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WEB EXCLUSIVE

EZRA STREET: A REMINDER OF KOLKATA'S RICH JEWISH PAST

Documentary evidence suggests that sometime in the 19th century it was named after one of its most storied residents, David Joseph Ezra, a prominent member of the city's Baghdadi Jewish community.

TECH

TICWATCHGTHREVIEW
Not for sports tracking, but you can use it to track your heart rate, steps, sleep and SpO2

SCIENCE

VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS
A lot depends not only on speed at which magma accumulates but also on the conditions

EXPRESS AUDIO

How to secure yourself in the times of Pegasus

Saket Modi, an ethical hacker, and co-founder and CEO of Safe Security joins host Nandagopal Rajan to discuss navigating the online world after the Pegasus spyware scandal

FROM PAGE ONE

Assam, Mizoram keep forces at the border, no backing down

handed over to a neutral agency, especially when the place of occurrence is well within the constitutional territory of Assam?”. He said he had already conveyed it to Zoramthanga, his Mizoram counterpart.

Assam DGP Bhaskarjyoti Mahanta said: “We don’t recognise the summons or the case registered by Mizoram Police. They simply cannot say they have jurisdiction over a land that does not belong to them. This (case) does not mean anything to us.”

Mizoram Home Minister Lalchamliana, referring to the Assam FIR, said Mizoram was not going to respect summons from Assam Police.

On the impasse, a senior Assam official told The Sunday Express that “nothing has changed at the border” though the July 28 meeting in New Delhi — Chief Secretaries and DGPs of the two states met the Union Home Secretary — decided that Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will be deployed in the disturbed area, and the two state governments will work out an arrangement in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs to facilitate the functioning of neutral forces within a “reasonable time frame”.

As of Saturday, both states had their forces at the border, along with the CAPF — neither ready to back down.

According to the Assam official, when the Chief Secretaries and DGPs met Union Home Ministry officials in early July — before the July 26 incident — discussions had led to the framing of a three-point understanding. “One was that they will withdraw their forces from the posts/check gates they had built during the Covid-19 lockdown, that no new constructions will be made, and the status quo will be maintained.” “However, at the last minute, the Mizo side refused to sign it,” the official claimed. He alleged that Mizoram had ramped up construction of border posts, roads etc ever since October 2020. “We even suggested that we should look at satellite imagery pre-October 2020 and solve it in a scientific manner, but Mizoram refused,” he said.

After the July 26 incident, the officials met again in New Delhi two days later. “It was suggested that we withdraw our forces to Lailapur, and Mizos to Vairengte. But even that was refused. The Mizoram Chief Secretary then had a word with his Chief Minister, and they said both states will reposition the location of camps into another area which will be determined by the Chief Ministers. However, they backed again. Finally, it was decided that a neutral force will be in place, and the Chief Ministers would discuss the next steps within a suitable time frame,” the official said.

Mizoram Home Minister Lalchamliana said such an impasse had been reached because “if Assam moves like this, we have to as well.”

He said Mizoram would not budge from its stand on the 1875 boundary notification since it was the “only legitimate notification” in their perspective.

“We are going to stand by it since that was the only notified boundary where Mizos were consulted. The other notifications which followed have absolutely no ground,” he said.

Members of the Mizoram Boundary Committee, formed on July 23, passed a resolution Friday that the state’s northern side would follow the 1875 boundary demarcation.

Lalchamliana said the

Mizoram government was all for “solving the problem amicably across the table”. “This problem has deep roots and it has not been solved by previous governments either,” he said.

Asked why Mizoram was not willing to withdraw its forces from the border at Vairengte, he said it was “not possible at the moment”.

“At the moment, my Chief Minister has said it is not possible, I cannot answer why, but it is the stand of the Chief Minister,” he said.

Meanwhile, a group of MLAs from Assam, led by Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary, visited the patrolling post in Lailapur, Silchar to meet police officers regarding the ground situation. The delegation included Sibsagar MLA Akhil Gogoi.

Jayanta Malla Baruah, MLA and Political Secretary to the Assam Chief Minister, said the boundary of the state was safe and “not an inch of our land” would be compromised.

“During times like this, we expect all political and non-political organisations to stand with the Government of Assam for the greater cause of Aai Aoxmi. We hope this dispute will end soon and peace will prevail in the border areas,” he said.

MLAs from Barak Valley districts of Assam, cutting across party lines, met in Silchar and said they will move court against Mizoram’s Kolasib district SP for his alleged role in the clash.

In another development Saturday, Chief Minister Sarma announced de-escalation of tension on the state’s border with Nagaland.

“In a major breakthrough towards de-escalating tensions at Assam-Nagaland border, the two Chief Secretaries have arrived at an understanding to immediately withdraw states’ forces from border locations to their respective base camps,” he said.

In a Twitter post, Sarma said: “This is a historic step in our relations. My gratitude to HCM Sri @Neiphiu_Rio for working with #Assam in restoring peace on the border. Assam is committed to ensuring peace along all its borders & strives for social & economic prosperity of #NorthEast region.”

Days after cabinet exit, Supriyo posts on FB: Will leave politics

amake diyey jete hobe, because it is pertinent. Prashno utthe kenoi ba rajiniti chhaarte gechhilam? Mantrito chole jawar satha tar ki kono samparka achhe? Haan achhe. Kichhuta toh nischoi ache (But I have to answer a question since it is pertinent. Questions will arise why I am quitting politics. Is there any link with losing ministerial berth? Yes there is. To some extent there is.)”

The two-time Lok Sabha MP from Asansol in West Bengal was among those dropped the Union council of ministers in the recent reshuffle. He was formerly the Minister of State for Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change.

Supriyo stated in his post that there were differences between him and some Bengal BJP leaders even before the state elections this summer. In some cases he was at fault and in others some state party leaders were to be blamed, he wrote, adding that disagreements and differences between senior leaders had a negative effect on party workers at the ground level.

He wrote that since such differences are unwanted, he is leaving.

Asked about Supriyo’s social media post, Lok Sabha MP and West Bengal BJP president Dilip

Uptick in economic activity but income stress, third-wave fears weigh heavy

median value of the corresponding day of the week during the five-week period between January 3 and February 5, 2020. On April 23 this year, a fortnight before the second wave peaked, visits were down a sharper 46%.

Similarly, on July 26, visits to public transport hubs like bus and train stations were only 11% down from the pre-Covid baseline.

Retail outlet visits could witness a further surge with movie halls reopening. Inox Leisure said it will reopen cinema halls in several cities including Delhi NCR, Lucknow, Jaipur, Kota, Surat, Anand, Bharuch, Rajkot, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Manipal, Mysore, Belgavi, Raipur, Vijayawada, Dhanbad, Bhopal and Indore. PVR, the largest cinema chain in the country, said it will reopen its halls in select cities. Significantly, multiplex cinema theatres in malls are key drivers of footfall in these shopping centres.

E-way bill data also points to an uptick. Average daily e-way bill generation improved to 19.83 lakh in the first 25 days of July from 18.22 lakh in June. This indicator, a proxy for inter-state and intra-state movement of goods, was at 20.2 lakh the week ending July 25, compared with 20.4 lakh in the preceding week and 19.24 lakh in the first 11 days of July.

INDICATORS STILL SLUGGISH

● GROSS FIXED CAPITAL FORMATION (% OF GDP): 2021	22: 27.5% <i>(Estimate by Care Ratings)</i>
2020-21	27.1%
● NOMURA INDIA BUSINESS RESUMPTION INDEX:	
Week-ending July 25	95.3%
Week-ending July 18	96.4%

Yet, several experts concur that consumption levels remain subdued due to incomes hit by the pandemic, enhanced household spending on health and fears of a third wave weighing heavy.

The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI) fell to 95.3 for the week ended July 25 from the high of 96.4 in the previous week — at levels from before the second wave but 4.7 percentage points below pre-pandemic levels. “...Mobility, railway freight revenues and GST e-way bill data suggest some stagnancy in July, even as the trade sector remains strong,” Nomura said in a note.

Domestic travel also recouped following the second wave. According to data

sourced from DGCA, domestic air traffic rose 47% in June compared with May on the back of easing of travel restrictions and a dip in Covid cases. Around 3.11 million passengers flew in June on domestic routes compared with 2.12 million in May.

Passenger vehicle wholesales more than doubled to 2,31,633 units in June, compared with 1,05,617 units in the same month of 2020 which had witnessed massive Covid-related disruptions.

Although industrial activity was not affected significantly in the second wave, there is idle industrial capacity. “The second wave caused a setback to economic recovery. But industrial activity continued broadly as localised and implemented with Covid protocol. Things are gradually falling into place, there is a mood of cautious optimism. Consumption levels are still low as households have seen high health expenditure and have dipped into their savings to meet those expenses,” said Devendra Pant, Chief Economist, India Ratings.

CARE Ratings said that Gross Fixed Capital Formation — an indicator for investment in the economy — is expected to rise only marginally to 27.5% of GDP this fiscal from 27.1% in FY21.

the key participants.

Sources said three action points emerged at the meeting. “The vice chairman suggested that to ensure quality as well as equal opportunity, a national-level entry examination in line with NEET may be worked out for engineering education; that candidates with any of the subjects proposed by the AICTE may be allowed to compete; and that institutions and universities be barred from accepting admissions without the entrance exam.”

Kumar is believed to have also suggested that the committee tasked by the AICTE to list the branches for which studying physics and mathematics in plus-two will not be a prerequisite could look at the possibilities of the revamped engineering entrance examination. “Kumar advised the AICTE to work in collaboration with the NITI Aayog in this regard,” the source said.

The consensus was that the AICTE should prepare the model curriculum for such an examination. The IITs have a separate entrance system and will not be covered by the new AICTE proposals. During the meeting, Sahasrabudhe made a presentation on the existing status and future plans regarding entry-level qualification norms for engineering education, as laid down in the Approval Process Handbook (APH) 2021-22.

According to the norms proposed in the APH 2021-22, any student who has obtained 45% marks in Class 12 in any of the three subjects from a list of 14 — Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Electronics, Information Technology, Biology, Informatics Practices, Biotechnology, Technical Vocational Subject, Agriculture, Engineering Graphics, Business Studies and Entrepreneurship — is eligible for undergraduate engineering programmes. The cut-off is 40% in case of candidates belonging to reserved categories.

“The Universities will offer suitable bridge courses such as Mathematics, Physics,

“It had declined to 47.3% in Q1 of FY21. There has been a pick-up to 66.6% in Q3-FY21. Typically, a level of 78-80% is required before companies start investing in capital. At the aggregate level, this looks some time away. Therefore, capacity expansion is more likely in industries which have reached optimal utilization levels like steel or pharma. But it is unlikely to be generalised which is what is required to push up the gross fixed capital formation rate,” it said.

According to Nomura, the pace of vaccination and the risk of a third wave remain risks to growth. “The pace of vaccinations stagnated, with the month-to-date average in July at about 3.7 million doses/day. We currently forecast a faster pace of vaccination starting in August but the recent pace suggests risks are skewed towards a delay. With pandemic cases plateauing at an elevated level of about 39,000 new cases per day?, susceptibility to a third wave remains a key growth risk,” Nomura said.

This is underlined by the fact that as many as 40 crore people still remain vulnerable, according to the latest nationwide serosurvey by the Indian Council of Medical Research that estimated two-thirds of the population above the age of six as having been infected.

Engineering drawing, etc, for the students coming from diverse backgrounds to achieve desired learning outcomes of the programme,” the new norms say.

It is learnt that during the meeting, Sahasrabudhe also argued that no compulsion be placed on any university or institution to make any of the 14 subjects mandatory for admission.

Sahasrabudhe described the new eligibility criteria as being in sync with the “multidisciplinary approach” of the National Education Policy-2020 and said it was “optional” in nature.

Higher Education Secretary Khare is learnt to have suggested a “graded approach” instead of complete overhaul of the eligibility norms. “He suggested that a few select institutions/courses may be allowed to implement a pilot based on the revised norms,” said a source.

Dr V K Paul and Dr Ramesh Chand also supported the new eligibility norms.

Opposing them, Saraswat stressed that physics and mathematics be retained as mandatory subjects for engineering entrance. “He highlighted that 60% of current engineering graduates are not employable (as per studies). He also pointed to the lack of a consistent standard for engineering entrance examinations across the country.”

Sahasrabudhe had earlier told The Indian Express that the matter was still under discussion. “All of us will sit together and hold more discussions,” Saraswat had said he did not wish to speak on the matter.

Other experts have also cautioned against the AICTE making physics and mathematics optional for engineering aspirants in plus-two, including Principal Scientific Advisor K VijayRaghavan. He earlier told The Indian Express that “rigour and depth in mathematics and physics comes easier early on” and that it would be wiser to study these subjects in plus-two before seeking admission to B.E and B.Tech programmes.

Danish Siddiqui’s body mutilated, had multiple bullet wounds, tyre marks

as the Afghan special forces with whom Siddiqui was travelling tried to retake Spin Boldak.

Accounts from local officials, as well as Taliban members, suggest that Siddiqui and the Afghan unit’s commander were killed in a crossfire when their convoy was ambushed from multiple directions. Their bodies were left on the battlefield as the rest of the unit retreated, according to this version of events.

Some news outlets reported that Siddiqui might have been captured alive by the Taliban and then executed. Those reports could not be confirmed. One Indian official, however, said that some of Siddiqui’s wounds appeared to be from gunshots at close range.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, denied any wrongdoing on the part of the insurgents, saying they were under orders to treat bodies with respect and to hand them over to local elders or the Red Cross. But the Taliban were in control of the area at the time, and some photographs showed what appeared to be the group’s fighters standing around Siddiqui’s body, which was then intact.

The revelation comes amid concern that the fighting in Afghanistan has become increasingly brutal as peace talks have stalled.

The Taliban rose to power from the southern province in the 1990s, promising to end atrocities carried out by local militias. In recent years, Afghan forces led by Abdul Raziq, a general who was assassinated in 2018, have been accused of ruthless tactics as they fought the Taliban in Kandahar. Spin Boldak, where Siddiqui died, was General Raziq’s hometown. Reports have emerged of the Taliban detaining, and in some cases executing, people who had been associated with the general.

Human Rights Watch and other watchdog groups say the Taliban have carried out a series of revenge killings in Kandahar province, where some of the most brutal episodes in Afghanistan’s last four war-torn decades have occurred.

“Danish always chose to be on the front lines so that abuses and atrocities could not remain hidden,” said Meenakshi Ganguly, the South Asia director for Human Rights Watch. “The brutality with which Taliban fighters punished Danish proves the abuses that he was documenting.”

Three days before his killing, Siddiqui had posted a video on Twitter in which he said several rocket-propelled grenades had struck the armoured vehicle in which he was travelling.

His body, in a closed coffin, was returned to his home in New Delhi two days after his death. He was buried in a cemetery at Jamia Millia Islamia, the university in New Delhi from which he had graduated. **NYT**

Jaish ‘mastermind’ behind Pulwama attack, relative of Masood Azhar, killed in encounter

Explosive Devices (IEDs), and the forces expect the attacks on them using IEDs to come down now.

GoC, 15 Corps, Lt Gen D P

Pandey said Saifullah had trained several militants in making and deploying IEDs, and also helped identify susceptible locals who were then brainwashed, radicalised, and armed.

Kumar said Saifullah, who was related to Pakistan-based Jaish chief Masood Azhar, had entered Kashmir in 2017 winter through the Shikargah sector and had been active in South Kashmir since then. “There were 14 FIRs registered against him.”

The forces claimed to have captured a telescopic M4 carbine, an AK-47 rifle, a Glock pistol and a Chinese pistol from the slain militants.

Bali said they had received tip-off regarding Saifullah on July 27, but as it was raining heavily in the area, the Army took a circuitous road to approach it. “The men zeroed in on the cluster of dhoks (a kind of living quarters) Saturday morning. The dogs started barking and this may have alerted them (the terrorists). They pushed the women out and then the children. They opened automatic fire from behind and lobbed grenades,” the GoC said. “But since the cordon was tight, as soon as they fired, the well-trained boys of the Victor Force retaliated.”

Bali said both the terrorists were dead in two to three minutes.

The Pulwama attack had been carried out on February 14, 2019, when a dayeven, Adil Ahmad Dar, had rammed his explosive-laden car into a CRPF convoy on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway. The attack, the first of this scale, had threatened to escalate to a full-blown war between India and Pakistan.

With hat-trick, Vandana powers India to first Olympics quarters in 4 decades

whom believed that young girls needed to be trained to do household work. Initially, fearing backlash, Vandana’s family would buckle under societal pressure.

But Nahar, unable to see her daughter’s misery when not allowed to play, stood up against the pressure and ensured she continued to play at coach Krishna Kumar’s academy in Roshnabad.

Now, with 245 international appearances and 67 goals, Vandana is one of India’s finest forwards of all time. Her goals have helped India win a junior World Cup bronze, an Asian Champions Trophy gold and an Asian Games silver — all of them historic medals for a team that has been on a continuous upward trajectory.

But none of the goals she had scored before would be as important as the three she put past South Africa goalkeeper Phumlelela Mbande on Saturday, including the winner in the 49th minute from a penalty corner.

“It feels nice to score three but all those goals were team efforts. It wouldn’t have been possible if my teammates hadn’t assisted me,” Vandana said.

She might have played down her role but Vandana’s goals gave India their second win of the campaign, after they defeated Ireland 1-0 on Friday. It’s their best-ever performance since the 1980 Olympics, where they won two games as well.

But Saturday’s result proved how far they have come since the Rio Olympics, where the team lost four of its five matches and drew against Japan, finishing last in the 12-team tournament. To put it in perspective, Vandana scored the same number of goals in one match as India did in their entire campaign at the Rio Games.

Grey Blue Yellow Black Grey Blue Yellow Black Grey Kolkata Grey

3 WEST BENGAL



TRIAL RUN

A Metro trial run at Sealdah railway station in Kolkata on Saturday. Meanwhile, West Bengal on Saturday reported 711 new Covid-19 cases and five more deaths, the health department said. *PTI*

Woman's hair cut off over 'affair' with brother-in-law, both driven out of village

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 31

A WIDOWED woman's hair was chopped off allegedly by her husband's elder brother and some villagers over an alleged "affair" with her brother-in-law. The alleged incident took place on Wednesday at Dabu in the Canning police station area of South 24 Parganas district.

According to local sources, the woman, in her forties, lost her husband around three years ago and lived at her in-laws' place with her two sons.

It was alleged that she was beaten up and forced to marry her brother-in-law. A bond was drafted as per which the woman and the man were forced to leave the village.

On the basis of a complaint lodged by the woman, the Canning police started an investigation into the incident.

A case has been registered and two of the seven accused have been arrested.

