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SARPATTA PARAMBARAI BRINGS NORTH MADRAS' BOXING MEMORIES BACK IN THE RING

While the exact year and origin of when the Parambarai culture in boxing began is unclear, it is said that the Sarpatta Parambarai was one of the first clans of boxing that was formed

TECH

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NAVARASA REVIEW

Some rasas are more palatable than the others in this starring the who's who of Tamil film world

EXPRESS AUDIO

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Casteist slur case: third accused held, CM speaks to hockey player

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 7

DAYS AFTER the family of Indian women's hockey team player Vandana Katariya allegedly faced casteist slurs following India's defeat in a Tokyo Olympics match, the third accused in the case was arrested by the Haridwar police on Saturday on the basis of a tip-off.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami virtually spoke to Vandana and congratulated her for performance at the Olympics. The CM said that Vandana will be

2,700 SUCH MARKETS IN DELHI

All weekly markets to open from Monday: Kejriwal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal announced Saturday that all weekly markets in the city will open from Monday. Trade unions estimate that there are around 2,700 markets in the city.

The markets, which primarily cater to lower-income groups, employ lakhs of small-scale traders and suppliers and register heavy footfall. A wide variety of products ranging from vegetables to garments are sold in these markets.

After the lockdown was lifted, the government had allowed one weekly market to operate per day in each municipal zone. That arrangement has been in place since June 14. Kejriwal announced the decision to allow all markets through a tweet: "These are poor people. Govt is quite concerned about their livelihoods. However, everyone's health and lives are also important. I urge everyone to follow Covid appropriate behaviour after these markets are opened."

The decision comes a day after the meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). Under DDMA guidelines, district authorities are expected to carry out random RT-PCR and rapid tests of vendors as well as customers thronging the markets.

Meanwhile, SDM Vasant Vihar Ankur Prakash Meshram has issued a showcase notice to seven market associations, includ-

Supply low, will take a year to vaccinate all: Delhi Govt

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE ENTIRE adult population of Delhi will not be fully vaccinated until next August at the current rate of vaccine supply by the Centre, according to the Delhi government, which has underlined the need for around 45 lakh doses per month till December to complete the vaccination drive by the end of 2021.

For the month of August, Delhi has been allotted 16,79,660 doses — 14.72 lakh Covishield doses and 2.06 lakh Covaxin doses — by the Union government, which falls far short of the demand, according to the government. It had raised the matter in a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Friday in the presence of representatives of the Centre.

In fact, in September, Delhi needs 60 lakh doses to ensure that its entire adult population is covered by at least one dose so that they become eligible to take the sec-

ond dose by December.

Till Saturday, 51.4 per cent of the adult population have received one dose and 19.42 per cent have received two doses. According to a presentation made by the government, there are 1.5 crore eligible vaccine beneficiaries in the city, necessitating 3 crore doses to administer two doses. So far, the Centre has allotted 1.01 crore doses to Delhi, of which 93.76 lakh were administered till August 5. This does not include vaccinations administered at paid private facilities. At the DDMA meeting, the government presented two scenarios — one envisages 45 lakh doses per month till December and the other examines the situation if the current pace of vaccine allotment continues.

"Scenario 1 — to complete two doses of all eligible beneficiaries by December, 2021, around 45 lakh doses are required every month. Scenario 2 — at present rate of vaccine supply, it will take till July/August 2022 to complete the two-dose vaccination of all 18+ years beneficiaries," according to the presentation.

initially, the market had been shut due to violations of Covid-19 curbs. Market associations had said that they were unable to follow protocol due to the presence of several unauthorised vendors. Association heads said the process of issuing identity cards is underway.

The notice, issued on August 6, states that in a meeting on July 19, the markets had been asked to issue the identity cards, failing which they would have to follow an odd-even scheme. This includes Sarojini Nagar main market, Babu market, Sarojini Nagar mini-market, Thareja street vendors, high court relief vendors, grocery shops in the area and tharas, including mochi thara and press thara. A total of 851 shops function in these markets.

"And whereas, despite giving ample amount of time & relaxations as requested by the associations, till date only one market association has issued i-cards to its members & submitted compliance; Therefore, the president/general secretary of the remaining market associations are hereby required to show cause within 3 days of this notice, as to why they should not be made to follow odd-even operations for their shops, as suggested by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest). The reply should reach the office of the undersigned by Monday, August 9, 5 pm," the order said.

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FROM PAGE ONE

Hope & hunger

No one encapsulated this better than silver-medal winning wrestler Ravi Dahiya, who was so distraught at not winning the gold that at one point, he offered, half-jokingly, his medal to a reporter who merely requested to see it. "I have to live with the fact that I have silver," he said.

It wasn't just him. Boxer Lovlina Borgohain shed a tear for winning "only" a bronze. PV Sindhu, the only woman to win two Olympic medals, said as much: she didn't know whether she should be sad at missing out on another Olympic final or be happy that she had one more shot at a medal.

Another enduring image, perhaps, would be that of goalkeeper Savita Punia who sobbed on the pitch after losing the bronze medal playoff to Britain. It didn't matter to her that the hockey team had already overachieved by reaching that far despite being one of the most underprepared. Indeed, heading into Tokyo, her hockey team hadn't played a competitive match since November 2019 and half-a-dozen players had got infected with Covid-19 during the second wave. And they weren't alone. The second wave had wrecked the preparations of almost the entire Indian contingent.

But the government, federations and private not-for-profit companies made sure the elite medal prospects did not suffer a lot. Sample this: Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu was sent to the USA almost overnight just as the second wave was starting to wreak havoc. She stayed there until the Olympics.

Wrestler Bajrang Punia, too, stayed in Russia to prepare for the Games. The entire shooting team was airlifted to Croatia to ensure their preparations weren't affected. Some, who were infected with Covid, battled it out in their own ways. Aditi Ashok, the golfer who fell agonisingly short of a podium finish, noticed her strength getting considerably sapped post-Covid, which affected the range of her shots, especially from the tee. Still, through sheer grit, she challenged the world's best golfers.

Even Chopra was a desperate man just four months ago. An injury had robbed India's newest Olympic gold medalist of competition for the whole of 2019. When he recovered last year, the pandemic struck and another year had gone waste, a situation that persisted until the middle of this year following the second wave.

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So, he made an appeal. "Mujhe competitions ki bahut zyada zaroorat hai (I desperately need competitions)," he had said. Once again the demand was met — before moving to Tokyo, he got to train and compete in France, Sweden and Finland.

On Saturday, Chopra looked in perfect shape. He won the gold when javelin throw is considered to be at its peak given the competition. His field included one of the best throwers of all time, Germany's Johannes Vetter, but Chopra remained unfazed.

It was the same with the hockey team that ended the 41-year wait for an Olympic medal in some style to beat the mighty Germans and win the bronze. Sentimental factors aside, this medal means a lot more to the players as it comes when any of the top eight teams is capable of beating another.

The same was the case with Sindhu, who acknowledged that the Tokyo bronze was tougher than the silver in Rio for two reasons: the expectations placed upon her, and to fight against what is largely considered the golden generation of women's singles badminton.

Sindhu was virtually in a self-imposed exile since the Covid second wave hit — a plight shared by most Indian athletes. This makes the record medal haul even more significant. Chopra did what he did without a proper competition for two years. Imagine how good he could be when Paris comes along in three years. And imagine how hard Dahiya and Lovlina will be training to

change the colour of their medals. Tokyo made it slightly easier for a nation to imagine.

Aditi Ashok Indian out of medal contention after six hours of thrilling stroke-play. Ko didn't miss and, with that, ended Ashok's hopes of a podium finish. "In a regular tournament whether you finish second or fourth it really doesn't matter, no one cares. But, yeah, fourth at an Olympics where they give out three medals kind of sucks," she said.

Ashok's disappointment was natural. But the fact that it went down to the last shot on the final hole of the deciding day, staying in the mix right until the end is credit-worthy in itself. Just imagine: this was a 23-year-old ranked 200th, against World No. 1 Nelly Korda of the US and multiple title winner Ko, standing her ground with a cold-blooded, nerveless performance with no one else but just her mother by her side.

87.58 m, a billion hearts, first athletics medal: Neeraj Chopra makes history

country's illustrious athletes.

Chopra dedicated his medal to all of them, but first and foremost to the legendary Milkha Singh, who passed away recently due to Covid-19 related complications. "First of all, I dedicate my gold medal to Milkha Singh Sir. He had longed to see this day and I hope he had been watching this from the heavens," Chopra said. "Then, to so many others who came close, including PT Usha ma'am. This medal is also for all of them."

Not the biggest or bulkiest of throwers, he relied on speed to generate power in his throws. Second in the starting list for the final, he laid down the gauntlet in a tough field with a massive throw of 87.03 m. "That was our strategy," his coach Klaus Bartonietz said. "We wanted to put pressure on the rest of the field straightaway and the only way we could do that was by throwing big."

It was one of those rare days when everything aligned perfectly for Chopra. He looked calm and relaxed, had a sip of an energy drink just before his turn came and announced his intention. With the second

throw, he went farther, recording 87.58 m. Chopra being way ahead of the field was not the biggest surprise. He had done that during the qualifying round as well, but with the weather a lot clearer but equally humid on Saturday, it was expected that others, including the sport's current biggest star Johannes Vetter, would raise his game.

Vetter was the outright favourite to win gold, having recorded throws of 90-plus metres for fun this year. But he had been having troubles with his technique and had complained about the track being slippery. Vetter didn't look comfortable during the final as well, struggling to get a proper grip on the surface and slipping multiple times. After a first attempt of 82.52 m, he turned over his ankle and slipped during his next throw. His third throw, like the second, was also a foul.

With the world's best javelin thrower in the last 12 months out of the fray, others struggled to come close to Chopra's effort. The next best throw, by Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch, was almost a metre short and the bronze medal winner, Vitezslav Vesely, was a good 2.14 m behind the Indian.

"The plan was just to go after my personal best. I knew if I matched that, I would finish on the podium," Chopra said. He did finish on the podium, on the top too. When he was presented the medal, Chopra held it firmly, planted a kiss and put it around his neck. And as the national anthem played out in this gigantic stadium, he teared up. The only time in the night he seemed overawed.

which he proudly wore to class. So crisp and stately was the *kurti* that his friends began to call him 'Sarpanch', a name that has stuck to him ever since. As Bhim speaks, those around him guffaw loudly.

His uncle Sultan has another story. A young Neeraj had burned the kitchen down while trying to swat away bees that were buzzing over ghee, goes the story. Sultan says Neeraj was an "over-pampered boy" — "He wasn't allowed to do any household chores. We didn't send him to work in the fields. He was the first kid in our family and he was like a doll for us." That kid, yet another story goes, had once tied the tail of a cow in a knot.

Being the eldest child in a joint family of 17 members meant that his doting grandmother guaranteed he got the lion's share of *malai*, *makkhan* and *doodh* (cream, butter, and milk). Neeraj would never say no to another generous helping. He put on a lot of weight, and the family enrolled him at a gym. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The profile of the village will now change, but Neeraj will not fall into the trappings of stardom, says the family. "For us, he will always remain a child. Whenever he comes, we try to make sure that we don't praise him much because we don't want his success to go to his head. Even now if he comes, you'll find him working in the fields," says father Satish. It sometimes takes a village to raise a champion. Now is the time to relish the fruits of labour.

In his message, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat said, "Neeraj Chopra has proved that when there is a will there's a way. He has done the Armed Forces and the nation proud like many other Olympians who have created history in Tokyo 2020. We are confident you will continue to reach greater heights in the years to follow. Your achievement will inspire and motivate other sportspersons to aspire and succeed to bring bigger laurels and greater honour to our nation."

A tweet from Indian Army's Southern Command stated, "Lt Gen JS Nain GOC-IN-C and All Ranks of Southern Command, Indian Army congratulate Subedar Neeraj Chopra of Battle Axe Division on winning Nation's first

ent and hard work is an inspiration to every sportsman, there is a lot more to learn from his composure, humility and sincerity. While Neeraj received majority of his training at the national camps, he has intermittently been trained and coached at the ASI, and has got the required administrative support from here."

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ROAD TO 87.58 M GOLD

- 82.23M:** SAF Games gold medal (2016)
- 86.48M:** World U20 championships first position (2016)
- 87.43M:** Gold at Dubai Diamond League (2018)
- 88.06M:** Gold medal at Asian Games (2018)
- 88.07M:** His personal best, Indian GP (2021)

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3 WEST BENGAL

2 TMC youth leaders 'injured in Tripura attack', party blames BJP

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, AUGUST 7

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS youth leaders Sudip Raha and Jaya Dutta, who are camping in Tripura for organisational activities, were injured on Saturday in an attack allegedly by ruling BJP supporters at Ambassa in Dhulai district, 90 from state capital Agartala.

Speaking to reporters, police said two activists came under attack by unidentified persons at Ambassa and their vehicle was damaged.

Trinamool spokesperson Debangshu Bhattacharya, who was with the youth leaders, said they were attacked by goons supported by the BJP while they were en route to Dhamanagar in North Tripura district.

Claiming that the attack showed the BJP 'desperation', sensing defeat in the 2023 Assembly elections, Debangshu said lethal weapons, along with sticks and stones, were used in the attack.

Things escalated as supporters of both parties enforced a road blockade on National Highway 8, within 500 meters of each other. As the situation turned unruly, police used tear gas cells to disperse the mob.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, Trinamool supporters, led by former MLA Subal Bhowmik, staged a road blockade at Dhamanagar in protest against a purported attack on a party office by BJP supporters.

The convoy of Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, who was returning from an official programme at Dhamanagar, and was supposed to cross in some time had to eventually change route as the protesters refused to budge.

Bhowmik was later arrested along with other TMC supporters.

On the alleged police action on them, Bhowmik told reporters in the evening, "We were protesting the damage to our party office by BJP-backed goons. But we were treated like miscreants. This is very unfortunate."

BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya said his party workers had nothing to do with the attack on Trinamool supporters at Ambassa and neither did they damage any party office.

"Trinamool Congress isn't a threat to us. They don't have the strength to win even a panchayat seat here. We aren't worried about TMC in Tripura," Bhattacharya said.

The Trinamool, which started its political journey in Tripura for the first time in 1999 under the leadership of former CM Sudhir Ranjan Majumder, has seen some swell in rank and file since the party's thumping win in recent West Bengal elections.

BJP: TMC taking political violence to Tripura too

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 7

AN ALLEGED attack on Trinamool Congress activists in Tripura on Saturday drew a mixed response from its political rivals in West Bengal.

While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accused the ruling party of taking political violence to the neighbouring state, the CPM claimed that they have been facing similar attacks from the BJP in Tripura for the last four years.

Trinamool national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee came down heavily on the saffron party for the alleged attack on his party activists, tweeting, "The GOONS of @BJP4Tripura have shown their TRUE COLOURS! This barbaric attack on Trinamool workers reveals the 'GOONDA RAJ' in #Tripura under @BjpBiplab's Govt.!"

BJP state vice-president Joyprakash Majumder said, "Trinamool is spreading the virus of political violence in peaceful Tripura."

CPM leader Sujan Chakraborty said, "In West Bengal, Trinamool attacked Opposition parties, including the BJP. Now, they are facing the heat in Tripura. However, the BJP doesn't want any Opposition parties in states ruled by them."



At a fuel pump during a strike by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) fuel tanker operators, in Kolkata on Saturday. Partha Paul

Tankers' strike withdrawn amid fuel crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, AUGUST 7

THE STRIKE by fuel tankers was withdrawn on Saturday afternoon as the Indian Oil Corp put on hold the new transportation rates amid a crisis at hundreds of filling stations in south Bengal, their association said.

Hundreds of fuel pumps in south Bengal, including Kolkata, ran dry due to the strike that began on Thursday evening, dealers said.

The tankers' association at IOC's Mourigram depot in Howrah, which serves the region, was on strike over the re-

duction in fuel transportation rates as a new tender was floated.

"IOC extended the existing rates so that more negotiations can take place and normal supply can be maintained," West Bengal Tankers' Association's Mourigram unit secretary Rajkumar Chatterjee told PTI.

An IOC spokesperson confirmed that the strike was withdrawn but did not divulge the details of the deal struck with the fuel transporters.

The strike affected around 900-1,000 fuel pumps in the region, impacting public transport, movement of essential supplies and private vehicles, the

dealers said.

The strike was withdrawn at a time the IOC was planning to rush fuel to a few pumps from its Haldia and other depots to meet the demand in Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, Nadia, Howrah, Hooghly and North 24 Parganas — the urban agglomerate.

IOC has fuel depots in Haldia, Durgapur, Mourigram, Malda and Siliguri in the state.

The tankers' association was also protesting against the termination of services of 60 tankers.

"When costs are spiralling, how can IOC slash the fuel transportation rates? They also

terminated services of 60 tankers in their new tender," association secretary Chatterjee said.

"The survival of many people is associated with these tankers," he added.

The IOC spokesperson earlier said that similar tenders were floated even for Siliguri, Durgapur, Haldia and Malda terminals in the last one year.

"Such a tender is floated every five years for the deployment of tank trucks and the last one was floated in 2014. The tender was due since April 2020, which was deferred due to requests from the transporters on account of the pandemic," he said.

749 new Covid cases 15 more die

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 7

THE STATE saw a spike in Covid-19 infections and fatalities, with 749 new cases and 15 deaths in the last 24 hours.

North 24-Parganas district topped the caseload on Saturday, with 97 new infections, while Nadia recorded most deaths at five.

North 24-Parganas trailed Nadia on the death count, at three, followed by two in Hooghly and one each in Jalpaiguri, Purba Medinipur and Howrah.

The number of active cases declined by 15 to 10,585. As many as 791 more patients were cured of the infection on Saturday, taking the overall recoveries to 15,04,326 and the recovery rate to 98.12 percent.

The state has, so far, tested 1,60,45,662 samples, including 45,701 in the last 24 hours.

The number of persons administered vaccines on Saturday stood at 3,91,898, a health department official said, taking the cumulative figure to 3,16,67,239.

As many as 90,18,117 people have received both doses, officials said.

NOTICE
Notice is given to all that my clients 1) Smt. Rupali Chatterjee 2) Smt. Pranali Bhattacharya, 3) Smt. Ruma Bhattacharya, intend to sell land measuring about more or less 01 kata 09 CH. 18 Sq. Ft. with G+2 house at Mouza Shibpur Sheet 10, J.L. No-01, in L.R. Dag No- 240 L.R. Khatian No. - 116 & 279, Under Police Station Shibpur, under Howrah Municipal Corporation, Ward No.- 42, Holding no - 9/1/2 Ramkumar Bhattacharjee Lane, Howrah - 711104, State of West Bengal. Any person having any objection / claim please contact the undersigned within 15 days strictly as advised, otherwise no objection / claim is legal and acceptable.
Pritam Das
Advocate
Mob - 9007553434

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT BILL

States not consulted: Mamata writes to PM

'Bill will hamper interest of the common people if passed'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 7

PROTESTING AGAINST the Centre's move to place the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020 in Parliament, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday alleged that states were not consulted properly regarding it. She also wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to "refrain from initiation of the legislation".

