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ONE WEEK OF HISTORY

'Students brought her down because they felt stifled... but when Mujib's statues were destroyed, we cried'

On the streets of Dhaka as regime changes: Protesters manage traffic, anti-Hasina writing on the wall



Students who hit the streets in protest against the then Sheikh Hasina government. Today, he is back on the road — this time as a student volunteer, supervising the traffic in the busy Shahbag area, next to the Dhaka University campus.

If a week is a long time in politics, the last seven days in Dhaka mark a veritable change of era. Stunning speed has marked

the regime change: from Sheikh Hasina leaving the country to an interim government being put in place under Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus — to a new Chief Justice being sworn in Sunday.

"We got rid of the government, now we will have to take up the responsibilities. My feet hurt but it is our responsibility to serve the people," says the sec-



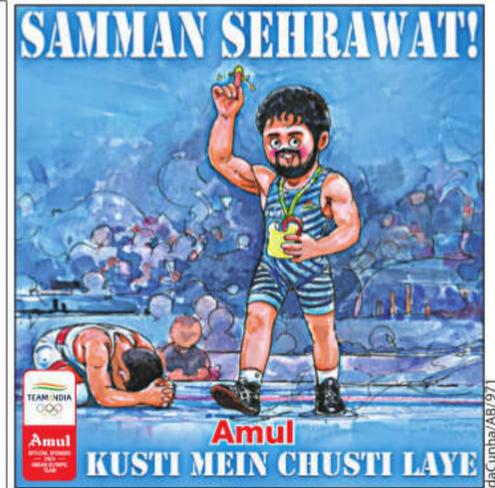
Student volunteers manage the traffic at the Shahbag junction in Dhaka on Sunday. Shubhajit Roy **MORE REPORTS, P12**

ond-year student of architecture, who suffered a fracture in his right arm facing lathicharge and tears when he was on the other side of the picket lines.

It is the first day of the working week and roads are busy. Obhik says he's been on traffic duty since 11 am, and was at his post till evening despite a drizzle.

Facing the wrath of the people for siding with the government and shooting at protesters, the police are not turning up for work. Last Sunday, more than 100

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



SAMMAN SEHRAWAT!

Amul KUSTI MEIN CHUSTI LAYE



Shooter Manu Bhaker and hockey goalkeeper P R Sreejesh ahead of the closing ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris on Sunday. **P11 MORE REPORTS, P 17, 18**

Paris leaves India with a few smiles — and many red flags



Letes didn't land on these shores as tourists. But they will still return with a lingering sense of disappointment.

The country's Paris Olympics campaign ended with six medals — one silver and five bronze. There could be another, with an asterisk, as the Court of Arbitration for Sport is yet to pronounce its verdict in Vinesh Phogat's plea for a silver. But there were also six agonising fourth-place finishes, more than ever, to mark the bitter-sweet campaign that ebbed as the Games progressed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NEW HINDENBURG REPORT

Sebi backs chief Buch: Disclosed, recused on conflict of interest

Investment made in 2015... we were private citizens: Madhabi, husband

HITESH VYAS & GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, AUGUST 11

A DAY AFTER the US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research made a series of allegations against Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, Sebi came out in Buch's defence and said the regulator has adequate internal mechanisms to address issues related to conflict of interest, which include disclosure framework and provision for recusal.

Relevant disclosures required in terms of holdings of securities and their transfers have been made by the Chairperson from time to time, SEBI said on Sunday. "Chairperson has also recused herself in matters in-



Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch. *File*

volving potential conflicts of interest," the regulator said, backing its Chairperson and advising investors to remain calm and exercise due diligence.

The SEBI press statement **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

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PAGE 15

As Buch digs heels in, key query: Did she disclose fund linked to Adani?

SANDEEP SINGH, RITU SARIN & P VAIDYANATHAN IYER
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, AUG 11

AS SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch digs her heels in with solid backing by the market regulator, former chairpersons and board members of SEBI *The Indian Express* spoke with said two specific aspects merit attention in this case: i) did she make

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Opp wants Buch to quit, JPC probe; bid to create economic chaos: BJP

Allegations very serious, SEBI integrity compromised: Rahul

VIKAS PATHAK & ARUN JANARDHANAN
NEW DELHI, CHENNAI, AUG 11

THE ALLEGATIONS levelled by US-based Hindenburg Research against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch triggered a political firestorm Sunday. While



Cong chief Mallikarjun Kharge; BJP's Tamil Nadu unit president K Annamalai

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and the CPM called for Buch's resignation, and the

Congress and the TMC demanded a JPC probe into the allegations, the BJP dismissed the charges and accused the Opposition of using its "connections abroad" to create "economic chaos".

At the same time, BJP's Tamil Nadu president K Annamalai took a more nuanced line, calling for a thorough probe and promising action if any wrongdoing was found but asserting that Hindenburg had made

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Dabbu, Rudra & a mango: How a children's scuffle turned into murder case that dragged on for 40 yrs

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM & MANISH SAHU
NEW DELHI, GONDA, AUGUST 11

DABBU HAD SPOTTED the mango, Rudra said it was his. On a hot April day back in 1984, two friends fought over the fallen mango near a field in Lorhiya Ghata village in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district. The fruit would go on to extract a steep price, re-



Rudra Pratap Singh stands near the mango tree where the fight broke out in 1984; (right) Brijesh Singh alias Dabbu at his home in Lorhiya Ghata village in UP's Gonda. *Vishal Srivastav*

sulting in a murder case that would drag on for 40 years and traverse the length of the Indian judiciary, from the lowest court all the way up to the Supreme Court.

On July 24, the Supreme Court converted the conviction of murder in the case to the less stringent culpable homicide. But by the time the ruling came, two of the accused — Rudra Pratap Singh's father Ayodhya Singh and uncle Lalji Singh — had already been dead for some years and the relationship between

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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By UNNY



SEBI: SEBI's New Logo, please meet New Opposition with new logo.

IDEA EXCHANGE

'Congress is the only party that can carry everyone along. It's improving'

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA
FORMER HARYANA CM
PAGE 14

Day after J&K gunfight: Injured civilian dies, forces widen search ops

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 11

ONE OF the two civilians wounded in an encounter between security forces and militants in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Saturday succumbed to his injuries on Sunday, police said.

Two soldiers, identified as Havildar Deepak Kumar Yadav and Lance Naik Praveen Sharma, were killed on Saturday in the en-

counter that broke out after a joint team of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Army launched a search operation in the mountainous forests of the Ahlan Gadole area of Kokernag in Anantnag. The civilian who died Sunday was identified as Abdul Rashid Dar.

The security forces' operation against the militants continued

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PAGE 12



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Sebi: Buch disclosed, recused on conflict of interest

came soon after Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch issued their second statement within a gap of 24 hours. In their second statement issued on Sunday, they said their investment in the offshore funds, mentioned by Hindenburg Research in its latest allegations, were made in 2015 when they both were 'private citizens' living in Singapore. The investment was made almost 2 years before she joined Sebi as a Whole-Time Member, it said.

The SEBI statement backing her is significant since the market regulator's board has Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth, Secretary of the Ministry Corporate Affairs Manoj Govil and RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao as members, besides four Whole-Time Directors. Major decisions of the Sebi are decided in the board meetings.

The market regulator also advised investors to remain "calm and exercise due diligence" before reacting to such reports. "Investors should remain calm and exercise due diligence before reacting to such reports. Investors may also like to take note of the disclaimer in the report that states that readers should assume that Hindenburg Research may have short positions in the securities covered in the report," Sebi said.

On Saturday, the US-based Hindenburg Research, in a post on X (formerly Twitter) alleged that Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the Adani

money siphoning scandal. The short-seller alleged that the couple invested in Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund (GDOF), in which Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani, had invested.

SEBI, over the years, has built a robust regulatory framework that not only aligns with best global practices but also ensures protection of investors, the regulator said. "The allegations made by Hindenburg Research, against the Adani Group, have been duly investigated by SEBI," it said.

"Supreme Court in its order of January 3, 2024 noted that SEBI had completed 22 out of 24 investigations into the Adani group. Subsequently, one more investigation was completed in March 2024, and one remaining investigation is close to completion," it said.

During the ongoing investigation in this matter, more than 100 summons, around 1,100 letters and emails have been issued to seek information. "Further, more than 100 communications have been made seeking assistance from domestic/foreign regulators and external agencies. Also more than 300 documents containing around 12,000 pages have been examined," it said.

On the show-cause notice issued to Hindenburg, Sebi said it has been issued by following the due process of the law. "It is noted that Hindenburg Research has itself made the show cause notice issued to it available on its website. The show cause notice con-

tains the reasons for its issuance. The proceedings in this matter are ongoing and the same is being dealt with in accordance with the established procedure and in compliance with the principles of natural justice," it said.

On the allegations that REIT regulations benefited a large "conglomerate", Sebi said regulations are notified after approval of the SEBI Board. "As a measure of transparency, the agenda papers for Board meetings and outcomes of Board discussions are also published on SEBI website. Hence, claims that such regulations, changes to regulations or circulars issued related to REITs were to favour one large multinational financial conglomerate, are inappropriate," it said.

In their Sunday's statement, Madhabi and her husband Dhaval Buch said, "The decision to invest in this fund was because the Chief Investment Officer, Anil Ahuja, is Dhaval's childhood friend from school and IIT Delhi and, being an ex-employee of Citibank, J.P. Morgan and 3i Group plc, had many decades of a strong investing career. The fact that these were the drivers of the investment decision is borne out by the fact that when, in 2018, Ahuja, left his position as CIO of the fund, we redeemed the investment in that fund."

Ports-to-energy conglomerate, Adani group, in a statement said that the latest allegations by Hindenburg are malicious, mischievous and manipulative selec-

tions of publicly available information to arrive at predetermined conclusions for personal profiteering with wanton disregard for facts and the law.

"We completely reject these allegations against the Adani Group which are a recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Honorable Supreme Court in March 2023," Adani group said in a clarification.

360 One (earlier India Infoline) in a statement issued on Sunday said that throughout the fund's tenure, IPE-Plus Fund 1 made zero investments in any shares of the Adani group either directly or indirectly through any fund. At its peak, the fund's Assets Under Management (AUM) reached approximately USD 48 million, with over 90 percent of the fund consistently invested in bonds.

GDOF invested in IPE-Plus Fund 1, a small offshore Mauritius Fund, managed by wealth management firm India Infoline (now 360 ONE WAM). The founder and chief investment officer (CIO) of IPE-Plus Fund was Anil Ahuja, who was also a director of Adani Enterprises, the flagship company of the Adani group, where he served three terms spanning nine years ending in June 2017. According to Hindenburg, Vinod Adani used the offshore fund to invest in Indian markets with funds allegedly siphoned from over invoicing of power equipment to the Adani Group.

On streets of Dhaka

people had died, mostly student protesters. A week later, Dhaka bears signs of the chaos of the last weekend and the Monday that followed, when Hasina resigned and fled to India after ruling Bangladesh for more than 16 years.

After the interim government, was sworn in, the writing on the Dhaka wall has changed. The Metro pillars have been spray-painted with graffiti like "Khoodi Hasina" (murderer Hasina), "we won, o' Hasina koi geli" (Hasina, where have you vanished).

Her father and founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, hasn't been spared either. Right outside Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, his mural lies shattered in pieces. Hasina's supporters say statues across the country have been destroyed, including some in the heart of the capital.

"She would invoke his name at every juncture, to justify her ac-

tions. So, there was pent-up anger against her that made the mob do such things," says an official who works at the airport.

A professor at Dhaka University says the students' agitation was used by some fundamentalist forces to carry out such acts. "We also respect Bongo-bondhu, but Sheikh Hasina's actions made people angry. And this was a spontaneous reaction as a release of that anger," says student Arshad, who is also manning the traffic near the airport.

Hasina, who brought some political stability and economic growth in Bangladesh, is hated on the streets today for the authoritarian turn she took, which saw her going after the Opposition, civil society and the media in the last decade of her government.

On Sunday, one of the Opposition leaders, BNP's Salahuddin Ahmed, returned to Bangladesh after nine years of living overseas.

Dabbu, Rudra & a mango

the two friends had changed irrevocably.

According to court documents, it started when Vishwanath's 10-year-old son Brijesh Singh alias Dabbu spotted the mango while playing with his friend and neighbour Rudra, then 9, on April 19, 1984. Dabbu claimed it was his since it was found in his father's field.

Rudra's complaints brought his father Ayodhya and four others — Man Bahadur Singh, Lalji Singh, Bharat Singh, and Bhanu Pratap Singh — to the field, all

armed with lathis. Their loud admonition of his son Dabbu drew the attention of Vishwanath, who was threshing wheat nearby. It was then that the situation took a turn for worse. "The aforesaid accused thereupon started beating Vishwanath Singh with lathis," a court document says.

Vishwanath later died on the way to hospital. On April 4, 1986, a trial court in Gonda sentenced all five accused to life in jail. Although the accused appealed in Allahabad HC that same year, the case progressed at a glacial pace.

"After crushing dissent for so many years, people thought that she was invincible. But the students brought her down as they felt stifled. The youth wing of the Awami League was unleashed on the student protesters, including girl students who were manhandled," says Tasnim Siddiqui, a professor of political science at Dhaka University.

The assault of the young women students was the "inflection point", she says, as it provoked the student protesters, bringing them on a collision path with the police and pro-Awami League students' wing. "But when (Mujib's) statues were destroyed, we cried... the actions were in nobody's control," Siddiqui says.

Mesbah Kamal, a professor who taught history at Dhaka University and is now Vice-Chancellor of a private university, draws parallels with the student protests in 1969 that led to the downfall of Pakistan's military dictator General Ayub Khan.

"Ayub Khan had carried out a

lot of development work in east Pakistan, but people wanted their right to speak and (protection of their) human rights. Hasina, too, had carried out several development works but she turned very harsh on the students. This kind of violence against students had not happened even during Ayub Khan's time," says Kamal.

Outside the university campus, at the Shahbag junction, volunteers distribute packets of snacks — a slice of cake, a packet of biscuits and a bottle of water — to the students manning the traffic.

As the skies turn dark, they ask the women volunteers to go home. "It's too risky for girls to be out after dark, so we are asking them to go home. They too have been up on their feet and managing the traffic since morning," says a volunteer.

There are rows of flower shops nearby, and the evening breeze fills the place with their fragrance. A young couple takes a selfie — with the flowers — before heading home.

All five were released on bail soon.

By the time it came to be heard in 2017, Ayodhya Singh and Lalji Singh had died. In 2022, the HC upheld the conviction of Man Bahadur Singh, Bharat Singh, and Bhanu Pratap Singh — the three accused still living. On July 24, an SC bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Ahsanuddin Amanullah reduced the charge to culpable homicide and commuted the sentence to seven years.

Back at Lohiya Ghata village, the mango tree still stands on a patch of land near Vishwanath's fields. Dabbu and Rudra are both over 50, with children and grand-

children. While they continued to live next to each other for a few years afterwards, their relationship was never the same. Eventually, they moved to houses 800 metres apart.

Sitting outside his house, Dabbu, a farmer like his father, says, "After my father was killed, they kept pressuring us for a compromise but I refused. Rudra and his family would make snide comments whenever they saw me. They were always trying to goad me into a fight." Rudra denies the allegation, instead claiming that his father reacted in response to Vishwanath's "provocations".

Anantnag gunfight

on Sunday, with police saying searches were underway in the upper reaches of Kokernag. They said any concrete information about the militants would only be given after the operation comes to an end. "The search operation was going on when the security forces saw movement of one foreign terrorist. There was exchange of fire, and during this operation, two security force personnel were critically injured and later attained martyrdom. One more soldier was injured, and he is stable," said Viridhi Kumar Birdi, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir.

"There were some other people who came under fire during the exchange. A civilian who was

critically injured has succumbed to his injuries. The other civilian (who was also injured) is undergoing treatment and is relatively stable," he said.

The search operations by the J&K Police and the Army, which were intensified on Sunday, were taking place in the dense Ahlan forests that connect the Kashmir Valley to Jammu division.

The IGP said the militants were likely "a group of three-four men. Once the operation concludes, we can share some concrete information".

Police said they are also investigating the antecedents of the civilians killed and injured in Saturday's exchange of fire.

Opp wants JPC probe, Buch to quit

"baseless" charges earlier too.

Rahul Gandhi said SEBI's integrity has been compromised by the allegations against Buch. "Honest investors across the country have pressing questions for the government: Why hasn't SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch resigned yet... if investors lose their hard-earned money, who will be held accountable — PM Modi, the SEBI Chairperson, or Gautam Adani... In light of the new and very serious allegations that have surfaced, will the Supreme Court look into this matter suo motu once again?" he said.

"It is now abundantly clear why Prime Minister Modi is so afraid of a JPC probe and what it might reveal," he said.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge demanded a JPC probe on the issue. "SEBI had previously cleared Adani, a close associate of PM Modi, before the Supreme Court following the January 2023

Hindenburg Report revelations. However, new allegations have surfaced regarding a quid-pro-quo involving the SEBI Chief. The small & medium investors belonging to the Middle Class who invest their hard-earned money in the stock market need to be protected, as they believe in SEBI," he said. Kharge said that a JPC inquiry is "imperative to investigate this massive scandal. Until then, concerns persist that PM Modi will continue to shield his ally".

The CPM too demanded the resignation of Buch. "Given these serious charges against the head of the regulatory authority, it is necessary that the Chairperson step aside till a proper investigation is conducted," the CPM said while also calling for a JPC probe into the "entire affair of the stock market manipulation of shares of the Adani group".

Hitting back at the Opposition, BJP leader and former Union minister Rajeev Chandrashekhar dismissed the allegations as "a set of innuendos and guesswork that are being tied together with a few grains of truth".

Asserting that India's financial system, "rebuilt" by Prime Minister Modi, was strong, Chandrashekhar said, "There seems to be a pattern where the Congress over the last ten years has adopted a strategy of politics of lies and is now seeking foreign help to destabilize our financial system and to create chaos in the country by attacking the independent regulator SEBI and by casting aspersions on the chairman of SEBI..."

BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi claimed that such allegations — be it the BBC documentary on the Gujarat riots or the Hindenburg report on the Adani Group — were timed with Parliament sessions. The latest report was released after Parliament was adjourned sine die Friday. "The Opposition has such connections abroad to create instability and anarchy during every Parliament session of India. They want to create economic chaos in India through confusion," Trivedi said.

Annamalai, meanwhile, called for an investigation even while asserting that previous allegations had been found "baseless".

"Hindenburg is not a journalist or an NGO but a short selling agent of shares... They release such reports, trigger panic among investors, make preparations to capitalise on that crisis scenario, and they make thousands of crores of profit," he said.

While asserting that the Supreme Court had found no basis in Hindenburg's 2023 report, Annamalai said, "Still, I wouldn't say that we should just ignore it (latest report). The Hindenburg report should be probed without judging the false charges they made in the past..."

Annamalai, who alleged a larger conspiracy to hinder India's international rise, said SEBI officials facing charges of having offshored accounts should be investigated. "If it is true, there will be action for sure. Even if Hindenburg has always been false in their claims and reports, a responsible government will definitely probe," he said.

Later, the TMC called for an SIT to probe the allegations. It also demanded a JPC — a departure from its stance on the Hindenburg report last year when it had called for a SC-monitored probe. "Before June 2024, a JPC would have been futile because of how the BJP had diminished Parliament. But this situation is extraordinary. BJP is clearly on the back-foot in Parliament. We need both (SIT and JPC)," said Derek O'Brien, the party's leader in the Rajya Sabha.

Separately, TMC Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra asked the SEBI chairperson a set of 13 questions. They ranged from queries about the SEBI chief's reported investment in a fund linked to Vinod Adani, the timeline of such stakeholding and whether such stakes were disclosed to SEBI.

RJD MP Manoj Jha claimed the economic system was rigged, adding that corruption charges were being obfuscated. CPI MP P Santhosh Kumar demanded a judicial inquiry into the allegations.

Paris Olympics

Every medal had a story. It elicited contrasting emotions but did one thing: raise the bar for India's athletes.

In the warm and sunny city of Chateauroux, shooter Manu Bhaker showed it is possible to win not one but two medals in a single campaign. With some luck, it could have been an unprecedented hat-trick.

About 300 km away in Paris, Neeraj Chopra soared again and took India to newer territories: following up on the Tokyo gold with a silver here. But the country's greatest living Olympian, at war with his own body, looked tormented that he couldn't throw the javelin any longer.

The focus, however, will be on the lessons from each medal that was lost.

The first, coming from two of India's biggest legends Prakash Padukone and Abhinav Bindra, was: spend, but wisely.

As *The Indian Express* reported before the Olympics, the Government spent Rs 72 crore under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) during the three-year Olympic cycle from Tokyo in Covid-hit 2021 to Paris.

That money was spent on customised training programmes, with the athletes getting almost everything they wanted — from a big entourage to specialised coaches to hi-tech equipment.

Last week, Padukone urged the Government — the biggest spender — and the federations to be a "little firm" with those who don't deliver. He also demanded the players "cannot keep asking for more and more and more".

On Saturday, Bindra, who has experienced the era when funds didn't flow so smoothly, said the Olympics aren't a "vending machine" and that the players "can't be wrapped in cotton wool". "We need to understand that money is only going to be an enabler. Money is not going to get you medals," Bindra told *The Indian Express*. "It is blood, sweat and tears, hard work and resilience shown on the field of play, which will get you there. And hunger is a very, very

important aspect of it. Resources being allocated is only a simple, simple enabler, and you need it."

A consensus is building that, at an elite level, the Government money and support is going to a sports person but not the sport. This was seen at the Paris Games, where in a few key sports, serious red flags have emerged.

Consider this:

■ In badminton, India returned empty-handed for the first time since the London Olympics. A bigger concern is the empty cupboard in women's singles, especially since P. V. Sindhu — a medallist in the Rio and Tokyo Olympics — hinted that Los Angeles 2028 might be a Games too far for her.

■ In boxing, another sport that has fetched India medals consistently, there isn't a serious male contender for the future. Nikhat Zareen, done in by the luck of the draw, remains the only bankable face on the women's side.

■ Mirabai Chanu made a painful exit in fourth place in her last Olympics. For Los Angeles 2028 and beyond, there isn't a single new face India can turn to in the hope of continuing her legacy in weightlifting.

India's participation at the Olympics is as it is restricted to a dozen out of the 30-plus sports. To fall behind in these key sports would impact participation numbers and hurt medal chances.

They don't need to look far for inspiration.

Shooting, despite back-to-back failures, remained resilient and drove India's medal tally thanks to the patient, long-term planning by multiple agencies. The tweaking of firearm laws led to mass participation. That created a deep talent pool, which led to a highly competitive domestic structure that was reflected in the selection trials. Three medals, seven finals and three fourth-place finishes provide a solid base for future Games.

Hockey might have botched up the women's team programme, unable to build on their Tokyo success. But they got the men's team planning right. Be it, in hindsight, the timely interven-

tion and changing of coaches after the World Cup debacle, empowering the foreign coach, Craig Fulton, and meeting his demands — or, be it a full-time travelling psychologist or a trip to the Alps days before the Olympics.

The free hand given to Fulton allowed him to test his plans without the fear of failure and, as a result, when India landed in Paris, they could look any team in the eye. This bronze medal, at a time when the competition level in men's hockey is arguably at its highest, will be special.

If shooting is a lesson in broad-based grassroots and hockey showed what can be achieved if a person with a plan is given full freedom, wrestling points to how crucial the cultural element is.

The financial assistance to India's youngest Olympic medallist, 21-year-old Aman Sehrawat, was just Rs 16 lakh since December 2021, far less than most Indian athletes. He trains at Delhi's Chhatrasal, a stadium that has found itself in one controversy and crime after another. His sport suffered brutally with national and international tournaments drying out after sexual harassment charges were levelled against the then federation chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

But Sehrawat was in an environment where the only thing he would breathe, eat and sleep was wrestling. And it was the ingenuity of his coaches and the deeply ingrained culture that keeps churning out champions that ensured wrestling's streak of Olympic medals continued unabated.

These sports — and Chopra's genius — made sure that even in a poor Olympics and with disappointments galore, India came close to the Tokyo tally of seven — one gold, two silver, four bronze. But the contingent still finished a lowly 71 overall, sandwiched between Lithuania and Moldova, and 23 slots below its standing in the Tokyo Games.

It's not what the country expected before landing here. But then, the Paris Syndrome exists for a reason.

As Buch digs heels in, key query: Did she disclose fund linked to Adani?

complete disclosures to the government and i) did she recuse herself while investigating a regulated entity where she or her husband had a direct or indirect interest.

The finance ministry, according to sources in the government, may be willing to give concessions to her since she is not from civil services background and well within her rights as a private sector person to invest in global funds. Former regulators are, however, of the view that there she and her

husband to be investors in Adani-related global entities, it was incumbent upon her to be granular in her disclosures. "What is important to know is her conduct as a whole time member or the chairperson of SEBI when Adani-related complaints or investigations came to her desk. Did she recuse herself," said a former SEBI head.

While SEBI, in its statement, said the Chairperson made relevant disclosures required in terms of holdings of securities and their transfers from time to time and also recused herself in matters involving potential conflicts of interest, Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch said, "SEBI has strong institutional mechanisms of disclosure and recusal norms as per the code of conduct applicable to its officers. Accordingly, all disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed, including disclosures of all securities held or subsequently transferred."

Another former SEBI chief said though he did not have full knowledge about her investments and disclosures to the SEBI board, available information in public domain suggested her time in SEBI since 2017 overlaps with the market regulator's probe into 13 offshore entities which held stake in Adani Group companies. "It is not clear from the statement by Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch and that of SEBI if she recused herself from the Adani Group investigations," he said.

A former bureaucrat who was a government nominee on the board of SEBI said there has been an instance in the past when the chairperson recused herself over what could be construed as conflict of interest. "CB have recused himself when the issue of NSDL's (of which he was the Managing Director) lack of oversight over a depository participant was being discussed by the SEBI board. In fact, there was a government order to

that effect — his recusal from the decision-making process in the case," he said.

Another bureaucrat, who was also on the board of SEBI in the past said, there was a former chief of SEBI who opened a demat account years after his term ended in the regulatory body. "He did not own shares of any company," the bureaucrat said.

In her statement, Madhabi Puri Buch said upon her husband's appointment as Senior Advisor to Blackstone Group, the company was immediately added to her recusal list maintained with SEBI. The statement does not clearly say that with respect to the global fund in which she made an investment in 2015, two years ahead of her appointment as SEBI's a whole time member. The investment was redeemed in 2018, she said.

Former Chief Vigilance Commissioner Pradeep Kumar said, "The SEBI is an independent market regulatory body and the

CVC has a limited role in its supervision, if at all. There is certainly no superintendence of the CVC over the SEBI, say, as it has over the CBI and the ED."

But a former official said the existence of a Board with members from the Ministry of Finance and the RBI itself was an inbuilt oversight mechanism for the SEBI. Added to this was the fact that its judicial orders were scrutinized by benches of the Securities Appellate Tribunal.

Another former top SEBI official recalled how, several years ago, as the Investigating Officer of a major stock exchange scam, he was instructed by the Board to not route the inquiry files through the Chairman since some allegations had also been made against him. "In the present case too with allegations of a conflict of interest being thrown around, the Chairperson could and maybe should have recused herself from the Adani investigation," he said.

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PERSONAL

I, Amir Shafi, S/O, SHRI SHAFI ULLAH, R/O, A2-1406, JKG-PALM COURT, GAUR CITY-2, GAUTAM BUDDHA-NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201009, have changed my name to AAMIR SHAFI. Henceforth I would be known by the name of AAMIR SHAFI. For all future purposes
0040743312-2

I, Naresh Kumar, s/o Ajit Kumar, R/O 457-A, Regent Shipra Sun City, Indrapuram, I.E Sahibabad, Ghaziabad-201010, U.P., have changed my name to Naresh Chauhan Permanently. 0040743312-1

I, Jamali Singh Ahluwalia S/o Teja Singh Ahluwalia R/O PD 10-A, 2nd Floor, Malibu town, Sector 47, Gurgaon, declare that my name has been wrongly mentioned as Jamali Singh in my Pension Payment Order & as J.S. Ahluwalia in my son's birth certificate. My correct name is Jamali Singh Ahluwalia. 0130044167-1

LOST & FOUND

I have lost Allotment Letter and Share Certificate related to my flat no. B-24, MEA Apartment, Sector-62, Noida 201301. Rajni Dhingra Minocha D/o Dharam Vir R/o A-114, MEA Apartment Sector-62, Noida 201301.
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FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED FOR THE VISITORS

 <p>खाने-पीने की चीज़ें Eatables</p>	 <p>सिगरेट, बीडी, लाइटर Cigarettes, Bids, Lighter</p>
 <p>थैला, ब्रीफकेस Bag, Briefcase</p>	 <p>शराब, इत्र, स्प्रे, आग्नेयात्र Alcohol, Perfume, Spray, Replica Fire Arm</p>
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EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30th JUNE, 2024

(₹ in Lakhs except Earnings per Share)

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated			
		Quarter Ended		Year Ended		Quarter Ended		Year ended	
		30 th June, 2024	31 st March, 2024	30 th June, 2023	31 st March, 2024	30 th June, 2024	31 st June, 2024	30 th June, 2023	31 st March, 2024
		Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total income from operations	-	-	-	-	5,445.69	8,514.66	6,167.69	29,170.90
2	Net profit/(loss) for the period before tax and exceptional items	(22.77)	(5.24)	8.22	(31.67)	222.03	581.03	219.43	1,592.71
3	Net profit/(loss) for the period after tax and exceptional items	(22.77)	(5.24)	8.22	(31.67)	159.42	419.53	215.53	1,385.49
4	Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the period [comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)]	(22.77)	(5.24)	8.22	(31.67)	153.49	395.92	215.49	1,361.74
5	Paid-up equity share capital (face value of ₹ 1 each)	3,143.55	3,143.55	1,571.78	3,143.55	3,143.55	3,143.55	1,571.78	3,143.55
6	Earnings per share in rupees: (Quarterly not annualised)								
	Weighted average number of equity shares of ₹ 1 each	31,43,55,000	31,28,79,590	30,84,20,934	31,28,79,590	31,43,55,000	31,28,79,590	30,84,20,934	31,28,79,590
	- Basic (in ₹)	(0.01)	(0.00)	0.00	(0.01)	0.05	0.13	0.07	0.44
	- Diluted (in ₹)	(0.01)	(0.00)	0.00	(0.01)	0.05	0.13	0.07	0.44

1 The above results were reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee & approved by the Board of Directors of Kamdhenу Ventures Limited at their respective meetings held on 10th August, 2024. The unaudited Standalone and Consolidated financial results for the quarter ended 30th June, 2024 have been limited reviewed by the Statutory Auditors of the company, and they have issued unmodified report on the above results.

2 The above is an extract of the detailed format of unaudited results for the quarter ended 30th June, 2024 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the unaudited financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites, www.bseindia.com, www.nseindia.com and on the Company website, www.kamdhenupaints.com

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors of
Kamdhenу Ventures Limited
Sd/-
Saurabh Agarwal
Managing Director
DIN: 00005970

Place: Gurugram
Date: 10th August, 2024



Full-Dress Rehearsal on 13th August 2024

PLAN YOUR ROUTE, FOLLOW TRAFFIC ADVISORY



TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS AROUND RED FORT

The following roads will be closed for general traffic from 4:00 AM to 10:00 AM on 13.08.2024 and only labeled vehicles will be permitted:-

- Netaji Subhash Marg from Delhi Gate to Chhatta Rail.
- Lothian Road from GPO Delhi to Chhatta Rail.
- S.P.Mukherjee Marg from H.C.Son Marg to Yamuna Bazar Chowk.
- Chandni Chowk Road from Fountain Chowk to Red Fort.
- Nishad Raj Marg from Ring Road to Netaji Subhash Marg.
- Esplanade Road and its Link Road to Netaji Subhash Marg.
- Ring Road from Rajghat to ISBT.
- Outer ring Road from ISBT to IP Flyover i.e., Salimgarh Bypass.

ROADS THAT MAY BE AVOIDED FROM 04:00 AM TO 10:00 AM ON 13.08.2024:

Those vehicles which do not have parking labels for the rehearsal may avoid C- Hexagon India Gate, Copernicus Marg, Mandi House, Sikandra Road, W Point, A point Tiak Marg, Mathura Road, BSZ Marg, Netaji Subhash Marg, J.L. Nehru Marg, Ring Road between Nizamuddin Khatta and ISBT Kashmiri Gate & Outer Ring Road from Nizamuddin Khatta & ISBT Kashmiri Gate via Salimgarh bypass.

NORTH-SOUTH ACCESS

Alternative-1: Aurobindo Marg - Safdarjung Road - Kamal Ataturk Marg - Kautilya Marg - S.P.M. Marg - 11 Murti - Mother Teresa Crescent - Park Street - Mandir Marg - Panchkuan Road - Rani Jhansi Road and reach their destinations in North Delhi and vice-versa.

Alternative-2: Reach Connaught Place - Minto Road - Bhambhuti Marg - Ajmeri Gate - Shradhanand Marg - Lahori Gate Chowk - Naya Bazar - Peeli Kothi - S.P. Mukherjee Marg up to ODRS and reach their destination in North Delhi and vice-versa.

Alternative-3: Reach Nizamuddin Bridge to cross Yamuna - Pushta Road - G.T. Road and cross Yudhishthar Setu to ISBT and reach their destination in North Delhi and vice-versa.

EAST WEST ACCESS:

- NH-24 (NH-9) - Nizamuddin Khatta- Barapula Road- under AIIMS Flyover- Ring Road.
- DN-2 - Barapula Road further as per 1 above OR via Ashram on Ring Road & proceed accordingly.
- NH-24 (NH-9) - Nizamuddin Khatta- Ring Road- Bharon Road- Mathura Road- Subrahmanyam Bharti Marg- Rajesh Pilot Marg- Prithviraj Road- Safdarjung Road- Kamal Ataturk Marg- Panchsheel Marg- SP Marg/Ridge Road accordingly and vice versa.
- Vikas Marg- IP Marg- DDU Marg- Minto Road then either via Connaught Place or Ajmeri Gate- DBG Road & proceed further.
- Pusta Road (Shastri Park)- GT Road- Yudhishthar Setu- ISBT Kashmiri Gate and proceed accordingly via Ring Road or Rani Jhansi Road.
- DN2 - NH24 (NH9) - Yudhishthar Setu- Signature Bridge- Wazirabad Bridge will remain open to reach Ring Road.
- Old Iron Bridge and Geeta Colony Bridge towards Shanti Van will be closed.
- People are advised to reach early to avoid last minute rush & inconvenience.
- All RWAs are hereby requested to collect/purchase their essential commodities before 22:00 Hrs. on 12.08.2024 for citizens of Delhi.

SIGNAGES

Adequate informative signage's will be provided for the guidance of vehicular traffic destined for the Red Fort at all important traffic junctions.

RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT OF COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT AND INTERSTATE BUSES:

- Goods vehicles will not be permitted between Nizamuddin Khatta and Wazirabad bridge from 12:00 Midnight of 12.08.2024 to 11:00 AM on 13.08.2024.
- Interstate buses will not be allowed between Mahanara Pratap ISBT and Sarai Kale Khan ISBT from 12:00 Midnight of 12.08.2024 to 11:00 AM on 13.08.2024.

RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT OF CITY BUSES APART FROM RESTRICTED ROADS:

Local city buses including DTC will not move on Ring Road from 12:00 Midnight of 12.08.2024 to 10:00 AM on 13.08.2024 between ISBT Kashmiri Gate and Ring Road - NH-24(NH-9)/NH T point (Nizamuddin Khatta) and take available alternative route.

The following road shall also be closed for movement for Inter City/DTC buses from 12:00 Midnight of 12.08.2024 to 10:00 AM on 13.08.2024.

(A) Lothian Road from Chhatta Rail Chowk to Kashmiri Gate (Boulevard Road).

(B) Netaji Subhash Marg from Chhatta Rail Chowk to Delhi Gate.

(C) Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Marg.

(D) Ring Road between Nizamuddin Khatta (NH-24) and Northern loop of ISBT Kashmiri Gate.

(E) 'C' Hexagon, Shershah Road, Dr. J. I. Hussain Road, Pandara Road, Shanahan Road, Akbar Road, Rajpath, Ashoka Road, KG Marg, Copernicus Marg, Tiak Marg, Purana Qulla Road, Sikandra Road, Bhawan Dass Road and BSZ Marg.

(F) Ashoka Road from R/A Windsor Place to 'C' Hexagon.

(G) KG Marg from Ferrozshah Road to 'C' Hexagon.

(H) Vikas Marg, beyond loop towards Delhi Secretariat.

(I) Mathura Road from Ashram Chowk to W Point.

Buses ordinarily terminating at Red Fort, Jama Masjid and Delhi Main Railway Station will be curtailed/diverted as below:-

- Opposite Ramliha Ground on J.L.N. Marg for buses approaching from South and West Delhi.
- At Mori Gate and Tis Hazari for buses coming from North, North West via Barafkhana and East Delhi via ISBT Bridge.
- At Boulevard Road opp. Maharaja Agrasen Park for buses coming from North Delhi side from Ring Road.

Normal bus service will be restored after 10:00 AM.

How to Approach / Reach important places:-

1) OLD DELHI RAILWAY STATION:-

a) From West and South Delhi:- Mother Teresa Crescent - Park Street - Mandir Marg - Panchkuan Road - Rani Jhansi Flyover - Azad Market - Boulevard Road - Mori Gate - Pul Dufferin - S.P.Mukherjee Marg to reach the Railway Station or Dhaula Kuan- Ridge Road (Vande Matram Marg) - Faiz Road- Rani Jhansi Road & thereafter as above & vice versa.

b) From North:- Mori Gate - Pul Dufferin - S.P. Mukherjee Marg to reach the Railway Station.

c) From East/North East:- Pusta Road - Yudhishthar Setu - Mori Gate - Pul Dufferin - SP Mukherjee Marg then proceed further accordingly.

2) NEW DELHI RLY. STATION:

a) From East-Vikas Marg, DDU Marg, Bhambhuti Marg, ND Railway Station.

b) From North-East:- Yudhishthar Setu, Rani Jhansi Road, R/A Rani Jhansi, DBG Road and reach ND Railway Station accordingly OR via Mori Gate, Pul Dufferin, SP Mukherjee Marg, Outub Road and reach.

c) From North:- Rani Jhansi Road, R/A Rani Jhansi, DBG Road and reach ND Railway Station accordingly OR via Mori Gate, Pul Dufferin, SP Mukherjee Marg, Outub Road and reach.

d) From West:- Pusa Road, R/A Hanuman Murti, Panchkuan Road, Connaught Place, Chelmsford Road and Nd Railway Station OR via DBG Road to reach ND Railway Station.

e) From South:- To reach Connaught Place, Chelmsford Road and ND railway Station OR via DBG Road to reach ND Railway Station.

3) ISBT KASHMERE GATE

a) From New Delhi and South Delhi:- Mother Teresa Crescent- Park Street - Mandir Marg - Panchkuan Road - Rani Jhansi Road and Rani Jhansi Flyover - Boulevard Road.

b) From West Delhi:- Pusa Road, R/A Hanuman Mandir, Faiz Road, Rani Jhansi Road and thereafter as above.

c) From North Delhi:- There is no restriction.

d) From North-East Delhi:- Yudhishthar Setu, Boulevard Road, Mori Gate, Pul Dufferin, SP Mukherjee Marg, Old Delhi Railway Station.

4) J.P.N. HOSPITAL:- There is no restriction.

5) KASTURBA HOSPITAL:- Ajmeri Gate - Ajmeri Bazar - Chowk Haz Quazi - Chawni Bazar - Chowk - Barshaballah - Urdu Bazar.

BUSES COMING FROM SOUTH DELHI

Buses bound for Red Fort, Old Delhi Railway Station, Bhai Mati Dass Chowk (Fountain) from South Delhi will be diverted via Ring Road - NH -24, Marginal Bandh (Pustia) Road, new ISBT Bridge and shall terminate on Boulevard Road.

Return journey by taking 'U' Turn and proceed further via ISBT Bridge.

- Buses bound for Connaught Place from South Delhi shall be diverted towards Ring Road and further take Upper Ridge Road upto R/A Karol Bagh and reach Connaught Place via Jhandewalan Panchkuan Road Shivaji Stadium Terminal.
- Buses bound for ISBT Mahanara Pratap Terminal shall proceed Ring Road and further take Upper Ridge Road upto R/A Karol Bagh Faiz Road Filimistan Azad Mkt. Chowk, Boulevard Road and reach Mori Gate/ISBT.
- Buses bound for East Delhi from South Delhi shall proceed via Ring Road-Hazrat Nizamuddin Bridge (NH -24) - New Patpur Ganj Road.
- Buses bound for East Delhi from South Delhi coming at Lala Lajpat Rai Marg will be diverted on Mathura Road towards the Ashram Chowk - Ring Road from Lodhi Fly over R/A Neela Gumbad.
- Buses bound for Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Kauriya Pul from Ferozshah Road and going towards Mandi House shall take Barafkhana Road from Mandi House, Rajni Singh Flyover and terminate Opp. Turkman Gate Asaf Ali Road.

Return journey via J.L.N. Marg, Ranjeet Singh Flyover by taking 'U' Turn and proceed further.

Mudrika Services (Buses) shall take route via new ISBT Bridge, Shastri Park, Pusta Kailash Gandhi Nagar - Vikas Marg - Mother Dairy Road-NH -24 - Nizamuddin Bridge - turn left Ring Road for Sarai Kale Khan.

INTER STATE BUSES

INCOMING

- All buses coming from Ghaziabad towards Delhi shall move via Bhopura Chungi Road from Mohan Nagar for Wazirabad Road and then towards Chandni Ram Akhara - U turn ISBT and enter ISBT.
- All buses coming from Dhaula Kuan shall be diverted on Ring Road for taking Punjabi Bagh - Azad Pur - Akhara Chandni Ram - U turn ISBT and enter ISBT.
- All buses operating between ISBT and Faridabad (Badarpur) shall either terminate at Sarai Kale Khan or be diverted on Ring Road via Dhaula Kuan Punjabi Bagh - Azad Pur - Akhara Chandni Ram - U turn ISBT and enter ISBT.

OUTGOING

- No bus shall be allowed to take 'U' turn at northern loop of Ring Road near Buth Vihar (Monastery) and should be diverted towards Wazirabad to go Trans Yamuna or take 'U' turn from Chandni Ram Akhara and take loop of ISBT Flyover to go towards Shastri Park and Buses bound for Dhaula Kuan shall take Boulevard Road, Rani Jhansi Road, Link Road and upper Ridge Road (Vande Matram Marg).
- Buses bound for Loni Border shall proceed via Wazirabad Bridge and those bound for Ghaziabad shall proceed via ISBT Bridge.

DTC RECOVERY VANS

DTC recovery vans shall be stationed (from 05:00 AM on 13.08.2024 onward till diversions are cleared) as under:-

- Central Control Room - Gokhale Marg
- Ghata Masjid
- Yamuna Bazar
- Delhi Gate
- Chhatta Rail Chowk

Note:- BUSES ORIGINATING FROM EAST, NORTH, CENTRAL, WEST, SOUTH AND INTENDING TO USE BSZ MARG-TIAK MARG- SUBASH MARG-RING ROAD BETWEEN AKHARA CHANDNI RAM AND HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN BRIDGE BE DIRECTED TO AVOID THESE STRETCHES & TAKE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES AS SUGGESTED ABOVE.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

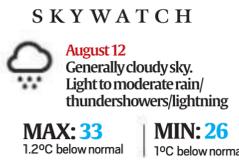
- General public is advised not to bring cameras, binoculars, Remote Control car keys, umbrella, handbags, briefcases, transistors, cigarette lighters, tiffin boxes, water bottles, lunch boxes, etc.
- Don't touch any suspicious object. Immediately report about the presence of any unidentified/suspected object, suspicious movement of individuals & vehicles or anything out of the ordinary, to the nearest policeman.
- Flying of sub conventional aerial platforms like Par- gliders, para-motors, hang gliders, UAVs, micro light aircrafts, remotely piloted aircrafts, hot air balloons, small size powered aircrafts, quadcopters or para jumping from aircraft etc. are prohibited over the jurisdiction of National Capital Territory of Delhi up to 15.08.2024.

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WhatsApp Number: 8750871493
Helpline Numbers: 1095/011-2584444
<https://www.facebook.com/dtpraifc> <https://twitter.com/dtpraifc> <https://www.instagram.com/dtpraifc>

DP/9695/2024



BRIEFLY

Man booked for 'harassing' stepdaughter

Noida: Police on Sunday booked a 35-year-old man for allegedly molesting and sexually harassing his 13-year-old stepdaughter in a high-rise in Noida, officers said. Noida Police officials said that a complaint has been filed by the mother of the victim who alleged that when she confronted the man about the allegations, he threatened her with dire consequences. "The accused, an employee at a private firm, is absconding," said an official, adding that search is on to nab him. **ENS**

Over 700 MT silt removed in a week: L-G

New Delhi: Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena on Sunday said de-silting work in three arterial drains of the national capital is progressing with removal of over 700 MT silt in a week. Saxena had visited Sunehri, Kushak and Barapulla drains on August 4. **PTI**

'POLICY, ORGANISATION MAN' TO NOW HIT THE GROUND

Sisodia to begin padyatra on Aug 14 as re-energised AAP gets into election mode

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

A PADYATRA (footmarch) is on the cards for former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who was released on bail Friday after remaining in jail for 17 months in the excise policy case.

The padyatra is a departure for Sisodia, who has always been seen as more of a policy and organisational leader.

But now, with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in jail, it is Sisodia who will hit the ground.

This was among the several decisions taken during his meeting with senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders at his former official residence at Mathura Road.

While the padyatra will start on Wednesday, Sisodia will meet Delhi MLAs and councillors on Monday and Tuesday.

"It may seem like the Assembly polls are still a long way off, but we need to start campaigning as soon as possible. While we are confident that we will win, Manish ji's return is only going to strengthen



Outside the AAP's new office at Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla lane where shifting process began on Sunday; (R) Manish Sisodia with senior AAP leader and Delhi minister Gopal Rai during a meeting. *Amit Mehra/Express*

us further. We also know that the CM will get bail soon but we want to start preparing in earnest," a senior party leader said.

Talking about Sisodia's role and his importance, another leader said, "For several years, we have seen him mostly running the government even if the CM was busy with political campaigns. The situation has almost been reversed now. The ministers are in touch with the CM at Tihar jail and can discuss issues of governance, while

Manish ji will go door-to-door," he said.

Sunday's meeting saw Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak; Ministers Gopal Rai (who is also AAP's Delhi State Convener), Saurabh Bharadwaj, Atishi and Imran Hussain; National Secretary Pankaj Gupta, MLA Durgesh Pathak, and senior leader Jasmine Shah, among others, in attendance.

"... (he) held a detailed discussion on strategies to defeat the BJP... The leaders' sugges-



tions were carefully considered, and a consensus was reached on how to proceed strategically based on the prevailing circumstances," a statement issued by the party said.

"It is now clear to the people of this country that the only agenda of BJP and PM Narendra Modi is to somehow stop the work of the people of Delhi and break the AAP. Despite so many adverse circumstances, today the AAP is standing tall and doing good work. Also, our party

is moving forward in every state. We have come out of these difficulties stronger. Manish Sisodia will go among the people and meet them. The blessings of the people remain with us. We will continue to work hard for Delhi in the future too," Sandeep Pathak said.

Another thing that was discussed is the way forward in Haryana, which goes to polls before Delhi. Sunita Kejriwal, wife of CM Kejriwal, has been holding public meetings in this regard.

"It has been decided that she will continue campaigning in Haryana with Singh and other leaders and Manish ji will stick to Delhi for the time being. The organisation in Delhi has suffered a lot over the past three-four months. There are some MLAs who have found getting any work done extremely difficult and are now facing a situation where the public sentiment is turning negative. We are sure that with the direct intervention from the top, the cadre will be re-energised," another leader said.

Sisodia, meanwhile, also met the Patparganj constituency volunteers.

Delhi govt nod to new court complex at Rouse Avenue

Aimed at reducing pendency in cases

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11



Finance Minister Atishi

FINANCE MINISTER Atishi has approved the construction of a new district court complex, in a move that is aimed at eventually reducing pendency in court cases in the capital.

To be constructed at a cost of Rs 427 crore, the new complex with 55 courtrooms will soon come up at Rouse Avenue, according to a statement from Delhi government.

"In the meeting of the Executive Finance Committee, Finance Minister Atishi approved this project. She said that speedy and accessible justice is the fundamental right of every Indian and this is possible only when adequate infrastructure is available in the courts," the government stated.

At present, she said, there is a huge burden of pending cases on judges and courts across the country, due to which there is unnecessary delay in the disposal of cases.

"This is a very important project towards enhancing the judicial infrastructure of Delhi

and after its completion, it will be of great help in disposal of judicial cases quickly. In this project, better public facilities will also be created keeping in mind the convenience of judges, lawyers and citizens," she further said.

According to the Delhi government, two blocks will be constructed as part of the project, the first of which will have 11 storeys, including three basements.

The other block will consist of 55 courtrooms across 17 storeys, including three basements; 815 lawyer chambers will be built in both building blocks that will be connected by a skywalk.

Atishi has ordered the departments concerned to prepare a detailed timeline of the project and work towards completing it quickly, the government added.

A Millennium City wasteland

Despite housing offices of several Fortune 500 companies, Gurgaon continues to reel under a garbage crisis. While underpaid contractual workers do most of the heavy lifting to keep the city clean, little is done to improve their lives

AISWARYARAJ
GURGAON, AUGUST 11

BEFORE THE dawn breaks in Gurgaon, Rajarani, a 45-year-old Dalit woman, like a ritual, begins her work day from her own home. She cooks for her family and then cleans the house – a single-room set-up she owns in sector 42. At 7 am, she walks seven kilometres to the Sector 44 parking lot. In a white salwar suit, she heads to the electricity department office – a place to safely store brooms. Soon, a group of 23 sanitation workers gather around their supervisor Jitender, who sends them away in clusters.

In their eight-hour shift, there is no scope – or place – to take a break. "We don't even have toilet facilities. Sometimes, we have to go in the parking lot, in the open area behind cars," says Rajarani.

Gurgaon has a garbage crisis. Though the government has already declared a "Solid Waste Exigency", little seems to have changed on the ground. The city, with a population of around 30 lakh, according to a 2022 Health department survey, produces 1,200 tonnes of waste every day. To clean it, the Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG) has 3,010 sanitation workers and a budget of Rs 500 crore. Last year, it spent Rs 254 crore – less than half its allocation.

At Rs 5 lakh per person, the city has one of the three highest per capita incomes in the country. With Rs 42,244 crore collected in tax last year, Gurgaon contributes up to 3.7% of income tax in the country. The city boasts of offices of at least half of world's Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, IBM, and Amazon.

'So much garbage, so few of us'

Rajarani's group cleans the mounds of garbage in front of 152 office buildings, shops, roads, a parking lot, and surrounding areas in Sector 44. She sweeps and shovels the garbage into a tractor-trolley a few metres away. By the end of her shift at 3.30 pm, fresh bags of waste appear. "There is so much garbage and so few of us, it is impossible," she says.

Of the 3,010 workers, only 175 (about 5%) are regular employees who get dearness, housing rent, petrol, mobile, and uniform allowances. The rest are simply paid Rs 16,900 every month. Some are also provided brooms, oil and soap allowances, totalling Rs 568, apart from a sanitation allowance of Rs 1,000.

Even as the likes of Rajarani toil away, complaints continue to pour in at the Municipal Corporation's redressal cell. In July,



Gurgaon produces 1,200 tonnes of waste every day; (R) a worker leaves for her shift. *Aiswarya Raj*

the cell received over 2,000 sanitation-related complaints. Sanitation inspectors field at least 10 calls every hour; "Waste has not been lifted from our homes for three days" seems to be a common refrain.

A complex machinery

Apart from sanitation workers, there is a complex machinery comprising a contractor with 354 trucks that collects waste door-to-door from 75,000 households. The streets, parking lots, footpaths and other public spaces are cleaned by workers, while earth movers, trucks, tractors and trolleys do the heavy lifting. Six contractors have also been hired by the MCG for additional labour and machinery across four zones. A senior officer says that around 3,000 people have been employed by these contractors for Rs 10,500 per month.

Most of the complaints that MCG has been grappling with come from Zone 3, where Rajarani works.

Most of the sanitation workers hail from Gurgaon, within a 10-km radius of their workplace such as Nathupur and Sikandarpur, while less than 500 are migrants. As much as 80% of them, union leader Kailash says, are Dalits.

The waste the city generates comes in all shapes, sizes, and colours: plastic gunny sacks, bags of dog excrement, unsegregated food waste, plastic cups and plates, footwear, bathtubs, milk wrappers, discarded packets of chips, even ceramic utensils, and mattresses. "And lots of cigarette butts," Rajarani says. The first stop for the garbage is one of many collection points before it all moves to the Bandhwari landfill – known as the "cancerogenic garbage mountain".



had to give up her house for Gurgaon's expansion. "I had a house at Sikandarpur, but it was demolished for the Yellow Line of the Delhi Metro. Seven years later, the government gave us 52 gajji in exchange for the 150 gajji they took. Even now, the land is vacant and a wine shop stands near it."

"I worked hard to ensure my children are in a good line of work," says Rajarani, who has been working for 14 years as a sweeper. Rajarani's two sons are B Tech graduates. Earlier, she would stitch clothes and earn a living. "I had to undergo surgery following a brain haemorrhage. This impeded my vision... and I had to take up the sweeper position."

As she sits down for a break, a rat scurries off from a mound near her. "There are too many pests and we have to work with no safety gear, and sometimes manually segregate waste... The roads in front of office spaces are the hardest to clean due to cigarette butts. It is as if the entire city is smoking," says Rajarani whose mother was a sanitation worker with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

"My children insist that I quit, but I will wait till they get married." Last year, the garbage crisis deteriorated. The MCG's move to hire new contractors had led to a months-long strike as the services of 3,480 workers under private contractors were terminated and the new contractors did not hire them. The crisis was reflected in the Swachh Survekshan ranking 2023 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; Gurgaon ranked 140 in the category of cities with more than 1 lakh population. This was when neighbouring New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) secured the seventh rank and Noida, 14th. In 2022, the city came 19th in the list of cities with a population of 1-10 lakh.

Among the workers are those who have seen the city rise from scratch. Such as Amal Ali who left West Bengal's Malda 20 years ago. "I dropped out of school before Class 10 and left for Delhi with my uncle... I was unhappy and returned to Malda, but after five years I came back, this time to Gurgaon," he says. But it was a different city back then. "Fewer people and less garbage."

In 2010, Ali started working for a contractor hired by the MCG. He says the life in Malda was better. "People here hurl abuses, ask me to clean their waste," he says.

The situation has not improved even after the government declared that a ward that maintains cleanliness standards for two months straight will get a reward of Rs 1 crore. The MCG workers say six contractors have not deployed enough labourers and machines, adding to their workload.

The crisis isn't about a shortage of funds. According to MCG's Chief Accounts Officer Vijay Singla, the budget allotted to the sanitation department last year was Rs 500 crore of which only Rs 245 crore was used. This year, Rs 375 crore has been allotted and Rs 80 crore has been spent so far, he says.

Narhari Singh Banger, the MCG Commissioner, says that funds for various projects, including a waste to energy and C&D waste plants, were allocated but the projects did not take off, owing to which funds were lapsed.

Jitender (38), the supervisor, says he has not been regularised for 10 years and still gets Rs 16,900 a month – the same amount as the workers under him. "We are unable to make the authorities listen to us. After the termination of 25 workers for protesting last year, our union, too, has become weak," he says. Jitender belongs to the Valmiki community; his mother was also a sanitation worker. "She was on the MCG rolls but has not received her share of PF owing to a mistake the clerk made while entering her gender," he says.

Additional Commissioner, MCG, Balpreet Singh says the administration is looking at ways to resolve the crisis. "We will seek alternate methods if the demands are not met soon by the new garbage collection agency, Vimalraj Pvt Ltd. We are also in touch with other private vendors," he says. Singh says funds have been sought to develop sites to process waste. "We have approached five companies to pick up C&D waste from roads."

As Rajarani rises to resume work, a traffic police officer, who had been sitting in a chair under a shed and listening to her, chimes in, "It is not a difficult line of work. Dalits traditionally get into this line..." Rajarani retorts: "I won't let my sons do this."

DAKSHIN BIHAR GRAMIN BANK
REGIONAL OFFICE: 371 A, RAMANUJ BHAWAN, A.P.COLONEY, GAYA-823001

Auction Sale Notice Under SARFAESI ACT, 2002

Auction Sale of immovable Property mortgaged to the Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 read with rules 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules, 2002. Possession of the following property has been taken over by the Authorized Officer, pursuant to the Notice issued U/s 13(2), 13(4) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 in the borrowers accounts mentioned below with a right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS" AND "AS IS WHAT IS" basis for realization of the Bank's Dues.

SR. No.	Branch	Borrower's Name(B)/ Guarantor's Name(G)	Details Of Property (Name Of Mortgagor)	(A) Demand Notice -13(2) (B) Possession Notice- 13(4) (C) Balance outstanding as per Demand Notice.	(A) Reserve Price Rs. (B) EMD (C) Incremental Bid Amount
1.	GHUGHARI TAND	B- Sri Muri Manohar Sinha S/o Sri Roy Radhika Raman Sinha	All that part & parcel of the property consisting of Land & Building belongs to Sri Muri Manohar Sinha S/o Sri Roy Radhika Raman Sinha bearing Reg. Sale Deed No- 13167/2016 Dt. 26.08.2016, Khata No.- 215, Plot No.- 1353/1668, Area- 2.22 decimal situated at Mauza- Paroriya, PS- Mufassil, PS No.-300, Anchal-Manpur Dist-Gaya. Boundary (As per Deed): North: Kachchi Rasta, South: Nij Lekhykari, East: Hal Kharidar Ramesh Pandey, West: Bandh & Aahar.	A. 27-09-2021 B. 29-01-2022 C. Rs. 14,23,909/- + Future Interest + Other Charges	A. Rs. 12,58,200/- B. Rs. 1,25,820/- C. Rs. 12,582/-
2.	AP COLONY	B- Sri Durga Prasad S/o Late Ram Prakash Ram Urf Late Pragas Ram	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Building in the name of Mr/Mrs. Durga Prasad S/o, Late Pragas Ram @ Late Ram Prakash Ram measuring an area of 870.5 Sqft. of Mohalla Gopalganj Road Manpur Thana No 251, MSP Plot no 2182, Tauzi No 5151 PS-Mufassil, Sub-Registry District- Gaya District- Gaya. Bounded By : North : Krishna Prasad , South : Malti Devi, East : Hemwanti Devi, West : Niz Mokir	A. 02.11.2022 B. 09-11-2023 C. Rs. 12,22,259/- + Future Interest + Other Charges	A. Rs. 20,53,000/- B. Rs. 2,05,300/- C. Rs. 20,530/-
3.	SP ROAD	B - Navin Kumar S/o Late Ramashish Prasad	Mortgage Of land & Building Belongs to Navin Kumar & Amit Kumar Suman Both son of Late Ramashish Prasad Of Chotki Gali Road, gaya. Property 1. Mouza : Murarpur , Mohalla chotki Delha , Thana no- 5 , Deed No- 13116/90 Dated 11.07.1988, Touzi no- 2494 , Khata No- 85 , Plot No- 30 , Area - 920 Sq Feet Boundry As Per Deed: North : 10 feet Wide Rasta , South : Shambhu Sharan , East : Main Road of Colony , West : Bhagwani devi Property 2. Mouza : Murarpur , Mohalla chotki Delha , Thana no- 5 , Deed No- 13117/90 Dated 11.07.1988, Touzi no- 2494 , Khata No- 85 , Plot No- 30 , Area - 1200 Sq Feet Boundry As Per Deed: North : 10 feet Wide Rasta , South : Shambhu Sharan , East : Ramashish Prasad , West : Vacant Plot	A. 07-09-2018 B. 27-03-2019 C. Rs. 27,58,343.80/- + Future Interest + Other Charges	Proprty 1. A. Rs. 23,61,000/- B. Rs. 2,36,100/- C. Rs. 23,610/- Proprty 2. A. Rs. 48,70,000/- B. Rs. 4,87,000/- C. Rs. 48,700/-
4.	NOURANGA	B - Puran Kumar S/o Late Birja Singh	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Building in the name of Mr/Mrs. Puran Kumar S/o Late Birja Singh having Deed No. 5187 Dt. 08.04.2015, measuring an area of 4.68 Decimal of Mouja Grere , Thana No 252, Khata No 211, Plot No 728, PS- Mufassil , Sub-Registry District- Gaya District- Gaya. Bounded by:- North: Nij Lekhyakari, South: 12.00" Rasta badahu Sanjay Singh & Shyam Singh ka makan, East: Jai Narayan Singh, West: 12.00" Rasta	A. 14.12.2023 B. 19.03.2024 C. Rs. 16,69,087/- + Future Interest + Other Charges	A. Rs. 13,21,200/- B. Rs. 1,32,120/- C. Rs. 13,212/-
5.	AP COLONY	B- Amit Kumar S/o Sri Gopal Singh	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Building in the name of Mr/Mrs. Amit Kumar S/o Sri Gopal Singh having Deed No. 4899 Dt 04-04-2015 measuring an area of 1 Decimal of Mauza Bhadeji, P.S. Mofassil, Khata No 146, Plot No 391 Sub-Registry District-Gaya District- Gaya. Boundary (As per Mortgaged Deed) : North: Rasta & Laxman Prasad, South: Rasta & Satyanarayan Prasad, East: Satyanarayan Prasad, Plot Haza, West: Rasta & Shivsharan Prasad.	A. 14.12.2023 B. 19.03.2024 C. Rs. 10,41,368/- + Future Interest + Other Charges	A. Rs. 6,20,000/- B. Rs. 62,000/- C. Rs. 6,200/-
6.	GHUGHARITAND	B- Sanjay Kumar S/o Late Tannu Saw Co- Borrower - Punam Devi W/o Sanjay Kumar	All that part and parcel of the property of Land and Building in the name of Mr/Mrs. Punam Devi W/o Sri Sanjay Kumar having Deed No. 1811 Dt 03.02.2018 measuring an area of 333 Sq feet (0.76 Decimal) of Mauza Chotki Delha gali BhuiToli, Ward No - 03 , khata no - 85, Plot No - 46, Makaan No- 1264, P.S- Delha, District Registry Office -Gaya District- Gaya. Boundary (As per Mortgaged Deed) : North: Budhdev Sharma, South: 8 feet wide Road, East: Deepak Kumar, West: Vijay Kumar Part of Nij Plot.	A. 20.12.2023 B. 29.04.2024 C. Rs. 9,26,949.20/- + Future Interest + Other Charges	A. Rs. 17,23,500/- B. Rs. 1,72,350/- C. Rs. 17,235/-

Date of Auction 20.09.2024 (Time- 11:00 AM), Place - Regional Office, Gaya.