Local police sources said since her husband's death, the woman had been struggling to get by with her children. It was alleged that her husband's elder brother, Paritosh Sardar, as well as some young men in the neighbourhood, had proposed marriage but she turned them down. She was then threatened with eviction from the village.

According to sources, it was in this situation that the widow's brother-in-law, Khudiram Sardar, extended a helping hand.

The local police released a

statement, saying, "On 29/07/21 (Thursday), a woman from Dabu in the Canning police station area in the South 24 Parganas submitted a written complaint against Paritosh Sardar and seven others."

Police quoted the complainant as saying that around 5pm on July 28, Wednesday, Khudiram came into her room with her mobile phone saying that her mother was on the line. It was then that Paritosh and the other accused broke in on them claiming that the widow was in an extra-marital relationship with Khudiram.

Hurling insults at the widow and her brother-in-law, the accused also beat her up. They also beat up Khudiram with bamboo sticks before chopping off the complainant's hair with a razor blade.

UP man held for killing woman in Kolkata: Cops

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 31

THE BIDHAN Nagar police have tracked down and arrested a man who is accused in the murder of a senior citizen in Bangur Avenue. The accused, Dinesh Prasad (35), was arrested from Silgari in Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh and had been employed as a domestic help at the woman's apartment in Kolkata, police said.

On June 7, family members of Dipa Mukherjee (62) found her decomposed body at her apartment in Bangur Avenue, where she lived alone. Family members visited the apartment after neighbors complained that she had not been spotted for the past few days. Her domestic help was missing, along with gold ornaments and her phone.

The police registered a case under sections 302 and 308 of IPC. During investigation, it was found that the domestic help hailed from Uttar Pradesh. In 2019 Dipa Mukherjee visited Mumbai and stayed at a hotel. Dinesh used to work at the hotel. In June 2018, Dinesh visited Kolkata and convinced the victim to allow him to work as a domestic help at her residence, police said.

The police recovered the gold ornaments and the phone stolen from the victim. The accused was produced at a local court in Badaun and brought to Kolkata on transit remand.

BJP to go ahead with 'mini marathon' today despite no police permission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, JULY 31

BJP state president Dilip Ghosh has vowed to take part in the 'mini marathon' in the city to be organised by its youth wing on Sunday, despite the Kolkata Police not granting permission for the event.

Besides Ghosh, Union minis-

ter Gajendra Singh Sekhawat, Janata Yuva Morcha state president Saumitra Khan and its national secretary Raju Bista will take part in the less-than-1 km marathon in the Maidan area, to encourage the Indian sports contingent at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics.

"Keeping in mind the Covid situation, the event has been planned with only 500 partici-

pants. This gesture is all about giving a boost to our sports persons at the Olympics. If the police want to take action, let them," Ghosh told news agency PTI.

An officer of Kolkata Police said the event has not been cleared due to the prevailing Covid-19 restrictions that disallow large gatherings in the state.

Arun Arora is new GM of Eastern Rlys

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 31

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE of the Cabinet has approved the name of Arun Arora as the new General Manager of the Eastern Railways.

Arora was posted as an additional member at the Railway Board in charge of environment and mechanical engineering segments since October 2020.

Arora is an officer of the 1984-batch of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering

A 1984-batch IRSME (Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering) batch official, Arora has over the years held posts such as divisional railway manager of Delhi, principal chief mechanical engineer of the Northern Railway, the largest railway zone, and deputy secretary in the Union Ministry of Steel and Mines.

He has been twice named for National Railway Award for outstanding contribution. Amid the Covid pandemic in 2020, Arora, then principal chief mechanical engineer of Northern Railway, led the challenge to design coaches meant for quarantine facilities.

MOGRAHAT HOCH TRAGEDY

Nine years later, main accused convicted



Nur Islam Fakir alias 'Khonra Badshah' at a court in Kolkata on Saturday. *Express*

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 31

NINE YEARS on, the Alipore district and sessions court on Saturday convicted Nur Islam Fakir alias 'Khonra Badshah', the kingpin of a spurious liquor racket that left 173 dead and several more ill at Sangrampur in the Mograhat police station area of South 24 Parganas district.

The quantum of sentence in the case, which is infamous as the Mograhat hooch tragedy and dates back to 2011, would be pronounced on Monday, the court said. The court convicted 'Khonra Badshah' under four sections of the IPC, including murder

and causing grievous bodily harm. It also found substance in the charges brought against him under multiple sections of the Bengal Excise Act.

The court acquitted seven others named in the chargesheet filed by the Criminal Investigation Department as there was "not enough evidence against them". One of the seven who were let off was Shakila Bibi, the convict's wife.

The kingpin, who used to run several unauthorised distilleries in the Sangrampur area along with his associates, spiked country liquor with methyl alcohol and several other toxic chemicals.

The victims of the hooch

tragedy were from Mograhat, Usti, Mandirbazar and several areas of Diamond Harbor in the South 24 Parganas. As the toll mounted, agitated family members of the victims razed the unauthorised distilleries.

The kingpin, who had been on the run after the incident, subsequently surrendered before the police. There was substantial evidence against him, sources said.

Twelve persons were named accused in a case filed at Usti police station in connection with the deaths of 48 of the hooch victims. Two of them are still absconding. The CID arrested 10 people, including 'Khonra Badshah' and his wife. The chargesheet was filed in 2012.



INVITATION FOR NOMINATIONS: SUN PHARMA SCIENCE FOUNDATION RESEARCH & SCIENCE SCHOLAR AWARDS

Sun Pharma Science Foundation invites nominations for Research Awards and Science Scholar Awards for the year 2021 from August 01, 2021. The last date of receiving nomination is September 30, 2021. The Nomination procedures of both the awards are available at www.sunpharmasciencefoundation.net.

The Sun Pharma Science Foundation Research Awards are for excellence in original research work in Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, by Indian scientists working in India or abroad. There are three awards - one each in Medical Sciences-Basic Research, Medical Sciences-Clinical Research and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Each award carry a Trophy, Citation and a Cash Prize of Rs.250000/- (Rupees two lakh fifty thousand). To apply for Sun Pharma Research Awards, please visit <http://www.sunpharmasciencefoundation.net/spsf/> (open in chrome).

The Sun Pharma Science Foundation Science Scholar Awards are for upcoming brilliant and young Indian researchers under the age of thirty, for their research projects. There are four awards; two each in Bio-Medical Sciences and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Each award carry a Citation and a Cash Prize of Rs.50000/- (Rupees fifty thousand) and a lump sum grant of Rs.50000/- to present posters/abstracts in an international conference.

To apply for Sun Pharma Science Scholar Awards, please visit <http://www.sunpharmasciencefoundation.net/SSAN/> (open in chrome).

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PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
DATE OF E-AUCTION: 18.08.2021
E-AUCTION WILL TAKE PLACE THROUGH PORTAL NAMED <https://www.msstcecommerce.com> ON 18.08.2021 BETWEEN 1.00 PM TO 5.00 PM
WITH UNLIMITED EXTENSION OF 10 MINUTES FOR EACH BID.
LAST DATE & TIME OF SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS ON/ BEFORE 14.08.2021 up to 4:00 pm

E- auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the UCO Bank, the constructive/physical (mentioned in property details column against each property wherever applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of UCO Bank, will be sold on 18.08.2021 on "As is Where is", "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of Bank's dues.

Sl. No.	Name of the Branch & Account	Details of property & Name of the owner of the property	A.Outstanding Amount		Reserve Price	Date of Inspection	Date/ Time of e-Auction
			B.Demand Notice Date	C. Possession Date	EMD		
					Bid Incremental Amt		
1.	Branch: Balurghat (0954) Account Name: Pintu Dutta A/c No(s): 09540610004739 Account Name: Shampa Dutta A/c No(s): 09540610004746	All that piece and parcel of Land & Building in the name of Mrs. Sampa Dutta, W/o Mr. Pintu Dutta, situated at C/o Sandhya Cinema Hall, Vill. Khadimpur, P.O. & P.S. Balurghat, Dist. South Dinajpur, Pin-733101, Mouza-Khadimpur, W. No. 8, Holding No. 67/59, J.L. No. 110, Plot No. 464/1706, 465(R.S) & 1315, 1329(L.R), Khatian No. 3791, 122, 6217, 6218 (Old L.R) & 7435 (New L.R), Deed No. I-1601, I-1602, I-1603, I-1604, dated 11.05.2011, Area 20 Decimal. Boundaries of the property: North- 7 Ft. Passage, South- Municipality Road, East- House of Ajit Kr. Ghosh & Others, West- Municipality Road (The property is under Bank's Symbolic Possession)	A. Rs.20,40,578.00 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Forty Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Eight only) plus un applied int., charges, expenses & costs. B. 19.05.2016 C. 27.09.2016		Rs.1,07,90,000.00 Rs.10,79,000.00 Rs.20,000.00	On 10.08.2021 from 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	18.08.2021 from 01:00 PM to 05.00 PM With Unlimited 10 Minutes Auto Extension for each Bid.
2.	Branch: Balurghat (0954) Account Name: M/s Shyam Sundar Enterprise, Proprietor-Shyam Sundar Saha A/c No(s): 09540500030077	All that piece and parcel of land in the name of Mr. Shyam Sundar Saha, S/o Late Narayan Chandra Saha, situated at Prachyabharati, behind Prachyabharati School, P.O. & P.S. Balurghat, Dist. Dakshin Dinajpur, under Mouza- Balurghat, J.L. No. 109, Khatian No. (LR)1030, Plot No. 1574, 1573(Old), 2466(LR), Area of the land- 3.0 Decimal, Sale Deed No. 2722, dated 20-08-2004. Boundaries of the property: North- Prachyabharati School, South- Kabi Saha, East- Tapasi Karmakar (Now Sudeb Barman), West- Subhankar Saha & Monoj Saha (The property is under Bank's Physical Possession)	A. Rs.9,70,891.50 (Rupees Nine Lakh Seventy Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety One and Paise Fifty only) plus un applied int., charges, expenses & costs. B. 28.08.2007 C. 11.06.2009		Rs.6,75,000.00 Rs.67,500.00 Rs.10,000.00	On 10.08.2021 from 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	18.08.2021 from 01:00 PM to 05.00 PM With Unlimited 10 Minutes Auto Extension for each Bid.

Terms and conditions:
1. The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Detailed terms and conditions of the sale is available/ published in the following websites/Web portal:
i) <https://www.ibapi.in>
ii) <https://www.msstcecommerce.com>
2. The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS".
3. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
4. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website: <https://www.msstcecommerce.com> on Dt. 18.08.2021 and starts at 1.00 PM.
5. It is open to the Bank to appoint a representative and to make self-bid and participate in the auction.

Date: 01.08.2021, Place: Siliguri
Chief Manager and Authorised Officer
UCO Bank, (Secured Creditor)

NIA raids 15 locations in J&K in terror cases, Jaish offshoot's member held

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, JULY 31

THE NIA Saturday arrested a suspected Lashkar-e-Mustafa (LeM) member and conducted search operations at 15 places in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with its probe into Lashkar-e-Taiba's plans to carry out an IED explosion in Jammu city hours before the drone terror attack on the IAF station here early June 27, and LeM's plans to carry out terror activities across the Union Territory.

The LeM is an offshoot of the terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad, and its chief Hidayatullah Malik was arrested in Jammu's Kunjwani area on February 6 last year.

TRIPURA Bru outfits claim clash was instigated to disrupt resettlement

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, JULY 31

FOUR DAYS after a clash between people of Bru and Choral communities at Damcherra in Panisagar sub-division of North Tripura district, leaders of Mizoram's Brumigrants, who are currently undergoing permanent resettlement in Tripura, said the clashes were "instigated" by certain people with vested interests. The migrant leaders have urged the state government to identify such people and set exemplary punishments for them.

North Tripura SP Bhanupada Chakraborty said the situation was peaceful at Damcherra and contingents of Tripura Police, Tripura State Rifles (TSR) and CRPF were deployed to maintain law and order in the areas. "A team from the local administration was sent to talk to those who fled Tripura and went to Assam. They

In a statement, NIA said the searches were carried in assistance with J&K Police and CRPF, and Irfan Ahmed Dar, who comes from Batingong in Anantnag, was arrested in connection with the LeM conspiracy case.

It said searches were conducted at nine places in Shopian, Anantnag and Jammu districts in connection with Hidayatullah's arrest, and at six places in Shopian and Ramban in connection with the arrest of an LeT terrorist with 5 kg IED in Bhatindi.

The agency stated it had seized laptops, mobile phones, pen drives, hard discs, memory cards, shells of used bullets, CDs, booklets containing incriminating material, besides plastic face masks used during stone-pelting, handwritten jihadi material, ID

card of Al-aqsa media and others. During his interrogation by police, Hidayatullah had said he had conducted reconnaissance of the Delhi office of National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and sent a video of it to his handlers in Pakistan. He had also said Jaish-e-Mohammad, which investigators say was behind the terror attack on a CRPF convoy in Pulwama in 2019, was trying to create a terror network in Jammu and identify targets in Delhi.

According to police, he had created a network with the help of associates in Punjab to bring weapons from Bihar. They have so far brought seven pistols from Chhapra, Bihar, and distributed them among militants in Kashmir, officers said. Following Hidayatullah's arrest, police had arrested two Kashmiri students enrolled in private colleges on the periphery of Chandigarh, in connection with a plot to target Jammu on the second anniversary of Pulwama attack. Identifying the arrested students as Shuhail Bashir Shah and Qazi Wasim, both residents of Pulwama, police said the former had come from Chandigarh to plant a 7 kg IED at a crowded place in Jammu, but was arrested in the city.

The other case related to the arrest of Nadeem-ul-Haq, a member of 'The Resistance Front', an LeT offshoot, who was held with 5 kg IED from near a shopping mall in Narwal area on June 26, hours before the drone attack at the IAF station in the early hours of June 27. Following his disclosures, police had arrested two associates — Talib Rehman from Banihal and Nadeem-ul-Haq from Shopian. In Jammu division's Banihal area of Ramban district, sources said, NIA conducted searches at houses of Nadeem-ul-Haq (resident of Zenihal) and Talib Rehman (of Kaskoot), besides Nadeem Ayub Rather (from Shopian in Kashmir). The last two were arrested on the basis of Nadeem's disclosure. The NIA is trying to find the link between LeT's plan to plant an IED in Jammu on June 26 evening and the drone attack on IAF station a few hours later, besides unearthing LeM's network — suspected to stretch from J&K to Bihar. **FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com**

Questioned in conversion racket, Saharanpur man heads to SC — on foot

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

AFTER NAVIGATING the busy Delhi-Meerut road on foot for hours, Praveen Kumar halts for a small break, keeping his trolley bag by the highway to take a sip of water. Praveen has been walking from Saharanpur for the last four days. His destination — the Supreme Court, which he plans to approach for being wrongly named in a religious conversion racket by Uttar Pradesh ATS last month.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Praveen, who claims to have published books on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath and their vision to take the country forward, said he was brought to Lucknow for questioning last month by the ATS.



Praveen Kumar on the Delhi-Meerut highway on Saturday. *Amil Bhatnagar*

For three days, he said, he was questioned about allegedly receiving foreign funding to convert people to Islam and a potential terror plot.

"Police officers believed I had changed my name to Samad and was in some way part of this criminal conspiracy. I cooperated with them fully and answered all their questions," he said. "They did not find anything incriminating and dropped me back to Saharanpur. I was innocent in their eyes but my problems had only begun."

UP Police said his name had cropped up in a list recovered from the main accused in the alleged conversion racket, Umar Gautam, following his arrest from Delhi's Jamia Nagar earlier this month. "It was routine procedure since his name was in the list being probed. We gathered details on the basis of which we questioned him. He was let go after that. Several angles of the racket are being probed," said Prashant Kumar, ADG, Law and Order.

LADAKH STANDOFF

India, China hold 12th round of talks; hope for a breakthrough

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

INDIA AND China held the 12th round of the Corps Commander-level talks on Saturday to find a possible resolution for the nearly 15-month-long military standoff in eastern Ladakh. The meeting was held on the Chinese side of Chushul-Moldo Border Personnel Meeting point.

Sources said the meeting, which began around 10.30 am, continued until 7.30 pm, and defence establishment sources were hopeful of reaching an understanding for disengagement from Hot Spring and Gogra Post, Patrolling Point (PP) 15 and PP17A, respectively, friction points.

There are platoon-sized units of troops on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at both these friction points since last year. But the troops are not

in an eyeball-to-eyeball situation anywhere in eastern Ladakh.

The talks, however, are unlikely to resolve issues in Depsang Plains and Demchok. In Depsang Plains, Chinese PLA troops are blocking Indian soldiers from accessing their traditional patrolling limits — PP10, PP11, PP11A, PP12 and PP13 — in the region. India had accessed the patrolling limits in February 2020, before the standoff began last May.

In Demchok, sources said, "so-called civilians" have pitched tents on the Indian side of Charding Nala, which marks the LAC.

But any movement on PP15 and PP17A would mark a breakthrough, as there has been a stalemate since February. The two sides had disengaged from the north and south banks of Pangong Tso, where troops and tanks from both sides were barely a few hundred meters apart at some places.

Soren sends Dhanbad judge death case to CBI

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, JULY 31

JHARKHAND CHIEF Minister Hemant Soren Saturday recommended a CBI investigation into the death of Dhanbad Additional Sessions Judge Uttam Anand in an alleged hit-and-run incident.

Soren made the recommendation a day after he met Anand's family. Also Friday, the Supreme Court, taking suo motu cognisance of Anand's death on July 28, said that the "gruesome incident" had "larger ramifications", and the court would address larger questions of security for judges across the country.

The bench of Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justice Surya Kant directed the Jharkhand Chief Secretary and DGP to jointly submit a report in a week's time on the status of the investigation into the incident.

On Saturday, the CM Secretariat, in a press release, said: "The CM has given orders for the CBI to investigate into the death of Judge Uttam Anand. CM had met family members of Judge Anand and had assured that justice would prevail."

Soren also took to Twitter to announce his decision to recommend a CBI probe into the incident.

The Jharkhand government had formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the incident after police opened a murder investigation and arrested two persons who were in the autorickshaw which veered off the road to knock down the judge who was on a morning run.

Police sources said the two arrested men claimed they were "drunk" at the time of the incident.

The SIT, headed by Jharkhand ADG (Operations) Sanjay Anand Latkar, questioned the men and formed teams to ascertain antecedents.