In her letter, she said that if the bill was passed, it would "hamper the interest of the common people".

Banerjee wrote, "Power is too important a sector for such unilateral interferences, especially when 'electricity' as a subject is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India and any legislation on a subject in such a list needs serious prior consultation with the states. In the present case, there has been some tokenism of consultations, but no real exchange of views, which is antithetical to the federal structure of our polity".

She added, "In the name of market reforms, the state will give up its commanding height, state PSUs will become sick and ailing and yet forced to serve areas where no corporate body would focus. Allowing cherry-picking to select private entities



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee; PM Modi

cannot be the goal of public policies, particularly in a strategic sector like power."

The CM also said, "Such an approach would result in concentration of private profit-focused utility players in the lucrative urban-industrial segments, while poor and rural consumers would be left to be tended by public sector DISCOMS."

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 seeks to propose amendments to the Electricity Act 2003. The bill has proposed the setting up of a National Selection Committee instead of a separate selection panel for the appointment of state electricity regulatory commissions (SERCs).

Alleging "sweeping abdication of the state's pre-eminent role in the power sector in favour of unregulated and de-licensed private players", Banerjee wrote, "The avowed objective of the Bill is to provide plural choices to the consumers, even while actually

the Bill will finally end up in profiteering by the new service providers through enhancements in tariffs and every sector of the society will suffer due to increased tariff."

Mamata Banerjee claimed that the bill "basically attacked the root of the federal structure of the country". She wrote, "The reduction of the role of the state public utility bodies, the unchecked enhancement of the role of private corporate bodies, and the curtailment of the authority of the states in the power sector together imply a sinister design, whereby crony capitalism will get nourishment at the cost of the states, the public sector and the common people at large."

Banerjee wrote, "The dilution of the role of the State Electricity Regulatory Commission and the State Distribution Companies implies a political design to demolish state bodies and domestic industries. Direct interference by the Central Government in activities involving distribution will not at all be helpful to take care of the interest of the common people and the States."

She said, "I would like to request you to kindly refrain from the initiation of the legislation and to ensure that broad-based and transparent dialogue on the subject is opened up at the earliest."

Heavy rain continues to lash southern parts of state

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 7

THE FLOOD situation continued to prevail on Saturday in the six southern districts of Bengal, with heavy rain lashing the entire region. Four persons were killed and seven injured in lightning strikes in two districts of Bengal on Saturday.

Sources in the state disaster management department said that two persons died in Hooghly district and two others, including a woman, were killed in Purba

Bardhaman district when lightning struck them. Seven persons from Purba Bardhaman district were injured in similar incidents of lighting, the sources added.

A senior official said, "It has been raining quite consistently since Friday night. In the daytime, the rain had stopped but again started on Saturday evening and that has impacted the situation in the flood-hit districts of the state. We are monitoring the situation and ensuring that there is enough food and relief material for the affected people."



A waterlogged street in Kolkata on Saturday. Expressjy

Mamata to resume district visits with Jhargram trip

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 7

AFTER CLAIMING that the second wave of Covid is under control in Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will resume her district visits by presiding over a programme in tribal-dominated Jhargram to commemorate International Day for World's Indigenous People on Monday. She is also likely to visit a tribal village later in the day.

According to sources, she will either fly to Jhargram or travel by road, depending on weather. A helipad at Jhargram Raj college is being kept ready for her visit.

On Tuesday, Banerjee is scheduled to undertake aerial surveillance of flood-affected districts and hold a meeting with the district administration in Paschim Medinipur.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR
भारतीय अभियंत्रिकी विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, शिवपुर
ভারতীয় প্রকৌশল বিজ্ঞান এবং প্রযুক্তিবিদ্যা প্রতিষ্ঠান, শিবপুর
(An Institute of National Importance under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE
Recruitment directly/on deputation for the post of Senior Medical Officer (01)

Advt. No. RO/AU/21/07 **Date: 08.08.2021**

Applications are invited from the eligible Indian Nationals for recruitment directly / on deputation for the post of Senior Medical Officer (01). For further details please visit the Institute Website: <http://www.iists.ac.in>. The last date of submission of applications is **31.08.2021 up to 04.00 PM**.

Registrar

KISHORE VAIGYANIK PROTSAHAN YOJANA
किशोर वैज्ञानिक प्रोत्साहन योजना
KVPY

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Rank certificates will also be available to an extended list of candidates.

1	Start of online submission of Application	12 th July 2021@ 1700 Hrs.
2	Last date for closing of online Application	25 th August 2021
3	KVPY Aptitude Test	7 th November 2021

For more details please visit: [http:// www.kvpy.iisc.ac.in](http://www.kvpy.iisc.ac.in)
Convener, KVPY, IISc, Bengaluru-560 012

EXPRESS NETWORK

J&J's 1-dose vaccine cleared, will be India's fifth Covid shot

KAUNAIN SHERIFFM
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE DRUG regulator on Saturday granted the American pharma giant Johnson & Johnson emergency use authorisation for its Covid-19 vaccine, paving the way for J&J's Indian subsidiary to introduce in India for commercial use the first single-dose vaccine against infection with the novel coronavirus.

The single-shot vaccine, developed by J&J subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals, has been shown to be 85 per cent effective in preventing severe disease in phase 3 human clinical trials.

This is the second Covid-19 vaccine to be granted emergency use authorisation through the fast-track approval route by the Indian drug regulator.

On April 13, India changed its policy on regulatory approvals for foreign manufacturers to commercially market their Covid-19 vaccine in the country — waiving the pre-condition of phase 2-3 clinical trials for those vaccines that have been granted emergency approvals by regulators in the US, EU, UK, and Japan, and those listed by the WHO.

On June 29, the American biotechnology firm Moderna became the first foreign company to be granted emergency use approval for its mRNA vaccine under the liberalised regulatory regime.

After Saturday's approval, J&J, like Moderna, will not be required to conduct bridging studies in India to establish the safety of the vaccine.

"India expands its vaccine basket! Johnson and Johnson's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine is given approval for Emergency Use in India. Now India has 5 EUA vaccines. This will further boost our nation's collective fight against 'COVID19'," Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya said in a tweet.

The four other vaccines that have been granted emergency use authorisation in India are Serum Institute's Covishield, which is the Indian version of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, Russia's Sputnik V, and Moderna's mRNA vaccine.

"We are pleased to let you know that on 7th August 2021, the Government of India issued Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 single-dose vaccine in India," Johnson & Johnson said in a statement.



The vaccine has been developed by J&J subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals.

The one-shot vaccine, developed by J&J subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals, has been shown to be 85% effective in preventing severe disease in phase 3 human clinical trials

While Saturday's approval paves the way for J&J to bring its vaccine to India, talks with the Indian government continue on the contentious issue of indemnity. Multiple rounds of discussions have taken place with Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J, and the negotiations are now in their final stage.

On July 27, the Centre informed Parliament that a team of officials is in "continuous dialogue" with Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J to discuss and address "various issues including the issue of indemnity".

Globally, pharmaceutical companies have supplied their Covid-19 vaccines only after indemnities have been given against the costs of compensation for severe side effects due to vaccination.

Significantly, in August last year, Hyderabad-based Biological E Limited had entered into an agreement with Janssen Pharmaceutica NV for the creation and enhancement of manufacturing capacities for the single-dose Covid-19 vaccine.

J&J is using its flagship AdVac vaccine platform, which was also used to develop and manufacture Janssen's European Commission-approved Ebola vaccine regimen, and construct its Zika, RSV, and HIV investigational vaccine candidates.

Janssen's AdVac vectors are based on a specific type of adenovirus, which is genetically modified so that it cannot replicate in humans and cause disease.

Uphill climb for pahadi restaurant, name cooks up storm

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 7

A NONDESCRIPT restaurant promising Indian, Chinese, Tandoori and Chaat food, with local recipes on its menu, and the photo of a cherubic child chuckling next to a tandoor steak on its board, is hardly the stuff of haute cuisine. However, in six days of operations, Dehradun to Delhi, 'Pyari Pahadan' has cooked up a storm.

Owner Preeti Maindoliya, protesters argue, has insulted the hill people to "matrashakti (woman power)" with the name of the restaurant. One of the protesters, who allegedly assaulted Maindoliya, has been arrested.

A.B.Tech, Maindoliya, 26, says running a restaurant was her



The restaurant in Dehradun. Express

first dream, and so she decided to pursue it after two years of working as an electronics engineer. She took up an 180 sq ft

space in the Banjarawal area of Dehradun, and named her eatery 'Pyari Pahadan'. The name had always appealed to her as

'Pahadan' was what her classmates from the plains called her in college, she says. Her mother moved from Dhumakot, their village in Pauri Garhwal, hit by migration like many other villages in Uttarakhand, to help her run the restaurant.

But within an hour of the restaurant opening on August 1, a man later identified as Surendra Rawat did a Facebook Live from the site, objecting to the name. Later, he arrived with some women, who allegedly threatened Maindoliya, calling the name an insult to matrashakti and pahadis. "I told them I was also a pahadi, and had been born and brought up in Pauri Garhwal district," says Maindoliya, the daughter of a government teacher.

Soon, she says, she also got

calls on her phone threatening that unless she changed its name the restaurant would be vandalised.

On August 2, Rawat reportedly arrived with Bhawana Pandey and Pramila Rawat, and Maindoliya was assaulted, causing her to pass out. Her mother Neelima filed a complaint at the Patel Nagar Police Station and an FIR was lodged against the three under IPC Sections 354 (assault on a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 506 (criminal intimidation). Surendra Rawat has been arrested and probe is on, Pradeep Rana, Station Officer, Patel Nagar, said.

While Maindoliya says she was told the three were associated with the Uttarakhand

Kranti Dal (UKD), the political outfit issued a statement denying any links and condemning the attack on her. "Bhawana Pandey is not associated with the UKD. Names of some other persons associated with the UKD have appeared in the matter and will be probed. The UKD fully supports the victim and will co-operate in getting the guilty punished," a release by UKD state president Kashi Singh Airy said.

Pandey on her part claims to have fought for Uttarakhand's statehood, and says she is a social worker aspiring to contest the next Assembly elections. Denying raising hands against Maindoliya, she says, "The word pahadan represents women of the hills and it is associated with their honour. The title 'pyari pahadan' is objectionable."



FLOODS IN PRAYAGRAJ

A man rows his boat through a flooded Ganga following heavy monsoon rain in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Saturday. AP

Kerala looks to ensure first dose for all senior citizens by August 15

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUGUST 7

KERALA WILL begin a Covid-19 vaccination drive for those aged above 60 starting Monday to ensure they get at least one shot by August 15.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said at a meeting that the state would directly obtain 20 lakh doses and hand it over to private hospitals, which would be allotted vaccines on the basis of facilities.

He said the drive, which would continue till the end of this month, was also aimed at completing the vaccination of final year degree and post-graduate students as well as teachers of lower and upper primary school teachers.

A large chunk of high school, higher secondary teachers had been already vaccinated as part of inoculating those on recent election duty.

The Chief Minister said business establishments and organisations are free to join hands with private hospitals to ensure shots for their targeted local people.

The bed-ridden would be vaccinated at their homes, as part of ensuring first dose for those aged above 60.

In Kerala, 53 per cent of the eligible population (above the age of 18) have got one dose. Only 22 per cent of them, however, got two shots.

Meanwhile, an expert team



A mega vaccination camp in Thiruvananthapuram last month. PTI/File

deputed by the central government to evaluate the pandemic in Kerala has found that 5,042 persons in Pathanamthitta district who have taken two doses of vaccine have got infected. Of them, 258 had been infected 15 days after their second dose. Four of them, aged above 80, had died.

The figure of those infected after the single dose in the district is 14,974. The committee had conducted the analysis only in Pathanamthitta district.

Health Minister Veena George told the media that the analysis demonstrated the effectiveness of the vaccine. The four people who died of Covid-19 even after vaccination had comorbidity issues.

Others who got infected after vaccination did not develop any serious health issue, the health minister further said.

Over 80 monsoon deaths in Rajasthan

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, AUGUST 7

AS MANY as 80 persons have died and 55 injured so far following heavy monsoon rain in Rajasthan.

Most deaths have been recorded in Bundi (16), followed by state capital Jaipur (15). As many as eight persons have died in Tonk, followed by six in Kota, and four in Sawai Madhopur. Nineteen other districts have recorded 1-3 deaths. Most of the deaths in Jaipur were reported after lightning struck a watch tower near Amer Fort last month, which had led to the death of at least 11 persons.

Additionally, at least 125 animals have died so far. The details were shared by government officials during a presentation before Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot at a meeting of the Disaster Management and Relief Department on Saturday. The CM also announced a sum of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the deceased and Rs 2 lakh to those injured.

Meanwhile, over 150 persons were rescued in Kota's Sangod on Saturday even as Army personnel joined rescue operations in Hadoti region. Among those rescued were teachers and students stuck at a residential school. The opening of gates of Bhimsagar dam had led to flooding in some villages, prompting rescue work.

2 ex-cops convicted for graft

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

OBSERVING THAT they were expected to perform their duty but "turned out to be wolf in sheep's clothing" instead, a Delhi court has sentenced two former police officers to four years' rigorous imprisonment for compromising a gangrape case by demanding a bribe from a businessman. Special Judge Kiran Bansal convicted the accused persons Sahashtra Bahu Yadav, former SHO of Jahangirpuri police station, and Dilip Singh Chauhan, the ASI and initial investigating officer.

"The convicts, being police officials, were expected to do their duty to uphold the law. But far from performing their duty, they turned out to be wolf in sheep's clothing. Despite being educated persons and belonging to uniformed force and respectable society, the convicts demanded and accepted the illegal gratification. The uniform which the convicts adorned should have made them more responsible towards society, but they rather breached the trust, misused their authority/power, and conspired with each other to satisfy their greed," the court said.

They have been sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 3,50,000 each. They were convicted under sections 7/13(i)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and IPC Section 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy).

The two convicts have been accused of conducting a raid at a businessman's house in 2010 and threatening to file a gangrape case against him on the complaint of a woman.

MP rain and flood toll rises to 24

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, AUGUST 7

THE DEATH count in rain-related incidents in flood-ravaged Gwalior and Chambal divisions of Madhya Pradesh increased to 24, officials said on Saturday.

Authorities said that the flood situation is slowly improving and at present "no life-threatening" scenario exists in the region, where rescue and relief work is currently on.

"The death toll in the rain-related incidents in the flood-hit parts of the state has risen to 24. These fatalities were recorded between August 1 and 7," Revenue Secretary Gyaneshwar Patil said.

Till Friday, officials pegged the number of deceased at 12.

The flood situation in the northern part of Madhya Pradesh had taken a serious turn earlier this week, with more than 1,250 villages being affected by the deluge following heavy rain.

Authorities said that the flood situation is slowly improving and at present "no life-threatening" scenario exists in the region, where rescue and relief work is currently on.

"The death toll in the rain-related incidents in the flood-hit parts of the state has risen to 24. These fatalities were recorded between August 1 and 7," Revenue Secretary Gyaneshwar Patil said.

Till Friday, officials pegged the number of deceased at 12.

The flood situation in the northern part of Madhya

58 shifted from Mumbai hospital as LPG tank leaks

SANJANA BHALERAO & YOGESH NAIK
MUMBAI, AUGUST 7

AT LEAST 58 patients, 20 of whom were being treated for Covid-19, were shifted from the BMC-run Kasturba hospital at Agripada in central Mumbai and around 400 residents from nearby buildings were evacuated following liquid petroleum gas (LPG) leak at the hospital premises on Saturday.

The incident occurred at 11.34 am in the hospital's LPG gas yard, which supplies gas for cooking and equipment sterilisation purposes. The capacity of the above-ground gas tank is 10 metric tonne (MT). It is suspected that the tank joint ruptured while excavation work was being undertaken in the vicinity.

At the time of the incident, the tank was half full. In over two hours after the incident, the storage had dropped to 3.5 MT.

"This morning, somebody was working with an excavation machine near the LPG tank. It is suspected that the JCB touched the tank, causing the leakage," said Kishor Ghadigaonkar, Assistant Divisional Fire Officer of Mumbai Fire Brigade.

While the hospital with 934 beds is spread over a large area, the effects of the leakage were primarily felt by occupants of building 148 abutting the LPG gas yard. The two-storey building has five wards, including an ICU and two laboratories.

In all, 58 patients present in the building at the time of the incident had to be evacuated. "The patients were shifted to another building. Kasturba hospital has a large complex," said Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani, in charge of BMC health and disaster management departments. The BMC also had to evacuate residents from buildings near the hospital.

The civic body has ordered an inquiry into the incident. "We have asked the fire brigade to submit a report," Kakani said.

Officials said that the gas leakage from the tanker was initially spotted by a worker repairing an air-conditioner.

According to a Shiv Sena worker who lives near the hospital, there was panic soon after the leakage and patients were seen running out holding IV fluid



Kasturba hospital in central Mumbai. Express

sets in their hands.

The fire brigade arrived at the hospital around 12 pm. Three jumbo water tanks and fire engines each were pressed into service. Chief Fire Officer Hemant Parab said, "The leakage began from a joint in the tank."

While the fire team initially tried to seal the leakage, only 60 per cent of the leak could be controlled. Later, a team from Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) was called in. Following this, HPCL's regional manager called for mobile tankers to decant the tank. "We noticed that there was still 3.5 MT of gas left in the tanker. Following this, a container with a storage capacity of 6 MT was called from Kharghar. As it was urgent, we coordinated with the necessary departments and arranged for a green corridor," said an official.

The tank — almost 40-ft long — reached the hospital around 4 pm. But because the container was big and the lanes leading to Kasturba hospital were narrow, the container could not reach the spot. Subsequently, two smaller tankers were arranged to store four MT of gas.

"We created two other green corridors for these two tankers from Kalamboli and Uran, respectively. The tankers arrived around 7 pm, after which the process to transfer the gas was initiated," said another official.

Kasturba hospital was the first Covid-19 facility and testing lab in the city. On August 4, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had inaugurated Mumbai's first genome sequencing laboratory in the hospital.

INPUTS FROM SAGAR RAJPUT

Government of West Bengal

EE, BDA, Parba Bardhaman invite NIT No. 06/BDA of 2021-2022 for one no. of civil work under BDA area. Detailed information is available in the website: www.bdadurwan.org & www.purbabardhaman.gov.in and in the office of the BDA.