1. For participation in the Auction, each intending bidder has to make a refundable deposit EMD by way of Pay Order/ Demand Draft, Payable at **Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank, A.P. Colony, Gaya** branch. The said EMD will have to be deposited with the Authorized Officer within the Banking hours by 19.09.2024 The said deposit shall be adjusted in case of successful bidders. 2. The authorized Officer reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the bid/offer or adjure/postpone/cancel the auction sale without assigning any reason thereof. 3. The aforesaid property shall not be sold below the reserve price mentioned. 4. If the Bid/ Offer is accepted by the Authorized Officer, the successful Bidder who has offered the highest sale price in the bid has to pay a Deposit of 25% of the Bid Amount inclusive of EMD of the Sale Price immediately on the same day to the Authorized Officer, failing which the Earnest Money Deposit shall be forfeited and the property shall forthwith will be sold again. 5. The successful Bidder shall pay the remaining 75 % of the bid amount on or before the 15th Day of confirmation of Auction Sale by means of Pay Order/ DD favoring **Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank, A.P. Colony, Gaya** branch. 6. In default of payment of balance amount 75 % of bid amount within the stipulated period i.e. 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. The deposit amount 25 % of bid amount inclusive of EMD shall be forfeited and the property shall be resold and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold. 7. On confirmation of sale by the bank and if the terms of payment have been complied with, the authorized officer exercising the power of sale shall issue a sale certificate for immovable property/ certificate of sale for moveable property, as the case may be, in favour of the purchaser in the specified format of the bank as per the rules under Securitization Act 2002. 8. The property is being sold "AS IS WHERE IS" AND "AS IS WHAT IS" basis and subjects to the condition prescribed in the Securitization Act 2002. 9. The interested parties / Bidders may inspect the property put up for the Auction Sale during the working hours of the bank for which they may contact our Branch Manager/ Regional Officer with a written request accompanied by the copy of acknowledgment of EMD as aforesaid. 10. Symbolic possession of the property will be handed over to the successful bidder by the authorized officer. The successful Bidder shall bear exclusively all the charges payable for physical possession, Registration Fee, Stamp Duty, Taxes, Statutory dues etc. as applicable. 11. The sale/ auction is subject to confirmation by the bank. 12. The authorized officer will not be held responsible for any charge, Lien, Encumbrances, Property tax or any other dues to the government or anybody in respect of the property proposed to be auction. 13. This is also a notice to the borrower / Guarantor of the aforesaid loan about holding of auction sale on above mentioned dated if their dues are not repaid in full.

Authorised Officer
Dakshin Bihar Gramin Bank

Place : Gaya
Date : 12.08.2024

WILL ENSURE PUNISHMENT TO GUILTY, SAYS AAP GOVT

13-year-old boy electrocuted while playing cricket in park

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

A 13-YEAR-old boy was electrocuted on Saturday when he went to fetch a ball while playing cricket at a park in West Delhi's Ranhola area and came in contact with an iron pole, said police.

The incident took place around 1:30 pm on Saturday at Kotla Vihar Phase 2, according to the details received via a PCR (police control room) call. "An electric pole is erected in one corner of the ground and when the boy, Aditya Mehto, went to get the ball, he touched the pole while looking for support and got electrocuted. The iron pole provides electricity to a cowshed adjacent to the ground," said an officer.

The boy was immediately rushed to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital where he was declared dead.

A case under section 106 (1) (causing the death of any person by doing a rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide) of the BNS has been filed by police.

The teen often went to play at the park near his home his family said. The park also doubles up as a cricket ground—around 100 to 150 children visit the ground



The park also doubles up as a cricket academy. Express

during evenings and weekends, according to locals.

The boy's father, Bechan Mehto, works as a daily wagger, while his mother is a housewife.

"Why was the electric pole erected inside a ground where so many children play in the first place?" asked a grieving Mehto.

Vishal, Aditya's cousin, shared, "Aditya studied in a government school and has two other brothers...He was passionate about playing cricket and would always go to the park where the incident took place. His mother had to go and force him to come back home to study."

A senior police officer said that they have sent notices to the owner of the gaushala and the cricket academy to provide property documents for their premises.

"The Electricity Department has also been contacted to check as to how come the pole was erected inside the academy ground," he said.

On Saturday, the death of the 13-year-old triggered a protest in the area as the family demanded justice.

Meanwhile, sources in the discom on Sunday said that the discom network "is nowhere involved in the incident".

"It appears that the iron pipe had an electrical leakage from an internal wire of the premises that was wrapped around it, which led to this unfortunate accident," a source said.

In an official statement, the Delhi government said, "It's extremely unfortunate, our hearts go out to the family and friends of

DEATHS DUE TO ELECTROCUTION

■ On July 13, a 34-year-old wading through a waterlogged street in Yamuna Vihar came in contact with a live wire

■ On July 22, a 26-year-old civil service aspirant died near the Patel Nagar metro station

■ On July 31, a ragpicker was electrocuted in South Delhi's Sangam Vihar

■ On August 1, a 12-year-old died in Dwarka's Bindapur

the young boy during this incredibly difficult time, and we stand in solidarity with the grieving family. We are treating this matter with the utmost urgency, we will ensure that the guilty are identified and punished strictly in accordance with the law."

"The safety and well-being of all citizens, particularly our children, is our top priority," the statement added.

The BJP has demanded a probe into the matter.

7-year-old boy drowns while playing in waterlogged park in Rohini

ENS & PTI
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD boy drowned in a waterlogged park in Rohini's Sector 20 on Saturday, said police.

A PCR call regarding the drowning of a child was received

Police is also scanning the CCTV footage in the area for more inputs.

at around 6:30 pm at the Aman Vihar police station, said officials, adding that the incident happened when the child was playing in the park.

A police team then rushed to the spot and took the child to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

The victim was identified as Tarun, a resident of Aman Vihar. Said an officer, "Preliminary inquiry revealed that the child had drowned in the jheel (pond) formed due to rainwater in the park situated in Sector 20, Rohini". The body was sent for post-mortem. Police is also scanning the CCTV footage to know the actual sequence of events, the officer added.

DTC ridership still lower than pre-Covid levels, official points to service gap, rise in Metro footfall

DEVANSH MITTAL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

AN INCREASE in metro footfall in Delhi and unreliable bus services are believed to be among the factors that contributed to the fall in the ridership of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), according to Shilpa Shinde, Managing Director, DTC.

Even as the bus fleet expanded, the ridership of the main public transport operator of the national capital fell to a whopping 91 crore in 2022-23 as compared to the pre-pandemic numbers—121 crore in 2019-20. In the year 2023-24, however, the figure recovered slightly to 95.10 crore. The total traffic revenue fell from approximately Rs 735 crore before the pandemic to Rs 683 crore in 2022-23. It increased to Rs 709.11 crore last year.

Meanwhile, the daily metro ridership shot up to 46.2 lakh in 2022-23 from roughly 28 lakh before the pandemic in 2019-20, according to the Delhi Economic Survey 2023-24. This year, the daily passenger journeys hit a record 71.09 lakh in February, as compared to around 60 lakh in October 2023.

"Unreliable services of buses is the primary reason for the fall in number. The increase in metro ridership has come at the cost of



DTC had a ridership of 121 crore before pandemic. File

DTC ridership," Shinde said, pointing to the expanding metro network. The rise in the use of private transport could also be linked to the decline in DTC ridership, which was "concerning", Shinde further said as she highlighted an "unusual congestion on Delhi's roads in the last five years."

Roughly three public buses broke down every day in July, according to updates posted on X, formerly Twitter, by the Delhi Traffic Police, triggering traffic snarls across the capital. In total, the Delhi Traffic Police posted about more than 90 breakdowns of public buses, which include DTC as well as cluster buses. A majority of these buses are said to have reached the end of their life cycle (15 years of operation or 10 lakh kilometres).

ADTC official pointed to more

frequent breakdowns of the buses running on CNG, which make up most of DTC's fleet. Officials estimate that all CNG buses will be off the roads by 2026 when they will hit the 15-year limit. According to experts, these buses should've been replaced after eight years, considering the rough conditions they operate in.

To offset the loss of CNG buses the government is adding electric buses to the fleet. With the introduction of 320 new electric buses last month, the number of electric buses in DTC's fleet has shot up to 1,570. Shinde also pointed to measures such as using technology to ensure timely bus arrivals and keeping buses clean to attract passengers to DTC buses.

The average number of passengers ferried daily by the DTC buses fell from 33.29 lakhs in 2019-20 to around 25 lakhs after the pandemic, according to Delhi's Economic Survey 2023-24. The alarming fall in the DTC bus ridership was also highlighted in the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) annual report this year. It pointed to a massive 48.5% drop in bus ridership from 2017-18. High wait time and poor service were some of the reasons linked to the drop despite the introduction of modern buses, according to the report.

(Devansh Mittal is an intern with The Indian Express)

Task at hand for 32 government officers: Mentoring schools that are faring poorly

SOPHIYA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

EYEING AN improvement in the overall academic performance of 67 government schools in Delhi where Class 9 and Class 11 students fared the worst in the last academic session, the Directorate of Education (DoE) has handed a task to 32 district-level officers in the Education Department — mentoring the schools. These government officers have been asked to adopt the assigned schools and keep a tab on overall performance for the current academic session, according to a DoE circular.

At least once every two weeks, the officers will have to fill out the 'Adopted Inspection Report' regularly after a visit to the assigned school, as per the circular issued on August 9. The list of government schools has been prepared by the Exam Branch.

"As a mentor, we are in touch with the schools. We identify the challenges, and our objective is to facilitate improvement. Every area has unique challenges. For instance, some schools may be in densely populated areas, so there is overcrowding. After identifying the challenge, we come up with a strategy. There will be varying degrees of success because the challenges are different everywhere," said an official on condition of anonymity.

He added that this practice has been a norm for years and it has consistently shown the desired outcome.

In general, two schools are assigned to each officer but due to the non-availability of officers, three schools have been allotted to Deputy Director of Education (DDE) West A, DDE Zone 14, and DDE Zone 15.

The officers are also expected to record points of observation for Class 9 to Class 12, which include a count of guest and permanent faculty, evaluation of skill subjects, support material provided, and attendance of the students.

"The academic performance of Class 9 students declined considerably this time and the worst-affected were students in North East government schools because of lack of attention on



The academic performance for current session is in focus. File

the quality of the education in those schools," said a government teacher who did not wish to be named.

Insufficient infrastructure, a disproportionate student-classroom ratio, staff shortage, a high number of first-time learners and young boys trying to fill in the shoes of the bread-earner, late provision of textbooks and supporting material from the department, improper parental counselling — these were among the factors that led to poor results, the teacher said.

A government official further highlighted that the unique challenges faced by the students in the geographic area include the "problem of space crunch" and "inadequate educational environment in homes". Additionally, the stakeholders give a passive response, claimed the teacher.

When asked about the overall performance, a DDE Exam Branch official said, "Approximately 97% or more have cleared compartment examinations of Class 10 and more than 98% have passed the compartment of Class 12."

However, the results of Class 9 in the academic session 2023-24 were dismal with only around 64% of students clearing the compartment examinations and in Class 11, 17,308 students could not clear the compartment examinations, as reported by The Indian Express on July 18.

'DESTINATION INDIA' EXHIBITION AT DELHI ART GALLERY

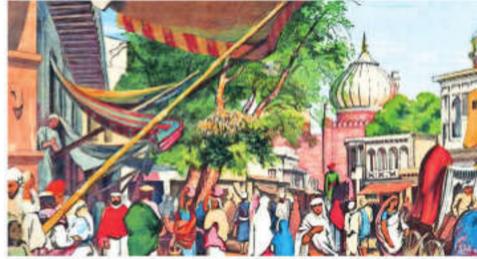
From Jama Masjid to Lutyens' Delhi, a look at how foreign artists saw the Capital

VANDANA KALRA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

RESTORED TO its former glory in 2018, the 13-meter high arched gate of Arab Sarai in Delhi's Nizamuddin East stands mighty now but when Danish artist Hugo Vilfred Pedersen was in Delhi in the early 1900s, it was evidently in need of repair. Despite its crumbling state, it did catch the attention of the voyager who painted it in oil with crumbling borders that depicted the inlay stonework falling apart.

The canvas with impressionist brushstrokes now forms part of the exhibition "Destination India" at the Delhi Art Gallery (DAG) that documents India between 1857 and 1947 through works of foreign artists travelling through the country. On till August 24, the exhibition is also a testament to how a number of them were interested not just in monuments but, unlike most of their predecessors, also in scenes from everyday life, people and society.

"They (the artists) were attracted to the people, and not just to the grandees, but to ordinary people in the streets," writes Ashish Anand, CEO and



One of the artworks on display. Courtesy: Delhi Art Gallery

MD of DAG in a book accompanying the exhibition. On display are works of nearly 40 artists from across the globe, including Britain, Germany, France, and Japan.

"The aim is not merely to retrace the steps of those who came before but to explore the intricate perspectives of a new generation of artists who found different nuances and beauty in the Indian subcontinent," writes MP Shashi Tharoor in the book.

So while we do see familiar scenes and monuments — including Delhi's Jama Masjid — the gaze is atypical. If artist William Carpenter's 1857 wood

engraving depicts a crowded street behind the iconic mosque with its dome visible from a distance, in a 1864 work, William Simpson presents a bird's-eye view of the monument, then surrounded with vast open grounds.

Art historian Pheroza Godrej notes in the publication: "The show uncovers a forgotten archive of painters and print-makers in a fast-changing (colonial) India, in a period when images were being transmitted as picture postcards (from 1880 onwards) and photography had become the dominant medium of documentation."

The exhibition view begins with works of Dutch artist

Marius Bauer, who toured India twice — in 1898, and 1924-25. Knighted thrice in the Netherlands and a recipient of the prestigious Grand Prix at the Paris Exposition 1900, his very first watercolour in the exhibition has a terrace with canopies and dancing peacocks. In other works, the Orientalist artist also paints the ceremonial ox-drawn cart and elephants, and a courtyard of a palace. Illustrator of children's books Walter Crane depicts the Tomb of Mohammed Ghaus in Gwalior in his 1907 watercolour on paper. In Mary Anne Blyth's 1860 watercolour, we see the falls of Courtallam in Tirunelveli.

Portraitist and landscape artist William Carpenter's 1858 wood engraving has "Raja Jowahar Singh and Attendants" in bright hues. Simpson paints a gypsy girl in The Brindjarries (1863), and the prolific Horace van Ruith paints a Shaivite ascetic, and portrait of a Maratha man. We also see Lutyens' Delhi as it was being built. In London-born David Gould Green's 1916 watercolour and pastel on paper, the dome of the Rashtrapati Bhawan is visible from afar, years before it was completed in 1929.

Maximum temperature drops to lowest in 17 days as heavy rain lashes Delhi



Several parts in Delhi-NCR witnessed waterlogging, on Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE in the Capital dropped to its lowest in 17 days as heavy rains lashed several parts of Delhi-NCR on Sunday.

The maximum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 31 degrees Celsius, three notches below normal, at the Safdarjung base station. The minimum temperature was recorded at 26 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal.

Instances of traffic snarls, waterlogging and tree-falling were reported while Delhi airport saw three flight diversions, officials said.

An official said three flights of Air India were diverted, two to Jaipur and one to Lucknow between 9.45 am and 11.15 am, the official added.

Safdarjung station logged 26.6 mm, SPS Mayur Vihar 57 mm, Palam 38.7 mm, Lodhi Road 30.8 mm, Ridge 2.6 mm, Aya Nagar 49.4 mm, Delhi University 4 mm, Pusa 5.5 mm, Najafgarh 25 mm, Pitampura 6.5 mm, and Narela 0 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm, as per data by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). According to Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) officials, the Central Control Room received 12 complaints of waterlogging. The Delhi Traffic Police issued several traffic alerts due to waterlogging. (With PTI inputs)



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12 August 2024 | 4.00 PM
Chennai

Keynote Address



Dr. PTR Palanivel Thiaga Rajan
Minister for Information Technology & Digital Services, Tamil Nadu

Fireside Chat



K Chandru
Retired Judge
Madras High Court

Panellists



Anshul Mishra IAS
Member Secretary
Chennai Metropolitan
Development Authority (CMDA)



Anant Maringanti
Executive Director
Hyderabad Urban Lab



D. Raghunandan
Project Lead
Inhaf ClimACT-Chennai



Sabareesh Suresh
Manager
Climate Action Implementation
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8 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



NOT-SO-COOL IDEA

IT MAY have been an old practice at the ministry office but the new minister did not take kindly to it. Staffers at the Krishna Bhawan office of Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan used to switch on the ACs before his arrival to cool down the room. One day when Chouhan realised that the ACs were already running, he called the officials and instructed them not to switch on the TV, lights and ACs before his arrival. Chouhan asked the officials to conserve energy by switching off all electrical devices when not required. An official said the minister has been following this principle to save energy for years.

NEW OLD NEIGHBOURS

IT SEEMS Paswans and Gandhis are destined to be neighbours in Lutyens' Delhi. Former Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan was the immediate neighbour of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi till he passed away in 2020. Gandhi's move to walk across to Paswan's home at 12, Janpath in 2003 was seen as a significant moment in India's coalition politics as it ensured the exit of the socialist leader from the BJP-led NDA into the Congress-led UPA camp. Now the second generation in the two families are going to be neighbours again. Paswan's son and Union Minister Chirag Paswan has been allotted 1 Sunehri Bagh as his official residence, while Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi has been offered the adjacent bungalow number 5 at Sunehri Bagh. The LoP is expected to move into the bungalow as soon as the renovation work is over.

Akhilesh: Constitution sanjeevani, quota is the oxygen for PDA

LALMANI VERMA & MAULSHREE SETH
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, AUG 11

A DAY after Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge called the Supreme Court's ruling on SC/ST subclassification a "big setback" for the SCs and STs, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday said there was no need to change provisions of reservation.

On the importance of reservation, Yadav said the Constitution is 'sanjeevani' (lifesaver) and reservation is 'Prana-vayu' (oxygen) for "PDA" (Pichda, Dalit and Alpsankhyak).

"Reservation is the constitutional way to empower and strengthen the exploited and deprived society, this is what will bring change," he said, adding that the "khai (gap)" of discrimination for several generations cannot be bridged by changes that have emerged in a few generations.

Hitting out at the BJP, Yadav said, "BJP's internal thinking has always been anti-reservation. That's why the trust of most of the PDA community on BJP is continuously eroding. The credibility of the BJP on the issue of reservation has become zero," Yadav said.

On August 1, a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the SC in a 6-1 majority verdict ruled that SCs do not constitute a socially homogeneous class and can be sub-classified by states for the purpose of providing reservation to the less privileged among them. Four judges favoured excluding the creamy layer from the SC/ST quota.

Meanwhile, BSP chief Mayawati during a meeting with party leaders in Lucknow

BSP TO CONTEST U.P. BYPOLL: MAYAWATI

Lucknow: BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday announced that her party would contest the bypolls on 10 Assembly seats in UP, saying the BJP has made it a "prestige issue". She hit out at the BJP, saying its governments in Uttar Pradesh and at the Centre have failed to check poverty, unemployment, inflation as well as backwardness.

At a meeting with senior party office bearers, Mayawati is learnt to have said: "There is resentment among the public due to failure of the BJP government at the Centre and UP... to divert people's attention, the government is engaging in destructive bulldozer politics or creating new controversies on caste or religion."

She was referring to the state's decision to amend the anti-conversion law and the SC verdict allowing the states to make sub-classifications within SCs and STs. **ENS**

From Paris Olympics, lessons for Indian politicians on both sides of the aisle



THE NEERAJ CHOWDHURY COLUMN
Weekly insight into what's changing in national politics — and why

TWO MAJOR events last week, India's performance at the Paris Olympics and the political developments in Dhaka, brought home a simple message: how much our politicians could learn from our sportspersons.

When wrestler Vinesh Phogat, disqualified for being 100 grams overweight, posted her anguish on X — "everything is shat-

tered... Goodbye wrestling 2001-2024" — Beijing Olympics gold medalist Abhinav Bindra told her: "Some (victories) end up in a cabinet (cupboard) and the ones that matter find their way into the stories we tell our children. And every child in the country will know the champion you are."

Bindra's words were a tribute to Vinesh's grit, which had overcome among other things, injuries and the trauma of the battle she fought last year taking on the high and mighty, including former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh who the wrestlers had accused of sexual harassment. Bindra echoed what many in India felt that day. To paraphrase John Donne: "Your defeat

Maldives a key partner in maintaining stability in region, says Jaishankar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALE, AUGUST 11

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday concluded a crucial visit to Male, assuring the country's top leadership that the Maldives remains an important partner of India in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.

Jaishankar's three-day visit to the Maldives was the first high-level trip from New Delhi after President Mohamed Muizzu, seen as a pro-China leader, assumed office in November last year. India's relationship with the Maldives soon came under severe strain due to the actions of the new government here.

During his visit, Jaishankar called on President Muizzu and held wide-ranging talks with his counterpart Moosa Zameer. He also met Maldivian Defence Minister Ghassan Maumoon, the Ministers of Finance and Economic Development & Trade and the Governor of Maldives



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Maldives counterpart Moosa Zameer in Addu city on Sunday. ANI

Monetary Authority. Jaishankar's visit highlights the importance of the Maldives, India's maritime neighbour, as a key partner in the 'Neighbourhood First' policy and India's Vision 'SAGAR' i.e. Security and Growth for All in the Region, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on Sunday. "Maldives remains an important partner of India in maintain-

ing peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region. The visit reaffirmed the continued commitment of both countries to strengthening their multi-dimensional bilateral relationship and deepening their close people-to-people ties," it said.

India's relationship with the Maldives came under severe strain since Muizzu took charge as the President late last year. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel manning three aviation platforms gifted by India to the Maldives. After talks between the two countries, the Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians.

During his meeting with President Muizzu, Jaishankar extended greetings from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

President Muizzu appreciated India's continued developmental assistance provided to Maldives and reaffirmed his commitment to deepen the India-Maldives relationship further, the MEA statement said.

I-Day guest list: Youth, farmers, women and poor in focus

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

FARMERS, YOUTH, women and the poor — described by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the "four pillars of a developed India" during his first visit to Varanasi after being reelected for a third term in June — dominate the list of over 4,000 special guests that the Centre has drawn up for the Independence Day celebrations.

The special guests have been invited along with a family member each to the event at Red Fort. The guests have been divided into 11 categories, with 1,000 of them from the Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare category. From the Youth Affairs category, 600 have been invited, and 300 from the Women and Child Development category.

Others are from Panchayati Raj and Rural Development (300 each); Tribal Affairs (350); School Education and Literacy and Border Roads Organisation/ Ministry of Defence (200 each); Health and Family Welfare and Sports (150 each). Also, there are 1,200 special guests from Niti Aayog category.

Invites to the special guests are sent by the departments concerned via the Ministry of Defence. "...150 elected women representatives, along with their families, are included. There's a focus on youth, with 400 NSS volunteers under the Meri Maati Mera Desh scheme, 100 beneficiaries of MyBharat scheme, and students of PM Shri schools being on the list," a source said.

About 150 students of Eklavya Model Residential Schools, 100 tribal artisans and Van Dhan Vikas Yojana members, and 50 tribal entrepreneurs are invited. "All the special guests will arrive in Delhi on August 14 and some of them are scheduled to visit the National War Memorial. They would call on some senior ministers during their stay in Delhi," the source said. The overall guest list is much higher, with at least 18,000 e-invitation cards having been issued for the 78th Independence Day celebrations.

Modi releases 109 high-yield, climate-resilient crop varieties

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Sunday released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient and biofortified varieties of crops at an event at the India Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi.

"The 109 varieties of 61 crops released by the Prime Minister included 34 field crops and 27 horticultural crops. Among the field crops, seeds of various cereals including millets, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, fibre and other potential crops were released. Among the horticultural crops, different varieties of fruits, vegetable crops, plantation crops, tuber crops, spices, flowers and medicinal crops were released," the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Modi also spoke with farmers and scientists on the occasion. "Discussing the importance of these new crop varieties, the



PM Narendra Modi with Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at India Agricultural Research Institute in Delhi. PTI

Prime Minister stressed on the significance of value addition in agriculture. The farmers said that these new varieties will be highly beneficial as they will help reduce their expenditure and also have a positive impact on the environment," the PMO statement said.

The PM also discussed the importance of millets, and about the benefits of "natural farming and the increasing faith of com-

Foreign Secy meets Nepal leadership

Kathmandu: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Sunday met with Nepal's top leadership, including Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, and discussed ways to advance the bilateral cooperation in various sectors with the Himalayan nation since the formation of a new government here.

Misri, who is here on a two-day visit, made a courtesy call on President Ramchandra Paudel at his office in Kathmandu.

Misri also met Oli, who was sworn in last month, at his office at Singhdurbar.

Earlier in the day, Misri and Secretary of Nepal's Urban Development Ministry Maniram Gelal jointly inaugurated a new building of Nepal Bhasha Parishad in Kathmandu built under India's post-earthquake reconstruction grant. **PTI**

'Infiltration spurt despite presence of troops': Farooq talks of collusion

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, AUGUST 11



National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah

NATIONAL CONFERENCE president and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah Sunday suggested collusion was to blame for the spurt in cross-border infiltration and smuggling of narcotics into the Union Territory.

He told party workers in Kishtwar: "Mujhe bataiye, itni fauj hai humarey border pe, kisi bhi mulk mein itni fauj nahi hai. Phir bhi yeh log kaise aa rahey hain. Yeh dawaiyan kaise aa rahi hain. Miley huey hain. Humari barbaadi ke liye mile hue hain (We have so many troops deployed on the border; no other country has such deployment. How are they (terrorists) coming in? How are narcotics coming in? They have colluded, colluded for our destruction."

"We believed and had faith in them (the establishment) for ten years, but they said one thing and did the other. Our educated children protested and faced batons," he said, adding that he cannot explain the atrocities inflicted on NC workers.

He appealed to the people to unite for safeguarding the future of the Union Territory and for their support in the upcoming Assembly elections. His comments come against the backdrop of a series of terror attacks in both Jammu and Kashmir.

Senior BJP leaders and former deputy chief ministers, Nirmal Singh and Kavinder Gupta, described Abdullah's statement as "utterly baseless" and made "out of frustration after having lost political relevance" in the J&K.

Abdullah often makes such statements but no one takes them seriously, Singh told reporters in Doda, adding that the NC leader is known for speaking "nonsense". Gupta said Abdullah's reckless and baseless accusations are nothing but a desperate attempt to regain lost political ground. "His insinuations of collusion be-

ARMS, NIGHT-VISION TECH FOR VILLAGE DEFENCE GUARDS

Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir Director General of Police RR Swain said Sunday that village defence guards (VDGs) will be equipped with weapons and night-vision devices in an effort to shore up the anti-infiltration grid along the International Border with Pakistan. He said this would create "a new level of difficulty for the enemy".

VDGs will be "suitably rewarded" for their efforts in countering infiltration, the DGP told reporters. He also said that standard operating procedures will be laid out for the smooth functioning of VDGs in close coordination with the BSF and the police.

The DGP was speaking after a meeting with senior police officers, BSF officers, and VDGs at Rajpara in Samba district. He said the aim of the meeting was to establish a close rapport with the VDGs so as to strengthen the anti-infiltration grid. **ENS**

tween our honorable Indian Army and terrorists are not only unfounded but also a grave insult to the brave men and women who sacrifice their lives to protect our nation," he said.

Ghulam Nabi Azad-led Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) also took objection to Abdullah's remarks. "He is a senior politician and it is very unfortunate that he has questioned the bravery of the Indian Army," a DPAP spokesperson said.

Diplomat to minister, Natwar Singh's long journey

ASAD REHMAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

A DIPLOMAT, politician, and author. In his public life, Natwar Singh essayed several roles and made the transition between them almost seamlessly over the decades. A former External Affairs Minister, Singh died late on Saturday at the age of 93.

Singh was a veteran Congress leader who forayed from diplomacy to politics in the 1980s. He shared a good rapport with Indira Gandhi and later Rajiv, holding important portfolios in his government. But his relationship with the Congress became complicated after he fell out with Sonia Gandhi over allegations of corruption against him when he was the external affairs minister in the UPA-I government and after leaving the government his political career came to an end.

Born on May 16, 1931, in Rajasthan's Bharatpur, Singh, an alumnus of St Stephen's College in Delhi and Cambridge University, joined the Indian Foreign Service

(IFS) in 1953 and served as India's Deputy High Commissioner to the UK from 1973-1977 and was appointed High Commissioner of India to Zambia in 1977. He also served as Ambassador to Pakistan from 1980 for two years. In 1983, Singh served as the head of the preparatory panel of the Non-Alignment Summit in Delhi.

Singh was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1984.

Once he jumped into politics, he was fast-tracked into the Rajiv government and handled important portfolios like steel, mines, and coal and agriculture from 1985-1986. He then served as Minister of State (MoS) in the Ministry of External Affairs between 1986 and 1989, under Rajiv Gandhi. After Gandhi's assassination, Singh got sidelined in the Congress as P V Narasimha Rao, with whom he shared a strained bond, took over as PM. He then became a founder member of the All India Indira Congress.

However, with Sonia at the helm, he returned to the party after a decade later and was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2002.



NATWAR SINGH
1931-2024

After the UPA won the 2004 poll, he took charge of the External Affairs Ministry. In 2006, he resigned after his name appeared in the oil-for-food scam. During a probe, it was found that people close to Singh, including his son Jagat, allegedly made gains from payments in exchange for contracts in Iraq during the Saddam Hussein regime. Singh always said he hadn't made personal gains from the payments despite UN's Volcker Committee naming him and the Congress as beneficiaries of illegal payments in the scam.

In February 2008, Singh resigned from the Congress, ending his nearly 25-year association

with the party. In 2008, he joined the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) but was expelled in months for "anti-party activities", after failing to secure a Rajya Sabha nomination.

Towards the end of his public life, Singh spoke against Sonia and former PM Dr Manmohan Singh on several occasions and was also accused of impropriety for revealing personal conversation with them in his autobiography *One Life Is Not Enough*, published in 2014. In an interview to *The Indian Express* at the time, Singh defended himself, saying that Sonia is a "historic public figure" and "a public figure doesn't have a private life". "...I haven't written this book with any vengeance, malice or bitterness; otherwise I would go down in my own esteem. In the ultimate analysis, I am answerable to myself," he said. In his book, he also claimed that 10 Janpath (Sonia's house) was the real power centre of the UPA government.

Apart from his autobiography, Singh also wrote *The Legacy of Nehru: A Memorial Tribute and My China Diary 1956-88*. He is survived by his wife Heminder

Kumari Singh and son Jagat.

On Sunday, calling Singh "an outstanding parliamentarian", President Droupadi Murmu wrote on X: "Sad to learn about the demise of former Union Minister Shri K Natwar Singh. In his long career, he wore many hats, from a distinguished diplomat to an outstanding parliamentarian. Honoured with Padma Bhushan, he was also a renowned man of letters. My heartfelt condolences to his family, friends..."

PM Narendra Modi said that Singh made rich contributions to the world of diplomacy and foreign policy. "Pained by the passing away of Shri Natwar Singh Ji. He made rich contributions to the world of diplomacy and foreign policy. He was also known for his intellect as well as prolific writing. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief. Om Shanti," he posted on X.

In a post on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called Singh an "acclaimed intellectual" as well as lauded his contributions to diplomacy and external affairs of the country.

could happen in India".

Khurshid's remarks struck a discordant note especially given the uncertainties in a fast-changing geopolitical scenario — more so when the need is for a responsible, restrained and unified Indian response to the developments in Bangladesh.

A word also on the spat in the Rajya Sabha between chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and five-time SP MP Jaya Bachchan. Bachchan has a right to be addressed as she wants and she wants to be called Jaya Bachchan, not Jaya Amitabh Bachchan, which is the way the Rajya Sabha Chair addressed her on three occasions — saying this is her name in the formal papers she submitted.

The chair could have handled it with a lighter touch, instead of the angry words that followed — even as Jaya Bachchan criticised Dhankhar for his "tone" calling it "unacceptable".

A walkout by the Opposition MPs followed, led by Sonia Gandhi; the episode seems to have brought the estranged Gandhis and Bachchans closer. That apart, the Opposition's protests reflected their pent-up anger against the chair in both Houses for what they allege is their partisan conduct.

But for the Opposition to think of bringing an impeachment motion against the Rajya Sabha Chair, something that has not happened in independent India, is again an

example of going over the top.

Clearly, a strengthened Opposition won't take things lying down. But they will have to choose their battles wisely. As for the chair, Om Birla and Jagdeep Dhankhar, will have to address the sense of grievance the Opposition MPs feel, be even-handed and be seen as even-handed. If only both sides would fight hard when required and be big-hearted when necessary — like our sportspersons — for the larger prize called our parliamentary democracy.

Neeraj Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, The Indian Express, has covered the last 11 Lok Sabha elections. She is the author of How Prime Ministers Decide

9 EXPRESS NETWORK

RAPE AND MURDER OF WOMAN DOCTOR AT KOLKATA HOSPITAL

Crime committed spontaneously, accused intoxicated, say police

SWEETY KUMARI & ATRI MITRA
KOLKATA, AUGUST 11

KOLKATA POLICE investigating the alleged rape and murder of a young junior doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital said the preliminary findings suggest that the crime was committed "in a spontaneous manner" and the arrested accused, Sanjay Roy, was "intoxicated".



Express

Kolkata Police chief Vineet Goyal and other senior officers at RG Kar Medical College & Hospital, Sunday

Sources in the police also said the murder and rape likely took place between 3 am and 6 am Friday. Sources in the hospital had earlier told *The Indian Express* that the woman doctor was on duty until 2 am on Friday.

Sources said police are not ruling out the possibility that the woman was first killed and then raped. "After going through the autopsy report, circumstantial evidence, and other material evidence, we will be able to conclude whether she was first raped and then murdered or vice-versa," said a police officer involved in the probe.

Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal, accompanied by

ings as part of probe," said a police officer involved in the probe. "He (Roy) was a habitual drinker. He had no relationship with anyone of us," the sister of the accused said. "We sisters take care of our mother. We don't know how he got the civic volunteer job," she said.

Meanwhile, Additional Commissioner of Police Murlidhar Sharma Sunday visited the woman doctor's house and met her parents. He said the police handed over a copy of the postmortem report to the family. "We explained and briefed them everything about our investigation so far. We also informed them about our next course of action. The family said they have faith in us," he said.

Hospital chief removed

The government Sunday removed hospital superintendent Sanjay Vashisth. Prof Bulbul Mukhopadhyay, dean of student affairs of the hospital has been given additional charge of superintendent. Kolkata Police has also decided to remove an ACP-rank officer from charge of the hospital. Goyal conveyed this to the protesting students.

DCP (North) Abhishek Gupta and Additional Commissioner Santosh Pandey Sunday examined the crime scene.

The seminar room, where the woman's body was found, has two entries. "In one of the entry points, no suspicious movement was noted in CCTV footage, while in the other, we noticed some suspicious movement involving Roy. We found evidence against him and arrested him. We have seized his shoes and a few of his belong-

SAU ACTION OVER PHD PROPOSAL

Sri Lankan prof said he conveyed all facts to envoy, she denies it

There was no mention of criticism of PM by a noted linguist both in written and verbal communications presented to me by Prof Perera: High Commissioner

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

DAYS AFTER the Sri Lankan High Commissioner said she was not aware that a probe initiated by the South Asian University (SAU) against sociologist Sasanka Perera was linked to a PhD scholar citing linguist Noam Chomsky's criticism of the NDA government, Perera said this was a "misrepresentation of facts".

Perera, who is from Sri Lanka, had left SAU after a disciplinary inquiry was initiated against him over a doctoral research proposal on Kashmir's ethnography and politics, by a PhD scholar he was supervising, that cites Chomsky's criticism.

On April 23, Sri Lankan High Commissioner Kshenuka Senewiratne had expressed her "concerns" with SAU president K K Aggarwal regarding "an intended inquiry" against Perera. She also wrote a letter to Aggarwal on May 12.

In response to *The Indian Express* report on her letter (August 4), the High Commis-

sioner said she had not known that the SAU action was linked to the research proposal citing criticism of the NDA when she raised concerns with the university. However, Perera said he had conveyed the details of the issue to High Commissioner Senewiratne.

"I must unqualifiedly state that her claim that I have not 'divulged' to her (details) about the proposal of the concerned student and its quotation of Prof Noam Chomsky's criticism of Prime Minister Modi is being economical with the truth, to say the least," he said, adding that he "kept the High Commissioner informed of all aspects of the inquiry process".

When asked about Perera's claims, Senewiratne told *The Indian Express* that she did not recall "receiving any text messages mentioning this particular reference of what Chomsky said about PM Modi from Prof Perera".

"There was no mention of the criticism of the PM by a noted linguist both in the written and the verbal communications presented to me by Prof Perera. Neither has the university in-

formed me about this when I gave my representation to them. I have not initiated any communication from my side to the university post my communication on May 12," Senewiratne said.

She reiterated that if such a reference was received, no representation at a diplomatic level would have been made.

In his statement to *The Indian Express* on Saturday, Perera referred to his communication with the High Commissioner over text messages on April 13. "A formal inquiry has been instituted on the claim of violating professional code of conduct and violating laws of the host country. None of this makes any sense. In the first, it is for supervising a student whose work deals with Kashmir. There is a quotation from a well known US scholar on the Indian PM..." Perera wrote to the High Commissioner.

Following this, Perera said he met the High Commissioner in her office on April 18 and "expanded on it".

"I also suggested that she go through the documents I had at hand at the time — hard copies of

which I took to the meeting — so that the entire case was clear, including inferences to Prof Chomsky and the Prime Minister. She did not hesitate to tell me categorically that she did not need to see these. I was neither requested to furnish anything else at the meeting or subsequently," Perera said.

He said he had also conveyed to the High Commissioner that "... the bone of contention for the university was the criticism of the PM in a quote from Prof Chomsky, which was used by my student in his proposal... This was not my opinion or that of the student's, but a quotation used as per regular academic practice in social sciences."

SAU is an international university sponsored by eight South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries, and Sri Lanka is a member state of its governing board. Perera taught sociology at SAU and was a founding member of the department at the university. The SAU had earlier said that while an inquiry had indeed been initiated against Perera, "no PhD proposal led to the resignation of a professor".

Former Manipur MLA's wife killed in blast; police say no link to conflict



Charubala Haokip, 59, died in the blast at her home

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, AUGUST 11

THE WIFE of a former Manipur MLA was killed in a bomb blast at their home in Kangpokpi district, police said Sunday, adding that the incident was not linked to the ethnic conflict in the state.

A police officer from Kangpokpi district said the incident took place around 3 pm Saturday, but was reported early Sunday morning. According to police, a locally made IED had been placed with waste material at the house. Charubala Haokip, 59, wife of former Saikul MLA Yamthong Haokip, died when she sought to burn the waste material. "When the deceased burned the waste material, it exploded. Everybody else is okay. There are no other fatalities or injuries," the officer said.

In his complaint registered at Saikul police station Sunday, Haokip said the incident took place when his wife was cleaning the house and the compound Saturday afternoon. "My wife was hit by an explosive item, most likely suspicion [sic] to be bomb, while burning waste items. Due to her injury...and excessive bleeding, my wife has succumbed to her injury," he wrote.

No arrests had been made as of Sunday morning. "The former MLA had purchased some land adjacent to one of his uncles' grandsons and there was a dispute. We suspect this was related to that. We are investigating," the police officer said. According to residents of village, this dispute has flared up many times and resulted in a physical confrontation earlier this year in which people on both sides had been injured.

While Charubala was from the Meitei community, Kangpokpi is a Kuki-Zomi-dominated district. Haokip, 64, won Saikul seat twice — in 2012 and 2017, both on Congress tickets. He joined BJP before 2022 Assembly polls. He is among those named as accused in a 2018 NIA case linked to missing arms from Manipur Rifles armoury.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday made a phone call to her Odisha counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi, and requested him to look into the alleged incidents of assault on labourers from her state. **ENS**

In Bhadrak district, residents rounded up seven persons — suspecting them of being from Bangladesh — and handed them over to the police. Police said they are verifying their identities.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday made a phone call to her Odisha counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi, and requested him to look into the alleged incidents of assault on labourers from her state. **ENS**

Last Paradesi Jewish woman in Kochi dies at 89



Queenie Hallegua

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUGUST 11

THE LAST woman of Kochi's Paradesi Jew community died in Mattancherry area on Sunday at the age of 89.

Queenie Hallegua was the wife of the late Samuel H Hallegua. She is survived by her children, Fiona and David Hallegua — both of whom live in the US along with their spouses and children.

With her death, only one Paradesi Jew — White Jews of European origin — remains in Kochi: Queenie's 65-year-old nephew Keith I Hallegua. Queenie was the warden and managing trustee of Paradesi Synagogue from 2012 to 2018.

'How long will we keep losing sons': Father of Bihar soldier killed in J&K

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, AUGUST 11

THE FATHER of Havildar Deepak Kumar, who was among two soldiers killed Saturday in an encounter with militants in J&K's Anantnag, has urged the Centre to take care of Deepak's wife and son.

"How long will fathers like me keep losing their sons?" said Deepak's father Suresh Rai, a farmer and resident of Lavwan Kalan village at Baniapur in Bihar's Saran district.

Deepak (34) had joined the Army in 2008. His elder brother, Devendra, is also in the Army. Deepak is survived by his wife Anita and their nine-year-old

son. He had last come to his village two months ago. "I have lost my son. I will be going to Patna on Monday with some members of the family to receive the mortal remains of my martyr son," Suresh Rai said.

"The government should think of some long-term plan to deal with militancy in J&K," he said.

Rai also urged the government to take care of Deepak's wife and son. "Deepak hardly had any savings. He would send me money off and on as he had his family responsibilities as well. He wanted to build a pucca house at the village, but he hardly had money," said Rai, a farmer who has just about two bighas of agricultural land.

GUNFIGHTS IN J&K's KISHTWAR, UDHAMPUR

Jammu: Security forces and militants got into a brief encounter in Paddar area of J&K's Kishtwar district Sunday, officials said. But pilgrims on their Machail Mata yatra need not panic as adequate security is in place, they said. Officials said forces established contact with militants in the forests of Basantgarh in Udhampur district Sunday. A few rounds were exchanged between two sides in Khaned forest but there was no report of casualty, they said. **ENS & PTI**

14 killed, 5 washed away in dam as heavy rain lashes Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, AUGUST 11

AT LEAST 14 people were killed in rain-related incidents across Rajasthan on Sunday while five people were washed away by the gushing water of Kanota Dam in the capital Jaipur, officials said.

Karauli and Hindun in eastern Rajasthan's Karauli district are facing a flood-like situation following incessant rainfall since Saturday night, officials said.

Seven people drowned while bathing in a river in Bharatpur. Eight youths from Srinagar village were taking a bath in the Banganga River in Bharatpur.

In Jaipur, the five men were out on a picnic at the dam when they were washed away by the



A flooded street in Jaipur on Sunday. Rohit Jain Paras

gushing water, officials said.

In Jhunjhunu, three people drowned while bathing in a pond in Mehrana village. In Karauli, a father-son duo, Zakir Khan, 40, and Ziya Khan, 12, were killed on Sunday after getting trapped under the debris of

their house that collapsed due to heavy rain, police said.

In another incident, a 19-year-old nursing student died after he slipped and fell into the Kedia stream in Banswara. In Sawai Madhopur, a 35-year-old man drowned in a pond.

9 of family from Himachal die in Punjab after SUV swept away

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, AUGUST 11

ON THEIR way to attend a wedding in Nawanshahr, nine members of a Himachal family drowned and two were swept away after the SUV they were travelling in got stuck in the swollen seasonal stream Choe in Punjab's Jajjon area, nearly 34 km from Hoshiarpur, Sunday, SSP Surinder Lamba told *The Indian Express*.

SSP said police arrived at the spot swiftly and called in NDRF team to assist them in rescue and search operations for the missing. Police said search for missing persons was called off for the day and would resume Monday.

Chabbeval police station Sub-Inspector Parvinderjit Singh said they are yet to record the statement of Deepak (22), who was among the 12 in the SUV. "Deepak told police that after reaching seasonal stream, they saw heavy vehicle crossing it, leading them to believe their vehicle being an SUV would also make it. As it entered the stream, gushing water and wild vegetation smashed windpanes, and people were swept away," Singh said.

Video of pistol washing leads MP cops to illegal arms unit, two arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, AUGUST 11

THE MADHYA Pradesh police said they busted an illegal arms factory in Morena district after a video showing a woman washing pistols with soap started doing the rounds on social media. A man and his son were arrested.

After they verified the video, police said they searched a house in Ganeshpura area Friday night, and found an illegal arms manufacturing unit was being operated from there for the last six months.

During the searches, police found a double-barrel gun of 315 bore, a pistol of 315 bore, a pistol of 32 bore, and several incomplete weapons. They also seized materials and tools used to make these illegal weapons.

Police said they were interrogating the suspects to find out where the illegal weapons were distributed.

A senior police officer said, "We got to know about a video of a woman who was cleaning some country-made pistols. Then, we found out the accused was from Ganeshpura village and that her



A video grab shows a woman washing a pistol

husband was involved in the business of making country-made pistols. During the raid, the woman's husband and father-in-law were arrested as they tried to flee. Three country-made pistols, several half-made weapons, and various other equipment and materials were seized from the factory."

The arrested were identified as Shakti Kapoor Sakhwar and his father Biharilal Sakhwar. They were allegedly running the illegal arms factory, the officer said.

Police have registered a case under the Arms Act, he said. On Saturday, the accused were produced before a court which remanded Biharilal in judicial custody and his son to one-day police custody. **PTI**

Tripura teacher facing molestation charge lynched

Agartala: Accusing a school teacher in Tripura's Gomati district of molesting a minor girl student, a mob assaulted him leading to his death two days later, a police officer said on Sunday.

Police have lodged an FIR in this connection, but no arrest was made. It is alleged that the man, who was in his 40s, molested the girl during a private tuition session.

Following this, local people severely beat up the government school teacher Thursday.

"After a severe assault, local people took him to RK Pur police station on August 8 night in presence of his wife and lodged a molestation case against him. On doctor's advice, the accused stayed the night at a local health centre," Assistant IGP (Law & Order) Ananta Das said. He was arrested and secured bail Friday. Das said the teacher took ill after returning home and was admitted to a hospital in Agartala. He died Saturday, the officer said. **PTI**

IE Thinc session today: How to deal with climate change in coastal cities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

UP AND down the country, Indian cities are increasingly facing challenges related to urbanisation as well as climate change. But nowhere are these two sets of concerns more alarming than in coastal cities such as Chennai.

Climate change is not only raising temperatures at an alarming rate but also making incidence of rainfall more erratic and cyclonic storms more frequent. Cities are failing to adapt to such environmental changes through better urban planning.

Indeed, many experts believe unchecked and often ill-conceived construction is equally responsible for cities such as Chennai routinely complaining of both floods as well as lack of drinking water all at the same time.

In June 2023, the Tamil Nadu government launched Chennai's first Climate Action Plan (CAP),



making it the second Indian city to have a Paris Agreement-aligned CAP. How is this changing urban planning in Chennai? What lessons can the rest of the country, especially the coastal cities, learn from Chennai's example? What more needs to be done to ensure India's coastal cities can deal with climate change?

These will be some key questions discussed in the second edition of *The Indian Express's* THINC: CITIES seminar series, presented by Omidyar Network India, to be organised in Chennai on Monday.

Job losses and salary cuts hit Surat diamond hub, distress pushes workers to brink

KAMAAL SAIYED
SURAT, AUGUST 11

A SUICIDE helpline launched by the Diamond Workers Union Gujarat (DWUG) has received over 1,600 calls — or more than 50 calls a day — since its launch on July 15. Nearly 75% of the callers are workers who lost their jobs.

This is just an indicator of the distress and desperation among the workers engaged in the Surat diamond industry, India's largest, that has been struggling for more than a year now after being hit by conflicts abroad — first the Russia-Ukraine war and then the one between Israel and Palestine.

Job losses and salary cuts in the diamond units, on which more than 10 lakh livelihoods depend, have claimed the lives of 62 diamond polishers in past 16 months.

Among those who called the helpline was Jaysukh Koradiya (52), a resident of Varachha, who sought a job to clear his debt of Rs 3.2 lakh as the factory where he worked shut two months ago.

"We somehow survived the 2008 recession but now it has become difficult for us to go on. I was drawing Rs 20,000 salary. I have to pay a monthly house rent of Rs 5,000. My two months rent is due... I called the DWUG helpline seeking a job so that I can clear the loans I took from private financiers

to meet the marriage expenses of my daughter in January," said Koradiya, who has 28 years experience. Koradiya's family now depends on what his wife earns from stitching sequins on sarees and dress materials at home. Their son is a final-year BCom student.

Rajesh Savaliya (45), physically challenged due to polio, lost his managerial job in a reputed diamond company. Later, he got a job with Rs 18,000 as salary at a diamond firm. Two months ago, he lost this job as well. Living in a rented house at Pungam, Savaliya has not been able to pay the school fees of his two children. While one child is in class 11, the other is in 9, and their fees at the private school



The diamond industry has been hit by conflicts abroad. File

are Rs 18,000 and Rs 16,000, respectively. "The school wants us to pay advance for six months. We are helpless. I called DWUG seeking help to pay the fees and also get a job," said Savaliya.

DWUG president Ramesh Jileriya said there are also workers like Sanjay Patel, who has been jobless for the past six months. On July 20, the desperate 40-year-old walked into the DWUG office, say-

ing he had no choice but to end his life. "He was drawing a salary of Rs 45,000 and had bought a house on loan and is now unable to pay the installments," said Jileriya, adding that Patel's house was seized by the bank and he had to move into a rented house with his family. He has two children.

"He has debts of over Rs 5 lakh. After he lost his job, he sold his wife's ornaments and his vehicles. He tried to get a job in other firms but failed," said Jileriya, adding that Patel has 15 years experience in the diamond industry. The DWUG counselled Patel and is now trying to get him a job.

Not all were as lucky. On July 17, diamond polisher

Sagar Makwana (21), of Punagam, died by suicide after a salary cut. "Sagar earned Rs 23,000 per month but in the past few months he had been getting Rs 10,000 as work flow had reduced... We don't want to blame anybody for his death," his brother Kalpesh said.

Surat Diamond Association president Jagdish Khunt said, "The recession in the diamond industry is due to the Russia-Ukraine war, Israel-Palestine conflict and a falling demand for polished diamonds in the international market." Due to the sanctions imposed by the US and the ban by G7 countries on Russian diamonds, the industry has been left with large inventories.

DWUG Surat unit president Bhavesh Tank said over 150 helpline calls were on school fees. "Of them, we found 35 cases to be genuine," said Tank. The students' list was shared with Laljibhai Patel, owner of Dharmanandan Diamond who bought PM Narendra Modi's monogrammed suit in 2015, and he agreed to help. On Sunday, cheques worth over Rs 4 lakh were handed over.

"We learnt that over 25,000 diamond polishers lost their jobs in the recession period," said Tank. Khunt said: "We appeal to factory owners not to lay off polishers, but try to find solutions like reducing working hours and giving more than one weekly off."



WORDLY WISE
THIS ABILITY TO CONQUER ONESELF IS
NO DOUBT THE MOST PRECIOUS OF ALL THINGS
SPORTS BESTOWS. — OLGA KORBUS

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SEBI AND A CLOUD

Allegations about conflict of interest related to chairperson need to be investigated. Denial doesn't work, more disclosure does

EIGHTEEN-ODD MONTHS after Hindenburg Research accused the Adani group of "brazen stock market manipulation" and "accounting fraud", allegations that the group denied and the Supreme Court said don't need any CBI or court-monitored probe, the firm, facing a show-cause notice from Sebi, the stock market regulator, is back. It claims it's connecting the dots between what it sees as inaction on the issue by the regulator and its chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch's investments. A series of revelations, based on whistleblower papers, made by the US-based firm raise questions for SEBI, and turn the spotlight, specifically, on the regulator's disclosure norms. The outright denial by all parties is hardly an answer.

Hindenburg has alleged that Buch and her husband "had hidden stakes in the exact same obscure offshore Bermuda and Mauritius funds, found in the same complex nested structure, used by Vinod Adani". During her tenure as a whole-time member of SEBI, it says, Buch was in communication with the managers of the offshore fund, and wrote to India Infoline to redeem the units in the fund. And that during this time she had an interest in an offshore Singapore consulting firm, Agora, and it was only two weeks after she was appointed as SEBI chairperson that she transferred the shares to her husband. In her defence, Buch has said that "all disclosures as required have already been furnished to SEBI". The SEBI code for board members asks that they disclose their interests which may conflict with their duties, along with transactions of family members. However, in light of the latest controversy, it must be asked: When the regulator was investigating the allegations surrounding the Adani Group, why were the disclosures not made available to the wider public? After all, members of Parliament openly declare their assets. Any connection between the regulator and the regulated must be publicly disclosed. It is especially odd considering that the same stock market regulator had, in the words of the Supreme Court appointed expert committee, "drawn a blank" in its inquiry to determine the contributors to the foreign portfolio investors who had invested in the Adani Group. It must be asked whether the regulator's associations with parties who themselves are key players in private investment firms should also have been publicly disclosed.

A blunt denial will not work. This matter needs to be investigated and every disclosure made — or not made — shared. Not doing so undermines the integrity and independence of the regulator. Given that Buch is the chairperson of SEBI, there will be a question mark over any process initiated by the market regulator to get to the bottom of these revelations. There is also a risk that this will get caught in a political slugfest. Larger issues of propriety and conflict of interest are at stake, and the aim of any such exercise is to strengthen the market regulator in a time of rising market penetration. Quite simply, when the market regulator is under a cloud, all stakeholders, from SEBI to the government, need to act urgently to clear it, fully protecting its institutional autonomy. A short-seller may play fast and loose — the Indian market, the world's fourth largest by market cap, needs to ring-fence its regulator with a stronger firewall — and a higher bar.

AFTER THE OLYMPICS

As the curtains come down in Paris, Indian sports needs to go into a huddle. Stakeholders need to pull in the same direction

FINISHING WITH SIX medals, India couldn't improve on its last Olympics medal haul of seven. On the medals tally, it slipped from 48th to 70th place. With defending javelin champion Neeraj Chopra settling for silver, the lack of a gold medal cost the country a good 10 places this time. So how will a cold-hearted reviewer — who treats Vinesh Phogat's tragic 100 grams miss with hard objectivity — see the performance of India's biggest-ever Olympic contingent in 2024? Paris will be remembered for the lessons it taught a nation with grand sporting dreams of producing world-class athletes and hosting mega international events. As the curtains come down in Paris, Indian sports needs to go into a huddle. The important stakeholders — federations, Sports Authority of India, Sports Ministry and other non-government organisations — need to pull in the same direction.

The spending on elite athletes was generous, but at times it was celebrity-driven and without foresight. Badminton legend Prakash Padukone raised valid questions on the need for athletes to be far more accountable and deliver when it matters. The federations also need to correct course. Phogat's weight category confusion and Nikhat Zareen's lack of match-day training and subsequent tough draw point to the mess the national wrestling and boxing bodies find themselves in. India can dream of broad-basing into swimming and athletics, but not without ensuring badminton, weightlifting, wrestling, and boxing keep up with their medal marks. The country also shouldn't see the many fourth-place finishes as the speck of morning light that promises a sparkling dawn. These near-misses will need to be minutely analysed for meltdowns under pressure. Being on the threshold of the podium is no guarantee of reaching the much-celebrated Top 3 perch in a matter of four years.

The real bright spot has been the men's hockey team. Back-to-back Olympic bronze medals is an exceptional achievement. Captain Harmanpreet Singh, leading the team both at Tokyo and Paris, had a reliable core group that the selectors didn't disturb. In coach Craig Fulton, the team had a committed coach with an international reputation of building champion international sides. The government and federation also gave both Harmanpreet and Fulton a free hand. Olympic medals need a process and persistence with top names at least over a couple of cycles. Double medallist shooter Manu Bhaker wanted Jaspal Rana as her coach. After a lot of reluctance, the decision-makers relented and Bhaker had her way. So at the Paris review meeting for Indian sports stakeholders, there needs to be a white-board with a message written in bold — "Identify the champions wisely and honestly. And listen to them".

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



Three neighbourhood questions



VIVEK KATJU

Why was India taken by surprise by swiftness of final changes in Afghanistan, Maldives and Bangladesh?

IN LESS THAN three years, Indian foreign and security interests have suffered severe setbacks in three countries in India's immediate neighbourhood. On August 5, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the mainstay of India's Bangladesh policy, had to resign at short notice amidst widespread and violent protests and flee to this country. On November 17, 2023, Mohamed Muizzu was sworn in as President of Maldives after winning the presidential election. He is committed to diminishing India's role in the island country while enhancing China's presence. His predecessor, Ibrahim Solih, had the opposite approach. And, on August 15, 2021, Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani, in whom India had invested so much diplomatic capital, had to fly out of the country even as the Taliban took over. Were these grave reverses the consequence of misjudgements of those in charge of the country's foreign and security policies or do the reasons lie in the structures of policy making in these critical areas?

It is essential that the political and security classes introspect on these issues, avoiding political point scoring. The nation is facing such significant security challenges that it cannot afford the luxury of politics as usual on these matters. Indeed, it was encouraging that the government called an all-party meeting on August 6 to brief the Opposition on the developments in Bangladesh and the Opposition leaders have responded, as yet, by not raising the temperature on the government's handling of Bangladesh. This government-Opposition dialogue should continue in the coming weeks and months and extend also to a consideration of policy-making structures — ultimately, the government, apart from the judgement and instincts of its top leadership, has to rely on the professional advice given by the various ministries, organisations and agencies which handle India's external interests. It has to be ensured that they work harmoniously. A brief consideration if this is so would not be out of place in view of the ad-

verse impact to India's interests in the cited cases of regime change. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is in charge of managing the foreign policy of the country. It is manned by the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) whose mandate is to look after India's external interests. In the neighbouring countries, India's embassies are helmed by diplomats who are carefully chosen for their competence and understanding of regional and global affairs. They have insights not only into the thinking, inclinations and compulsions of the political leaders of their countries of posting, but of the country's social, economic and political trends. The top management of MEA has similar capabilities to appropriately advise the country's political leadership. In 1968, India created its external intelligence service with the mandate to ensure that it develops the skills to explore and bring forth the subterranean which impacts India's interests. It has a special role to play in the neighbourhood. Diplomats and officers of the external intelligence, MEA, other concerned ministries and the external intelligence agency have different but complementary roles and methods to safeguard and promote national interest. They have to avoid the temptation to tread into the others' mandate. In this context, it needs to be examined how far the original idea regarding the constitution of the external service has been adhered to.