HOLD THE LINE

People trapped on one side of the Jahlama Nala in Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul-Spiti district after a recent cloudburst are rescued via zipline on Saturday. A total of 178 people were rescued in the district. Meanwhile, an operation to trace 20 people who went missing after a cloudburst in J&K's Kishtwar district Saturday entered its fourth day with no success. *PTI*

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Martyrs of CISF on 1st AUGUST Col Manoranjan Panda (1 August 2004)
In memory of Col Manoranjan Panda, Commanding Officer, 6th Battalion, The Bihar Regiment, who laid down his life in the service of the nation. An officer, who will always be remembered for his professionalism and sterling character by those who served with him. We, the fraternity of The Veer Biharis pray to God for eternal peace for the departed soul.

The Bihar Regiment Association



On the 27th raising day of 24 Rashtriya Rifles (Bihar), we pay homage to the gallant jawans who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

Lt Col Mohit Whig, Maj Joginder Shekhawat, Sub Rajesh Xaxa, SM, Nk Bandi Bhagat, SM, Swr Dhiraj Singh, SC, Swr Sultan Singh, SC, Sep Dilip Besra, SM, Sep Chitranjan Singh, SM, Sep Dinesh Goswami, SM AND Sub Alban Tigga, Ris Haripal Duttu, SM, Ris Ram Nath Ram, Hav Arun Kumar Jha, ALD Anil Kumar Singh, Nk Mohammed Khalil, Nk Matias Horo, Nk Ram Niwas Singh, L/Nk Raju Kumar, L/Nk Farid Ali Khan, L/Nk Bande Oraon, Sep Devi Dayal, Sep Ram Nandan Singh, Sep Angat Kumar, Sep Rajesh Kumar Minj, Sep Anil Topno, Sep Manoj Kumar Singh, Sep Rama Kant Singh, Sep Birendra Kumar Suman, Sep Inderjit Singh, Sep Bhim Singh, Sep Dhiraj Kumar, Sep David Ravindra Minz, SM, Sep Arvind Kumar Jha, Sep Anil Topno, Sep Ghora Chand Singh, Sep Pawan Kumar Rai, Sep Ramakant Singh, Sep Vijay Kumar, Swr Swinder Singh, Swr Dhananjay Singh Rajput, Swr Ram Singh, Swr Bijender Kumar, Swr Tofan Singh Khiche, Swr Iqbal Ali, Swr Ranjodh Singh, Sigmn Naresh Kumar, Gignam Keshav Kumar,

Your gallantry will continue to inspire us forever. We, the fraternity of the Veer Biharis salute you and your brave families.

The Bihar Regiment Association

STATE BANK OF INDIA

Premises & Estate Dept., Local Head Office,
2nd Floor, III/1, Pt. J.N. Marg, Bhubaneswar-751001,
Ph. No.: 0674-2394637, Email: agmpre.lhobhu@sbi.co.in

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER FOR PROVIDING FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SERVICES & MAINTENANCE AT VARIOUS OFFICE/QUARTERS AT BHUBANESWAR CENTRE

P & E Dept. of SBI invites online e-tender in two bid system from prospective & eligible vendors for the following works:

- 1) **FMS-** Housekeeping and Maintenance of local head office building.
- 2) **FMS-** Housekeeping and Maintenance of Bank house, GMs Flat, DGMs Flat, Staff Quarters at various location of Bhubaneswar Centre.
- 3) **FMS-** Housekeeping, Catering and Maintenance at Guest Houses, Chummary, Cottage, Gymnasium, Dispensary & Community Hall at Sastrinagar & Nageswar Tangi, Bhubaneswar.

Interested eligible vendors having experience of similar type of works may visit the bank's website : www.sbi.co.in under "PROCUREMENT NEWS" and can also download tenders documents from 30/07/2021 to 12/08/2021 upto 14.00 hrs and submit their offers in the aforesaid address on or before 12/08/2021.

The addendum/corrigendum if any will be published in the bank's website www.sbi.co.in.
Date: 01.08.2021
Place: Bhubaneswar

Asst. General Manager (P&E)

COMMISSIONER, WOMEN DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF TELANGANA, HYDERABAD

H.No.3-222, Vengal Rao Nagar, Besides Madhura Nagar Metro Station, Ameer Pet, Hyderabad-500038

e-TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of price bids from Cooperative Dairy Federations like Vijaya Dairy Corporation (TSDOCF) /other Cooperative Dairy Federations only. Bids are invited from all over India through e-Tender platform <https://tender.telangana.gov.in> for supply of (3.00) Crores Ltrs (approx.) UHT Tetra Brick Pack Milk in 500 ML Packing with shelf life of 180 days with customized exterior packaging design as specified by WDCW dept. indicating "It is not for sale" and meant for "Distribution to the AWCs only" for delivery upto to 35,700 Anganwadi Centers in all the Districts of Telangana State with Bio Metric System of Women Development & Child Welfare department for (12) months starting from August-2021 to July -2022. For details please visit the website of e-tender platform <http://tender.telangana.gov.in>, e-tenders to be uploaded before 12.08.2021 at 4 PM.

DIPR R.O.No.: 449-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2021-22

Sd/- Commissioner
WD&CW Dept.TS

MAHARASHTRA METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD.

(A joint venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Maharashtra)

PUNE METRO RAIL PROJECT

101, The Orion, Opposite Don Bosco Youth Centre, Koregaon Park, Pune - 411001. Telephone: 020-26051072
E-mail: tenders.pmp@mahametro.org / www.punemetrorail.org

Tender Notice No. P1PD-05/2021 Dated: 01.08.2021

Name of the Work: Licensing of Co-Branding Rights of Selected Ten (10) Metro Stations of Reach-01 & Reach-02 of Pune Metro Rail Project for a period of 05 years.

Cost of Documents: ₹ 47,200/- (INR Forty Seven Thousand Two Hundred only) incl. GST.

Interested bidders may visit Pune Metro Rail website www.punemetrorail.org or download the bidding documents and obtain further details regarding the tender from our e-tender portal <https://mahametrorail.etenders.in> from 16:00 Hrs. on 02/08/2021.

Executive Director
(Procurement & Contracts),
MAHA-METRO

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PETROCHEMICALS ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY (CIPET) CSTS - HALDIA

(Formerly Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology)
Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals,
Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Govt. of India

City Centre, P.O: Debbhog, Haldia, Dist: Purba Medinipur,
Pin Code: 721657, West Bengal
Ph. No : 03224-255444/255404/255534, Tele fax : 03224-253016
Email: cipet.haldia@gmail.com / Website: www.cipet.gov.in

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

E-Tender No.: CIPET/HAL/E-TEN.-01/Construction/2021-2022
Date: 29-07-2021

CIPET-CSTS - Haldia invites E-Tender in two Bid System for Construction of Sample Store for Testing Dept. at our campus.
Pre-Bid Meeting: 11-08-2021, 14.30hrs. at CIPET-CSTS-Haldia.
Estimated Cost: Rs. 24,28,677.00/-
Last date of submission of online bid: 20-08-2021 upto 13.00hrs.

Tender form & other details can be seen and downloaded from the Website: www.cipet.gov.in / www.tenderwizard.com/CIPET
CIPET-CSTS-Haldia reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason.

Sd/- DIRECTOR & HEAD

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER

RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, ANGUL

No. 1817

DI. 27.07.2021

e-Procurement Notice for Road work in Odisha

1. Name of the work : Road work
2. Total No. of work : 1 No.
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 352.06 Lakh
4. Class of Contractor : 'A' & Special Class
5. Period of completion : 11 (Eleven) Calendar Months.
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul	Road Online-AGL-09-2021-22	04.08.2021 at 10.00 A.M	18.08.2021 up to 3.30 P.M	10.08.2021 up to 1.00 P.M	18.08.2021 up to 4.00 P.M	25.08.2021 at 11.00 A.M

(1) For detailed Notice inviting Tenders, Please visit to the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- D.Padhi
Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle, Angul.
OIPR-25049/11/0009/2122

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD

O/o Chief General Manager (Engg), O&M Circle-IV, S.R. Nagar, Hyderabad-500038, T.S.

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

e-Tender Notice No. & Date	Name of Work
No.102/GCM(E)/O&M.C.V./2021-2022, Date: 31.07.2021.	Payment of wages for Outsourcing staff working in various units of HMWS&SB.

(1)Tender Documents will be available online from dt.31.07.2021 from 5.30 P.M onwards and the last date for receipt of tenders is dt.07.08.2021. (2) Name & address of Chief General Manager (Engg), concerned - Chief General Manager (Engg), O&M Circle-IV, HMWSSB, SR Nagar, Hyderabad-38. (3) The Contractors / firms are requested to upload the information in the 'ZIP' format preferably. (4) Further details can be seen @ <https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in>

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg)
O&M Circle-IV, S.R. Nagar, Hyderabad - 500038, T.S.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

e-TENDER Notice FOR THE SUPPLY OF STORES No-E/29/2021. Firms are requested to Login to <http://www.ireps.gov.in-ogin> E.Tendergoods & services (new) and quote against these tenders. Manual quotations will not be entertained for these tenders. Closing time for all tender 14:30 hours.

S.No.	Tender No.	Description	Due Date
1	26213489	Vacuum circuit breaker	06-AUG-2021
2	01214351	LIQUID OXYGEN GAS	09-AUG-2021
3	04211013	CENTERING DISC	09-AUG-2021
4	06211025	OIL HYDRAULIC	09-AUG-2021
5	15210446A	Seamless tube	09-AUG-2021
6	26210206	Set of Air Brake Cylinder	09-AUG-2021
7	44210596A	FABRICATED HAND BRAKE WHEEL	09-AUG-2021
8	04210663A	BODY PILLAR PART	10-AUG-2021
9	04211012	LINK PIN	10-AUG-2021
10	06211093A	Compreg 3mm thick	10-AUG-2021
11	04210012	WEDGE FOR CASNUB	10-AUG-2021
12	04210180	ENHANCED DRAW HOOK	11-AUG-2021
13	04210192	DRAFT KEY	12-AUG-2021
14	04210962	SECONDARY LATERAL DAMPER	12-AUG-2021
15	04210946	CONTROL ARM LOWER LEFT	13-AUG-2021
16	04210954	TRACTION LEVER	13-AUG-2021
17	44210020	SLACK ADJUSTER	13-AUG-2021
18	04210279	PIN FOR BOGIE BRAKE	16-AUG-2021
19	04210339	DRAIN COCK ASSEMBLY	17-AUG-2021
20	04211009	PRIMARY BUMP STOP	17-AUG-2021
21	44210242A	KNUCKLE FOR CBC	17-AUG-2021
22	04211018	Speed Sensor	18-AUG-2021
23	06210182A	PRS TICKETS	18-AUG-2021
24	06211116	NAFTC CEILING SHEET	18-AUG-2021
25	11210636	Emergency battery charger	18-AUG-2021
26	26215004	BRAKE SYSTEM	18-AUG-2021
27	44210013A	DRAFT GEAR	18-AUG-2021
28	04210947	CONTROL ARM LOWER	19-AUG-2021
29	11211011	Hermetically sealed scroll compressor	19-AUG-2021
30	26212711A	Magent valve	19-AUG-2021
31	44210001	GREASE SEALS	19-AUG-2021
32	04211090	RUBBER PAD	20-AUG-2021
33	26213477	CATTLE GUARD	20-AUG-2021
34	26215006	Electronic speed indicating system (ESMON) for WAP4 and WAG7 Loco	24-AUG-2021
35	26215005	Main compressor	25-AUG-2021
36	26211332	ELECTRO MAGNETIC CONTACTOR COMPLETE	27-AUG-2021
37	82205846	48F OFC Cable	19-AUG-2021
38	90216018	Single phase prepaid cum post paid smart energy meters	17-AUG-2021

The following e-bid has been published in GeM website. Firms are requested to login to www.gem.gov.in and quoted against the following e-bid. Manual quotations will not be entertained.

39	GEM/2021/B 382296	Power Cable for Direct Burial XLPE Ugac cable - IS:10418	04-AUG-2021
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Principal Chief Materials Manager

Follow us on : twitter.com/GMSRailway

Maharashtra reports first case of Zika infection

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JULY 31

THE FIRST case of Zika virus infection in Maharashtra has been reported from Purandar tehsil in Pune district. A 50-year-old woman from Belsar village in Purandar tehsil was detected with fever in mid-July and her sample tested positive for Zika infection, in a test conducted by the National Institute of Virology (NIV), on July 30. She was also detected with chikungunya.

Zika is a mosquito-borne disease and while surveillance has

been stepped up, the disease presentation has been mild, state Surveillance Officer Dr Pradeep Awate told The Indian Express. Of the three members in the family, the woman had the co-infection of Zika and chikungunya, her daughter had chikungunya fever while her son didn't have any of the infections. However, all of them are stable, said Dr Awate.

The common symptoms of the disease are body ache, conjunctivitis, retro-orbital pain and skin rashes, Dr Awate said. The woman had symptoms from July 15 and her sample tested positive for Zika virus and chikungunya infection on July 30, said Dr Awate.

As part of surveillance, samples of village residents who had fever, and who had reported to the Primary Health Centre at Belsar, were sent to the NIV in Pune. Initially, five samples were sent on July 16, of which three were detected with chikungunya.

A team from NIV, under the guidance of scientist Dr Yogesh Gurav, visited the village and collected 41 samples from Belsar and Parinch villages. Of these, 25 tested positive for chikungunya while three tested positive for dengue, said Dr Awate, who visited the village along with the state surveillance department team.

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

CORRIGENDUM

No. PCMM/CLW/DKAE/E-Procurement/CORRIGENDUM/12 Dated: 29.07.2021. The following Corrigendum of E-Tender/s is for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/likely suppliers are requested to look up the website www.ireps.gov.in. These are E-Tenders; only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. For detailed instructions please refers to website. SI. No.: [40]. Tender Notice No.: SI No. 41 of PCMM/CLW/Dankuni/E-Procurement/21-22/11 Dated: 22.06.2021. **Tender No. : 34212528 Specification:** Specification No. is to be read as "CLW/ES/3/0030/D OR LATEST" in place of "CLW/ES/3/0030/C OR LATEST." **Tender Opening Date:** Tender Opening Date is to be read as "17.08.2021" in place of "28.07.2021".
Principal Chief Materials Manager,
PR4-166 CLW, Dankuni
Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

"IMPORTANT"

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‘Over 62% TN population has Covid antibodies’

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JULY 31

A STATEWIDE cross-sectional serosurvey on 26,610 samples conducted in July revealed that at least 62.2 per cent of the state's population has developed antibodies to Covid-19 infection.

The highest seropositivity of 84% was observed in Virudhunagar district, south of Madurai, and the lowest was reported in Erode district (37%), near Coimbatore, according to results of the survey released by Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian on Saturday.

Among total samples, 17,624 individuals had IgG antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 virus.

5 EXPRESS NETWORK

In SC, Maharashtra govt seeks empirical data on OBC from Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 31

MAHARASHTRA ON Saturday filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking empirical data on other backward classes (OBC) from the Union government.

On March 4, the SC had quashed 27 per cent OBC quota in local bodies for want of empirical data on the backwardness of the community.

"Today, the Maha Vikas Aghadi government filed a petition in Supreme Court urging it to direct the Centre to furnish empirical data on OBC. This would help in restoring OBC reservation in local bodies," Food and Civil Supplies

Minister and NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal told media-persons.

Reiterating the government's commitment to OBC quota, Bhujbal said, "When Devendra Fadnavis was the chief minister of Maharashtra, he had written to the Centre seeking empirical data on the community. Then minister for rural development, Pankaja Munde, had also sought data from the concerned department. The correspondence in 2019 by the BJP leaders did not elicit favorable response from the Centre."

In March, the SC had struck down Maharashtra government's 1994 amendment of the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act, 1961,

reserving 27 per cent seats in local bodies for OBC. The quota was applicable for all urban (municipal corporations and councils), rural (zilla parishad and panchayat samitis) local bodies.

While giving the verdict, the SC had pointed out that the state government can give reservation to the OBC in local bodies after setting up a dedicated backward class commission to conduct rigorous empirical inquiry into the nature and implications of backwardness of the community.

"In accordance with court's directives, the government has already constituted Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission to pursue empirical data on the community," said Bhujbal.

Uddhav praises Gadkari, seeks Centre's cooperation for development works

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 31

SHOWERING PRAISE on Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari for his style of functioning, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday sought the Centre's cooperation for development works in Maharashtra.

Gadkari on Saturday conducted the ground-breaking ceremony of the new rail overbridge in Nagpur while Thackeray joined the event via video conference from Mumbai.

Recalling the days of the first Shiv Sena-led saffron combine's government between 1995 and 1999, Thackeray praised Gadkari for

connecting Mumbai and Pune by expediting work on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

"Nitinji, I don't praise you unnecessarily... Had there been anyone else in your place, the person would have said 'I will see whether it is possible'. But you quickly said 'I will do it' and you did it. Now, you are creating the same identity all over the country with your works. I am proud of you for it," said Thackeray.

Seeking Centre's cooperation for development projects in Maharashtra, he added: "In Maharashtra, some roads and railway tracks have been damaged due to flood. Modern technology that will last for many generations should be used to repair the same..."



PM Narendra Modi during the address. ANI

Confidence in police low, work to restore: PM to IPS probationers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Saturday pointed to flagging public confidence in policing as he called upon young officers to work towards restoring it.

"In the field, whatever decision you make must be informed by national interest and perspective. The limits of your work may be local, but keeping this talisman will come in handy. You must remember you are also the flag-bearer of Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat. So all your actions must be inspired by the feeling of 'Nation First, Always First'," he told IPS probationers of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad, via video-conferencing.

Prime Minister Modi, citing the example of the National Disaster Response Force, said the police have not been able to command the same respect as the specialised organisation.

"NDRF instills confidence during disasters. People think if the NDRF has come, they will be saved. It has earned this confidence and respect through its work. But the NDRF, too, has many police officials. Have police forces earned the same respect as NDRF? Why? You know the answer," the Prime Minister said.

He said this negative perception surrounding the police was a challenge.

"During the pandemic this perception was changing because of the work done by the police. But it is back to square one. Why doesn't public confidence in policing increase? You

sacrifice your life for national security. Yet when policing is talked about, people feel differently. It is your responsibility that this changes. Whether you change the system, or the system changes you will depend upon your training, will power and morale. What is your goal? What are your principles? That will determine how you behave," PM Modi said.

The virtual interaction was also attended by Home Minister Amit Shah.

Modi also stressed upon increasing representation of women in police forces. "There has been a constant effort to increase women's representation in the police forces in the recent past. Along with transparency and accountability, women strengthen the values of politeness and sensitivity in the police force," he said.

Invoking the Dandi March, Modi said police needed to have the same desire for change. "The nation is demanding the same will power in your determination today. At that time the youth of the country fought for Swarajya. Today you have to dedicate yourself to surajya (good governance). At that time people were ready to die for country's freedom. Today you have to live for the country," he said.

Modi said when India completes 100 years of freedom 25 years later, how strong and well the police force is will depend upon the work that IPS probationers do in their careers. "You have to build the foundation on which glorious and disciplined India will be erected. The time has chosen you to do this. You have the responsibility of building a modern, effective and sensitive police force."

Allow construction of rail corridor below Aravalli Biodiversity Park: Panel to Supreme Court

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

A SUPREME Court-appointed committee has recommended to the apex court to permit construction of a stretch of the proposed Delhi-Alwar high speed rail corridor under the Aravalli Biodiversity Park and the extended ridge area, observing that the project is in "public interest" and does not involve felling of trees.

According to the Central Empowered Committee's (CEC) report, which was finalised on Friday, a 3.6-km stretch of the corridor is supposed to pass below the extended or 'morphological' ridge in South Delhi. While ridge areas are classified as notified forests, extended ridge areas bear characteristics of the ridge, but are not notified forests.

The ridge areas, which are essentially extensions of the Aravalli ranges and extend over 7,000 hectares in Delhi, are considered the lungs of the capital. Agencies are not allowed to carry out construction in ridge as well as extended ridge areas without permission from the Ridge Management Board (RMB) and the SC via the CEC.

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), which is constructing the regional rapid transit system (RTTS) corridor, had earlier obtained permission for the project from the RMB. As per the CEC report, 1.7-km of the 3.6-km stretch under consideration will pass below the Aravalli Biodiversity Park near Vasant Kunj.

The committee observed that the project is in public interest and since the proposed rail corridor will run 20 metres below the ground, trees will not have to be cut. "The project on implementation is expected to improve the air quality in Delhi/NCR. The share of public transport is expected to increase.



Bhupender Yadav

Cong did nothing for weaker sections: BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

HAILING PRIME Minister Narendra Modi for approving reservation for OBCs and EWS candidates in the all India quota for medical courses, the BJP on Saturday said the government has taken a historical step aimed at establishing an egalitarian society, while the Congress did "nothing" for social justice and uplift of weaker sections during its rule.

The government on Thursday had announced 27 percent reservation for OBCs and 10 percent reservation for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category in the All-India Quota (AIQ) scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental courses from the current academic year, 2021-22.

Addressing a press conference, BJP leader and Union Minister Bhupender Yadav said the party congratulates Prime Minister Modi for taking this historic step.

"This is a historic decision aiming for setting up an egalitarian society based on social and economic justice," Yadav said, while questioning the opposition especially the Congress over their contribution to the progress of the socially and economically weaker sections.

At RSS meet, demand for population policy in Uttarakhand; Char Dham board objection

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, JULY 31

IN A recent coordination meeting with the ruling BJP, leaders from 35 affiliates of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have suggested the Pushkar Singh Dhami government to come up with a population control policy in Uttarakhand similar to Assam and Uttar Pradesh to ensure a "demographic balance".

They claimed that the Muslim population has increased — particularly in Dehradun, Haridwar, Udhm Singh Nagar and Nainital — over the years, and there has been unauthorised development of Muslim religious sites. They demanded that such places be identified and appropriate action taken.

At the meeting in Dehradun on Wednesday, apart from CM Dhami, BJP national general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh, state party president Madan Kaushik, and RSS joint general secretaries Dr Krishna Gopal and Arun Kumar — who is RSS's new BJP pointperson — were present.

A majority of those present disagreed with the Trivendra Singh Rawat government's decision to set up the Char Dham Devasthanam Board — which controls four major shrines and 49 linked temples. When the government said the board will regulate development works in



Pushkar Singh Dhami

shrines, a leader from an RSS offshoot asked why less popular Temples and religious places of other communities are not being controlled too, according to sources. The CM then said a high-level panel will be set up to study the impact of the board, sources said.

Sources said that functionaries of RSS affiliates said that officers in districts were not addressing the problems of workers and public and this was a disappointment. They said it was very important to ensure that the cadres are satisfied as they play a crucial role in convincing voters on the ground.

RSS functionaries stressed on the need to popularise the efforts of the BJP governments at the Centre and state.

"Suggestions were given on several issues. If the state government follows these suggestions, we hope it will retain power after the 2022 Assembly elections," said an RSS functionary, adding there was no discussion about anti-incumbency.

No two power centres in Punjab Cong, says Capt as Sidhu, CM attend separate events

KANCHAN VASDEV, RAAKHI JAGGA
CHANDIGARH, LUDHIANA, JULY 31

AS PUNJAB observed the 82nd martyrdom day of Shaheed Udhm Singh, CM Amarinder Singh and new PPCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu paid tributes to the martyr at different places. While Sidhu was in Fatehgarh Sahib, the CM attended a state-level function to mark the day in Sunam. Both leaders, however, went live on social media at the same time.

After his event in Sunam, Amarinder played down the issue of two power centres in Punjab Congress and said that both government and the PPCC had well defined roles. He also declared that his party had already fulfilled 93 per cent of poll promises made in the election manifesto and the figure would soon go up to 95 per cent.

While Amarinder flew in a government chopper to Sunam, birth place of the martyr to address a state-level function, Sidhu visited Fatehgarh Sahib, the constituency of PCC working president Kuljit Nagra and paid tributes to the martyr at Udhm Singh Smarak, near Roza Sharif.

Amarinder was flanked by his aide and Education Minister Vijay Inder Singla, and Sidhu was accom-



Amarinder Singh at Shaheed Udhm Singh Memorial in Sangrur. Harmeet Sodhi

panied by Nagra during his visit.

Sources said that Sidhu was not invited by the state government for the state-level function.

Amarinder, who has lately been participating in all government functions virtually, made it a point to address a function in person Saturday. Before this, former PPCC chief Sumil Jakhar was invited for most of these events.

In Sunam, Amarinder said that the party was working as one. On the issue of two power centres, he said: "Right now the party position is good and the same has to be further consolidated till elections," said Singh.

Asked about the 18-point agenda given by the Kharge committee, the CM said there was "some confusion" as his government had already implemented several points of this agenda.



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar arrives at the JD(U) meet in Delhi on Saturday. Prem Nath Pandey

Lalan is JD(U) top post pick as Nitish tries to strike a balance

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JULY 31

JD(U)'S MUNGER MP and Lok Sabha leader Rajiv Ranjan, also known as Lalan Singh, was on Saturday chosen as its national president at the party's national executive meeting in Delhi. He replaces RCP Singh, who offered to step down after being inducted as a minister in the Narendra Modi government.

From being Karpoori Thakur's aide to emerging as Nitish Kumar's man Friday, Singh is a natural choice in Nitish's attempt to strike a balance between loyalists of Singh and RCP Singh.

A Bhumihar leader, Singh has the image of a troubleshooter and is known for his organisational



Munger MP Lalan Singh

skills and wide connections across party lines. He has stood by Nitish Kumar since the beginning of their political career, barring the two years after 2009 Lok Sabha elections when he quit JD(U).

Singh, who is said to have recently played a role in splitting the IJP, also enjoys a good rapport with BJP. He was one of the five petitioners in the fodder scam case that eventually led to the conviction of Lalu Prasad. He is also known for his shrewd political skills and speaks very less to the media.

Once R C P Singh became Union minister, Lalan Singh was the obvious choice for the party post despite another strong contender — JD(U) parliamentary board chairman and former MP Upendra Kushwaha. The Bihar CM did not want to rush through a clear projection of Kushwaha, who had just returned to the JD(U), besides the fact that his appointment could have upset R C P Singh, who has long been the number 2 in the party organisation.

This is also the first time an upper caste has been appointed as the JD(U) national president. Singh's elevation is being seen as Nitish Kumar's bid to rebuild the party organisation in a manner it could try to win over Bhumihars.

FULL REPORT ON
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India to preside over UNSC in August; focus on 3 major areas

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, JULY 31

INDIA WILL take over the Presidency of the UN Security Council on August 1 and is set to host signature events in three major areas of maritime security, peacekeeping and counterterrorism during the month.

"It is a singular honour for us to be presiding over the Security Council the same month when we are celebrating our 75th Independence Day," India's

Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti said in a video message on the eve of India assuming the rotating Presidency of the powerful 15-nation UN body.

The first working day of India's Presidency will be Monday, August 2 when Tirumurti will hold a hybrid press briefing in the UN headquarters on the Council's programme of work for the month.

Tirumurti will also provide a briefing for member states of the United Nations which are non-

members of the Council on its work for the month, according to a schedule released by the UN.

India's two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council began on January 1, 2021. It will again preside over the Council in December next year, the last month of its two-year tenure.

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Saturday expressed its hope that New Delhi would follow international rules and norms, the Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson said in a statement. **PTI**

As UP polls draw near, Adityanath govt lines up 34 projects for inauguration in 100 days

AVANEESH MISHRA
LUCKNOW, JULY 31

WITH THE next Assembly election less than seven months away, the state government has planned to inaugurate at least 76 development projects worth more than Rs 57,800 crore. It has identified at least 34 projects, worth over Rs 9,691 crore, for which foundation stones could be laid in the next 100 days.

The bid to showcase the strides being made by the state on the development front will start with the laying of the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art Forensic Institute in Lucknow and Maa Vindhyavasini Devi Corridor by Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday. In addition to these, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation

stone for the Noida International Airport in Jewar, Greater Noida and inaugurate nine new medical colleges in the state. The medical colleges were earlier set to be inaugurated on July 30, but the date has now been extended.

While most of these projects are either completed or are about to be finished in the next few months, the government has planned to inaugurate only a few sections of some specific projects that are nearing completion.

Religious tourism has been one of the focus areas of the state government, with stress on developing districts such as Ayodhya, Gorakhpur, Mathura, Varanasi and Prayagraj as a tourism hub.

Six projects commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, worth over Rs 364.16 crore, are to be inaugurated by the government in



Religious tourism has been one of the focus areas, with stress on developing districts such as Ayodhya. File

the coming days. The government is about to finish development work in Ayodhya as part of the 'Ramayana Circuit'. The project involves development of Ram Katha Gallery, Queen Heo memorial, Ayodhya bus stand, multi-level parking facility at the bus stand, a

tourist shelter at Panchkoshi Parikrama, Ram Ki Paidi, Laxman Kila Ghat, street revamp and a road to Hanuman Garhi, Kanak Bhawan and Dashrath Bhawan.

A bouquet of 16 projects, commissioned by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and worth

Rs 14,259.74 crore, are said to have been completed. The projects include rehabilitation and upgradation of the Indo-Nepal border, connecting Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha and a world heritage tourist site, with Varanasi and Samath. The other significant projects include the NH-2 corridor in Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri and Etawah, and upgradation of sections of the Aligarh-Kanpur Road in Etah and Mainpuri.

Two projects worth Rs 1,304.11 crore under the Ayush development have been completed. These are the Ayurveda Research Pharmacy Drug Testing Lab and special units on mineral & metals in Jhansi, and construction of the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CRIUM) building in Lucknow.

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TOP OF THE WORLD



President Jovenel Moïse was killed in July

HAITI
SC ex-judge is a suspect in President's killing

HAITIAN POLICE on Friday outlined fresh accusations against a former Supreme Court judge over her links to the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse earlier this month, saying she had met with some Colombian mercenaries accused of killing him. Haitian police earlier this week issued an arrest warrant for Wendelle Coq-Thelot, a former Supreme Court judge who was ousted with two other judges earlier in Feb when Moïse alleged a coup was being planned against him. Coq-Thelot's whereabouts are unknown and she could not be reached for comment. Colombian mercenaries and Haitian-Americans arrested after Moïse's murder said they had met Coq-Thelot, police said. **REUTERS**

NEPAL

Oli slams door on party unity, says Madhav Nepal is a 'traitor'

THE ONGOING attempts to reunite the two warring factions of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) looks to be failing as party chief, and former Nepal PM, KP Sharma Oli asserted on Saturday that there would be no space for dissident leader Madhav Kumar Nepal (another former PM) in the party. Hours after proximity leaders said the CPN-UML would suffer politically if the patch-up bid failed, Oli said, "Madhav Nepal is anti-Communist movement, a traitor and there will be no space for him in the party." **YUBARAJ GHIMIRE**

UNITED STATES

US: Tanker used to evade N Korea sanctions seized

THE US Justice Department on Friday announced the seizure of a 2,734-tonne tanker it said was owned and operated by a Singaporean national and used to make shipments of petroleum products to North Korea in violation of international sanctions. A DoJ statement said the *M/T Courageous* was seized by Cambodian authorities in March 2020 in accordance with a US warrant, having been used to transfer oil products to North Korean vessels and to make shipments to the North Korean port of Nampo. **REUTERS**

Delta variant rampant in Asia; Tokyo, Thailand, Malaysia post record cases

REUTERS
JULY 31

THE OLYMPICS host city Tokyo, as well as Thailand and Malaysia, announced a record number of Covid-19 infections on Saturday, mostly driven by the highly transmissible Delta variant of the disease.

Cases surged in Sydney as well, where police cordoned off the central business district to prevent a protest against a strict lockdown that will last until the end of August.

Police closed train stations, banned taxis from dropping passengers off downtown and deployed 1,000 officers to set up checkpoints and to disperse groups. The government of New South Wales reported 210 new infections in Sydney and surrounding areas from the Delta variant outbreak.

Tokyo's metropolitan government announced a record number of 4,058 infections in the past 24 hours, topping 4,000 for the first time. Olympics organisers reported 21 new Covid-19 cases related to the Games, bringing the total to 241 since July 1.

The record comes a day after Japan extended its state of emergency for Tokyo to the end of August, expanding it to three prefectures near Tokyo and the western prefecture of Osaka in light of the recent spike in infections.

Olympics organisers said on Saturday they had revoked accreditation of a Games-related person or people for leaving the athletes' village for sightseeing, a violation of measures imposed to hold the Olympics safely amid



At a vaccination Centre in Bangkok last week. Reuters

the pandemic.

The organisers did not disclose how many people had their accreditation revoked, if the person or people involved were athletes, or when the violation took place.

Malaysia, one of the hotspots of the disease, reported 17,786 coronavirus cases on Saturday, a record number of infections.

Over 100 people gathered in the centre of the capital Kuala Lumpur, expressing dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the pandemic and calling on PM Muhyiddin Yassin to quit.

Thailand reported a daily record of 18,912 new coronavirus infections, bringing the country's total accumulated cases to 597,287. The country also reported 178 new deaths, also a daily record, taking total fatalities to 4,857.

China is also battling an outbreak of the Delta variant in the eastern city of Nanjing, traced to airport cleaners who worked on a flight from Russia. read more

Covid-19 infections have increased by 80% over the past four weeks in most regions of the world, WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Friday.



FRENCH PROTEST COVID PASS: A protestor holds a sign which reads "Jupiter, come back to Earth", referring to French President Emmanuel Macron, during a demonstration in Paris on Saturday. Demonstrators gathered in several cities in France on Saturday to protest against the Covid-19 pass, which grants vaccinated individuals greater ease of access to venues. AP

West African health officials race to vaccinate amid spikes

CARLEY PETESCH
DAKAR, JULY 31

A RESURGENCE of coronavirus cases in West Africa is hitting the region hard, inundating cemeteries where funeral numbers are rising and hospitals where beds are becoming scarce.

Those visible shifts are also pushing a reluctant population to seek out the vaccines in larger numbers at a time when ship-

ments of doses are arriving from multiple sources after nearly grinding to a halt in recent months.

Thousands of new Covid cases were reported in the region in the past few weeks amid low vaccination rates and the spread of the delta variant, with some countries seeing their highest numbers since the pandemic began.

Shortages and delays have caused Africa's 54 countries to fall far behind wealthier nations in their Covid-19 vaccine roll-

outs. Some 82 million doses have arrived on the continent to date, though that is just 10% of the number needed to vaccinate 30% of its population by the end of 2021, said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, World Health Organisation regional director for Africa.

But more shipments are finally rolling in, steering the continent of 1.3 billion people into an "encouraging phase after a bleak June," Moeti said. **AP**

CPC 'commands the gun', says Xi as he tells military to expedite modernisation

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, JULY 31

ON THE eve of China's Army Day, Chinese President Xi Jinping asserted on Saturday that it was the ruling Communist Party that "commands the gun", and asked the military to make resolute efforts to become the world's best army by 2027.

A key conclave of the Communist Party of China (CPC) headed by 68-year-old Xi finalised plans last year to build a fully modern military on par with that of the US by 2027.

Addressing a group study session of the CPC Political Bureau on Saturday, Xi — who heads the CPC and the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC) —

organisation, said.

NSO's ongoing internal investigation checked some of the telephone numbers of people that NSO's clients reportedly marked as potential targets.

"Almost everything we checked, we found no connection to Pegasus," the employee said, declining to elaborate on potential misuse NSO may have uncovered.

NSO "will no longer be responding to media inquiries on this matter and it will not play along with the vicious and slanderous campaign," the employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said.

adopted by Parliament this month barring people from some public venues unless they are fully vaccinated against Covid or can show a fresh negative test.

Flori, whose billboards were posted around his home region in the south of France, said the consensus in his country was on the side of *Charlie Hebdo*.

"But when it is a matter of making fun of the President by depicting him as a dictator, then it becomes blasphemy, then it is unacceptable," he said in an interview with Reuters. **REUTERS**

satirical magazine published caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad, originally in 2006, that most Muslims view as blasphemous. The French state defended the magazine's right to publish. "We will not give up on cartoons and drawings, even if others back down," Macron said last year in a speech to honour teacher Samuel Paty, who was killed by a Chechen teenager who wanted to avenge Paty's use of the cartoons in a class on freedom of expression.

Flori put up the Macron billboards in response to a law



The Israeli government has launched a probe into allegations against NSO

triggered concerns over issues relating to privacy.

The suspensions are in response to an investigation by the Pegasus Project, a consortium of media outlets that reported the

NSO blocks some govt clients from using its spyware over misuse claims: report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, JULY 31

ISRAELI CYBERSECURITY company NSO Group, which is at the centre of the Pegasus snooping scandal, has temporarily blocked several government clients around the world from using its spyware technology as the firm probes its alleged abuses, according to a US media report.

The alleged use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, including India,

Depiction of President Macron as Hitler becomes test of French tolerance for satire

MANUEL AUSLOOS & MICHEL ROSE
PARIS, JULY 31

MICHEL-ANGE FLORI, owner of a French street advertising business, decided to use some of his billboards for what he called an exercise in political satire: posting a picture showing President Emmanuel Macron dressed like Adolf Hitler.

Macron's personal lawyers and his party have now filed legal complaints alleging that the de-



French President Emmanuel Macron

pictions were a public insult, and Flori said he has been contacted by police acting on the complaint.

The case has turned into a test of where France draws the line between freedom of expression and being offensive.

That resonates particularly in a country where the *Charlie Hebdo*

US issues new Cuba sanctions; Biden says more to come

JEFF MASON & STEVE HOLLAND
WASHINGTON, JULY 31

THE UNITED States imposed sanctions on the Cuban police force and two of its leaders on Friday in response to the Havana government's crackdown on protesters, and President Joe Biden promised Cuban-American leaders more actions were coming.

The US Treasury Department said the sanctions, which appeared to be largely symbolic, were a reaction to "actions to suppress peaceful, pro-democratic protests in Cuba that began on July 11".

Targets of the sanctions are two Cuban police force leaders, as well as the Cuban interior ministry's national police force, the department said.

"There will be more, unless there's some drastic change in Cuba, which I don't anticipate," Biden said during a meeting with Cuban-American leaders at the White House.

His meeting came as the politically important community calls for more support for protests in Cuba that represent the biggest populist outpouring against the government on the Communist-run island in decades.

"The United States is taking concerted action to bolster the cause of the Cuban people," said Biden. He said he had asked the Treasury and State departments to report back in a month on how to allow remittance payments from Americans to Cubans without the Cuban government profiting.

In addition, Biden has been working on a plan to try to pro-



"There will be more, unless there's some drastic change in Cuba," US President Joe Biden said of sanctions

EXPLAINED
E Politically key issue for Democrats

FLORIDA'S CUBAN American community, many of whom are very vocal opponents of the Communist government in Havana, have been calling on the Biden administration to provide more support for the recent anti-government protests in Cuba. Experts say Biden's approach to Cuba will play a major role in the Democratic party's fortunes in Florida, which is one of the most crucial battleground states in presidential elections. Support from Cuban Americans had helped Trump clinch Florida in 2020 by a bigger margin than in the previous election.

vide wireless communications to Cubans and augment US embassy staff in Cuba, a senior administration official said.

The protests erupted this month amid Cuba's worst economic crisis since the fall of its old Soviet Union ally. **REUTERS**



Rashad Hussain

Biden nominates Indian American as ambassador for religious freedom

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, JULY 31

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden nominated Indian American attorney Rashad Hussain as Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, the first Muslim to be picked for the post, according to the White House.

Hussain, 41, is currently Director for Partnerships and Global Engagement at the National Security Council.

"Today's announcement underscores the President's commitment to build an Administration that looks like America and reflects people of all faiths. Hussain is the first Muslim to be nominated to serve as the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom," the White House said.

During the Obama administration, he served as US special envoy to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, US special envoy for strategic counterterrorism communications and deputy associate White House counsel. **PTI**

Hong Kong police arrest man for booing national anthem

Taipei: Hong Kong police have arrested a man accused of booing the Chinese national anthem while watching an Olympic event at a mall.

The 40-year-old man was allegedly waving colonial-era Hong Kong flags and booing, while urging others to join him in insulting the national anthem, according to a police statement.

Hong Kong passed a law in June last year that criminalised

any actions that insult the national anthem. Violating the law can mean a fine of up to \$6,400, and up to nine years in prison.

China's central government criminalised actions that insult the national flag and emblem in amendments to the law last October, which is also applicable to Hong Kong.

Police said there may be additional arrests and that an active investigation is underway. **AP**

AT LEAST 30,000 AFGHANS ARE LEAVING EACH WEEK

As fear grips Afghanistan, hundreds of thousands flee the country

CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM & FATIMA FAIZI
KABUL, JULY 31

HAJI SAKHI decided to flee Afghanistan the night he saw two Taliban members drag a young woman from her home and lash her on the sidewalk. Terrified for his three daughters, he crammed his family into a car the next morning and barrelled down winding dirt roads into Pakistan.

That was more than 20 years ago. They returned to Kabul, the capital, nearly a decade later after the US-led invasion toppled the Taliban regime. But now, with the Taliban sweeping

across parts of the country as American forces withdraw, Sakhi, 68, fears a return of the violence he witnessed that night. This time, he says, his family is not waiting so long to leave.

"I'm not scared of leaving belongings behind, I'm not scared of starting everything from scratch," said Sakhi, who recently applied for Turkish visas for himself, his wife, their three daughters and one son. "What I'm scared of is the Taliban."

Across Afghanistan, a mass exodus is unfolding as the Taliban press on in their brutal military campaign, which has captured more than half the country's 400-odd districts, ac-

cording to some assessments. And with that, fears of a harsh return to extremist rule or a bloody civil war between ethnically aligned militias have taken hold.

So far this year around 330,000 Afghans have been displaced, more than half of them fleeing their homes since the United States began its withdrawal in May, according to the United Nations.

Many have flooded into makeshift tent camps or crowded into relatives' homes in cities, the last islands of government control in many provinces. Thousands more are trying to secure passports and visas to leave the country altogether. Others



Hundreds of people wait in long lines at the passport department in Kabul each morning. NYT

have crammed into smugglers' pickup trucks in a desperate bid to slip illegally over the border.

In recent weeks, the number of Afghans crossing the border illegally shot up around 30 to 40

per cent compared to the period before international troops began withdrawing in May, according to the International Organisation for Migration. At least 30,000 people are now fleeing every week.

The sudden flight is an early sign of a looming refugee crisis, aid agencies warn, and has raised alarms in neighbouring countries and Europe that the violence that has escalated since the start of the withdrawal is already spilling across the country's borders.

"Afghanistan is on the brink of another humanitarian crisis," Babar Baloch, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said earlier this month. "A failure to reach a peace agree-

ment in Afghanistan and stem the current violence will lead to further displacement."

The sudden exodus harks back to earlier periods of heightened unrest: Millions poured out of Afghanistan in the years after the Soviets invaded in 1979. A decade later, more fled as the Soviets withdrew and the country fell into civil war. The exodus continued when the Taliban came to power in 1996.

Afghans currently account for one of the world's largest populations of refugees and asylum seekers — around 3 million people — and represents the second highest number of asylum claims in Europe, after Syria.

Now the country is at the

precipice of another bloody chapter, but the new outpouring of Afghans comes as attitudes toward migrants have hardened around the world.

After forging a repatriation deal in 2016 to stem migration from war-afflicted countries, Europe has deported tens of thousands of Afghan migrants. Hundreds of thousands more are being forced back by Turkey as well as by neighbouring Pakistan and Iran, which together host around 90 per cent of displaced Afghans worldwide and have deported a record number of Afghans in recent years.

Coronavirus restrictions have also made legal and illegal migration more difficult. **NYT**

9 ECONOMY

TO PROMOTE STARTUPS AND LOCAL MANUFACTURING

India-suited, low cost mobile products: IT Min contest seeks ideas for prototype

AASHISH ARYAN & AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

AIMING TO improve indigenous designing of electronic equipment which is more suited to uses for domestic customers, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has invited local companies and innovators to design and submit ideas for products used with mobile phones such as low cost power bank, wireless chargers, blue-tooth speakers, among others.

Apart from cash prizes of up to Rs 25,000 for best design and prototype, the Ministry will also help winners secure funds for scaling the production of best electronic products from prototype to assembly lines, an IT

EXPLAINED

Showcasing local talent, fostering competition

THROUGH THE design competition, the IT Ministry also wants to showcase the development of indigenous talent that has developed over the last five years in the mobile manufacturing and allied components space. The Ministry will pitch the successful prototypes for production within local companies so as to augment and foster healthy competition in this space.

Ministry official said.

"There is a need to develop quality, low cost products which are used with mobile handsets so that they are more suited to Indian needs. Say, a smart light

system, which is for now mostly imported and is sometimes not suited as per domestic voltage and wattage situations," the official added.

The design competition is the

latest in a series of awards, incentives and funds announced by the Central government as well as the IT Ministry for the promotion of startups and local manufacturing.

Earlier in January, the government had announced setting up of a Rs 1,000-crore seed fund for startups, called Startup India Seed Fund, aimed at helping startups with the initial capital for growth and operations. It was preceded by another fund launched in August 2020, which aimed to identify 300 startups which would be provided seed fund of up to Rs 25 lakh.

Apart from the IT Ministry, the Finance Ministry, along with IT Ministry's MyGovIndia platform, too has announced a contest to crowdsourcing the name, tagline and logo of the new Development Financial Institution (DFI).

"Name, tagline and logo should represent the intent behind setting up of the Development Financial Institution and be a clear marker of what it will/can do. It should in effect be like a visual signature, easy to recall and pronounce," the details posted on MyGov website stated.

Cash prizes of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh have been kept as first, second and third prize for categories of name, tagline and logo. The contest, for which the last date is August 15, has already received 1972 applications.

The setting up of a Development Financial Institution was announced in the Budget for 2021-22. Both Houses of Parliament passed the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Bill 2021 in March.

NTPC Q1 profit up 27.3%

Net profit of ₹3,145.6 crore recorded in June quarter

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, JULY 31

NTPC LTD, the country's largest power generator with an installed capacity of 66,885 MW, on Saturday posted a net profit of Rs 3,145.63 crore for the June quarter of FY22 as against Rs 2,470.16 crore in the same period a year ago, registering an increase of 27.35 per cent.

The total income for the quarter was Rs 26,802.25 crore as against Rs 24,021.00 crore in Q1 of the previous year, registering an increase of 11.58 per cent. NTPC group has recorded gross power generation of 85.81 billion units (BU) as against 67.94 BU during the previous quarter of last year.

On a standalone basis, the gross generation of the state-run generator for Q1 of FY22 was 71.75 BU as against 60.19 BU in the same quarter of last year.

Coal stations achieved a plant load factor (PLF) of 69.68 per cent as compared to the

85.81 BILLION UNITS OF GROSS GENERATION

NTPC GROUP has recorded gross power generation of 85.81 billion units (BU) as against 67.94 BU over the year-ago quarter. On a standalone basis, gross generation for Q1FY22 was 71.75 BU over 60.19 BU in the same quarter of last year



File

national average of 58.50 per cent, with an availability factor of 93.68 per cent.

Revenue from operations for the quarter ended June included Rs 903.62 crore (Rs 880.97 crore last year) on account of sale of energy through trading.

The company is executing a hydro power project in Uttarakhand, where all the clearances were accorded. A case was filed in the Supreme Court after the natural disaster in the state in June 2013 to review whether the various existing and ongoing hy-

dro projects have contributed to environmental degradation.

The Supreme Court, in 2014, ordered that no further construction should be undertaken in the projects under consideration until further orders, which included NTPC's said hydro project.

As part of the proceedings, the SC is examining to allow a few projects all of which have clearances, which included the project of NTPC where work has stopped. Aggregate cost incurred on this project till this June is Rs 164.13 crore (Rs 163.86 crore last year).

RBI WATCH FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Rising streak halts: Fall in currency assets pulls forex reserves down

RESERVES DECLINE BY \$1.581 BILLION		
	July 16 2021	July 23 2021
Foreign currency assets	568,748	567,628
Gold	37,333	36,884
SDRs	1,548	1,546
Reserve tranche position	5,100	5,091
Total	612,730	611,149

in million US dollars; source: Reserve Bank of India/Reuters

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

THE FOREX reserves, after a steady run of gains over the past few weeks, posted a decline of \$1.581 billion to slide to \$611.149 billion for the week ended July 23, data from the RBI showed. In the previous week ended July 16, the foreign exchange—or forex—reserves had reached a record high of \$612.730 billion, having risen by \$835 million.

During the reporting week, the fall in the reserves was primarily on account of a decline in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves, according to weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released on Friday.

FCAs declined by \$1.12 billion to \$567.628 billion.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were down by \$449 million to \$36.884 billion in the reporting week.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) dipped by \$3 million at \$1.546 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF also declined by \$9 million to \$5.091 billion in the reporting week, as per the data.

A rise in forex reserves could augur well for the government as well as the Reserve Bank in managing the nation's external and internal financial issues at a time when the economy is facing Covid stress once again and it could have an impact on the GDP growth rate for the ongoing fiscal as states are announcing lockdowns.

It is a big cushion in the event of any crisis on the economic front and enough to cover India's import bill for a year. An increase in the forex kitty could also help strengthen the rupee against the US dollar.

Higher reserves could bring confidence to markets that a country can meet its external obligations, demonstrate the backing of domestic currency by external assets, assist the government in meeting its foreign exchange needs and external debt obligations, and maintain a reserve for national disasters or emergencies.

'Skill gaps slowing productivity, feel 7 in 10 professionals'

About 70% employees feel there is a gap between the skills they have and the skills they actually need to best perform their job, as per a SCIKKEY Market Network study



SHARE OF SURVEYED RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL SKILL GAPS RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS:

Loss of productivity	70%
Higher rate of staff turnover	33%
Lower morale	40%
Inferior work quality	45%
Inability to expand business	40%
Loss of revenue	35%

70% Professionals who feel that their organisation either already faces skill shortage or is likely to encounter it as a major challenge in the next 2-3 years

10% Respondents who feel the knowledge they acquired in their educational institutions has proved to be useful in what they do today

35% Employees who feel skill shortage can lead to loss of revenue for businesses

45% Employees who said skill shortage leads to poor quality of work

EMPLOYEE-ORGANISATION CORRELATION:

The study said that employee growth and productivity has a direct correlation to organisational growth and productivity

Source: SCIKKEY Market Network/PTI

Why is it important: According to the study, the increased skill gap that plagued the job market has left a huge impact and brought in challenges for both employers and employees

PV sales could recover to 2019 levels, but third wave still a worry

VIKRAM CHAUDHARY
NEW DELHI, JULY 31

GOING BY the auto sales in the first six months of calendar year 2021, auto analysts forecast that the passenger vehicle (PV) segment could touch the CY19 levels by the end of this year.

Even if that happens, it would not be right to say that PV sales have returned to health as calendar year 2019 wasn't a great year for the industry—PV sales in that year had declined 12 per cent to 29,36,839 units, from the all-time high of 33,49,386 units in CY18.

Even as PV sales plummeted to 88,045 units in May 2021 due to the Covid-19 second wave, the overall January-June 2021 sales were 14,30,184 units, a lakh units below the 15,28,233 sold in January-June 2019. Som Kapoor,

partner, automotive sector, EY India, said he is cautiously optimistic whether or not PV sales can match CY19 levels. "The optimism stems from the fact that CY19 sales were low. Also, there is some pent-up demand right now, especially in urban markets, and so matching 2019 levels may not be difficult."

"But I am also cautious because the Covid-19 second wave has hit closer to home, and many households ended up spending a lot of healthcare, so the willingness to spend on discretionary items such as PVs is lesser this

year. On top of that, people are anticipating a third wave. Instead of buying a car, they may want to save cash," he added. The PV sales forecast trend for CY21 by IHS Markit points to the fact that in July-December 2021 PV sales could beat 2019 levels.

Gaurav Vangaal, associate director, IHS Markit, said, "While trends indicate that H2CY21 sales would be better than both in 2020 and 2019, the global semiconductor shortage could be a challenge to the supply side, and a possible third wave could be a risk to the demand side." **FE**

IL&FS floats RFP to sell arm's stake in Shendra Green Energy

New Delhi: IL&FS has floated a request for proposal for selling stake of IL&FS Energy Development Company Ltd (IEDCL) in Shendra Green Energy. "Shendra Green Energy Ltd (SGEL), a 100 per cent subsidiary of IEDCL, is inviting Request for Proposals (RFP) for potential stake sell of IEDCL stake in SGEL," a public notice said.

SGEL, previously known as GAPS Power & Infrastructure, is a 13-mega watt biomass-based power plant incorporated on February 18, 2005 and situated at Shendra MIDC, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

IEDCL had acquired 100 per cent stake in GAPS from GMS Group in December 2010. **ENS**

Airbus production plans expose strategy rift with engine makers

REUTERS
PARIS, JULY 31

A RIFT between Airbus and engine makers over plans for higher jet output blotted strong aerospace earnings this week, with worries over the supply chain's industrial capacity masking a deeper tug of war over contrasting business strategies.

With travel demand snapping back in key US and Chinese markets, Airbus wants to almost double jet production in a few years as it capitalises on a bulging order book for new jets and the recent woes of embattled US rival Boeing.

In May, it issued a mix of firm targets and scenarios that could

lift narrowbody output to 75 jets a month by 2025 from 40 now, and 60 before the COVID pandemic, read more

That has rattled engine makers and others who fear the world's largest planemaker will upset their own recovery by flooding markets with new jets too quickly, forcing existing ones straight into retirement rather than their repair shops.

"The engine makers look at the production plans and see them displacing older airplanes that are still profitable for them," said Teal Group analyst Richard Aboulafia. The standoff could accelerate efforts by engine makers to adapt their service-dependent business models by charging more upfront for their engines, Aboulafia said.

BRIEFLY

AEO-T1 entities

New Delhi: The CBIC said Saturday it has done away with renewal of Authorised Economic Operator certification for AEO-T1 entities.

New Adani arm

New Delhi: Adani Enterprises said Saturday it has incorporated Adani Petrochemicals Ltd (APL) as a wholly-owned arm to oversee the refineries, petrochemicals complexes and specialty chemicals businesses.

SBI offers waiver

New Delhi: State Bank of India has announced waiving processing fee on home loans till August-end. **PTI**

COMPANY SEES SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT AHEAD, NOT TO MENTION COSTS FROM HIRING AND TRAINING STAFF

Amid slowing sales growth, Amazon needs more warehouses

JEFFREY DASTIN & DANIELLE KAYE
WASHINGTON, JULY 31

AMAZON.COM INC needs to spend billions of dollars to expand its warehouse and delivery system, adding pressure to its shares which dropped 7 per cent on Friday after it forecast lower sales growth.

The company is racing to meet demand even though shoppers are venturing more outside the home and it is returning to a pre-lockdown sales trajectory.

Last year, Amazon turned goods away from warehouses

for weeks because it lacked the people and space to fulfill them safely.

It still is playing catch-up, said Andrea Leigh, vice president at e-commerce optimization firm Ideoclick, who formerly worked at Amazon.

"Amazon is running out of available space," she said. "They're also running out of labor."

Even after the company almost doubled its warehouse and transportation network in the prior 18 months, it sees significant investment ahead, not to mention costs from hiring and training staff. A tight labor market forced Amazon to raise



The company is racing to meet demand even though shoppers are venturing more outside the home and it is returning to a pre-lockdown sales trajectory. *Reuters file*

wages early and add signing bonuses to attract full and part-time employees, who now number 1,335,000.

It also has to get back on track to its goal of one-day Prime deliveries in the United States.

"This is all part of a multi-year investment cycle for us," Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky told analysts Thursday.

For shareholders, Amazon's spending to capture long-term gains at the risk of near-term profit is in a playbook it has deployed over 27 years, sometimes testing the patience of Wall Street.

"Slower growth & increased investments make the shares more challenging," JPMorgan analysts said in a note.

Amazon plans to add 517 facilities to its global distribution infrastructure in the coming years, according to logistics consultancy MWPVL International. That is 176 million square feet on top of the 402 million it already has.

Amazon did not comment on the accuracy of those estimates, but said its infrastructure rollout already is ramping up. Over the past 12 months, capital expenditures and equipment leases jumped 74 per cent to \$54.5 billion, almost

double the growth rate a year ago.

That may be par for the course for a \$1.7 trillion retailer that wants to get bigger. Credit Suisse analysts said Amazon's ramp-up in capital expenditures is more important than its revenue guidance.

"The consumer responds positively to higher/faster service levels," they said in a note.

"Unit volume accelerated following one day Prime delivery launch in 2019 – we believe it is only a matter of time before we see a similar impact as Amazon deploys fulfillment assets into the Holidays," the analysts added. **REUTERS**



ARTS etc

Matter of Motifs

How the classic weave of the jamdani, a craft form unique to the subcontinent, has West Bengal and Dhaka in knots



BOOKS

- Extract from Coomi Kapoor's *The Tatas, Freddie Mercury & Other Bawas*
- Remembering Italian writer and publisher Roberto Calasso

STILL LIFE WITH

How artists are exploring our essential relationship with food to defy prejudice, mark history and nurture connections

RASAM ON THE SIDE

Vandana Kalra

AT THE 2017 Art Basel, the usually well-turned-out Subodh Gupta was seen walking up and down the aisles wearing an apron. Instead of mixing paints or setting up his sculptures, he was grinding spices, chopping vegetables and stirring a wok in a makeshift kitchen he had designed as part of an installation made of second-hand utensils. Alluding to India's economic and social transformations, the enormous structure also housed a dining table. Here, Gupta served his seven-course feast of authentic Indian cuisine, including dishes from Bihar, to over 20 guests in four daily sittings, for a week. The spread included lentil soup, bhel puri, khichdi and saffron yogurt layered with slices of banana. The guests ate, chatted and made new friends.

"Food might have become politicised and factors such as religion and ethnicity might have come to influence it, but it certainly has the ability to bring people together. That is what I want to do. People sitting on the same table don't just eat, they have conversations. The performances encourage inclusivity in times of growing intolerance. People are not mere spectators, they are part of the act," says Gupta, 57.

The project "Cooking the World" at Art Basel was not his first meal-based installation/performance. Known for his passion for cooking, the Gurugram-based artist has rustled up meals at prestigious venues the world over, from the 2013 Performa in New York to his 2018 solo at Monnaie de Paris. "If I hadn't become an artist, I would have been a chef," he says.

Among the numerous ways that COVID-19 has altered our lives, the virus has also changed our relationship with food. While we watched migrants walking back to their villages for want of adequate food, on the other end, visuals of sourdough bread and pasta in our homes filled social media. If some turned to healthier eating, others perfected recipes. At a time when regional cuisines have become hyper-global, the world connected as much through food as through its visuals. While Gupta gathered hearty comments for his recipes of one-pot mutton curry and Vietnamese pancake posted on social media, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, introduced the series "Cooking with Artists" in April 2020. It has New York-based artist Anicka Yi preparing lemon pasta with parmesan, peas and fresh herbs, and architect-artist Hugh Hayden baking the perfect cornbread pudding.

"As we remain homebound and isolated, food is a great source of comfort. It binds us to one another and our ancestors, allowing us to draw upon a wealth of family recipes and stories associated with it. Through the past year, people have time and again turned towards the simple joy of cooking or eating," says Kamini Sawhney, director of Bengaluru-based Museum of Art & Photography. An ongoing online exhibition by the museum showcases the association between food and art through over 15 pieces from its collection. Each exhibit has an accompanying text on the primary ingredient and a recipe from a team member, bringing together nostalgia, culinary practices and their love for art. One such is an 18th-century cotton robe from the Coromandel Coast with pomegranate motifs, which we are told is one of the oldest fruits in the world that entered India from Iran. If a 1980 untitled KG Subramanyan canvas has a woman inspecting a fish basket, Jogen Chowdhury's 1977 ink and pastel

much-brighter *Still Life with Blue Enamel Coffeepot, Earthenware and Fruit* (1888), inspired by his time in Paris. Spanish artist Salvador Dali, on the other hand, brought surrealism into his studio and kitchen, as is evident in his 1973-cookbook *Les Dinners de Gala*. For an artist who famously stated "My work is my diary", Cubist master Pablo Picasso's Spanish-French palate often reflected in his palette too — from a basket of fruits in *Fruit Bowl with Fruit* (1918) to a delectable lobster set on a platter in *Le Homard* (1945).

In India, Raja Ravi Varma, the father of modern Indian art, turned to European realism for his depictions dominated by Indian mythological deities and royalty. He, too, painted a fruit basket in oil, *The Maharashtrian Lady*. The more sensual



Fruit-I has the capsicum as its protagonist.

The intersections of food and art are centuries old, even as the latter has served as a register of the times. The Romans not just hosted grand banquets but also painted them; the walls of the Egyptian pyramids have drawings of food for the afterlife of the deceased; the Bhimbetka cave paintings in Madhya Pradesh have hunting scenes and picking of wild plants for food. In medieval times, as trade grew and new lands were conquered, images of food symbolised prosperity in Western art. For instance, Italian Renaissance artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo painted portraits by piecing together exotic fruits, vegetables and flowers, and 17th-century still life Flemish artist Joris van Son depicted decorative fruit baskets.

The tradition of food as an object in still life continued into modern times. Dutch post-impressionist Vincent van Gogh's *The Potato Eaters* (1885), of farmers consuming a modest meal of potatoes and coffee, is a stark contrast to the

much-brighter *Still Life with Blue Enamel Coffeepot, Earthenware and Fruit* (1888), inspired by his time in Paris. Spanish artist Salvador Dali, on the other hand, brought surrealism into his studio and kitchen, as is evident in his 1973-cookbook *Les Dinners de Gala*. For an artist who famously stated "My work is my diary", Cubist master Pablo Picasso's Spanish-French palate often reflected in his palette too — from a basket of fruits in *Fruit Bowl with Fruit* (1918) to a delectable lobster set on a platter in *Le Homard* (1945).

In India, Raja Ravi Varma, the father of modern Indian art, turned to European realism for his depictions dominated by Indian mythological deities and royalty. He, too, painted a fruit basket in oil, *The Maharashtrian Lady*. The more sensual



MUSEUM OF ART & PHOTOGRAPH, BENGALURU



THUKRAL AND TAGRA STUDIO



SWANOOP JOHN

PLATE IT UP
(Clockwise from left) Chitra, Barahmusa-1 series, *Madan Meena* 2020, Silkscreen and natural pigments on paper; Vipin Dhanurdharan's community kitchen at the 2018-19 Kochi Muziris Biennale; an exhibit from Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra's exhibition 'Farmer is a Wrestler'

Woman Holding a Fruit has a young woman with a lemon in one hand.

It's not just the presence but also the absence of food that caught the attention of Indian artists. One of FN Souza's most recognised early paintings is *Indian Family* (1947), with a family seated with empty bowls, while the table inside offers a lavish spread of fruits, fish and wine. The Bengal famine of the 1940s has been documented for posterity in the artwork of Somnath Hore and Chittaprosad Bhattacharya. The latter produced disturbing sketches of the undernourished in his book *Hungry Bengal*, copies of which were destroyed by the British. In one of the captions, Bhattacharya writes: "The dacoits carried away the half-boiled rice, the last two pieces of brassware that the unfortunate victims still had, and even the dirty rags they had on them. The woman had nothing to cover herself with for two days."

Despite being a marker of inequality, food, with all its associations, can also champion cultural exchange. "Food can be a method to create a community through pleasure and thereby form a fulcrum to start conversations," says artist Anita Dube, 62. In her 1996 sculpture performance *Oh Tiersias* at Eicher Gallery in Delhi, she barbecued 101 ceramic eyes on a skewer and served it to guests as mementos. "It symbolised the violent gaze," says Dube. As the curator of the 2018-19 Kochi Muziris Biennale, she included multiple projects around food. Chefs

Anumitra Ghosh Dastidar (Goa) and Prima Kurien (New Delhi) explored indigenous rice strains of India under the banner of Edible Archives, while Kochi-based artist Vipin Dhanurdharan had his community kitchen at Aspinwall House, where visitors were encouraged to prepare, serve and share meals. Dhanurdharan's inspiration was a community feast, organised by social reformer Sahodaran Ayyappan, at Cherai, Kerala, in 1917, to counter untouchability. "The kitchen was a space where everyone was equal, a miniature model of a utopian world that I imagine and is much needed now," says Dhanurdharan, 32.

IN THE ACT
Subodh Gupta's project 'Cooking the World' at Art Basel 2017, where he served a seven-course feast of Indian food

Delving deeper into the imposition of cultural hierarchies and divisiveness through food traditions, meanwhile, is the art practice of half-Dalit, half-English artist Rajyashri Goody. Since 2017, she has been collecting extracts from Dalit literature that relate to food and has been compiling "recipes" into booklets. It has writers describing hunger, the process of sourcing ingredients and even the experience of eating. *Manusmriti*, the Hindu law book, which condemns inter-caste interactions, is an active ingredient, in the form of paper pulp, in works such as *Joothan* (2018) and *Lal Bhaaji* (2019).

Meanwhile, the series "Caste and Food" on the Instagram handle The Big Fat Bao underlines caste-based culinary dynamics. The illustrations complement the text, showing how several traditional Dalit recipes are telling of discrimination — from the use of meat, goat, cow, buffalo and sheep blood solidified to prepare *rakti*, the main ingredient of the dish Lakuti, to the consumption of millet as a cheaper alternative to wheat. "Caste, gender, and environment constantly intersect at the site of food. There is an intricate relationship between food and caste economy in addition to the construct of division of labour," says the introduction to the series.

The personal becomes political in artist Pushpamala N's work. She pays tribute to her friend and neighbour, journalist-activist Gauri Lankesh, who was killed in 2017. Her performance, titled *Gauri Lankesh's Urgent Saaru*, involved preparing rasam from a recipe shared by Lankesh. Dressed as Mother India — ostensibly addressing accusations of Lankesh being described as "anti-National" — the Bengaluru-based artist served rasam to the audience, in memoriam.

More recently, several artworks have pointed to the pronounced irony of debt-ridden farmers dying of hunger. "If no one does farming, what will everyone eat," questions Paradsinga-based artist Shweta Bhattad, 37. She works with the very source of food: seeds. Packed in seed balls, a variety is shipped on order in packaging designed by Bhattad with her team, under the label Gram Art Project.

Artist duo Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra's travelling exhibition "Farmer is a Wrestler" (2019) was centred on the ongoing agrarian crisis. For its opening, the duo opted for a simple menu with items made from *bajra*. "It seemed most appropriate not to have a typical opening that is celebratory. We worked with groups that are researching lost recipes of the regions," says Tagra. The duo has incorporated food in their practice to address multiple issues, including building connections between the history of grains and evolution of society in "Bread, Circuses & You" (2019).

They are currently working on two games, one that discusses the overwhelming odds of women in Indian agriculture and another dedicated to climate change and food. "We need to question what we are eating and how climate change affects every strata of society. How urgent is it to act? Where will the next meal come from?" says Tagra.

Kolkata



PHOTOS: EXPRESS ARCHIVE

EXTRACT

Counting on Community

A new book offers a ringside view into the lives and contributions of some of India’s most well-known Parsis

Coomi Kapoor

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI JR was Pallonji Sr’s sixth child. He was only 13 years old when he was moved enough by his father’s business struggles to decide he would help out... In 1900, Shapoorji dropped out of school after completing the fifth grade to help his father...

The family’s early contracts were mostly military and PWD projects. In 1919, Pallonji Sr bequeathed his business to his son...

By working with experienced British army engineers and government civil engineers, Shapoorji gained invaluable technical experience and knowledge...

By 1943, Shapoorji Jr formed his own company, Shapoorji Pallonji Construction Private Limited (SPCL) and moved into the big league. He focused on building smart residential flats and houses... It was considered prestigious to live in an apartment block or building constructed by SPCL, recognised for its high standards.

In his career stretching over seven decades, Shapoorji’s firm played a major role in shaping Bombay’s skyline. Many of Bombay’s landmark buildings were executed by SPCL. These include the RBI building, the Bombay Central Station, the Cricket Club of India, the Taj Hotel extension, the Oberoi Hotel, the Shanmukhananda Hall, TIFR, the Homi Bhabha Auditorium, the Breach Candy Hospital and the Bombay World Towers... Despite his success, for most of his life, the master-builder operated out of a dark, Dickensian office on the first floor of Meadow Street, in the heart of the Fort commercial dis-

trict... Shapoorji was a shrewd judge of men, and tended to keep his engineers on their toes by paying surprise visits to the site. Since he was not proficient in English, his secretary Mr Dumasia translated his instructions for the benefit of his staff. While most of his senior engineers were Parsis, his accountants were Gujarati and maintained their ledgers in the language. Every engineer reported to him daily and, without the help of any notes, he knew from memory which material supplies and labour requirements had to be dispatched to different sites. An employee recalls his long, frayed coat that had numerous pockets in which he kept wads of cash, his chequebook and spectacles. Shapoorji was not a lavish paymaster but inspired loyalty in his team all the same. He looked after staff members and their families when they found themselves in difficulties, and was always there for marriages or funerals – more a father-figure than boss...

The construction czar also formed an investment company titled ‘Sterling Investment Corporation’ (SIC). Its subsequent and continued success showed that he truly had the Midas touch...

Take, for example, Shapoorji’s investment in the Bollywood film, *Mughal-e-Azam*. Movie production is considered a high-risk business, and many have lost fortunes in film ventures just to rub shoulders with the glamorous stars. Shapoorji’s connection with Bollywood came about by chance. The script for the now iconic movie... was presented to him as payment for a debt... When another film producer approached Shapoorji for the script, he sensed that it might be valuable and decided to finance the film himself. Director K. Asif hired three famous stars, Dilip Kumar, Madhubala and Prithviraj Kapoor, to play the



MAXIMUM CITY

(Top) Shapoorji Pallonji’s firm played a major role in shaping the skyline of what was then Bombay; Pallonji Shapoorji Mistry

lead roles. Asif was, however, a perfectionist, and Shapoorji, uncharacteristically, kept shelling out more money to fund this perfectionism... just as the film was nearing completion, the technology for colour cinema came to India and the director insisted that a part of the film be reshot in colour. By this time, the cost of the movie, Rs 15 million, had mounted to 10 times the normal budget of a Hindi film and had taken eight years to make. Shapoorji’s son, Pallonji Mistry, was convinced his father was wasting good money in a bid to recover a dead loss. Some suspected it was the beauty of Madhubala that had dazzled Shapoorji, others felt it was his fascination with Prithviraj Kapoor’s Urdu dialogue, which Shapoorji recited enthusiastically while climbing the stairs, that made the normally shrewd and cautious businessman throw money at a white elephant. Of course, all the doomsday predictions came to naught. *Mughal-e-Azam*, the first Indian film to be shot partly in colour, turned out to be one of Bollywood’s biggest gross earners of all time.



Parsis now claim that they abjured proselytising in India because this was a condition of their pact with the Sanjan ruler. But the Parsis probably ended the practice of selectively admitting non-Parsi to the fold only by the 17th century. By the 19th century, the community had developed a great sense of pride in its exclusivity and identity, and objected entirely to the admission of any outsiders...

Even in the 21st century, the schism is still wide open. On the one side are cosmopolitan and affluent modern-thinking Parsis, whether Indians or emigrants, many of whom have family members who have married out of the community but would like future generations to be brought up as Parsis and have navjotes... First and second-generation Parsi migrants to the West are conscious that if their offspring do not meet fellow Parsis, they are likely to distance

themselves from their culture forever...

But not so in the parochial *baugs* of Mumbai, where the middle classes live in insulated, rent-controlled Parsi housing colonies. For a girl from such an upbringing to marry outside the community still carries a terrible social stigma. As a consequence, there are more spinsters per capita among Parsis than any other community in India.

There is still a stubborn streak of fundamentalism in a sizeable section of this otherwise liberal and highly educated community. This is in part because of the charisma of the conservative, persuasive lay preacher and scholar, Khojeste Mistree. Most priests may have been unwilling to bend with the times, but their influence was limited, particularly as there were always exceptions in the clergy who were agreeable to performing religious ceremonies for those who did not fall within the strict definition of a Parsi. But Mistree succeeded in impressing his strict standards on the Parsi laity for a considerable time.

Mistree, who grew up in Pune, was drawn to mysticism since childhood. He travelled to England at the age of 16... and stayed on in the country to study accountancy. He qualified as a chartered accountant and was on the brink of making partner in a firm when he became interested in religion. He was admitted to Oxford University to study Zoroastrianism...

Mistree returned to Mumbai in 1980 and was invited to give a series of talks on Zoroastrianism. The auditoriums were packed with Parsis, young and old, keen to learn more about the faith in which they were brought up but about which they knew very little. Mistree became something of a religious pop star, thrilling the crowds with his displays of oratory and learning... His resistance to any concession to changing times coupled with his fast-growing clout made him a highly divisive figure in the community.

(Extracted with permission from Westland Non-fiction)

‘A Parsi could belong to any religion or none’

Journalist and writer Coomi Kapoor on feminist Parsi women and lines of separation in the community

Tanushree Ghosh

Behedins (your father’s side) are distinct from Athornans (your mother’s side). What lines divide these two sections of the community, known for its absence of caste divisions?

There’s no divide in the community on the Behedin-Athornan question. Parsis pride themselves for having no caste system, unlike most of India. The only distinction between Athornan and Behedin is whether you can be ordained a priest, there’s no other discrimination whatsoever. Centuries ago, the priestly class may not have married their daughters to Behedins, but as early as 1777, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet sided with the laity (the Behedins) on this. Today, even the most conservative Athornan family would be thrilled if their daughter married a Behedin rather than a non-Parsi. The only caste practice is of the corpse bearers, Nassessalars, who, even to this day, remain confined to their homes in the *dakhma* (Tower of Silence) compound and can’t mix with other Parsis. That this archaic inhuman practice continues in the 21st century is disgraceful in a progressive community.

Zoroastrian women cannot become priests, they are excommunicated if they marry outside the community and their children can’t enter the fire temple. In 2017, Goolrukh Gupta moved the Supreme Court challenging these. Have things changed since?