Sd/-
EE, BDA

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, PHED, REGION AJMER

PHONE No. 0145-2624748 FAX No. 0145-2627671
No. F. (J)/Ar. MP/2021-2022/5663-5713 Dated: 30.07.2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR WORKS

Bids for the work for Reorganisation of Rural water supply scheme CLUSTER DARDATURKI for providing functional Tap connections in Block Peepul under JIM with one year defect Liability and 5 years O&M in the jurisdiction of PHED Division TONK. (Estimated cost of work- Rs. 318.82 lacs) are invited from interested bidders upto 23.08.2021. Other particulars of the Bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state.

UBN No.: PHE2122WSOB05614 NIB No.: PHE2122A2494

(Mukul Bhargava)
Additional Chief Engineer,
PHED, Region, Ajmer.

DIPR/C/7605/2021

Government of West Bengal

Office of the District Magistrate, Purba Bardhaman (MA&ME Section)
Memo no. 412/MAME Date 06/08/21

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Application are hereby invited for the following post from interested eligible retired Government Employee not below the rank of UDC up to the age of 62 as on 23/08/2021. Application along with relevant documents should be submitted by 23/08/2021 to the drop box in MA&ME Section, Purba Bardhaman.

Sl No	Name of the Post	No of Post	Qualification
1	UDC-cum-accountant	1	The retired employee should have worked in similar capacity or above & drawn last pay under PB 3 (7100 - 37600) (old) & new as per ROPA 2019 (27000 - 69800) pay matrix

Application form is available on district website: www.bardhaman.nic.in
Sd/- District Officer, Rural Affairs, Purba Bardhaman

HIMACHAL PRADESH HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (HPHDP)
(Govt. of Himachal Pradesh)
Dyerton Bizhub, Talland Bypass, Shimla, H.P. 171001

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION FOR MATCHING GRANT SCHEME FROM ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/ENTREPRENEURS

Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project (HPHDP) is inviting applications for Matching Grant Scheme from eligible applicants/ entrepreneurs interested to invest in horticulture value chain in Himachal Pradesh.

The grant (30% of the eligible project cost) for male applicant and 35% in case of female applicant or specially abled applicant, with max. grant amount capped at INR 60 Lakh for all categories will be provided on competitive basis with mandatory equity contribution by the applicant/entrepreneur. The Request for Application (RFA) i.e. application form, eligibility criteria and other necessary information are available on the Project website (www.hds.hp.gov.in). The duly completed application may be submitted via email (hdp-pd-hp@gov.in) or can be procured from and submitted at HPHDP Office, Shimla (Ph- 8894497175) or office of Deputy Director of Horticulture (DDH), Kangra (Ph- 7781004578) or DDH, Mandi (Ph- 9811185010) or DDH, Solan (Ph- 9311018839) during office hours on or before 05.09.2021.

Project Director
Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project (HPHDP)

0311/HP

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. LK-38/1/UPD, dated 06.08.2021. E-tender is invited by Chief Works Manager, Eastern Railway Workshop, Kanchrapara for "Annual Maintenance Contract including Consumables/Spares and Accessories for Repair and Preventive Maintenance of two nos. (02) of Portable Digital Ultrasonic Flaw Detectors (UFDs) Make: Modsonic Instruments Mfg. Co. Ltd. Ahmabad (OEM) Model-Einstein-II(R) (1) E-4185-1214 and (2) E-4671-0616 from Expert Personnel Preferably OEM or Authorized Dealer of OEM for the period of two (02) years at Metallurgical & Chemical Laboratory, Loco Complex, Eastern Railway, Kanchrapara on single tender basis. **Tender Value** : ₹ 2,18,00,00/- (including GST @ 18%). **Date and time of closing of tender** : 27.08.2021 at 14.00 hrs. **Validity of Offer** : 63 days. The Tender document and complete details available at website : www.reps.gov.in

MISC-84/2021-22

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.e.railindianrailways.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

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5 GOVT & POLITICS

Rs 1.70 lakh: Salary revision for Delhi govt ministers, LoP

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE MONTHLY salary of Delhi government ministers is set to increase from Rs 72,000 to Rs 1,70,000 under the revised pay structure approved by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Delhi Cabinet.

The Delhi Assembly Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip, and the Leader of Opposition will also be entitled to the same salary structure and allowances as ministers. The revised pay structure will come into effect after it is cleared in the Assembly. Delhi has seven ministers, including the CM.

However, the Centre has rejected the Delhi government's proposal for increase of salary every year for MLAs and ministers. There are 70 MLAs in the Assembly — 62 from AAP and eight from BJP.

According to the break-up of the pay components, the basic salary of ministers has been increased from Rs 20,000 to Rs 60,000 per month; daily allowance from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500; constituency allowance from Rs 18,000 to Rs 30,000 per month; secretarial assistance of Rs 25,000 per month; and sumptuary allowance from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000 per month.

The ministers will additionally get Rs 1 lakh annually for travelling within India; Rs 30,000 per month for two data entry operators; Rs 12 lakh advance for purchase of a vehicle; Rs 1 lakh in each term for the purchase of computers; laptops and mobile phones. They will continue to get reimbursed for electricity consumption of up to 3,000 units per month, 700 litres of petrol, and two home orderlies.

They are also entitled to "free medical treatment and/or reimbursement."

During 2014 & 2017 polls, BJP shared max fake news: Akhilesh

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 7

A DAY after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said social media was at present a "belagaa ghora [unbridled horse]", Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday claimed that the BJP government had spread the maximum amount of fake news during the elections in 2014 and 2017 in the state.

Speaking at a press conference at the party headquarters in Lucknow, Akhilesh said, "During the 2014 and 2017 polls in UP, the BJP was the one who shared maximum fake news, fake videos and rumours... If anyone has expanded the 4G network, it was the Samajwadi Party government due to which internet has reached villages. Today, when everyone can speak the truth, then the government is panicking. Let the elections come. The number that I have predicted for the elections will come true."

During the press conference, former BSP Rajya Sabha member from Muzaffarnagar Rajpal Saini joined the SP along with several other OBC leaders from the BSP and Congress.

Referring to an interview of Adityanath to a TV channel on Friday where he called SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav "abbajaan", Akhilesh said, "The CM knows another language. He can't hear what the farmers are saying. He wants to take the election in another direction."

He also said that Adityanath is the "first CM of UP who lies so much".

Cabinet Secy term extended

New Delhi: Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba was given a one-year extension Saturday. Gauba's tenure was to end on August 30.

Gauba, a 1982 batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre, was appointed Cabinet Secretary in 2019 for a two-year period.

Prior to his appointment as the country's top bureaucrat, Gauba served as Union Home Secretary. He had also served as Chief Secretary, Jharkhand. **ENS**

PM: Previous govts spoke of poor but didn't work for their welfare; MP has uplifted them

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, AUGUST 7

IN A veiled attack on the previous Congress-led governments, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accused them of indulging in hypocrisy and said they chanted the word "poor" many times each day but did not work for their welfare.

In a video interaction with Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) beneficiaries from Madhya Pradesh, he also praised the state government under Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, saying that the state has left behind its earlier image of a "beemarajya (sick state)".

Modi accused the previous



PM Narendra Modi, along with Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, during the virtual address on Saturday. *PTI*

government of keeping the poor and villagers away from basic amenities such as roads, electricity, housing, cooking fuel, banking etc. He said, "They used to speak the word poor hundreds of times a day. They recited the word poor like a song, but did not adopt their welfare in practice. Such acts are called 'pakhand' (hypocrisy). They

did not give these facilities to the poor but used to express false sympathy."

Modi was presiding over the 'Anna Utsav' organised by the MP government to distribute additional 5 kg free ration to 1.15 crore families as part of PMGKAY.

He spoke to four beneficiaries from the state: Rajendra Sharma,

an autorickshaw driver from Burhanpur; Dilip Kori from Satna; Chandra Badan Vishwakarma from Niwari; and Maya Dhurve from Hoshangabad.

The four were among 1.15 crore families from across the state who were given 5 kg additional wheat and rice through 25,453 fair price shops in MP. People in the list of beneficiaries in flood-hit districts of Gwalior-Chambal region would be given an additional 50 kg ration per family, apart from 5 kg wheat and rice, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had announced on Friday.

Modi expressed grief over the loss of lives and livelihood of those affected by rain and flood in the Gwalior-Chambal region and as-

sured them of all help by the Centre.

Speaking about development of the state under Chouhan, the Prime Minister said: "I remember the condition of roads in MP — the state was infamous for its scams. But today, MP's cities are touching new heights of cleanliness and development. If government schemes today are being implemented on ground, it is due to the change in governance."

Pointing out that August 7 also marked the beginning of Swadeshi movement in 1905, Modi urged people to purchase handicraft from local shops and promote handloom, and warned them against letting down their guard against Covid-19.



PRESIDENT HOSTS MINISTERS

President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday interacted with the Union Council of Ministers and hosted a high tea for them at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, according to an official communique. Apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and members of the Union council of ministers, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu was also present, it said. *PTI*

Shah: Modi put a system in place; development happens automatically

AVINASH NAIR
GANDHINAGAR, AUGUST 7

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi has put a system in place in Gujarat where development happens automatically, said Union Home Minister Amit Shah, while virtually addressing the seventh day of celebrations to mark the completion of five years of Vijay Rupani government in Gujarat on Saturday.

"Narendrabhai (PM Modi) has created a new tradition in the country's democracy. A system has been created in such a way that even when a leader is not serving as the chief minister, the development work goes on automatically. I am proud that



Amit Shah addressed an event to mark five years of Vijay Rupani govt in Gujarat

Narendrabhai has created such a system in Gujarat, whereby even after he has left the state, development is happening beautifully," Shah said, addressing the "Vikas Divas" event held at the Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar.

The Union minister said both CM Rupani and his deputy Nitin

Patel have continued to provide speed to development works in the state "on the path shown by Narendrabhai". "Gujarat is either number one or is heading towards being number one in all sectors," Shah said.

In the presence of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Shah also virtually inaugurated and laid foundation stones for various projects worth Rs 5,300 crore, belonging to nine different state departments. Of these, projects worth Rs 900 crore were part of his Lok Sabha constituency of Gandhinagar, Shah said.

"Narendrabhai's throne is like Vikramaditya's throne and the person sitting on it imbibes the powers," Rupani said.

Rahul's account locked, Congress says BJP busy intimidating Twitter

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE TWITTER account of senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was 'temporarily' locked on Saturday, a day after a photograph he had posted with the family of the nine-year-old Dalit rape victim was taken down by the microblogging site.

The action came after the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) issued a notice to Twitter India, ask-

ing the social media platform to remove the tweet which revealed the identity of the rape victim.

"Shri @RahulGandhi's Twitter account has been temporarily locked & due process is being followed for its restoration," the Congress tweeted. "Until then, he will stay connected with you all through his other SM platforms & continue to raise his voice for our people & fight for their cause. Jai Hind!"

There was no reaction from Gandhi.

The Congress, on the other hand, accused the government of

intimidating Twitter.

"Based on a complaint by the BJP, the Twitter account of Rahul Gandhi has been locked. Instead of giving justice to the 9-year-old Dalit girl, the BJP and the Narendra Modi government are far too preoccupied in intimidating Twitter as also illegally chasing Rahul Gandhi. Had PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah used this time in ensuring justice for the Dalit girl... Delhi would have been a safer place," Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala told *The Sunday Express*.

Afghan security situation a serious matter: Jaishankar

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

The rapid deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan is a "serious matter", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday after meeting Qatari special envoy for conflict resolution Mutaq bin Majed Al-Qahtani.

Al-Qahtani, the Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister of Qatar for Counter-terrorism and Mediation of Conflict Resolution, is on a visit to India ostensibly to discuss the latest developments in Afghanistan.



S Jaishankar with Qatari special envoy for conflict resolution Mutaq bin Majed Al-Qahtani, in Delhi on Saturday. *PTI*

Govt writes to UIDAI, seeks Aadhaar use for new voters

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE GOVERNMENT has approached the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) with a proposal to permit the Election Commission (EC) to use Aadhaar for registration of new voters.

Aadhaar verification could be used for faster delivery of some other services such as change of address as well, the Law Ministry has suggested.

Downloading e-EPICs (electronic Elector's Photo Identity Card) or Voter Slips could be allowed under Rule 3 of The Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation and Knowledge) Rules, 2020, the government has said.

The Rules, which were notified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on August 5 last year, provide for Aadhaar authentication "in the interest of good governance, preventing leakage of public funds, promoting ease of living of residents, and enabling better access to services for them".

To use Aadhaar for such purposes, the interested entity has to submit a proposal to the union government which forwards it to the UIDAI. The Indian Express has learned that the Law Ministry's letter to UIDAI was sent at the behest of the EC, and that the proposed Aadhaar verification would be voluntary.

If the UIDAI and the government agree, the seeding of voter cards with Aadhaar for the above-mentioned purposes could begin without need for amendments to The Representation of the People Act, 1950, and The Aadhaar Act, 2016.

In August 2019, the Commission had written to the Law Secretary proposing amendments to the RP Act and the Aadhaar Act to empower it to collect and use Aadhaar data for "cleaning" voters' lists as a "back-end exercise".

The EC had argued then that

Aadhaar-seeding of voter cards would help weed out duplicate entries and bogus voters, and hence serve the national interest. "This step will also pave the way for exploring use of technology for voting and verification of voter identity in the future," it had said in its letter.

As per the EC's proposed amendment to the RP Act, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) may, for the purpose of establishing identity, ask a person to furnish her Aadhaar number and even ask those who are already enrolled as voters to furnish their Aadhaar to check for duplicate entries.

However, the proposed amendment had also said that no one would be denied enrolment or would be deleted from the voters' list for their inability to furnish Aadhaar or for not having Aadhaar.

The EC had initiated the exercise of linking Aadhaar with EPIC in February 2015, when HS Brahma was Chief Election Commissioner. But the exercise was suspended in August of that year, after the Supreme Court restricted the use of Aadhaar to the Public Distribution System (PDS), and the distribution of LPG and kerosene. The EC had already linked 38 crore voter cards to Aadhaar by then.

In its final order passed in September 2018, the apex court held that although privacy is a fundamental right, it can be curtailed if there is either a specific law authorising collection of Aadhaar or if the interest of the state is involved or the test of proportionality is satisfied. Hence, the Commission's demand in 2019 for legal powers to resume seeding of voter cards with Aadhaar.

While the Law Ministry had responded positively to the request and a proposal for the Cabinet's approval was learnt to have been prepared, there had been no development since — except now that the Ministry has proposed a beginning for Aadhaar-seeding of voter cards without amending the law.

Karnataka: Bommai allocates portfolios, keeps finance dept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, AUGUST 7

KARNATAKA CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday allocated portfolios to ministers in his new cabinet, with most of them retaining the ministries they had in the previous B S Yediyurappa government.

Debutant ministers have got plum portfolios like Araga Jnanendra (Home) and V Sunil Kumar (Energy, along with Kannada and Culture). The Chief Minister who had on Wednesday expanded his new cabinet, by inducting 29 ministers, tried to play it safe by retaining many old faces — 23 of them were ministers in the previous B S Yediyurappa cabinet.

Bommai has retained the Department of Personnel and



Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai

Administrative Reforms (DAPR), Finance, Intelligence, Cabinet Affairs, Bengaluru Development and all unallocated portfolios with himself.

K Sudhakar has retained the all important health and medical education department, amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The lone woman minister in the Cabinet, Shashikala Jolle, has been made in-charge of Muzrai, Wakf and Haj. Those with major changes include Govind Karjol (water resources), C C Patil (public works), B Sriramulu (transport and ST welfare), Muruges Niranji (industries).

Al-Qahtani had played a key role in the Afghan peace process and his visit to India came amid mounting global concerns over escalating violence by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Qatar's capital Doha has been the venue for the intra-Afghan peace talks and the Gulf country has emerged as a crucial player in facilitating the Afghan peace process.

The visit also comes days ahead of talks among Russia, China, the US and Pakistan on the situation in Afghanistan. The 'extended Troika' convened by Russia is scheduled to be held in Doha on August 11.

6 SUNDAY STORY

TORA AGARWALA

IN THE year 2000, weighed down by liabilities, and with few avenues for revenue, Mizoram had managed to extract Rs 182.45 crore as “bonus” from the Centre. First of its kind, the package, extended by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, came to be known as a “peace bonus” — awarded to Mizoram for being “the most peaceful state in the Northeast”. Back then, if one were to ask the man who made it happen and who was just two years into his chief ministership, Zoramthanga would possibly have smiled and said, “Peace pays”, a catchphrase the rebel-turned-politician is fond of using. Because, ever since it emerged from a two-decade-long insurgency in the mid-1980s, peace is what the hill state has prided itself on — even its tourism pitch is based on that. Since the militant outfits laid down arms in 1986, few if any insurgents are recorded as having gone underground. The Mizo Accord of June 30, 1986, between the Mizo National Front (MNF) and the Government of India is perhaps the most successful of its kind in the country. Security experts often call it the “only insurgency in the world that ended with the stroke of a pen”.

The last fortnight though has been far from peaceful for Mizoram. First, in what was possibly the bloodiest standoff in its old border dispute with Assam, six policemen from Assam were killed. Assam issued an unusual travel advisory against travelling to Mizoram; Mizoram instituted an FIR against Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, among others; Assam responded with counter-FIRs — with the diminutive Zoramthanga going toe-to-toe with Sarma, arguably Northeast’s most influential political leader.

Those who know him saw shades of Zoramthanga of old — the college graduate-turned-MNF rebel, who joined the armed insurgency, rose to second only in stature to the legendary Laldenga, and survived in the bush for 20 years. He penned down an autobiography in Mizo recording all this, and is currently writing his memoirs in English.

The insurgency was the result of the Mizos feeling neglected at the hands of the larger Assam state it was a part of then, and New Delhi. In a culmination of the anger, on February 28, 1966, the bank clerk-turned-rebel Laldenga led Operation Jericho to capture Aizawl. For the first and only time in the history of independent India, the government, led by Indira Gandhi, ordered air raids on its own territory. The violence raged on for two decades, before the MNF declared peace and joined electoral politics. Power has since largely remained with the party, first under Laldenga and then his personal secretary and closest aide, Zoramthanga.

Now into his third term, Zoramthanga is known as frank and outspoken, but also soft and pacifist — a carefully cultivated image. “His politics has never been combative. He barely attacks his opponents even during poll campaigns. And if there is a scandal, he probably won’t even make a statement — at best, issue a press release,” says a senior Aizawl journalist, who asked to remain anonymous. “Zoramthanga does not betray that side of him which pushed him to take up guns. Rebel leaders need not fit the stereotype of being tough and uncompromising,” says Patricia Mukhim, Editor, *Shillong Times*.