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In a paper published in 2019 in the *Journal of Defence Studies* of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, P S Raghavan, a distinguished diplomat who, after his retirement, chaired the National Security Advisory Board, examined the additions made to India's National Security Structure after its nuclear tests of 1998. As India became a nuclear weapons state and in the quarter century since, naturally, new security structures had to be put in place to meet new and growing challenges. These emanated from changing global power equations, technological changes in the cyber and space fields — to mention only two. They had

a direct bearing on the country's defence and internal and external security. In addition, concerns in the neighbourhood have only increased with China's rise and its continuing hostility towards India. The formation of new structures began in 1999 with the creation of the National Security Council chaired by the Prime Minister, a Strategic Policy Group, and, most significantly, the creation of the post of National Security Advisor (NSA). A National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) was established to service these new structures. Within a relatively short period it became clear, as Raghavan notes, "the NSA was to assist the Prime Minister on foreign policy, defence, atomic energy and space issues (besides internal and external security)". Raghavan also writes "the quickest and most effective means to reach a foreign government in times of crises is through the NSA". Along with the importance of the NSA, the NSCS has also proportionately grown. After 2018, it consists of four officials of Deputy NSA rank dealing with different areas of foreign and security issues. Following this year's elections, an officer of Additional NSA status has been added. There is, therefore, an elaborate security structure now, in addition, to the line ministries and the intelligence agencies. The ultimate purpose of the NSA and NSCS is to coordinate strategic and security related work but, as Raghavan writes, "turf" issues arise.

The overriding question in considering the foreign policy failures in Afghanistan, Maldives and Bangladesh is why should the Indian system have been taken by surprise by the swiftness of the final changes, even if it had an inkling that all was not well in these countries in the context of Indian interests. These surprises occurred despite the large structures that are now in place. Are "turf" issues responsible and, if so, how high do they reach? Or were there a series of misjudgements and, if so, by whom?

The writer is a former diplomat



LEHER KALA

NOT MADE IN INDIA

Would Kamala Harris have succeeded here? It's unlikely

A WOMAN OF Indian origin is on the cusp of making history by breaking one of the highest glass ceilings of political life. In a few months, Kamala Devi Harris might be the US president but she isn't the only enigmatic Indian female in the limelight this election. Former President Donald Trump's running mate J D Vance is married to an accomplished woman from South India, Usha Chilukuri. The potential Second Lady is a daughter of first-generation immigrants and a graduate of elite academic institutions such as Yale Law School and Cambridge University and who has also served as a clerk in the US Supreme Court. They may be on opposite ends of the ideological spectrum but what Harris and Mrs Vance seem to have in common is that they grew up with traditional Indian values — to stay grounded and work tirelessly in the pursuit of achievement.

We Indians take great pride in the success of our own, overseas. Recently, when Sridhar Ramaswamy was appointed as CEO of Snowflake, a US-based data cloud company, it made headlines in all the newspapers. It's old news that several tech companies in Silicon Valley have CEOs of Indian origin like Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai, who are greatly feted by industry whenever they are here. Indian immigrants make up about 6 per cent of the US foreign-born population, second after Mexico, but top the charts in income. Clearly, Indians are far from mediocre but it appears equally clear that they need to leave India to flourish and realise their potential. The unexpected tra-

jectory of Kamala Harris's life from a California neighbourhood to this political pinnacle is a classic example of what might be acquired by immigrants in pursuit of the American dream. It is worth asking, where would Harris and Usha Vance be if their parents hadn't taken the fortuitous decision to build a future in America? In all likelihood (and if they were extremely lucky), they'd be slaving away at a respectable level at a company like Infosys, since it would have been drilled into their heads from childhood that the best that can be hoped for is a reliable job. At the ripe old age of 25, some nosy relative would have trotted out a dull and eligible man from the same caste. Instinctively, they would have internalised that being too educated and ambitious might create problems in their personal lives. To protect the fragile egos of Indian men, they would automatically have taken a step back to ensure a smooth family transition. However emancipated and driven we might be, cultural pressures wear us down. Indeed, women know that success is an ongoing responsibility, dependent, in large measure, on how much they are willing to sacrifice. Not to knock talent and effort which are critical to success but there's something to be said for being in the right place at the right time — to take advantage of the right opportunities when they come along. There is something tragic about the fact that generational hardships and a negative, autocratic atmosphere have killed the inno-

There is something tragic about the fact that generational hardships and a negative, autocratic atmosphere have killed the innovative spirit of many Indians here, while some of their counterparts in the US with exactly the same qualifications are able to reach stratospheric heights. Blame it on a pompous bureaucracy or a frustrating caste system designed to keep privilege closely guarded. Whatever it is, the unspoken messaging we imbibe is to follow the beaten path rather than carve out a new one.

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There is something tragic about the fact that generational hardships and a negative, autocratic atmosphere have killed the innovative spirit of many Indians here, while some of their counterparts in the US with exactly the same qualifications are able to reach stratospheric heights. Blame it on a pompous bureaucracy or a frustrating caste system designed to keep privilege closely guarded. Whatever it is, the unspoken messaging we imbibe is to follow the beaten path rather than carve out a new one. Avoid risk at all cost because god knows trying anything new is fraught with uncertainty. Insecurity is etched into our hard drives, a feeling that what little we have might get taken away too.

This defensive, inward-looking attitude goes against great inventions coming out of India. Instead, we are getting pushed down further into mediocrity. Over time, we have become a nation of citizens deferring to authority and latching onto (questionable) examples of our alleged greatness, like the invention of zero thousands of years ago.

It isn't just sheer grit that has catapulted Harris and Mrs Vance within reach of the White House. Their society is set up in a way that it is possible to take pride in one's roots and proudly brandish a dual identity, while also fully assimilating into the American way. The perennial outsider doesn't exist there. It's become fashionable to dwell on the divisions within the US but the welcoming acceptance of Harris-Vance at the highest echelons of power should serve as a valuable lesson in inclusion, for all.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

AUGUST 12, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

SARBAT KHALSA MEETS

THE SARBAT KHALSA convention held the SGPC and its president, G S Tohra, responsible for the damage done to the Golden Temple complex and excommunicated Tohra from the "Khalsha panth". Significant changes in the Sikh Gurdwara Act have also been sought to ensure that Sikh *sahibans* (high priests) command due respect and are not reduced to the status of employees.

GULF WAR INTENSIFIES

IN ONE OF the worst air and naval battles in the four-year-old Gulf War, Iraqi warplanes and naval units in their joint action shot down

three Iranian war jets and destroyed five targets in the Khor Mousa area at the tip of the Gulf. After a month of lull, Iraq has intensified its attacks and in a fierce dogfight, shot down three Iranian warplanes which were escorting a naval convoy heading towards Iranian ports in the region that have been declared by Iraq as a "war zone".

SRI LANKA VIOLENCE

SIX SOLDIERS WERE killed and 25 injured when an army truck was ambushed by Tamil terrorists at Mulankavil in Sri Lanka's northern Mannar district, according to unofficial sources in Colombo. The Mannar police station confirmed that there was an "incident",

but said details were awaited. Tamil United Liberation Front sources in Jaffna said security personnel indulged in "indiscriminate" firing near a bus stand.

PM MISSES RAKHI

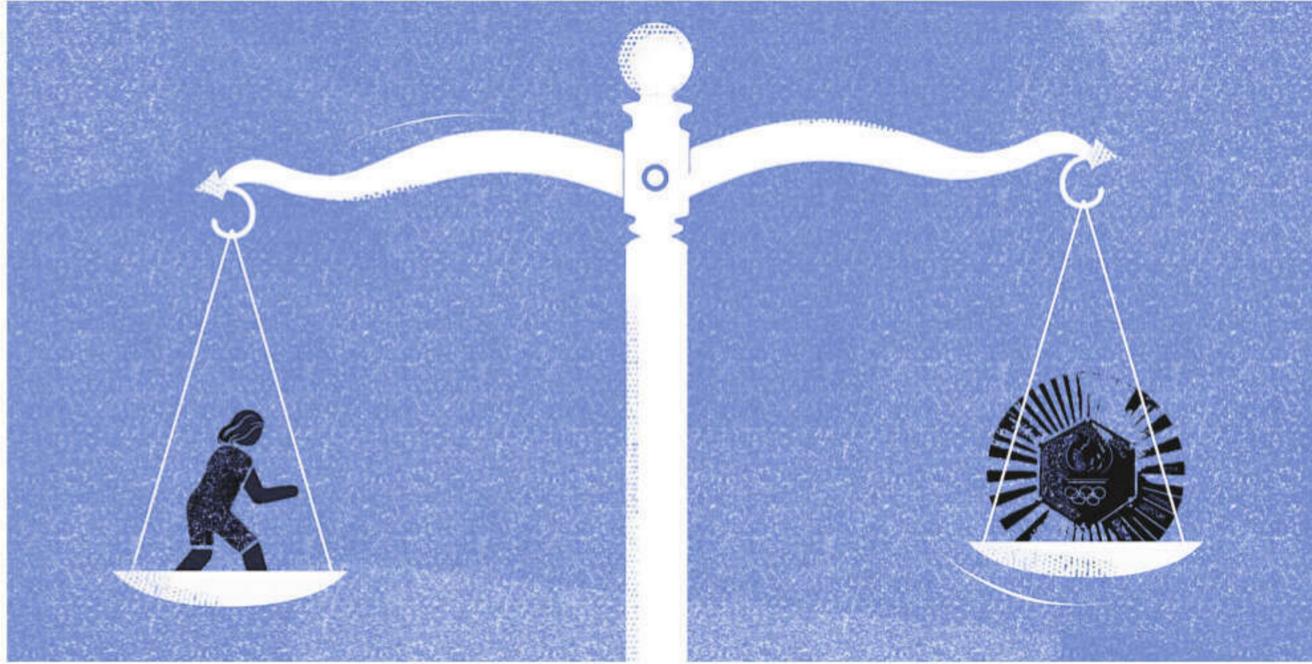
FOR THE FIRST time in 30 years, Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi, did not celebrate Rakshabandhan with the destitute children of Bal Sahyog in New Delhi. According to Bal Sahyog officials, the PM, who is the founder president of the institution, informed them only on the eve of her arrival about her inability to attend the function. "Urgent matters" are believed to be the cause of her absence.



11 THE IDEAS PAGE

DIS/AGREE
THE BEST OF BOTH SIDES

A fortnightly column, which offers not this-versus-that, but the best of both sides, to inform the debate



C R Sasikumar

Vinesh Phogat's journey at the Paris Olympics made a nation hold its breath, mirrored its collective aspirations and tribulations. Did that cast an unfair weight on her shoulders?

Vinesh's story is our story

Because the odds are so high in this country and triumphs so rare, Phogat's near-miss is also ours



AAKASH JOSHI

VINESH PHOGAT — WRESTLER, fighter, rebel, slayer of giants on and off the mat — is an icon. She has become a powerful symbol thanks to her actions — rising from humble beginnings, in a place not known for women's agency and right to excel, taking on Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the lord of Indian wrestling, and a system ranged against her. On the mat in Paris, the woman dismissed by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) completed the hero's journey and silenced her critics by defeating the undefeated Yui Susaki. Even the tragic technicality by which she may be denied a medal screams of poetic injustice, almost as though scripted by a hacky Bollywood writer trying to make the ending a tear-jerker.

Vinesh Phogat is a person who has had to overcome more than most. That she has surmounted the odds makes her a symbol, her success something to aspire to. It is a burden that she cannot shed. Because, in a country riddled with inequality, we are hungry for stories of success. But it is equally important that in our addiction to happy endings, we do not forget her road to greatness.

At the time of writing, Phogat's appeal of her disqualification over not "making weight" before the 50-kg gold medal bout is pending. If it is successful, we will all celebrate — rightly so — her much-deserved medal. Even if it is not, she will likely be (as Sandeep Dwivedi has written in these pages) "called for felicitation functions and may even get cash awards. She would be made to feel like a winner".

Why aren't we still angry at her being dragged through the streets for bringing to light alleged sexual harassment at the WFI? Why do we take for granted the fact that the road to success is either to swallow injustice and abuse, or have to face near-impossible odds?

Phogat's story, of course, is a sad and exceptional one. But even more "normal" journeys to "excellence" carry an unfair burden of expectation in India. Every athlete with a medal chance must play actor, next to billionaire sponsors trying to ride on the patriotism brand for some publicity. Every IAS aspirant in a basement nook, poring over general studies books and newspapers to crack an exam knows just how much the odds are stacked against her. Every JEE aspirant in Kota, whose parents have spent more than they can afford for a chance at generational social and economic mobility, knows the dark side of "aspi-

ration". Yet, batch after batch, generation upon generation, perseveres. It's the story and hope every smoker repeats — there's always the one chimney who lived to 90 and died in their sleep, otherwise healthy.

There are several sound, legitimate arguments in defence of ambition and aspiration. Why shouldn't success be celebrated and learnt from? What is wrong with striving for the best jobs in the private sector through, say, the IITs and the power, prestige and financial security of working for one of the All-India Services? Why shouldn't a young man or woman want to be a doctor? The services that crop up to service these ambitions — the coaching centres — and the advertisements that celebrate them are useful for at least three reasons.

First, they are merely supplying a demand. There would be no Kota, no Rajinder Nagar, without people willing to pay for it. Second, in a country of deep inequality, these stories provide hope and succour. Third, it is the success stories, and their brand value, that keep these shops running and in the case of sport, draw in private investments.

All these points are well taken, if they are taken without context.

"Mummy, papa I can't do JEE so I suicide. I am loser. I am worst daughter. Sorry mummy papa. Yahi last option hai." Too many of us have forgotten the final note by Niharika Singh, the 18-year-old IIT "aspirant" who committed suicide in Kota in January. Just as we are trying to

forget that very little might have changed at the WFI. The toppers of entrance exams will be celebrated, those who have cleared UPSC will be front-and-centre in ads by the coaching centres. Kota will thrive, as will Rajinder Nagar. And Vinesh Phogat will be held up as an example, while those who wronged her will continue — through proxies — to exercise power, without consequences.

This forgetting is only partly deliberate. If we actually look at the hurdles to success for the vast majority of Indians, we will realise that the feel-good story is just a high that blinds us to the fact that there are so few avenues and opportunities. Outside of the government, where can the young — the 324 million Indians under 25, the demographic dividend — find secure employment? If they were not virtuosos on the mat, statistically, given their background, what would the fate of Haryana's women wrestlers have been?

Vinesh Phogat had said that an Olympic medal would be her reply to those who hounded her and tried to silence her. But for a technicality, she has already proved her point. She is a dedicated sportsperson who has gone through a lot. But precisely because stories of triumph are so rare in India, she will always be more than the sum of her parts. We need her story — it is, after all, one of inspiration in the land of a million tragedies.

akash.joshi@expressindia.com

It was not Vinesh's burden

She carried not just dreams of a medal, but hopes of vindication for herself and millions of others. It was unfair all along



SUKHMANI MALIK

IN ROCKY (1976), as the climactic match between defending world champion Apollo Creed and past-his-prime underdog Rocky draws to a close, the commentators marvel that the latter is still standing. Rocky's eye is swollen; he asks his manager to cut it open so he can see, so he can keep fighting. He makes it through all 15 rounds, knocking out Creed for the first and 10th time in the same match, and the commentators announce a split verdict. Rocky's words from earlier come to life on the screen: "It really don't matter if I lose this fight... all I wanna do is go the distance."

After the almost cinematic ups and downs at the Paris Olympic Games 2024, as the fate of Vinesh Phogat's joint silver medal hangs in the balance at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, the comparison rings uncannily true. Like Rocky, Phogat, too, aspired to go the distance. Except, the image of Phogat in tears on the mat carried a burden much larger than any that Rocky ever did. Coming up as a sports-woman against all odds, and fighting battles for justice with a ferocity rarely seen, Phogat shouldered aspirations far beyond excellence and medal dreams. She carried to Paris dreams of vindication — for herself and millions of others. It was a burden she should not have had to bear.

The script for this was written much earlier over the course of a televised 18-month agitation fought with blood, sweat, and tears and then an uphill battle to the Olympics. On August 6, as Phogat managed one of the greatest upsets in world sports — she knocked out the defending champion Yui Susaki and broke her streak of 95 unbeaten international matches — it seemed like the ribbon with which to neatly wrap the story was within reach, whether silver or golden. Her disqualification from the finals, hours after the historic win, was a twist no one saw coming. It was met with outcry — and a solidarity that went far beyond sports.

Many saw their own stories in Phogat's trial by fire. Last year, the wrestlers' protest against then Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president and former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on allegations of sexual assault did a few things. It created role models, people who put their full weight

and careers behind holding power accountable. It also showed what such a reckoning can look like in India — the unshakeability of these ecosystems and the ugly ways in which they can take agency and power away from women. It was a moment of collective comprehension of the wall one comes up against in one's fight against the wrong man in the right place.

Phogat's tale did not begin on the mat. And so, bookending it with a medal can only be a consolation, for her and for countless others like her. That so many women identified with the burden that Phogat carried to Paris this year, that this was her burden to begin with, tells us much about a country that espouses values of both "naari shakti" and being a "sporting nation". Justice and dignity were supposed to be snatched back with grit and a commitment to brilliance. She had said once, "I will look him (Singh) in the eye and medal *leke aongi main, tu dekh* (I will bring a medal, you see)." This is why the dejection at her disqualification speaks of a sorrow that goes beyond Phogat. "Vinesh, you were not the one who lost. It's the defeat of every daughter of our country for whom you fought," Bajrang Punia commented on her disqualification. But this fight and this burden of vindication should not have weighed on her mind as she stepped into the ring. That is the real issue.

In one of the interviews Phogat gave while protesting at Jantar Mantar, she said, "Junior women wrestlers come to me and ask how they are supposed to train like this, how I did it. How do I answer them?" Over a year later, that fear now looms larger, having witnessed the impunity of the powerful. But surely, Phogat's story, her journey to the biggest podium in the world is larger than one of vindication alone?

From Delhi to Paris was a long road. It told a story of potential stymied; of potential that could have blossomed much brighter had it not been fighting against the wind. The recognition and fair opportunities that she has missed can be awarded to her by way of a medal. But the real task is to ensure change. Phogat carried on her shoulders the shared grief of dignity denied and the inability to dream for oneself without being knocked down by systems entrenched in misogyny. This is a battle for our courts and for us. It must be fought by building a culture that empowers justice. It can't be fought on the mat. Phogat has gone beyond her call of duty. As we await a decision on the medal, maybe we can ponder if there is a better script for this story — one that ensures dignity long before the mat.

sukhmani.malik@expressindia.com

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Ministers should not allow themselves to be overawed by the racial politics of the Conservative era. That legacy was the Tories' doing. It remains the Tories' problem. Labour should speak for a better Britain." — THE GUARDIAN

A communist first

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's life, its highs and lows, became inseparable from the history of the Left Front in West Bengal



PRABHAT PATNAIK

BUDDHADEB BHATTACHARJEE CAME from a conservative family. Sukanta Bhattacharya, the renowned revolutionary poet of Bengal who died of tuberculosis at the age of 20, was his uncle, but the family disapproved of Sukanta's politics, as indeed they would have of Buddha's. Buddha's politicisation came from a different source, the Bengal of his youth which was not only intellectually and culturally vibrant, but also had a remarkable legacy of communism that had been inherited largely by the CPM after the split.

After a visit to India, Harry Pollitt, the British communist leader, had reportedly said that he would give his right hand for a communist party like India's. Its cadres were dedicated, disciplined, austere, untouched by corruption and firmly ensconced within the rich intellectual and cultural ethos around it; this was even more true of Bengal. Besides, India, especially Bengal, had an obvious unfinished task at the time of Independence — to carry forward the democratic revolution by instituting land reforms. The Communists alone could accomplish this. Lenin had theorised about such a conjuncture and the communists were clear about this task.

This clarity of vision and their organisational strength gave the communists in West Bengal an appeal that drew Buddha and numerous young persons of his generation to communism. In fact, starting from the Fifties, the communists appeared to be an irresistible force in West Bengal which could be kept away from power only through ruthless repression. Not surprisingly, a lull in repression after the Emergency allowed the Left Front to come to power in the state in 1977. Buddha, who had been a prominent student and youth leader and state secretary of the Democratic Youth Federation of India, was inducted at the age of 33 into Jyoti Basu's cabinet, one of five young men that Pramode Dasgupta, the state secretary of the CPI(M), had been mentoring to take over responsibilities from the older generation.

Buddha spent more than half of his adult life as a minister in the Left Front government, first as minister of culture, then as home minister, and finally, as chief minister. There were two breaks in his ministerial tenure. Both were extremely brief. He did write a play during one of these interludes, which was also staged in Kolkata, but his ministerial responsibilities were to prevent him from writing more. This, however, also means that his life, its highs and lows, became inseparable from the history of Left Front rule.

The Left Front government, of which Buddha was an important part, played a stellar role in carrying out the unfinished task of West Bengal's democratic revolution. Operation Barga, under which sharecroppers, till then legally unrecognised, got registered and hence could claim credit from

banks for carrying out cultivation; the insistence that whoever sowed the crop could alone reap the harvest; the distribution of ceiling-surplus land to the landless; and the resurrection of the panchayat system that produced a vivacious grassroots politics, were some of the achievements of Left Front rule. They not only reduced the power of the *jotedars* and reinvigorated participatory democracy, but also contributed greatly to West Bengal's economic growth. Indeed, for the decade of the Nineties, West Bengal became the top-ranking state in terms of agricultural growth in India.

Once this phase was over, the Left Front government was less clear about what it should do next. The need for industrialisation was obvious, but how should industrialisation be accomplished? Should West Bengal follow the conventional route of enticing capitalists to set up units in the state? Or, should it form cooperatives in agriculture both to maintain the tempo of agricultural growth and also to start a range of industries that would be owned by the peasants at large? Should it set up industrial units in the public sector? While the last of these was ruled out because of fiscal constraints, Buddha, as chief minister, opted for the first. His decision may have been prompted by a sense of pragmatism; it may have been influenced by China's remarkable success while following this conventional route; and it may have been clinched by the interest shown by the Tatas in establishing a small-car manufacturing plant in West Bengal. But whatever the reason, the Left Front government's attempt to acquire land from peasants for this project started a process of alienation of the peasantry from it that eventually led to its defeat, and to Buddha's withdrawal from active politics.

Meanwhile, the party had grown too flabby — it was no longer one for which Pollitt would have given his right hand.

This is not to say that after the initial years, the Left Front's contributions were insignificant. It did pioneer the idea of autonomous councils within the state as a counter to statehood demands, just as the Left had pioneered the idea of states being formed on linguistic lines. The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, in whose formation Buddha, as home minister, had a direct role, was a product of this. Many states in India at present, including West Bengal, are again facing statehood demands from various internal resident groups. The framework of the Council provides scope for adjusting the devolution of resources and powers in a manner that can obviate the need for any separate state — exploring this would be a testimony to Buddha's legacy.

Buddha's life had been one of exemplary simplicity and austerity. He lived, in a manner resembling one's image of a Communist, in a two-room apartment that needed urgent repairs. He had been ailing for quite some time, because of which he had asked to be relieved from the membership of the Politburo. One may agree or disagree with Buddha but one cannot quarrel with the fact that he was a truly noble and outstanding figure in West Bengal's political landscape.

The writer is former professor of economics at JNU

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A GRAVE LOSS

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Former External Affairs Minister and Padma Vibhushan awardee K Natwar Singh passes away' (IE, August 11). I am deeply saddened to learn that my good friend and colleague K Natwar Singh has passed away. He was my age, and I knew him for six decades. He made his mark as a foreign services officer for many years, in many countries. His contributions to politics were also significant. I pay my homage to his memory and convey my deep sympathy to his wife Rajkumari Hem Kaur and the rest of the family.

Karan Singh, via email

THE BEST OF SPORTS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Soaring High' (IE, August 10). Javelin sensation Neeraj Chopra has inscribed his name in the nation's sporting history as the first independent Indian track and field athlete to clinch a second-straight Olympic medal. What stands out is his tenacity and drive to grow his skills. It's inspiring to see how Neeraj continues to soar despite the weight of expectations. His friendly rivalry with his counterpart Arshad Nadeem adds an exciting dimension to the classic Indo-Pak sporting duels. Nadeem's maiden individual Olympic gold at the ongoing games with an Olympic record of 92.97 meters makes him stiff competition.

Mahajan Rohan, Jammu

TELLING CASE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Against unfreedom' (IE, August 10). The fact that it took so long for Manish Sisodia to be granted bail when the Supreme Court found no substantive evidence against him is a poor reflection of our judiciary. The Court has rightly denounced lower courts for "playing safe" in bail matters. How the Sisodia case progressed reveals how central agencies use legal loopholes and convoluted judicial systems to deprive a jailed accused of the right to a speedy trial. The SC should frame guidelines to rid the agencies of the rot that appears to have permeated its operations and hold them accountable.

Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru

CASTE DOUBLESPEAK

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'RSS-affiliated weekly says caste is India's unifying factor' (IE, August 11). Hitesh Shankar's editorial piece eulogising the virtues of the caste system as India's unifying factor directly contradicts RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's repeated condemnation of it and claims of wanting it done away with lock, stock and barrel. The contradictory narratives from within the Sangh Parivar are no surprise. To quote B R Ambedkar, "Religion compels the Hindus to treat isolation and segregation of castes as a virtue.... If Hindus wish to break caste, their religion will come in their way."

I R Murmu, New Delhi



RWANDA LEADER WON LAST MONTH'S POLLS WITH 99.18% VOTES
KAGAME SWORN IN AGAIN, EXTENDING 24-YR RULE

Rwanda President Paul Kagame was sworn into office on Sunday for a five-year term, after a landslide win in last month's election extended his 24 years in office. The 66-year-old leader won the July poll with 99.18% of the vote, after eight other candidates including his most vocal critics were barred by the electoral commission. **REUTERS**

TOP OF THE WORLD



Abbas Araghchi, file

IRAN
Pezeshkian picks pragmatist as top diplomat

Dubai: Iran's new president presented his Cabinet to Parliament on Sunday for a vote of confidence, state media reported, proposing seasoned pragmatic diplomat Abbas Araghchi as foreign minister at a time of heightened regional tensions. Araghchi, 61, who was Iran's ambassador to several countries, including Japan, played a key role in negotiating Tehran's 2015 nuclear agreement, which then-US President Donald Trump exited in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on Iran. Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that parliamentary commissions will start reviewing Pezeshkian's candidates on Monday. **REUTERS**

AUSTRIA
Terror suspect's lawyer plays down attack bid

Vienna: The lawyer of the main suspect in a foiled plot to carry out an attack at a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna on Sunday sought to play down the seriousness of the plan, saying her client was only "playing with ideas". Lawyer Ina-Christin Stiglitz told Reuters the youth had only been involved with ISIS for the past month. "It interested him," she said, suggesting that her client had not intended to carry out a serious attack. "It was just playing with ideas," she said. "He says the bomb wasn't of good enough quality, it wouldn't have worked." **REUTERS**

PHILIPPINES
'Actions of China Air Force illegal, reckless'

Manila: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday condemned Chinese Air Force actions in waters of the South China Sea claimed by both countries, calling the actions "unjustified, illegal and reckless". Manila and Beijing accused each other on Saturday of disrupting their militaries' operations near Scarborough Shoal in the first incident since Marcos took office in 2022 in which the Philippines has complained of actions by Chinese aircraft. **REUTERS**

DAY AFTER SCHOOL ATTACK THAT KILLED AROUND 100
Thousands leave south Gaza as Israel orders evacuation

Gazans trapped, nowhere to go, says UN Agency for Palestinians

REUTERS
 CAIRO, AUGUST 11

ISRAELI EXPANDED evacuation orders in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip overnight, forcing tens of thousands of Palestinian residents and displaced families to leave in the dark as explosions from tank shelling reverberated around them. The Israeli military said it was attacking militants from the Hamas group - which administered Gaza before the war - who were using those areas to stage attacks and fire rockets.

On Saturday, an Israeli airstrike on a school where displaced Palestinians were sheltering in Gaza City killed at least 90 people. The Israeli military said it had struck a Hamas command post.

In Khan Younis in the south of the Gaza Strip, the evacuation order covered districts in the centre, east and west, making it one of the largest such orders in the 10-month-old conflict. It was posted



Palestinians flee Hamad City in Khan Younis after the Israeli evacuation order. Reuters

on X and in text and audio messages to residents' phones: "For your own safety, you must evacuate immediately to the newly created humanitarian zone."

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations' agency for Palestinian refugees, said Gazans were trapped and had nowhere to go. "They are going to overcrowded places where shelters are already overflowing with families," he said.

The IDF said it had struck around 30 Hamas military targets in the previous 24 hours.

Later Sunday, an Israeli airstrike near the center of Khan Younis city killed four Palestinians and wounded several others, medics said. Nearly 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli offensive in Gaza since the war broke out last October and the toll is rising by the day, the Gaza health ministry says.

'CHINA BACKS IRAN IN DEFENDING DIGNITY'

Beijing: China supports Iran in defending its "sovereignty, security and national dignity", China's foreign minister Wang Yi told Iran's acting foreign minister in a call Sunday, China's foreign ministry said in a statement. **REUTERS**

In a first, Ukraine acknowledges military incursion into Russian soil

It can restore justice... and is ensuring pressure on the aggressor: Zelenskyy

REUTERS
 KYIV, AUGUST 11

PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR Zelenskyy said Ukraine had launched an incursion into Russian territory to "restore justice" and pressure Moscow's forces, in his first acknowledgement of Kyiv's surprise offensive into the western Kursk region.

Moscow's forces on Sunday were in their sixth day of intense battle against Kyiv's largest incursion into Russian territory since the start of the war, which left south-western parts of Russia vulnerable before reinforcement started arriving.

Russian authorities rushed to evacuate residents and imposed a sweeping security regime in three border regions on Saturday, while Belarus, a staunch ally of Moscow, sent more troops to its border with Ukraine, accusing Kyiv of violating its air space.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said he had discussed the operation with top Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Syrskyi, vowing to respond in kind after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of its neighbour in February 2022. "Today, I received several reports from Commander-in-Chief Syrskyi regarding the front lines and our actions to push the war onto the aggressor's territory," he said late on Saturday. "Ukraine is

EXPLAINED
Unclear objective

WHAT THE incursion into Kursk means for Ukraine is not yet clear. In the third year in a war of attrition, the decision to cross the border into Russia surprised not just Moscow, but also Kyiv's Western allies. Some speculate they hope to draw Russian troops away from Ukraine front lines, giving their troops a much-needed rest, though analysts say that has not happened.

proving that it can indeed restore justice and is ensuring the exact kind of pressure that is needed - pressure on the aggressor."

Russia's defence ministry said Sunday it had destroyed 14 Ukrainian drones and four ballistic missiles overnight over the Kursk region, and 18 drones over other Russian regions that Ukraine frequently attacks. In a statement, it called the ground incursion "barbaric" and said it made no military sense. Top Russian general, Valery Gerasimov, said Wednesday the attacks had been halted, but Russia has not pushed the Ukrainian forces back over the border.



DON'T LOOK DOWN

A man climbs the Eiffel Tower on Sunday, hours before the Olympics closing ceremony. Police evacuated the area before intercepting and arresting him. AP

Trump campaign says its emails were hacked, alleges Iran link



REUTERS
 WASHINGTON, AUGUST 11

DONALD TRUMP'S US presidential campaign said on Saturday some of its internal communications were hacked and blamed



Donald Trump at a rally in Montana on Friday. Reuters

the Iran, citing past hostilities between Trump and Iran without providing direct evidence.

The Republican's campaign statement came shortly after

Yunus is acquitted in graft case 3 days after taking oath

Three other top Grameen Telecom officials also acquitted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 DHAKA, AUGUST 11

MUHAMMAD YUNUS was Sunday acquitted in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over the misappropriation of funds from the Grameen Telecom Workers and Employees Welfare Fund, three days after he took oath as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, according to a media report.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka gave the order after accepting the graft agency's application, seeking to withdraw the case under the Code of Criminal Procedure, an official of the anti-graft agency was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper.

On August 7, the Labour Appellate Tribunal acquitted the Nobel laureate and three top officials of Grameen Telecom - Ashrafal Hassan, M Shahjahan and Nurjahan Begum - in a labour law violation case in which they were sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined Tk 30,000 each in January.

Yunus, the 84-year-old economist, on Thursday took oath as the interim government's chief adviser - a position equivalent to the prime minister. Nurjahan Begum, another accused in the case, is a member of his Council of Advisers.

Yunus had been in a protracted row with Sheikh Hasina due to obscure reasons while authorities initiated a series of investigations against him after she came to power in 2008. Officials launched a review of the Grameen Bank's activities in 2011 and fired Yunus as its founding managing director on charges of violating the government retirement regulation. He was charged under dozens of cases during Hasina's regime.

Will maintain smooth India, China ties, says Bangladesh interim govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 DHAKA, AUGUST 11

BANGLADESH'S NEWLY-INSTALLED interim government on Sunday said it would maintain a "balanced" foreign policy, asserting that Dhaka intends to maintain "smooth and positive" ties with all, including India and China.

"Our policy is to maintain good relations with all countries while



Protesters demand justice for those who disappeared during Sheikh Hasina's rule, in Dhaka on Sunday. Reuters

New Bangladesh CJ sworn in following revamp of judiciary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 DHAKA, AUGUST 11

SYED REFAAT Ahmed was sworn in as Bangladesh's new chief justice on Sunday, a day after Obaidul Hassan stepped down as the top judge following an ultimatum by the protesters demanding a revamp of the judiciary.

Hassan and five other judges of the apex Appellate Division on Saturday tendered their resignation, five days after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime amid massive street protests.

His resignation came as protesters of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement gathered at the apex court premises. The students had issued an ultimatum to him and the judges of the Appellate

Division to resign by 1 pm. Ahmed took oath as the new chief justice during a ceremony at the Darbar Hall of the president's official residence at around 12.45 pm local time, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to the chief justice. The oath-taking ceremony was conducted by Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain, the report said. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus also attended the event.

Several top officials in Bangladesh, including Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Maksud Kamal and Bangla Academy Director General Professor Dr Md Harun-Ur-Rashid Askari, resigned from their posts in the wake of new protests by students and other demonstrators.

protecting our national interests," interim government's Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain said during his first press briefing at the foreign ministry.

"We intend to maintain smooth and positive relations with all... including India and China," said Hossain, who had served as a deputy high commissioner to India. When asked about the approach towards India, Hossain said both countries share

a strong and deep bond. "It is important that... India is a good friend of Bangladesh," Hossain said.

Economy top priority: Finance adviser

The top priority of Bangladesh's interim government is to bring the economy back on track and restore the people's trust in the banks, finance and planning adviser Salehuddin Ahmed has said.

Maldives Opp welcomes India policy recalibration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 MALE, AUGUST 11

THE MALDIVIAN Democratic Party has welcomed President Mohamed Muizzu-led government's "sudden recalibration" of its India policy and said Male has always been confident that India will always be the first responder any time the Maldives "dials an international 911".

Abdulla Shahid, the president of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), made remarks after he met External Affairs Minister Sjaishankar here on Saturday.



Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu. File

Shahid said his party "calls on the Muizzu government to issue a public apology for the actions... from its officials which have resulted in significant damage to the Maldives' foreign and economic outlook.

"The Maldives has always been confident that India will always be the first responder any time the Maldives "dials an international 911", he said.

WHILE STARS LIKE MICHAEL PHELPS, SIMONE BILES CAN MAKE MILLIONS, MOST ATHLETES STRUGGLE TO COVER COSTS OF COMPETING IN OLYMPICS
Olympians turn to OnlyFans to fund dreams as they face 'broken' finance system

THOMAS ADAMSON & MEGAN JANETSKY
 PARIS, AUGUST 11

DIRE FINANCIAL straits are leading droves of Olympic athletes to sell images of their bodies to subscribers on OnlyFans - known for sexually explicit content - to sustain their dreams of gold at the Games. As they struggle to make ends meet, a spotlight is being cast on an Olympics funding system that watchdog groups condemn as "broken," claiming most athletes "can barely pay their rent."

Olympic Committee did not express concern about the situation. When asked by AP about athletes turning to OnlyFans, IOC spokesman Mark Adams said, "I would assume that athletes... are allowed to do what they can."

Watching his sponsorships dry up and facing mounting costs, Jack Laugher was among the pantheon of Olympic athletes using the platform to get to the Games - or simply survive.

After medaling at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, Laugher, who scored another bronze in Paris last week for the UK, said he was waiting for funding that never materialized. His account, costing \$10 a month for a subscription, says he posts "SFW (safe for work) content in Speedos, briefs, boxers."

"For me, it's been an absolute lifeline," he said.

The AP spoke to multiple current and former Olympians who painted a sobering portrait of what they had to do to get to Paris. Laugher, and other current and former Olympians - rower Robbie Manson (New Zealand), pole vaulter Alysha Newman (Canada), divers Timo Barthel (Germany), Diego Belleza Isaías (Mexico) and Matthew Mitcham (Australia), the first openly gay Olympic gold medalist - found a measure of financial stability in OnlyFans that other funding failed to provide.

Unable to secure traditional sponsorships, Mitcham began posting photos on OnlyFans, including semi-frontal nudes, earning triple the amount he received



British diver Jack Laugher at the Paris Olympics, last Tuesday. AP

as a top athlete. "It's a privilege to see a body that has six hours of work every day, six days a week

put into it to make it Adonis-like," said Mitcham, who describes himself as a "sex worker-lite."

Manson, meanwhile, credited OnlyFans with boosting his athletic performance, saying his content included "thirst traps," but nothing pornographic. "My content is nude or implied nude. I keep it artistic, I have fun with it and try not to take myself too seriously... This approach has helped me achieve a personal best result at the Olympics," he told the AP.

Global Athlete, an organization created by athletes to address power imbalance in sports, decried the dire state of Olympic financing. "The IOC generates now over \$1.7 billion per year and they refuse to pay athletes," said Rob Koehler, Global Athlete's director general. He criticized the IOC for forcing athletes to sign away their image rights.

While stars like Michael Phelps and Simone Biles can make millions, most athletes struggle to cover the cost of competing on the global stage.

These can include coaching, physical therapy and equipment, at a cost of thousands of dollars a month. Some delegations fund training, with the athletes covering medical bills and daily expenses. In others, athletes pay for everything themselves.

Pole vaulter Alysha Newman has used the money she earned from OnlyFans to buy property and build up her savings. "I never loved how amateur athletes can never make a lot of money," she said. "This is where my entrepreneurial skills came in."

said at a press conference Thursday he wasn't aware of the trend and dismissed concern about the subject.

OnlyFans has expressed solidarity for its athletes. "OnlyFans is helping them to support training and living costs, and providing the tools for success on and off the field," it said in a statement.

Athletes on OnlyFans say they have been forced to grapple with societal stigma. But others like Mitcham have been vocal about their experiences. "Some people are judgmental about sex work. People say it's a shame or even that it is shameful," Mitcham said. "But what I do is a very light version of sex work, like the low-fat version of mayonnaise... selling the sizzle rather than the steak." **AP**

Provision to skip local trials for certain drugs: regulator's rationale

ANONNA DUTT
 NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

THE DRUG Controller General of India on August 7 formalised the pathway by which certain categories of new drugs can get marketing and manufacturing approval in the country without conducting local clinical trials. Medicines for rare diseases, new cellular or gene therapies, drugs needed in a pandemic, and medicines specifically needed by the armed forces will be exempt from local trials if they have been approved by the US, the UK, Japan, Australia, Canada, or the European Union regulators. Drugs that have a therapeutic edge over existing treatments for a condition can also apply for this waiver.

Lower prices
 Waiving local clinical trials reduces huge cost burdens on companies. This is because trials are expensive — exactly how expensive depends on the kind of side effects that a medi-

cine may cause, the number of sites and trial participants needed, and the duration of the trial, including patient follow-up. Thus, trials are a major determinant of a drug's price. This is especially true for new drugs which have to conduct three phases of trials to demonstrate their safety and efficacy. High prices in turn can act as barriers for entry to the Indian market. Waiving local trials will also help Indian pharma companies that have secured manufacturing licenses from international corporations. At present, even after obtaining manufacturing licenses, local clinical trials are a must for a product to enter the Indian market. A senior health official told *The Indian Express* that with this requirement now waived, pharma companies will save a big amount and thus be able to price their products lower.

Expedited availability
 Senior officials from the Union Health Ministry said that the move was made to ensure that cutting-edge therapies enter the

Indian market sooner. The step will likely hasten entry of drugs for the treatment of rare diseases afflicting very few people, where trials take longer to recruit participants. Similarly, the availability of new cancer therapies, whose clinical trials require long follow-ups, may also be expedited. Among the drugs whose availability is expected to be accelerated are popular weight loss drugs containing GLP-1 receptor agonists (like semaglutide and tirzepatide), donanemab, which slows cognitive decline in early Alzheimer's patients, and cancer therapies like larlatamab (lung cancers) and tovorafenib (paediatric brain tumour). The New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules 2019 already makes provisions for such expedited approvals. It says that local clinical trials may not be required if a new drug is approved in specified markets, no major adverse events have been reported, a global trial with Indian sites is ongoing, there is no evi-

dence that enzymes or genes in the Indian population affect the drug's safety and efficacy, and the applicant has provided an undertaking to conduct phase IV trials. **No blanket approval** While Wednesday's order did not explicitly state this, officials from the Health Ministry said that the DCGI's Subject Expert Committee will still have the discretionary power to ask a company to conduct a local clinical trial, especially if there is scientific evidence suggesting that the new drug might behave differently in the Indian population. "Companies may still be asked to conduct a local clinical trial if needed, but it will be on a case-to-case basis," the health official said. Moreover, all drugs approved without local trials will have to undertake phase IV marketing surveillance to keep track of any adverse events that might not have been detected in previous trials.

Some experts emphasise that the waiver has to be made after careful consideration. Prashant Reddy T, a lawyer specialising in drug regulations, said: "It is possible that some drugs may perform differently in the Indian population. Hence, it should not be a blanket waiver. As long as a committee looks into it and transparently states the scientific reasons for providing a waiver from local clinical trials, it should be fine." Dr Abhishek Shankar, oncologist at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences-New Delhi, emphasised the need to find a middle ground. "Maybe drugs for which global trials have 10% Indian population may be approved in this manner. This will also incentivise drug manufacturers to include Indian patients in their existing global trials," he said, adding that while waivers may be necessary for "orphan drugs [used to treat very few people afflicted with rare diseases] or during crises such as a pandemic", these exceptions "should not be the basis for a policy". Trials also help optimise the dosage for the

Indian population. Dr Shankar said: "There is a cancer which is recommended in a 400mg dose in the US. If I prescribe the same for Indian patients they will experience toxicity". **Not novel concept** That said, the pathway India has chosen is not new. There are several regulators across the world who accept approvals from other countries as basis for their own approvals. The UK, for instance, post-Brexit allowed fast-track approvals for medicines that had been approved by regulators in the US, Canada, Australia, and the EU. The Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration also has a fast-track process for approval of products that have been prelightened by Comparable Overseas Regulators of the US, Canada, the UK, Switzerland, the EU, Japan and Singapore. However, applications under this pathway have to fulfill certain criteria, including the medicines having to be identical and manufactured using the same process, and trials abroad featuring a similar demographic.

EXPLAINED SCIENCE

FIRST-EVER 'MEGAQUAKE ADVISORY' ISSUED BY JAPAN: WHAT THIS MEANS

AFTER A 7.1-MAGNITUDE earthquake shook southern Japan on Thursday, the country's meteorological agency issued its first-ever "megaquake advisory". The warning said that there is a higher than normal likelihood of strong shaking and large tsunamis on the Nankai Trough, a subduction zone (a region where tectonic plates collide with each other, and the heavier one slides under the other) along Japan's southwest Pacific coast. However, this does not mean that a major earthquake will definitely happen during a specific period, the advisory said.



Shaded area is region where Nankai Trough quakes may occur. Govt of Japan

What is the Nankai Trough?
 The Nankai Trough is a nearly 900-km long underwater subduction zone where the Eurasian Plate collides with the Philippine Sea Plate, pushing the latter under the former and into the Earth's mantle. This accumulates tectonic stress which can cause a megaquake — an earthquake with a magnitude larger than 8. The trough has produced large earthquakes roughly every 100 to 150 years, according to the 2023 study, 'High probability of successive occurrence of Nankai megathrust earthquakes', published in the journal *Nature*. These tremors usually come in pairs, with the second often rupturing in the subsequent two years — the most recent "twin" earthquakes took place in 1944 and 1946. Notably, Thursday's magnitude-7.1 earthquake occurred on or near the Nankai Trough, according to the United States Geological Survey. As a result, experts worry that the next tremor along the trough could be devastating.

When can the next megaquake along the Nankai Trough occur?
 In January 2022, Japan's Earthquake Research Committee said the next magnitude 8-9 megaquake along the trough has a roughly 70% probability of striking within the next 30 years. Such a megaquake could send tremors to areas from central Shizuoka — about 150

km south of Tokyo — to southwestern Miyazaki, *Reuters* reported. Tsunami waves of up to 98 feet may reach Japan's Pacific coasts within minutes after the quake. A 2013 government report found that a major Nankai Trough earthquake could impact an area that covers about a third of Japan and where about half the country's population of more than 120 million people lives, according to a report by *Nikkei Asia* magazine. The economic damage due to the disaster could go up to \$1.50 trillion, or more than a third of Japan's annual gross domestic product. **But can earthquakes be predicted?** No. An accurate prediction of an earthquake needs a precursory signal from within the earth, indicating a big quake is on the way. The signal must also occur only before large earthquakes so that it does not indicate every small movement within the earth's surface. Currently, there is no equipment to find such precursors. Thursday's advisory by Japan's meteorological agency was just a warning, not a prediction — it had nothing to do with science, Robert Geller, professor emeritus of seismology at the University of Tokyo, told the *BBC*. The advisory asked residents to prepare, review evacuation routes, and consider potential future warnings. **ENS**



AMITABH SINHA

A TECHNICAL snag in the spacecraft that took them to the International Space Station (ISS) has forced astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore to spend an extended period in space. Last week, NASA said they might have to wait till February 2025 to return to Earth. Though in an unprecedented situation, Williams and Wilmore are not in danger. The ISS can comfortably house them for the next six months. Currently, there are seven other astronauts at the space station. The ISS, a permanent space laboratory orbiting Earth at a distance of about 400 km, is continuously manned and has never been without an astronaut since November 2000. This is not the first time that astronauts have had to extend their stay at the ISS due to technical glitches. Williams and Wilmore, however, would have the longest unsheduled stay if they return in February. **Why are Williams and Wilmore stuck in space?** Williams and Wilmore travelled to the ISS on a Boeing spacecraft called Starliner in June. This spacecraft has made two trips to the ISS earlier but this was the first time it was carrying astronauts. Before the launch, a helium leak in Starliner's propulsion system was detected but was not considered serious enough to abandon the journey. Although Starliner developed two more similar leaks on its way, it reached its destination without any trouble. However, after it docked with the ISS and the two astronauts transferred inside, more problems emerged in Starliner, raising questions over the safety of the astronauts on their return journey — originally scheduled after just a week. So far, ground engineers have not been able to resolve all issues to everyone's satisfaction, leaving Williams and Wilmore stranded as they do not have a vehicle to return home. Both NASA and Boeing have said they hope to get Starliner in order soon. If that does not happen, the earliest that the astro-



(left) Wilmore and Williams at the ISS. The duo went to the ISS in Boeing's Starliner spacecraft. X/Space_Station, NASA



nauts can return to Earth would be in February 2025 on another vehicle that is set to travel to the ISS in September. This spacecraft, operated by SpaceX, is supposed to carry four astronauts to the ISS and bring them back in February. However, if Williams and Wilmore also have to be brought back, then the SpaceX spacecraft will carry only two astronauts in September. **Can the ISS accommodate them?** In recent years, the ISS, which has been operational for 25 years, has usually been hosting seven astronauts at any given time. These astronauts mostly belong to the five countries/regions whose space agencies manage this facility — the United States, Russia, Japan, Canada, and Europe. The astronauts carry out a variety of space-based experiments and are themselves subjects of some experiments, particularly those regarding the study of impacts of the outer space environment on human bodies. Nonetheless, the ISS is large enough to accommodate more astronauts. The number increases when a new team comes to take over or when astronauts arrive for short visits like Williams and Wilmore did. The facility is bigger than a typical six-bedroom apartment in the US, according to NASA. It has six sleeping quarters, two bathrooms, and even a gym. When visiting spacecraft attach themselves, additional space is created. Cargo spaceships routinely make trips to

the ISS, carrying essential supplies and attending to maintenance requirements. On their return, these spacecraft take back waste generated at the ISS and dispose of it into space at the time of re-entering Earth's atmosphere where it gets burnt due to friction. In fact, one such cargo spacecraft, called Cygnus, operated by a private aerospace and defence firm Northrop Grumman, docked with the ISS last week. It carried more than 3,700 kg of cargo, which is currently being unpacked by the astronauts on board. It will remain docked with the space station till January after which it will return to Earth. As many as eight spacecraft can simultaneously dock themselves with the ISS. The cargo spacecraft, however, cannot be used to bring back Williams and Wilmore as they are not equipped with the special capsules that can house humans in space. **Have astronauts stayed in space for a long duration?** Spending nine to 10 months in space is quite a long time but not unusual. Several astronauts have remained in space far longer than that. The current record is held by Russian cosmonaut Valeri Polyakov, who spent 438 days at the Mir space station between January 1994 and March 1995. Russia's Mir predated the ISS and was operational between 1986 and 2001 before being brought down. More recently, US astronaut Frank Rubio completed 371 days at the ISS between

September 2022 and September 2023. Several other astronauts, including women, have spent more than 300 days in space. Williams and Wilmore are likely to spend more than 250 days by the time they return. Both these astronauts are on their third visit to the ISS. Williams spent 196 days on her first visit in 2006-2007 and then another 127 days in 2012. Wilmore, during his two previous visits in 2014 and 2015, has spent a total of 178 days at the ISS. **What happens to the human body in space?** NASA has increasingly been deploying its astronauts for extended stay missions to study the impacts on human bodies. US astronauts flying to the ISS can now volunteer to be part of such experiments. NASA is running a programme to study the impacts of short (up to 3.5 months), routine (up to eight months), and extended stays (more than eight months) of astronauts in space. Past studies have shown that bone density and muscle quality deteriorate faster in space than on Earth. Low gravity impacts brain fluids and extended stays can potentially alter brain structure. Extended stays can also increase the risk of heart disease. Several other impacts have also been noticed. The ongoing programme would help in better understanding of these changes. For these reasons astronauts aboard the ISS spend almost two hours every day in the gym, doing a range of physical exercises.

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How Centre's Clean Plant Programme plans to boost production of fruits

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
 NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

THE UNION CABINET on Friday approved the Clean Plant Programme (CPP), aimed at increasing the yield and productivity of horticulture crops in India. First announced in Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's interim Budget speech in February 2023, the CPP is also targeted at enhancing the quality of fruit crops across the nation. The Ministry of Agriculture has sought an allocation of Rs 1,765 crore for the programme. One half of this will be sourced from the budget of the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), while the other half will be in the form of a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). **How will the CPP work?** The programme has three main components geared towards helping farmers ob-

tain virus-free, high-quality planting material (plants used for vegetative propagation) in order to increase crop yields and improve income opportunities. These are: **Development of nine Clean Plant Centers (CPCs) which will provide disease diagnostics and therapeutics, create mother plants to be sent to nurseries, and quarantine all domestic and imported planting materials intended for commercial propagation and distribution;** **Enhancement of infrastructure, including the development of large-scale nurseries to facilitate the efficient multiplication of clean planting material — the mother plants obtained from the CPCs will be multiplied in nurseries and distributed to farmers;** **Creation of regulatory and certification process to ensure thorough accountability and traceability in the production and sale of planting material.** **What is the need for the CPP?** India is the second largest producer of

NINE CITIES, NINE CLEAN PLANT CENTERS LINKED TO ICAR INSTITUTES

The CPCs will be established in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for specific horticultural crops. Each CPC will be linked to a different ICAR institute.

- IN PUNE, the CPC for grapes will be linked to the National Research Centre for Grapes, Pune**
- IN BIKANER, another CPC for citrus fruits will be developed at the Central Institute of Arid Horticulture, Bikaner**
- IN SOLAPUR, a CPC for pomegranate will be linked to the National Research Center on Pomegranate, Solapur**
- IN EAST INDIA, a CPC for tropical and subtropical plants will be developed in collaboration with to ICAR's East India Horticulture Centres in West Bengal and Jharkhand**
- IN LUCKNOW, the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture will develop a CPC for mango, guava, and litchi**
- IN SRINAGAR, a CPC for temperate fruits — apple, almond, walnut, berries, etc. — will be developed at the Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (CITH), Srinagar**
- IN MUKTESHWAR, another CPC for temperate fruits will be developed at the CITH's regional station in Mukteshwar**
- IN NAGPUR, a CPC for citrus fruits will be developed at the Central Citrus Research Institute, Nagpur**

fruits and vegetables in the world after China. From 2013-14 to 2023-24, the area under horticulture crops has risen from 24 million hectares to 28.63 million hectares, and production has increased from 277.4 million metric tonnes (mt) to 352 million mt. India is also a major importer and exporter of fresh fruits. In the financial year 2023-24, India exported fresh fruits worth \$1.15 billion,

while it imported fruits worth \$2.73 billion. With the rising consumption of fruits in the country, demand has specifically increased for planting materials of foreign apples, and "exotics" such as avocado and blueberry. According to sources, between 2018-20, the EXIM committee for import of planting material of fruit plants permitted the import of 21.44 lakh apple plants in 2018, which increased to 49.57 lakh in 2020. In 2018, permission was given to import only 1,000 avocado plants which increased to 26,500 in 2020. Similarly, permissions for the import of blueberry plants went up from 1.55 lakh in 2018 to 4.35 lakh in 2020. At present, the process of importing plants is very cumbersome, with imported plants having to be kept in quarantine for two years. The CPCs will cut this period down to six months, and thus make it easier for farmers to access disease free and genuine planting material for horticultural crops in India. The concept of CPCs is on the lines of projects in countries like the US, Israel, and the Netherlands.

14 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

ON THE CONGRESS EXODUS

People leave the Congress for their self-interest. There is no problem. Ours is a democratic party. There could be ideological differences but not conflict. Without ideological differences, there can be no progress

Manoj CG: In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress did not get any seats in Haryana. This time it has got five of the 10 seats. With the Assembly elections just a few months away, how confident are you of a win?

Last time, we lost all the seats and the vote share of the party was around 28 per cent. This time we got five seats and the combined vote share of the INDIA Alliance has been the highest in Haryana at 47.62 per cent. In fact, Haryana has the highest vote share for the Opposition alliance followed by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It is pertinent to remember that though we had only a 28 per cent vote share in 2019, we (the Congress) won 31 seats in the Assembly elections just three months later. The party had managed to give a tough fight, with the margin of difference with the winner in many seats being as low as 4,000 votes. This time, looking at the Lok Sabha election results, the trends and popular mood, it is obvious that people have decided to bring the Congress to power in the next Assembly elections.

Manoj CG: The BJP changed its chief minister (CM) before the Lok Sabha elections, hoping to deflect local anti-incumbency against Manohar Lal Khattar by replacing him with Nayab Singh Saini. It believes the people's anger has subsided. Is that a concern?

No, that is their own assessment. They might have changed their CM after sensing anti-incumbency. They may keep changing the face of their CMs but the people have already decided to change them.

Manoj CG: The BJP suffered losses not just in Haryana but in the Hindi heartland states of Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (UP) during the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress, the Samajwadi Party (SP) in UP and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) to some extent in Bihar made gains. Do you think the Modi magic is waning?

That the BJP's popularity is declining has been proved by the Lok Sabha results. Compared to their tall claims of absolute majority, they won just 33 seats in UP.

Manoj CG: Do you think the Congress in Haryana should announce a clear chief ministerial candidate?

No, there is a certain procedure in the Congress. It is based on the feedback of the winning MLAs and party observers. Then, the high command takes the decision on a leader who best commands the loyalty of the elected representatives and of the people. But perceptions play a role in how tickets are distributed. That makes a difference.

Manoj CG: There's a perception that if the Congress returns to power, you will become the CM. Is that right?

That is your perception.

Vikas Pathak: The Congress and the Opposition say that the ruling BJP government at the Centre has had an authoritarian attitude. Your comment.

Be it the BJP or Congress, no one should function with political vengeance in a democracy. In Haryana, we have full faith in the judiciary. When the election results come out, you will see if there is political vendetta or not.

Vikas Pathak: Haryana politics seems to be pivoted on the Jat versus non-Jat tussle. The BJP has looked past the dominant Jats and believes that Saini, who is from an Other Backward Class (OBC), will consolidate the non-Jat vote. How correct is this perception and is the Congress addressing it?

The Jat versus non-Jat divide is just a perception, not reality and certainly not derived from any analysis. When a road is made or a school is built, people from all communities use them. The Congress has always been with the underprivileged, be it farmers, labourers, small traders, shopkeepers and youth.

Vikas Pathak: Several Congress leaders left the party to join the BJP. Naveen Jindal left at the last minute. How do you intend to address this exodus?

The scenario is quite the opposite. Over the last four years or so, 42 ex-MLAs, ex-MPs and sitting MPs of the BJP have joined the Congress. Very few Congress leaders left to join the BJP. The people you are talking about left the Congress in 2014. A few of them returned. We also got many joiners from the BJP at the last minute. You should ask Naveen Jindal why he left.

Asad Rehman: In the recent Lok Sabha elections, the Congress fought on fewer seats compared to the last time to accommodate its allies. Do you think this will weaken the Congress in

WHY BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA

Bhupinder Singh Hooda is former Chief Minister of Haryana and is at present Leader of the Opposition in the Haryana Assembly. After the Lok Sabha elections, the Opposition alliance is acting as a counter-balance to the ruling party's rhetoric and the Congress is recovering

lost ground. As one of the prominent state leaders of the Congress, he is pitching a strong campaign against the BJP in the run-up to the Haryana Assembly elections and is reconnecting with voters. A seasoned politician, Hooda is giving his all to an election he claims will be his last.



ON AGNIVEER SCHEME

Agniveers who come out in 2026 can avail the ex-servicemen's reservation that is already provided by the Central and state governments. Besides, where will you reserve jobs for them, in class IV services?

'Congress is the only party that can carry everyone along. It's improving'

Former Haryana CM and veteran Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda on the shift in national politics, the reinvention of the Congress, the Haryana Assembly elections and Vinesh Phogat. The session was moderated by Manoj CG, Chief of Political Bureau



Former Haryana Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition in the Haryana Assembly, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, with Manoj CG at the Indian Express office, Noida *Abhinav Saha*

future general and state elections?

I think this happened when Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister in 1996 and a majority of the seats were given to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) for the UP Assembly elections. After that, the Congress regained those seats with much difficulty. The circumstances were such. But under the INDIA Alliance, there was proportional representation. The party with a bigger vote share got more seats to contest from. Those with a smaller vote share got fewer seats. Our vote share in UP was smaller in 2019. The SP had a bigger vote share, so they got more seats. There has to be give and take in an alliance.

Manoj CG: If the Congress high command decides to give a few seats to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Assembly elections, like it did with Kurukshetra in the Lok Sabha polls, what will be your reaction?

At the national level, we have an alliance with the AAP, SP and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). But there's no alliance at the state level. There has been no discussion on that.

Asad Rehman: But not having an alliance at the state level will pit partners against each other and could lead to cutting of each other's votes. Won't this send a mixed message?

As far as Haryana is concerned, the Lok Sabha results signal that the fight is between the Congress and the BJP. The other parties that could have cut the vote have been rejected. Parties like the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and Jannayak Janata Party (JJJP) got less than one per cent of the vote share.

Varinder Bhatia: The state Congress seems to be a divided house with party general secretary Kumari Selja on a different yatra while the state unit, headed by Deepender Singh Hooda, is on a different one. Won't this damage your party's prospects?