TASHITOBGAYAL

TIME KEEPER

Coomi Kapoor

Indian Zoroastrian women cannot become priests, Iranian Zoroastrians allow it. This excommunication word is not in our religion. Some conservatives decree that Zoroastrian women cannot enter the fire temple or perform funerary rites if they marry out of the religion. But, there’s a difference of opinion on this. Most accept that Zoroastrian women who marry under the Special Marriage Act should be allowed to enter any place of worship. Gupta was one such case. She wanted a guarantee that she be permitted to be present for her parents’ last rites. The Supreme Court conceded her specific demand but, I think, referred the larger religious question to a special bench. Many make the mistake of assuming that the term Parsi and Zoroastrianism are synonymous. Parsis refer to the descendants of those who fled Persia and migrated to India because of religious persecution many centuries ago. A Parsi could belong to any religion or none. I’m a Zoroastrian because I believe in the teachings of the prophet: truth, good thoughts, words and deeds. Yes, reform is coming slowly and some priests are willing to carry out navjote (induction ceremony) for the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis. No one has ever barred my entry from any Zoroastrian religious place.

Would you call Bhikhajji Cama the first Parsi feminist? As a supporter of VD Savarkar, would she be seen as a Hindutva sympathiser today? Why do you draw a parallel between her and the Communist activist Kobad Ghandy in the book?

Madame Cama is one of India’s most inspiring feminists, but she is not the first Parsi feminist. Parsi women had a tradition of empowerment and emancipation. Motlibai Wadia, a widow, was running a huge business trading and shipping empire in the late 19th century. Jerbai Wadia, (Bombay Dyeing chairman and Jinnah’s grandson) Nusli Wadia’s great-grandmother, pioneered the concept of subsidised housing colonies for poor Parsis and cut her own sons out of the administration of the charities.

Bhikhajji was certainly an ardent supporter of Savarkar and his financier. She even took the blame for him in the Nasik Conspiracy Case (1909). Kobad agreed with me that there were similarities between him and Bhikhajji even if they supported completely opposite ideologies. He felt, ‘Patriotism was the guiding force for both of us’. While Bhikhajji’s family disowned her, Kobad’s parents were proud of him and gave up their corporate lifestyle for a simple life.

Did the Parsis continue to enjoy privileges after Independence? Unlike the Islamic community, they have never been considered a threat by the majority community.

At Independence, the Congress offered them a special reservation in Parliament as was granted to the Anglo Indians because of their small population. The Parsis declined saying they’d prefer to stand on their own merit. Maybe, we aren’t seen as a threat to other religions since we ourselves don’t want anyone to convert to ours. The PM (Narendra Modi) does have a soft corner for Parsis. As the Gujarat chief minister, he pushed for declaring Udvada a heritage site.

OBITUARY

The Storyteller of the Gods

Remembering Italian writer and publisher Roberto Calasso, who passed away on July 28

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

THE MODERN world, it is said, banished stories of the gods. But can the gods be banished? Or, in banishing gods, what exactly are we banishing? What do we lose when the gods are banished? For one thing, the gods gave us great stories. Or, perhaps, one can put it the other way around as well: wherever there is a great story, you can see a trace of the gods at play, the fugitive presence of forces we do not fully understand.

Roberto Calasso, one of the most encyclopaedic, playful, lyrical and acute minds to have ever graced the world of letters,

spent his lifetime telling stories with unmatched grace, narrative tension and precision. He recreated entire civilisations through retelling what we now call “mythology.” *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (1988) light up the Greek gods. *Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India* (1998), told the story of Indian gods from the exuberant dawn of creation to the moment where even gods begin to find existence heavy. And other brilliant books on Kafka, on Baudelaire, told the story of the reappearance of the gods in the modern world.

But Calasso was not just telling stories. He was also telling a story about stories. And the big story is that we have forgotten the real

stories. He knew the real mystery is not that there is an “I” who can observe the world, make it an object of knowledge and render it transparent. The real mystery is the self-awareness of this I, watching itself watch the world – the mystery of consciousness. There is, as he put it, the “gaze that perceives the world” and a gaze that “contemplates the gaze directed at the world.” It is this dual constitution of the mind, the connection between the Self (*atman*) and the I (*aham*) that we seek to banish. From the Vedas to the Upanishads, to the Buddha, in an unbroken continuity the great mystery is the sensation of thinking. In the Vedas, the point is not just the sacrifice, it is the attention. Not for nothing Calasso reminds us in the philologically brilliant *Ardor* (2014) does the word “*manasa*” occur 116 times in the Rig Veda, but even in that most hermetic of texts that only a Calasso would dare deeply engage with – *The Satapatha Brahmana* – the point is not the ritual or the gesture: it is thinking the gesture even as you perform it. These stories were about the ways in which the realm of the mind and the realm of the tangible world communicate. This is what we banished in banishing the stories about the gods. No wonder, he could write, that “For those born in India, certain words, certain forms, certain objects may seem familiar, like an invincible atavism. But they are scattered fragments of a dream whose story has been blotted out.”



ROBERTO CALASSO

1941-2021

When we banished the Gods, we banished consciousness; we now operate only with a simulacrum of it.

But the West also has its own story of forgetting, or rather disguising. It banished the

gods, it waged a war on idolatry, and did away with sacrifice as a form of superstition. But this was only an illusion. In *The Ruin of Kasch* (1983), that literally discusses everything, he reminded us that by banishing the gods, all we did was replace it with the idolatry of society. It is the social that now becomes our new supernatural, that which contains everything, the mysterious force that operates upon us. Even nature becomes a thing within society. We might think this is the harbinger of liberation: after all, if everything is social, we can create and recreate it. But this turns out to be the fatal delusion. For one thing, the social is as mysterious as the gods were; for another, this promises a world without limits. (French sociologist Émile) Durkheim’s reduction of religion to the social revealed more than he realised. Explaining everything, as modern thought does, in the name of the social, does not explain anything: it just sets up a new god in its place. Yes, the modern world liberates the individual in a certain sense, but only to reabsorb her, and make her the instrument of the social. After all, what are we if we don’t contribute to the GDP or the glory of the nation – gods that can suppress individuality.

The stories of the gods, whether of the Greeks, of the Mahabharata or of the Old Testament, were aware of sacrifice. Someone or something was always being put up as an offering. But the stories never let

you forget that. In *The Celestial Hunter* (2016), Calasso reminds us of how humans set themselves apart from animals and became predators. He has a provocative story. In the Jewish and Islamic consumption of meat, you are never allowed to forget that the meat comes through an act of violence. Modern industrial consumption of meat anesthetises the animals, perhaps to convince both the animals and us that there is no violence involved in this consumption. The stories of sacrifice were a form of hyper-awareness of the fragility and violence by which order is often constituted, the world maintained in balance. In some ways, our modern stories or myths seek to convince us that we moderns don’t sacrifice, even as we are constantly mobilised and slaughtered for abstract causes. In telling old stories, he illuminated the new world.

The combination of playful rapture, philological precision, philosophical insight, uncanny connections and the sheer storytelling power of Calasso’s work is unmatched. He was warm, accessible, incredibly funny, as only really serious people can be. His favourite line was a sentence from *Yoga Vasistha*: “The world is like an impression left by the telling of a story.” Calasso always made an impression.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta is contributing editor, *The Indian Express*



MEDAL TALLY

COUNTRY	G	S	B	TOTAL
1. China	21	13	12	46
2. Japan	17	05	08	30
3. United States	16	17	13	46
4. ROC*	11	15	11	37
5. Australia	10	03	14	27
6. Great Britain	08	09	11	28
7. South Korea	05	04	07	16
8. France	04	09	06	19
9. Netherlands	04	07	05	16
10. New Zealand	04	03	03	10
60. India	00	01	00	01

*Russian Olympic Committee

HIGHLIGHT REEL

INDIA

ARCHERY
Atanu Das lost 4-6 to Takaharu Furukawa of Japan in the men's individual 1/8 eliminations

ATHLETICS
M. Sreesankar did not qualify for the final, finishing 25th overall with a 7.69m jump

BADMINTON
In the women's singles semifinal, PV Sindhu lost 18-21, 12-21 to Tai Tzu Ying (TPE).

BOXING
Amit Panghal lost 1-4 to Yuberjen Martinez of Colombia in the 52kg pre-quarterfinal. Pooja Rani lost the women's quarterfinal 0-5 to Chinese Li Qian.

EQUESTRIAN
Fouaad Mirza and his horse Seigneur Medcott finished the dressage stage 9th overall.

HOCKEY
Indian women beat South Africa 4-3. Ireland's loss to Great Britain later in the day helped India qualify for the quarterfinals.

SAILING
KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar finished 17th and did not qualify for the medal race.

SHOOTING
Anjum Moudgil and Tejaswini Sawant failed to qualify for the 50m Rifle 3 Positions final, finishing 15th 33rd respectively

INTERNATIONAL ATHLETICS
SURPRISE MIXED RELAY WIN FOR POLAND; USA THIRD
A surprise came in the Olympic debut of the mixed 4x400 relay where Poland won the gold and Alexander Ogando of the Dominican Republic sprawled over the line to edge out the Americans for second. The US which was disqualified from the preliminary heat the night before only to be reinstated after an appeal settled for bronze.

TENNIS
INJURED DJOKOVIC LEAVES GAMES EMPTY-HANDED
World No.1 Novak Djokovic has left the Olympics empty-handed for a third-straight Games after a shoulder injury forced him out of mixed doubles bronze medal match. The Serbian, who earlier lost to Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta in the singles bronze medal match in which he threw his racket into the stands and smashed another, has failed to earn a place on the podium at the London, Rio and now Tokyo Olympics. Djokovic lost to Germany's Alexander Zverev on Friday in the singles semifinals

BASKETBALL
USA BASKETBALL TEAM IN THE QUARTERFINALS
The U.S. lost its first two exhibition games of the summer in Las Vegas, dropped its opening game at these Olympics and had a difficult time shaking free of the Czech Republic in their group-play finale. None of that matters now. The Americans are headed to the quarterfinals at the Tokyo Games — with a shot of being good as gold once again. Jayson Tatum scored 27 points, Kevin Durant added 23 and set a pair of USA Basketball men's Olympic records, and the U.S. defeated the Czechs 119-84 on Saturday to clinch a berth in the knockout stage.



Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah points to the clock as she crosses the finish line ahead of teammates Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce (lane 5) and Shericka Jackson (lane 7) in the women's 100 metre final.

JAMAICAN RUN

Elaine Thompson-Herah clocks 10.61 seconds for 2nd fastest women's 100 metres ever; Caribbean nation makes a clean sweep

EDDIE PELLIS
TOKYO, JULY 31

STREAKING DOWN the track, with only six steps to go until she reached the finish line, Elaine Thompson-Herah stuck out her left arm and started pointing at the clock. She knew she had the win. It was only a matter of what else would come with it. With a time of 10.61 seconds, the latest in the long string of Jamaican speed stars defended her Olympic title in the 100 meters Saturday. She broke a 33-year-old Olympic record held by none other than Florence Griffith Joyner. And, as a more-than-fitting bonus, she revisited a debate first triggered by the fastest Jamaican of all — Usain Bolt.

Yes, the gold medal and Flo Jo's venerable record were great. But the question could not be avoided: Just as people wondered what Bolt might have given up when he hot-dogged his way to the finish line in his first Olympic victory in 2008, how much faster might Thompson-Herah have gone had she run hard for 100 metres, not just 90 or 95? "I think I could have gone faster if I wasn't pointing and celebrating, really," she said. "But to show you that there's more in store. Hopefully, one day I can unleash that time." As it was, she finished the night as the second-fastest woman in history. Flo Jo's world record of 10.49 is only mark left to beat. As it was, she beat a two-time Olympic champion, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, and joined bronze medalist Shericka Jackson in the first Jamaican podium sweep at the Olympics since 2008.

"The legacy we have in Jamaica is incredible," Fraser-Pryce said. Yet, with all that swirling around, it felt more than fitting that Thompson-Herah was drawing comparisons to Bolt, who redefined the sprint game with his antics, to say nothing of his speed, and left a hole in track and field after he left the Olympic scene in 2016 with nine victories in nine sprints.

In the first win, the 6-foot-5 speedster was well clear of the field in Beijing when he brought his hands out to his sides and started his celebration before he reached the finish line. His time, 9.69, was a world record. But the world went crazy — even then-IOC President Jacques Rogge leveled a sharp critique of the move — wondering what might have been had Bolt busted it through the line. He answered the question a year later when he lowered the mark to 9.58 at the world championships in Berlin.

Thompson-Herah thinks she'll get another chance like that, too. "I have more years," she said. "I'm just 29. I'm not 30. I'm not 40. I'm still working."

On a sultry night in the near-empty Olympic Stadium in Tokyo, Thompson-Herah started pulling away from her top rival, Fraser-Pryce, early. By the 50-meter mark, it was a runaway. She won by 13 seconds, or about three body lengths, a veritable rout in a 100-meter final.

Jackson, a bronze medalist five years ago at 400 meters who moved to the shorter



SECOND ONLY TO GRIFFITH-JOYNER

Elaine Thompson-Herah finished in 10.61 seconds, breaking Florence Griffith-Joyner's Olympic record by a hundredth of a second. On the all-time list, she is only behind Griffith-Joyner's world record of 10.49.



HOW THEY FINISHED IN TOKYO

POS.	ATHLETE	TIME	COUNTRY
1.	Elaine Thompson-Herah	10.61s	JAM
2.	Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce	10.74	JAM
3.	Shericka Jackson	10.76	JAM
4.	Marie-Josée Ta Lou	10.91	CIV
5.	Ajla Del Ponte	10.97	SUI
6.	Mujinga KamBundji	10.99	SUI
7.	Teahna Daniels	11.02	USA
8.	Daryll Neita	11.12	GBR

FASTEST EVER

POS.	ATHLETE	COUNTRY	TIME	YEAR
1.	Florence Griffith-Joyner	USA	10.49s	1988
2.	Elaine Thompson-Herah	JAM	10.61	2021
3.	Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce	JAM	10.63	2021
4.	Carmelita Jeter	USA	10.64	2009
5.	Marion Jones	USA	10.65	1998

sprints for the Tokyo Olympics, took bronze in this one, as well, in 10.76.

Flo Jo's old mark of 10.62 came at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, not long after she ran the 10.49 on a breezy day in Indianapolis. For decades, debate has raged about whether the marks are legit, and the longer they held up, the more amazing the records seem.

No Olympic champion had even broken 10.7 since Flo Jo back in the day. Thompson-Herah insisted she wasn't sure she would either as she approached the finish. But, she said, "I knew that I won."

Thompson-Herah is now firmly entrenched in a long list of Jamaican women track stars — a string some say is even more impressive than the men's. The Caribbean island was putting greats such as Merlene Ottey and Veronica Campbell-Brown out there long before Fraser-Pryce moved to cen-

ter stage as a brace-faced 21-year-old in Beijing. She finished on top in that 2008 race, and this second-place finish completed her Olympic set in the 100, where she now has two golds ('08, '12), this silver and a bronze from 2016.

But she looked a bit stunned to finish that far behind her main rival on a track that has produced fast times over the first two days of competition. After seeing Thompson-Herah hotdog it to the finish, the woman they call "Mommy Rocket" — she has a 3-year-old son, Zyon — stared, stone-faced, at the scoreboard and stood on the track with her hands on her hips. **AP**

Sunday's Finals: 7 am: Women's shotput; **3:40 pm:** Men's high jump; **4:45 pm:** Women's triple jump; **6:20 pm:** Men's 100 metres.

Kamalpreet enters final, on course for a big throw

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JULY 31

DISCUS THROWER Kamalpreet Kaur, 25, proved she could compete against the best in the world by being just one of the two automatic qualifiers to advance to the final. Kamalpreet, who rewrote the national record in June to signal her form was peaking at the right time, advanced with a throw of 64 metres.

USA's Valarie Allman was the only other automatic qualifier with 66.42 metres. The other Indian in the fray, the veteran Seema Punia didn't live up to expectations. She fouled her first throw, and then produced 60.57 metres and 58.93 metres to bow out of the competition.

The cut off for the automatic qualification was 64 metres. Kamalpreet started off with 60.29m and then improved it to 63.97m before her third throw of 64m. The remaining 10 throwers qualified as the next best performers behind Allman and Kamalpreet.

The final on Monday won't be a cakewalk because the field is full of experienced throwers who know how to turn the pressure on by producing big throws when it matters the most. Defending Olympic champion Sandra Perkovic and defending world champion Yaimie Perez will be in the final. There are six women who have a personal best which is better than Kamalpreet's 66.59 metres.

Kamalpreet's progress has been phenomenal. She threw 65.06m during the Federation Cup in March to become the first Indian to breach the 65m mark. Then in June, she bettered her own national record with a throw of 66.59m during the fourth leg of the Indian Grand Prix. She had the sixth best throw in the world going into the Olympic Games. 2021 leader Jorinde van Klinken of Netherlands failed to make the final round cut with a modest throw of 61.15m.

She has a season's best of 70.22m while Allman is second best this year at 70.01m.

Kamalpreet, a six-foot one-inch tall athlete from Kabarwala village in Punjab's Sri Muktsar Sahib district, has come a long way since first trying her hand at shot put before switching to the discus.

"I have only one target on my mind and that is to give my best and hit close to 69m. I am not thinking about a medal or anything at the moment," Kamalpreet had said before leaving for the Olympics.

Family of farmers

The phones at the Kaur household in Sri Muktsar Sahib haven't stopped ringing even for a moment since morning. Kamalpreet Kaur's parents have been swamped with calls after their daughter earned a sport in the final of the discus throw event. The parents, both farmers, aren't aware about the



Kamalpreet Kaur was one of the two automatic qualifiers.

CHAMPION CLASS IN FINAL

Though Cuba's silver medallist from the 2019 World Championships Denia Caballero and world leader Jorinde Van Klinken (70.22m) didn't advance, India's Kamalpreet Kaur will be up against a world class and experienced field in the women's discus throw final on August 2.

TWO-TIME OLY CHAMP

Sandra Perkovic, the two-time defending champion from Croatia, qualified with the third longest distance (63.75m) but her season's best is 68.31 metres. If she can find her range, Perkovic could make it a hat-trick of gold medals. The 31-year-old has enough experience to deliver on the big stage.

WORLD CHAMPION

Cuba's Yaimie Perez had only the seventh best throw in the qualifying round yet she has been better than Perkovic this year with a season best of 68.99m. She has a personal best of 69.39m.

YOUNG STAR

At 24, Shadae Lawrence is one of the younger throwers. She was 2nd last in qualifying but has a season best and personal best of 67.05 metres.

finer details of their daughter's sport but that hasn't stopped them from supporting her endeavours. Mother Rajinder Kaur recalls how they would spend sleepless nights when their daughter travelled alone in crowded train compartments for various meets across the country. "She would tell me some athletes would fly down for the competition in South India. But our situation was so bad that we could not even imagine buying flight tickets for my daughter. We could not travel with her because the crops need to be tended to."

CRICKET & GEOPOLITICS: KASHMIR PREMIER LEAGUE

Those part of PoK T20 league can't play or work in India: BCCI

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
KOLKATA, JULY 31

THE BOARD of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has drawn the line for those expected to be associated with the upcoming league in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The Indian board has informally told cricket boards around the world that those participating in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)-promoted Kashmir Premier League (KPL), that commences on August 6, would be barred from playing in leagues in India or having any commercial connection with the BCCI. "While asking the boards not to allow their players to take part in the Kashmir league, we have informed them that in case they do, they can't be part of any cricketing activity in India. We have done this keeping national interest in mind," a top BCCI official told *The Sunday Express*. According to the official, this is just an

extension of the Indian government's policy. "We have no problems with those playing the Pakistan Super League (PSL) but this is a league in PoK. We are toeing our government's line."

This follows former South Africa batsman Herschelle Gibbs accusing the BCCI of "trying to prevent" him from participating in the inaugural KPL in PoK and subsequent comments by PCB officials and those associated with the Pakistan government. Gibbs had said the Indian board was bringing "their political agenda into the equation".

PCB unhappy

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has expressed its "displeasure" on the issue. In a tweet on Saturday, Gibbs wrote: "Completely unnecessary of the @BCCI to bring their political agenda with Pakistan into the equation and trying to prevent me playing in the @kpl_20. Also threatening me saying they won't allow me entry into



Former South Africa batsman Herschelle Gibbs accused the BCCI of threatening to stop him from working in Indian cricket if he joined KPL franchise Overseas Warriors.

"While asking the boards not to allow their players to take part in the Kashmir league, we have informed them that in case they do, they can't be part of any cricketing activity in India."
BCCI OFFICIAL

India for any cricket related work. Ludicrous."

Gibbs, one of the accused in the 2000 match-fixing scandal, has signed up to play for KPL franchise Overseas Warriors.

Following a statement from the PCB, there's a chance that this could snowball into a conflict between the two cricket boards in a T20 World Cup year, with India and Pakistan set to face each other at the ICC event.

"The PCB considers that the BCCI has brought the game into disrepute by issuing warnings to multiple ICC Members to stop their retired cricketers from featuring in the

Kashmir Premier League, further threatening they will not be allowed entry into India for cricket-related work," the PCB said in its statement.

"Such conduct from the BCCI is completely unacceptable, against the preamble of the Spirit of Cricket and sets a dangerous precedent, which can neither be tolerated nor ignored," it said.

The PCB has also spoken about raising the matter "at the appropriate ICC forum".

Tough talking

The BCCI dismissed the PCB statement, with an Indian cricket board official telling this paper: "We are not bothered about what statement PCB is putting out. We are mindful of Indian cricket and India."

Pakistani politicians, however, have waded into the issue.

In a tweet tagging Gibbs, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry alleged that "the pressure on Herschelle Gibbs not to

participate in the Kashmir League" was a "continuation" of an old Indian practice. Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, too, reacted to Gibbs' post. "Depriving young Kashmiri players of the opportunity to share (a) dressing room with big names in cricket is unfortunate and regrettable," he tweeted.

The first KPL edition is scheduled to be held with six teams from August 6 to 16. Five of those teams will represent cities in PoK, while the sixth franchise, Overseas Warriors, is reserved for overseas Kashmiris.

Akram, Afridi involved

The tournament's launch saw a mix of politicians and former Pakistan cricketers. Wasim Akram is KPL's founding vice-president, while Shahid Afridi is the league's brand ambassador.

Inzamam-ul-Haq, Shoaib Malik, Saeed Ajmal, Umar Gul and Abdul Razzaq were present at the launch as well.

EYE ON INDIA

BADMINTON
WOMEN'S SINGLES
(MEDAL ALERT)
PV Sindhu vs He Bingjiao (CHN)
Bronze medal match: 5:00 PM
World No 7 PV Sindhu is just a win away from winning her second Olympic medal, a bronze this time, to add to her silver from Rio 2016. Only China's He Bing Jiao stands in the way.

BOXING
MEN'S SUPER-HEAVYWEIGHT
(MEDAL ALERT)
Satish Kumar vs Bakhodir Jalolov (UZB)
Quarterfinal: 9:36 AM
Satish Kumar is a win away from ensuring India a medal in his event, but he will have to overcome World No 1 Bakhodir Jalolov. There are also reports emerging that Kumar might be injured.

EQUESTRIAN
EVENTING CROSS COUNTRY
Fouaad Mirza
4:15 AM

GOLF
MEN'S EVENT
Anirban Lahiri and Udayan Mane
4:00 AM

HOCKEY
MEN'S QUARTERFINAL
India vs Great Britain
5:30 PM
History beckons the Indian men's hockey team at the Olympics as the eight-time champions look to book a last four berth in the quadrennial sporting extravaganza after a hiatus of 41 years when they take on Great Britain in the quarterfinal on Sunday. Going by head-to-head record in the Olympics, there is hardly anything to differentiate between the two sides. India has played Great Britain eight times in the Olympics, winning four and losing as many games. In terms of goals scored in the Olympics against their next opponents, India holds an edge having scored 18 and conceded 13.

INTERNATIONAL
SWIMMING
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S 4X100 MEDLEY RELAY FINAL
7:45 AM and 8:06 AM
In the final two events of swimming, the discipline's medal tally race heats up with the United States ahead of Australia by just one gold medal. The Aussies will be led by Kyle Chalmers in the men's relay.

TENNIS
MEN'S SINGLES
Alexander Zverev (GER) vs Karen Khachanov (ROC)
Gold medal match: Around 1:30 PM
There will be a new Olympic champion in tennis, but not the one that was expected. Alexander Zverev played a solid game to come from behind and beat Novak Djokovic, while Russia's Karen Khachanov beat David Schwarzman to get to the summit clash.

SWIMMING
DRESSLE STILL HAS A SHOT AT FIVE GOLD MEDALS
Caleb Dressle is favored to win his third individual gold in the 50meter freestyle Sunday before nine days of competition ends with the mens 4x100 medley relay, an event the Americans have never lost at the Olympics. Dressles' quest for six golds ended with a US flop in the 4x100 mixed medley relay.

EXPRESS AT OLYMPICS



MIHIR VASA VDA
TOKYO, JULY 31

Tai Tzu-Ying calmly walked to the centre of the court, folded her hands and bowed, as if asking PV Sindhu's permission before making her a prop in her magic show.
That little act of politeness was all Sindhu would get from her Taiwanese opponent. For the next 40 minutes, Sindhu was pushed from one corner of the court to another, lunging and bending in her desperate attempts to stay alive in points. But when Tai is in a mood like she was in during the Tokyo Olympics women's singles semi-final on Saturday, very few are able to resist.

The look on Sindhu's face after her 21-18 21-12 defeat to Tai conceded as much. The Rio Olympics silver medallist will face another tough, and vastly different, opponent in China's He Bingjiao for a bronze medal on Sunday. But the harder task will be to shrug off Saturday's defeat.

"This is a bit sad," Sindhu said. "I will have to recover from this and come back stronger tomorrow."

As she did against Akane Yamaguchi in her quarterfinal, Sindhu started from the slower side of the court, trying to use the drift in her favour in the opening game. It worked for a while as Tai did not find her range immediately. But at no point was she troubled. Then she decided to turn the screws on the Indian.

She didn't nail Sindhu by deftness alone: Tai unleashed powerful smashes (one travelled as fast as 358kmph), tangled up the Indian with a few fierce body shots, and produced outrageous drop shots - like she did when the score was 16-14 in Sindhu's favour. Tai pretended to hit a powerful return from the backcourt, changing her grip mid-air and caressing the shuttle such that it kissed the net while dropping at Sindhu's forecourt.

Until that moment, Sindhu felt like she hadn't allowed Tai to get into any sort of a rhythm. But the East Asian shuttler was only getting warmed up. The next point was a flat smash to Sindhu's backhand, followed by a classic drop on the forehand to make it 16-16.

She operated on a different gear and won

five of the next seven points.

It was tough to be in Sindhu's shoes with her 27-year-old opponent showcasing supernatural powers. At 4-3 to Sindhu in the second game, Tai played a drop shot to the forecourt, Sindhu retrieved it with a long lunge and quickly returned to the centre to receive the next - this sequence played out thrice in a row and the fourth time, Tai waited till the very last second to flick it to the opposite side. Sindhu made a desperate attempt but couldn't reach.

On other occasions she would push the Indian to the rear-court on the backhand, and then unleash sharp, dipping shots close to the net. The constant running around was energy-sapping just to watch, although Sindhu would later say she didn't feel like she was being pushed around so much.

"It wasn't like I was running around a lot. Yes, she has deceptive strokes and maybe because of her anticipation that impression might have been created," Sindhu said.

The points would start with a loud "hi-yaah!" by Tai, which would echo around the Musashino Forest Sport Plaza, and end with a wondrous "haai" from the commentators, who could barely believe the quality of stroke-play from the Taiwanese player.

The manner in which Tai played on Saturday was a display of everything joyous in badminton. The daring of even trying unimaginable, audacious shots is common to Tai, meaning that she is often the poet of her own fall during matches. Not something she's unaware of.

"Most mistakes are from my side," she said when asked about a string of past quarterfinal exits. "That's why I am under pressure. It's from within."

Both players agreed that Tai had almost no errors in the match on Saturday. "She didn't make many unforced errors," Sindhu said. Tai added: "That's why I was not under pressure in this match as I used to be. I felt a little paranoid in the middle of the competition but for this game, I didn't feel as paranoid."

There were hardly any long rallies or lofted shots. Tai kept the rallies short and quick, stabbing at the shuttle, which made it tougher for Sindhu to lift. The Indian struggled to dominate the rallies, having been preoccupied simply by finding ways to return, and could not stage a comeback.

Tai finished the match in the same way she controlled the 71 points played to that point. She drew to the front and then hit a sharp dipping shot to the backcourt. Formalities complete, she walked to the centre of the court, folded hands, bowed and calmly walked off.

Panghal goes down to a relentless attack by Martinez in opening bout

GAURAV BHATT
JULY 31

FOR FOUR years, Amit Panghal had been the surest thing in Indian boxing. A run during which he earned a full set of medals at the Asian championships, an Asiad gold, a Commonwealth Games silver and a historic silver at the Worlds. Then he ran into a freight train from Colombia.

The top-seeded flyweight at the Tokyo Olympics was ousted in his first bout, beaten 4-1 by Rio silver medallist Yuberjen Martinez.

It wasn't a typical Panghal defeat. The 25-year-old didn't lose a close decision because he started slow and left it too late. He took the first round 4-1, which, with the open scoring, is half the bout won.

The 5'2 Indian did not lose to a natural fly-weight either. Martinez, though three inches taller, has had to move up to 52kg like Panghal. The 29-year-old is yet to win a major medal in

the weight class. His Olympic and Pan American silvers, and the bronze at Worlds, came in the 49kg category.

Instead, it was the relentless pressure from Martinez that left Panghal battered and breathless. The Indian corner, who had never seen their boxer "so tired" in a bout, had observed the Colombian's handiwork up close before.

No secrets

In the run-up to the Olympics, Panghal had sparred with Martinez at the team's training base in Assisi, Italy, where the Colombian often similarly overwhelmed Panghal. So, when Panghal drew Martinez as his opening opponent in Tokyo, the team knew what to expect.

"This bout was not difficult to plan tactically," high-performance director Santiago Nieva tells *The Indian Express*. "You have a boxer that comes forward all the time. There is no point matching him with the same tactic. The plan was to keep him at a distance because he was not difficult to hit. You needed to stick and



PV Sindhu was made to reach and stretch out for every return by a magical display from Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu-Ying. *PTI*

Sindhu's next hurdle - a leftie from China

SHIVANI NAIK
JULY 31

AFTER DOORS to the Olympic final were shut on her by Tai Tzu Ying, PV Sindhu now needs to hastily regroup, slay the demons in her mind to get herself the bronze medal.

There's a million reasons to wake up on Sunday shiny, new and bright. India doesn't have a surfeit of medals, so PV Sindhu really can't afford to mope over lost gold when there's a bronze to be won. She has a chance to become the first Indian woman with two Olympic medals.

Her last match of the Rio Olympics was a loss. Here there's a win to be taken to sign off. She's done this as a 19-year-old at CWG in Glasgow - bounced back from a torrid loss to Michelle Li to fight for a medal, and register on the medal tally. The bronze might look duller than gold, but 20 years down, she might look back at Tokyo fondly, and India could move a few notches higher on the tally.

More than anything, Sindhu has worked



Bingjiao stands in between her and the podium.

The Chinese southpaw starts as favourite. She's the first left-hander Sindhu will come across in this tournament. He BJ is playing at breakneck speed, is fitter than ever, and her unsettlingly powerful smashes left Nozomi Okuhara in tears after the quarters. She rarely lets slip a chokehold on opponents when she's leading in a set and is particularly tough to rattle when not in acute discomfort (read: Marin getting stuck into her, noisily).

The Chinese are here to make up for the lost 2016 podium, so they'll not falter in temperament. But Sindhu boasts an enviable

record of seldom having lost to a Chinese at the Majors. A hurting Sindhu, out to prove a point, can channel her beast mode into making good of this second chance.

Speaking at her Hall of Fame induction earlier this year, China's double Games gold medallist Zhang Ning (2004 & 08), the only female shuttler, to twice bag the Olympic title, had correctly picked out Chen Yufei, Tai Tzu Ying, Sindhu (and wrongly Nozomi Okuhara) for Tokyo Last 4. This was before the draws even came out. Sindhu ought to know that the Chinese respect her ability since the 2013 World Championships to spoil their parties, as she mopped up the last domineering generation at back to back World's. With fast shuttles in play, and her confident game not having diminished overnight merely because Tai Tzu Ying was enjoying her sorcery, Sindhu will need to quickly whip up a gameplan to down He BJ.

As score settling goes while her Rio silver reign ends, the task is straightforward for PV Sindhu: there's a left-hander who needs downing, and an Olympic medal is on offer. This is peak Sindhu-terrain.

It was implemented in the opening round. Panghal countered Martinez's blistering pace by sticking-and-moving, scoring and side-stepping. When cornered, he would feint and slip under the counter. He bobbed, weaved and ducked to safety. He also landed — a couple of straight lefts flush on the face — and, at one point, traded shots in an exchange.

Quality over quantity got Panghal the first round. In the next two, Martinez had both quality and quantity. The Indian corner was hoping that their opponent had emptied his gas tank, but the Colombian had gallons to spare. Behind on the scorecards, Martinez, incredibly, upped the volume and pressure.

Ordeal for Indian

Thus began the long punishment for Panghal. He was swarmed and each time he held on to his opponent for some respite, Martinez poured on the bodywork, uppercuts to the torso and multiple liver punches.

"I would have to ask Amit (how much the bodywork took a toll on him) but we all know about the body punches, especially to the liver. It takes all your strength, your stamina, legs away. It knocks the wind out."

The pressure also meant Panghal could never get his biggest weapon going — the looping overhand left. The punch is at its best when Panghal lunges back to create distance, before closing in with a quick, looping shot. With the opponent in his face all the time, there was no distance to create or close. There was no overhand left, nor a straight right to follow it.

Constantly backpedalling and side-stepping against an untiring Martinez, Panghal had nothing to give in the third round.

"In the first round itself, we knew that we needed the second round," says Nieva. "We needed to get three judges (in the second) because we knew the last round we wouldn't win as the Colombian guy has incredible stamina. And it's difficult in the third round when you are tired."



Drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh (R) could be India's main man. *Reuters*

Graham Reid had laid extra emphasis on this aspect during the national camp.

He's improved India's ability to be strong on the ball under pressure and remain patient when the opponents pack their 'D' with defenders, a strategy Britain are likely to adopt.

Eye on defence

After the 7-1 thumping at the hands of

Australia, India have recovered well to win the next three games.

They dished out dominating performances against Argentina and Spain, two tricky opponents, but the defence looked a bit iffy in the other three games, especially against Japan.

Drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh could be India's main man in the match both for his abilities on penalty corners as well as his role in defence.

But it will be the responsibility of the forwards to create penalty corner situations for India, especially since they have looked a bit shy in the attacking third.

The forward line, which lacks experience, has been under scrutiny ever since the team was announced.

And while they've done decently well so far, their task will be cut out against a stubborn British defence.

Ultimately for India, it'll all boil down to whether they can hold their nerve. Reid has shown enough faith in the team's ability to reach the last four, a milestone that has been eluding India for the last four decades.

Against Britain, they have an opportunity to end that dubious streak.

Marijne endures wait before sigh of relief

MIHIR VASA VDA
TOKYO, JULY 31

SJOERD MARIJNE couldn't bear to watch.

As the match between Ireland and Great Britain began, the Dutch coach of the Indian women's team stepped out of his room and went for a stroll around the Games Village, cut off from whatever was transpiring at the Oi Hockey Stadium, 15 minutes away.

India's fate depended on that game. They had done their bit in the morning, a hat-trick by Vandana Katariya and a goal by Neha Goyal ensuring a 4-3 win over South Africa. Now, to qualify for the Olympic quarterfinals, they had to hope that Ireland wouldn't beat Britain.

A win for Ireland would mean they would end the group stage with the same number of points as India — six. But the Irish had a superior goal difference, which would mean the World Cup finalists would progress to the quarterfinals at the expense of Marijne's charges.

"I was walking outside our apartment, couldn't watch it," Marijne told *The Indian Express*. "A few girls too were outside. It was



Indian women's team coach Sjoerd Marijne. *File*

too tense for us to watch calmly."

Unbearable tension

It felt to them like the match went on forever. After walking for a while, Marijne went to the gym. "I did a complete session, the match wouldn't get over! They were playing for what seemed like a very, very long time," he laughs.

Although there would have been a slight urge, Marijne did not even follow the scores online. Instead, he had messaged a couple of

his friends to text him each time Britain scored. He got those messages twice: Britain defeated Ireland 2-0 to guarantee India a place in the last eight. This is the first time India's women's hockey team has reached this far. In 1980, the team finished fourth at the Moscow Olympics but only six teams had competed at those Games, which were boycotted by several countries. In 2016, the only other occasion the women have played at the Olympics, they finished 12th out of 12 teams.

Marijne said he first called his wife and kids and then went to a common room where the rest of the players had already assembled. "My wife and children have been an integral part of this journey. So this moment was important for them as well," he said. "When we met, there were some tears of joy and some of the girls were shouting and screaming in celebration. We are relieved, happy. A lot of hard work has gone into this."

Marijne, though, added it was important for the team to focus on their quarterfinal opponents: three-time Olympic champions Australia, who have been unbeaten in the group stages. Marijne said the team will go into that match with a free mind. "The pressure is on Australia and not on us. We'll be able play freely and that will work for us," he said.