Robert Romawia Royte, a Cabinet minister in the MNF government who is close to Zoramthanga, says the CM never “scolds anyone”, not even a “peon”, but can “be tough when the situation demands it”.

Given this record, over the years, the Central government — from the Vajpayee-

THE SUNDAY PROFILE THE REBEL WHO CHOSE PEACE

His years as an armed insurgent are two decades in the past. Since then, Zoramthanga has helped Mizoram emerge as NE’s most peaceful state. When it comes to land though, the 77-yr-old CM won’t back down, as Assam just found



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

led one to Narendra Modi’s — has sought Zoramthanga’s help to reach out to other rebel groups in the Northeast. In an interview, he once said, “It is my life’s mission to bring peace here.”

Since the 1990s, the MNF has been an ally of the BJP, before it even registered a presence in the Northeast, and is now a part of its Northeast Democratic Alliance. In local, state-level politics though, the MNF and BJP often fight each other.

To dissect the events of the past week then, it is important to not just look at Zoramthanga alone, but Mizo society as a whole, for whom land is the most important asset. “It’s not just Zoramthanga. Any other

Given his record of peace, Centre seeks Zoramthanga’s help often to reach out to NE rebel groups... For standoff with Assam, one must look beyond him, at Mizo society

Mizoram CM would have taken a similar stand,” says an observer in Mizoram. “When it comes to issues of ethnicity, whether it’s against the Brus or for the Chins (from Myanmar), or land, they will rally together across political lines, no matter what.”

Adds Mukhim: “Land (in tribal communities) belongs to clans, not to the State... This is the primary difference in our understanding of land as a constitutional entity, and land as a living space which tribal ancestors handed down to their people. International boundaries are often meaningless.”

As Assam raised the heat on an old land claim, Zoramthanga had to show he would do whatever was in his power to protect the territory. In the several rounds of talks with Delhi, his representatives refused to budge even an inch. “They would say, ‘Sorry, that’s my CM’s position’, and that was that,” says an official from Assam privy to the talks.

Earlier, in March, following the military

coup in Myanmar, Zoramthanga had similarly stood up to the Centre. While the government ordered that borders be closed to Myanmar refugees, Zoramthanga welcomed them as fellow brethren, invoking a common tribal lineage. Around 10,000 refugees are believed to have crossed over to Mizoram, and have been given official support.

“Zoramthanga does not shy away from speaking his mind,” says the observer, “even if it’s unpopular vis-a-vis the Centre.”

His oratory is another skill Mizoram knows Zoramthanga for. “It is this that eventually helped him become the top MNF leader after Laldenga’s death. Everybody loves his speeches, with their bombastic words,” says Dr Lallianchunga, a professor of Political Science at Mizoram University.

In April 2020, soon after the Covid pandemic started, Zoramthanga had left social media in splits when he came out of a video-conference with the PM on the situation saying he felt perplexed. “They were speaking in Hindi. And I don’t understand a word of Hindi.”

Two decades after he chose peace over insurgency, the 77-year-old remains an endearing personality in Mizoram — often seen playing badminton, cracking jokes, an ordinary man. Married after he came overground, Zoramthanga and wife Roneihsang have a son and a daughter who keep a low profile.

At the same time, Zoramthanga has proved he can be shrewd, knowing when to push the right buttons. “Take the development fund in 2020. It is said he made several rounds of Delhi for it. He does not care much for protocol... if he needs funds, he will go down right to the joint secretary,” says a senior journalist from Aizawl.

Another example of his skills of persuasion is the Lengpui airport, perhaps the only one in the country to be owned by the state government and not the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Under his uncontested reign in the state, there has been a significant improvement in roads, apart from in healthcare and education.

However, in the last three years, the MNF government under Zoramthanga has invited some criticism. Many complain it’s a dispensation that “talks more, does less”. “Sometimes, people don’t take him seriously because he says a lot of things that never really pan out... for example, the CM’s obsession with importing bamboo species for more than a decade now,” says the journalist, adding that there is a “sense of lethargy”.

The pandemic has also left the state reeling under a severe financial crisis, with salaries reportedly delayed and several development projects stalled.

Senior Congress leader Lalsawta says the bigger problem is that the Zoramthanga government is “wasteful”. “At the end of the day, it is about the management of finances. The CM holds the finance portfolio.” Claiming that any of the other 26 MNF MLAs would make a better CM, Lalsawta says, “The problem is that Zoramthanga talks too much... A person has to think before he speaks.”

Lalduhoma, the founder-president of the Zoram Nationalist Party, which is part of an anti-Congress, anti-MNF alliance, says that while on the border issue Zoramthanga has their full support, “whether it’s the pandemic or development or financial issues”, the government has failed. “Mizoram has only one RT-PCR lab,” he points out.

The two also ask why the root cause of the boundary issue — the border demarcation with Assam — had not been addressed by the CM. “No one has the political will,” says Lalduhoma. But, as his minister Royte puts it: “Zoramthanga did what people expected of him. In a week, we saw his maturity, how he listened to the people — and for Mizoram, that’s what matters.”

== TAKE 5 == PAPRI CHAAT, PARLIAMENT

MONU SINGH KASBA, 22
VENDOR AT SANT NAGAR, DELHI



Derek O’Brien with a spread of papri chaat as a message to the Modi government. P77

‘Can’t work in the farm any more... get tired. This is what I know best’

On the speed at which the Modi government has been pushing Bills through amidst Opposition protests, TMC MP Derek O’Brien asked if it was making legislation or *papri chaat*. Monu Singh on his hard life as a *papri chaat* maker:

ASHNA BUTANI

1 How long have you been in this profession?

I come from a family of farmers in Gwalior, but have been selling street food in Delhi for four years now. My brother came first, and I followed. I have been seeing him make street food since I was 10. Nobody taught me, I saw others, picked the skill. Now I sell *aloo chaat*, *papri chaat* and *golgappas*.

2 What all goes into a papri chaat?

I use potatoes, onions, tamarind *chutney*, curd and a pinch of *chaat masala*, adding all to the *papri*. I use the same sweet and tangy *chutney* for *golgappas* and *chaat*, preparing it whenever it gets over.

3 How has Covid hit your work?

When the lockdown was announced in March last year, I was back home. I didn’t return for six months, but had to continue paying house rent of Rs 3,000. This year too, I went back fearing losses after Covid hit again. The uncertainty and lack of customers leave me hopeless most days. I make around Rs 600 on average daily, of which Rs 300-400 is my profit.

4 Will you consider going back to the village?

We grow wheat and paddy on our 1.5-acre land, but *kheti ki aadat choot gayi hai*, *main khet mein bahut thak jaata hoon* (I am not used to farming, it makes me very tired). Making street food comes more naturally to me.

5 What do you think of papri chaat figuring in Parliament?

I don’t know much about it, would not like to comment on it.

NUSHAIBA IQBAL

NUMBER PLATE

150%

The increase in salary of Delhi MLAs — from Rs 12,000 a month (Rs 53,000 with allowances) to Rs 30,000 (Rs 90,000 with allowances. Still, they remain the third lowest paid in the country after Kerala (Rs 2,000 a month), West Bengal (Rs 10,000)

Highest paid legislators

Inclusive of annual allowances, Telangana has the highest paid legislators in the country (Rs 2.87 lakh a month), followed by Haryana (Rs 2.07 lakh) and Maharashtra (Rs 1.8 lakh). Monthly salaries of MLAs exclusive of all allowances are the highest in Assam (Rs 80,000), followed by Gujarat (Rs 78,800) and Maharashtra (Rs 67,000)

Smallest increase

Despite its low-paid MLAs, West Bengal has also seen the smallest hikes in salaries (Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 in 2017). CM Mamata Banerjee, who does not take any salary, is entitled to a smaller sum (Rs 27,000) than MLAs from other states. Kerala MLAs get lower salaries than Bengal’s, but make up for it in allowances — getting overall Rs 62,000 a month with allowances, compared to Bengal’s Rs 61,800

Tax relief

The Acts that mention the wages of legislature members from Haryana, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, who have among the highest allowances, also specify that the tax incurred on this income is to be borne by the state

Watching Nikki didi play

As the women’s hockey team made history and almost landed a podium finish in Tokyo, geographies away, a Jharkhand village celebrated a game that is often their way out of hardships

ABHISHEK ANGAD

EARLY FRIDAY morning, as the Indian women’s hockey team walked onto the astroturf at the Oi National Stadium in Tokyo for their semifinal match against Great Britain, thousands of kilometres away, people trickled into a hall lined with asbestos sheets and took their place on a rug in front of a projector.

Hesal, a tribal village in Khunti district of Jharkhand, listed as Naxal territory, seems a long way from even the state capital. On days such as these, when the rains churn the mud roads, the distance is even longer. Yet, even with its non-existent roads and crushing poverty, the tribal village has sent at least 12 hockey players to the state and national teams. Nikki Pradhan, the defender in the Dream 16 team that played in Tokyo, grew up here, playing with bamboo balls and sticks.

Hesal is home to about 60 families, 80% of them tribals. The village has only one health sub-centre that mostly stays shut and no school, with most children walking down to nearby Pilaul.

It was this walk to school that was to change Nikki’s life, along with an other children of her generation. At the Pilaul Middle School was “Mahato sir”, Dasrath Mahato,



who played hockey for Bihar from 1978 to 1981 and who joined the school in 1988 as Assistant Teacher. “He wasn’t a sports teacher but every game period, he encouraged us to play hockey. He trained anyone who showed an interest, including me,” recalls Shashi, 32, Nikki’s sister, elder to her by



Against erratic power, patchy network, watching the Olympic semifinal. Abhishek Angad

five years, who played hockey for Bihar and Jharkhand, and now works for the Railways.

“We would play with bamboo sticks and bamboo balls. Sir took us to tournaments in villages, including with men. After Class 8, those of us who played the game reasonably well were sent to the Bariatu Girls’ Hockey

Center in Ranchi, a boarding school for hockey players. Before we left for Ranchi, he handed Nikki and me food and money,” says Shashi.

Mahato, who is now general secretary of the Khunti unit of Hockey Jharkhand, says, “Around 77 of my students, including the Pradhan sisters, have made it to several top

level circuits... It is a matter of great pride.”

He has a regret, though. “Khunti still lacks basic facilities for training. Simdega (the district from where Salima Tete, the only other Jharkhand player in the Olympics team, hails) has 13 day centres for hockey, two boarding centres for women and three for men, where education, training and lodging are taken care of. Khunti has only one boarding centre each for men and women, apart from eight day centres,” Mahato says. The district has two astroturfs, but they are mostly under water during the rains.

But every such challenge only spurred Hesal’s girls and boys to come out stronger.

After playing national-level hockey for 10 years, from 1998-2004, Hesal girl Neelam Mundu, 32, took to teaching the game. In 2017, she was recruited by Tata Trusts for its programme to “professionalise grassroots-level hockey” in India. Since the pandemic began, Mundu says, she has not been able to travel much to hold lessons.

“I get Rs 8,000 a month to teach hockey. When I took to the game, we thought if we played well, we could at least get into a school where our food and accommodation were taken care of, where we at least didn’t have to worry about getting married off,” she says.

One of Munda’s students is Junita

Pradhan, a Class 8 student of a private school in Khunti. From 7 to 9 every morning, Junita walks barefoot with her hockey stick to the Khunti Sports Shop, where Mundu coaches her and 25 other girls and boys. The hockey stick cost her Rs 400, so she had to shelve her plans of buying shoes. On Friday, she skipped practice to watch the Olympic semifinal.


While sad the team lost, she says, “I saw Nikki *didi* play. I entered the sport due to her.”

Standing beside his under-construction house, Nikki’s father Soma Pradhan, a former constable with the Bihar Police, is a proud father, but it took him long to get here. “I wasn’t happy about the girls playing this game. I did not know much about it. People used to tell me that no one would marry my girls if they played hockey.”

Soma points out that Hesal does not have toilets still while power is erratic and the mobile network patchy. “Even while we were watching the match, we missed some part of it,” he says, adding that in June, a power failure meant he got news of his daughter’s selection for the Olympics two days later.

On Friday morning, surrounded by cheering villagers, he felt his heart weighing down as his daughter leaned against her hockey stick after an agonisingly close match. “But at least the girls played well,” he says.

Across
THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

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The pivot to climbing out of every hole — be it concerning the economy, education, social intercourse or festivals — is vaccination. Unless we vaccinate all the people of India, we will be on a start-stop mode that will take us nowhere. Regrettably, the vaccination drive has not only fallen behind schedule, it is also highly inequitable

Caste in the UK, and why Ambedkar matters

Dalitality

SANTOSH DASS

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ON JUNE 30 this year, Gray's Inn, the internationally recognised seat of jurisprudence, unveiled a radical portrait of its former alumnus Dr B R Ambedkar and inaugurated a room named after him. It was the culmination of years of discussion between the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK) and Gray's Inn.

Commissioned and donated by FAB OUK, the David News oil painting of Ambedkar is based on a 1946 black-and-white photo by renowned photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White for *Life* magazine. Radical? Ken Hunt, the writer, observes, "Unlike his (Ambedkar's) usual poses, Bourke-White's shoot captured him in a relaxed mood at his home in Delhi. He is on his veranda with a cascade of bougainvillea beside him." His smile engages, and, like Mona Lisa's, his eyes will follow future legal eagles around the room.

Lord David Alton of Liverpool, Master Ali Malek QC, Dr Ambedkar's great-grandson Sujat Ambedkar and I gave speeches before the portrait's unveiling. Lord Alton is a staunch supporter of our campaign against caste-based discrimination and regularly refers to Dr Ambedkar in parliamentary debates on equality legislation, anti-caste discrimination law, and the discrimination Dalits and Adivasis face.

The campaign to publicise caste discrimination experiences in Britain began in the '70s with such committed Ambedkarites as FABO UK's Arun Kumar. For over two decades, Dalit organisations have actively lobbied for a law to address the impact of caste discrimination. It is in essence no different to other forms of discrimination — say, on disability, sexual preference, gender or race — already outlawed in Britain. That's why groups want it to be protected under the Equality Act 2010.

I came to London at the age of eight from Punjab. Britain's pro-equality legislation helped give redress from the caste discrimination we faced.

Powerful Hindu and Sikh lobbies oppose the law and argue "caste consciousness... does not exist" here, or bizarrely, the legislation will introduce it. This patent falsehood is laid bare by the prevalence of

THE PANDEMIC is likely to remain with us for some more time. The healthcare infrastructure will be strained, people will be infected, lives will be lost and families will be devastated. The only defence is vaccination. India is doing worse than any of the other G-20 countries in vaccinating the adult population — only 10,81,27,846 people have received two doses of the vaccine against the target of 95-100 crore.

The consolation is, economic losses can be recovered. Closed businesses can be reopened; lost jobs can come back; reduced incomes can be restored; drawn-down savings can be rebuilt; rising debt can be pared; borrowed money can be repaid; and impaired confidence can be revived. An economy that has slid can be put back on the growth path.

LEARNING DEFICIT

Life, however, is more than physical existence. Life is living with dignity. There are many deficits that can rob a human being of dignity. Among them is incomplete school education. It is trite that a person with a school education has a better chance to a life with dignity than an unlettered person. And a person with a proper college education has an even better chance. The foundations of a good education are laid in school. Literacy and numeracy are

the cornerstones.

What is the state of school education in India today? 'Learning deficit' is an acknowledged reality and an important measure of the state of school education. Ask what proportion of children enrolled in Class 5 can read a text prescribed for Class 2? According to the Annual Survey of School Education (ASER) 2018, the proportion was 50.3%. When the children reach Class 7, the proportion that can read a Class 2 text rose to only 73%. The enormity of the learning deficit will hit one like a sledgehammer.

Drill deeper. If we measure learning deficits by gender, urban/rural, religion, caste, economic class, parental education and occupation, and private/government school, the magnitude of the deficit grows larger as we slide down the socio-economic ladder. A child born in a village to low-education, low-income parents whose occupation is farm or casual labour, belonging to a Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) or Other Backward Class (OBC), and studying in a government school, lags far behind a child enrolled in an urban, private school and supported by high-education, high-income parents belonging to one of the 'forward' or upwardly mobile castes.

This is a self-evident truth, now proven conclusively by ASER and similar studies.

She
SAID

SHIVANI NAIK

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IN AN ideal world uncontaminated by overzealous sports officials, their only mandate over what women should wear in sport would extend to choosing colour schemes of the polyester medal ribbons. And in ensuring every athlete with jelly ligaments has proper taping. Like, not leave India's top woman wrestler Vinesh Phogat rudderless without a physio, if she had a strong chance of getting a medal.

Sports policing of athlete outfits could focus on ensuring that sneaker soles and spikes or swimsuits don't accord undue advantage on the track or the pool. But exceeding their brief, sport's officialdom decides that it will not only have an opinion but also air it, on what women will wear when they compete.

German gymnasts gave it a long, hard thought over this summer, and decided they will not take on additional pressure of discomfort wearing bikini-cut leotards at Tokyo Olympics. Instead, they opted for unitards, which incidentally are not a novelty for those watching. Men have always been wearing them.

Smart ankle-lengths and long-sleeved gear in cherry red, with geometric patterns for a yoke, and a snazzy tattoo pattern at the ankle which accentuated the pointed toes — the design that German gymnasts sported merged aesthetics with acrobatic comfort.

Beyond Germany, woman gymnasts in Europe have rebelled this Fall against the unspoken tradition of wearing leotards that are highly sexualised and minutely photographed from uncontrollable angles while women are flinging themselves in the air, and chosen to be more concerned about sticking landings and not breaking their necks.

German Elisabeth Seitz nailed her uneven bars routine, but not before declaring: "We wanted to show that every woman, everybody, should decide what to wear. On competition day, we will decide what to wear." For a sport that has not quite completely resolved yet the traumatised fallout of a sexual abuse scandal in the US, the apprehensions of the Germans were not imaginary.

Elsewhere, the European Beach Handball governing body showed some remarkable thickness in imposing fines on the Norwegian team for turning out in shorts instead of the mandated bikinis. The stipulations are so outrageous that, after 15 years of disapproving, the players couldn't bother less, and their home federation didn't think twice about shelling

A CRUEL JOKE

All the above were before the pandemic hit India, and the first lockdown on March 25, 2020. On that day the schools were closed and, after 16 months, they remain closed in most states. During this period, we have witnessed the much-hyped online learning, internal assessments, automatic promotions and even grades for passing, without exams, Class 10 and Class 12. Conceding that many of these steps were inevitable, was the hype necessary?

Prof Reetika Khera of IIT-Delhi quotes a joint statement of UNESCO and UNICEF that said "schools must be the last to close and the first to reopen" and reads out the grim statistics: only 6% of rural households and 25% of urban households have computers; only 17% of rural areas and 42% of urban areas have Internet facilities; and the vast majority of families do not have smartphones. The boast about online learning in the India of 2020/2021 is a cruel joke on the children of India.

