राष्ट्रदुत

**#TRENDING** 

# Chillin' with Penguins

A heartwarming café experience at Ski Dubai lets visitors dine beside waddling penguins, blending icy charm with viral magic.



table. Sounds like a scene from a winter fantasy, right? Well, it's real, and it's happening in the mid-

dle of the desert! Welcome to Ski Dubai's Penguin Café experience, the latest viral sensation that's turning heads (and melting hearts) across social media. Set inside the Mall of the Emirates, this frosty experiwarm meal while adorable Gentoo and King penguins roam freely in the icy enclosure just inches away from

The concept, equal parts surreal and heartwarming, has taken the internet by storm. Videos of diners beaming with joy as curious penguins waddle around have racked up millions of views on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. One video cap tioned, 'I never thought I'd eat breakfast with penguins in Dubai' has over 3 million



D ubai, known for its futuristic attractions and overthe-top luxury, has long been a nagnet for unique experiences. But dining with penguins? That's a new level of cool, literally. Located within Ski Dubai, the indoor snow park that maintains sub-zero Penguin Café is part of the Penguin Encounter program.

Guests can book a session

that includes a tour of the penguin habitat, educational interactions with trainers and a cozy meal inside a dome surrounded by snow and, of course, penguins. And don't worry, the experience is designed with the penguins' well-being in mind. The enclosures are climate-controlled, supervised by veterinary staff, and follow ethical animal care standards.

# A Hit with Families, Influencers, and Couples

**T** t's not just animal lovers dise. Families see it as an educational and fun day out, couples consider it a romantic cool date,' and influencers? Well, let's just say a selfie with a penguin is pretty unbeatable

café offers a selection of hot drinks, pastries, and comfort food, all served with a side of icy charm. Think sipping hot cocoa while watching penguins slide across ice, it's hard

on the Instagram feed. The

# What's Making It Go Viral?

part from the obvious A 'aww' factor, the success of this experience lies in its unexpectedness. Who would expect a slice of Antarctica in the heart of Dubai? The element of surprise, coupled with the visually stunning setup, makes it irresistibly

shareable. In an age where unique experiences trump material things, the idea of 'dining with penguins' perfectly taps into the experiential travel trend. People don't just want vacations, they want stories. And this one's a

o, if you're heading to Dubai and looking to swap skyscrapers for snow. maybe it's time to pencil in a penguin date. After all how many people can say

they've had brunch with a bird in a bow tie? One thing's for sure, when it comes to unforgettable moments. Dubai just keeps raising the (ice) bar.



# How the Quit India movement brought down the Left Front

IN OCTOBER, 1942, A MASSIVE CYCLONE HIT THE REGION AND THE RAJ, AS COLLECTIVE PUNISH-

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WHICH IS ALL THE BRITISH WERE INTERESTED IN AT THE MOMENT. TUCKED AWAY IN THE SOUTH OF

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BENGAL. MIDNAPORE DID NOT AFFECT EITHER THE ASSAM OR BURMESE FRONT OF WAR.

Villagers in some cases attacked armed soldiers taking away rice from the district, resisting the colonial scorched-earth policy which would soon lead to mass starvation. By the end of September, Dhara's team was taking over police stations and government officers. In this direct action, 71-year old Matongini Hazra was shot and killed as she attempted to take over the police station of the district headquarters located in Tamluk. Hazra's murder came to symbolise the immense British repression as well as the heroic grassroots resistance that characterises the Quit India movement and she remains an icon of anti-colonial struggle. Modern Kolkata remembers her with a statue at the Brigade Parade Grounds, proudly holding up the Congress flag, which is what she was doing when she was shot.

## Shoaib Daniyal

August 8, 1942, the Congress passed what has come to be known to history as the Quit India resolution. The entire sum-Mohandas Gandhi in an unprecedentedly belligerent mood towards the British. Three years earlier, a month before the start of World II. however. Gandhi had Subhas Bose expelled from the Congress for advocating a mass movement, preferring instead, along with entire right wing of the Congress, to work with the Rai But now things were different and Gandhi was turning increasingly hostile, a change Jawaharlal Nehru attributed to 'Gandhiji's feelings that Japan and Germany will win World War II,' a popular sentiment at the time, before the allies turned the tide in Stalingrad. On July 10, Gandhi spoke vehemently against the Raj's scorched-earth policy in Bengal, built to deny provisions to Japan

should it invade from Burma, a

move that would cause a famine

killing three million Bengalis

This statement was so incendiary

that the British government

thought it amounted to the decla-

ration of a 'parallel authority act-

ing in defiance of measures neces-

sary for the prosecution of war.'

details how this was to be accomindependence and a vague reference to mass struggle