There's no divided house. These are all cooked up stories. All of us are working for the Congress. There's no such problem.

Manoj CG: After 2014, the perception is that the Haryana Congress is run by Bhupinder Hooda. First Ashok Tanwar left, followed by Kuldeep Bishnoi and then Kiran Choudhry and her daughter. Everyone feels that you run the Haryana Congress, there's no place for anyone else. Isn't this a problem?

People with important posts in the Congress leave the party for their self-interest. Ours is a democratic party. There

could be ideological differences, not conflict. Without ideological differences, there can be no progress.

Varinder Bhatia: The Haryana CM has been making announcements for public welfare, be it on reservation for Agniveers, Panchayati Raj institutions, backward classes and minimum support price for crops. Will this impact the poll results?

Several of these announcements are measures we have already executed before or promised. For example, the announcement of a cylinder for Rs 500 was done by me three months ago. They (BJP leaders) are declaring it now. In their Kaushal Rozgar Nigam, there's no reservation or merit. They are just extending the contractual employees' contract without making them permanent employees. They are just de-luding the people. So far, OBCs (Other Backward Classes) have not got reservation in MBBS colleges or engineering colleges. The Congress has decided to give a minimum support price (MSP) with a legal guarantee. They have given MSPs for about 14 crops that are not even grown in Haryana. These are just hollow announcements. But people understand.

Rishika Singh: In Karnataka, there are talks of reservation for locals in the private sector. Such a policy had come up in Haryana a few years ago but was cancelled. Do you think there should be reservations for employment of local residents?

Private job reservations have not benefited anyone, not even local residents. They are hogwash. Depending on the nature of service or job, some can get priority or preference. But you can't make a reservation.

Asad Rehman: The Supreme Court



recently gave States the right to sub-classify Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) for quotas. What's your take on it?

We believe in stakeholderhood of all sections. Let me remind you that it was my government in Haryana that brought, for the first time in the country, reservation for the economically poor among the upper castes. It was that decision that later inspired the Modi government to bring a reservation for the economically backward among the upper castes (at the national level). We have even pushed for a limit higher than the current Rs 8 lakh for creamy layer. Those who are socially backward need affirmative action. That's why Rahul Gandhi is asking for a caste census.

Shiny Varghese: What's your policy on conserving the Aravallis, given the pollution and heavy rain in NCR?

There's a specific policy and I am committed to preserving the Aravallis. In fact, the current government tried to give a licence to industry but people resisted. Those operations have stopped now.

Manoj CG: What's the Congress manifesto guaranteeing in Haryana?

We have formed a manifesto committee but we have taken five or six major decisions. Like the old age pension of Rs 6,000, making 300 units of electricity free and filling more than two lakh posts. These are all permanent recruitments but the BJP is not filling them up because these involve giving reservations to SC and OBCs. We will fight for a legal guarantee of MSP for farmers. We'll declare more guarantees. The Opposition alliance is now strong.

Rinku Ghosh: You publicly recommended that Olympic wrestler Vinesh Phogat be given a Rajya Sabha

seat. Her uncle Mahavir Phogat claims that this is politically motivated since you didn't make such a recommendation as CM when the other Phogat sisters, Geeta and Babita, won medals in 2010. Your comments.

First of all, they got medals in the Commonwealth Games, which are very different from the Olympics. But that's not the question. They were accordingly given jobs in the services. One of them was made deputy superintendent of police (DSP) just like Olympian wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt. The other was made deputy director in the Haryana sports department.

Vinesh's is a special case because justice has not been done to her. If a wrestler is 50-100 gm overweight, they are usually given around five hours (to lose that weight). She fought three back-to-back bouts and was not given time. She had already qualified for the silver medal. This doesn't happen to every sportsman. It's our duty to honour her for her efforts.

Rinku Ghosh: During your tenure, you had promoted Faridabad as a smart city and an investor's dream. Then Gurugram came up. Now the infrastructure is crumbling in both these growth hubs. How do you plan to upgrade them?

It's not only about Gurugram and Faridabad. During my tenure, Haryana was the number one state in the country in per capita income and per capita investment. Be it law and order, employment, sports development or education, we were at the top. Now it's number one in unemployment and has been lagging behind in every growth index for the last decade. That's because the current government hasn't done anything. There is neither investment nor employment opportunities. If the Congress government comes to power, Gurugram will become one of the best cities in the world. The state is an education hub because we started in 2005 and continued institution-building through our years in governance. Can you name a single institution they built in the last 10 years, considering they had promised a medical college in every district?

Lalmani Verma: The first batch of Agniveers are likely to come out in 2026. Assuming you're in the government at that time, what happens to them?

There's a major protest against Agniveer and Haryana will suffer the most. Every year, at least 5,000 people would sign up for the Army. Now, that figure has fallen. The population of Haryana is only two per cent of the country but every tenth soldier

is from Haryana. This is injustice against Haryana and Punjab. When the INDIA alliance comes to power at the Centre, this will definitely be scrapped.

Those who come out in 2026 can avail the ex-servicemen's reservation that is already provided by the Central and state governments. But so far hardly two to three per cent of ex-soldiers have been recruited. Besides, where will you reserve jobs for them, in class IV services? Is this how we will devalue their contribution? Neither the Army, nor the people are in favour of Agniveer. Previously, when someone was recruited in the forces, they would be celebrated. They would be given education, healthcare, pension. Not anymore.

Manoj CG: You were part of G-23, a group of senior Congress leaders, who wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi seeking reforms in the party. It has been four years. The Congress has won 99 Lok Sabha seats and Rahul Gandhi's image is much improved. How has the party changed?

There was nothing like G-23, it's coined by the media. Having said that, we weren't against the Congress. I'm a third generation Congressman, my son is fourth generation, my grandfather was a freedom fighter. My father has been member of the Constituent Assembly, constituent legislative Assembly, provincial parliament, Lok Sabha, Punjab Assembly, Haryana Assembly and the Rajya Sabha. Congress is the only party that has been here from the freedom struggle and can carry every section alongside. We wanted to strengthen the Congress, nothing more. After that letter, Mallikarjun Kharge was elected Congress president. Rahulji did a yatra over thousands of kilometres. He got so much support. We doubled our seats. The Congress is improving.

Deeptiman Tiwary: Among Opposition leaders, you have the most cases filed by Central agencies like CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) and ED (Enforcement Directorate). Your take?

No charges have been framed against me. I have full faith in the judiciary. Time will prove everything.

P Vaidyanathan Iyer: The BJP has got less than a majority of Lok Sabha seats after 10 years. Do you think the influence of its brand of Hindutva is going down?

Using any religion for votes isn't right. People have started to realise that they can get ahead by working together. During riots in Mewat, so many Hindus came together and stood by Muslims. People are seeing through divisive politics.

15 ECONOMY

MARKET WATCH

MCAP OF 8 OF TOP-10 VALUED COS DROPS

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1,66,954.07 crore last week, with Reliance Industries and Life Insurance Corporation of India emerging as the biggest laggards, in line with weak trend in equities.

HINDENBURG RESEARCH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SEBI CHAIRPERSON

All disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed: Madhabi, husband

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, AUGUST 11

SECURITIES AND Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband, Dhaval Buch, on Sunday said that their investment in the offshore funds, mentioned by Hindenburg Research in its latest allegations, were made in 2015 when they both were 'private citizens' living in Singapore.

The investment was made almost two years before Madhabi joined Sebi as a Whole Time Member, they said.

On Saturday, US-based Hindenburg Research, in a post on X (formerly Twitter) alleged that Madhabi and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal. The short-seller alleged that the couple invested in Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund (GDOF), in which Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani, had invested.

GDOF invested in IPE-Plus Fund 1, a small offshore Mauritius Fund, managed by wealth management firm India Infoline (now 360 ONE WAM). Hindenburg claimed. The founder and chief investment officer (CIO) of IPE-Plus Fund was Anil Ahuja, who was also a director of Adani Enterprises, the flagship company of the Adani group, where he served three terms spanning nine years ending in June 2017. According to Hindenburg, Vinod Adani used the offshore fund to invest in Indian markets with funds allegedly siphoned from over invoicing of power equipment to the Adani group.

"The investment in the fund referred to in the Hindenburg report was made in 2015 when they were both private citizens living



Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch.

in Singapore and almost 2 years before Madhabi joined Sebi, even as a Whole Time Member," Sebi Chairperson and her husband said in a joint statement.

The clarification is in response to the allegations made by Hindenburg Research on Saturday. They have strongly denied the "baseless allegations and insinuations" made in the report.

Adani group and 360 One WAM, the wealth and asset management company, have denied allegations made by Hindenburg Research on August 10. "Sebi has strong institutional mechanisms of disclosure and recusal norms as per the code of conduct applicable to its officers. Accordingly, all disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed, including disclosures of all securities held or subsequently transferred," the joint statement stated.

Madhabi, an alumna of IIM Ahmedabad, became a Whole Time Member in the Sebi in 2017 and its Chairperson in March 2022. "The decision to invest in this fund was because the chief investment officer, Anil Ahuja, is Dhaval's childhood friend from school and IIT Delhi and, being an ex-employee of Citibank, J.P. Morgan and 3i Group plc, had many decades of a strong investing career. The fact

Dhaval Buch's holdings in the fund were less than 1.5 per cent of the total inflow into the fund," 360 One WAM said.

Ports-to-energy conglomerate, Adani group, in a statement said that the latest allegations by Hindenburg are malicious, mischievous and manipulative selections of publicly available information to arrive at pre-determined conclusions for personal profiteering with wanton disregard for facts and the law.

"We completely reject these allegations against the Adani Group which are a recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Honorable Supreme Court in March 2023," Adani group said in a clarification.

The Adani group said it has "absolutely no commercial relationship with the individuals or matters mentioned in this calculated deliberate effort to malign our standing". The group said it remains steadfastly committed to transparency and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. "For a discredited short-seller under the scanner for several violations of Indian securities laws, Hindenburg's allegations are no more than red herrings thrown by a desperate entity with total contempt for Indian laws," the group said.

Hindenburg Research also alleged that during Madhabi Buch's tenure as a Whole Time Member at Sebi, her husband was appointed as a senior advisor to Blackstone, the world's largest alternative asset manager, in 2019. Dhaval had not worked for a fund, in real estate or capital markets before, per his LinkedIn profile, the short-seller claimed.

"Dhaval's appointment, in 2019, as Senior Advisor to

Blackstone Private Equity was on account of his deep expertise in Supply Chain management. Thus, his appointment pre-dates Madhabi's appointment as Sebi Chairperson. This appointment has been in the public domain ever since. At no time has Dhaval been associated with the Real Estate side of Blackstone," Sebi Chairperson and her husband said in the joint statement.

On Dhaval's appointment, the Blackstone Group was immediately added to Madhabi's recusal list maintained with Sebi, the statement said. "Over the last two years, Sebi has issued more than 300 circulars (including "Ease of Doing Business" initiatives in line with the developmental mandate of Sebi) across the entire market eco-system. All regulations of Sebi are approved by its Board (and not by its Chairperson) after extensive public consultation. Insinuations that a handful of these matters related to the REIT industry were favours to any specific party are malicious and motivated," the joint statement by the Sebi Chairperson and her husband said.

"During this long period, Madhabi and Dhaval have accrued their savings through their salaries, bonuses and stock options. Insinuations about their net worth and investments referencing Madhabi's current government salary are malicious and motivated," the joint statement said.

The two consulting companies set up by Madhabi during her stay in Singapore, one in India and one in Singapore, became immediately dormant on her appointment with Sebi. These companies (and her shareholding in them) were explicitly part of her disclosures to Sebi. After Dhaval retired from Unilever in 2019, he started his own consultancy practice through these companies.

INVESTIGATIONS INTO INVESTMENTS IN ADANI GROUP COMPANIES

Fund named by Hindenburg part of structure used by two overseas funds probed by Sebi

JAY MAZOOMDAR & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, AUGUST 11

IPE PLUS Fund 1, the offshore Mauritius fund where the US-based Hindenburg Research claimed the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch held a stake since 2015, is part of the investment structure used by two of the 13 overseas funds that were being probed by the market regulator by opaque fund flows into Adani Group companies since 2020.

In effect, this made the Sebi Chairperson a part of the investigations by the regulator, said former Sebi officials, thereby raising potential conflict of interest issues.

"We don't know if she recused herself when the investigation was going on. Ideally, she should have recused herself and disclosed that she had invested in the fund structure in the time period that was under investigation," said a former whole-time member with Sebi. A statement jointly issued by the Sebi Chairperson and her husband, though, said that "disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed" as per the code of conduct applicable to its officers.

The funds were being probed by the market regulator for its "long-standing suspicion" that some public shareholders of the Adani Group "could be fronts for the promoters". In a report released Sunday, the US-based Hindenburg Research claimed that the Sebi Chairperson "had a stake in obscure offshore entities used in the Adani money siphoning scandal." According to Sebi records, Emerging India Focus Funds and EM Resurgent Fund, two of the Adani Group's 13 foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) under investigation, declared Trident Trust Company (Mauritius) as their beneficial owner.

Corporate records accessed by *The Indian Express* show that Trident Trust Company (Mauritius) is also the administrator of Global Opportunities Fund (Bermuda), the parent entity of IPE Plus Fund 1 (Mauritius), where the Sebi Chairperson held a stake worth at least Rs 5.5 crore until February 2018.

While a detailed email sent to Madhabi Puri Buch did not elicit any response, in a statement issued jointly with her husband on Sunday, she said: "Sebi has strong institutional mechanisms of dis-



File

closure and recusal norms as per the code of conduct applicable to its officers. Accordingly, all disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed, including disclosures of all securities held or subsequently transferred." She further said that "Hindenburg has been served a show cause notice for a variety of violations in India. It is unfortunate that instead of replying to the Show Cause Notice, they have chosen to attack the credibility of the Sebi and attempt character assassination of the Sebi Chairperson."

Last year, documents accessed by the reporters' consortium Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) showed that Vinod Adani, the elder brother of Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani, set up Assent Trade and Investment Private Limited (ATIL) in October 2010 as the sole shareholder.

Until 2010-2011, annual reports of Adani Power Limited listed Vinod Adani, the Vinod Adani Family Trust and Vinod Adani HUF as part of the promoter group. Funded by entities owned by Vinod Adani, records accessed by OCCRP showed that ATIL moved \$100 million by May 2012 to the Global Opportunities Fund (GOF). In August 2013, ATIL subscribed to a sub-fund of GOF in Bermuda — Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund (GDOF) — which, in turn, invested in IPE Plus Fund 1 (Mauritius) that put money in the Indian stock market.

With approximately \$522.2 million in assets, Global Dynamic Opportunities Fund Limited (Bermuda) is a hedge fund operated by IIFL Capital Pte Ltd which also manages IPE Plus Fund.

Last August, the British daily *Financial Times* reported that to pick up and trade in Adani stocks, funds from unknown sources were channelled by two British Virgin Islands shell companies — United Arab Emirates national Nasser Ali Shaban Adil's Gulf Asia Trade and Investment Limited and Taiwan national Chang-Cung-Ling's Lingo Investment Limited

through a structure under Global Opportunities Fund (Bermuda), using the two Mauritius funds being probed by the Sebi.

Under the requirement of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), show Sebi records, both Emerging India Focus Funds and EM Resurgent Fund named a Mauritius company — Emerging India Fund Management Ltd (EIFM) — as their controlling shareholder under the Emerging Fund Trust and its trustee Trident Trust Company (Mauritius).

As reported by *The Indian Express* last September, Mauritius financial regulator Financial Services Commission (FSC) revoked the business and investment licences of EIFM in May 2022, a full eight months before the first Hindenburg report flagged alleged irregularities in the Adani Group.

In its licence revocation notice, the FSC held that EIFM "acted in breach" of various sections of the Financial Services Act, the Securities Act, the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Regulations (2003 and 2018) and the Code on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

These alleged breaches relate to non-compliance on maintaining records of clients and transactions, accounting and auditing standards; safeguards against dummy officers; corporate governance and the prescribed internal mechanism to identify risks of money laundering.

Hours after Hindenburg Research raised questions of conflict of interest alleging that Sebi was unwilling to take action against the Adani Group as its chairperson had a stake in the company's offshore entities, the conglomerate rubbished the claims calling it "malicious, mischievous and manipulative".

Earlier, Madhabi and her husband said in a statement that they strongly denied the "baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report". "The same are devoid of any truth. Our life and finances are an open book," they said.

BRIEFLY

Adopt guidance over intimidation: CBDT chief

New Delhi: Income-tax department officials should make renewed efforts to come across as responsible, responsive, transparent apart from undertaking an approach of "guidance over intimidation" while dealing with taxpayers, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman has said. Ravi Agrawal, the head of the direct taxes administration body of the country, suggested a 'PRUDENT' approach to be followed by the taxmen as the income tax regime completed 164 years in India. The CBDT chief recently spoke to his colleagues via an online video 'Samvaad' session — 'The Chairman Speaks' — on the occasion of the 165th Income Tax Day that was observed on July 24. PTI

LIC to invest around ₹1.3 lakh cr in market in FY25

New Delhi: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) MD and CEO Siddhartha Mohanty has said that the corporation is looking to make fresh investments of around Rs 1.3 lakh crore in equities during the current financial year. PTI

FPIs turn net sellers in August so far

New Delhi: After infusing money during the last two months, foreign investors have turned net sellers as they pulled out over Rs 13,400 crore from Indian equities in August so far due to unwinding of the yen carry trade and recession fears in the US. So far this year, FPIs have made a net investment of Rs 22,134 crore in equities, data with the depositories showed. Going according to the data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrew a net amount of Rs 13,431 crore from equities so far this month (August 1-9). PTI

MATTER PERTAINS TO TRADEMARK, NOT PATENTS: OFFICIAL

Re-validate all decisions by contractual employees: DPIIT directs patent office

RAVIDUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

THE DEPARTMENT for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has asked the patent office to terminate its Memorandum of Understanding with Quality Council of India (QCI) and form a committee consisting of 5 to 10 officials from Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM) to re-validate all decisions taken by contractual staff, a government official told *The Indian Express* on Sunday.

This comes after Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati in her legal opinion sought by DPIIT suggested annulment of all the decisions made by the outsourced QCI employees hired by CGPDTM. She said that quasi-judicial functions conducted by the outsourced employees from any agency without the necessary statutory architectural powers would be "inherently flawed and legally unenforceable". QCI is an autonomous not-for-profit body.

To tide over shortage of staff, the CGPDTM had "outsourced" a total of 790 employees through Quality Council of India

The ASG, as reported by this newspaper, suggested the ministry to constitute a committee of officials who are statutorily authorised to make quasi-judicial decisions. This could save some of the decisions from invalidation, she said.

"The DPIIT has, on legal advice, communicated to the CG office on July 18, 2024 directed it to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) dated December 28, 2022 with Quality Council of India (QCI) and form a committee consisting of 5 to 10 officials from the office of CGPDTM to re-validate all the decisions taken by these Contract Hearing Officers (CHOs)," the official said.

The official stressed that the matter pertains to the "grant of trade marks, not patents".

"The High Court (HC) of Calcutta has upheld the same, setting aside the orders passed by a QCI official appointed by CGPDTM. The HC has found that Section 3(2) of the Trade Marks Act suggests that 'officers' should be from the cadre of officers, not contractual or outsourced employees. The matter is to be heard," the official said.

To tide over shortage of staff, the CGPDTM had "outsourced" a total of 790 employees through the Quality Council of India, an autonomous not-for-profit body, at an annual cost of Rs 50.26 crore from October 10, 2022. The patent office had originally proposed hiring 1,114 employees at an annual cost of Rs 62.15 crore. The hiring was undertaken because manpower shortage was cited as the reason for delays in approving patents and trade marks in a report by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).

"It (order) was initiated on the complaint of an advocate, Mukesh Jain. He alleged that the contractual staff hired by the office of CG-

PDTM to conduct hearings and dispose of show-cause and opposition matters of Trade Mark Applications is a quasi-judicial responsibility. Thus, the orders passed are illegal and are expected to be conducted by regular officials holding quasi-judicial positions," the official said.

The Calcutta High Court on August 8, 2024 had also ruled that hiring contractual employees for "quasi-judicial functions" in the patents and trade mark office was not legal. The Calcutta High Court's decision came in a case where a trademark opposition order that was issued by an 'Associate Manager' of Trade Marks was being challenged. These officers were hired as Hearing Officers in the Trade Marks Registry, "purely on contract basis" up to the period of March 31, 2023.

According to the Annual Report for 2022-2023 published by the Office of the Controller General, a total of 2,31,977 trade marks were registered in 2022-23 while 2,61,408 trade marks were registered in 2021-22.

FDI in manufacturing rises 69% during 2014-24

Foreign direct investment inflows in the manufacturing sector during 2014-24 rose by 69 per cent to \$165.1 billion, Parliament was informed recently.



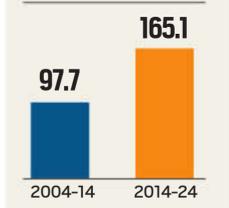
In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said that India is rapidly emerging as a preferred country for foreign investment in the manufacturing sector.

\$383.50 billion: Total FDI inflow reported in the country during the past five financial years (2019-20 to 2023-24)

Replying to a separate question, Prasada said that the initiatives taken by the Government have led to a decline in dependency on imports in several sectors including mobiles

The import of mobile phones has decreased from Rs 48,609 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 7,674

FDI EQUITY INFLOW IN MANUFACTURING SECTORS (in \$ billion)



On the other hand, the exports have increased from Rs 1,566 crore in 2014-15 to more than Rs 1,28,982 crore in 2023-24, he said

Prasada, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha earlier, had said that the government is developing a trade connect e-platform to connect exporters, MSMEs and entrepreneurs with various stakeholders including Indian missions abroad, export promotion councils, and other partner government agencies

Source: PTI

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

THE UTTAR Pradesh government has indicated to carmakers that the state is unlikely to roll back its decision to waive registration fees for strong hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, despite pushback from some companies to rescind the policy, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

During a meeting with automakers on Sunday (August 11), the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary is learnt to have informed carmakers about the decision to not take the policy back. The policy was said to be criticised by major car manufacturers like Tata Motors, Hyundai and Kia, as it was being seen as beneficial to their rivals Maruti Suzuki and Toyota Kirloskar who have a big portfolio of hybrid cars.

"The state government has indicated that they want to encourage both hybrid and electric vehicles and believes there have to be incentives provided to both the classes. There is also an understanding that the incentives need to be dynamic in nature given that the two vehicles have different technologies and are not in the same category," a source aware of what was discussed at the meeting said on condition of

EXPLAINED
Amid EV race, the hybrid push

TATA MOTORS, M&M and Hyundai have been betting big on pure electric vehicles (EVs). But Maruti has taken a more conservative approach, with no battery EV in the market so far. Maruti has, however, prioritised hybrids in its portfolio in partnership with Toyota Kirloskar.

anonymity. Countries everywhere, including India, are pushing toward electrification. In India, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra and Hyundai Motor have been betting big on pure electric vehicles (EVs). But passenger car market leader Maruti Suzuki has taken a more conservative approach, with no battery EV in the market so far. Maruti has, however, prioritised hybrids in its portfolio in partnership with Toyota Kirloskar.

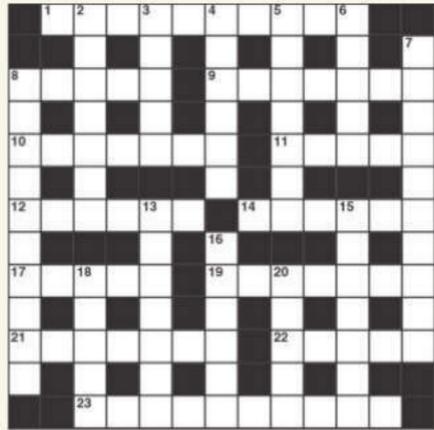
Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors and Hyundai Motor India did not respond to an immediate request for comment. In July, the Uttar Pradesh government had waived off registration fees for strong hybrid and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, joining states like Tamil

Nadu and Chandigarh in offering incentives for cleaner alternatives to petrol and diesel vehicles. The move had come as hybrid vehicles seemed to be gaining traction globally by offering improved fuel economy without the range anxiety of pure EVs. Recent sales figures highlight this shift in India's automotive market. In FY23, strong hybrids made up 0.5 per cent of total sales, which surged to 2.2 per cent in FY24. By comparison, the share of battery EVs grew at a slower pace, from 1.3 per cent to 2.3 per cent of the market, and there are signs of a further slowdown in this category.

The UP government's 100 per cent waiver on registration fees for strong hybrids could save buyers up to Rs 3.5 lakh. The waiver is likely to boost sales for manufacturers like Maruti Suzuki India, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, and Honda Cars India, all of which offer strong hybrid models. Previously, strong hybrids priced above Rs 10 lakh ex-showroom incurred a 10 per cent road tax. The state government is said to have clarified to carmakers that the scheme may apply only to hybrid vehicles certified under the central government's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME II) programme.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

CROSSWORD 5440



- ACROSS**
- Allowance obtained through an embassy (10)
 - It's held by solicitors to be permissible (5)
 - Tongue no longer red (7)
 - Small companies have places for pets (7)
 - Ellis spins a yarn (5)
 - All the points appear in a right solution (6)
 - Ready to throw a line to one in trouble (6)
 - A widespread current issue (5)
 - Show zeal then change employment (7)
 - Learned of a rite due for revision (7)
 - He shows the way one gets into bed (5)
 - An impressive thing to wear (6,4)
- DOWN**
- Cuts out exercises without hesitation (7)
 - Award for a priest of unusual merit? (5)
 - American revolution remains supremely secure (6)
 - Run sail out when away from the mainland (7)
 - Proverbially hard on one's toes? (5)
 - A blockade that should pay dividends (10)
 - Their union offers security (4,3,3)
 - Losing the rubber prevents you from doing this (7)
 - Muddled girl takes nothing up (7)
 - Cut over a quarter? That's serious (6)
 - Coarse types confuse love with lust (5)
 - Light or sound recorder (5)

Solutions Crossword 5439 Across: 1 Unwep, 4 Circle, 9 Terrain, 10 Apart, 11 Dress, 12 Elector, 13 First choice, 18 Treason, 20 Facia, 22 Liama, 23 Acclaim, 24 Attest, 25 Ascend Down: 1 Untidy, 2 Worse, 3 Praises, 5 Rate, 6 Chaotic, 7 Entre, 8 Under canvas, 14 Inexact, 15 Offices, 16 Stella, 17 Marmot, 19 Seals, 21 Crane

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue. Aim at ___ and you will get ___ thrown in. Aim at ___ and you get neither. - C. S. Lewis (6...5...5) (one word twice)

PVEEE **CESHNT**

CTAAR **ABEEHV**

SOLUTION: PVEEE: CARET, STENCH, BEHAVE
CTAAR: AHA, HAVEN, HEAVEN, HEAVEN, HEAVEN
CESHNT: CANTH, TENCH, NCHT, TENCH, NCHT
ABEEHV: BEHAVE, HEAVEN, HEAVEN, HEAVEN, HEAVEN

SUDOKU 5650

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

7		8			2			
8	1	2			3	9		
	2	4	9	6				
	7	5	4	8	9			
3								1
6		2	7		4	5		
			5	1	4	9		
9	5			6	8		4	
			3		7			2

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5649

8	3	9	6	1	7	5	2	4
2	6	1	5	4	3	7	8	9
4	5	7	2	8	9	1	6	3
3	4	6	9	5	8	2	1	7
9	1	5	7	2	4	8	3	6
7	8	2	1	3	6	9	4	5
1	9	8	4	6	5	3	7	2
5	2	4	3	7	1	6	9	8
6	7	3	8	9	2	4	5	1

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Tel. No.:07574-255259, Fax No.07574-255170, E-mail: gm.spm@spmcil.com, Website: http://spmnarmadapuram.spmcil.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Advt. No.178 Dated: 10.08.2024

The Chief General Manager, Security Paper Mill, Narmadapuram (M.P.) Pin 461005 invites sealed tenders for following work/material purchase. Interested Manufacturers/Suppliers may visit our website <http://spmnarmadapuram.spmcil.com> or <http://eprocure.gov.in> for detailed tender specifications / terms and conditions of tender enquiry.

Tender No.	Description / Work of Item	Please visit for Quantity, details & Submission of Bid	Last Date/ Time for receipt of tenders
Expression of Interest (EOI)	Expression of Interest (EOI) for Installation & Commissioning of Automatic E-type Welding Unit & Complete Integration with Existing Embossing Machine Setup	http://spmnarmadapuram.spmcil.com or http://eprocure.gov.in	09.09.2024 upto 11:00 Hrs

Any updates, Corrigendum, etc against the above tenders shall be published on said website only. Those shall not be published in any other newspaper or media. Manager (Material)

NO. SB PHQ/MT-CELL/2024 (178) Dated 06-08-2024

"E-TENDER NOTICE"

E-tender are invited by Assistant Inspector General of Police (G) Special Branch, Police Head Quarter, Bhopal for the Financial Year 2024-25 for rate contract for purchase of following. Items on website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app>:

S. N.	Name Of Item	Specification	Tender	EMD Rs.
1	VEHICLE BATTERY	As per tender	1000/-	10000/-

- Cost of tender document (Tender Fee) is non refundable and cannot be exempted in any condition & must submit online through website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app>.
- Tender document can be download from the website of MP Police (www.mppolice.gov.in)
- Bids shall be submitted online only at MP Tenders website: <https://www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app>
- Tender Schedule:

No.	Tender Activity	Date & Time
01	Last date of online e-Tender submission	22.08.2024 up to 1600 hrs.
02	Bid will be opened on	23.08.2024 up to 1600 hrs.
03	Bid Opening Place	MT CELL, SB PHQ BHOPAL

Sd/-
Dy. Inspector General of Police (Intelligence) M.P. Bhopal
G-14783/24

WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION

SUPPLYING AND INSTALLATION OF GRC

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. CPM-GSENGG-BRC-05R-24-25

Sealed Tenders for and on behalf of the President of India are invited by Chief Project Manager (Gati Shakti), Western Railway, Pralapanagar, Vadodara-390 004 for the following works. E-Tender No : CPM-GS-ENGG-BRC-05R-24-25

Name of the work : Vadodara Division: Supplying and installation of GRC cladding elements at old and new Station Buildings at Pralapanagar Station. Approximate cost work : ₹1,23,36,264.63 (Rupees One Crore Twenty Three Lakhs, Thirty Six thousand Two Hundred Sixty Four and Sixty Three Paise Only) Earnest Money to be deposited : ₹2,11,700/- (Rupees Two Lakhs, Eleven Thousand, Seven Hundred Only) Availability of online Tender for bidding : From: 16.08.2024 at 11.00 Hrs. To : 30.08.2024 up to 15.00 Hrs. Opening of Technical Bid Date & time : 30.08.2024 at 15.30 Hrs. Regarding detailed notice containing cost of tender document (non refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, Similar Nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit www.reps.gov.in Manual offers will not be considered.

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SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE PUNJAB

Shaheed Lance Naik Bashir Hussain 14-01-1954 To 12-08-1991 98-Bn Jammu & Kashmir

On 12th August 1991, 98 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Punjab for anti-terrorist operations. During an area domination patrol, the troops came under heavy fire from terrorists lying in ambush near a village. Despite being at a disadvantage, the troopers retaliated fiercely. Shaheed L/Nk Bashir Hussain led a flanking attack against the terrorists, advancing bravely despite sustaining injuries. His courage forced the terrorists to retreat, but he succumbed to his wounds and attained martyrdom. His valor and sacrifice will forever be remembered by the Force.

JAMMU & KASHMIR 12 August 1992

Shaheed SI Dalip Singh 08-03-1938 To 12-08-1992 44-Bn Rajasthan

During a period of intense militancy, 44 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Srinagar for anti-terrorist operations. On 12th August 1992, militants launched an attack on the Bank of India at Lal Chowk, guarded by CRPF troopers. The militants fired indiscriminately and hurled grenades, but the troops quickly retaliated with heavy fire, forcing the militants to flee. In the fierce encounter, Shaheed SI Dalip Singh, who bravely led from the front, sustained severe injuries and attained martyrdom. His supreme sacrifice will forever be remembered by the Force.

JAMMU & KASHMIR 12 August 2000

Shaheed Constable Shankar Lal Vaykar 20-07-1969 To 12-08-2000 10-Bn Madhya Pradesh

On 12th August 2000, 10 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Jammu & Kashmir for anti-terrorist operations. While two jawans were returning from Dett HQ, near Degree College ground, they were ambushed by two militants who opened indiscriminate fire, gravely injuring Constable Shankar Lal Vaykar. Hearing the gunshots, nearby troops rushed to the scene, causing the militants to flee. Despite being evacuated to District Hospital Baramulla, Constable Shankar Lal Vaykar succumbed to his injuries, attaining martyrdom in service to the nation.

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार

Govt. of Bihar

Notice Inviting Tender for selection of agency to provide Physiotherapy services at Sub-Division/Block-level Government Healthcare Facilities, in the State of Bihar

e-tender (NIT) Reference No.: - 05 /SHSB/Physiotherapy Services/2024-25

- The State Health Society, Bihar (SHSB), Patna intends to select an agency via e-tendering to provide Physiotherapy services at Sub-Division/Block-level Government Healthcare Facilities, in the State of Bihar. The State Health Society, Bihar, invites bids from eligible business entities, in providing the services as mentioned in this tender document.
- To participate in the e-tendering process, the bidder/agency are required to get themselves registered with Bihar Government Centralized e-Procurement portal, i.e., <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>, shall contact the helpdesk at the following address, "Mjunction Services Limited, RJ Complex, 2nd Floor, Canara Bank Campus, Khajpura, Ashiana Road, P.S. - Shastri Nagar, Patna 800 014, Bihar, e-mail id: eproc2support@bihar.gov.in, Toll Free Number- 18005726571 (Working Hours: 8AM to 7PM, All days in week except Sunday and few selected state holidays)".
- Schedule of Events:

Sl.no.	Event Description	Timeline
3.1	Bid Submission Start Date & Time	16/08/2024 (Friday) from 11:00 AM, on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.2	Last date & time for submission (upload) of online bidding document.	06/09/2024 (Friday) till 05:00 PM, on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.3	Last date & time for submission of EMD (Online Mode)	06/09/2024 (Friday) till 05:00 PM
3.4	Time, Date of opening of Technical Bid	09/09/2024 (Monday) at 1:00 PM on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.5	Time, Date of opening of Financial Bid	To be announced later on the e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.6	Pre-bid meeting (Date & time)	23/08/2024 (Friday) at 11:30 AM
3.7	Pre-bid meeting venue	Conference Hall, State Health Society, Bihar, 4 th Floor, Swasthya Bhawan, Sheikhpura, Patna-800014

- Bidder may also download the tender documents (a complete set of documents is available on website) from e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>) and submit its tender by using the downloaded document.
- For further enquiry and information, please contact the following officers during office hours 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM to-
 - Dr N. K. Sinha (State Program Officer), Mob. no. 9470003014
 - Shri Vikash Kumar, Additional Director-PPP, State Health Society, Bihar (SHSB), Mob. no.- 7903367959

Executive Director
State Health Society, Bihar

PR. No. 005870 (B&C) 2024-25

This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार

Govt. of Bihar

Notice Inviting Tender for selection of agency to provide spectacles to the eligible people screened and identified at Government Healthcare Facilities, in the state of Bihar

e-tender (NIT) Reference No.: - 04 /SHSB/Spectacles/2024-25

- The State Health Society, Bihar (SHSB), Patna intends to select an agency via e-tendering for providing spectacles to the eligible people screened and identified at Government Healthcare Facilities, in the state of Bihar. The State Health Society, Bihar, invites bids from eligible business entities, in providing the services as mentioned in this tender document.
- To participate in the e-tendering process, the bidder/agency are required to get themselves registered with Bihar Government Centralized e-Procurement portal, i.e., <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>, shall contact the helpdesk at the following address, "Mjunction Services Limited, RJ Complex, 2nd Floor, Canara Bank Campus, Khajpura, Ashiana Road, P.S. - Shastri Nagar, Patna 800 014, Bihar, e-mail id: eproc2support@bihar.gov.in, Toll Free Number- 18005726571 (Working Hours: 8AM to 7PM, All days in week except Sunday and few selected state holidays)".
- Schedule of Events:

Sl.no.	Event Description	Timeline
3.1	Bid Submission Start Date & Time	14/08/2024 (Wednesday) from 11:00 AM, on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.2	Last date & time for submission (upload) of online bidding document.	05/09/2024 (Thursday) till 05:00 PM, on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.3	Last date & time for submission of EMD (Online Mode)	05/09/2024 (Thursday) till 05:00 PM
3.4	Time, Date of opening of Technical Bid	06/09/2024 (Friday) at 1:00 PM on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.5	Time, Date of opening of Financial Bid	To be announced later on the e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.6	Pre-bid meeting (Date & time)	21/08/2024 (Wednesday) at 11:30 AM
3.7	Pre-bid meeting venue	Conference Hall, State Health Society, Bihar, 4 th Floor, Swasthya Bhawan, Sheikhpura, Patna-800014

- Bidder may also download the tender documents (a complete set of documents is available on website) from e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>) and submit its tender by using the downloaded document.
- For further enquiry and information, please contact the following officers during office hours 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM to-
 - Shri Pramod Kumar Ram (B.A.S.), Deputy Secretary-cum-Incharge PPP, State Health Society (SHSB), Contact No.: 9661341999
 - Shri Vikash Kumar, Additional Director-PPP, State Health Society (SHSB), Contact No.: 7903367959

Executive Director
State Health Society, Bihar

PR. No. 005871 (B&C) 2024-25

This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

PRESS NOTICE INVITING PERCENTAGE RATE e-TENDER

Executive Engineer(C), Postal Civil Division, New Delhi invites on behalf of The President of India, online percentage rate (CPWD-7) e-tenders for the following work:
N.I.T. No.: NIT/EEPCND/2024-25/27 dated 09.08.2024.
Name of Work: Civil Work for accommodating the Parcel Directorate Office at BPC in PO Building Chankyapuri New Delhi.
Estimated Cost: ₹ 10199048/-.
Earnest Money: ₹ 203981/-.
Period of completion: 180 days.
Last time and date of submission of bid: 29.08.2024 upto 15:00 hrs
The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

AAVAS FINANCIERS LIMITED

(CIN:L65922RJ2011PLCO34297) Regd. & Corp. Office: 201-202, 2nd Floor, South End Square, Mansarovar Industrial Area, Jaipur, 302020

Demand Notice Under Section 13(2) of Securitisation And Reconstruction Act of 2002

As the Loan Account Became NPA therefore The Authorised Officer (AO) Under section 13 (2) Of Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 had issued 60 day demand notice to the borrower as given in the table. According to the Notice if the Borrower does not deposit the Amount within 60 days, the amount will be recovered from Auction of the security as given below. As the demand Notice sent to the borrower/guarantor has not been served, copy of demand notice has also been affixed on the secured assets as given below. Therefore you the borrower is informed to deposit the loan amount along with future interest and recovery expenses within 60 days, otherwise under the provisions of section 13 (4) and 14 of the said Act, the AO is free to take possession of the Security as given below.

Name of the Borrower	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of Mortgaged property
SHUBHAM KAUSHIK, GEETA DEVI (A/C No.) LNM0802218-190097398	8 AUG 24 Rs. 1120406/- 7 AUG 24	PRIVATE PLOT No. 28, PART OF KH. NO. 16,17, WAKE MAUJA DEHRI MUSTKAN, TESHIL & DIST. MORADABAD (U.P) PIN244001 ADMEASURING 43.1635 SQ.MTRS
SHIMBUSHUMBIHU, GAUTAM SINGH, RAJ CHODHARY, ALOKCHAUDHARY, KRISHNAKRISHNA (A/C No.) LNM0803720-210166738	8 AUG 24 Rs. 941918/- 7 AUG 24	HOUSE NO -06160205AS PER NAGER NIGAM HOUSE TAX RECEIPT, GALI NO. 03, WAKE MOJJA BHOODA BHOORE KA CHOURAHA SITUATED AT MOHALLA ASALATPURA, PRICE ROAD VALMIKI BASTI NEAR KALI MANDIR, BHOORA TESHIL & DIST MORADABAD (U.P) PIN-244001 ADMEASURING 111.284 SQ. MTR. (59.724+51.56) SQ MTR
ABHISHEK VERMA, SUNDARI DEVI (A/C No.) LNHPR02921-220197857	8 AUG 24 Rs. 1045779/- 7 AUG 24	PROPERTY SITUATED AT, PLOT NO. 15, KHASRA NO. 259 SITUATED AT VILLAGE CHAMRI PARGANA AND TESHIL AND DISTT HAPUR, (U.P) PIN-PIN-245101 ADMEASURING 180 SQ. YD.
NETRAPAL SHARMA, NEELAM SHARMA (A/C No.) UNALI00522-230237235	8 AUG 24 Rs. 558123/- 7 AUG 24	PROPERTY SITUATED IN MAUJA PANAIHTI, JU PART OF KHET NO. 154/1 TESHIL KOIL, DISTRICT ALIGARH, UTTAR PARDESH PIN-202001 ADMEASURING 50 SQ.YARDS

Place : Jaipur Date : 12.08.2024

Authorised Officer Aavas Financiers Limited

"IMPORTANT"

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How race for the bragging rights unfolded on final day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AUGUST 11

THE TOP spot on the medal tally at the Tokyo Olympics came down to one gold, the United States edging China 39 to 38 on the last day of the Games. If one thought that the tussle for bragging rights between the two sporting superpowers couldn't get any tighter, they were wrong. In the French capital, it came down to the last medal event, and the last shot. The USA tied with China on 40 gold by winning the women's basketball event in a final that itself was decided by a single point at the last second. But by virtue of having more medals of the other two hues, the Americans got their noses in front, only just.

At one point, on the penultimate day of the Olympics, China had a lead of four on the medal tally, before the USA got close after a memorable night of athletics action, including winning the two 4x400 relays.

Going into Sunday, they trailed China by one, which became two when Li Wenwen won the women's +81kg weightlifting gold. When the Americans lost the women's volleyball final to Italy and Kennedy Alexis Blades went down to Japan's Yuka Kagami in the women's 76kg wrestling finale, it seemed as if they would fall short and China would finish top for the first time since 2008.

But Jennifer Valente brought a gold in the women's omnium cycling event, setting the stage for the USA's women hoopsters to get the job done, barely. Looking at the bigger picture, they brought medals in as many as 34 sports, with 14 of them fetching gold. Athletics contributed 14 of them and swimming eight, despite being pushed all the way by Australia and France. There were some

OLYMPICS IN NUMBERS

85 A total of 850 medals were won by athletes coming from 85 different countries at Paris 2024.

42 Among the many firsts at the Games were a total of 42 records that were broken, including 10 world records and 32 Olympic records.

150 At peak occupancy, the Athletes village played host to 11,804 competitors. 150 hairdresser and manicure appointments were made for them every day.

unexpected contributions as well, Olivia Reeves's gold in women's 71kg weightlifting was USA's first in several decades. The American male wrestlers did not win any golds, while their women took home two.

China benefited greatly from their total dominance of table tennis and diving and, to a lesser degree, weightlifting. They also took five gold medals from shooting and three from boxing, though they had to be satisfied with just two from their badminton squad. A total of 23 sports fetched them medals, with 14 bringing gold, including their first in women's singles tennis for Zheng Qinwen.

It was also a good Olympics for Japan (20 gold medals), Australia (18) and hosts France (16) as they finished in the top five of the medal table.

FITTING END TO KNIFE-EDGED RACE

USA women's basketball team won a thrilling final against France 67-66 to go level with China in the gold-medal haul and overtake them on overall medals. AP

MEDAL TALLY

Pos.	Country	G	S	B	Total
1.	USA	40	44	42	126
2.	China	40	27	24	91
3.	Japan	20	12	13	45
4.	Australia	18	19	16	53
5.	France	16	26	22	64
71.	India	0	1	5	6

STORY OF MEDALS

France get best medal haul in a century

President Emmanuel Macron had set the bar high by calling for 50-60 French medals at the Paris Olympics and Les Bleus duly delivered, reeling in the country's biggest medal haul since 1900, as the Games ended on Sunday. The women's basketball team delivered the delegation's 64th medal when they took silver after their final defeat against the U.S., the highest number since the 1900 Games - also held in Paris - when fewer nations competed and some events were only contested by French athlete. REUTERS

TRACK AND FIELD

Congo sprinter tests positive for steroid

Sprinter Dominique Lasconi Mulamba, listed as one of Congo's flag bearers for the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, has tested positive for an anabolic steroid, the International Testing Agency said Sunday. Mulamba, who competed in the 100 meters, gave a sample that was positive for stanozolol metabolite, the ITA said. That's the same steroid that sprinter Ben Johnson used at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. AP

'Been a rollercoaster but athletes did well'

Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra calls India's performance in Paris a 'mixed bag', but hopes that will not halt spending on athletes

MIHIR VASAVDA
PARIS, AUGUST 11

EVERY DAY he's spent in Paris, Abhinav Bindra has faced one question: about India's inability to win a gold medal at the Olympics.

The country's first individual gold medallist, here as part of the International Olympic Committee's Athletes Commission, admits he doesn't have an easy answer. India's six-medal campaign, gold-less, has left him with 'mixed emotions', especially after the 'brutality' of the Vinesh Phogat disqualification.

In an interview with The Indian Express, Bindra - who was awarded the Olympic Order on Saturday - looks back at India's campaign, analyses why India lags at the Olympics, and why only spending money won't guarantee medals.

Excerpts:

Do you get asked a lot while you're here about India and the inability to win a gold medal?

I do, almost on a daily basis, how many medals, etc. I'm also asked a lot on governance.

What do you say? Does it get embarrassing?

Governance in Indian sport has been a red flag for so long now that you move past the embarrassment. We have not got double digits in Paris. So, what should be the aspiration for Los Angeles? Once we go home, there's time to reassess and study what has gone right, and many things have gone wrong.

What does it take to win an Olympic medal? Is it only talent?

The Olympics is a very hard platform to perform at for a variety of reasons. But it's



New IOC Athletes' Commission vice-chair Abhinav Bindra speaks at the latest IOC session in Paris. Reuters

also a platform which is imperfect for performance. Because there's external expectations, and internal expectations, that just doesn't allow you to let go.

Performance sometimes is almost artistic in nature. You almost have to allow it to happen.

And the ability to let go is very difficult. So skill is almost thrown into the dustbin. There will be a few who are just great but for a majority, you have to almost find perfection on that imperfect day.

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ABHINAV BINDRA
ON WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN AN OLYMPIC MEDAL

at a human level, it has an impact on performance on the field. What you do outside the field has a direct influence on what you do on it. Because we are having more participation at a younger level, it is important to make sure that there is a dual career. We have to ensure that athletes get a basic level of education and that they're building another skill. It helps them in life outside sport and also has an impact on performance.

Prakash Padukone has said that athletes should also be made accountable. Do you agree?

Accountability has to be collective, and an athlete is very much part of it. So I don't completely disagree with what Mr. Padukone said. But that doesn't mean that you stop spending on athletes. You have to see how that money is spent. You cannot always wrap your athletes in cotton wool.

Does getting everything easily impact their hunger?

I think hunger is intrinsic in nature. As a nation, we need to understand that money is only an enabler. It's not going to get you medals. It is blood, sweat and tears, hard work and resilience shown on the field which will get you there. And hunger is a very

important aspect of it. You need money for training, to compete, travel, for the larger performance support stuff. But that doesn't mean it's a vending machine. You can spend more, you can spend less. It's not going to guarantee you success.

Shooting returned among medals after two failed Olympics...

Shooting has had an improvement. I'm proud of each one of them. But when athletes go to a World Cup or a World Championship, you look at the medals rally, we are top-three, top-four normally. Now we're not there. I don't even think in the top 10 (14). They've done a great job. But sport is about constant learning and to see what better can be done. When you compare it with Tokyo, it's been a resounding success in many ways, overall performances as well, not just medals... the way they've gone and approached it.

Looking back, would you be happy or sad with India's medals?

I don't know how I'm feeling. It's been an emotional rollercoaster from an Indian perspective. I think the athletes have done well. We may not have won all the medals but overall, generally, there has been an improvement. We must consolidate the gains that have been made and work harder. The brutality of the Vinesh (Phogat) case, we are all still struggling with it. It's been a mixed bag.

How big a deal is it that Neeraj followed up his gold medal with a silver?

Incredible feat. I think we are all very proud of him. The Pakistani (Arshad Nadeem) was a worthy winner on the day. But Neeraj should be proud of himself. There will be a level of disappointment, because you're not gonna get everything going your way, but he performed admirably. A lot of expectations were also on him, but he delivered.

INDIA'S GREATEST INDIVIDUAL OLYMPIAN

Affable Neeraj, Angry Neeraj, Avenger Neeraj make a Champion Neeraj

SANDEEP DWIVEDI

NOT FINDING the rhythm to defend his Tokyo Games javelin gold at the storied Stade de France colosseum, Neeraj Chopra was angry. In a rare first, he would be seen cursing. His flaming eyes during the final certainly needed a fire-hazard warning.

India's most-decorated individual Olympian-ever wasn't the affable boy with an angelic smile who makes mothers wince when he tumbles to the ground after completing his throws. But after the stadium light dimmed, well after it was decided that he had finished second to Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, the rage vanished somewhere in the Paris night. He was disappointed but he was anything but a sore, annoyed loser. He was lachrymose, and like always, self-deprecating. Neeraj was respectful towards Nadeem but didn't try too hard to be normal and told the world that he was 'happy for him'. He even didn't overdo the Indo-Pak friendly neighbour thing.

Neeraj is an OG, he doesn't try to be what

he isn't. Olympic medals haven't given him airs, accents or attitude. But then there are several Neerajs within him, each different from the other. It's the perfect departmentalisation of his emotions and the tight leash over his mind that goes a long way in shaping Neeraj into a champion athlete.

Many professional sportspersons have perfected the art of being cold-hearted at their workplace and warm away from it. Two-time unified world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua is one of them. He too has a few Joshuas inside him. Known for his peachy punches - his straight right is blessed with the magical powers to make opponents see stars - the British boxer is unapologetically brutal in the ring.

After he takes his gloves off, he becomes a sensitive family man and a philanthropist. Raised in a big Nigerian family with many uncles, aunts and cousins - just like Neeraj - the big man has a throaty laugh. He firmly believes in having no enemies and being good to everyone. Joshua also speaks well.

In the long-running iconic BBC podcast, Desert Island Disc, the boxing great, very early



Perfect departmentalisation of his emotions and the tight leash over his mind shape Neeraj Chopra into a champion athlete. PTI

in the show, sweeps the listeners with his wit and charm. The interviewer asks the obvious question: You love knocking out your opponents and have no remorse. It looks so at odds with the person sitting across from me. Can you explain the contradiction?

Joshua's answer makes one understand those on the Paris podium, men and women like Neeraj, better: "Like you see a lion on some social media (clip) and they are showing affection (to their cubs) ... and you think 'Oh, it's so amazing, I would like to give one of those a cuddle,'" he says as a prelude to the answer. "And then you put a gazelle in front of that lion and you see his pupils widen and his focus and attention... That's like me. I love company, I love to talk to people ... but when it is time to eat..." His voice trails off as he leaves out the gory details of the chase, catch and the kill.

Joshua's lion story explains Neeraj's first switch. The second transformation - Angry Neeraj to Pragmatic Neeraj - can be understood by the end of the day quotes. While the reporters attempt to ask him about the loss to a Pakistan thrower or failure to cross 90

metres; the man who listens to each question carefully and answers them thoughtfully speaks about a concept that explains why the top-seeds don't win every tournament.

Like in life, sports have too many moving parts. But there are those perfect days when everything falls in place and a beautiful harmony prevails. There are few everyday parallels to understand this concept. Commuters marvel at the coincidence of walking on the platform to welcome an empty local train ambuling in, shopkeepers thank their stars for a morning that brings in unfussy big-spenders and students can't hide their glee on finding that last-minute revised question is on the exam sheet. It's what they remember as 'their day'.

In sports, most champion athletes accept the sovereignty of 'the day'. They are hard on themselves and are firm believers in the maxim 'you don't win the silver, you lose the gold' but their resolve to win does have a tiny rider. They know if their rival has 'their day' no force can stop them. Travis Head in the World Cup final at the biggest cricket stadium in the world and Arshad Nadeem at Paris's

theatre of dreams. The Pakistan strong man would amble in like a pace bowler in the third session after a long spell and hurl the javelin. Like a perfect swing of a renowned golfer or batsman in great touch, he would launch the javelin at the right pace and angle. 92.97 metres would flash on the screen and all the throwers in the arena would be hit by the 'it's his day' thunderbolt. All was not lost but deep inside there might have been a sense of resignation. But the committed competitor in them would not allow them to give up.

While there was poise in Nadeem's stride, the rest of the field was in a state of panic. They would try to fight the odds, they would dig deep inside but that would amount to trying way too hard - never ever a great idea in crunch situations. Even on a day that wasn't his, Neeraj would secure his season's best of 89.45 metres, the best amongst all to respond to the 92+ throw. "Today was Arshad's day. I gave my best," he would say.

And just after that another Neeraj would emerge. "I still have a lot of throws in me. The loss here would inspire me to work harder and throw further," the Avenger Neeraj would say.

Jump-off > Shared gold

Tokyo high jump had a split gold; In Paris, Kerr & McEwen choose one-on-one duel which Kiwi wins

NIHAL KOSHIE
AUGUST 11

'To hell with sharing the gold medal', these are not the exact words said but rather the sentiment when two men were tied at the same height after both had failed to jump any higher.

New Zealand's Hamish Kerr didn't want the men's high jump final to end up becoming another feel-good moment of the Olympic Games. Kerr is said to have told USA's Shelby McEwen that he was prepared to fight it off in a jump-off. McEwen, without batting an eyelid, agreed. There would be just one winner. Ultimately it was Kerr.

The New Zealander and the American were going off script at the Stade de France on Saturday night.

High jumpers Gianmarco Tamberi and Mutaz Barshim at the Tokyo Olympics and pole vaulters Katie Moon and Nina Kennedy at last year's World Championships were happy to share the gold medal.

"Can we have two gold?" Barshim had asked and an official nodded. Ankle injuries had almost ended the careers of Barshim and Tamberi, so when they both knew they could touch gold, the good friends were on the same page.

Moon hit back at critics saying she and Kennedy would have been foolish to risk injury because of fatigue. "Contrary to popular belief, you do not need a 'win at all cost' mindset to have a champion's mentality," Moon had said.

Kerr, once a track runner, and McEwen, a former winner of a basketball dunk competition, were not going to let go of a golden opportunity to be a solo Olympic champion.

Final with high stakes

High-stakes were at play when Kerr and McEwen went for the jump-off. For the first time World Athletics was offering \$50,000 for every gold medal winner. If they had split the gold, they could have also shared the pot. "I got a family to feed," McEwen said after the final when asked if he had entertained thoughts of pocketing \$25,000.

There was a lot riding on the high jump gold for the USA as well as for New Zealand.

The Paris Games are now New Zealand's most successful ever. Kerr's gold was the ninth for the country, one better than eight



(Above) New Zealand's Hamish Kerr is said to have told USA's Shelby McEwen (left) that he was prepared to fight it off in a jump-off. The American readily agreed. Reuters

won at Los Angeles in 1984.

Post the final, the narrative the misinformed trolls bought into was that McEwen had thrown away the medal that mattered for USA - one behind China in the gold count before Sunday - by challenging Kerr to a jump-off.

Actually, Kerr didn't leave McEwen with an option. McEwen narrated the sequence of events once those, for and against a jump off, had their say.

"He (Kerr) said he wanted to face off, and I was all for it. We faced off until the last battle and he came out on top, so salute, congratulations to him. I know I will be back, stronger and fit, better than ever," McEwen was quoted as saying by World Athletics.

Both Kerr and McEwen had cleared 2.36 metres in their first attempts, but had three

failures at 2.38m. In the jump-off both botched their one and only attempt at 2.38 metres and also at 2.36 metres before Kerr soared over 2.34 and McEwen dropped the bar. The on-air commentator was happy that no javelin throwers were in action as Kerr took off for a celebratory run into the middle of the field.

Creating a legacy

Later at a joint press conference with Barshim and McEwen, Kerr spoke about the motivation behind creating a different high jump legacy to what was seen in Tokyo.

Kerr said the jump-off was for those who wanted to see a fight to the finish between Barshim and Tamberi but left unsatisfied three years ago in Tokyo.

"I always talked about how amazing the jump-off was last time (in Tokyo). That has such a special place in history for high jumps. For me also to have an exact same scenario this time around, but to choose to do the jump-off, was putting at peace those people who wanted to jump-off, so we're both really happy to add to that history," Kerr said.

"If anything, I'm more fatigued from running onto the field than I am from the actual jumping, but I was just so happy that I'd won."

The day didn't belong to the two superstars of this era. Barshim, a modern great, and Tamberi, were out of gold-medal reckoning. Barshim finished third, he now has the full set of medals with a gold and two silvers from previous Summer Games. Barshim was far from his best in an injury-ridden season.

Tamberi's Olympics started with him losing his wedding ring during the opening ceremony on the Seine. Kidney pain, fever and hospitalization made matters worse this week, he bowed out at 2.22 metres.

Three years ago the Qatari and the Italian had created a lasting legacy of their own and now they watched two others do the same. When asked about a second-place scenario, Kerr said 'would have been prouder of a silver than a split gold'. McEwen concurred. Two men didn't want to share gold this time and another glorious chapter in the men's high jump final was written.

With eye on Tests, Rohit, Kohli likely to play in Duleep Trophy

DEVENDRA PANDEY
AUGUST 11

INDIA CAPTAIN Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are likely to be part of star-studded Duleep Trophy squads that will be picked by the senior selection committee of the BCCI. With the Test series against Bangladesh coming up, the senior selection committee wants all the players available for the Duleep Trophy which will be played in a new format this season beginning September 5.

The Indian Express understands that Shubman Gill, KL Rahul, Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Suryakumar Yadav, Kuldeep Yadav have been asked to play in the Duleep Trophy. However, ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah won't be playing the tournament as he has been given a prolonged rest period. The selectors are also set to have a discussion on his inclusion for the two Tests against Bangladesh as India have a gruelling 10 Tests line-up in the next four months including 5 in Australia. With the pitches for Bangladesh series expected to spin friendly and Mohammed Shami closing in on return, Bumrah may be rested for the series.

With the zonal format of the Duleep Trophy done away, Ajit Agarkar's panel will pick the four squads - India A, India B, India C and India D - set to feature in the tournament.

The Duleep Trophy is scheduled to be played in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. With the venue not connected by air transport and with the star players agreeing to turn up, the BCCI is now planning to keep one round at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

The six matches of Duleep Trophy will begin on September 5 and end on September 24 while the first Test between India vs Bangladesh will be played in Chennai from September 19.

It is not clear whether Rohit and Kohli will be playing the Duleep Trophy opener on September 5 or the second round that starts on September 12. It is understood that the BCCI is also planning a short camp in Chennai before the Test series and if that materialises, then the stars will feature in the first round of the Duleep Trophy.

A few months ago BCCI secretary Jay Shah had stated that all national players will have to make themselves available for domestic cricket barring top Indian cricketers like Rohit, Kohli



Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel wants all the regular players available for the Duleep Trophy. File

and Bumrah. Players like Suryakumar and Sarfaraz Khan will be taking part in Buchi Babu invitational tournament to be played in Tamil Nadu from August 15.

Iyer-Kishan to be included

Meanwhile, the selection committee is likely to pick Ishan Kishan for the Duleep Trophy game. It is learnt that the selection committee wants Kishan to resume red ball cricket if he wants to be back in contention for the Indian team. Ishan and Shreyas Iyer were dropped from the BCCI's annual contract list after they failed to play the Ranji Trophy despite the selection committee asking them to do so last season. Iyer, despite playing two Ranji Trophy games, was dropped from contract list, whereas Kishan snubbed BCCI's warning and trained separately in Vadodra. Iyer made his way back to the national side during the recently concluded ODIs in Sri Lanka and one more opportunity has been thrown at Kishan to make a comeback.

No Pujara-Rahane

Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane won't be finding a place in any Duleep Trophy team as the national selection committee has made up their mind to move on from these two old stalwarts. Rahane led Mumbai Ranji Trophy side to their 42nd Ranji Trophy title last season but his performance with the bat was not upto the mark. While Pujara was amongst runs, the selection committee feels that youngsters like Sarfaraz, Dhruv Jurel have shown a great potential to fill their place.

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