BE JUDGE AND JURY

An average child in India starts with a learning deficit. And if she has no learning for 16 months and more, imagine how rapid will the backward slide be? The governments — Centre and states — have stood by helplessly. As a

nation, we have failed our children and made no effort to find a way to mitigate the unfolding disaster.

Schools must reopen soon. Before that, the children must be vaccinated. The pivot to climbing out of every hole — be it concerning the economy, education, social intercourse or festivals — is vaccination. Unless we vaccinate all the people of India, we will be on a start-stop mode that will take us nowhere. Regrettably, the vaccination drive has not only fallen behind schedule, it is also highly inequitable. On May 17, over 500 renowned scholars, teachers and concerned citizens wrote to Prime Minister Modi on the inequalities that have emerged among the vaccinated: between urban (30.3%) and rural (13%); between men (54%) and women (46%); and between the poor states (1.75% in Bihar) and the rich (7.5% in Delhi).

The pandemic was unprecedented and can overwhelm any government. Allowing for that, the government that assumed to itself all authority under the National Disaster Management Act and took all the decisions in the last 16 months must be judged on the outcomes: did it contain the spread of the infection, did it reduce the number of deaths and did it achieve the self-declared target of fully vaccinating the adult population of India by the end of December 2021? In the meantime, did it spare a thought for the children of India? You be the judge and the jury.

One small length of legging, and a giant leap



Sarah Voss of German gymnastics team, that wore unitards instead of bikini-cut leotards, at the Tokyo Olympics, seeking their right to wear what they want. AP

out the ridiculous fines on their behalf.

Sample the stupidity as fleshed out by *The New York Times*: "Women must wear bikini bottoms 'with a close fit and cut on an upward angle toward the top of the leg', and those bikini bottoms cannot be longer than 4 inches". The corresponding men players could "wear shorts at least four inches above the knee, provided they are 'not too baggy'".

Beach volleyball women's players are split on the topic of whether shorts ought to be allowed, with practical considerations of sand clinging to the pockets.

The entire Muslim world with its women athletes bounding out to participate in every sport possible, meanwhile, is grappling with the skittish issue of why women wearing a hijab — or not, as the case may be — is anyone else's concern.

Egyptian beach volleyball player Doaa Elghobashy has competed at the Games for a decade wearing ankle-length tights and a head scarf. Smashing an unreturnable spike gives her immeasurable glee. Watchers should try following the sport, she reckons.

Serena Williams was wearing a baby literally when she won an Australian Open. The French crinkling their noses at her bodysuit was plain bad form.

At the heart of this debate is women's free choice — to compete feeling comfortable, feeling not being ogled at and feeling good about their game.

As a corollary, women do not want to

be judged for indulging in fashion on their Big Competition Days either. Painted nails, pretty braids of wrestlers, hair parted two-ways for the sprints, dyed a flaming red to streak on the track, an aura of curls and stylised flags on running tights, lipstick and eye shadow — the tyranny of the trudging tracksuit ended a while back.

Tokyo's newest contrivance from the broadcasters zoomed in on swimmers — both male and female — as they wrapped up their swims with limber downs in outdoor showers. But the roving gaze of cameras while athletes compete isn't the only problem. Outdated marketers insecure about selling their sport, and untrusting of every sporting discipline being capable of producing exciting match-ups, has led to years of dress diktats from the suits. Defiance was long due when women knew in their bones that they could compete just as well without this skin-showing compulsion, that in fact dissuaded many budding careers after puberty hit and body image issues cropped up.

The talent oozing out of Tokyo's badminton women's singles final between Tai Tzu Ying and Chen Yufei was so mesmerising that you didn't notice that the two had turned up in shorts. Badminton had once contemplated a compulsory skirts rule. The current golden generation emerged right after the dress-code was summarily dumped.

Skills, not body-hugging skins, were enough.

On the
LOOSE

LEHER KALA

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WHEN US gymnast Simone Biles unexpectedly withdrew from the Olympics saying she wasn't in the right headspace, it created a furore. It has never happened that an athlete of Biles's calibre has caved in to agonising pressure, preferring an exit bang in the middle of a competition.

Even one Olympics ago, Biles would have been berated for poor sportsmanship but the post-pandemic buzzword dominating the international narrative is: mental health. Twitter India itself has noted a 108% increase in mentions of the term 'wellness' and a surge in popularity of hashtags like #SelfLove #LoveYourSelf and #MentalHealthMatters.

Quitting is the new winning

Depending on one's worldview, this display of fragility can feel either like righteous self-preservation or a euphemism for a cop-out. Recently, it feels like the world has done a dramatic U-turn, from stigmatising mental health problems to embracing them manically. So much so that while the greatest spectacle of human endurance is on, quitting is being hailed as some sort of noble act. What would happen if soldiers became immobile thanks to panic attacks before battle? Or if doctors and nurses started having breakdowns and not showing up for duty?

Civilisation is held together by a tangled web of small and large commitments, and we all have our little roles to play. The fact is, all work is, occasionally, painful. Not wanting to strive, resolutely,

everyday, is rarely depression, anxiety — frightfully misused terms these days.

Stress is universal and a fear of failure haunts all of humanity. I dread writing this piece fortnightly. I'm convinced every time I begin that I'm a hopeless fraud with nothing new to say. While largely true, I do it anyway because leaving my editor in the lurch is not an option.

May the irony not be lost that in Tokyo, the athlete who succumbed to nerves and bailed last minute grabbed the media limelight, while the ones who set new world records remain relatively obscure. Quick, name the two 13-year-old girls who won the first ever medals for skateboarding, without Google? Everyone remembers Biles.

While one can certainly empathise with how difficult it must be to perform

at a stratospheric level, it's also true that the Games embody a brutal Darwinism — the Olympics is the ultimate test of the survival of the fittest.

The many meltdowns we are seeing all around is also a (not entirely surprising) culmination of the 'participation trophy' generation. Even in India, progressive schools frown upon rankings — first, second, third is infra-dig and prizes are freely distributed not on merit, but for showing up. This trend (of everyone is great in their own special way!) has infiltrated the discourse in all aspects of our lives. Drug addiction and alcoholism are "illness", not poor decision-making. The conversation around obesity is fraught, dare one dwell on the huge health risks. Instead, 'body positivity' celebrates size in all its forms.

In this environment, praise for those

who can push themselves to superhuman feats is almost a backhanded criticism, like they are not doing enough for those whose anxieties stood in their way.

There is nothing quite like the Olympics to remind us of our own inadequacies and at the same time provide an opportunity for reflection. The things we imbibe from watching sport, even if you don't play anything, are setting goals, discipline, and crucially, honoring your place in a team. It is great progress, that the aura of shame surrounding peoples' worst vulnerabilities is dissipating. However, an Olympic pedestal is the preserve of that minuscule minority that can conquer panic, the defining characteristic of a true champion.

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

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Rape, caste and politics

THERE ARE things in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'new India' that have got worse than they were in the old India. One of them is the false narrative that is spun by his spokesmen and supporters on social media every time a child or a woman is brutally raped and murdered.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) says it recorded 32,033 cases of rape in 2019, which means that 87 Indian women were raped every day. Of these, 15% were children. The statistics are shameful, but it is not the statistics that should worry us as much as the strenuous efforts made in the 'new India' to change the narrative at the behest of political leaders at the highest level.

Last week it was only when Dalit activists took to the streets in protest that arrests were made in the case of the nine-year-old Dalit girl who was allegedly raped and murdered by a priest and his three cohorts. The alleged rapists deny all charges and claim that the child died of an electric shock she got from a water cooler. But this does not explain why they were in such a hurry to cremate the child's body, even when her mother tried to stop them.

The story has been reported in detail in this newspaper and needs no repetition. It is the politics I want to talk about.

This is because I was sickened by the insensitivity with which spokesmen of the Bharatiya Janata Party responded to the child's death. They were more bothered by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi having gone to offer his condolences to the dead girl's family than the horror of what happened to her. Sambit Patra, who is the TV face of the BJP, spoke in crude, ugly detail about what had happened to Dalit women raped in Rajasthan and with his fixed smug smile asked why Rahul Gandhi did not visit their families.

If he believed this strengthened his case that Rahul went for political and not compassionate reasons, he achieved the opposite result.

This column is no fan of Rahul Gandhi or Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, but I applaud them for going to the home of this wretchedly poor Dalit family and offering financial and legal help. It is the very least that political leaders should do since they are unable to prevent this most shameful of crimes from happening with such relentless routine that India is sometimes referred to derisively as the rape capital of the world. It should shame us all that this is not a major political issue. And that not one of Modi's women ministers thought they needed to offer help and condolences to the dead girl's family.

Smriti Irani was the shrillest critic of Sheila Dikshit's government when Nirbhaya was brutally raped and murdered. She is now Minister of Women and Child Development but did not care to even tweet about the tragic death of this little girl. Was it because she was Dalit or because one of the alleged rapists is a priest in a temple that adjoins the crematorium in which the girl died?

It is not as if Mrs Irani was staying away from Twitter last week. She found the time to tweet this about the women's hockey team. "An inspiration! Each one of you have renewed hope, emboldened aspirations... each one of you epitomizes strength, skill & fortitude. You are our girls, our pride #Ind onwards to a stronger future." The Prime Minister and several other ministers tweeted in similar triumphant fashion about the hockey team. But, not one tweet about the little Dalit girl. Why?

Is it because the Delhi Police comes directly under the Home Minister and it was important to bury the story as quickly as possible? Changing the narrative when a rape becomes political and reflects the awful realities of caste and poverty is something that has become the norm in the 'new India'. When another Dalit girl was raped, murdered and cremated by the police in the dead of night in Hathras last year, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh tried to make it into an 'international conspiracy' against his government. A Muslim journalist who was arrested on his way to Hathras was implicated in this so-called 'jihad' conspiracy. A year later, he remains in jail.

These foolish attempts to change the narrative can never work. The narrative will change only when our political leaders stop turning their faces away from the horrible truth that not much has changed in the 'new India' when it comes to crimes against women.

Another horrible truth that we need to face up to is that usually the women and children who get raped and killed come from Dalit families. At the risk of being charged yet again by BJP trolls of being 'anti-Hindu' and 'anti-India', I am going to say what our political leaders do not like to admit. In rape cases the victims are usually Dalit and the rapists upper caste.

This is why justice is rarely done. This is why the police use intimidation to get charges dropped. If rape cases manage to come to trial, more than 90 per cent of rapists get away with their barbarous crimes. What has changed in 'new India' is that in BJP states a false narrative is created to obscure facts. Unless the victim is Hindu and the rapist Muslim. Then we have arrests under new 'love jihad' laws.

8 ECONOMY

‘PRIVATE COMMUNICATIONS TO BE UNREADABLE’; CHILD RIGHT AGENCIES WELCOME MOVE

Apple to check iPhones for child abuse pics; a ‘backdoor’, claim digital privacy bodies

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

APPLE IS rolling out a two-pronged mechanism that scans photographs on its devices to check for content that could be classified as Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). While the move is being welcomed by child protection agencies, advocates of digital privacy, and industry peers, are raising red-flags suggesting the technology could have broad-based ramifications on user privacy.

As part of the mechanism, Apple’s tool neuralMatch will check for photos before they are uploaded to iCloud — its cloud storage service — and examine the content of messages sent on its end-to-end encrypted iMessage app. “The Messages app will use on-device machine learning to warn about sensitive content, while keeping private communications unreadable by Apple,” the company said.

neuralMatch will compare the pictures with a database of child abuse imagery, and when there is a flag, Apple’s staff will manually review the images. Once confirmed for child abuse, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the US will be notified. At a briefing Friday, a day after its initial announcement of the project, the Cupertino-

‘POTENTIAL PRECEDENT FOR GOVT ENTRY’

WHILE COMPANIES like WhatsApp have opposed traceability, experts suggest that Apple’s decision to scan photographs on its devices could set a potential precedent to provide the government entry into encrypted systems



AP file

based tech major said it will roll out the system for checking photos for child abuse imagery “on a country-by-country basis, depending on local laws”.

However, this move is being seen as building a backdoor into encrypted messages and services. In a blog post, California-based non-profit Electronic Frontier Foundation noted: “Child exploitation is a serious problem, and Apple isn’t the first tech company to bend its privacy-protective stance in an attempt to combat it. But that choice will come at a high price for overall user privacy. Apple can explain at length how its technical implementation will preserve privacy and security in its proposed backdoor, but at the end of the day, even a thoroughly documented, carefully thought-out, and narrowly-scoped backdoor is still a backdoor”.

The non-profit added that it

was “impossible to build a client-side scanning system that can only be used for sexually explicit images sent or received by children”. “That’s not a slippery slope; that’s a fully built system just waiting for external pressure to make the slightest change”.

In its statement, Apple has noted that the programme is “ambitious” and “these efforts will evolve and expand over time”. Apple’s move has put the spotlight once again on governments and law enforcement authorities seeking a backdoor into encrypted services, and experts are looking for signs that establish if Apple has changed direction in a fundamental way from its stance as an upholder of user privacy rights.

So much so that less than a year ago, *Reuters* had reported that the company was working to make iCloud backups end-to-end encrypted, essentially a move that

Apple wins court ruling in patent verdict

New York: Apple persuaded a US federal judge to throw out a \$308.5 million jury verdict it lost to a licensing firm for infringing a patent associated with digital rights management. As per the judge, Personalized Media Communications intentionally delayed filing the patent application. **REUTERS**

meant the device maker could not turn over readable versions of them to law enforcement. This was, however, dropped after the FBI objected. The latest project is being seen as almost making a full circle, with the proposed system potentially setting the stage for the monitoring of different types of content on iPhone handsets.

Criticising Apple’s decision, Will Cathcart, head of Facebook-owned messaging service WhatsApp said in a tweet: “Read the information Apple put out yesterday and I’m concerned. I think this is the wrong approach and a setback for people’s privacy all over the world. People have asked if we’ll adopt this system for WhatsApp. The answer is no”.

“This is an Apple built and operated surveillance system that could very easily be used to scan private content for anything they or a government decides it wants to control. Countries where iPhones are sold will have different definitions on what is acceptable,” he argued.

Globally, Apple has around 1.3 billion iMessage users, of which 25-30 million are estimated to be in India, while WhatsApp has two billion global users, around 400 million of which are from India.

This also comes in the wake of the Pegasus scandal, where Israeli private cyber-offensive company NSO Group exploited the loopholes in apps such as iMessage and WhatsApp to provide its government customers access to the devices of their targets through installing a spyware. These targets include human rights activists, journalists, political dissidents, constitutional authorities and even heads of governments.

In India, through the IT Intermediary Guidelines, the government has sought traceability of originator of certain messages or posts on significant social media intermediaries. While companies like WhatsApp have opposed traceability, experts suggest that Apple’s decision could set a potential precedent to provide the government entry into encrypted communication systems.

Covid cover for health workers: 1,016 claims settled, paid till Aug 4

Till August 4, 1,016 claims have been settled and paid under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: Insurance Scheme for Health Workers Fighting Covid-19, the government informed Parliament



NEW CLAIM SETTLEMENT SYSTEM: With effect from May 28, a new system of claim settlement has

been implemented, according to which, claim papers are now being examined by district collectors

48 hours: Time mandated to the insurance company to make payment to claimants, on the basis of certificates furnished by district collectors and counter signed by state nodal officers

22.12 lakh

Healthcare providers, including community and private health workers who have been in direct contact with and care for Covid-19 patients, who are eligible for comprehensive personal accident cover of Rs 50 lakh under the scheme

SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION:

In a reply to the Lok Sabha on Friday, Minister of State for Health Bharti Pawar said the scheme is being implemented via an insurance policy from New India Assurance Company Ltd

Source: Government of India/PTI

China regulators meet delivery firms, seek stronger labour rights

REUTERS
BEIJING, AUGUST 7

CHINA’S DELIVERY platform companies including Meituan and Alibaba’s Ele.me recently joined a meeting with government regulators on improving safety and labour rights for delivery workers.

Food delivery platforms, in the spotlight due to China’s regulatory reforms, have attracted severe criticism on social media for their treatment of delivery workers, most of whom are not covered by basic social and medical insurance.

The meeting included officials from the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, according to a Saturday notice on WeChat by the

Food delivery platforms, in the spotlight due to China’s regulatory reforms, have attracted severe criticism on social media for their treatment of delivery workers, most of whom are not covered by basic social and medical insurance

Ministry of Emergency Management, which also attended.

Firms should strengthen safety and labour rights protections, and not set performance indicators which harm the health of workers, according to the meeting.

Alibaba Group, its supermarket operator Hema Xiansheng, Dada Nexus Ltd and other firms also joined the meeting and reported on their efforts to improve safety and labour rights.

Investors believe a major shift

is under way in China as the government aggressively pursues reform aimed at cutting cost-of-living pressures at the expense of businesses, roiling stock markets. A set of reforms announced in July by China’s market regulator pushed food delivery platforms in China to guarantee their workers with income above minimum pay, insurance and a relaxation in delivery deadlines.

Investors are worried about the rising cost of employing riders by the platforms, *Reuters* had previously reported.



A display of Tencent at the China International Fair for Trade in Services. Prosecutors had said the “youth mode” on WeChat does not comply with laws protecting minors. *File*

CRUDE WATCH

OIL FALLS ON DEMAND WORRIES

New York: Oil prices fell about 1 per cent lower on Friday, posting to their steepest weekly losses in months, on worries that travel curbs will derail global recovery in energy demand. Brent crude fell 0.8 per cent to \$70.70, and US WTI crude by 1.2 per cent to \$68.28. **REUTERS**

AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED TO IBC

Panel points out NCLT vacancies to MCA: How appointment delays are affecting resolutions

KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

THE PARLIAMENTARY Standing Committee on Finance has called out the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on persistent vacancies in National Company Law Tribunals (NCLTs) leading to delays in corporate insolvency under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The committee has also recommended that the IBC be amended to prevent frivolous litigation and non-adherence to deadlines under the IBC that can lead to value destruction.

The committee recommended that the IBC strictly prohibit the submission for resolution plans after the deadline for plans and that recoveries under the IBC be measured against an international benchmark.

Why are vacancies in the NCLT a major issue?

The combined strength of the current NCLT benches around the country is currently only 29 members against the total sanctioned strength of 63 members.

The committee noted that delays in the admission of insolvency cases by NCLTs and the approval of resolution plans were the key reasons behind the non-adherence of timelines under the IBC.

As of March 31, 2016, 79 per cent of the total cases under the IBC had been pending for more than 270 days, the initial time limit envisaged for a resolution process under the IBC.

The committee noted that delays on the part of the NCLT in admitting cases allowed defaulting owners the opportunity to divert funds and transfer assets and, therefore, the NCLT should be required to admit a defaulting com-

ONLY 29 MEMBERS AGAINST 63 SANCTIONED

■ The combined strength of the current National Company Law Tribunal benches around the country is currently only 29 members against the total sanctioned strength of 63 members

■ As of March 31, 2016, 79% of the total cases under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code had been pending for more than 270 days, the initial time limit envisaged for a resolution process under the IBC

pany into insolvency proceedings and hand over control to a resolution professional within 30 days. “The MCA, as the nodal ministry, should take greater responsibility to streamline the operational processes in NCLT/NCLAT while constantly monitoring and analysing the workflow, disposal and outcomes with regard to resolutions, recoveries, time taken, etc.,” the committee noted.

What are the key concerns around frivolous litigation?

A number of high profile cases under the IBC — including those of Essar Steel, Bhushan Power & Steel and Binani Cement — saw multiple decisions being challenged by stakeholders. Experts have called many of these appeals frivolous attempts to slow down insolvency proceedings.

The Standing Committee has also said that cases in which creditors have evaluated resolution plans submitted after the specified deadline would disintegrate bidders from bidding within prescribed timelines and that such plans also contribute to delays and value destruction.

In the insolvency proceed-

ings of Bhushan Power & Steel Ltd, the NCLT had directed the committee of creditors (CoC) to evaluate the resolution plan submitted by Liberty House

Pte after the CoC refused to consider the plan as it was submitted after the deadline for resolution plan submission.

“These bidders typically wait for the H1 bidder to become public and then seek to exceed this bid through an unsolicited offer that is submitted after the specified deadline ... As a result, genuine bidders are discouraged from bidding at the right time. The overall process is vitiated and there are significant delays leading to further value erosion,” the committee noted.

What are the other key recommendations by the committee?

The committee also recommended that the IBC be amended to provide micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which are operational creditors under the IBC, with greater protection in the current economic environment. The IBC currently prioritises financial creditors over operational creditors.

TOTAL INCOME MODERATES MARGINALLY

BoB clocks Q1 profit of ₹1,209 cr on dip in bad loan provisioning

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

HELPED BY a fall in bad loans provisioning, Bank of Baroda (BoB), on Saturday, posted a standalone profit of Rs 1,208.63 crore during the quarter ended June 2021. The bank had reported a net loss of Rs 864 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

Total income moderated marginally to Rs 20,022.42 crore from Rs 20,312.44 crore in the same quarter a year ago, BoB said in a regulatory filing.

The bank’s asset quality improved with the gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 8.86 per cent of the gross advances as on June 30, 2021, from 9.39 per cent by the end-June 2020. However, net NPA ratio rose to 3.03 per cent from 2.83 per cent as on June 30, 2020, the bank said. As a result, total provisions and contingencies for the quarter eased to Rs 4,111.99 crore from Rs 5,628 crore a year ago.

Provisioning Coverage Ratio including floating provision stood at 83.14 per cent as on June 30, 2021. A penalty of Rs 41.75 lakh has been imposed on the

GROSS NPAs AT 8.8% OF ADVANCES

■ The bank’s asset quality improved with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 8.86 per cent of the gross advances as on June 30, 2021, from 9.39 per cent by the end-June 2020

■ However, net NPA ratio rose to 3.03 per cent from 2.83 per cent as on June 30, 2020, Bank of Baroda said

bank by Reserve Bank of India for the quarter ended June 30, 2021, it said. As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular, the bank has opted to provide the liability for frauds over a period of four quarters, it said.

Accordingly, the carry forward provision as on June 30, 2021 is Rs 349.45 crore which is to be amortised in the subsequent quarters by the bank, it said.

FACELESS ASSESSMENT

I-T Dept issues three email IDs for registering grievances

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

UNDER THE faceless or e-assessment scheme, the Income Tax (I-T) Department on Saturday notified three official email IDs for taxpayers to register grievances.

“In a move aimed to further improve taxpayer services in alignment with the Taxpayers’ Charter, the Income Tax Department creates dedicated e-mail ids for registering grievances in respect of pending cases under the Faceless Scheme,” the department said on its official Twitter handle. “For faceless assessments: samadhan.faceless.assessment@incometax.gov.in; For faceless penalty: samadhan.faceless.penalty@incometax.gov.in; For faceless appeals: samadhan.faceless.appeal@incometax.gov.in,” the department said.

Under the faceless assessment system, a taxpayer or an assessee is not required to visit an I-T department office or meet a department official for income tax-related businesses.

Q2: Berkshire Hathaway sees higher profits, buys back shares worth \$6 bn

JONATHAN STEMPEL
NEW YORK, AUGUST 7

WARREN BUFFETT’S Berkshire Hathaway Inc on Saturday said many of its businesses are enjoying strong recoveries from the early depths of the coronavirus pandemic, fueling rebounds in profits and revenue. The company Buffett has run since 1965 also signaled the billionaire’s confidence in its future by repurchasing \$6 billion of its own shares in the second quarter, even as its stock price regularly set new highs.

Second-quarter operating profit rose 21 per cent to \$6.69 bil-

The Warren Buffett-run company’s 2nd quarter operating profit rose 21% to \$6.69 billion

lion, or about \$4,424 per Class A share, from \$5.51 billion, or about \$3,463 per share, a year earlier.

Net income rose 7 per cent to \$28.1 billion, or \$18,488 per Class A share, bolstered by unrealized gains in Berkshire’s \$192 billion of investments in Apple Inc, Bank of America Corp and American Express Corp. Revenue jumped 22 per cent to \$69.1 billion. **REUTERS**

BRIEFLY

Hindustan Copper Q1 net up

New Delhi: Hindustan Copper on Saturday reported a 53.6 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 45.63 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2021, against Rs 29.69 crore a year ago. **PTI**

‘Virgin listing on LSE planned’

New Delhi: Virgin Atlantic Airways is planning to list on the London Stock Exchange, *Sky News* reported. The plan received positive responses from institutional investors and an announcement could come soon, it said. **REUTERS**

AFTER CHINA PROSECUTORS INITIATE LAWSUIT

Will inspect WeChat’s ‘youth mode’, says Tencent

REUTERS
BEIJING, AUGUST 7

TENCENT SAID it would investigate the functions of its popular social messaging app WeChat’s “youth mode”, after Beijing prosecutors initiated a civil public-interest lawsuit against a subsidiary of the company on Friday.

Prosecutors had said the “youth mode” on WeChat does not comply with laws protecting minors. “We will earnestly inspect and check the functions of WeChat Youth Mode, accept user suggestions humbly and sincerely respond to civil public interest litigation,” the company

WeChat team said in a post on Weibo.

The lawsuit was initiated by Beijing’s Haidian District People’s Procuratorate against Shenzhen Tencent Computer Systems Co Ltd, according to a filing posted on JCRB.com, a website run by China’s top prosecutor. The document did not say how WeChat’s “youth mode” broke Chinese law.

It said it could support other agencies and organisations that intended to bring lawsuits against the Tencent unit and asked them to contact the prosecutor’s office within 30 days. Tencent did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



POINT OF VIEW

Column Writing

How the Jaipur Column at the Rashtrapati Bhavan was built to commemorate the transfer of the British capital to Delhi



ARTS etc

The Night of Longing

Documentary filmmaker Payal Kapadia on winning *L'Oeil d'Or*; love, discrimination, and the future

Shivani Naik

PV SINDHU makes history by clearing browser caches of her competitive life. Her secret to succeeding on a badminton court is remembering, unfailingly, to forget. Win or lose; rinse, don't remember, don't repeat.

There was the BWF (Badminton World Federation) World Championships gold medal she won in 2019, by forgetting the two stinging losses for silvers of 2017 and 2018. This time at Tokyo, Sindhu carefully erased all thoughts of gold or silver to nail a bronze, making this her back-to-back medalling in the Olympic Games. The disappointment of going down in the semifinals was scrubbed clean after the initial tears. It is how Sindhu is staggeringly successful, in obliterating landscapes of losses that would leave most others wandering and lost.

Badminton revels in its disappointments. It nurses regrets and carefully curates every despondency. Malaysian legend Lee Chong Wei never won the Olympics or World Championships titles. Indonesian Olympic champion Taufik Hidayat just couldn't crack the All England Open championships. Taipei's Tai Tzu-Ying, who is the closest a muggle can come to *Wingardium Leviosa*, controlling a feather with a wizard's wand, risked being told she was altogether inadequate had she not made it to the badminton podium this time.

Sindhu, too, was told she can't win the finals, the perennial doubts tarnishing all her silvers. Sindhu herself barely ever publicly indulged in these long, meandering post-mortems.

Ask her about her second match at Tokyo where she faced Hong Kong's Cheung Ngan Yi, who had dragged her into an 87-minute wringer at the 2017 Glasgow World Championships, where she was on all fours, panting heavy, and could barely stand up. Memories like that — an almighty plod even before Japan's Nozomi Okuhara tested her in the famous final — can leave bruises that can jump up at a nervy stage like the Olympics. Not for Sindhu, who has a sketchy recall of that match.

"But every time we get onto the court, it's a fresh match and I don't think about what has happened before. We, of course, make strategies from the earlier games, but every time you come on the court, you don't think about past matches. You just come with a mindset where you need to give your best present," she says, after winning her bronze. "Best present" is Sindhu's own invention — an original tense that means living only in that moment, which is an unburdened, untangled, isolated few minutes before a rally.

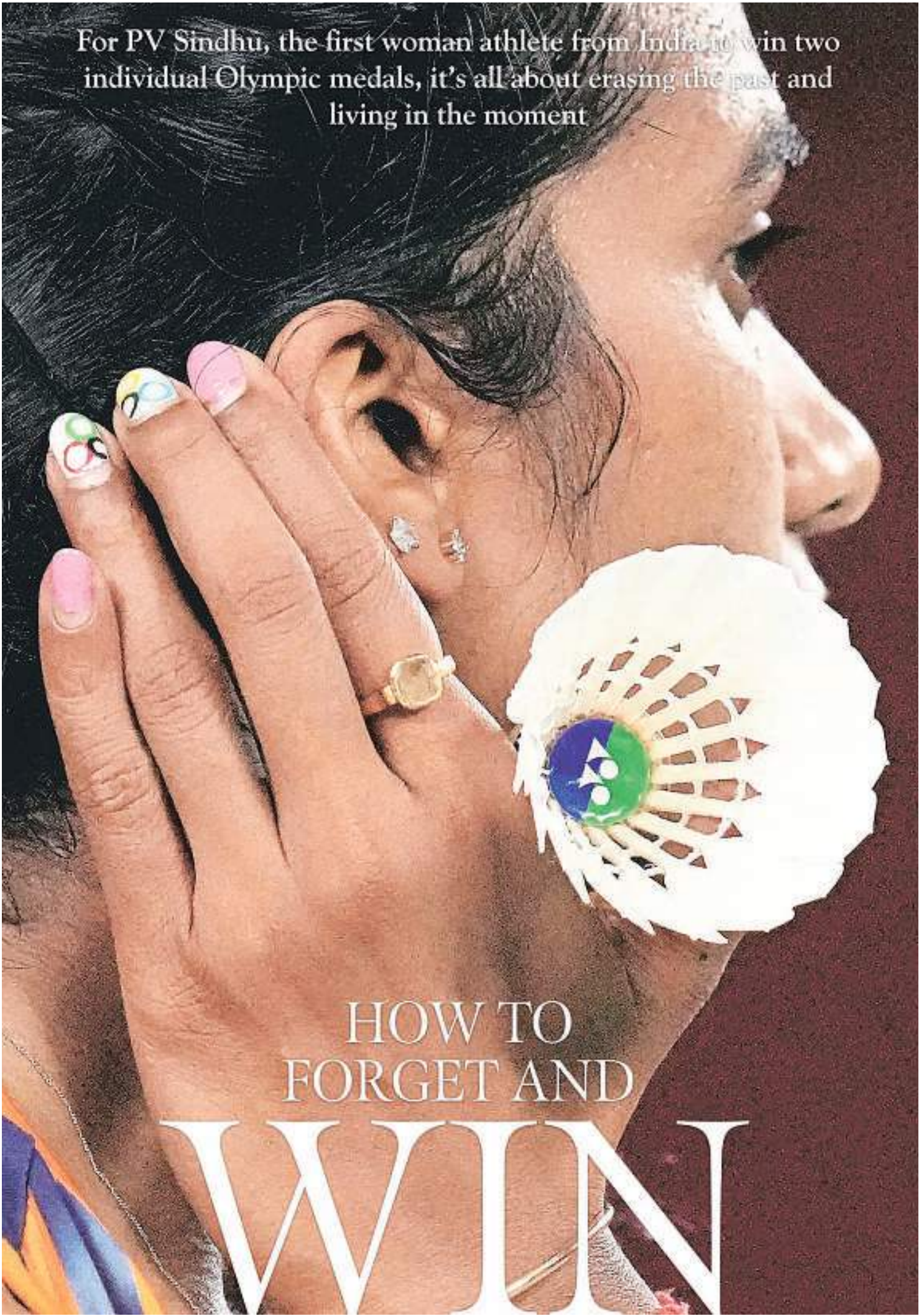
She didn't know whether to be sad about the lost gold or be happy about the second chance. Her Korean coach Park Tae-Sang wasn't quite spouting Nietzsche that evening after she lost the semifinals, by telling her "Blessed are the forgetful, for they get the better even of their blunders". He did pithily tell her though that the fourth place would leave her wretched. Ice bath, recovery massage, dinner, sleep...and memory of the semifinal brushed aside.

Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind; the prayer of a bronze accepted, the wish for gold, resign'd.

Sindhu is the reigning world champion; she has won a bigger medal at the Rio Olympics in 2016. The bronze is only the third step on the podium. But Sindhu saw the next 24 hours with algorithmic ease: one medal, two countries gunning for it, and a Chinese southpaw with suspect backhand, "Hulk, Smash".

Sindhu has enjoyed an upbringing of a First World athlete. That is not to say her family didn't face financial struggles or that she didn't go through the uncomplaining repetitions during practice to keep her body fit. But marked as a special talent, not shy of working hard, she didn't struggle for facilities. She had it all — top-notch academy, high-performance coaches, shuttles, international tournaments, and seamless funding from the establishment. Sindhu's athletic, rangy game was meant to succeed if she could keep herself uninjured and agile. It needed fine chiselling like the Bidri metal craft and not a dramatic DIY store makeover.

Getting on the *Forbes* list of highest-paid women athletes in 2019, showered by sponsors, Sindhu never had to claw at the basics or build a *pucca* house, like some others who won at Tokyo. She earned her privilege and preserved it, and stayed within the comfortable straight and narrow on tricky issues, non-committal on anything that could



nudge her away from the pleasant and polite. India remained an indulgent country, but Sindhu was only one dip away from facing the proverbial cold shoulder. Yet, this was badminton, and she lost plenty on either side of her five medals at the World Championships and two at the Olympics, of which one was gold. In the absence of any major turbulence that ails Indian athletes, her struggles in her snugly cloistered universe were of the elite First World variety: How to forget a stinging loss and move on to the next medal.

Around this New Year's at the UK, after a happy snowy Christmas enjoying her freedom from minute-to-minute monitoring, Sindhu would post an emoji-bookended message: "Life's not about expecting, hoping and wishing, it's about doing, being and becoming." It was the first of these motivational "for self" Post-its that you realised she buys into: ignore expectations, remember actions.



SMASHING IT
PV Sindhu on the court at the Olympic Games last week, where she took the bronze; with coach Park Tae-Sang at Shamshabad airport, Hyderabad, on their return from Tokyo

Athletes lead fish-bowl lives, but in the absence of square-meal struggles or rancour, they tend to keep their life hacks simple. When the Olympics draws came out, it was evident that players strewn across her path from the quarters onwards could trip her up. The preparations had been to her satisfaction and she would get down to shedding old, damaged statistics by declaring every opponent as tough.

Not everything went as planned. But she shrugged off both the snub to her wish of being a flagbearer and the snapping at her heels by Japan's Akane Yamaguchi in the quarters with the same non-chalance. Resentments, reputations, reversals, railroading by opponents

leave her completely unperturbed. If it's all the same, she'd rather sit back with some bubble tea and look to the next match. Landing in Tokyo, Sindhu enjoyed being in her terrain. "Olympics is everybody's dream come true. The Athletes Village itself is a nice place. There are lots of athletes who

do really well and get those medals," she says. Though all she remembers is settling in nicely at her sophomore Games.

Ask her about routines of medal-chasing athletes, and she forgets she's one among them, talking in third person. "Those top shuttlers get into a routine. I noticed how they do things and how every athlete has a different exercise workout," she recalls.

There's a kaleidoscope of movements as she revs up the engine for the knockouts. Like the forced perspective filmmakers have in movies such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Alice in Wonderland* or *King Kong*, where objects look larger by playing with space and distance, for Sindhu, opponents appear in sharp focus. Yamaguchi fetches up, life-sized in the quarters. Cue: Forget just how endlessly the Japanese can retrieve.

"There were long rallies. There are no easy or short matches against her. So, I have to be patient and put the shuttle in the court and use my attack, even though she retrieves," she says. Getting bogged down by the prospect of a tough grind isn't Sindhu's style.

But nothing went right in the semifinals against Tai. A dream of a gold ended, just like that. The Taiwanese dictated points, unveiled trickery and packed the Indian off. The lost semifinal meant Sindhu could miss out on a medal at the Major League for the first time in five years. She cried, then stopped, and erased the thought for first and second place. And then, it began, the slashing at the prospect of a dreaded fourth finish.

Looking back, while Tai has dominated completely, Sindhu latched on to a safety that helped her cope. Ask her if she mulled over lost points and she waves it away with a long "Noooo". "I played my best. Sometimes, it happens that it might just not be your day. So, yeah, if I might have won the first set, it would have been different. Perhaps, the net-cord was the difference," she muses. This happened at the 18-18 stage in the first set. A net-cord is considered poor luck when the shuttle nicks the net and can fall on either side. Thin margins are bonafide blemishes, and a scaffolding comes up around her confidence, where she will not, for the moment, admit and analyse how strong Tai was. Scratch the match, move on.

Day of the bronze match, breakfast is bread, egg, bacon sausage and some milk. The match is scheduled for the late evening. Lunch is katsu curry and rice, and other Japanese food. "More than that, since our match was in the evening it was like 'When will I play...when will I play...and, when will I get onto the court?' That was the only thing going on in my mind," she says. Fade the expectations, focus on actions. When she was younger, Sindhu would bite her nails before a nervy match. Then nail-art happened. Polish and glitter didn't taste good.

Her opponent that day, China's He Bingjiao, was a compact player and technically proficient, but Sindhu would have none of it. She figured the bronze was the most coveted thing, that moment, for the two nations. "Everybody was aiming for that medal to make their country proud. He Bingjiao has really good wrists so her deception also was very good. But, again, it was important that I am in every point, even if she was covering leads. I made sure even though I'm leading, I don't give her easy points. I maintained that and got the medal," she says simply.

