

CITY TALKS

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CHANDIGARH IS 'BEST UTS SMART CITY' IN COUNTRY



CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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AIRTEL, TATA GROUP TEAM UP FOR 'MADE IN INDIA' 5G NETWORK SOLUTIONS



POTPOURRI

8

OTT GAVE CHANCE TO NEW ACTORS: PRIYANKA CHOPRA



HIGHLIGHTS

- Congress put up five demands at the all-party meeting including early statehood, conducting polls to restore democracy and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits.
- Congress also called upon the government to bring a bill giving guarantee regarding domicile and employment in the state to the residents of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Fourteen prominent leaders from Jammu and Kashmir attended the meeting.
- This was the first high-level interaction between the Centre and political leadership mainly from Kashmir since August 5, 2019, when the Centre revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and the state was bifurcated into two union territories.
- Twenty-two petitions against the law (passed by Parliament on August 5, 2019 bifurcating the state and abrogating special status) are pending hearing before a Constitution Bench of the SC
- NC had boycotted the first meet of the delimitation commission in February this year saying it cannot participate in the exercise that flows from the JK Reorganisation Act which it has challenged in the apex court.

Delimitation, statehood on cards

Our priority is to strengthen grassroots democracy in J&K. Delimitation has to happen at a quick pace so that polls can happen and J&K gets an elected Government that gives strength to J&K's development trajectory."

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

"Today's meeting on Jammu and Kashmir was conducted in a very cordial environment. Everyone expressed their commitment to democracy and the Constitution. It was stressed to strengthen the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir."

Amit Shah, Home Minister

"All political parties presented their opinions. I think that in the time to come, the political process is going to begin. The election will also be held after the delimitation process. Assembly will be constituted there once again."

Kavinder Gupta, senior BJP leader

"The meeting was very cordial and very positive, very dignified. We all agreed that we must work for the democracy. The prime minister has assured that he will do everything to make Jammu and Kashmir a zone of peace rather than a zone of conflict."

Muzaffar Hussain Baig, PC leader

WANT TO REMOVE 'DILLI KI DURU' AS WELL AS 'DIL KI DURU': PM NARENDRA MODI TO JAMMU AND KASHMIR LEADERS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi told a group of leaders from Jammu and Kashmir that the Assembly elections there will be held after the completion of the ongoing delimitation exercise, People's Conference leader Muzaffar Hussain Baig said after a crucial meeting to chalk out the future course of action in the Union Territory.

According to official sources, the main focus of the meeting was to strengthen the democratic process and the Prime Minister said that the government was "fully committed" to it. Modi stressed that holding Assembly elections, just like the successful conduct of the District Development Council polls, is a priority and that the polls can happen soon after the delimitation exercise, the sources said, adding that by and large most participants expressed willingness for it. The Prime Minister stressed that an atmosphere of safety

and security needs to be ensured for all sections of society in Jammu and Kashmir and he wanted to remove 'Dilli ki Duru' as well as 'Dil Ki Duru' (distance from Delhi as well as distance of heart), according to the sources. Earlier, fourteen leaders of mainstream J-K mainstream parties arrived at the PM's residence to attend the meeting with everyone having welcomed the resumption of talks—the first outreach by the Centre since the Abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into the UTs of JK and Ladakh.

Yes, Nitin has left as his immediate family members have Covid-19 and he is currently not in a mental state to conduct games"

The meeting had no specific agenda, with leaders free to raise what they want. Before entering the meeting, Chairman of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration and National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah again hailed the PM's initiative and distanced himself from PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's remarks that the Centre should also talk to Pakistan for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. Abdullah said Mufti has her agenda and party and he, in the NC, had his separate agenda. "The meeting is a very welcome step, much needed for easing tensions in JK. We are going with an open mind," he said. The meeting is being at-

tended by four former CMs Farooq Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti; four former JK deputy CMs Nirmal Singh, Kavinder Gupta, Tara Chand, Muzaffar Baig present along with chiefs of mainstream JK parties including state Congress president GA Mir, BJP state chief Ravinder Raina, JK Panthers Party chief Bhim Singh, Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari, People's Conference chief Sajjad Lone. On statehood, Home Minister Amit Shah has said it will be restored at an appropriate time.

OPPOSITION REACTION

"People of Jammu and Kashmir are in a lot of difficulties after August 5, 2019. They are angry, upset and emotionally shattered. They feel humiliated. I told Prime Minister that people of Jammu and Kashmir do not accept the manner in which Article 370 was abrogated unconstitutionally, illegally and immorally."

Mahbooba Mufti, PDP Chief

"There has been a breach of trust between Jammu and Kashmir and the Centre" and it is the union government's duty to restore it. "As it was an open discussion, we have put our views openly. We told Prime Minister that we don't stand with what was done on August 5, 2019. We're not ready to accept it."

Omar Abdullah, NC leader

Reliance retail is on a hyper growth trajectory, says Mukesh Ambani



MUMBAI: Reliance Retail will grow by three times within the next five years even as it continues to remain the undisputed leader in the field of organised retail, namely in all categories - grocery, electronics and apparels, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) chairman Mukesh Ambani told shareholders during the company's 44th annual general meeting. He said that the company's apparel business sold around five lakh units per day and more than 18 crore units during the year. Reliance Retail is on a hyper growth trajectory, Ambani added. "This is equivalent to dressing the entire population of

UK, Germany and Spain once," said Ambani. RIL also added 1,500 new stores taking its store count to 12,711 across the country during the past one year, he informed, describing it as one of the largest retail expansion undertaken during the period. In consumer electronics, the company further consolidated its position and sold 4.5 crore units in the last one year, which comes to around 1,20,000 units on a daily basis, Ambani said. Reliance Retail also sold more than a billion units of groceries and JioMart recorded more than 6.5 lakh peak orders in a single day. In the last one year, more

than three lakh stakeholders or shopkeepers across 150 cities were empowered to transform their businesses both physically and digitally. Ambani said that RIL will be relying on five key initiatives to expand its retail business. First will be to further invest in research, design as well as product development capabilities. Secondly, the company will work extensively with micro small and medium enterprises as well as service providers to strengthen its sourcing mechanism. As a third step, RIL is investing in developing state-of-the-art supply chain infrastructure across the country by linking all sourcing and demand driven locations. This will help the company deliver products at a faster pace in any part of the country. Fourth, the focus will be on expanding its store footprint by several times during the current year. Lastly, RIL will keep on acquiring businesses to provide varied experiences to its customers continue acquiring businesses to heighten offering and experience to customers. Some of the recent acquisitions by the company include digital platforms like Netmeds, Urban Ladder and Zivame.

AGENCIES

KOTKAPURA FIRING CASE Sukhbir Badal appears before Special Probe Team

CHANDIGARH: Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal appeared before a special investigation team (SIT) probing the 2015 Kotkapura police firing incident. Sukhbir Badal reached the Punjab Police Officers Institute at Sector 32 in Chandigarh at around 11 am following a summons by the SIT. Badal was the Deputy Chief Minister and holding the state Home Ministry portfolio when incidents of desecration of religious texts and the subsequent police firing at people protesting against it had taken place in Faridkot in 2015. Several senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders, including Bikram Singh Majithia, Balwinder Singh Bhundar, NK Sharma and Daljit Singh Cheema, reached the Punjab Police Officers Institute in a show of support to Sukhbir Badal. On Tuesday, the SIT led by Additional Director General of Police (Vigilance Bureau) LK Yadav had questioned Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch and former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal for two-and-a-half hours. The Punjab government had formed the new SIT to probe the Kotkapura police firing incident following the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.



The new SIT is investigating the two FIRs registered on October 14, 2015 and August 7, 2018 in connection with the Kotkapura incident. The high court had on April 9 this year quashed a report by an earlier Punjab Police SIT into the firing at people protesting in Kotkapura in 2015 over the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in Faridkot district. Police had also opened fire at a similar demonstration in Behal Kalan, also in Faridkot, where two people were killed. A separate probe is underway in that case. Meanwhile, Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu on Saturday slammed Sukhbir Singh Badal and said the new SIT inches closer to justice for Punjab's soul. Mr Sidhu tweeted, "6 Yrs since sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib Ji.. No Justice in 2 yrs of your rule.. No Justice in the following 4.5 yrs."

AGENCIES

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Punjab CM face of AAP will be a Sikh: Kejriwal



AMRITSAR: Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced the Punjab CM face of AAP will be a Sikh for 2022 Punjab Assembly Elections. He said that the name of the candidate will be revealed at the right time.

Kejriwal made this announcement while interacting with the media after welcoming former IG Punjab Kunwar

Vijay Pratap Singh in the party fold. He further assured that Punjabis will be proud and happy with the CM face of AAP.

He refused to comment on the speculation of senior Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu joining AAP and being its CM face. "He (Navjot Sidhu) is a Congress leader. I have nothing to comment on him," he said. **AGENCIES**

Congress to contest under leadership of Sonia, Rahul Gandhi: Mallikarjun Kharge

NEW DELHI: Congress MP and president of Congress panel over Punjab affairs, Mallikarjun Kharge said on Tuesday that the party will fight the 2022 state assembly elections under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

Speaking to ANI, he said that Congress high command will try to resolve all the issues in the party's Punjab unit. "Committee members met before also and discussed with all. We are preparing for the upcoming elections. High command will try to resolve all the issues and grievances of our leaders. Everything will be fine. We will all together fight the election," Kharge said.

Speaking on the ongoing tussle between Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu and Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh, Kharge said, "Sidhu has kept his view point, I don't want to say anything on that. We will fight the (Assembly)



election under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi," he said. Asked why Sidhu did not come to attend the meeting called by the panel, Kharge said: "It is not like that at all, we have called Captain Amrinder for some clarification."

"Everyone in the party said in one voice that they will fight the election together and will again form the government in Punjab. If anyone has any kind of issues, the High command will try to find the solution," he added.

The three-member panel, set

up by Congress President Sonia Gandhi to end factionalism in the party's Punjab unit, was scheduled to meet today to discuss certain pointers with Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh raised in the report.

According to senior party leader Harish Rawat, interim president Sonia Gandhi has expressed interest in discussing certain pointers and the committee will discuss them with Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh.

This will be his first meeting with the panel members after they had submitted a report to party chief Sonia Gandhi. The AICC panel, which includes Mallikarjun Kharge, JP Aggarwal, and Harish Rawat, has met Rahul Gandhi twice after submitting their report. Sources close to the Chief Minister said on Sunday that the meeting is aimed at finding a solution acceptable to him concerning various issues. **AGENCIES**

Chandigarh is 'Best UTs Smart City' in country

DOLLY CHOPRA
Chandigarh

During an online event held on Friday to commemorate six years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three transformative urban missions, Smart Cities Mission (SCM), AMRUT, and PMAY-U, Chandigarh received the 'Best UTs Smart City' award, and the project Revitalization of Capitol Complex received 1st prize under the 'Culture' category awards.

Key urban stakeholders from the Central and state governments, including Principal Secretaries of states/UTs, Municipal Commissioners of cities, and MDs/CEOs of Smart Cities, attended the event, which was presided over by Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Housing and Urban Affairs. Commissioner, MCC-cum-CEO Chandigarh Smart City Ltd, K K Yadav, and Additional CEO, Anil Kumar Garg.



According to K K Yadav, CEO of CSCL, SCM is a transformational mission aiming at bringing about a paradigm shift in the country's urban development practise. Chandigarh took part in the competition and received the title for best UT Smart City, while the project to revitalise the Capitol Complex (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) won first prize in the 'Culture' category. He went on to say that

the Capitol Complex was the first large-scale Modern Heritage Restoration Project (spanning over 100 acres), and that as part of the solution to the many issues, one of the innovative techniques used was the application of water repellent chemicals to extend the life of buildings. He also said that different state governments were involved, and that coordination was done at the highest level.

NEWSBRIEF

Punjab Police ASI stabs brother, kills sister-in-law over water issue in Chandigarh

CHANDIGARH: A Punjab Police ASI allegedly stabbed his sister-in-law to death and injured his brother following an altercation over the issue of water supply at Ram Darbar last night. The suspect, Harswaroop, posted at the Police Headquarters, used to have arguments with his brother Prem Nath Sagar, staying on the first floor of the house, over the supply of water. Prem used to complain that the water supply did not reach the first floor, which always led to arguments between him and Harswaroop. The duo had an altercation again following which Harswaroop allegedly stabbed Prem with a knife. **AGENCIES**

Chandigarh DM issues orders regarding modified night curfew

CHANDIGARH: The District Magistrate of Chandigarh, Mandip Singh Brar on Wednesday issued orders regarding change of timings in Night Curfew in the city. As it was decided in the war room meeting on Tuesday, the night curfew in the city will remain in force now from 11 pm to 5 am. **AGENCIES**

PSPCL procures 879 MW power from outside state during paddy season

PATIALA: Chairman cum Managing Director (CMD) of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL), A Venu Prasad disclosed that has purchased 879 MW of Power from Power exchange at the rate of RS 3.85 per unit. He said that this would help in meeting the increased power demand in the state due to the hot summer and Paddy season. "PSPCL has made arrangements to meet the demand up to 13,700 MW. **AGENCIES**

After Bajwa's son refuses to accept job, Sunil Jakhar hits back, asks Bajwa family to apologise

CHANDIGARH: PPCC chief Sunil Jakhar has advised the politically and economically well-placed Bajwa family to apologise for hurting sentiments of youth of the state instead of throwing mud at others.

Rubbishing questioning by the Bajwa family of appointment of Ajay Vir Jakhar as chairman of Punjab State Farmers' & Farm Workers' Commission, the state congress president said that Ajay Vir did not draw any salary or other emoluments. "The Bajwa family by accepting a government job for its kin has not only hurt the feelings of thousands of jobless youth but also damaged the reputation of the Chief Minister and Congress party besides tarnishing their deceased father's name, Jakhar said.

He said that even now by pretending to quit the job on moral grounds and throwing mud on others Bajwa family was trying to hood wink public and cover up their monumental blunder. **AGENCIES**



It would be better even today if the family admits the mistake and publicly apologizes to the people of the state.

Jakhar said that as far as Ajay Vir Jakhar being the Chairman was concerned, he had not drawn a single rupee from the exchequer during his tenure as salary or any other benefit. He has a unique identity of his own and is the only Indian to be selected as co-chairman of the Action Track 2 of the United Nations Food Systems Summit to be held in September 2021 to design sustainable food systems. **AGENCIES**

BJP-JJP alliance pleasing Ambani, Adani houses to weaken farmers: Abhay Chautala

SATISH HANDA

Addressing a press conference at Ambala City Abhay Singh Chautala National General Secretary Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) warmly welcomed by large number of party workers at Panchayat Bhawan accused ruling government in the state taking wrong decisions in past 600 days severely harming people in the state which will be exposed by his party he added as such BJP-JJP alliance government in Haryana state is unable to face people in the state. On the issue of farmers agitation going on since past about seven months in which large number of farmer sacrificed their lives, Chautala strongly condemned ruling BJP government trying to weaken farmers just to benefit big Ambani and Adani houses and deaf and dumb government in the country not listening to farmers grievances and solve situation. He made an appeal to INLD workers to extend full support to protesting farmers.

Chautala said, ruling government in Haryana is unable to control scams witnessed in the state in past years some of them include paddy scam, liquor smuggling scam, medicines purchase scam during Covid-19 epidemic outbreak, registry scam, sarson scam and wheat procurement scam. He said, panic is seen among residents in the state due to fast increasing crimes



in Haryana in past few years which include cases of murder, robbery, kidnapping, rape-gang rape, ransom demand and theft as such Haryana state has become No. 1 state in crimes in the country.

Chautala raised a question over former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also acting as a member of BJP team playing inactive role as a leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha perhaps due to fear of action by ruling government against him.

to tell him where he should be protesting," said 21-year-old Amrit Kaur, a student who often joins Singh at Matka Chowk. Raising slogans against Chandigarh Police, the protesters accused the police of repeated high-handedness. "This is not the first time they have created trouble for baba ji. Why do they see him as a problem? It is his fundamental right to protest wherever he wishes to," said Mohali resident Jashandeep Singh.

Meanwhile, a delegation of 10 representing the nihang held a meeting with police officials, negotiating on whether he should be shifted to some other place. After few hours of discussion, the cops agreed that Labh Singh can hold his sit-in at Matka Chowk.

UT police detain 80-yr-old protester at Matka Chowk, release soon after

CHHAVI BHATIA
Chandigarh

The UT police on Monday detained Sardar Labh Singh, the 80-year-old man who has been holding a sit-in at Matka Chowk for the last few months. He was later released after the police allowed him to continue with his dharna at the roundabout.

On Monday morning, cops rounded up Singh for "illegally" putting up his tent at Matka Chowk where he is sitting since December to support the farmers' protest currently raging on the Delhi borders. They asked him to move to some other place, which the octogenarian refused. Following this, the police took him to Sector 17 police station while his tent was also dismantled.



Ruckus was created a day before too when area cops had arrived at the scene and asked Labh Singh to shift. Sources claimed the police have received orders from higher-ups to remove him from Matka Chowk.

As the news of his detention spread, a large number of people gathered outside the police station, demanding his release. Youth activists giving him company at Matka Chowk mobilised support through social media and soon the road outside the police station was choc-a-bloc with around 100 protesters. "Baba ji has inspired so many of us to stand with the farmers and more so, with what is right. He is being unnecessarily harassed as the administration can't bear a strong man raising his voice. They have no legal authority

to tell him where he should be protesting," said 21-year-old Amrit Kaur, a student who often joins Singh at Matka Chowk. Raising slogans against Chandigarh Police, the protesters accused the police of repeated high-handedness. "This is not the first time they have created trouble for baba ji. Why do they see him as a problem? It is his fundamental right to protest wherever he wishes to," said Mohali resident Jashandeep Singh.

Meanwhile, a delegation of 10 representing the nihang held a meeting with police officials, negotiating on whether he should be shifted to some other place. After few hours of discussion, the cops agreed that Labh Singh can hold his sit-in at Matka Chowk.

Flower farming disappoints farmers in Haryana suffering heavy loss



SATISH HANDA

Flower farming in Haryana was profitable for growers since beginning as compared to cultivation of other seasonal crops like wheat, paddy, maize, Sugar cane and vegetables since entire production of flowers was consumed at country's biggest Gazipur market at Delhi. But flower growers in Haryana has suffered heavy losses in cultivation of flowers due to COVID-19 epidemic outbreak in the country when sale of flowers was adversely affected in past over a year due to frequent lock down and curfew declared by the government. Moreover, there was complete ban over visiting religious places, restrictions on marriage celebrations, private as well as political functions in which flowers are consumed as such farmers involved in flower cultivation had to suffer a lot due to demand recession and most of the flowers dried in agriculture farms, destroyed and farmers had to throw incurring them heavy financial loss.

According to information Jind, Faridabad and Gurugram districts are famous for cultivation of flowers in the state due to being nearer to

Delhi having bulk requirement of flowers round the year in wholesale vegetable and fruit markets especially at Gazipur the biggest wholesale flower market throughout the year. According to farmers, marigold, flower cultivation is being done in nearly 100 acres area at and around village Aahirka in Jind district facing severe harm in past over a year in the absence of demand of flowers and farmers suffered heavy loss even unable to recover cost of production of flowers. Similarly, farmers cultivated flowers including marigold, rose and jasmine in large number of villages in hundreds acre area around Fatehpur and adjoining area in Faridabad district and over 400 growers cultivated Rajnigandha, gladium, rose and marigold flowers too suffered heavy set back in this period due to poor demand of flowers in Delhi markets as well as severe transport problem due to farmers' agitations at the borders and Toll Plaza as well as passenger train service cancelled by the railways. Farmers told that they failed to deliver flowers in time and had to bring back unsold stocks and had to destroy the same causing them hundred percent loss.

Rising crime graph in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

In-spite of lock down, night curfews and nigh domination claimed by the police, crime graph in Haryana state has witnessed drastic hike in past five and half months during present year 2021.

State police busted four gangs in the state involved in cyber crimes running fake call centres just in a period of last one week at Ambala City, Faridabad and Sonapat. Chief Minister Flying Squad on a clue raided a call centre at Kundli functioning in a commercial building at Sushant City Kundli in Panipat district on Tuesday early morning and arrested three persons the owner Inderjit Malik alias Bablu resident of Piplikheda in

Sonepat district and his two employees Anshu resident of Jahangir Puri Delhi and Chanderkant resident of Pitampura Delhi, Police recovered six Laptops, Ear phones, Head phones, POS Machine, Desktop and other accessories. Inspector Ravi Kumar of Kundli Police Station told that during preliminary investigation Inderjit Malik admitted crimes and told that they used to search telephone numbers on google and yellow pages and misguide customers that their computer sets is having severe virus in the software in the country as well as in other countries along with other cyber crimes hacking their bank account number. A case was registered with police at Kundli police station.



During a study of crime record in Ambala district known as one of the safest town in the state on National Highway No. 1 for a period of five and half months with effect from January 1 to June 16, 2021, in-spite of lockdown, night curfews, night domination claimed by district police

crime graph has witnessed heavy rise in this period. A study on the crimes reveals that 440 theft cases, 15 murders, 95 cases of cybercrimes and on-line cheating, 48 snatchings were reported to police in this period apart from large number of rape, kidnapping and other cases.

As regard theft cases registered at various police stations in the district with effect from January 1 to June 16 this year, 62 cases registered in January, 73 cases registered in February, 86 cases registered in March, 91 cases registered in April, 76 cases registered in May, and 52 cases registered so far in June this year as such five cases of theft registered at police stations in every two days. Similarly, out of 15 murder cases reported at Ambala in this period include five murders in month January, one murder in month February, four murders in month March, three murders in month May and two murders reported in 16 days during month June.

Out of total number of 105 cybercrime cheating

cases reported to police at Ambala in five and half months during current year include 16 cases registered in January, 14 cases registered in February, 26 cases registered in March, 5 cases registered in April, 25 cases registered in May and 26 cases registered so far in June. As regard snatchings cases Ambala district registered 48 cases this year, which include six cases registered in the month January, 11 cases registered in the month February, nine cases in the month March, seven cases in the month April, nine cases in the month May and six cases so far in the month June. According to information, usually most of the snatchings cases are not reported to police by victims.

NEWSBRIEF

Assam doctor arrested for 'raping' colleague

DIBRUGARH: A doctor of a private hospital in Assam's Dibrugarh district was arrested on Thursday for allegedly raping a female colleague, police said. In a complaint filed at Borbori police station, a woman doctor working at the same medical establishment alleged that her colleague raped her in an inebriated state on Wednesday night after duty hours, an officer said. After a preliminary investigation, a case under Section 376 (rape) and 328 (causing harm) of the Indian Penal Code was lodged against the male doctor, Superintendent of Police Shwetank Mishra said. The woman, who hails from a Union territory, has been sent for a medical examination, he added. **AGENCIES**

Noted photographer and film-maker Sivan dies

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Veteran still photographer and film-maker Sivan died on Thursday, family sources said. He was 89. Noted film-makers Sangeeth Sivan, Santhosh Sivan and Sanjeev Sivan are his sons. "It's with great sadness that I share with you all d tragic news that my father, Mr. Sivan, breathed his last today," Sangeeth Sivan, his son and noted film director, posted on Facebook. Sivan was the first press photographer in Kerala. He was also the still photographer of the classic Malayalam movie 'Chemmeen' which was released in 1965. Sivan directed 'Abhayam' in 1991, which bagged the national film award for the Best Children's film. 'Abhayam', 'Yagam', 'Mohangal', 'Kili-vaathil, Keshu', 'Oru Yathra' are among his notable works. "He was our inspiration & role model. What he accomplished was achieved through hard work, dedication, discipline & foresight. Am sure he would continue to guide us on our onward journey. Forever indebted & will always be in our hearts. Love you Dad for everything & I m sure you will be watching over us from your place among d clouds & stars. Om Shanthi," Sangeeth Sivan posted on Facebook. **AGENCIES**

Dalit boys tied to tree, beaten for plucking 'jamun'

LAKHIMPUR KHERI: Two Dalit boys, aged 10 and 11, were allegedly tied to a tree and mercilessly thrashed for hours by the owner of an orchard in Uttar Pradesh for having plucked 'jamun' from his plantation. The incident took place in Gehua village. When their mothers went looking for them, they found them still tied to the tree and unconscious. They informed the Mohammadi police station personnel but an FIR was registered only after photographs of the children were shared on social media on Wednesday. The main accused, Kailash Verma, has been arrested and sent to jail. The police said he was inebriated at the time of the incident. In their complaint, the families of the two boys alleged that they had plucked a few jamun from a tree on a private school campus and were eating them when the school owner, Kailash, 25, happened to catch them. **AGENCIES**

BJP seeks cancellation of Mukul Roy's nomination for PAC

KOLKATA: The saffron party on Thursday sought cancellation of Mukul Roy's nomination for the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and urged the Assembly secretary to reject his candidature as his name has not been proposed by the BJP Legislature party and the TMC is ineligible to advance his nomination as he has been elected on a BJP ticket.

Roy was among the 20 MLAs who filed nominations for memberships of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the West Bengal Assembly on Wednesday amid speculations that he may be appointed its chairman. The TMC has submitted 14 names and the BJP has put forward six names. Roy featured in the list of 20.

Roy, officially a BJP MLA from Krishnanagar Uttar, switched over to the TMC last week but did not resign from the assembly or was disqualified under the anti-defection law.



"We have submitted a letter to the assembly secretary objecting Mukul Roy's nomination for the PAC membership. According to the assembly rules, either his name has to be submitted by the TMC or the BJP. The list doesn't state on whose behalf Mukul Roy has filed nomination," a senior BJP MLA said. Roy's name has been proposed by independent member Ruden Sada Lepcha and TMC MLA

Tarun Kumar Maity.

Citing Rule no-302 of the Rules Procedure and Conduct of Business in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, the letter by the BJP noted that the norm of electing members to the PAC is based on the Principle of Proportional Representation. "Proportional Representation means election of the PAC members from amongst the proportional ratio of the

parties. The BJP has not recommended his name. "The TMC also can't recommend his names as he has been elected on a BJP ticket. Hence, his nomination should be cancelled," another BJP MLA said.

Reacting to the development, TMC chief whip Nirmal Ghosh had said the letter by the BJP neither has any legal nor constitutional sanctity. "The BJP leaders don't know the rules and proceedings of the House. When the nominations for the PAC membership are submitted, it is done as members of the house and not as a member of any party," Ghosh said. Meanwhile, according to sources, all the 20 nominations, including that of Roy, have been accepted after the scrutiny.

However, the list will be officially announced later. The BJP legislature party is apprehensive that the post of the PAC chairman, whose selection is the speaker's prerogative, might

go to Roy as there have been instances when Congress MLAs switching over to TMC were appointed to the important posts, party sources said.

"As per the norm, the PAC chairman post goes to the opposition party. But, in the last assembly, we saw how Manas Bhunia and Sankar Singh held the post despite crossing over to the TMC and not resigning as Congress MLAs. "The speaker then had cited that they are officially opposition MLAs," a state BJP leader said. The apprehensions gained momentum after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, during a press conference, said Roy is a "BJP member" and the TMC is ready to face voting on the floor of the house on the issue of PAC chairman. Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari said Roy's nomination does not matter as he would cease to exist as a house member under the anti-defection law. **AGENCIES**

BJP changes candidate for zila panchayat chief's post after Unnao rape victim writes to President, PM



UNNAO: The BJP on Thursday changed its candidate for the post of the district panchayat chief here after the Unnao rape victim objected to the party's choice, alleging that he is "very close" to former MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who was convicted for the crime.

Sengar, a former BJP MLA from Unnao's Bangarmanu seat, was accused of rape by the victim in 2017. A Delhi court had sentenced Sengar to life imprisonment in the case in December 2019.

The party's decision came after the rape victim wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in this regard.

The rape victim also claimed danger to her life if the BJP gives ticket to Arun Singh, who held the post of the Nawabganj block panchayat chief. The elections for the post of the zila panchayat chairman are scheduled for July 3.

The BJP had earlier denied the charge, with its district president Raj Kishore Rawat terming it "baseless" and suggesting that the allegations may be a part of a "conspiracy" by the Opposition.

Later, Rawat in a statement said, "On directions of the party leadership, the candidature of Arun Singh has been cancelled. Now Shakun Singh, wife of the late former MLA Ajit Singh, will be the

"It is my demand from the party and the government to withdraw Arun Singh's name and declare someone else as its candidate"

party candidate for the district panchayat chairperson."

The rape victim had told PTI over the phone that though the BJP talks of strict action against criminals, it declared the man, who was "involved" in the murder case of her father, as its candidate for the post of the zila panchayat chairman.

She alleged, "The BJP government is still supporting Kuldeep Singh Sengar. Arun Singh is very close to Sengar. My entire family has been destroyed by Sengar. If Arun Singh gets the ticket, it will increase danger to my life."

"It is my demand from the party and the government to withdraw Arun Singh's name and declare someone else as its candidate," the rape victim said, adding that she has written to President Ram Nath Kovind, PM Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath regarding this.

She also alleged that her uncle is seeking parole from police custody but it is not being allowed because of Sengar. **AGENCIES**

Judge reserves order on Mamata's recusal plea over his BJP links

KOLKATA: The Calcutta High Court reserved its order on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's application seeking recusal of a judge from hearing her petition challenging the election of her BJP rival from Nandigram Suvendu Adhikari apprehending bias because of his links to the saffron party.

Banerjee was present before the court online during the hearing by Justice Kausik Chanda in accordance with his June 18 direction. Appearing for Banerjee, senior counsel AM Singhvi submitted through video conferencing that the petitioner ap-



prehends bias on the part of the judge in adjudicating the election petition as he was formerly an "active member" of the BJP. Advocate SN Mookerjee also argued for the TMC supremo. Justice Chanda, whose recusal Banerjee has sought, reserved his judgement after hearing

their submissions. Banerjee has claimed Justice Chanda was an active member of the BJP till his appointment as Additional Solicitor General in 2015, and since the election of a BJP candidate has been challenged, she apprehended bias in adjudication of the election petition. Quoting Shakespeare, Singhvi submitted: "Hon'ble judge of this hon'ble court should be like Caesar's wife - above suspicion." Justice Chanda said he was never the convener of BJP's legal cell, as claimed, but had represented the party in many cases before the Calcutta High Court. **AGENCIES**

Maharashtra government lies with confidence: Fadnavis

MUMBAI: Maharashtra BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday accused the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state of lying "with confidence", and criticised it over issues such as Maratha, OBC reservations, handling of the Covid-19 situation and the Sachin Waze case.

Speaking at a state-level convention of his party here, the former chief minister also said the BJP will intensify its agitation until the OBC reservation in local body elections—recently quashed by the Supreme Court—is restored.

"It is a wrong thing, but I think we need to learn something from this government. The way the MVA government spreads lies with confidence every day, it has baffled me. We should learn to possess this confidence and not the lying trait from this government," he said. The previous BJP-led government had offered reservation in jobs and education to the Maratha community and political reservation to the OBCs, but the steps taken by the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government resulted in nullification of these decisions, Fadnavis claimed.

"The state BJP will not let the MVA government breathe easy



"It is a wrong thing, but I think we need to learn something from this government. The way the MVA government spreads lies with confidence every day, it has baffled me. We should learn to possess this confidence and not the lying trait from this government"

until the political reservation for OBCs is restored. We are going to intensify our agitation in coming days and will corner the government," he said. The

government is "running away" from questions by truncating the coming monsoon session of the state legislature to only two days, the BJP leader said.

Referring to dismissed police officer Sachin Waze and alleged favours he received while handling high-profile cases, Fadnavis said, "The Waze in the police department has been nabbed. There are many such Wazes in every department under the MVA. We need to catch them as well to clean up the system."

Waze was dismissed from service after his arrest in the case of explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house and the murder of Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran. **AGENCIES**

China's amassing of troops, attempt to altar status quo responsible for eastern Ladakh row: India



NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has hit back at its Chinese counterpart over the amassing of troops in eastern Ladakh, even as it kept mum on the possibility of diplomatic talks this week.

Reacting to Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian stating that the high level of troop and military equipment was a "normal defence arrangement" to prevent and respond to encroachment and threats on China's territory, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "It is well recognised that it has been the Chinese actions over the last year, including amassing of a large number of troops close to border areas in the Western Sector, and trying to unilaterally alter the status quo along the LAC, which have seriously disturbed peace and tranquility in the border areas."

"These acts are in violation of bilateral agreements, including the 1993 and 1996

agreements that mandate that the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and that two sides will keep their military forces in the areas along the LAC to a minimum level," he added.

As regards the WMCC meeting, Bagchi said there were no updates to share for the moment. "We will certainly keep you informed as and when there are further developments," he said.

In an indication of the stalemate between the two sides, the WMCC has not met for over three months over disengagement in Gogra, Hot Springs, Demchok and Depsang Plains. On the contrary, the PLA is reported to have converted temporary ammunition dumps, helipads and surface-to-air missile positions into permanent positions.

The two sides had disengaged from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February, but there has been no movement in other flashpoints. **AGENCIES**

Bulk drug park coming up in Raigad district of Mah

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

A Bulk Drug Park (BDP) is coming up in Raigad district of Maharashtra with capacity to provide medicines to the entire nation and should involve the locals, according to state chief minister Uddhav Thackeray.

This ambitious project is proposed to be established on land across 17 villages in Murud and Roha Talukas of Raigad -- in which no village will be relocated -- Thackeray said while noting that this Rs 30,000-crore project will generate 75,000 jobs with priority for locals.

Highlighting 'sons of the soil' being employed and given required skills training in this project, he urged for a ground level survey to protect horticultural land wherever possible and also for preparation of a comprehensive blueprint with the locals to ensure they got the best compensation for their land.

Minister of industries Subhash Desai said that this project will be set up under the Indian Bulk Drug Park Development alongside follow up with the union government, besides compensation for land acquisition and 10 percent developed land being provided for PAP. While this land can be used for commercial, industrial and residential purposes, skill development centers will be set up for locals to assure them of getting jobs, he said.

Minister of state for industries, Aditi Tatkare said that processed sewage water would be disposed 10 kilometers away from the coastline



to avoid affecting fishing activities. The bulk drug parks would be utilizing their corporate social fund (CSR) for strengthening civic amenities and welfare schemes for the villages, she said. With the park project implementation under the Central chemical and fertilizer ministry, this will boost setting up of the bulk drug Park (BDP) while providing infrastructure at par with global standards for manufacturing medicines and minimizing production cost of medicines for drug manufacturing industries to become more competitive and make the nation self-reliant, Tatkare said, adding that the three bulk drug parks will be provided financial assistance for setting up the infrastructural facilities. **AGENCIES**

150 BJP workers undergo 'sanitisation' before joining TMC

SURI (WB): Nearly 150 BJP workers crossed over to the TMC on Thursday in Bengal's Birbhum district after local leaders of the ruling party sprayed sanitisers on them.

A dais was erected in Ilambazar area, where the saffron camp workers were "sanitised", following which local leaders handed them the TMC flag, said Dulal Roy, a block-level member of the Mamata Banerjee-led party.

"Those working for the BJP were virus-infected...Before taking them back, we had to ensure they were sanitised as we aim to get rid of the virus," he added.

"Those working for the BJP were virus-infected...Before taking them back, we had to ensure they were sanitised as we aim to get rid of the virus"

District BJP president Dhruva Saha, however, claimed workers of his party were "coerced" into joining the TMC. **AGENCIES**

"No one has willingly switched over to the TMC from the BJP," he maintained.

Saha further said that local TMC leaders, in a bid to avoid allegations of post-poll violence, were organising such events and "forcing" BJP activists to join their party.

"Thousands of workers are still with us, resisting TMC's torture," the BJP leader said. Two days ago, in Hooghly district, another set of 200 BJP men, who made a beeline to join the TMC, had to shave their heads to "atone their sin" of having switched over to the saffron party ahead of the assembly polls. **AGENCIES**

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage crosses 30.72 crore

NEW DELHI: India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage has crossed 30.72 crore as per a provisional report till 7 pm on Thursday, the Union Health Ministry said here.

According to the report, the total count was 30,72,46,600, it stated.

As the new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination commenced from June 21, more than 54.07 lakh vaccine doses were administered on Thursday, as per the 7 pm provisional report.

It said 35,44,209 first vaccine doses and 67,627 second doses were given in the 18-44 years category on Thursday. Cumulatively, 7,43,45,835

people in this group across 37 states and union territories have received their first dose and 15,70,839 have received their second dose since the start of phase-3 of the vaccination drive, the report showed.

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have administered more than 10 lakh beneficiaries of the 18-44 years age group the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine, the ministry said in its statement. **AGENCIES**

Seven Oppn parties attend Pawar meet, Congress gives it a miss

NEW DELHI: Seven opposition parties on Tuesday attended a meeting Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar hosted at his residence here with the NCP saying there was "nothing political" about the event.

The Congress was not present at the meeting, which was attended by NC's Omar Abdullah, SP's Ghanshyam Tiwari, RLD's Jayant Choudhary, AAP's Sushil Gupta, CPI's Binor Viswam and CPM's Nilotpal Basu. Invitations to leaders and intellectuals were sent on the letterheads of Rashtra Manch, a political action group formed by former NDA minister and TMC vice-



president Yashwant Sinha. "The meeting was called by Yashwant Sinha, not Sharad Pawar. He hosted it. It was apolitical," NCP leader Majeed Memon said.

Memon said all like-minded parties had been invited to discuss the challenges confronting the country, including

unemployment, "attack" on institutions, Covid "mismatch" and petrol and diesel price rise. "We had called some Congress leaders too," Memon said.

Also in attendance were former JDU leader Pawan Verma, KTS Tulsi, lyricist Javed Akhtar, among several intellectuals.

Verma also said the Rashtra Manch had been holding open-ended "apolitical discussions" on a range of issues since it was founded. The meeting at Pawar's residence has triggered talks of a possible realignment of opposition forces ahead of 2024 General Election. **AGENCIES**

Consumers are important. So are online businesses

Only 11 months after the Government notified the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, the Department of Consumer Affairs has come up with a set of sweeping amendments, ostensibly “to protect the interests of consumers... and encourage free and fair competition in the market”. Among them is a norm stipulating the appointment of a chief compliance officer, a nodal contact person for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies, and another requiring e-commerce entities offering imported goods or services to ‘incorporate a filter mechanism to identify goods based on country of origin and suggest alternatives to ensure a fair opportunity to domestic goods’. A third mandates a fall-back liability on online marketplaces in the event of non-delivery of goods or services to the consumer. Registration has also been made mandatory for all e-commerce players; specific ‘flash sales’, including ‘back-to-back’ ones, are set to be banned; and all entities must provide information within 72 hours on any request made by an authorised government agency probing any breach of law including cybersecurity issues. The fact that the latest changes expressly seek to ensure that none of an e-commerce entity’s ‘related parties and associated enterprises is enlisted as a seller for sale to consumers directly’ could also impact several platforms that retail products supplied by vendors with arm’s length ties. The enforcement of many of these norms is bound to spur protracted legal fights. In trying to address shortcomings in its rules from last year, the Government appears to be harking back to an era of tight controls. Overregulation with scope for interpretative ambiguity risks retarding growth and job creation in the hitherto expanding e-commerce sector. Welfare of the consumers is important. So is the well-being of businesses also crucial.



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA BELIEVES JUNE 25 IS THE DAY WHEN RIGHTS OF CITIZENS IN THE COUNTRY WERE TRAMPLED

A dark chapter in India’s democracy



In the history of Independent India, there are many important dates which are both eventful and historic. November 26 is one such historic day — also known as Constitution Day. The Constituent Assembly of India adopted India’s Constitution on this day, in 1949.

To make this day ever more significant, and to make the ethos of Indian Constitution memorable, the Narendra Modi government, in 2015, decided to celebrate the day officially. Post Independence, the leaders of our great country firmly decided that the fruits of Independence have to be enjoyed by all sections of society. The result was: universal adult suffrage and India emerging as the world’s biggest democracy. To strengthen our unity amid diversities, establishing a political system based on the strong edifice of democracy was the only priority at that time. The architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, once said, “Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life.”

A journey into our history also shows India’s persistent efforts towards imbibe of greater democratic values. This democratic tradition of India was first infringed upon during British Rule. Second, one has the actions of the Congress during Indira Gandhi’s time. In this context, B.R. Ambedkar’s statement is relevant and contextual when he said, “However good a constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad...” This observation was vindicated when a national emergency was declared in India on the midnight of June 25, 1975. Even after 46 years, in 2021 we are reminded of this attempt to murder our democracy and the democratic rights of its citizens.

Obtuse politics

The history of the world has seen many ups and downs in connection with human values, racial and social discrimination, apartheid, and war-time treatment to name a few. The strong democratic tradition of our country suffered a blow when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi decided to send all Opposition leaders to prison on the pretext of Emergency. Its imposition was not done to thwart any attempt of political violence or sedition, but was a manifestation of her anger and an obtuse attempt to enjoy political supremacy. It was a great disappointment

to see that the Congress Party, which had committed to uproot the British Rule in 1947, to establish democracy, and subsequently the support of innumerable Indians, now became a subservient tool. Government machinery was misused. Mrs Gandhi justified her actions: “The deep and widespread conspiracy which has been brewing ever since I began introducing certain progressive measures of benefits to the common men and common women of India in the name of democracy, the plot sought to negate the very functioning of democracy. Duly elected governments have not been allowed to function, and, in some cases, force has been used to compel members to resign in order to dissolve lawfully elected assemblies.” However, her statements left two unanswered questions. After the verdict of the Allahabad High Court, why did she have to impose Emergency? Second, why did the Congress government in power override the Allahabad High Court and use force against the Opposition leaders?

The background

Mrs Gandhi’s fears emanated from legal and political problems which resulted in her dark act under the garb of national security. The happenings in the aftermath of the general election of 1971, when her political opponent, Raj Narain, filed a case in the Allahabad High Court, the subsequent judgment that went against her, the declaration of her election being illegal, and her being deprived of holding any government post for a period of six years, are evidence of this. Instead of obeying the court order, she preferred to cling to power. With the Opposition leaders resorting to a civil dis-

obedience movement, she raised sedition charges against them. She did everything to make the democracy weak.

It was on the midnight of June 25 that Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), who was spearheading a movement against corruption, found himself in the cross hairs of the police. He had demanded Mrs Gandhi’s resignation following her conviction by the Allahabad High Court. He was resting at the Gandhi Peace Foundation when a member of the Foundation tried to telephone a journalist to convey the news of JP’s arrest. Little did he know that electricity supply to all newspaper offices had been cut. Mrs Gandhi was trying to subvert the voice of the fourth pillar of democracy. Veteran journalist Kuldeep Nayar had this to say: “For long, he (JP) had an uncle-niece relationship [with Mrs Gandhi] and he called her Indu. But over the years, especially the previous two, they had drifted apart. He considered her the fountainhead of corruption and the destroyer of basic values.” And after the Allahabad High Court judgment, he said she had no moral right to continue as Prime Minister. He was of the opinion that she had to quit office immediately. Her clinging to office was “against all public decency and democratic practice”.

Morariji Desai was also arrested. A staunch follower of ‘non-violence’, he accepted his detention gracefully. When a journalist from Italy had earlier spoken to him about the possibility of his arrest, Morariji Desai had said, “She will never do it...” Once arrested, he said, “When God wants to destroy people, he first makes them mad.”

Instructions were sent from the Prime Minister’s Office to arrest leaders in the States,

under different Acts and Sections. The Research and Analysis Wing was also used for this purpose. Consequently, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was amended. During this amendment, the Government had made the assurance in Parliament that the Act would not be used for political vendetta. But the reality was far different.

Ashok Mehta, leaders from the Jana Sangha, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani were also sent to jail. The Government’s list of the number of detainees featured 676 arrests. The arrest of JP and banning the Jana Sangha was a long-drawn plan of Mrs Gandhi. West Bengal Chief Minister Siddhartha Sankar Roy also proposed a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh through an ordinance.

A total ban was implemented on the publication and circulation of a weekly newspaper, Panchjanya, published by the Jana Sangha along with the publication and circulation of a news daily, Tarun Bharat, and a monthly magazine, Rashtra Dharma. The attack on the fourth pillar of democracy was obvious; in some instances, police personnel entered the offices of these publications without a search warrant and locked the offices. Even lawyers were intimidated not to aid publishers. Those who defied the government’s gag order to help publishers were also arrested under the National Security Act.

In Assam, the then Congress government arrested several leaders — Renuka Devi Borakatak, Debeswar Sharma, Khagen Gogoi, Purnanarayan Singha, Dulal Baruah, Golap Borbora, Nibaran Bora, Ramani Barman, Laksheshwar Gohain, Bhuvaneshwar Barman, Indreswar Goswami were some of the prominent names. Democracy and its virtues were trampled during those fateful years. To eminent journalist K.T.J. Menon, Mrs Gandhi was the ‘first woman autocratic leader of the world’. Every year, on June 25, we remember this black chapter in India’s democracy.

On this day, we should resolve to take steps to avert the repetition of such a mindless and draconian act that affected politics and the fourth pillar of democracy. Let us undertake a firm resolution to remain committed to the Indian Constitution, its values and the country’s democratic ethos.

Himanta Biswa Sarma is the Chief Minister of Assam and Convenor of the North East Democratic Alliance, a forum of regional political parties aligned with the Bharatiya Janata Party. Views are personal

FIVE OBSERVATIONS

ON THE 30:30:40 FORMULA FOR EVALUATION OF MARKS FOR CLASS 12

1 PUNJAB GOVT’S RENUMERATION
The state government claims it’s just a “little gift of gratitude and remuneration for their (MLAs’) sacrifices.” Terrorists assassinated the two parliamentarians’ dads, who served as ministers, in 1987.

2 PARTY TICKET
In subsequent decades, the Congress has repaid both families by giving Bajwa and Pandey the party ticket in consecutive elections.

3 PICK AND CHOOSE STRATEGY
Giving jobs to the 3rd generation, and that too 30 years after the deaths that made the family eligible for benefits, smells like a pick-and-choose strategy. Given that the Congress govt failed to meet the requirement, this is a belated response.

4 BAJWAS AND PANDEYS
SC stated the policy of appointment in public service was not a right, but a benefit held out by the state to rescue the family of a deceased employee from penury.

5 ALLEGATIONS OF FAVOURITISM
A party that was voted to power on the back of promises such as ‘Ghar Ghar Rozgar’ (one job per household) needs to convincingly counter allegations of favouritism.



CHHAVI BHATIA FINDS HOW FARMERS HAVE BECOME SCRIPTWRITERS OF A NEVER-SEEN-BEFORE MOVEMENT

More than half a year later, farmers protest still rages on

Nine months and counting—this is how old the farmers’ protest currently raging on Delhi borders, is in Punjab. Often termed as the cradle of the peasant’s movement, the agrarian state has spearheaded and is continually shaping it into a revolution. What started on the rail tracks of the northern state with only Punjabi farmers revolting against the new farm laws, soon spread to as far as southern states. The scale may be small and the agitation on the outskirts of the national capital where farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh are camping, grabbing all the limelight, the truth is that farmers are taking the incumbent government head-on. Supporters and naysayers have acknowledged their presence, determination, steel and resolve to continue with their peaceful sit-in in the face of vagaries of weather, brute police force, indifferent political will among other obstacles. They are no longer persona non-grata, buried in the headlines of suicides, droughts and floods. They are, in fact, the scriptwriters of a never-seen-before movement post-Independence, one that they have



successfully carried forward with patience and wisdom. An awe-inspiring combination of the old and the young, each generation is learning and unlearning from each other, sifting what is best for the morcha.

For the first three months before the Punjab farmers decided to be heard louder and move to Delhi, thousands of them were living on railway tracks. And then made the roads on Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur and Shahjahanbad border their home. Fellow comrades from Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh showed alacrity in joining them, propelling the hitherto

Punjab-centric stir to a pan-India agitation. From sub-zero temperatures in one of the harshest winters in decades to scorching hot Indian summers, they are weathering it all for “haund di lada” (fight for existence). A most prominent and common sentiment that runs through the protest sites is that the farmers are not going back without getting the laws repealed. “We have not come this far to go back dejected,” they avow. They cannot be deterred, not with orchestrated police confrontations, not with smear campaigns calling them terrorists, not with plummeting or rising mercury, and least of all with intimidation.

Three quarters of a year under it, the farmers’ movement is going on as strong. It has found enormous solidarity beyond the farming community too—salaried class, students, teachers, artists, retired and serving bureaucrats and defence personnel. The humble sentiments of farmers struggling to salvage their land has resonated beyond borders too where NRIs are drumming support for them. To them, the farmer is a hero sitting in 48 degrees Celsius and cooking food using firewood, washing utensils with cold water in zero degrees Celsius. Tell this to the annadeta and he would probably be embarrassed because in his simplistic prism of the world, he is a kisan and they don’t give up,

BOOKS: REVIEW

Book highlights fascinating tale of motherhood

Among the many lore of the Kamakhya Temple atop the Nilachal Hills here, the belief in the annual menstruation of the goddess has evoked interest since ages and now Assam’s award-winning author Rashmi Narzary has woven a fascinating tale of creation and a mother’s overpowering love against the backdrop of this myth. “Bloodstone - Legend of the Last Engraving” is Narzary’s latest book of fiction wherein the various legends of Kamakhya find themselves threaded with the story of a Newar family, in more recent times, in the remote village of Tilibham in Nepal where the Mother Goddess is worshipped with equal fervor. “The story projects the power of the female, the strengthening of the subdued and the sheer capacity of a mother’s love and I have high-

lighted this against the backdrop of the temple’s famed annual ritual celebrated as the festival of fertility and creation—the Ambubachi Mela,” Narzary told PTI. The author said that she grew up understanding that Kamakhya’s lore had some historical basis to it. “There have been mythologies, legends and tales which may just be pure fictitious stories, probably stories told by grandparents around the fire ages ago and I thought of adding my own story-by-the-fire to it,” she said. The author often visited the revered Kamakhya Temple and everything around it, and it never ceased to give rise to a whole lot of questions in her mind each time. “Part of the story developed as answers to some of my own questions and honestly, it did not strike me then that I was writing a fictional work on a Goddess who has

The story projects the power of the female, the strengthening of the subdued and the sheer capacity of a mother’s love and I have highlighted this against the backdrop of the temple’s famed annual ritual celebrated as the festival of fertility and creation—the Ambubachi Mela

such a huge influence, not only on me but people across the region and beyond,” the Sahitya Akademi award winner for Children’s Literature said. In the underground sanctum sanctorum of the four-chambered



BLOODSTONE: Legend of the Last Engraving By Rashmi Narzary; 198 pages; Rs 1,821

Kamakhya temple, which is one of the ‘shaktipeeth’, the pilgrims worship a stone fissure in the ground shaped like a vulva, believed to be the genital of goddess Dakshayani, lord Shiva’s consort. The fissure is believed to bleed once every year during the Hindu month of ‘Aashaar’. Against the backdrop of this legend, the tale of the Bloodstone spans across centuries in time and embraces both the divine and the mortal. “This is the tale of a copper engraving etched by Dakshayani’s friend Princess Ambaa of Nepal as she mourns the death of her only friend. Centuries later, the ancient buried engraving is unearthed while a virgin land is tilled by the ruins of the palace, which threaten to alter prehistoric beliefs,” Narzary

pointed out. Asked about the connection between Kamakhya and Nepal in the book, the writer said that she happened to see a small family from Nepal at the temple yards and they had a very charming, happy little girl with whom she looked almost like a little goddess herself. “This sparked off an idea and of course, Kumaris or pre-pubescent girls, are as much worshipped here as in Nepal. Thus, there already existed a connection and also because the neighbouring country, too, had so much of Shiva and His consort woven into its history and culture, that little stray stories around them were more probable,” she said. The writer, who is also the joint secretary of North East Writers’ Forum (NEWF), said that she had drawn from “just one of the many tales that surround the many ‘shaktipeeths’ where every clan, tribe and community have their own intriguing story to tell about age-old practices but at the end of it all, I see that the truth and lore often merge into each other, giving a new perspective to the original truth”.

LETTERBOX
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NEWSBRIEF

Alliance Air extends monsoon bonanza scheme

CHANDIGARH: Following a good response from the travel fraternity, public sector operator Alliance Air has extended its monsoon bonanza offer, which had started on June 19, for two more days until June 23. Under the scheme, passengers can book seats with fares as low as Rs 999. Alliance Air is also allowing one change of date free of cost up to one week prior to the departure, a spokesperson for the airline said. Sectors where it is applicable include Delhi-Chandigarh, Chandigarh-Delhi, Bengaluru-Mysuru, Mysuru-Bengaluru, Mysuru-Kochi, Kochi-Mysuru, Hyderabad-Belgaum, Belgaum-Hyderabad, Kolkata-Bhubaneswar and Raipur-Kolkata. The 70-seater ATR 72 aircraft will be used on these sectors. **AGENCIES**

Maruti Suzuki India to hike car prices in July-Sept quarter

NEW DELHI: The country's largest automobile maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said it would hike prices of its cars in the second quarter of the current fiscal due to increase in the input costs. "Over the past year, the cost of the company's vehicles continues to be adversely impacted due to increase in various input costs. Hence, it has become imperative for the company to pass on some impact of the above additional cost to customers through a price rise," Maruti Suzuki India said in a regulatory filing. The company did not reveal the quantum of the proposed price hike. The price rise has been planned in the second quarter (July-September period) of the current financial year and the increase would vary for different models, the company added. **PTI**

Housing prices rise in Q4: RBI data

NEW DELHI: All India Housing Price Index (HPI) increased 2.7 per cent year-on-year in March quarter 2020-21, as per data released by RBI on Monday. The Reserve Bank of India released its quarterly HPI for January-March 2020-21, based on transaction-level data received from housing registration authorities in ten major cities. The cities covered are: Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai. All-India HPI increased year-on-year by 2.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020-21 compared to 3.9 per cent growth a year ago. The HPI growth showed large variation across major cities, from an increase of 15.7 per cent (Bengaluru) to a contraction of 3.6 per cent (Jaipur). "On a sequential (quarter-on-quarter) basis, all-India HPI growth rate moderated to 0.2 per cent in Q4:2020-21," RBI said. As per the data, Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Jaipur recorded a sequential decline in HPI, whereas it increased for the other six cities. **AGENCIES**

Airtel, Tata Group team up for 'Made in India' 5G network solutions

'TATA GROUP HAS DEVELOPED "O-RAN (OPEN RADIO ACCESS NETWORK) BASED RADIO AND NSA/SA (NON-STANDALONE/STANDALONE) CORE AND HAS INTEGRATED A TOTALLY INDIGENOUS TELECOM STACK, LEVERAGING THE GROUP CAPABILITIES AND THAT OF ITS PARTNERS



NEW DELHI: Bharti Airtel and Tata Group announced a strategic partnership for implementing 5G network solutions for India.

The announcement underscores a push for indigenous 5G solutions in India, as the world's second-largest telecom market gears up for fifth-generation mobile networks that would enable connecting virtually everything together including machines, objects, and devices at ultra-high speeds.

Notably, the partnership with Tata Group allows telecom operator Airtel to take

head-on, rival Jio's pitch on homegrown 5G solutions. Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio is accelerating the rollout of digital platforms and indigenously-developed next-generation 5G stack.

On Monday, Airtel and Tata Group/TCS announced a collaboration for 'Made in India' 5G. Tata Group has developed O-RAN (Open Radio Access Network) based Radio and core elements and integrated a totally indigenous telecom stack, while Airtel will pilot and deploy this indigenous solution as part of its 5G roll-out plans in India, with a pilot

beginning in January 2022, as per the norms formulated by the government.

Tata Group has developed "O-RAN (Open Radio Access Network) based Radio and NSA/SA (Non-Standalone/standalone) Core and has integrated a totally indigenous telecom stack, leveraging the Group capabilities and that of its partners", a statement said.

This will be available for commercial development starting January 2022.

"Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) brings its global system integration expertise and helps align the end-to-end solution

to both 3GPP and O-RAN standards, as the network and equipment are increasingly embedded into software," the statement added.

These 'Made in India' 5G products and solutions are aligned to global standards and interoperate with other products based on standard open interfaces and those defined by the O-RAN Alliance. The 5G solutions, once commercially proven in Airtel's diverse and brownfield network will open export opportunities for India.

Open RAN or open radio access network architecture is industry terminology for interoperability and standardisation of radio access network elements including products and software from various vendors. Gopal Vittal, Chief Executive Officer (India and South Asia) Bharti Airtel said, "We are delighted to join forces with the Tata Group to make India a global hub for 5G and allied technologies. With its world-class technology ecosystem and talent pool, India is well-positioned to build cutting edge solutions and applications for the world". **AGENCIES**

Arihant shakes pandemic loss with 43% PAT increase

DOMINICK RODRIGUES

Arihant Superstructures Limited (ASL) -- a leading real estate company focusing on the affordable housing segment in the Navi Mumbai, MMR and Jodhpur regions -- shook off pandemic-affected loss in earlier quarters by reporting vigorous results for Q4 in year ending March 31 2021.

The 12M FY21 period witnessed sale of total 1097 units with strong demand in Q4 of the fiscal, besides Total Income increasing by 14% to Rs 272.31 crore and EBITDA at Rs 50.16 Crore (at margin of 18.42%) with increase of 5% over the previous year's figure of Rs 47.66 Crore (at margin of 20.04%). PAT stood at Rs 15.74 Crore (at margin of 5.78%) with substantial increase of 43% over previous year Rs 10.98 Crore (at margin of 4.62%).

The Company also generated one of its highest-ever yearly operational cash flows of about Rs 120.52 Crore, up from Rs 25.41 Crore in the previous year, Ashok Chhajer, Chairman and Managing Director, Arihant Superstructures Limited, said while highlighting the



company's good performance.

"The beginning of the financial year was fraught with fear as the 1st wave of Covid-19 pandemic spread, but we were well prepared for a strong revival in the affordable housing segment with ready-to-move-in inventory as well as projects in various stages of construction across micro markets in Mumbai MMR and Jodhpur," he said, adding "This helped us in catering to varied customer requirements, as a result of which Q4FY21 became the best period for Arihant Superstructures Ltd till date with highest revenues and net profits."

Chhajer said that with "Work From Home" becoming the

present-day norm, home buyers had become discerning and were willing to travel the extra mile to buy a home. "While our Brand Arihant is showcasing quality homes with efficient use of space in well planned gated communities, we are excited at the prospects in our region and continuing to launch new projects," he added.

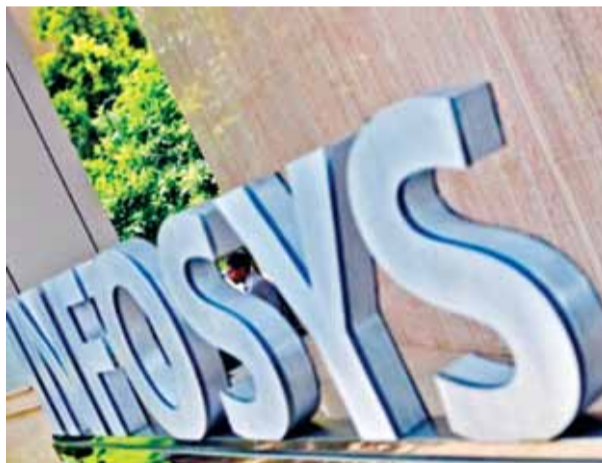
He said that so far, ASL has delivered over the past two decades 9,500+ homes amounting to 8 million square feet across 59+ projects, besides completely integrating in-house capabilities of Land Acquisition & Procurement, Liaison, Design & Engineering, EPC and Marketing & Sales.

"Will solve issues at the earliest": Infosys after tax portal complaints

NEW DELHI: Flooded with complaints from several income tax payers who are also shareholders in the company regarding the new e-filing portal, Information Technology giant Infosys has assured that it is committed to resolve all glitches being faced by users within the next few weeks, even as it claimed that close to one lakh users have filed their income tax returns so far through the platform.

The company manages the new platform which had been introduced by the Finance Ministry on June 7, 2021. Replying to questions raised by shareholders during the company's 40th annual general meeting held on Saturday, related to the problems being faced while using the new income tax portal, Infosys' chief operating officer (COO) UB Pravin Rao said that the company is concerned at the inconvenience being faced by users, and will try to address the problems of crores of taxpayers.

"We are deeply concerned at the initial inconvenience being faced by users because of the e-filing portal and are committed to resolve the issues at the earliest within the next few weeks on the basis of all the feedback received from people," Rao said.



He said that the company has received several complaints about the new platform and is working to resolve the concerns of the users.

At the same time Rao told shareholders during the virtual meeting that with several new features added to the e-filing portal and with many initial problems addressed, close to one lakh users have managed to file their returns so far through it.

He informed shareholders that Infosys has been working with the Government of India for a long period of time and is trying to ensure a seamless experience to crores of taxpayers.

The company's assurance has come at a time when - flooded with complaints about the portal - the Finance Ministry has summoned Infosys officials on June 22 for a meeting to discuss the matter and resolve the problems being faced in the portal, at the earliest.

The new portal had been thrown open for public use on June 7, however on June 8 itself, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had highlighted the issue of technical problems being faced by users on social media, and had asked Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani to look into the matter. **AGENCIES**

PNB Housing Finance files appeal against SEBI order over share allotment deal

NEW DELHI: PNB Housing Finance Limited has filed an appeal before the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) against the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) order which had asked the company to put on hold its Rs 4,000 crore deal with a consortium led by the Carlyle Group.

"This is furtherance of the intimation made by the company on June 19, 2021 regarding a letter received from the Secu-

rities and Exchange Board of India on June 18, 2021. Please note that company has filed an appeal before the Securities Appellate Tribunal against the letter issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India on June 18, 2021," PNB Housing Finance Corporation informed Bombay Stock Exchange in a filing today.

Apart from Carlyle Group, the consortium also consists of HDFC Bank Managing Direc-

tor and CEO Aditya Puri and private equity funds General Atlantic and Ares SSG.

SEBI has basically asked the company to undertake a valuation exercise as per the conditions of its Articles of Association prior to the deal. Interestingly, SEBI's order has come just when the Extraordinary General Meeting of the company is scheduled for June 22, where the share allotment deal is to be approved. **AGENCIES**

Paytm seeks shareholder approval for \$1.6 Billion sale of new stock: Report

NEW DELHI: Digital payments firm Paytm is seeking shareholder approval to sell up to Rs 12,000 crore in new stock in what could be the South Asian country's biggest-ever initial public offering at a total of \$3 billion. Paytm, which counts China's Alibaba and Japan's SoftBank as backers, will sell new shares and will also have an option to retain an over-subscription of up to one per cent, the company said in a notice for an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of shareholders in Delhi on July 12.

The company is aiming to raise \$3 billion via the public listing on Indian bourses, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

It has hired banks JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, ICICI Securities and Goldman Sachs for the IPO, the



source added, declining to be identified as the matter is private.

At the EGM, Paytm also plans to propose that its founder, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, be relieved from his role as the company's "promoter", the company said in the notice. Paytm did not respond to a request for comment.

Launched a decade ago as a platform for mobile

recharging, Paytm grew quickly after ride-hailing firm Uber listed it as a quick payment option. Its use swelled further in 2016 when a ban on high-value currency bank notes boosted digital payments.

Paytm has since branched out into services including insurance and gold sales, movie and flight ticketing, and bank deposits and remittances. **AGENCIES**

NCLT okays Jet Airways' revival plan

MUMBAI: The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved the Jalan Kalrock Consortium's resolution plan for the bankrupt Jet Airways, two years after the once-storied airline went into insolvency proceedings.

Financial distress forced Jet Airways, which flew for more than two decades, to suspend operations on April 17, 2019 and a consortium of lenders, led by the SBI, filed an insolvency petition in June 2019, to recover outstanding dues worth over Rs 8,000 crore. An NCLT Mumbai Bench, chaired by Mohammed Ajmal and V Nallasenapathy, has approved the resolution plan for Jet Airways that will have to be implemented in 90 days starting from June 22.

In an oral order, the Bench also said if further extension of



the effective date is required, the resolution applicant (Jalan Kalrock Consortium) can approach the tribunal again.

On the historicity of slot allocations for Jet Airways, the tribunal said it was not giving a direction and the issue will be handled by the government or the appropriate authority.

Slots will be crucial for the revival of Jet Airways once it restarts operations. The slots that were with the airline prior to

the suspension of operations in April 2019, have been allocated to other carriers.

The carrier could be back in the skies by the end of this year if everything goes well, according to its resolution professional Ashish Chhawharia. In October 2020, the airline's Committee of Creditors approved the resolution plan submitted by the consortium of the UK's Kalrock Capital and the UAE entrepreneur Murari Lal Jalan. **AGENCIES**

Heineken takes control of Kingfisher beer maker united breweries

NEW DELHI: Heineken NV, the world's second largest beer maker, has taken control of the country's largest brewer United Breweries Limited (UBL), cementing its position in a vast market where beer consumption could grow from a low base.

The Dutch brewer said on Wednesday it had bought 3.96 crore shares in UBL to push its holding to 61.5 per cent from 46.5 per cent before. Based on Tuesday's close at Rs 1,466, the acquisition would be worth Rs 5,810 crore.

UBL is the maker of the country's top-selling Kingfisher lager and was owned by businessman Vijay Mallya, who India want to extradite from Britain over \$1.4 billion of loans taken out from banks

which authorities argue he had no intention of repaying.

The banks took possession of the stake and Competition Commission approved Heineken's proposed acquisition of additional equity on Monday. Heineken has steadily been building its stake in UBL since taking an initial 37.5 per cent through its 2008 acquisition of Scottish & Newcastle.

Brokers Jefferies said India, accounting for 18 per cent of the global population but only about 1 per cent of world beer volumes, represented a long-term growth opportunity. Traditional drivers of beer expansion, a young population and economic growth, were in place, but high excise duty meant affordability was an issue. **AGENCIES**

India Pesticides Limited IPO for Global Fungicides, Herbicides

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Lucknow

India Pesticides Limited, an R&D driven agro-chemical manufacturer of Technicals, is launching its initial public offering (IPO) of Equity Shares from June 23 to June 25 at Rs. 290 - Rs. 296 per Equity Share, aggregating to total Rs 800 crores.

The Company intends to utilize the proceeds from the Fresh Issue to fund its working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

Replying to questions, Anand Swarup Agarwal, Chairman and Non-Executive director, said the company is presently dealing with global companies and would be looking at getting into

Biopesticides in the future.

Describing the company as R&D driven with focus on increasing production portfolio, he said multinational companies are looking at India from a new perspective, while India Pesticides Limited's revenue continued growing from Rs 171 crores to Rs 368 crores - and EBITDA from 21% in 2019 to 29% -- in this financial year.

Highlighting increasing demand to produce more quantity on agricultural land, he said the company's emphasis is on producing quality and sustainable herbicides and fungicides for growth of crops like grapes, potatoes, vegetables like okra etc.

Noting that developed countries are using fungicides and herbicides while develop-



ing countries continue to use pesticides with india being the lowest such consumer, he said the company is earning 65% revenue from exporting its products to 25 countries and is eyeing setting up of advanced manufacturing facilities that focus on environment, health and safety.

The Company is the sole Indian manufacturer of five Technicals and among the leading manufacturers globally for Captan, Folpet and Thiocarbamate Herbicide, in terms of production capacity. The Company manufactures: Folpet -- for use in making fungicides that control fungal growth at vineyards, cereals, crops and biocide in paints; and (ii) Cymoxanil -- used in making fungicides that control downy mildews of grapes, potatoes, vegetables

and several other crops.

Major herbicide Technicals made by the Company include, Thiocarbamate herbicides that have application in field crops, such as, wheat and rice, and are used globally.

The Company currently operates out of two manufacturing facilities in Lucknow and Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh with an aggregate capacity of 19,500 MT for Technicals and 6,500 MT for the Formulations vertical. It currently has registrations and licenses for 22 agro-chemical Technicals and 125 Formulations for sale in India, and 27 agro-chemical Technicals and 35 Formulations for exports purpose.

Axis Capital Limited and JM Financial Limited are the BRLMs to the Offer.

ED transfers Rs 9,371.17 cr assets seized in Mallya, Nirav, Choksi cases to PSBs, Centre

VIJAY MALLYA, NIRAV MODI, AND MEHUL CHOKSI HAD ALLEGEDLY DEFRAUDED VARIOUS PSBs BY SIPHONING OFF THE FUNDS THROUGH THEIR COMPANIES, RESULTING IN A TOTAL LOSS OF RS. 22,585.83 CRORE TO THE BANKS.



NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) transferred seized assets worth Rs 9,371.17 crore in the cases related to Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, and Mehul Choksi, to Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and Central Government.

Assets worth Rs 18,170.02 crore have so far been seized by the ED. "Enforcement Directorate (ED) not only seized assets worth Rs 18,170.02 crore (80.45% of the total loss to banks) in the case of Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, and Mehul Choksi under PMLA but also transferred a part of attached/seized assets of Rs 9371.17 crore to the PSBs and Central Govt," ED informed in a tweet.

The ED, in a press release elaborated, "As on date, out of the total seized assets of Rs. 18,170.02 crore, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), assets worth of Rs 329.67 crore were confiscated and assets worth Rs 9041.5 crore, representing 40 per cent of the total loss to the bank have been handed over to the Public Sector banks."

Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, and Mehul Choksi had alleg-

edly defrauded various PSBs by siphoning off the funds through their companies, resulting in a total loss of Rs. 22,585.83 crore to the banks. ED's investigation based on FIR by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) once and for all proved that the three accused used dummy entities controlled by them, for rotation and siphoning off the funds provided by the banks. The seized assets worth Rs. 18,170.02 crore, includes assets worth Rs. 969 crore located in foreign countries.

Prosecution complaints,

“Enforcement Directorate (ED) not only seized assets worth Rs 18,170.02 crore (80.45% of the total loss to banks) in the case of Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, and Mehul Choksi under PMLA but also transferred a part of attached/seized assets of Rs 9371.17 crore to the PSBs and Central Govt”

along with extradition requests to the United Kingdom (UK), Antigua, and Barbuda, have been filed against all the three accused after the completion of the PMLA investigation, the release informed.

Since, Vijay Mallya has been denied permission to file an appeal in the UK Supreme Court, his extradition to India has become final. Nirav Modi too will be extradited to India.

According to the release, Ni-

rav Modi has been in London jail for the last two years and three months on the basis of an extradition request by India. Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya have also been declared Fugitive Economic Offenders by PMLA Court in Mumbai.

The ED has recently transferred shares seized worth approximately Rs. 6,600 crore to State Bank of India (SBI) led consortium as per the order of PMLA Special Court, Mumbai. "Today, Debts Recovery Tribunal (DRT), on behalf of SBI led consortium, has sold shares of United Breweries Limited for Rs 5824.50 Crore," the release said. "Further realisation of Rs 800 Crore by the sale of shares is expected by 25th of June. It is pertinent to mention here that due to the cooperation and help extended by ED, Public Sector Banks have already recovered Rs 1357 Crore by selling the shares earlier. Thus, the banks shall be realising the total amount of Rs 9041.5 Crore through the sale of a part of assets attached/seized by ED under the provisions of PMLA," the release added. **AGENCIES**

Cases against fugitives, economic offenders to be actively pursued: FM

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday the government will actively pursue cases against economic offenders to bring back defrauded money from banks.

The remark came soon after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said the Debts Recovery Tribunal (DRT) has sold shares worth over Rs 5,800 crore of United Breweries Limited (UBL) that were earlier attached under the anti-money laundering law as part of an alleged bank fraud probe against fugitive liquor baron Vijay Mallya.

"Fugitives & economic offenders will be actively pursued; their properties attached & dues recovered. #PSBs have already recovered Rs 1357 Cr by selling such shares. A total of Rs 9041.5 Cr shall be realised by banks through sale of such attached assets" the Finance Minister said in a tweet.

According to ED, Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi have defrauded public sector banks by siphoning off the funds through their companies which resulted in total loss of Rs 22,585.83



crore to the lenders. The latest sale proceeds, as per the agency, would take the total value of recovery to Rs 9,041.5 crore, or 40 per cent of the over Rs 22,000 crore allegedly defrauded by the trio.

The three, who fled overseas as probes against them gathered pace, are being investigated by central investigative agencies such as the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after they were alleged to have cheated

banks. These frauds have been categorised as among the country's biggest criminal loan heists to date.

The ED gave the low-down on these two cases—the estimated Rs 13,000 crore fraud allegedly carried out by diamond trader Nirav Modi, his uncle Mehul Choksi and others in the Brady House branch of PNB in Mumbai, and the about Rs 9,000 crore Kingfisher Airlines fraud triggered by Mallya—in a statement issued here. **AGENCIES**

ED attaches helicopter, 100 land parcels in Mumbai in PMLA case against Unitech group

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached a helicopter and over 100 land parcels in Mumbai worth a total of Rs 81 crore in connection with a money-laundering probe against realty firm Unitech Group, the agency said on Wednesday.

It said a provisional order for attachment of these properties owned by the Shivalik Group and its associates has been issued under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The total value of the helicopter, owned by King Rotors Air Charters Pvt Limited, and the 101 land parcels located in Mumbai's Santa Cruz area is Rs 81.10 crore, the ED said in a statement. The action has been taken "in relation to the investigation being conducted against Unitech Group", the probe agency said. While the plots of land are owned by the Shivalik Group, the company that owns the chopper is its associate firm, it said.

The probe has "revealed that Unitech Group had diverted proceeds of crime to the tune of Rs 574 crore to Shivalik Group and, in turn, the entities of Shivalik Group purchased the



said land parcels and helicopter from these proceeds of crime," the ED alleged.

The Enforcement Directorate, early this year, filed a criminal case under various sections of the PMLA against the Unitech Group and its promoters over allegations that the owners—Sanjay Chandra and Ajay Chandra—illegally diverted over Rs 2,000 crore to Cyprus and Cayman Island.

The case was booked after the ED studied some FIRs filed by the Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) against these promoters and the company, including an instance where they allegedly failed to

complete a housing project on time in Gurgaon.

On March 4, the ED also carried out raids at 35 locations of the Shivalik Group, Trikar Group, Unitech Group and Carnoustie Group in Mumbai and in the National Capital Region after the registration of the case.

"After analysis of the seized records followed by the disclosures of various persons, the above diversion of proceeds of crime has been unearthed," it alleged. The total attachment in this case now stands at Rs 431 crore as two similar orders were earlier issued that froze assets worth Rs 349.82 crore. **AGENCIES**

I-T Dept functionality to identify non-filers on whom higher TDS will be levied from July 1

NEW DELHI: The income tax department on Tuesday said its new utility developed to help TDS deductors and TCS collectors identify non-filers or "specified persons" on whom a higher rate of taxes will be levied will help ease the compliance burden.

From July 1, non-filers of income tax returns for the past two fiscal years would be subjected to higher tax deducted at source (TDS) and tax collected at source (TCS) rate if such tax deduction was Rs 50,000 or more in each of those two years. The provision was introduced in the 2021 Budget.

The TDS deductors and TCS collectors would be required to check on the functionality of the PAN of the vendor from whom TDS is to be deducted or TCS to be collected, only at the beginning of the financial year.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had on Monday issued a circular on the implementation of Sections 206AB and 206CCA with respect to higher tax deduction/collection for certain non-filers.

In a statement on Tuesday,



the CBDT further said that to implement these two provisions, tax deductor or collector was required to do a due diligence of satisfying himself if the deductee or collectee is a "specified person". This would have resulted in extra compliance burden on such tax deductor or collector.

"To ease this compliance burden, the Central Board of Direct Taxes has issued a new functionality "Compliance Check for Sections 206AB & 206CCA". This functionality is already functioning through reporting portal of the income tax department (https://report.insight.gov.in)," the statement added. **AGENCIES**

FM calls for re-thinking financing and development priorities for inclusive, resilient infra

FINANCE MINISTER WAS PARTICIPATING IN ASIA INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM

NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made a case for re-thinking financing and development priorities for inclusive, sustainable and resilient infrastructure aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Adopted in 2015, SDGs are the world's shared plan to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet by 2030.

Participating in Asia Infrastructure Forum co-organised by Enterprise Singapore, Ministry of Finance of Singapore and Monetary Authority of Singapore, Sitharaman spelt out various measures taken by the government to boost infrastructure spending by the government.

"FM emphasised India's policy-led approach of open, rule-based and

transparent economic environment; encouragement to private investment and foreign capital; enhanced public expenditure and robust institutional structure for funding infrastructure development for #ResilientRecovery," the Finance Ministry said in a series of tweets.

The Finance Minister highlighted setting up of National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development, National Infrastructure Pipeline, National Monetisation Pipeline, liberalised FDI, development of GIFT City to promote Infrastructure Development, incentivise private partners and innovation.

"FM Smt @nsitharaman called for re-thinking financing and development priorities for inclusive, sustainable and resilient #infrastructure, prioritising healthcare and education, ensuring resilience of global supply chains and creating infrastructure aligned with #SDGs," another tweet said. **AGENCIES**

No I-T scrutiny on cash deposits up to Rs 2.5 lakh by housewives post-demonetisation: ITAT

NEW DELHI: Cash deposits of up to Rs 2.5 lakh by housewives post demonetisation will not come under I-T scrutiny as the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) has held that such deposits cannot be treated as income of the assessee.

Ruling on an appeal filed by an individual, the Agra bench of ITAT said the order would act as a precedent for all similar cases.

The appellant, a housewife Uma Agrawal of Gwalior, had declared total income of Rs 1,30,810 in her income tax return filed for fiscal 2016-17. However, post-demonetisation, the assessee deposited the Rs 2,11,500 cash in her bank account.

The case was selected for scrutiny assessment, during which the assessee was asked to explain the cash deposit of over Rs 2.11 lakh. The assessee had explained that she had collected/saved the above sum from her previous saving, given by her husband, son, relatives for herself and her family.

The CIT (Appeals) did not accept the explanation and confirmed the Assessing officer's order treating the cash deposit of Rs 2,11,500 as unexplained money. Following this, the appellant approached the ITAT.

The Tribunal, after going through all the facts and arguments, said "we are of the opinion that the amount deposited by the assessee during the demonetisation cannot be treated as income of the assessee. Hence the appeal of the assessee is allowed." Observing that housewife's contribution in the family is "immeasurable", the Tribunal said quoting an order by the Supreme Court, which mentioned that, in India, nearly 159.85 million women stated that 'household work' was their main occupation compared to only 5.79 million men, as per 2011 Census.

"Women all over the country, had been accumulating cash that they had saved for themselves from household budgets, by haggling with vegetable sellers, tailors, grocers and assorted traders..." Years of stashing in whatever little cash gifts they received from relatives during festival times and years of tucking away the change they found in the pants that they washed every day, however, suddenly they were left with no option but to deposit the amount in the denomination of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes in the banks on account of Demonetisation scheme 2016, (as) these notes were no more legal tenders," the tribunal added.

Exempting women who deposited less than Rs 2.50 lakh during the demonetisation period, the ITAT said "we may clarify that this decision may be treated as precedent in respect to proceedings arising out of the cash deposit made by the housewives during the demonetisation scheme 2016, only up to the limit of Rs 2.5 lakhs only." **AGENCIES**

Man who drilled hole in wall of Delhi Bank to steal Rs 55 lakh arrested

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police has arrested a 34-year-old man in connection with the theft at a branch of Union Bank of India in Delhi's Shahdara area, officials said.

The accused had allegedly broken into the bank by drilling a hole in the wall of the adjoining building which is under construction.

Without knowing about the accused, the bank officials had earlier entrusted him with the task of fixing a hole in the wall inside their premises which he had drilled to commit the crime, the police said. The accused wore a helmet at the time of the robbery to hide his identity, they said. Another person has also been arrested and he had received some amount of the stolen money, the police said.

The two accused have been identified as Hariram and Kachharan, they said. On Monday around 10:15 am, the police received information regarding a theft at the bank in east Delhi. The police inspected the spot and found that a hole was made in a wall of the bank's server room from the adjacent under-construction building.

Another hole was made in the wall of a strong room in the basement and cash worth 55,03,330 was stolen from the vault, a senior police officer said. During the investigation, various teams were formed



to question frequent visitors, guards, contractual staff about any details of those who have entered the locker room over the last six months, the police said.

After checking over 50 CCTV footage, one camera installed near an ATM located next to another under-construction building was found facing upward. It was noticed that the CCTV was tampered with. The man's palm and some portions of his face were captured in the camera for a few microseconds, the officer said. While working on the lead, it was established that the camera was tampered with from the first floor of the building, the police said.

Three prime suspects were caught by the police who were present in the building when the CCTV was pointed towards the entry of the under-construction building, they said. Detailed analysis of CCTV footage revealed that the person was Hariram and that he was known to the caretakers of the building, the officer said. **AGENCIES**

Rupee snaps 2-day losing streak, closes up by 10 paise at 74.27 vs US dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee snapped its two-day losing streak to settle 10 paise higher at 74.27 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, following the weakness of the American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 74.26 against the greenback

and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.07 and a low of 74.39. It finally ended at 74.27 against the American currency, registering a rise of 10 paise over its previous close. On Tuesday, rupee had settled at 74.37. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, dipped 0.01 per

cent to 91.74. "The USD-INR spot is following the trend in dollar. Fed's Powell downplaying the threat of tapering is not weighing on the spot, rather Fed rate hike worries has kept all the dollar bulls active," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research-Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services. Gupta added that "until the

spot tries above 73.75-73.80, it will remain afloat with immediate resistance around 74.50 and then 74.75 zone. While the major supports lies around 73.75-73.50-73.45." On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 282.63 points or 0.54 per cent lower at 52,306.08, while the broader NSE Nifty declined

85.80 points or 0.54 per cent to 15,686.95. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.95 per cent to USD 75.52 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,027.94 crore, as per exchange data. **AGENCIES**

Bitcoin rallies after dropping below \$30,000 on China Cryptocurrency crackdown

NEW DELHI: Bitcoin recovered from a five-month low on Tuesday in volatile session in which it fell below \$30,000 (roughly Rs. 22.28 lakhs), extending losses sparked a day earlier when China's central bank deepened a crackdown on cryptocurrencies.

But its outlook remained tilted to the downside, analysts said.

The world's largest cryptocurrency dropped to \$28,600 (roughly Rs. 21 lakhs), its lowest since early January. It was last up 3.7 percent at \$32,802 (roughly Rs. 24.3 lakhs), and remains about 13 percent higher so far this year.

Bitcoin's earlier fall also pressured smaller coins such as ether. It tumbled 11 percent on Monday, its largest one-day drop in over a

month, with losses of roughly 56 percent since hitting an all-time high of just under \$65,000 (roughly Rs. 48.3 lakhs) in mid-April. Bitcoin price in India stood at 25.3 lakhs as of 11am IST on June 23.

The earlier sell-off was sparked by the People's Bank of China urging China's largest banks and payment firms to crack down harder on cryptocurrency trading, the latest tightening of restrictions on the sector by Beijing.

"The underlying fundamentals of the crypto-asset world have not changed and this correction was more of a when, not if," said Iqbal Gandham, vice president of transactions at Ledger, a digital asset management solution.

"Any asset class which sees a meteoric rise in the same



way as we have seen in crypto is expected to correct. The situation in China has perhaps exacerbated this, along with the increased rate of adoption of altcoins by new users, following tweets of various

crypto personalities." Bitcoin's chart outlook has darkened after it broke below the neckline of a massive head-and-shoulders top formation at \$30,393 (roughly Rs. 22.6 lakhs), bringing closer a test of

key chart support that could potentially wipe roughly 40 percent off its current value.

After Monday's PBOC statement, banks including Agricultural Bank of China and Ant Group's payment platform Alipay said they would step up monitoring to root out crypto transactions.

Ether, the token used for the Ethereum blockchain and the second-largest cryptocurrency, last traded up 0.8 percent at \$1,900 (roughly Rs. 1.4 lakhs). It earlier dropped to \$1,700 (roughly Rs. 1.2 lakhs), its lowest in a month. Ether price in India stood at Rs. 1.48 lakhs as of 11am IST on June 23. It broke through key structural support in a sign that longs could be capitulating as China's crackdown rippled through the cryptocurrency universe. **AGENCIES**

NEWSBRIEF

Govt incentivises states ensuring transparent ration distribution

NEW DELHI: In order to incentivise states who are operating their e-point of sale (e-POS) devices judiciously and manage to generate savings while ensuring transparency in the public distribution system (PDS), the Government has facilitated changes in the food security legislation, where any savings accrued by such states can be used for purchasing electronic weighing scales and integrate them with e-POS devices. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has amended the Food Security (Assistance To State Government Rules) 2015, so that states are encouraged to generate savings through judicious use of e-POS devices. The amendment has also been effected to ensure greater transparency in the PDS regime. While distribution through ePoS devices ensures that subsidised foodgrains are provided to the rightful beneficiary through biometric authentication, the integration of ePoS devices with electronic weighing scales would ensure that the beneficiary is given the right quantity of foodgrains by the fair price shop dealer.

AGENCIES

Exam fees, supply of food to Anganwadis exempt from GST levy

NEW DELHI: The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has stated that Goods and Services Tax (GST) is not levied on services like supplying food to Anganwadis and schools under the ambit of Mid-day Meal scheme. It has further clarified that fees paid by students to sit in any examination conducted by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or state boards, will also not attract any GST levy. Even fees paid by students for sitting in any entrance examination is also exempted from GST levy, the board has clarified. CBIC recently had clarified these points through its Twitter handle, which had emerged from the GST Council meeting. The board said that it had received several representations from educational institutions, seeking to know whether supplying food in schools under government schemes would be exempted from GST, if it is funded by government or supported by donations from private bodies.

AGENCIES

India's total FDI inflow rises 38% to \$6.24 Billion in April: Govt Data

IN 2020, INDIA RECEIVED \$64 BILLION IN FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT, THE FIFTH-LARGEST RECIPIENT OF FDI INFLOWS IN THE WORLD, ACCORDING TO A RECENT UN REPORT PUBLISHED EARLIER IN THE WEEK



NEW DELHI: India has attracted a total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow of \$6.24 billion in April 2021, which is 38 per cent higher compared to the total inflow of \$ 4.53 billion in the corresponding month last year. In April, the total FDI equity inflows amounting to \$4.44 billion were reported in the country, which is 60 per cent higher compared to \$ 2.77 billion reported in the same month last year, government data showed on Wednesday,

June 23.

Steps taken for FDI policy reforms including investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows in the country, according to the commerce ministry.

In 2020, India received \$64 billion in foreign direct investment, the fifth-largest recipient of FDI inflows in the world, according to a recent UN report published earlier

in the week. The report stated that the second wave of COVID-19 in the country weighs heavily on the overall economic activity but its strong fundamentals provide optimism for the medium term.

The FDI inflow increased 27 per cent to \$64 billion in 2020 from \$51 billion in 2019, driven by acquisitions in the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, according to the World

Investment Report 2021 by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The global FDI flows have been severely hit by COVID-19 and plunged by 35 per cent in 2020 to \$1 trillion from a high mark of \$1.5 trillion the previous year.

In April 2021, Mauritius was the top investing country with 24 per cent of the FDI equity inflows, followed by Singapore at 21 per cent and Japan at 11 per cent, according to commerce ministry data released today.

The computer software and hardware emerged as the top sector during the month, with around 24 per cent share of the total FDI equity inflow followed by the services sector at 23 per cent and the education sector at eight per cent. Karnataka became the top recipient state during the month, with a 31 per cent share of the total FDI equity inflows, followed by Maharashtra with 19 per cent and Delhi with 15 per cent.

AGENCIES

Smriti Irani calls for research on impact of toys on neurological development of children

NEW DELHI: Union Minister of Textiles and Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani has urged the research bodies working under the aegis of Ministry of Education to look into the prospects of sustainable toys. Irani and Minister of State for Education Sanjay Dhotre virtually inaugurated Toyathon 2021 grand finale today. Amit Khare, Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Upendra Prasad Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Prof. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE, were present at the inauguration session.

Toyathon 2021 was jointly launched by the Ministry of Education, WCD Ministry, MSME Ministry, DPIIT, Textile Ministry, I&B Ministry and AICTE on 5th January 2021 to crowd-source innovative toys and games ideas. Around 1.2 lakh participants from across India registered and submitted more than 17000 ideas for the Toyathon 2021, out of which 1567 ideas



have been shortlisted for the three days online Toyathon Grand Finale, being held from 22nd June to 24th June. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, this Grand Finale will have teams with digital toy ideas, while a separate physical event will be organized for non-digital toy concepts. India's domestic market as well as the global toy market offers a huge opportunity to our manufacturing sector. Toyathon-2021 is aimed at boosting the Toy Industry in India to help it capture a wider share of the toy market.

Speaking on the occasion, Smriti Zubin Irani marked the moment as historical where the nations first toy hackathon is being dedicated to the world. The Minister complimented the individual teams that submitted the ideas at Toyathon 2021. She hoped that many more ideas from this toyathon grand finale be commercialized. She emphasized that the toys have huge impact on psychomotor abilities of children, impact their memory skill and generate huge responsibility towards ensuring future autonomy of the child.

She expressed her concerns that 85% toys that our children are playing with are imported and are predominantly made of plastic. Drawing inspiration from Prime Ministers global commitment for sustainable development, Minister invited research bodies and toy manufacturers to make sustainable toys. She also advised that India is known for its engineering potential and our technologists should equip toy sector with adequate and innovative technologies for electronic toys.

Irani also suggested that Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with NIMHANS can do a Research paper on the impact of Toys on the neurological development of children, specially the children who are challenged with some disorders and also on ensuring that the toys are used as an effective methodology to help those children come out of these challenges towards amiable solutions.

AGENCIES

Apple ranked No 1 in world's tablet PC market; Samsung ranked No 2

SEOUL [SOUTH KOREA]: Apple and Samsung Electronics are leading the generation of tablet PCs. Based on the Tablet Market Report published by Counterpoint Research on the 21st, the global tablet market has grown by 53 per cent compared to the previous year.

The growth rate of tablet markets was 19 per cent last year. The share of the global tablet market of Apple was 37 per cent, and Samsung's was 20 per cent in the first quarter of this year.

Huawei had ranked no.3 with its 11 per cent of share in last year, but its market share dropped a lot to 5 per cent this year. This is because that the US government has included a large number of Chinese electronics, telecommunication and drone companies including Huawei in a blacklist.



When the company is included in the blacklist, it cannot purchase patents and source technologies owned by US companies as well as parts that include US technology. In addition, the companies in the blacklist are subject to delisting. Huawei cannot release new products as it has not gained parts for smartphone and tablets. It is predicted that Apple

and Samsung Electronics will continue to dominate the market share in the second half of this year. Apple released iPad Pro-equipped M1 chip last month. Samsung Electronics recently released Galaxy Tab S7 Light in several European countries. Galaxy Tab S7 has gained popularity from North American, European educational institutions. AGENCIES

Indian working women more worried about job availability: LinkedIn

MUMBAI: The second wave of Covid worsened 'shecession' as twice as many working women in India are worried about the availability of jobs, time for job-seeking compared to working men, according to the LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index report released on Tuesday.

Shecession -- an economic downturn where job and income losses are affecting women more than men. The term was coined by C. Nicole Mason, president and chief executive of the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), a think tank.

The report, based on the survey responses of 1,891 professionals from May 8 to June 4, revealed how the aftermath of the pandemic's second wave has left Indian professionals -- particularly Gen Z and working women -- increasingly vulnerable to economic uncertainty in today's evolving job market.

The finding showed that working women's confidence level dipped four times more compared to working men. This uneven impact has also bruised the financial stability of working women as one in four

(23 per cent) female professionals are concerned about growing expenses or debt, in contrast with just one in 10 (13 per cent) working men.

The pandemic's recent peak in India has also amplified the importance of work experience and professional connections, as young Indians were found more than twice as worried as their older counterparts, about the impact of Covid-19 on their careers.

About 30 per cent of Gen Z professionals were found to be troubled due to lack of jobs, compared to 18 per cent baby boomers. AGENCIES

Centre extends food grains allotment by 5 months under 'Garib Kalyan Yojana'



NEW DELHI: In order to provide relief to the poor from the after-effects of the prevailing Coronavirus pandemic, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved allocation of additional food grains under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana for another five months. Subsequently food grains would be provided from July to November 2021 at five rupees per person per month to around 81 crore beneficiaries, who are covered under National Food Security Act.

According to official sources, this move would entail an estimated food

subsidy of Rs 64,031 crore. However as the Centre is bearing the entire expenditure of the scheme without any contribution by states, an additional expenditure of about Rs 3,234 crore would be required to be met towards transportation and handling and the margins of fair price shops owners. Thus, the total estimated expenditure to be borne by the Government will be Rs 67,266 crore.

The allocation in terms of wheat and rice shall be decided by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, official sources added.

AGENCIES

Govt moves Cabinet note to seek 100% Foreign Investment in oil companies

NEW DELHI: The Commerce and Industry Ministry has floated a draft cabinet note seeking inter-ministerial views on a proposal to allow up to 100 per cent foreign investment under automatic route in oil and gas public sector undertakings (PSUs), which have an 'in-principle' approval for disinvestment, sources said.

The move, if approved by the union cabinet, would facilitate privatisation of India's second biggest oil refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL).

The Government is privatising BPCL and is selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in the company.

Sources said that as per the draft note, a new clause would be added in the FDI policy under the petroleum and natural gas sector.

According to the proposal, foreign investment up to 100 per cent under the automatic route would be allowed in cases where an 'in-principle' approval for disinvestment of a PSU has been granted by the government.

Mining-to-oil conglomerate Vedanta had put in an expression of interest (EoI) for buying the government's 52.98 per cent stake in the PSU. The other two bidders are said to be global funds, one of

After collating the views, the commerce and industry ministry would seek approval of the union cabinet on the proposal.

At present, only 49 per cent FDI is permitted through automatic route in petroleum refining by the public sector undertakings (PSU), without any disinvestment or dilution of domestic equity in the existing PSUs. AGENCIES

Moody's cuts India growth forecast for 2021 to 9.6 pc

NEW DELHI: Moody's Investors Service on Wednesday slashed India's growth projection to 9.6 per cent for 2021 calendar year, from its earlier estimate of 13.9 per cent, and said faster vaccination progress would be paramount in restricting economic losses to the June quarter.

In its report titled 'Macroeconomics - India: Economic shocks from second Covid wave will not be as severe as last year's', Moody's said high-frequency economic indicators showed that the second wave of Covid infections hit India's economy in April and May. With states now easing restrictions, economic activity in May is likely to signify the trough.



"The virus resurgence adds uncertainty to India's growth forecast for 2021; however, it is likely that the economic damage will remain restricted to the April-June quarter. We currently expect India's real GDP to grow at 9.6 per cent in 2021 and 7 per cent in 2022," Moody's said. Earlier this month, Moody's

had projected India to clock a 9.3 per cent growth in the current fiscal ending March 2022, but a severe second Covid wave has increased risks to India's credit profile and rated entities.

Indian economy contracted by 7.3 per cent in fiscal 2020-21 as the country battled the first wave of Covid, as against a 4 per cent

growth in 2019-20. Stating that stringent lockdowns in economically significant states will mar April-June quarter economic activity, Moody's said the 10 states that have been hardest hit by the second wave collectively account for more than 60 per cent of the pre-pandemic level of India's GDP.

Four states - Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka - contributed the largest shares among all states in financial year 2019-20.

Moody's said faster vaccination progress would be paramount in restricting economic losses to the current quarter. As of the third week in June, only about 16 per cent of the population had received one vaccine dose; of those, only about 3.6 per cent had been fully vaccinated. AGENCIES

Waste management project highlights Responsible Tourism

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Tourism waste and pollution is impacting the environment, wildlife and local communities, as litter deposited along coastlines transform beaches into ugly tourist destinations and untreated sewage in the rivers/seas pose a grave threat to aquatic life.

While waste diminishes quality of life for residents, trash dumped in scenic areas destroys the area's natural beauty while offsetting ecosystem balance, according to

Studies that highlight 14% of all yearly solid waste being produced solely by tourists.

Karo Sambhav, an electronic waste PRO offering

solutions for e-waste management and EPR Services in India have been working on sustainable tourism criteria for India that not only initiates infrastructural adjustments but behavioral changes.

The tourism industry -- being prone to over-consumption -- produces substantial amount of waste that puts tremendous stress on local waste management systems, since the increase in waste streams is seasonal due to many tourist destinations' peak seasons in either summer or winter.

With the tourism industry becoming aware about its negative impact, India's new tourism policy has the overarching goal of sustainable & responsible tourism. Sustainable tourism criteria for



India have been developed which highlight the need for not only infrastructural adjustments, but behavioral changes wherein both residents & visitors have a

major role to play in sustainable waste management.

The concept of a 'Responsible Traveler' targets the behavior of visitors to ensure that there are no adverse

Under Swadesh Darshan scheme, we are currently working in 400 destinations which have a component of Sustainable Waste Management in them and have successfully implemented said scheme least 100 monuments"

social, cultural & environmental impacts on the destination city. This has been in India's pipeline for almost a decade now, but of late there has been a great deal of resolve within the sector

to mainstream sustainability in tourism.

To complement these efforts, the Himachal Pradesh State government last year introduced a plastic waste buy-back policy at Rs. 75 per kg of plastic waste and -- 1.5 years into the pandemic -- they have bought more than 1.35lakh kg of plastic at INR 97lakh.

Meanwhile, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH India (GIZ India) & Karo Sambhav have been working jointly -- under the development public private partnership (DeveloPPP) framework of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ) -- on a waste management project being implemented in Varanasi,

Goa & Ghaziabad.

This objective highlights developing scalable, transparent, financially sustainable waste management systems, besides generating awareness amongst 100,000 stakeholders on the importance of recycling plastic and e-waste.

R.K. Verma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, at a Webinar organized on the World Environment Day, emphasized, "Under Swadesh Darshan scheme, we are currently working in 400 destinations which have a component of Sustainable Waste Management in them and have successfully implemented said scheme least 100 monuments. Work is now being done to replicate it at a city level."

OTT gave chance to new actors: Priyanka Chopra



Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas says that people should embrace streaming platforms because they have not only allowed the audience to consume diverse stories but also democratised the film industry.

Chopra Jonas, who made her digital debut with Netflix movie 'The White Tiger' this year, said streaming services had made artists think outside the "formula" of a Bollywood film.

"That's what you're seeing in Indian cinema - the freedom of streaming services is allowing people to have larger thoughts than the formula that existed before.

"That there should be five songs, a fight sequence. That formula has gone away. Now people want to tell great, real stories, with which they identify," the actor told reporters.

Chopra Jonas was speaking at a virtual press conference of streaming platform

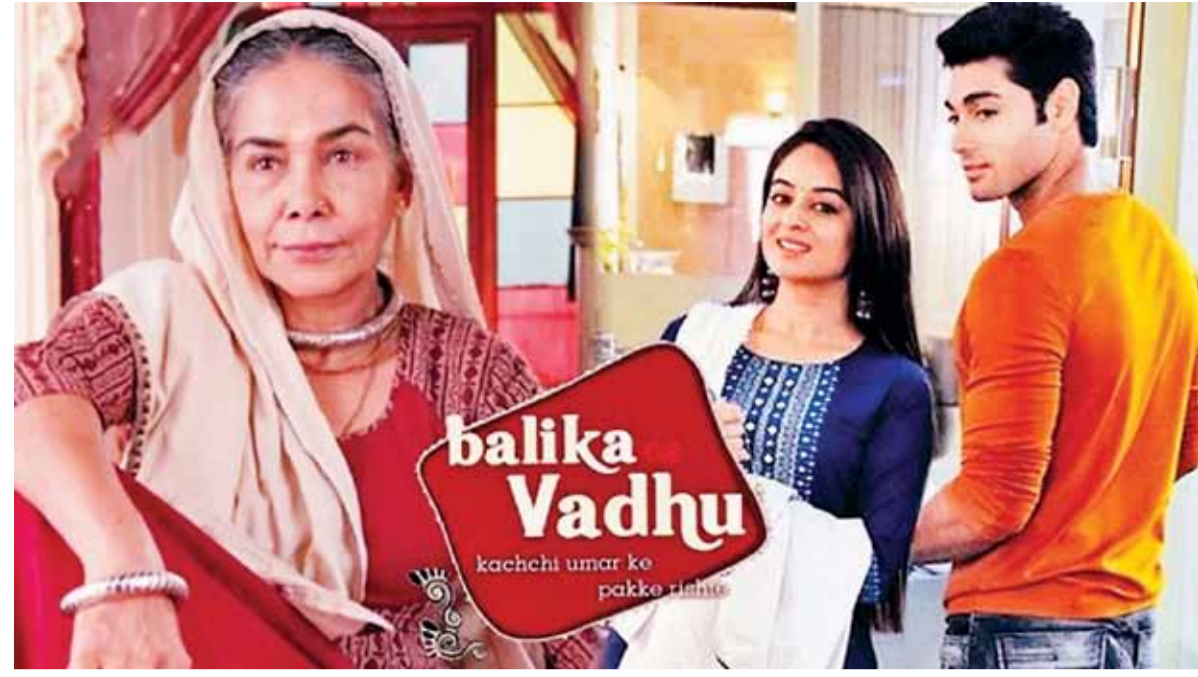
ZEE5's launch in the US, on Tuesday evening. The launch announcement was made by Archana Anand, Chief Business Officer, ZEE5 Global.

The 38-year-old actor said the boom of the streaming ser-

VICES, particularly in India, had broken down the monopoly of a "specific number of people", resulting in newer storytelling.

"It's amazing because it gives new writers, actors, filmmakers an opportunity to come

into an industry that was monopolised for a long time by very specific number of people. It's a great time for growth, entertainment and specifically for Indian cinema," she added. **AGENCIES**



Colors TV drama *Balika Vadhu* set for a restart



MUMBAI: Colors TV popular drama Balika Vadhu is reportedly set for a reboot. The show had aired between 2008-2016. As the talks around the new season or the revival are already on, the makers of the show have started approaching the actors for the same. The theme of the show would be somehow related to the first season. There have been reports that several actors, including Sunny Pancholi, Ketki Dave, Seema Mishra, Mehul Buch, Riddhi Nayak, have been roped-in for Balika Vadhu 2. Now, Riddhi Nayak Shukla has been roped-in to play Anandi's mother. **AGENCIES**

PM Modi launches Olympics quiz, winners to get Indian Team fan jerseys



In a few weeks, @Tokyo2020 begins. Wishing the very best to our contingent, which consists of our finest athletes. In the run up to the games, here is an interesting quiz on MyGov. I urge you all, specially my young friends to take part." **AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched an Olympics Quiz to create awareness about Indian participation at the games.

The launch coincides with the International Olympic Day, which is observed to mark the foundation day of the International Olympic Committee.

"In a few weeks, @Tokyo2020 begins. Wishing the very best to our contingent, which consists of our finest athletes. In the run up to the games, here is an interesting quiz on MyGov. I urge you all,

specially my young friends to take part," PM said in his tweet.

Winners of the quiz, which is to run until July 23 will win Indian Team fan jerseys besides few of the lucky winners will also get a chance to meet their favourite Olympian.

Sports minister Kiren Rijiju too encouraged the fans to join the quiz. "Thank you PM @narendramodi ji for your wishes for our athletes on #OlympicDay. With just 30 days to go for @Tokyo2020, it's time to start cheering - India, India! In the run up to the games, here is an interesting quiz on MyGov. I urge you all,

interesting quiz on MyGov. Do participate!" Rijiju wrote on his twitter page. Participants will have to register on the MyGov platform after which they will be given multiple options and on successful completion of each activity, they will be awarded with an e-certificate marking their participation. Besides, the quiz enthusiasts will have to answer 10 questions within 120 seconds. **AGENCIES**

New Zealand beat India by 8 wickets to win World Test Championship title

SOUTHAMPTON: India's revered superstars failed to dazzle on the 'D-Day' as New Zealand's canny operators and their classy skipper Kane Williamson deservedly walked away with the inaugural World Test Championship title after a composed eight-wicket win in the final that exposed multiple frailties in Virat Kohli's team.

Just like that overcast morning at the Old Trafford two years back, India's batsmen fluffed their morning lines against a familiar opposition, albeit with the red Dukes, and were skittled out for 170 on the best day for batting in a game marred by inclement weather.



A target of 139 wasn't going to be difficult and Williamson (52 not out), after a brilliant match as captain, played sublime drives in a short chase

on a balmy reserve day which was used to compensate for two days of cricket being lost to rain. There was the trademark

serene smile on his face which widened following a hug from his mate Ross Taylor (47 not out) in a very low-key celebration for a team that is high-profile in its own right. Senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's two early wickets raised hopes of a twist in the tale but Williamson and Taylor doused them one patient stroke at a time. Perhaps the cricket Gods wanted a course correction for Williamson and his men, who were left high and dry during that evening at the Lords where twist of cruel fate and horrible rules robbed them off deserving glory in the 2019 World Cup. **AGENCIES**

That was not to be the case on Wednesday when their bowlers choked India, who seemed to be in pursuit of a draw to lay their hands on the glittering mace. Williamson's pacers completely rejected their idea and ensured that a World Cup had one winner and the deserving one at that. For Kohli, this is the third failure in big ICC events after the 2017 Champions Trophy and the 2019 World Cup.

He might just have one more shot, which is the T20 World Cup this year, and failing to win that could warrant some changes in the team hierarchy. **AGENCIES**

Pen, ink, and action: 100 years of Satyajit Ray

KUNAL ROY

The birth centenary of Satyajit Ray was blurred amid the much hyped hoopla around Bengal elections. The political frenzy not only overshadowed the filmmaker's unparalleled craft but also served as a missed opportunity to look at Ray's legacy on the other side of the celluloid. The artist (not a filmmaker) in Ray caught my attention after the demise of Soumitra Chatterjee the tallest cinestiar of Bengal's cinema who under Manik Da's (as Ray was fondly known) tutelage in film Charulata altered his entire handwriting because camera tricks fell short to detail the evolution of Bengali script—what it had been, what it was then, how the words changed over the years, what was the role of Rabindranath Tagore and later writers.



A multifaceted artist extraordinaire, Ray was a genius and is still remembered for his graphic designs and illustrations. From capturing the emotions of Jibananda Das the dark, brooding contemplative loner bard of Bengal, next to Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam in the cover of 'Rupasi Bangla' (collection of poems by Jibananda Das) to designing film posters, illustrations of children's book and mastery over calligraphy and typography, his style reflected the depth of his intellectual understanding that set him apart. He was also credited for creating numerous new fonts in Bengali and four Roman

fonts, receiving an award for designing the typeface for Ray Roman. Recently, I chanced upon Ray's artistic work through a digital exhibition 'Aap Kya Sandesh Laya' at Delhi's India International Center that brought alive a selection of Ray's illustrations in covers of Sandesh an iconic Bengali children's magazine started by Ray's grandfather, Upen-drakishore Raychaudhury in 1913. As a prolific illustrator and editor of the magazine, he designed and painted each piece to narrate his own stories by creating riddles and

puzzles and creating illustrations of contributors also. Each piece reflected sophisticated experimentation with various artistic styles and traditions, both local and foreign without compromising on aesthetics or authenticity.

The cover designs incorporated colourful geometric and floral patterns in saturated primary colours with lines and textures similar to woodblock printing. Often using different folk motifs, motifs from traditional day-to-day rangolis (in Bengal, alpna) or the pattachitra style of narrative painting. Experimenting with

creative illustrations, he created four comic strips for Sandesh. However, these comic strips were 'silent', the characters did not converse with each other, leaving the narrative to the reader's imagination.

Constantly experimenting, using ink and pen, pencil, watercolours, and ordinary poster paint in different stylisations, Ray's illustrations are striking in the way they marry playfulness with strong lines. For readers, every cover of Sandesh was a constant source of surprise and delight, as with each issue, Ray played around with the word 'Sandesh' using different



calligraphic and typographic styles.

Since Satyajit Ray's passing in 1992, Sandesh continues to be published with his son

Sandip Ray at the helm and is now also available online. The covers remain those created and designed by Satyajit Ray during his lifetime.

No doubt, Ray put Indian cinema on the global panorama but his talent was not limited to just filmmaking. The man who received applause for his

craft of film direction deserves adulation for being a complete artist. 100 years of Ray and we know much about him yet we don't know much about him.