI) upskilling in overcoming career barriers.

Upgrad's Kumar underscored the motivation behind this trend, noting that "upskilling is often seen as a counter-cyclical phenomenon during economic downturns and typically, the highest enrolment rates occur during specific career stages, such



Heightened interest among women participating in upskilling programmes have been seen in sectors such as banking, IT services, and consulting File photo

as mid-career transitions."

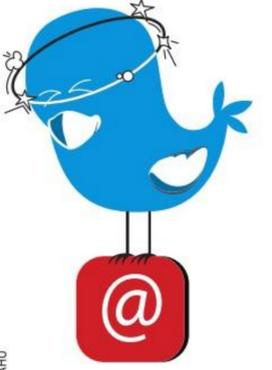
Post-pandemic market conditions have also played a crucial role in this upskilling wave.

Women professionals have been seen either enhancing their skills for stronger career growth or re-entering the workforce through "re-

turnship" programmes.

Upgrad's data reveals that of the 55,000 career transitions recorded in the financial year 2023-24, nearly two-thirds were made by women professionals, further emphasising the significant shift towards continuous learning.

Note Quite There



X's Community Notes was supposed to be an ally in the battle against digital misinformation. But 100 days after its India launch, the feature is yet to establish a solid footing in a diverse country fraught with unique challenges. **Aashish Aryan** takes a closer look at these issues.

To the untrained eye, NNN, which is simply the letter N repeated three times will make no sense. To a select bunch of X users, however, this means 'Notes Not Needed', signifying that the content posted on the platform does not require a fact-check notice as it could be an opinion or commentary. Welcome to the world of X's Community Notes' contributors. This group of disinformation and misinformation-fighting keyboard warriors cross-checks and provides additional context to tweets, images and videos posted on X by following a set of pre-defined guidelines. X's community notes was a pilot project and named 'Birdwatch' at birth on January 25, 2021. For the next 20 months, the feature remained fairly innocuous and flew under the radar.

In November 2022, when Twitter's new owner, the "free speech absolutist" billionaire Elon Musk, renamed it 'Community Notes', the feature roared back to life. Initially available only in the US, the feature has since been expanded to 70 countries, including India.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY NOTES?

The idea of Community Notes, X explains in a blog post, is to "create a better-informed world by empowering people (on X) to collaboratively add context to potentially misleading posts".

Where Community Notes Stands Today

29,000+ Total notes written in 2024 (January to April)
5 hours Average time for notes to appear on a misleading X post

Twitter says content with a community note is likely to be re-shared **61%** less often

Community Notes were **97.5%** accurate while addressing topics about Covid-19 vaccine



Is this note helpful? Yes Somewhat No

What was helpful about it?

Cites high-quality sources

Easy to understand

Directly addresses the post's claim

Provides important context

Neutral or unbiased language

Other

Submit

pay off only in the very long run, experts said.

Consider India, for example. Contributors and writers of Community Notes in the country often argue among themselves, using the feature more as a message board, according to an analysis by ET of the last 100 days.

The bickering gets intense and deeply personal on political content, with each contributor calling the other person "biased".

All these drawbacks notwithstanding, a crowd-sourced fact-checking feature is still the best way forward for social media companies, a fact-checker who works with social media companies told ET.

"We have to work within the set guidelines of the companies we sign up with. That means finding the source of the content, talking directly to the person if s/he is present in a photo or video and then filling in details of why we are making the decision that we are," he said.

Though features such as community notes hold promise, platforms need to be cautious as such tools can be manipulated by long-term coordinated social engineering attacks, Tarunima Prabhakar, co-founder at tech and policy research firm Tattle said.

According to X, the platform now has close to half a million contributors who wrote more than 37,000 notes in 2023. These notes were shown to more than 14 billion times to users across the globe last year.

Experts also believe that the feature will be more useful given that there is no interference from the intermediary either, which was one of the reasons for the eventual downfall of the "misleading media" feature that Twitter had rolled out before the US presidential election in November 2020.

"This (Community Notes) can build trust among users, who may be sceptical of fact-checking done by intermediaries perceived as biased or having an agenda," Arora said.

Empowering people on the internet to add context to potentially misleading posts and fact-checking them, however, is easier said than done, especially in countries with population and digital literacy as diverse as India.

Consider, for example, the happenings of April 4, 2024. About 10 days before the start of the first phase of the general elections to choose the representatives to the 18th Lok Sabha, X quietly launched the Community Notes feature in India.

The feature, which relies on crowdsourcing and volunteers to

fact-check potential misinformation, had been extremely helpful in providing additional context on several election related posts before and during the 2020 US presidential elections. It was hoped that the feature would serve a similar purpose in India.

The timing of the launch in the country, however, was met with suspicion from several quarters. Many "eligible" users complained that they were not being allowed by X to "join" as contributors because of their political leanings.

To be sure, Indian X users qualify

as Community Notes contributors only if they have not had any platform rule violations since January 1, 2023.

Other than that, only users who had joined X on or before October 4 and had a verified phone number from a trusted carrier linked to the X account were eligible.

Within days of the feature being introduced in the country, users also complained that it had already been "hijacked" by followers of a particular political leaning.

Assumptions like these, however, are unfounded misgivings of

Indian users, said Soham De, a researcher at the University of Washington, US.

"Most notes on X are not shown to the general public. Only those that end up receiving enough helpful ratings from diversely opinionated raters are made public — and those are a small minority. Over 90 per cent (of these notes) will never receive enough helpful ratings from a diverse enough crowd," De said.

Since X requires its Community Notes contributors to be accurate, it asks them to cite high-quality

sources and write notes in easy-to-understand unbiased language, no particular party or person can bend the narrative in their favour, he said.

SHARING SPACE

X ranks the contributing volunteers on accuracy, context, neutral language and other parameters, and keeps a dynamic score based on which users are allowed to write notes or just vote to decide if those should be shown to users, a lawyer who works with big tech firms, including X, said.

"Community-driven fact-checking can enhance transparency, as the process is visible and open to scrutiny. This can build trust among users, who may be sceptical of fact-checking done by intermediaries perceived as biased or having an agenda," said Pratishtha Arora, the chief executive officer of Social and Media Matters, a New Delhi-based non-government organisation which works for online safety.

Though X had hoped to decentralise fact-checking by giving the power in the hands of users on the platform, that bet may

The Dangers Keeping India From Winning the Game

Mannat Dora and Aashish Aryan

The year 2023 hit the Indian gaming industry like a never-ending blizzard, akin to a real-life rendition of Murphy's Law — everything that could go wrong, did go wrong.

First up, some states banned real money games (RMG) such as poker to prevent harm to children and young adults. It was followed by a policy flip-flop on permissible and non-permissible games, and finally, the imposition of a 28 per cent goods and services tax on the sector.

Despite these headwinds, however, the sector has managed to dig itself out from the snow, even though a few companies had to shut shop permanently.

Here's a quick look at the current state of the gaming sector in India and what its future looks like:

Projected growth by FY-2025: **₹253 billion**

Total number of games downloaded per year: **9.5 billion**

Total number of gamers: **538 million**

Number of game developers and programmers: **15,000**

Regulatory journey: Which laws were enacted when?

- 1867** Public Gambling Act - A British-era law which was enacted to address the perils of public gambling and to curb the operations of some common gaming houses.
- 2021** Information Technology Rules - Brought in to seek more accountability from online intermediaries such as social media companies and gaming platforms. Required gaming companies to implement stricter age and content control measures.
- 2023** Amendment to IT Rules - Two years later, more changes were introduced to the 2021 executive rules, empowering gaming companies to come together to form self-regulatory boards. However, these SRBs were never formed.

Uncertainties ahead

- Regulatory risks:**
- Lack of clarity on SRBs
 - Retrospective taxation burden
 - Confusion on KYC norms for players
 - Games of skill vs chance debate
- Fraud and IP theft risks:**
- IP infringement leads to substantial risk
 - Legal recourse to protect rights takes long time
 - Players using bots, rigged algorithms in games
 - Risk of money laundering through betting, gambling games
- Behavioural and reputation risks:**
- Players getting addicted due to lure of quick money
 - Impact on self-esteem of players, especially young children
 - Possible bullying, sexism leading to a decline in mental health
 - Negative publicity can impact players' image, reputation, earnings

Yearly share percentage

Real money games
 Non-real money games



Bits & Bytes



GERMANY TO BAN CHINESE GIANTS FROM 5G NETWORK

Germany said it will phase out the use of components from Chinese telecom giants Huawei and ZTE in its 5G networks in the coming years due to national security concerns.

It was the latest move by Berlin to reduce economic reliance on Beijing, that some fear have left it vulnerable, and follows warnings from the European Union.

German officials said their telecom networks must be protected from cyberattacks, calling it an "existential threat". Officials added that they have reached agreements with 5G network operators in the country.

Huawei responded saying there was "no specific evidence" that the technology has "cyber security risks". Beijing's embassy in Berlin also said the move was driven by "groundless accusations".

APPLE SETTLES EU CASE BY OPENING PAYMENT SERVICE TO RIVALS

Apple will for the first time allow

banks, payment services and app developers to use the underlying technology behind Apple Pay to make rival tap-and-go payment services, settling a long-running European Union antitrust investigation.

The settlement stems from an investigation started in 2020 to determine if Apple was abusing its dominant position in the smartphone market to box out rival payment service providers. However, the agreement doesn't apply to Apple Watch, which also has tap-and-go.



US FTC PUNISHES ANONYMOUS MESSAGING APP

The Federal Trade Commission has barred NGL, an anonymous messaging app, from serving users younger than 18, saying the app violated child privacy and consumer protection laws.

NGL was aggressively marketed as a "safe space for teens" with robust moderation practices, but instead, it exposed users to cyber bullying and other harms, the agency said. It also agreed to a \$4.5-million settlement to pay consumers affected by the company's practices. The settlement was jointly reached with the Los Angeles district attorney, who imposed an additional \$500,000 civil penalty on NGL.

In NGL's case, the agency said it found a host of deceptive practices, including sending fake messages that appeared to have come from real people to lure users to the site. It then tricked users into paying for a \$9.99 fee to reveal the identities of the senders.

— Agencies

Source: Grant Thornton & EY Report EGR0W & Pritmus Partners Report
 PICS: AP, REUTERS, GETTY IMAGES

Two Stand-Up Comedies for a Rainy Sunday



EVERYTHING MUST GO

Bathed in moody lighting beneath three grand chandeliers, Hannah Einbinder performs her jokes the way models strike poses. With dramatic pauses and flirtatious flourishes, always alert to the camera.

Einbinder tells us a lot about herself in *Everything Must Go*, her debut special (she has ADHD and is an ex-cheerleader), but her larky comedy doesn't feel confessional. It's not primarily about setups and punchlines either. Her oddball show comes off as a spoof of Hollywood glamour and over-the-top confidence. Directed by Sandy Honig with a visual vocabulary that evokes David Lynch as much as any special, the hour moves between tight close-ups and a long shot that makes the comic look like the inhabitant of a dollhouse.

Her dramatic pauses can adopt the rigid pacing of a movie trailer. But there's something exciting about a young perform-

er operating at her own comic frequency.

BRAVE

After three terrific specials in three years (and a fourth on the way), Ranaan Hershberg is one of the funniest, most prolific comedians working today. His dyspeptic delivery has the cadence of Gilbert Gottfried, but his joke writing evokes the craft of older comedians. In a nice modern update of the old Groucho Marx line about never wanting to be part of a club that would have him as a member, Hershberg says in his new hour, *Brave*: "When someone's into me, I view that as a red flag."

He comes on strong and loud, but can go subtle and wry as well. He has a knack for familiar things and making you look at them in new ways.

Most comics close their sets on broad gags, something risqué or a big act-out. But Hershberg tries a more creative callback, one that makes a sharp point about the art while earning laughs from the blurry territory between truth and fiction.



Pic: AI Generated

The story behind Paal Enger's infamous and incredible 1994 heist of Edvard Munch's masterpiece

Stealing 'The Scream'

The New York Times

Paal Enger, a rising prospect for a Norwegian soccer club who traded a game that he loved for another — art theft — culminating in his infamous 1994 heist of Edvard Munch's masterpiece 'The Scream', died on June 29 in Oslo. He was 57.

Enger, who was born in Oslo, rose from the junior system of Vaalerenga, a five-time champion of Norway's top-level league, now known as Eliteserien, and in 1985, made his debut with the club. But he was no stranger to the world of life outside the law. "I grew up in Tveita... people there don't have much money," he said in an interview last year with the tabloid *The Sun*. "We started doing crime when we were very young and I found it exciting. I carried on because I enjoyed it very much."

'I WANTED MORE'

Graduating from boosting candy to cracking safes and blowing up automated teller machines with neighbourhood friends, he proved a phenom in athletics and crime.

His outlaw alter ego was no secret to his teammates, who noticed that he threw away his tracksuits after every practice rather than wash them, and that he frequently showed up in luxury cars that were far beyond a teenager's budget. "I remember once he popped up with a BMW 735i," one former teammate told *The Athletic*. "He liked to steal expensive cars."

His pursuits beyond the law had him living like a superstar. "I did so much crime in my 20s," he told *The Sun*, "that I had everything — cars, boats, money, the most beautiful women in Oslo. But I wanted more."

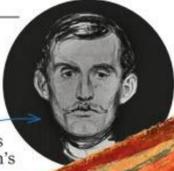
A KINDRED SPIRIT

Specifically, he wanted one of his nation's crown jewels. 'The Scream', which has been called Norway's 'Mona Lisa', is one of the most recognisable — and reproduced — paintings in the world.

Munch, known for haunting expressionist paintings, actually made four versions of 'The Scream', two rendered in paint and two in pastel and crayon. The only one in private hands, an 1895 pastel, sold at an auction in 2012 for nearly \$120 million to financier Leon Black.

Carrying emotional scars from his childhood with a violent stepfather, Enger found a kindred spirit in the agonised howling of the painting's ghostly subject, an expression of personal anguish as well as a broader existential dread.

In 1988, Enger, accompanied by his long-time partner in crime Bjorn Grytdal, slipped through a window at the Munch Museum in Oslo to steal a version of 'The Scream'. But a hitch in their plan led them instead to snatch another Munch masterpiece, 'Love and Pain',



Paal Enger and an accomplice smashed a window of the National Gallery in Oslo, slipped in and within 50 seconds, slipped out with 'The Scream', which at the time was valued at about \$55 million

Pic: Getty Images

also known as 'Vampire'. "The disappointment lasted days," Enger later recalled, "but then it started to become fun." In part, that was because he kept the painting hidden in the ceiling of a pool hall he owned that was frequented by off-duty police officers.

"They didn't know it's hanging just one metre from them," he added. "That was the best feeling. We let them play for free just to have them there." The amusement ended when his accomplice let word slip to a neighbour who was a police informant. Enger spent four years in prison.

'A THOUSAND THANKS'

Even so, his ambition burned. He turned his sights back to his muse and quarry. On February 12, 1994, Norway's attention was focused on the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer.

Enger took advantage of the distraction. He and an accomplice clambered up a ladder outside the National Gallery in Oslo, smashed a window and slipped in — and within 50 seconds, *The Athletic* reported, slipped out with the museum's version of 'The Scream', which at the time was valued at about \$55 million. The thieves left behind the ladder, their wire cutters and a note: "A thousand thanks for your poor security."

OBVIOUS SUSPECT

Enger was an obvious suspect. Still, he knew that the police had nothing on him, so he began taunting them, calling with false leads.

The stymied authorities reached out to Scotland Yard, which dispatched Charles Hill, a detective from the London police's art and antiques unit, to Norway Hill, posing as a representative of the J Paul Getty Museum in California, expressed interest in buying 'The Scream' from an art dealer who was connected to Enger.

Despite misgivings that a museum would shell out for a stolen masterpiece, Enger dispatched Grytdal, one of his accomplices, to pursue a deal. Three months later, police arrested Enger, Grytdal and two others.

In 1996, Enger was sentenced to six years and three months in prison, where he took up painting, taking stylistic inspiration from his artistic hero.

After his release, he established an art career of his own. In 2011, his abstract paintings were exhibited at a gallery in Norway. Still, he did not go clean. In 2015, he was charged with stealing 17 paintings from an Oslo gallery.

But he wasn't wholly averse to acquiring art by legitimate means. In 2001, he bought an unsigned Munch lithograph at auction for about \$3,000.

Leaving the auction house that day, he ran into the former head of security for the National Gallery. "Congratulations," he told Enger. "It's great that you've actually bought a Munch — much better than stealing one."

WEEKEND POSER

Who were the women prophets who guided the Vikings?

The Vikings were fearless warriors, traders and explorers. But few realise their restless spirits were guided by powerful women.

Seers and sorceresses known as 'volvas' played a central role in Norse society and a spotlight is finally being shone on their shadowy influence in a ground-breaking show at Denmark's National Museum.



The volvas were "a kind of female shaman, a seeress, a spy woman", said Peter Pentz, a researcher who helped curate the show. They could "look into the future, fly... and foretell your fortune", he said.

They could summon the gods, according to the sagas, the oral accounts of the Viking age from the 9th to the 11th century, which were written down hundreds of years later. The exhibition is

the first in the museum's history to focus on one particular woman, said Pentz standing in front of a case containing the remains of a volva exhumed from a ring fort built for Harald Bluetooth, the legendary Danish king who gave his name — and his runic initials — to bluetooth technology. "We believe that she might have been the king's advisor," he said.

Visitors to the show are plunged into the fantastical universe of the volvas, with Viking jewellery, amulets, rune stones, sagas and other archaeological finds on display.

"The word 'volva' means staff bearer," Pentz said. In northern Europe, women often held senior roles in society, enjoying more rights than their counterparts in the Mediterranean or the Frankish empire, he said.

"For instance, they would have had the right to seek a divorce" if their husbands were violent towards them, he said.



Pic: The National Museum of Denmark

— AFP

A Secret City in Kazakhstan Wants to Turn into a Seaside Resort

From inside his abandoned hotel, located in the centre of a 'secret city' in Kazakhstan, Alexei Vereshchagin looks out at pristine views of Lake Balkhash, certain that someday, tourists will visit. Due to a lack of investment, Vereshchagin has been renovating the hotel alone — including putting in new windows in each of the 150 rooms, one at a time.

"I want there to be a beautiful hotel in the centre of the city, like in the Soviet era. So, I am restoring it, little by little," he recounted. Development of tourism will



A picture taken on June 18, 2024, shows a Russian tourist from Siberia, at Lake Balkhash in Priozersk, the former secret city in central Kazakhstan

mark a dramatic change of fortune for the long-closed Kazakh city, long unmarked on maps due to secretive military sites there. The Sary-Shagan missile range was built in 1956 to test anti-ballistic weapons systems, and a portion of the range is still leased by the Russian government.



A semi-abandoned base around Priozersk

Today, the town still features many remnants of its Cold War heyday. From replicas of missiles placed in the city centre, to fading posters praising the 'Fatherland', empty missile silos and dismantled rocket fairings, these are all

guarded by the town's 15,000 residents. Russian troops are still stationed in the area and sometimes swim in the lake in the evenings with their families. But despite their presence, Priozersk's mayor is trying to transform the city into a seaside resort, in line with the government's desire to develop the country's tourism sector. "We are going to redevelop the entire coastline, so that pedestrians can walk along it. We also plan to build hotels and organise efforts to clean the beaches," said Mayor Mansur Akhmetov.

— AFP

Understanding the Contrasting Culinary Power of Salads

FOOD FABLES



VIKRAM DOCTOR

In old Goa cafes, like Aram in Panjim, you will find a dish of onions, tomatoes and a few spices, cooked into the gravy that serves as a base for many Indian dishes. Here it's served by itself, with *pao* or *puri*, under the odd name of 'salad bhaji'.

There is an echo here of Colonel Kenney-Herbert in his magisterial *Culinary Jottings for Madras* (1878) when he declares: "An excellent salad is that made by slicing raw ripe tomatoes with a

Bombay onion." He admits that "no man would partake of [it] just before a ball, or on his wedding day" for fear of the smell of raw onions on his breath. But combining savoury-sweet tomatoes and pungent onions clearly has real culinary value, whether sliced as he suggests, diced like a *kachumber*, pulverised salsa-style or even cooked in salad bhaji.

Defining salad is surprisingly hard. In Judith Weinraub's *Salad: A Global History* (2016), she struggles to connect salads, which are usually served cold, but can also be warm; which are served alongside main dishes or as a separate course or even a meal in itself; that are mostly made of leafy greens or other vegetables, but also eggs and meat; that can usually have a liquid dressing, but can also just be plain cut vegetables — and let's not forget fruit salad!

Perhaps salads should be seen as a concept. "Because salads traditionally have either consisted of or included raw vegetables, they provide a contrast in

The Currimbhoy salad was possibly created for Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim. This is another cooked salad, based on boiled eggs mixed with lettuce, green chillies and, crucially, fresh coriander leaves

heat, texture and flavour in the context of the meal," writes Weinraub.

The idea of salads being a contrast would include Indian *chaats*, since they are always alternatives to main meals. Salad bhaji is a snack, never a main meal, and the salad found on Goan *thalis*, usually based on chopped cabbage,

again is a raw, crunchy contrast to the cooked items.

Weinraub notes that nearly all culinary cultures have something like a salad to contrast with main meals. Even a hamburger usually includes lettuce, tomato or pickled cucumber that performs the salad function. Traditional culinary cultures always have meals made of raw or lightly-cooked vegetables, particularly when the weather limits food choices, like late winter/early spring in temperate zones or the rainy season in the tropics. Salads supplied the fresh nutrients that the foods at those times lacked.

The British in India craved salads as a cool contrast to hot weather, and their meals of Indian curries and British roasts. In GL Routledge's *Economical*



Indian Cookery Book (1942), she labels the section 'Salads for Sultry Days and for All Occasions'. Yet, this desire was coupled with fear, because of the ever-present threat of cholera and other diseases that could come from imperfectly-cleaned raw produce. One solution was to use cooked and cooled vegetables.

Pics: Getty Images, Wikimedia



VITALS
India Beat Zimbabwe by 10 Wickets to Seal Series



Yashasvi Jaiswal (L) and Shubman Gill during their unbeaten 156-run stand against Zimbabwe

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal struck a superb 93 from 53 balls to guide India to a 10-wicket win over Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club on Saturday and take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match T20I series. A youthful India missing several regulars won the toss and elected to bowl, restricting their hosts to 152 for 7 in 20 overs before reaching their target with 28 deliveries remaining. It is the second time India have won a T20 fixture by 10 wickets, the last coming against the same opposition at the same venue in 2016. The fifth and final match of the series will be played at the same venue tomorrow. **Reuters**

BRIEF SCORES
Zimbabwe 152/7 (Raza 46, Marumani 32; Khaleel 2/32) lost to India 156 for 0 in 15.2 overs (Jaiswal 93*, Gill 58*) by 10 wickets

Delhi Capitals and Ricky Ponting Part Ways



Delhi Capitals on Saturday parted ways with head coach Ricky Ponting after seven unsuccessful years in their quest for an elusive IPL silverware, the franchise announced on social media. While it is still early days, there is every possibility that Sourav Ganguly, the current Team Director, could double up as the head coach next season. "The four things that you told us about in every huddle - care, commitment, attitude and effort, they sum up our seven years together," DC posted on their official 'X' handle. Ponting came on board in 2018 and while the team reached its maiden final in 2021, the performance in the following years did not match that early promise. **PTI**

WRESTLING
Antim, Aman to Be Seeded at Paris Olympics

World Championships bronze medalist Antim Panghal (53kg) and Aman Sehrawat (57kg) have been seeded fourth and sixth in their respective weight categories which would help them avoid tough rivals in the initial rounds of the wrestling competition at the Paris Olympics. The wrestling events will run from August 5 to 11. This is the first time wrestling events will have seedings at the Olympics. The seeds were decided on the basis of performances at the 2023 World Championships, 2024 Continental Championships, and Ranking Series events. Star wrestler Vinesh Phogat (50kg) has not got any seeding. **PTI**

Wimbledon. Czech!

Krejčíková beats Paolini in 3 sets for her second Grand Slam title. Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic defeated Italy's Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon women's title on Saturday for her second Grand Slam singles triumph. Krejčíková, the 31st seed, won 6-2, 6-6, 6-4 to add to her 2021 French Open victory. Her win comes 26 years after her mentor Jana Novotna, who died of cancer in 2017, claimed the Wimbledon title. "Before she passed away, she told me to go and win a Slam. I did that in Paris in 2021 but I never dreamed of winning the same trophy that Jana did," said the 28-year-old Krejčíková. The result meant 7th-seeded Paolini had lost two Grand Slam finals back-to-back after coming off second best to Iga Swiatek at the French Open last month. **AFP**

Battle of Berlin

Spain go for record fourth title as England look to end 58-year wait for major trophy in the Euro 2024 final tonight

Karolos Grohmann

Spain go into Sunday's Euro 2024 final as slight favourites over England after not only being the most attractive team to watch at the tournament but having won every match they have played. The Spaniards have emerged as a team that can quickly adapt their strategy to their opponents without giving up their direct attacking game in favour of a results-based performance. They outsmarted France in the semi-finals despite falling a goal behind and it took them just five minutes to score twice to take the lead with their relentless pressing game and vertical passing that forced the French to resort to long balls. With Rodri as their midfield dynamo, a strategist matching Germany's Toni Kroos in impressive passing efficiency but with a more attack-minded approach, the battle in the centre of the pitch is expected to play a key role in the outcome. England will have to wrestle possession from Spain, who also have the outstanding Fabian Ruiz in midfield, a player who for many is already the player of the tournament. With lightning wingers Nico Williams and Lamine Yamal, who turns 17 on Saturday and is the youngest scorer at a Euros or World Cup, ripping up defences and provide assists, England's full-backs will have their hands full. Spain are the first team to win six games at a single Euros following their victory over France, up to that stage the team with the tournament's best defence. A second successive Euro final for England and coach Gareth Southgate is no mean feat even though they had to endure weeks of criticism, especially in the group phase, for lacklustre performances and with little punching power up front. England's defence, however, has remained solid and with the pace of John Stones and Kyle Walker, when they do get exposed, they have proved adept at scrambling recoveries. **SPANISH POSSESSION** Spain's ball possession and movement will likely give England their biggest test so far and key to Southgate's side being able to stay in shape is the incredible work of defensive midfield screen Declan Rice. His anticipation of danger areas plus his movement, strength and determination have made him arguably England's best player in Germany as he patrols in front of the back four, firefighting wherever the danger pops up. The rest of England's midfield also stepped up against the Netherlands in the semi-finals in terms of regaining possession, with Kobbie Mainoo, Bukayo Saka and Phil Foden all showing an appetite to spoil and stifle. After their largely misfiring group stage, with two goals in three matches, Southgate will have been reassured by what he saw against the Dutch when his big names stepped up and started creating sustained danger from out wide and through the middle. He will encourage Jude Bellingham to run hard at the same defenders the midfielder bullied en route to becoming La Liga player of the year, while reminding Harry Kane how much more effective he was in the semi when he did his work in and around the box rather than going deep as he often did previously. One area of concern is England's failure to be dangerous at set piece situations. Defensively they looked vulnerable in the air against a very big Netherlands team but that is unlikely to be so much of a factor versus Spain. **Reuters**



England will have a lot of expectations from Jude Bellingham (in white), Bukayo Saka and Harry Kane

3 KEY CONTESTS

KANE VS LAPORTE
Harry Kane's long and painful wait to win any major trophy could come to an end in spectacular fashion if he can lead his country to victory. Despite appearing sluggish and not fully fit, Kane has still managed to score three goals to put him in a share of the lead for the Golden Boot. He also has a good record against Arsenal Laporte, who he regularly came up against during their time together in the Premier League. Laporte has also since departed England for the riches on offer in Saudi Arabia but the Al-Nassr centre-back has proved the doubters wrong at the Euros over questions whether he can still perform at the highest level.

YAMAL + WILLIAMS VS SHAW + SAKA
Spain's two kings of the wing, Lamine Yamal -- who turns 17 on Saturday -- and Nico Williams have helped form the tournament's most swashbuckling attack. The explosive wide men have ripped opponents to shreds this summer and will be La Roja's main weapon. Up against them, if Gareth Southgate deploys his wing-back system, will likely be Luke Shaw on England's left and Bukayo Saka on the right. Shaw has only just returned from a five-month injury lay-off while Saka is a natural attacker, although he has earned rare reviews from Southgate for his diligent defending.

RODRI VS BELLINGHAM
The next winner of the Ballon d'Or could be decided by which of Rodri or Jude Bellingham emerges victorious. A lynchpin for both Spain and Manchester City, Rodri has remarkably lost just one game in his last 79 matches for club and country. Bellingham, though, has already been on the winning side against Rodri this year when Real Madrid knocked City out of the Champions League on penalties. **AFP**

THE SHOWDOWN
SPAIN VS ENGLAND
OLYMPIASTADION BERLIN

RANKING		
8	5	
FORM		
W W W W W	W W W D D	
HEAD TO HEAD		
ESP	DRAW	ENG
10	4	13
32	Goals	45

12:30am Sony Ten & Sony LIV

PATHS TO FINAL
GROUP STAGE

Bt Croatia 3-0	Bt Serbia 1-0
Bt Italy 1-0	D Denmark 1-1
Bt Albania 1-0	D Slovenia 0-0

LAST 16

Bt Georgia 4-1	Bt Slovakia 2-1
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QUARTER-FINALS

Bt Germany 2-1	D Switzerland 1-1 (won 5-3 on penalties)
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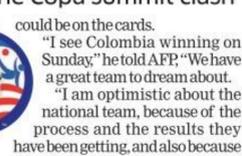
SEMI-FINALS

Bt France 2-1	Bt Netherlands 2-1
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Can Argentina Do a Spain?

Messi & Co. look to become the second side to win three straight major titles as they face formidable Colombia in the Copa summit clash

Argentina can become the first South American team to win the 'triple crown' of three straight major tournament titles if they can overcome a formidable Colombia in Sunday's Copa America final. Inspired by Lionel Messi, Argentina followed up their 2021 Copa America title with the World Cup triumph a year later and have advanced with little drama to this weekend's showpiece with the Colombians. Spain are the only other team in international football to have won a World Cup in between two straight continental titles when they clinched Euro wins in 2008 and 2012 either side of the 2010 World Cup. As well as achieving that landmark for the squad coached by Lionel Scaloni, a win would also give the 'Albiceleste' a record 16th Copa America title - they are currently tied with Uruguay on 15 Copa wins. But Colombia have an impressive streak of their own, heading into what should be a fiery and passionate night at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins. Colombia are unbeaten in 28 matches, a record for the team, and have arguably had the tougher route to the final. While Argentina took care of business against surprise package Canada in their semi, enjoying a comfortable 2-0 win in New Jersey, Colombia had to battle past Uruguay on Wednesday in Charlotte, winning 1-0 despite being down to ten men for the entire second half. In many ways, Sunday's is the perfect final for the tournament. Few would dispute that the two best teams in this year's 16-nation competition will fight for the title and there should be an electric atmosphere with both sides able to draw on support from large communities in Miami. Argentina, ranked number one in the world by FIFA and with a team that has been together for several years, are favourites, but few expect a one-sided game. "Scaloni knows them all by heart. Argentina today have a solidity that is foolproof and they have the added bonus of having the best player in the world, which is why they are the big favourites," said former Chile and Inter Milan striker Ivan Zamorano, who is covering the tournament as a television pundit. But former Colombia star midfielder Carlos Valderrama believes a surprise could be on the cards. "I see Colombia winning on Sunday," he told AFP. "We have a great team to dream about. I am optimistic about the national team, because of the process and the results they have been getting, and also because of the way they are playing. The team is unbeaten, is playing well in the Copa, with James (Rodriguez) as the best player in the tournament, so we can dream of being champions because we have a great team," he added. Rodriguez, who grabbed global attention with his performances in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, has never truly lived up to expectations at club level but at 34 is producing some of his best football in the yellow jersey of his country. Colombia's sole Copa America title came in 2001. There is an emotional factor for Argentina with Sunday's game also a farewell to the national 36-year-old winger Angel Di Maria. "I'm not ready for my last game with the national team, but it's time," he said. "A thousand things can happen, but I think that whatever happens I can go out on a high note. I've done everything to be able to leave through that door," added the Benfica midfielder. While defender Nicolas Otamendi may also depart, it remains to be seen if this will be the last tournament for Messi, who will turn 39 during the 2026 World Cup. "I'm living it like everything else in recent times: enjoying it very much and being aware, like Fideo (Di Maria) and Ota (Otamendi), that these are the last battles," the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner said after the semi-final win. Organisers CONMEBOL will be hoping that, unlike in Charlotte, the battles will be purely of a footballing nature. There were violent clashes between Colombia and Uruguay fans at the end of the game with Uruguayan players storming into the crowd and joining the fighting. "We want to reaffirm and warn that no action will be tolerated that tarnishes this global football celebration," CONMEBOL said in a statement on Thursday. The incidents tarnished a tournament which has been viewed as a test for venues which will host games at the 2026 World Cup which is being hosted by the USA with Canada and Mexico. While Charlotte is not a host city for 2026, Miami will host seven games including a quarter-final and the third-place game. **AFP**



THE FINAL
ARGENTINA vs COLOMBIA
Hard Rock Stadium, Florida
5:30am, no live telecast

RANKING

1	12
FORM	FORM
W W W W W	W W D W W

HEAD TO HEAD

ARG	DRAW	COL
25	8	9

COPA TITLES

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Argentina followed up their 2021 Copa America title with the World Cup triumph a year later and have advanced with little drama to this weekend's showpiece with the Colombians. Spain are the only other team in international football to have won a World Cup in between two straight continental titles when they clinched Euro wins in 2008 and 2012 either side of the 2010 World Cup. As well as achieving that landmark for the squad coached by Lionel Scaloni, a win would also give the 'Albiceleste' a record 16th Copa America title - they are currently tied with Uruguay on 15 Copa wins. But Colombia have an impressive streak of their own, heading into what should be a fiery and passionate night at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins. Colombia are unbeaten in 28 matches, a record for the team, and have arguably had the tougher route to the final. While Argentina took care of business against surprise package Canada in their semi, enjoying a comfortable 2-0 win in New Jersey, Colombia had to battle past Uruguay on Wednesday in Charlotte, winning 1-0 despite being down to ten men for the entire second half. In many ways, Sunday's is the perfect final for the tournament. Few would dispute that the two best teams in this year's 16-nation competition will fight for the title and there should be an electric atmosphere with both sides able to draw on support from large communities in Miami. Argentina, ranked number one in the world by FIFA and with a team that has been together for several years, are favourites, but few expect a one-sided game. "Scaloni knows them all by heart. Argentina today have a solidity that is foolproof and they have the added bonus of having the best player in the world, which is why they are the big favourites," said former Chile and Inter Milan striker Ivan Zamorano, who is covering the tournament as a television pundit. But former Colombia star midfielder Carlos Valderrama believes a surprise could be on the cards. "I see Colombia winning on Sunday," he told AFP. "We have a great team to dream about. I am optimistic about the national team, because of the process and the results they have been getting, and also because of the way they are playing. The team is unbeaten, is playing well in the Copa, with James (Rodriguez) as the best player in the tournament, so we can dream of being champions because we have a great team," he added. Rodriguez, who grabbed global attention with his performances in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, has never truly lived up to expectations at club level but at 34 is producing some of his best football in the yellow jersey of his country. Colombia's sole Copa America title came in 2001. There is an emotional factor for Argentina with Sunday's game also a farewell to the national 36-year-old winger Angel Di Maria. "I'm not ready for my last game with the national team, but it's time," he said. "A thousand things can happen, but I think that whatever happens I can go out on a high note. I've done everything to be able to leave through that door," added the Benfica midfielder. While defender Nicolas Otamendi may also depart, it remains to be seen if this will be the last tournament for Messi, who will turn 39 during the 2026 World Cup. "I'm living it like everything else in recent times: enjoying it very much and being aware, like Fideo (Di Maria) and Ota (Otamendi), that these are the last battles," the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner said after the semi-final win. Organisers CONMEBOL will be hoping that, unlike in Charlotte, the battles will be purely of a footballing nature. There were violent clashes between Colombia and Uruguay fans at the end of the game with Uruguayan players storming into the crowd and joining the fighting. "We want to reaffirm and warn that no action will be tolerated that tarnishes this global football celebration," CONMEBOL said in a statement on Thursday. The incidents tarnished a tournament which has been viewed as a test for venues which will host games at the 2026 World Cup which is being hosted by the USA with Canada and Mexico. While Charlotte is not a host city for 2026, Miami will host seven games including a quarter-final and the third-place game. **AFP**

For Gold Medal Athletes, You Need Gold Medal Administrators: IIS CEO Rushdee



Amit Chaudhary

Rushdee Warely likens his workplace to that of an orchestra, and himself a conductor, who has an ensemble staff to guide. Whether the orchestra produces a symphony or just cacophony comes down to his ability to issue the right instructions at the right time. Warely is the CEO of the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), a privately-funded high-performance centre located in Vijayanagar near the town of Bellary, Karnataka. The facility, about a 6-hour drive from Bengaluru, is spread over 42 acres and houses over 250 athletes of various age groups and levels - from 12-year-olds to senior pros. It provides international standard infrastructure for five sporting disciplines - track and field, boxing, wrestling, judo, and newly introduced swimming. All the disciplines are supported by a state-of-the-art sports science centre. There are around 80 members in support staff, including coaches, physiotherapists and data analysts. On top of that, many international



Neeraj Chopra underwent rehabilitation for an elbow injury at the IIS prior to winning the Olympic gold in Tokyo

athletes visit the IIS for specific purposes, from training to injury rehabilitation. Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, for example, underwent his rehabilitation and recovery here after his elbow surgery in 2019 before he went on to win gold in 2020 Tokyo Olympics and other international events. Warely is responsible for ensuring that all the pieces fit well with each other and work in complete harmony to help athletes become the best version of themselves. "What we try to do here is cre-

ate a world class, daily playing environment for our athletes that allow them to be the best versions of themselves," Warely says. "Everybody has a role to play. Everybody understands what it is that we're aspiring to do every single day," he adds. Warely has been at the helm of the IIS even before the facility started its operations in 2017. Since then, the IIS has come a long way, producing several international medal winners. National record (8.42m) holder in long jump, Jeswin Aldrin, 57kg cadet world champion judoka Linthoi Chanabam are IIS products. India's contingent for the 2024 Paris Olympics will have over 20 athletes who have trained and honed their skills here. "I think we're only scratching the surface of what we can do," Warely says. Warely, a former swimmer who faced discrimination because of the colour of his skin during the apartheid era in South Africa, worked in multiple countries as high-performance manager before joining the IIS. He feels a professional system is an important element for sporting success. "Someone once said to me if you want gold medal athletes, you need administrators also," Warely says. "It's important that a sport is run along the lines of business principles. If we expect our athletes to perform as full-time professionals, and they're not supported in the backend by full-time professionals, it is really fair to ask them to compete against athletes that have the complete back-end support program?"

There are many businessmen who have a stake in India's fast-growing sports industry, but a very few with as varied a portfolio as that of Parth Jindal, founder and director of JSW Sports. A sports aficionado, Jindal says it's his dream to see India becoming a force in the world of sport. Delhi Capitals may be the shiniest of all assets in his possession, but it is the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) in Bellary, Karnataka, that is closest to his heart. With the help of over 30 corporates, the IIS, in just seven years of its existence, has helped produce multiple champions in Olympic sports. Jindal, founder of IIS, spoke with **AMIT CHAUDHARY** about his vision, the challenges of securing corporate funding, looking beyond medals, and more. Excerpts: **What was the vision when you decided to start this centre? How has that vision evolved over the years?** The vision was to be the preeminent high-performance centre in India for Olympic sports, to work at the grassroots level and create Olympians who can win medals for the country across five sports disciplines - boxing, wrestling, judo, track and field and swimming. We started supporting athletes from 2012 and started building this centre in 2014. Our first medal was Sakshi Malik in the 2016 Rio Olympics and then Neeraj [Chopra] and Bajrang [Punia] in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

'Didn't Anticipate Winning Medals in Such a Short Time'



Parth Jindal

We did not anticipate that in such a short period of time we would be able to win medals for India, especially in a sport like track and field. But after the success of Neeraj and other athletes, the dream is a lot bigger now. **What has been the biggest achievement that you are proud of? Neeraj's Olympic gold is obvious. But when you talk about the institute, it's more than just the medals.** In terms of results, Neeraj's gold medal is something we are extremely proud of. But I think overall, every single athlete who we train here has to pass the school exams. If they don't pass their school exams, we don't keep them in our programme. So, we make sure that education of every child is taken care of. A lot of our athletes have gone on to join corporates, public sector, the army and they are better individuals and better citizens for our country. Since 2017, over 2500 students have graduated or have gone through the doors of the IIS and all of them have been educated here. So, that's something we're very proud of. **In a press conference earlier, you said you wanted more heroes to come up so that more children get inspired to take up sport. Do you think India has the infrastructure, the knowledge base and the coaches required to support so many more athletes?** Over the last 10 years, there has been a sea change. In terms of if we have the infrastructure, the answer is yes and no. There is infrastructure, but it is run well? Difficult to say. Some places are run very well. Some places are not. But with the advent of social media and the fact that everything is now available online, people are becoming more aware of things. So I think we're maturing slowly but surely.

How challenging is it to bring in the corporates to support IIS? The culture of giving is developing again in India. When we started to raise money in 2014-15, I went to everyone. From Tatas to Ambanis, Birlas, Bajajs, Hindujas, Goenkas, Piramals. I went to everyone with a begging bowl that please support IIS. I am a young boy. I have a crazy dream, support me. One or two said yes, the majority said no. But then over the years people have added. The reason I didn't call this JSW is because if I call it JSW, no one is going to support it. IIS is a neutral body, it is his own charitable trust. Where we are sitting (in the swimming pool complex), there is only Mizhuo everywhere. There is no JSW mentioned anywhere because this is Mizhuo's programme at IIS. Today you have the Tata building at Harvard Business School, Mahindra Center in Harvard University. How many people have given to universities in India? You can count them on your fingers, right? Now, the culture is changing. Naryan Murthy gave a library to the National Law School. JSW donated the School of Public Policy to IIM Ahmedabad, IIT Bombay started raising money from different people. So, culture is just starting.