The bronze morphed into a sympathetic pat on Tai's back as the Taiwanese waited for the award ceremony, dealing with her loss of a gold. "I congratulated (China's) Chen Yufei. Of course, Tai was feeling bad so I just told her everything will be fine," she recalls. "Silver's a good medal," the bronze winner told Tai.

It was the warmest of exchanges, where Sindhu forgot her own disappointment and got into the shoes of the silver medallist. At Rio, she had realised she was the only one on the court to lead Spain's Carolina Marin through her early moments with the gold.

She might have become India's biggest female Olympian, but Sindhu has a healthy relationship with a loss. And the bronze. At the 2013 World Championships, when she won her first, she knew the enormity of it. "I was super, super happy. I wasn't very experienced then. So, getting something new was exciting," she recalls. A year later, again at the World Championships, the medal shape-shifted into the "first time for a second successive bronze."

She makes her peace with bronze, then she forgets about it. In December this year is the World Championships at Huelva, Spain, Marin's hometown, where she'll defend her title. "It's the first time I'll be defending my title; it'll be exciting," she says.

Spotless sunshine. Eternal Mind. Same Sindhu.



12 THE WORLD/SPORT

TOP OF THE WORLD



A rainbow balloon in Budapest in June. Reuters

HUNGARY

Curbs on sales of LGBT-themed children's books

HUNGARY ORDERED shops on Friday to sell children's books seen as promoting homosexuality in "closed wrapping", stepping up restrictions that have set PM Viktor Orban on a collision course with the EU. The books were banned from being sold within 200 metres of a school or church. The order is the first to spell out the implications of a law passed in June banning the use of materials seen as promoting homosexuality at schools. **REUTERS**

MYANMAR

New ASEAN envoys says wants full access

THE BRUNEI diplomat appointed by a Southeast Asian regional bloc as its special envoy to Myanmar said on Saturday he should be given full access to all parties when he visits the country, where the military overthrew an elected government. Speaking a day after his appointment by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Brunei's Erywan Yusof gave no date for his visit to Myanmar, whose civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other officials have been detained since the February coup. **REUTERS**

Knife attacker injures 10 in Tokyo train, wanted to 'kill happy women'

REUTERS

TOKYO, AUGUST 7

THE MAN alleged to have wounded 10 people in a knife attack on a Tokyo commuter train late on Friday told police he became incensed when he saw women who "looked happy" and wanted to kill them, Japanese media reported on Saturday.

Police arrested the 36-year-old man in another part of Tokyo after he slashed and stabbed people in the attack at about 8.40 pm (1140 GMT) on Friday on a train on the Odakyu Line in the western part of the city, media reported.

One victim, a female university student, was seriously wounded, while the rest suffered less severe injuries.

The *Sankei* newspaper reported that the suspect told police: "I began feeling like I wanted to kill women who looked happy about six years ago. Anyone was fine, I just wanted to kill a lot of people."

Other media, including broadcaster NHK, reported similar quotes from the suspect.

A police spokesman said they had nothing further to share on the details of the case when asked about the media reports on Saturday.

Violent crime is rare in Japan but there have been a spate of knife attacks by assailants unknown to the victims.



Rescue workers carry a person through a train station in Tokyo. Reuters



Afghan honour guards hold a wreath of flowers with a portrait of Dawa Khan Menapal, director of Afghanistan's Government Information Media Centre, in Kabul on Saturday. The Taliban shot and killed Menapal on Friday. AP

Taliban enter north Afghan provincial capital, lawmaker says

TAMEEM AKHGAR & KATHY GANNON
KABUL, AUGUST 7

TALIBAN FIGHTERS entered the capital of northern Afghanistan's Jawzjan province Saturday, a provincial lawmaker said, after sweeping through nine of 10 districts in the province.

The government did not deny lawmaker Mohammad Karim Jawzjani's claim that Taliban fighters had entered Sheberghan, but said the city had not fallen. If the city falls, it will be the second provincial capital in as many days to succumb to the Taliban. Several other of the country's 34 provincial capitals are threatened.

On Friday, the Taliban took control of the southwestern Nimroz provincial capital of Zaranj, where the government says it is still battling insurgents inside the capital.

Sheberghan is particularly strategic because it is the stronghold of US-allied Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum, whose militias are among those resurrected to aid the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces.

Heavy airstrikes were reported by residents of Sheberghan who also said the Taliban had

Pak NSA: US not seeking military base in Pakistan

Islamabad: Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf has said that no US official or lawmaker asked for a military base in Pakistan, rejecting reports that the Biden administration was seeking American military bases in the country to influence developments in neighbouring Afghanistan. Yusuf made the comments as he wrapped up his 10-day trip to the US. He met senior officials during his visit before leaving for Islamabad, *Dawn* newspaper reported on Saturday. "The word base was not mentioned, not even once, during our talks, except in the media," Yusuf said. **PTI**

freed prisoners from the city jail.

Taliban fighters have swept through large swathes of Afghanistan at surprising speed, initially taking districts, many in remote areas. In recent weeks they have laid siege to several provincial capitals across the country. **AP**

50 held in Pak over attack on Hindu temple

MZULQERNAIN
LAHORE, AUGUST 7

PAKISTAN'S LAW enforcement agencies on Saturday arrested over 50 people, including the main suspects, allegedly involved in an attack on a Hindu temple in a remote town of the country's Punjab province, a day after the Supreme Court admonished the authorities for their failure to protect the shrine.

They also booked 150 people in connection with the attack on Wednesday.

A mob attacked the temple at Bhong city of Rahim Yar Khan district of the province, some 590 kms from Lahore, in protest against the release of an eight-year-old Hindu boy, who was arrested for allegedly urinating in a local seminary.

"More than 50 suspects have been arrested so far through analysis of video footages in a shameful ransacking incident at a temple in Rahim Yar Khan," Punjab province Chief Minister Usman Buzdar tweeted. **PTI**

Journalists briefly held in Pak over 'scandalous' talk

Lahore: Pakistani authorities briefly detained two prominent journalists in Lahore on Saturday, drawing condemnation from human rights activists, political leaders, and the country's media.

A senior official from Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said Amir Mir and Imran Shafqat were detained after posting "scandalous content" on social media. The FIA later said the two had been released on bail after questioning.

The content involved a video, which was an informal round-table discussion where journalists discussed the Army's role in politics and the judiciary in Pakistan. The video was posted on YouTube, the FIA said. **AP**

DELTA VARIANT SPREADS ACROSS COUNTRY

US now averaging 100,000 new Covid infections a day

Increase from average of 11,000 new daily cases in June

ASSOCIATED PRESS
AUGUST 7

THE US is now averaging 100,000 new Covid-19 infections a day, returning to a milestone last seen during the winter surge in yet another bleak reminder of how quickly the delta variant has spread through the country.

The US was averaging about 11,000 cases a day in late June. Now the number is 107,143.

It took the US about nine months to cross the 100,000 average case number in November before peaking at about 250,000 in early January. Cases bottomed out in June but took about six weeks to go back above 100,000, despite a vaccine that has been given to more than 70% of the adult population.

The seven-day average for daily new deaths also increased, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. It rose over the past two weeks from about 270 deaths per day to nearly 500 a day as of Friday.

The virus is spreading quickly through unvaccinated populations, especially in the South where hospitals have been overrun with patients.

Health officials are fearful that cases will continue to soar if more Americans don't embrace the vaccine.

"Our models show that if we don't (vaccinate people), we could be up to several hundred thousand cases a day, similar to our surge in early January," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Rochelle Walensky said on CNN this week.

The number of Americans hospitalised with the virus has also skyrocketed and it has gotten so bad that many hospitals are scrambling to find beds for patients in far-off locations.



People wait in line to get a Covid test to travel overseas at an airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. AP

EXPLAINED Hesitancy over masks, vaccines

THE DELTA variant is driving the latest surge in cases in the US, and preliminary research in the UK suggests that even vaccinated people can easily transmit this strain of the virus. Vaccinations do, however, offer strong protection against serious illness. But the US has seen vaccine hesitancy in a large section of the population, and the quick spread of Delta has coincided with a sharp surge in hospitalisation and death rates. Experts say the situation has been worsened by a rising hesitation among people to wear masks, and the scrapping of most social distancing norms.

Houston officials say the latest wave of Covid-19 cases is pushing the local health care system to nearly "a breaking point," resulting in some patients having to be transferred out of the city to get medical care, including one who had to be taken to North Dakota.

UK PM decides not to self-isolate after aide tests positive for Covid

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, AUGUST 7

THERE WAS growing anger within the Opposition Labour party ranks on Saturday over UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's decision to not self-isolate following an aide testing positive for Covid-19.

Downing Street said Johnson will not follow the government's 10-day quarantine guidance for people who come in close contact with someone who goes on to test positive for Covid-19.

According to the *Guardian*, a senior government source said that Johnson and the official in question were "side-by-side" on several occasions.

However, the PM's spokesperson said Johnson was never in close contact "with anyone who has tested positive".

The Labour party accused Johnson of "cooking up a reason to be above the rules". **PTI**

Australia win 4th T20 to end losing run in Bangladesh

ASSOCIATES PRESS
DHAKA, AUGUST 7

LEGSPINNER MITCHELL Swepson claimed a career-best 3-12 as Australia ended its losing run in Bangladesh with a hard-fought three-wicket victory in the fourth Twenty20 on Saturday.

Sweepson, one of the two changes by Australia, used his googly and quicker deliveries to perfection to limit Bangladesh to 104-9.

Bangladesh, which had already clinched the five-match series, created a chance to make it 4-0 by reducing Australia to 65-6 in the 11th over but Ashton Agar and Ashton Turner batted sensibly to help the side overhaul the target with six balls remaining.

Agar was key in the 105-7 winning total, making a run-a-ball-27 with two fours and one six.

After combining for a match-changing 34 runs with Turner, Agar was dismissed by fast bowler Shoriful Islam when the side was six runs from victory.

Australia won with Turner on 9 and Andrew Tye on 4.

Offspinner Mahedi Hasan broke through in the first over, dismissing captain Matthew Wade for 2. But Dan Christian appeared set to win the match on his own when he struck Shakib Al Hasan for five sixes in his one over.

The arrival of fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman shifted the momentum when he removed Christian after his 39 off 15 balls. "We've worked hard over the last few games and not had the result go our way. It's hard work out there," Australia captain Matthew Wade said. "The way Dan played, that's the difference between moving and losing sometimes. We needed big runs up top, and that changed the match."

The fifth and final T20 is on Monday.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 105 for 7 (Christian 39) beat Bangladesh 104 for 9 (Sweepson 3-12, Tye 3-18) by three wickets

Root, Bumrah set up intriguing final day

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
AUGUST 7

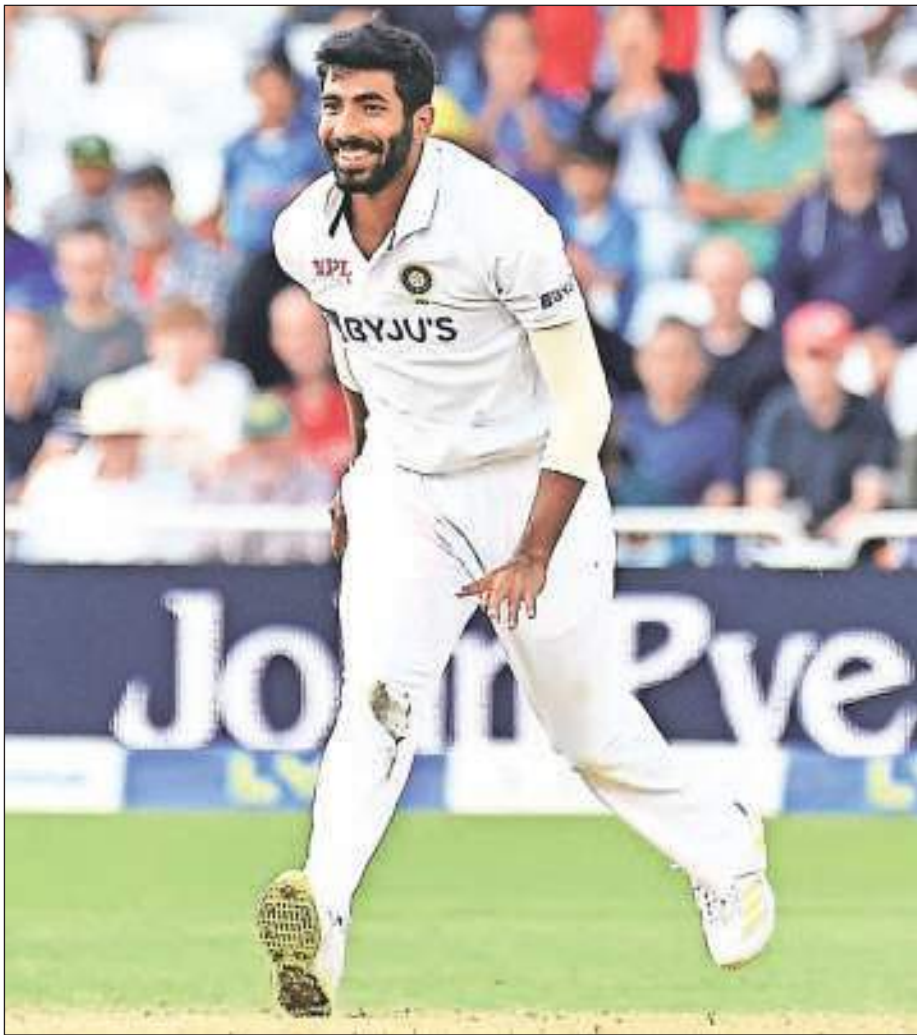
JOE ROOT drove Shardul Thakur past mid-on and let out his emotions. His batting form had dipped since mid-February. His captaincy has been under the scanner. At the pre-match press conference, Root was asked about if the next 10 Tests – five against India followed by five in the Ashes – could determine his captaincy future. The England captain didn't brush aside the question and sort of agreed that the results in the two high-profile series might have a bearing. Then again, he is not an average Joe and his masterclass gave his team a chance at Trent Bridge.

Root's 21st Test century, his first in England in three years, was one of the best of his 106-game career. For the first time in four days, the sun shone unfettered and play was uninterrupted. The pitch and conditions became easier for batting. But Root was up against a top-class Indian pace attack spearheaded by Jasprit Bumrah, who bagged a five-for in England's second innings to announce his return to form after the World Test Championship (WTC) final lull. The hosts posted 303 in their second innings to give India a victory target of 209. Root scored 109 of those runs.

India made a strong start to the chase but lost KL Rahul to finish Day 4 at 52/1.

It was a gripping day of Test cricket; a day which in Indian sporting context belonged to Neeraj Chopra. Not often does an India-England game get overshadowed by other sports events, but 87.58m has now been etched in sporting history.

From England's point of view, however, Root held the key to the day. At 46/2 and trailing by 95 runs on first innings, trouble beckoned. After a streaky four against Bumrah to get off the mark, Root steadily grew into the game. A stiff breeze was blowing across the ground and Mohammed Siraj was getting his inswingers going. England's batting talisman at-tested his intent with a couple of gorgeous boundaries against the bowler. Back-to-back fours off



The 5/64 on Saturday was Jasprit Bumrah's second five-for at Trent Bridge.

AP

Mohammed Shami were even better. Root was taking the game to India.

Virat Kohli tried to keep his opposite number off strike and attack the dour Dom Sibley. The ploy nearly worked. For a while, Root's batting became a little twitchy. He regained his rhythm by hitting a four off Shami that also took him to his half-century.

Kohli versus James Anderson is not the only subplot of the series. This is also Root's challenge to go shoulder to shoulder with his 'Fab Four' mates – Kohli, Kane Williamson and Steve Smith. This was his 10th Test hundred as England skipper. Only Peter May,

Graham Gooch and Alastair Cook are ahead of him.

Back to his best

Bumrah copped flak for his performance in the WTC final. Coming back to the red-ball fold after a few months, the fast bowler was undercooked against New Zealand in June. Now, he is back in his element. The delivery that dismissed a well-set Root pitched on the fifth-stump channel and angled in, carrying the extra bounce of the second new ball. Root edged it to Rishabh Pant.

Sam Curran's scalp was equally important. The left-hander, as is his wont, was frustrating

India. England's lead was swelling alarmingly. Bumrah accounted for Curran with a short delivery that cramped the latter for room. A brilliant yorker castled Stuart Broad next ball. The pacer finished with 5/64 from 19 overs on top of his 4/46 in the first innings.

England had one significant partnership – 89 runs between Root and Sibley for the third wicket – surrounded by a few more useful associations. Root's partners were letting him down. Jonny Bairstow looked good, but pulled a Siraj half-tracker straight to Ravindra Jadeja at deep square leg. The field positioning suggested that India were expecting

Bumrah copped flak for his performance in the WTC final. Coming back to the red-ball fold after a few months, the fast bowler was undercooked against New Zealand in June. Now, he is back in his element.

it. Dan Lawrence, after playing a superb shot, shuffled a little too far across against Thakur to be trapped leg-before. Jos Buttler shouldered arm to an incoming delivery from Thakur to be bowled.

From India's perspective, all 20 wickets in the match went to their fast bowlers. The pace quartet did their job, although Shami didn't have a good day on Saturday. Another 157 runs are required for victory on the final day, as the onus shifts to the batsmen.

SCOREBOARD
England (1st innings): 183
India (1st innings): 278
England (2nd Innings): 303
R Burns c Pant b Siraj 18 (49b, 3x4), D Sibley c Pant b Bumrah 28 (133b, 2x4), Z Crawley c Pant b Bumrah 6 (7b, 1x4), J Root c Pant b Bumrah 109 (172b, 14x4), J Bairstow c Jadeja b Siraj 30 (50b, 4x4), D Lawrence lbw b Thakur 25 (32b, 4x4), J Buttler b Thakur 17 (22b, 3x4), S Curran c Siraj b Bumrah 32 (45b, 4x4), O Robinson c Rahane b Shami 15 (12b, 2x4), S Broad b Bumrah 0 (1b), J Anderson not out 0 (2b)
Extras: 23 (b 5, lb 2, nb 10, w 6).
Bowling: J Bumrah 19-2-64-5, Md Siraj 25-3-84-2, Md Shami 15-5-172-1, S Thakur 13-1-37-2, R Jadeja 13-3-39-0.