The British reaction this time though, was different. Taking the Congress off guard, the Raj arrest ed the entire party leadership and organisation. Historian Sumit Sarkar explains that the August 8 resolution was not a call for a mass movement per se or a complete break with the Raj: "Far from ruling out further negotiations, the whole thing may conceivably have been an exercise in brinksmanship and a bargaining counter.' The British, facing a life and death struggle of their own, though, were in no mood to negotiate with the Congress. Not only did they arrest the Congress leadership, before they could launch any sort of mass movement, the Raj also unleashed an unprecedented wave of repression with no less than 57 armed battalions deployed against Indian civilians. Leaderless and under heavy fire, nevertheless, Indians across the subcontinent fought back. On August 31, the Viceroy would write: "I am engaged here in meet-



# Arrest and repression

Then, on July 14, the Congress passed a resolution asking for complete independence and speaking vaguely of a 'widespread struggle,' without giving any plished. The resolution of August 8, more or less, repeated the points made in the July 14 resolution:



ing by far the most serious rebel-

lion since that of 1857, the gravity

Sushil Kumar Dhara

M ost of the revolutionary activities in the area were led by a Congressman, Sushil Kumar Dhara and Satish Samanta (although given the famine and the chaos, quite a bit of the resist-Villagers in some cases

ance was also leaderless). attacked armed soldiers taking away rice from the district. resisting the colonial scorchedearth policy which would soon lead to mass starvation. By the end of September, Dhara's team

# and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world. In fact, so fierce was the Indian response that, for the first time in a century

**#HISTORY** 

the Raj actually lost control of some areas. One of them was located on the western coast of Bengal, in Midnapore district, where rebels ran an independent government for two whole years. called the Tamluk Jatiya Sarkar, National Tamluk Government."

# **British repression**

The British response was initially brutal. Colonial security forces

# Heroic resistance

and government officers. In this direct action, 71-year old Matongini Hazra was shot and killed as she attempted to take over the police station of the district headquarters located in Tamluk. Hazra's murder came to symbolise the immense British repression as well as the heroic grassroots resistance that characterises the Quit India movement and she remains an icon of anti-colonial

fired upon unarmed Midnaporis

and even machine-gunned Tamluk

Satish Chandra Samanta

struggle. Modern Kolkata remembers her with a statue at the Brigade Parade Grounds, proudly holding up the Congress flag which is what she was doing when she was shot. By the end of 1942, the Tamluk Jativa Sarkar had been fully established and the Raj, with the imperial centre of Calcutta only two hours away, completely cut off. Government buildings had been taken over, roads dug up and tele-

town using aeroplanes. In October, 1942, a massive cyclone hit the region and the Raj, as collective relief work. After a while, though, the Rai simply let the provisional government be, given that it did not really threaten the war effort, which is all the British were interested in at the moment. Tucked away in the south of Bengal. Midnapore did not affect either the Assam or Burmese front of war. The Jatiya Sarkar, meanwhile, launched a militia, in the nope of helping Bose's Indian National Army, should it succeed in invading British-held Bengal (it didn't). The Sarkar was also nvolved in cyclone relief work and was actually rather successful in famine relief, targeting hoarders and distributing surplus paddy to the poor. The parallel

it even ran its own justice system, helping to dispose of 1,681 cases. Eventually, while the Quit India movement did not succeed in its immediate aim, of making the British quit India, it did have a major impact on Britain's colonial policy after the war. Clear that they could not hold India by force, the British looked to work out a negotiated withdrawal from India. which they did on August 15, 1947. 1942 to 2007

And it wasn't only 1947. The culture of Midnapore, which had pro-



# #TELECOMMUNICATIONS

# Wired for Progress: How India Dialled into the Future

From colonial telegraphs to 5G revolutions, tracing India's remarkable telecom journey on World Telecommunications Day!



ello, can you hear me?" A phrase that once echoed across long-distance trunk calls is now a distant memory in the age of 5G, video calls,

On World Telecommunications Day, celebrated every May 17, we don't just honour the evolution of communication technology, we reflect on the way it has reshaped our lives. economies, and societies. And for India, the journey has been nothing



dates back to 1851, when the first operational telegraph line was laid between Kolkata and Diamond Harbour. Back then, messages were transmitted using Morse code and required skilled operators. It was the British who introduced telegraphy, primarily to maintain administrative control over colonial India. Yet, postindependence, India took steady steps to indigenize and expand this infrastructure.