India (2nd Innings): 52/1
KL Rahul c Buttler b Broad 26 (38b, 6x4), R Sharma batting 12 (34b), C Pujara batting 12 (13b, 3x4)
Extras: 2 (lb 1, nb 1)
Bowling: J Anderson 5-1-12-0, S Broad 5-1-18-1, O Robinson 4-0-21-0
At stumps Day 4
India need 157 runs

ASSOCIATED PRESS
AUGUST 7

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN and Lionel Messi are in negotiations on a contract after financially troubled Barcelona was unable to keep the superstar, a person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Messi's legal team is in Paris and negotiations have seen an annual net salary of around 25 million euros (\$29.5 million) discussed which would be lower than his Barcelona pay, the person said on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing talks.

Barcelona announced that Messi will give a news conference at the Camp Nou on Sunday at noon local time (1000 GMT) but has not specified what it is about. Even so, Barcelona's coach and players did not wait to make public their tributes and farewells to the star.

Barcelona bid farewell to Messi in statements and social media posts on Thursday, making him the most desired free agent in soccer history after his contract expired. The Catalan club had hoped to keep Messi, who agreed to a pay cut, but it still wouldn't have complied with the Spanish league's financial regulations.

PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino was in contact with his fellow Argentine as Barcelona announced on Thursday that Messi would be leaving the club he joined as a 13-year-old before winning every major trophy and world player of the year titles.

Funded for a decade by Qatari sovereign wealth, PSG is one of the few clubs in the world that can finance a deal. The club is exploring sponsorship deals in South America on the back of being able to sign Messi. There was no immediate response from Messi's media team. PSG, which was opening its French league campaign later Saturday against Troyes, didn't respond to an email with questions seeking comment. Messi led Barcelona to 35 titles, including four Champions League crowns, while also earn-



"Nothing will ever be the same, not Camp Nou, not the city of Barcelona, not even ourselves," veteran defender Pique said in a message to Messi. *Reuters*

ing a record six Ballon d'Or awards. But club president Joan Laporta deemed retaining the best player in club history, even at a 50% discount to his previous wages, as too risky to its beleaguered finances.

While Messi waited to speak on his future, Barcelona's coach and players used social media to express their farewells to the 34-year-old star.

Coach Ronald Koeman said Saturday that "it is still difficult to grasp that you will never play again for Barcelona." Veteran defender Gerard Pique, who had played with Messi since the time both were teenagers at Barcelona's youth academy, said late Friday that "nothing will ever be the same, not Camp Nou, not the city of Barcelona, not even ourselves. We met each other when we were 13 years old and had our careers before us. What a career! If we had written it ourselves, it could not have been better."

Left back Jordi Alba, who developed an almost unstoppable passing connection with Messi for the Argentine to score, said that "it has been a privilege to share these nine years with you. How I enjoyed your passes to meet my run and my pass back to you that always worked. And how much I am going to miss you," Alba said.

How Tokyo's 7 medals would impact the trajectory of Indian sport



HEALING
NEERAJ'S GOLD

FOR YEARS it hurt —the two fourth-place finishes of Milkha Singh and PT Usha at the Olympics. It was the closest that Indian athletics reached the vicinity of the podium. As much as Milkha and Usha were romanticised and revered, there was still a part of their own psyche that refused to come into grips with the near miss. No longer though, as Chopra's historic throw in Tokyo shall exorcise the ghosts of Rome and Los Angeles. Usha herself thanked Chopra for realising her unfulfilled dream. Beyond that, Indian athletics now has a legacy, a precedent and pioneer, and a totem who is just 23 years old, who has just begun his career and with the potential to take Indian athletics to further heights.



RENAISSANCE
HOCKEY BRONZE

FORTY ONE years of crushing pain is over. For long, it seemed Indian hockey was quietly rolling down the slope of ignominy, its heyday a sodden reel of the past, beyond redemption and retrieval. The longer the wait for an Olympic medal continued for the record Olympic champs, the lonelier Indian hockey felt. But the men's bronze medal—and the near bronze medal of the women's team—could potentially wake up the sleeping giant. Hockey's stature and popularity could soar, the team would only emerge stronger, bag more laurels, and the sport in the country of hockey's Bradman, Dhyan Chand, would witness a second wind that could reinstate the departed glory.



MESSIAH
MIRABAI'S SILVER

FOR 21 years, Karnam Malleswari's bronze remained India's only weightlifting medal in the Olympics. Though a popular sport, it seemed drifting down the drain after it got embroiled in doping scandals. The sport was teetering in an existential crisis when Malleswari's spiritual heir burst into the circuit from Imphal, with a beatific smile and charming demeanour. She showed nerves of steeliest steel to overcome injuries and hurt and chart a new path in India's weightlifting history. A path that would be devotedly followed by a thousand unknown Mirabais in the country. The most inspiring of India's medals could inspire a barbell revolution, and no doubt restore the credibility of the sport in the country.



SUCCESSOR
LOVLINA'S BRONZE

IN MARY Kom's Olympics swan-song, she found her successor too—Lovlina Borgohain, the doughty, gritty boxer from Baromukhia. Like her mentor, she has technique, tactical awareness and composure to be more than a one-off, to be a talisman of women's boxing in years to come, to rule the world for many more years. In her bouts in the Olympics, she illustrated Mary-like tenacity to not surrender and keep fighting, even if your adversary has a better repertoire and reputation, as was the case during her semi-finals. Her emergence came just around the time when women's boxing was slithering away from public eyes. Her emergence would catalyse its reemergence.



SUSTENANCE
WRESTLING'S SILVER, BRONZE

SINCE THE Beijing Games, India has been churning out world-class wrestlers at a breezy clip. But winning medals, especially in Olympics, is indispensable in sustaining the legacy from going askance. All it would take is a poor outing for an Olympic sport to go out of fashion. But Ravi and Bajrang ensured that wrestling would continue as India's most prolific medal-winning stream in this century. Bajrang's medal was more or less guaranteed, the colour of the medal was the only speculation, he is ranked second and considered one of the finest.



CONTINUITY
SINDHU'S BRONZE

Though she could not upgrade her silver in Rio, her bronze was well-earned, accomplished as it was against a tough pool of competitors. As with the wrestlers, it was important that she keeps winning medals so as to keep the torch of tradition flickering, to reassert India's stakes as one of the badminton powerhouses of the world. The medal could fuel her for more glory and a shot at completing the medal set in Paris. It also put her in a unique position among the pantheon of some of India's greatest sportspersons because of now having been there, and done that, across two Olympic Games. A silver and a bronze now matches the haul of Sushil Kumar and solidifies her legacy as one of the best.

MEDAL TALLY				
COUNTRY	G	S	B	TOTAL
1. China	38	31	18	87
2. USA	36	39	33	108
3. Japan	27	12	17	56
4. ROC	20	26	23	69
5. G Britain	20	21	22	63
6. Australia	17	07	22	46
7. Germany	10	11	16	37
8. Netherlands	10	11	12	33
9. Italy	10	10	19	39
47. India	01	02	04	07

*G- Gold, S- Silver, B- Bronze

HIGHLIGHT REEL

BASKETBALL

DURANT STEPS UP

Kevin Durant scored 29 points and joined Carmelo Anthony as the only three-time men's gold medalists in Olympic history. Jayson Tatum added 19 and the US held off France 87-82 on Saturday to win the title.

FOOTBALL

BRAZIL TAKE THE CROWN

Malcom scored in the 108th minute and Brazil won its second consecutive gold medal in men's soccer with a 2-1 victory over Spain. Brazil also won gold on home soil five years ago at the iconic Maracana Stadium. Neymar struck the winner in a 5-4 shootout after a 11 draw with Germany. Brazil had a 1-0 lead at the half but Mikel Oyarzabal tied it for Spain in the 61st minute off a cross from Carlos Soler.

ATHLETICS

FELIX EXITS ON A HIGH

Allyson Felix made her record-setting 11th trip after starting as the headliner on a 4x400 relay win that featured a who's who of American running. With the gold medal dangling from her neck and the Star-Spangled Banner playing in the near-empty stadium. "I took a moment just to close my eyes and take it in one last time," Felix said. After the final race of the final Games of the 35-year-old sprinter's career, Felix leaves the stage having won the most medals of any track athlete in US history.



SHIVANI NAIK

MUMBAI, AUGUST 7

THE 87.03 metres throw. Not to be mistaken for that 87.58 metres one which fetched Neeraj Chopra the gold.

Chopra's first rush in the final - the opening act, India's first step in track & field, Chopra's rocket take-off, his open challenge to Johannes Vetter to see who was better on the big night - was the defining moment of India's 2020+1 Olympics climax. The 87.03 joined a pantheon of statistical coincidences, harbingers of blazing medals India has won over the years in Olympic finals.

That the gold medal was sealed with the very first of six throws is clear. Some might even say that the message went out to the field in qualification itself. Chopra 86.65m bt Vetter 85.64m.

But on Finals Day, it was the 87.03m that set the tone, even while it was clear that 85m was going to be the new 90m of javelin this summer. While Chopra contemplated gunning for the Olympic record (90.5m) as well as his personal best, it was the impact first throw and "steady" second that actually brought home the gold.

"If your first throw is good, you gain confidence. And it also automatically puts pressure on all the other athletes plus you yourself feel good about yourself," he would explain later.

But going big on the first throw sits nicely with all of India's medals that have come on the back of aggressive opening attempts in Finals.

Abhinav Bindra's 10.7 on the first shot in the Beijing 10m air rifle Finals. Gold. Gagan Narang's 10.7 four years later in London. Bronze. Vijay Kumar's 5/5 in Rapid Fire Pistol. Silver. Shooting success has come on the back of that first near-perfect shot.

A good start sets the ball rolling, though the last shot could be just as important, or any other attempts delivered in the course of a final. So, Bindra bookended his final with 10.7 and a Hukling 10.8. Narang finished with another monster 10.7. The confident first stride - either to take the lead, like Chopra did (and never let go) when the best effort gets the medal, or to get into the groove, when scores add up - has been the hallmark of forays into medal territory.

Finals for Indians have also gone downhill if the starts were poor, middling or simply not enormous. In shooting, Jitu Rai (9.5), Joydeep Karmakar (10.1) previously, and Saurabh Chaudhary (10.1) in Tokyo, are cases in point.



An 87.03m to kick off the contest dumped almighty pressure on Johannes Vetter, and also put the gold seemingly out of reach of the Czechs and German Julian Webber. AP

The 7s and 8s in Archery this time to kick off for Deepika Kumari and Atanu Das have proven more damaging than anything in the clutch - which is assumed to be the weakness. But the poor starts can bring challenges undone.

Psychology of a fast start

An 87.03m to kick off the contest dumped almighty pressure on Vetter, and also put the gold seemingly out of reach of the Czechs and German Webber. While it may be simplistic to assume that Chopra was the form player going into Tokyo, it will rank as one of the smartest tactics to go all-out at the start, and draw desperation and rushed mistakes from Vetter by baiting him to go for '90m or no gold' scenario.

While the top eight throwers got six at-

tempts, the bar was set on an above-average 87m throw at the outset, which surely would've upset their own pacing or momentum-building, knowing that Chopra had fired home a biggie and might have enough in the tank to go even further.

While Vetter's fidgety restlessness preceded his reputation as the 90+ thrower, coming into the Olympics he was struggling to find his rhythm, which would've given Chopra confidence. Still, it was audacious to go for 85+ in qualification, way above the expected 82-mark. And to sow nettling doubts about just how much further he could go.

As gold medals go, this was taking it away from the field in a fast-break even before others could settle in and grip their spears.

For India, the 210 kg entry of weightlifter Mirabai Chanu when she won silver was a bold start. It wasn't that the Indian was intending to go straight for that total. But in what was a psychological masterstroke, the mere entry noting was bound to put pressure on Chinese Zhizhi Hou to think if her Snatch world record was in danger - even if it wasn't.

India's gold medals come in all manners. The first hockey team sent out in 1928 returned as Olympic champions, and then hockey couldn't stop winning. Abhinav Bindra couldn't stop standing still in deep focus to pick the first individual gold at Beijing. On Saturday, Neeraj Chopra's javelin couldn't stop flying. Not after a 87.03m first throw. Somewhere in between that first statement of intent and the elusive, coveted 90m mark, came the golden mark of 87.58m.

Former coach recalls a chubby youngster

NITIN SHARMA

PANCHKULA, AUGUST 7

JAVELIN COACH Naseem Ahmad remembers the day in 2011 when a chubby 13-year-old named Neeraj Chopra came to the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula. The teenager travelled over four hours from his native, Khandra village, near Panipat, to enquire about the process of getting admission at the sports academy that had one of the only two synthetic tracks available in Haryana at the time.

That was a big step for the youngster to take in his budding athletics career. An even bigger one, the biggest yet, came on Saturday, when he launched a javelin 87.58 metres at the Tokyo Olympic Stadium to become only the second individual gold medalist at the Olympics from the country.

It's an achievement that has created memories, and one that has brought back quite a few for Ahmad.

"I still remember how Neeraj would watch his seniors training at the nursery," recalls an emotional Ahmad.

"He'd sit with his notebook and take tips from them. He would never shy away from training and would always set targets of winning each day's round with the group. To see him win the gold medal today on the biggest stage is the greatest joy for us. And I am sure he will be spending time with the javelin throwers from the other countries just like he did here with his seniors and friends post training or competition." shares an emotional Ahmad.

Chopra first learnt the art of javelin throwing from coach Jaiver Singh in Panipat. In Panchkula he trained from 2011 till early 2016. But it wasn't just the field event Ahmad would make him train for. At the stadium near the foothills of the Shivalik Range, Chopra's morning sessions would be followed by him training with the long-distance runners, and then the javelin event again in the evening.

Staying at the hostel in Panchkula with him were also a few friends who used to train with him in Panipat. They weren't bereft of Chopra's constant questioning about the sport either. Narender Ranbir, a Paralympian from London 2012 and Rio 2016, and silver medalist at the 2014 Para Asian Games, shared a room with Chopra when they were in Panipat.

Read full story on [Indianexpress.com](#)

From Khudan to Tokyo, Bajrang Punia's love for wrestling pays off

NIHAL KOSHIE

AUGUST 7

IT IS a story that dates back to when wrestler Bajrang Punia was about 13-years-old. Balwan Singh, his father, still narrates it with pride. At a dangal near Khudan village, where the family is from, Bajrang grappled with a heavier wrestler and defeated him.

"The other pehelwan was about 15 kilograms heavier. Bajrang didn't hesitate. He out-muscled his opponent. I think it was an exhibition bout. There are no videos of it. But I remember he got the better of his opponent," Balwan says, chuckling with joy.

Medals his son won in Asian Games, Commonwealth, World Championship, and now the Olympics are close to his heart, but there is a reason Balwan remembers this particular day.

The little-known win convinced Balwan his boy was meant to be a wrestler. He was to put the family's name back in the wrestling spotlight. In telling fashion too, by out-manoeuving Kazakhstan's Daulet

Niyazbekov 8-0.

Strong, fearless

A pehelwan himself, Balwan realised that a young Bajrang had two qualities that the akharas across the region could not teach - natural strength and fearlessness. Now 27, Bajrang's comebacks when trailing in the final minute is the stuff of legends. He fought back from the brink during the gold medal match of the Asian Championship and the bronze medal bout at the World Championships two years ago.

His father is amused when asked how he remains confident though the clock is running down. "Even as a teenager, he won bouts after staring at defeat. He is mentally strong but equally important is his smartness. He is quick to spot a window of opportunity and backs himself. I was like this in my younger days."

Balwan is at home in Sonipat. Six years ago, the family moved from Khudan and closer to the Sports Authority of India centre where Bajrang trains. There is signage fixed across the boundary wall with pictures of Bajrang at felicitations. The Olympic rings painted at the top

of the building reflect the house owner's status. In the evening Balwan sits on the porch, passersby nod in acknowledgment.

Unfulfilled career

Balwan wrestled in dangals for a good part of his youth. A promising university-level wrestler, he dropped out because he had to tend to the three-acre land the family owned. Times were tough back, Balwan says. "I don't want to make it sound like it was a burden, but I had three daughters and two sons. You have to think of the future too when you have a big family. When the time comes, people will ask what the father does or how much land he owns," Balwan adds.

Through all his troubles, his one dream was to get his sons into wrestling. Harinder, the older son, followed in his father's footsteps and joined an akhada. But like his father, he had to give it up and work in the fields. Bajrang was the last big hope. "Bajrang was not mischievous and he towed the line at home. The only time we had to be strict with him was when his obsession for wrestling went overboard. But nobody really complained. We wanted a



Bajrang's father Balwan Singh (second from right), mother Om Pyari (right) and older brother Harinder (centre) at their home in Sonipat. File

pehelwan in our family."

Bajrang's mother Om Pyari enforced discipline in the house. However, seeing Bajrang's passion for the sport she admits to sparing the

rod a few times. She too has a treasure trove of stories about a young Bajrang. But this one cracks her up even today.

It was a Sunday morning and Bajrang hadn't woken up till 9 am. She went towards his bed to jolt him awake only to step back surprised. Bajrang had placed pillows and sheets in such a way to give an impression that he was in the bed. He was nowhere to be seen.

"He had left home at 3 am. We knew if he was not at home or in the immediate surroundings he would be at the akhada. That day he went to the akhada and didn't return till noon. I scolded him for trying to fool us but in my heart, I was happy to see his drive," Om Pyari says.

Bajrang first followed his brother Harinder to an akhada in Khudan. This was a practice most youngsters followed in the area. "Almost every second or third house in and around our village has someone who has been a wrestler," Harinder says. Soon it was obvious who was the more talented of the two.

Prodigy on tractor

A special day on the dangal calendar is

Shivaratri. If a wrestler chooses to, he can compete in at least a dozen bouts. Bajrang was always eager. "My father, Bajrang and I would go on a tractor from one village to another. Bajrang would finish one competition at one place, hop onto the tractor and we would go to the next. He must have been around 10 but everyone could see he was talented," Harinder says looking back.

The little joys of being on the wrestling circuit made Bajrang determined to work harder. "Sometimes he would win Rs 10, on other days it was a box of ladoos, or a bag of oranges and some churma. In winter, the prize was kilo of rewari or groundnuts. We had a tough life back then. Little things were precious. Bajrang and I discuss those days fondly," Harinder says.

On Friday, as his younger brother began his quest for an Olympic medal, Harinder went on a pilgrimage of 15 temples in his village. "I have been doing this since Bajrang's cadet days. On days he is competing, I am praying for him. I don't check my phone nor do I ask anyone about the result. Only when I get back home do I get to know the result. Prayers ensure Bajrang never disappoints."

87.58 m, a new high

A male athlete, likely a medalist, is shown in a celebratory pose. He is wearing a blue Japanese Olympic uniform with colorful geometric patterns on the sleeves. He holds a gold medal in his right hand and a bouquet of flowers in his left. The background is a large stadium with a complex roof structure and bright lights. The text "TOKYO 2020" is visible in the bottom right corner.

Kolkata