The first telephone exchange in India was established in Mumbai in 1882, with a modest 93

### country of over 1.4 billion today! But things didn't move fast. Up until the 1980s, getting a landline phone meant applying, waiting for years, and sometimes pulling political strings! The winds of change began

to blow in the 1990s, with liberalization and economic reforms. The telecom sector was opened to private players, and India saw the birth of the mobile revolublack Motorola handsets from the '90s? They cost almost as

ast-forward to 2025, and India now boasts over 1.2 billion mobile connections, making it the second-largest telecom market in the world after China. Internet penetration stands at over 55%, with rural connectivi-

ty improving steadily, thanks to initiatives like BharatNet. We're no longer talking about phones just for calling, they're tools for banking, learning, health consultations, shopping, and even

# The Study of Telecommunications: Then and Now

 ${\sf \Gamma}$  n the earlier days, few academ-L ic institutions in India offered dedicated courses in telecommunications. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and some IITs pioneered research in electronics and communication. With the mobile boom in the 2000s, demand for skilled telecom engineers surged, and universities started offering B.Tech and M.Tech programs in Electronics &

Telecommunication Engineering. Today, institutions are expanding into 5G research, IoT, satellite communication, and AI-driven telecom networks. The upcoming 6G roadmap, which India aims to lead by 2030, is also pushing new academic frontiers. Institutes like IIT Madras and IIIT-Hyderabad are already deep-diving into quantum communication and edge computing as the next big leap.



Apps like Aarogva Setu, DigiLocker and UMANG show how telecom can fuel e-governance. Meanwhile, ini tiatives like Digital India, Smart Cities Mission, and Start-up India are all riding on the backbone of robust telecom infrastructure. Let's not forget rural India. With mobile penetration increasing in villages. farmers now get crop prices via SMS, students learn on smartphones, and healthworkers access real-time medical data

# Challenges on the Line

Tet, the call isn't all clear. Call drops, spectrum pricing, cybersecurity concerns, and rural network gaps remain challenges. India still struggles with last-mile connectivity in remote areas like the Northeast and parts of central India. Moreover, with rising data usage, sustainability is a concern. Telecom towers consume a huge amount of energy. Greener alternatives and 5G energy-efficient net-

**Jugaad Meets Jio: The Desi** 

ndia's telecom success isn't just

about imported technology, it's

entry of Reliance Jio in 2016 disrupt-

ed the market by offering dirt-cheap

data. Result? Internet became a basic

necessity. From vegetable vendors to

grandparents, everyone went online

**Innovation Spirit** 

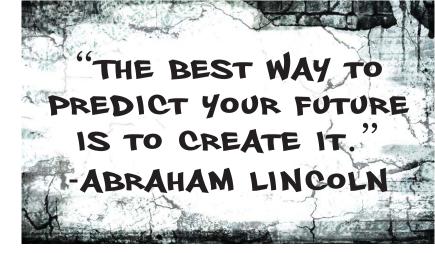
### works are now being explored. What's Next? A Connected Tomorrow

s we look ahead. India is posi tioning itself not just as a user but a global innovator in telecommu nications. 5G is rolling out, and 6G is already on the drawing board. Satellite internet, like JioSpaceFiber and OneWeb, could make the digital divide a thing of the past. Also, the integration of telecom with AI, health tech, agritech, and fintech sectors will unlock new horizons. Think remote surgeries, smart irrigation systems, AI-powered tutoring in vernacular languages, all made possible by high-speed, reliable connectivity.

# On a Final Note

o, this World Telecommunication Day, when you pick up your phone for a quick chat, a reel scroll, or an online payment, pause and think. That little device is the end product of nearly two centuries of innovation, policy, and perseverance.

# THE WALL



# **BABY BLUES**



### By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott ZITS

Tamluk Jatiya Sarkar, wasn't

going to quieten down overnight

Sixty years later, in 2007, the Left

Front government looked to

acquire land forcibly in the

Nandigram area of Midnapore.

one of the areas liberated by the

Tamluk Jativa Sarkar. In a move-

ment startlingly similar to 1942,

Nandigram simply cut itself off

from Kolkata. Protestors dug up

roads, cut off telephone cables and

declared a muktanchal, 'liberated

zone' free from government con-

trol. Chief minister Buddhadeb

Bhattacharya told the West Bengal

Assembly, "For two and a half

months, the administration could

not function at Nandigram.

Eventually, the state government

would launch a massive operation

involving 3,000 policemen support-

ed by Communist Party of India

(Marxists) cadre to try and 'take

back' Nandigram. During this, the

police opened fire on protestors,

killing between 14 (official fig-

ures) to 50 people. Like in 1942,

though, the events in Midnapore

reverberated far beyond the dis-

trict. Four years later, the

Trinamool Congress would make

opposition to forcible land acquisi-

tion, its main point of attack

against the ruling Left, holding up

the violence in Nandigram as a

graphic example. The campaign

34-year rule over West Bengal.

would be a success and

Nandigram would end the Left's



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman