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LAKHIMPUR INCIDENT

Minister Ajay Mishra whose son is an accused blames police for violence

NEW DELHI: Union minister Ajay Mishra blamed the Uttar Pradesh Police for the violence in Lakhimpur Kheri earlier this month, The Times of India reported. He accused them of negligence. Ajay Mishra's son, Ashish Mishra, is an accused in the violence case. He had been arrested.

Eight people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri on October 3 during a protest against the three farm laws. Four of them were farmers. Farmer organisations have alleged that a vehicle belonging to the minister ran over them.

The four others killed in Lakhimpur were BJP workers Shubham Mishra and Shyam Sunder Nishad, Hari Om Mishra, the driver of a car in Ajay Mishra's convoy, and journalist Raman Kashyap.

A prayer meet was held for the BJP workers and the driver, which Mishra also attended. The minister alleged that the police had allowed the protesting farmers to take over a road. "Then the route was not barricaded by the police," he claimed.



"Shyam Sunder Nishad, one of the workers, was alive with police and had reached an ambulance but [he] was dragged out and killed," the minister said, according to the newspaper. "The guilty cops will not be spared and the government will conduct a probe against them. The government has given a free hand to the investigating agency."

The police refuted the minister's accusation. "We had barricaded the road from

SKM suspends Yogendra Yadav for a month over his visit to BJP worker's house



NEW DELHI: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of more than 40 farmer unions suspended activist Yogendra Yadav over his visit to a deceased BJP worker's residence who lost his life during the Lakhimpur violence.

He has been suspended for a period of one month from the activities of the nine-member committee and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha. The decision was taken in an SKM meeting organised today, where Yadav was also present.

Yadav has also apologised to the farmers for his act. The action was taken after he visited BJP worker Shubham Mishra's house to offer condolences to his family on October 12. Ever since his visit, farmer unions in Punjab were demanding action against him. **AGENCIES**

both sides and provided protestors a different route," an unidentified official told the newspaper.

The official added that the minister's convoy sped past the barricades despite instructions to slow down. "A normal person doesn't drive so fast in a busy market," the official said. "There were many farmers on the road. Barricades are normally set up for vehicles to slow down, but [in this case] the convoy didn't pay heed." **AGENCIES**

Previous govt did not have the will to fight corruption: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his government, after hard work in the last six-seven years, had established faith among people that it is possible to fight corruption and that they would get benefits of various government schemes without the involvement of middlemen.

Virtually addressing a joint conference of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) virtually at Kevadia in Gujarat, Modi claimed the previous government did not have the will to fight corruption.

"In the last six-seven years, we have been able to establish faith among people that it is possible to stop corruption in the country. People of the country have faith today that they will get benefits of government schemes without any middlemen," Modi said.

"Corruption, big or small, takes away the rights of common people. It is a hindrance in the



progress of the country and effects our collective energy," he said. Modi

also said that there should be no safe havens anywhere in the world for

those committing crime against the country and its people. **AGENCIES**

Expand vax drive: PM to colleagues

The Council of Ministers at a meeting hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership and the milestone of crossing the 1 billion dose mark, with the PM asking his colleagues to "look forward and expand the inoculation to cover the hitherto uncovered adults".

Earlier, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur at the Union Cabinet briefing said, "The landmark of one billion doses is the result of PM's leadership. Not just the government, the entire country knows that. The milestone is also a reply to those who created suspicions over India's vaccination drive and promoted vaccine hesitancy by putting question marks on indigenous vaccines." **AGENCIES**



Cabinet approves Gati Shakti plan for infra projects

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet gave its nod to PM Gati Shakti-National Master Plan for multi-modal infrastructure projects providing connectivity to economic zones.

Announcing the decision of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said, "The PM Gati Shakti NMP is a programme intended to break departmental silos and bring in more holistic and integrated planning and execution of projects with a view to address the issues of multi-modal connectivity and last mile connectivity."

The minister said, "This will help in bringing down the logistics cost. This will translate into enormous economic gains to consumers, farmers, youth as well as those engaged in businesses." **AGENCIES**



Green is new watchword as Renewable energy horizon dawns amidst climate change

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai/USA

"GREEN is the new +Red White and Blue+ and, with the world's population growth likely to increase by another billion in future, renewable energy has to be the next clean energy source to ensure decrease in emission, pollution and climate change," according to Thomas Friedman, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and New York Times columnist.

Friedman was speaking recently at a special online event "Growing a Green Economy with Renewable Energy" that also featured Jamshyd Godrej, Chairman of Ananta Centre and Chairman & Managing Director of Godrej and Boyce Mfg. Co Ltd.

The event explored the benefits and challenges related to India's transition to renewable energy and the need for all sectors to bring about the changes required to address climate change. Noting that the renewable energy market need to be incentivised and scaled up, Friedman said as many as 20 countries were responsible for producing 80% of the emissions globally. Underscoring the need for focus on zero emission from polluting industries including automobiles which should



go in for rising fuel efficiency standards, he said "India has enormous scope in the wind and solar energy sector and needs to scale it up."

Highlighting India's potential to become the leader in the green sector including medicines, green alternatives etc, he described the scenario as a "win-win" for Indian to leapfrog to the leadership. "India's number one issue will be whether it is building 'resilience' for its people in the context that they are living in - water, power etc," he added.

"However, India is still embedded in the fossil fuel industry," Friedman said while noting that even though the USA has its own ESG standards, the world



needs to phase out nuclear power before using renewable energy - like Germany has done.

"This is not an energy revolution, but an energy transition, where the world has to get off gas, coal," he said, adding, "If you incentivise the green technology market to behave differently, it will do so by upscaling faster, cheaper and sooner."

Replying to questions, Friedman said that some tariff agreements on green technology were needed to drive down the cost volume curve. "Father Green is the only thing to take on Mother Nature," he said in reference to climate change effects that could be avoided by ushering in green technology.

No matter how powerful...: PM says will not spare those who cheat country, loot poor

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the government will not spare those who cheat the country or loot the poor, no matter how powerful they are.

Addressing the joint conference of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), PM Modi said, "Small or big corruption snatches the rights of someone or the other. It deprives the common citizen of the country of his rights, hinders the progress of the nation and also affects our collective strength as a nation. And today the country has also come to believe that those who cheat the country, loot the poor, no matter how powerful they are, wherever they are in the country and the world, they are no longer shown mercy, the government does not spare them."

The Prime minister pointed out that government schemes were now being implemented with-



out any middlemen or corruption. "The nation now believes that they can benefit from governmental schemes without any middlemen and corruption. The people are now also believing that cheaters are not being spared anymore," said PM Modi.

The Prime Minister said that the new India is no longer ready to accept that corruption is part of the system. They want a transparent system, efficient process and smooth governance, he said. **AGENCIES**

Triumph for India, as it hits 100 bn vaccinations milestone



NEW DELHI: In a landmark achievement, India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage crossed 100 crore doses. A total of 100 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far to eligible beneficiaries, as per the Cowin portal at 9:47 am today.

India's COVID-19 vaccination drive was launched on January 16, 2021. Initially, the vaccination was opened for Health Care Workers (HCWs) only. From February 2, front-line workers were made eligible for vaccination. These included State and Central Police personnel, Armed Force Personnel, Home Guards, Civil Defence & Disaster Management Volunteers, Municipal workers, Prison Staff, PRI Staff and Revenue workers involved in containment and surveillance, Railway Protection Force and election Staff. **AGENCIES**

Harish Chaudhary appointed new AICC in-charge for Punjab

CHANDIGARH: Congress chief Sonia Gandhi appointed Harish Chaudhary as AICC in charge of Punjab, relieving Harish Rawat of the charge.

Rajasthan minister Chaudhary played a key role as the points-person between Rahul Gandhi and Punjab Congress leaders during recent developments in the state.

A former general secretary, Punjab affairs in charge, during the 2017 Assembly election, Chaudhary has also been in the forefront brokering peace between CM Charanjit Channi and Punjab Congress chief Navjot Sidhu over the past few days. A trusted lieutenant of Rahul Gandhi, Chaudhary is expected to play a crucial role in coordination between the CM and the PPCC chief in the run-up to the Assembly election. **AGENCIES**



Ready for alliance with Captain Amarinder Singh: BJP

CHANDIGARH: A day after Amarinder Singh said he would launch a new outfit and hoped to tie up with the BJP for the Punjab election, his "friend request" has been accepted. "We are ready for an alliance with Captain Amarinder Singh," said the BJP's Punjab in-charge Dushyant Gautam.

"Our doors are open for an alliance, though only our parliamentary board can take the decision," Gautam said. He said the BJP was always ready to join hands with outfits that are nationalistic, concerned about the country and concerned about national security.

Captain Amarinder also said if the farmers' protest is resolved, he will consider a "seat



arrangement" with the BJP and breakaway Akali groups for the assembly elections four months away. The Captain had earlier denied joining forces with the

BJP after his recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah set off speculation. He tweeted: "Hopeful of a seat arrangement with BJP in

2022 Punjab Assembly polls if #FarmersProtest is resolved in farmers' interest. Also looking at alliance with like-minded parties such as breakaway Akali

Capt an 'opportunist', betrayed Punjab: Sukhjinder Randhawa

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa hit out at Capt Amarinder Singh, calling him an "opportunist", a day after the former chief minister announced he would launch his own political outfit.

Randhawa also accused Singh of betraying Punjab for the past four and a half years.

Amarinder said he would soon announce his own political party and was hopeful of a seat arrangement with the BJP if the farmers' issue is resolved in their interest. The two-time chief minister added that he would not rest until he secured the future of "my people and my state". Reacting to this, the deputy chief min-

ister said, "Captain Amarinder Singh is an opportunist leader who only thinks about himself, his family and his friends."

Referring to Singh's meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah last month, Randhawa asked why he did not try to resolve the ongoing farmers' stir-

He also blamed Amarinder for the enhancement of the BSF's jurisdiction in Punjab. "He (Amarinder Singh) says Punjab is a border state. I want to remind Captain Sahib that if it is a border state then why were tiffin bombs and drones coming (from across the border)? Why smuggling of arms and drugs could not be stopped?" he asked. **AGENCIES**

in the Congress government, it had common concerns. "We opposed him when he spoke against the welfare of the people of Punjab. But when it came to national security or border security, we kept praising him. He has been a soldier. We believe he is a good patriot," Gautam **AGENCIES**

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SC judge must probe Singhu murder: SKM

SONEPAT: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) demanded a probe by a Supreme Court (SC) judge into the brutal murder of Lakhbir Singh at the Singhu border on October 15.

This was decided at the general body meeting of the SKM held in the kisan andolan office at Singhu.

The SKM leaders said from the evidences and reports that had emerged so far, it was clear that the incident did not happen just like that and there was a conspiracy to give a bad name to the farmers' movement. They demanded that Union Ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Kailash Chaudhary, who were documented in pictures to have met the Nihang leader whose group was involved in the murder case, should immediately resign.

The SKM has already clarified that the morcha had nothing to do with the Nihangs involved in this incident. "This is a farmers' movement and not a religious one," it added.

Notably, after the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, a kisan mahapanchayat was announced in Lucknow on October 26, but has now been postponed to November 22, keeping in mind adverse weather conditions and the harvest season.

Meanwhile, the 32 farmers' organisations of Punjab met at Singhu. A five-member committee was also formed to submit a fact-finding report of the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. The meeting called upon the farmers of Punjab to strengthen the morchas by reaching out in large numbers to thwart the ongoing conspiracies of the government, an SKM leader said.



Call for nationwide protest on Oct 26

The SKM called for a nationwide protest on October 26 to press for the sacking and arrest of MoS Ajay Mishra Teni in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident and to mark the completion of 11 months of agitation at the Delhi borders.

It was also decided to take out 'kalash yatras' in the Majha, Malwa and Doaba regions of Punjab on October 24 to immerse the ashes of the Lakhimpur Kheri victims at Kiratpur Sahib, Goindwal Sahib and Hussainiwal.

AGENCIES

Navjot Singh Sidhu, Capt Amarinder Singh in war of words over farm laws

CHANDIGARH: As Capt Amarinder Singh prepares to float a political outfit, while trying to play a possible role in ending the farmers' war, a war of words has erupted between the former Chief Minister and PCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu.



The cricketer-turned-politician on Thursday termed the former CM the architect of the three central farm laws. "The architect of three black laws, who brought Ambani to Punjab's 'kisan', who destroyed Punjab's farmers, small traders and labour for benefitting one or two big corporates," Sidhu tweeted.

Hitting back at Sidhu, Captain Amarinder said: "It is obvious you are clueless about Punjab and its farmers' interests. You clearly don't know the difference between diversification and what the farm laws are all about. And yet you dream of leading Punjab. How dreadful if that ever happens."

Terminating the PCC chief a cheat who is trying to link his 15-year-old crop diversification initiative with the farm laws, the former CM said he was still fighting on the issue and had linked with his political future.

Reacting to a video shared by Sidhu on the then CM talking of inviting corporate houses, Captain Amarinder said: "It is hilarious that you've chosen to post this video at a time when the Punjab Government is going all out to promote its upcoming Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit. Or are you opposed to that too?"

Hitting back at Punjab Rawat over his secularism remark aimed at Captain Amarinder, the former CM reminded him that Sidhu was part of the BJP for 14 years and Pargat Singh was in the Akali Dal prior to joining the Congress.

Focus on finishing youths' unemployment in Haryana by 2025

SATISH HANDA
Chandigarh

Addressing media persons, Chief Minister Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar told that state government has already provided government jobs to nearly 85,000 youths in the state in past seven years and now focusing to make available employment, self-employment opportunities to nearly two lakh unemployed youths in the state by the end of this financial year for which road map based upon family identity cards has been prepared by the government.

Khattar said, in order to wipe out unemployment from the state employment to a person in every family will be given in the first phase, followed by employment to every unemployed youth in the state in second phase. He said, it is not possible to provide government job to everyone in the state, however beneficial schemes to earn livelihood are being introduced in the state including for small farmer families to increase their income like fish farming, bees farming and dairy farming in rural areas.



Chief Minister said, there is a proposal to open 5,000 Har Hit stores in rural as well as urban areas in the state by Haryana Agro Industries Corporation Limited to sell essential commodity products at economic rates under a roof for which Corporation has already tied up with nearly 60 reputed manufacturers in the country and as many as 71 outlets have already been inaugurated in the state. He said, state government is going to open VITA booths, HAFED stores and Khadi products outlets in all rural as well as urban locations to provide self-employment opportunities to youths.

Khatter said, nearly 60 lakh family identity cards has been prepared by the state government and there is a proposal initially to provide employment opportunities to youths belonging to families having annual income less than Rs 2 lakh.

He expressed deep concern over statements made by Congress leaders Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Deepender Hooda as well as INLD leader Abhay Chautala projecting wrong figures on unemployed youths in Haryana state as 26% as against 7% according to family identity cards and a recent survey.

15K teachers, 1,200 lecturers to be recruited by Nov-end: Pargat Singh

LUDHIANA: Education, Sports and NRI Affairs Minister Pargat Singh said the Education Department was set to recruit 15,000 teachers and 1,200 lecturers by November-end.

Interacting with youths during 'Punjab Da Bhavikh' programme at the Government College for Girls, the Cabinet Minister said it was painful that recruitments were not carried out for many years in the most important department. But now, it would not be tolerated.

He said the recruitment process was being undertaken on a fast-track mode and this backlog of vacancies would be cleared soon. Further, he announced that the state government would introduce a skill-based curriculum, as per needs of the industry.

Emphasising the need to enhance skills of students by starting new vocational courses, the Cabinet Minister said his



department was already in talks with industrialists and a committee would be formed to make it a reality. Exhorting girls students to contribute towards nation building, Pargat said they had an unbounded potential to transform society and could take the nation to new heights.

He said this generation could bring revolutionary changes in society with their energy.

The minister said there was a need for youths' active participation in country's development programmes. Former Delhi Education Minister Kiran Wallia also spoke to girl students and motivated them to scale new heights in their lives.

Earlier, the minister took salute from the Guard of Honour given by the Ludhiana police at the college.

Punjab Assembly Speaker accepts Sukhpal Khaira's resignation as MLA

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Speaker Rana K P Singh had finally accepted the resignation of Bholath MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira, almost three years after he first tendered his resignation in January 2019.

With his resignation, the Bholath Vidhan Sabha seat has fallen vacant. But there will be no bye-election, as the elections to Punjab Vidhan Sabha are scheduled in another three months. Officials say that Khaira had again submitted his resignation in June, but was told to submit the same in the prescribed format, which he did today.

Interestingly, no decision has yet been taken on the resignation of the three other AAP MLAs, who had resigned and joined the Congress earlier this year. These are Nazar Singh, Pirmal Singh and Jagdev Singh Kamalu. Khaira had switched sides



and joined AAP before the 2017 elections and won as an MLA. He was also appointed as the Leader of Opposition by his party. But his differences with the party supremo Arvind Kejriwal widened within a few months, and he rebelled within the party, taking along nearly half a dozen MLAs. He was removed as Leader of Opposition, but

he continued to be an MLA and worked as leader of the rebel group.

Khaira had also floated his own political party in January 2019, and contested the Lok Sabha election from Bathinda. He, however, was defeated and even lost his security deposit. Earlier this year, he had joined the Congress.

Special concession to govt staff in Haryana on first e-vehicle



CHANDIGARH: Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala has said that special concession would be given to government employees on the purchase of first e-vehicle.

Besides this, a financial assistance of up to Rs 5 crore would be given for research and development in the field of e-mobility in the state/national or international-level institutes in Haryana.

the policy was being formulated by the state government while focusing on e-vehicle manufacturers, users and people setting up charging stations. In it, special exemptions would be given to them"

The Deputy Chief Minister, who also holds the portfolio of Industries and Commerce Department, shared this information after a meeting on Haryana Electric Vehicle Policy-2021 with senior officers of various departments. He said that this policy would be released in next month.

He said the policy was being formulated by the state government while focusing on e-vehicle manufacturers, users and people setting up charging stations. In it, special exemptions would be given to them.

He said that the state government was emphasising on promoting two-wheeler, three-wheeler and four-wheeler e-vehicles. He said

that while e-vehicles would be given exemption at the time of registration, those commercial vehicles that would be converted from petrol, diesel etc to electric would also be given concession.

He said that the state government has a plan to have maximum e-vehicles in the state in 2022.

Financial assistance of up to Rs5 crore will be given to the government employees for research and development in the field of e-mobility in the state/national or international-level institutes in Haryana.

Punjab Govt has surrendered half of state to Centre: Akalis



LUDHIANA: Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said there was literally no government in Punjab and due to the ongoing 'power tussle', fate of the state and its people hanged in balance.

During his daylong visit, Badal participated in a road show and interacted with people. Interacting with mediapersons, he charged the Congress government, headed by Charanjit Singh Channi, with meekly handing over nearly half of the state to the Centre without expressing any formal protest over the extension of jurisdiction of the BSF in border states, including Punjab.

"The Congress government has taken the direct attack on federal structure lying down for which Punjabis will never pardon it," Sukhbir said.

Transport Dept's income up 17%: Raja Warring



CHANDIGARH: Completing 21 days in office, Transport Minister Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said due to concerted efforts the department has registered 17.24 per cent increase in its income, which amounts to Rs 7.98 crore till October 15.

Inviting suggestions from Cabinet colleagues and MLAs for betterment of the department, Warring said the collection of Punjab Roadways and PRTC was Rs 46.28 crore between September 15 and September 30. It increased to Rs 54.26 crore during the period between October 1 and October 15, he said, adding daily collection of the department increased Rs 53 lakh, approximately.

Stressing the action against tax defaulters and illegal permit holders was justifiable, Warring said it was necessitated to reinstate

people's trust as the tax which the defaulter bus operators had been evading for the past 10 months was being collected from passengers in the form of tickets.

He further said around 258 buses had been impounded/challaned so far due to non-payment of taxes, illegal permits, documents, etc. And, after strictness against defaulters, the department has collected Rs 3.29 crore as part of pending government tax and majority of the amount deposited by the big companies/operators.

He said the department had conferred more powers to general managers (GM) of bus depots. Apart from RTAs, now GMs have been empowered to check the vehicles in the 500 meters surrounding area of the bus stand.

Woman withdraws complaint against MLA Simarjit Singh Bains

LUDHIANA: The woman who had recently filed a sexual harassment complaint against Lok Insaaf Party (LIP) MLA Simarjit Singh Bains has backtracked from her statement and withdrawn her complaint. In a written statement to the police, the woman stated a few months ago she had submitted a complaint against the Atam Nagar MLA but she now wanted to take back her complaint.

She said she had submitted the complaint at the

behest an advocate, who planned to contest the elections from the Atam Nagar seat against Bains, a politician and his aide. She claimed the three had blackmailed her and forced her to submit the complaint.

Joint CP J Elanchezian said the woman had visited his office to withdraw her complaint and the process had been initiated. Bains is already facing a rape FIR registered against him a few months ago.



Punjab Police foil major weapon & drugs smuggling bid via Indo-Pak border

CHANDIGARH/TARN TARAN: In an intelligence led operation, Punjab Police have recovered huge arms and ammunition besides heroin during a search operation from near border fencing on Indo-Pak Border in district Tarn Taran.



The operation was jointly conducted by Border Security Force (BSF) and Counter Intelligence Amritsar in the area of BOP Mianwali Hithaar, Khemkarn sector.

Sharing details, officiating Director General of Police (DGP) Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota said that the Police have received a secret information that some Pak border operatives have concealed a huge consignment of arms and heroin, following which

Counter Intelligence Amritsar was sent to the spot and a search operation was planned with the BSF authorities.

He said that during the combing operation, the teams have recovered 22 pistols (most of them .30 bore Star

mark) along with 44 magazines and 100 live rounds besides a packet of heroin (weighing 934 grams) packed in a black coloured kit bag concealed in a paddy field.

During the preliminary investigations, it has come

to light that as 'conceal and clear' has been the most practised modus operandi of Pak smugglers, this consignment was placed by them in Indian territory across the fence and it was supposed to be retrieved by their Indian associates.

The DGP said that a case FIR No 19 dated 19.10.2021 under sections 511 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), sections 21, 28, 29 of the NDPS Act, section 25 of the Arms Act and section 14-Finance Act at Police Station SSOC Amritsar has been registered.

Efforts are being made to ascertain the identity of the Pak end as well as their Indian links who were to pick this consignment, he added.

Pertinently, this is not for

the first time, the anti-national elements have tried to push such consignments through various channels across the border. In the past also huge caches of illegal weapons have been recovered by the Counter Intelligence wing from different accused, which were meant to disturb the peace and harmony of the state.

On 10.06.2021, a consignment of foreign made 48 pistols was recovered from Jagjit Singh s/o @ Jaggu s/o Paramjit Singh r/o Purian Kalan PS Sadar Batala, Police Distt. Batala. In another operation, Counter Intelligence Wing had recovered 39 pistols from Barwani, M.P which were to be supplied to antisocial elements in the state.

Questionmark remains on GM crops' safety

Since June, the export of about 500 tonnes of rice from India has triggered an uproar in several European countries on the grounds that it was genetically modified (GM) rice. This emerged during a check by the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed that was testing rice flour by the French company Westhove. In June, France had issued a notification for unauthorised GM rice flour, identifying India as the point of origin, and alerting Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S. as the possible destination of products made with the flour. So in August, the American food products company Mars, fearing GM contamination, announced that it was recalling four of its product lines of 'Crispy M&M'. GM-free rice that is tagged as 'organic rice' is among India's high-value exports worth 63,000 crore annually. India does not permit the commercial cultivation of GM rice, but research groups are testing varieties of such rice in trial plots. So the suspicion is that rice from some of these test-plots may have "leaked" into the exported product. The Indian government has denied this possibility. However, India has indicated that it will commission an investigation involving its scientific bodies. India's history of crop modification using GM is one of test-plants finding their way to commercial cultivars before they were formally cleared. As many Indian farmers are dependent on European imports, the Centre must rush to assuage importers that India's produce is compliant with trade demands. The fractious history of GM crops in India means that passions often rule over reason on questions of the safety of GM crops, and so India must also move to ensure that research into all approaches — GM or non GM — should not become a casualty in this matter of export-quality compliance.



DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY ON HOW CYBERTECHNOLOGY WILL MAKE LAND SIZE OR GDP SIZE IRRELEVANT

The outlines of a national security policy

National security concepts have, in the two decades of the 21st century, undergone fundamental changes. These fundamental changes reveal that a large country, in terms of size of geography, population and GDP, will not deter any country. Cyber warfare has vastly reduced the deterrent value of these sizes since cyber weaponry will be available even to small island countries, and the capacity to cause devastation to a large nation by cyber warfare is within the reach of even small and poorer nations.

Innovations in weapons moved from stones in the pre-historic era, to bows and arrows, and later to cannons and guns in the 19th century. These were followed by aeroplanes, nuclear bombs, and intercontinental missiles in the 20th century. In the 21st century, the world is moving to cyber weapons-based warfare which will also immobilise current tangible advanced weapon systems in a war.

Therefore, in the 21st century, after cyber-technology enters as an important variable in nations' defence policies, the size of a country will cease to matter. Sri Lanka, or North Korea, empowered by cyber-technology, will be equal to the United States, Russia, India or China, in their capability to cause unacceptable damage. Weapons in the 21st century will merely mean a cyber button on the desk of the nation's military and the leader of the government. Geographical land size or GDP size will be irrelevant in war-making capacity or deterrence.

These fundamental changes are entirely due to the earlier 20th century innovations in cyber-technology and software developments. Drones, robots, satellites and advanced computers as weapons are already in use. More innovations are around the corner. Some examples of further innovations are artificial intelligence and nanotechnology.

Warfare, therefore, will be no more just mobilisation of weapons or be dependent on the size of the armed forces of men. It will be cyber warfare. From remote controlled drones to artificial intelligence driven weapons systems, etc., will matter in the 21st century.

Hence, national security in the 21st century covers not merely the overt and covert



operations but, more crucially, electronic operations from a remote centre beyond the front lines of ground forces or air power to track enemy assets by these newly weaponised cyber instruments of technology. Tracking those cyber warfare centres of the adversary will need a new national security policy.

By credible accounts, China, recently, publicly cautioned Indians to sit up and take notice by using cyber-technology to shut down Mumbai's electric supply in populated areas of the city, for a few hours. This was to overawe Indians as we were clueless for hours as to what went wrong till reports emerged about a possible cyberattack. Thus, each nation will have to prepare more for bilateral conflicts in the 21st century that are based on cyber warfare rather than in multilateral acts of conventional war or rely on military blocs for mobilisation.

The four dimensions to this National security at its root in the 21st century will depend on mind-boggling skills in four dimensions:

OBJECTIVES: the objective of the National Security Policy in the 21st century is to define what assets are required to be defended, the identity of opponents who seek to overawe the people of a target nation, by unfamiliar moves to cause disorientation of people. Although the novel coronavirus is

perhaps accidental, it has completely destabilised peoples globally and their governments in all nations of the world over, and also derailed the global economy because nations were most unprepared for such a pandemic, even conceptually. So far, nearly two years of the pandemic have left several millions [or more] dead with most economies having been driven to the edge of disaster. Normal life has been disrupted. Never before has there been such a virus attack of this dimension. This is a preview of the kinds of threats that await us in the coming decades which a national security policy will have to address by choosing a nation's priorities.

PRIORITIES: In such scenarios of uncertainties about the future in the 21st century, national security priorities will require new departments for supporting several frontiers of innovation and technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells, desalination of seawater, thorium for nuclear technology, anti-computer viruses, and new immunity-creating medicines. This focus on a new priority will require compulsory science and mathematics education, especially in applications for analytical subjects. Every citizen will have to be alerted to new remote controlled military technology and be ready for it.

STRATEGY: The strategy required for this new national security policy will be to

anticipate our enemies in many dimensions and by demonstrative but limited pre-emptive strikes by developing a strategy of deterrence of the enemy.

For India, it will be the China cyber capability factor which is the new threat for which it has to devise a new strategy.

The agenda for the new strategy will be critical and emerging technologies, connectivity and infrastructure, cyber security and maritime security. But, alas, India by trying to befriend nations on both sides of the divide ended up with no serious ally internationally. The position of India is much like that of the bat species in the Panchatantra.

Methods to use

Resource mobilisation: The macroeconomics of resource mobilisation depends on whether a nation has 'demand' as an economic deficit or not. That means, for example, if demand for a commodity or service is in deficit or insufficient to clear the market of the available supply of the same, then liberal printing of currency and placing it in the hands of consumers is recommended for the economy to recover the demand supply parity. This then is one way of facilitating resource mobilisation in a demand supply balanced market. A way to increase demand is by lowering the interest rate on bank loans or raising the rates in fixed deposits which will enable banks to obtain liquidity and lend liberally for enhancing investment for production.

If it is 'supply' that is short or in deficit compared to demand, then special measures are required to incentivise to encourage an increase in supply. The bottomline is that except for endowments of nature, a true economist adept in macroeconomics and inter-sectoral impact, will not despair for a lack of resources. Macroeconomics has many ways to generate resources without taxation. Printing of notes of currency is one way when there is a demand shortage.

Dr. Subramanian Swamy is a BJP Member of Parliament and former Union Minister for Law and Justice. Views are personal



ANIL SWARUP EXPLORES WHY THE SUPPLY OF COAL IN INDIA IS WELL BELOW THE DEMAND

Is the coal crisis over?

Initially, there was a huge debate on whether there was a coal crisis at all. We aren't discussing coal any more. Hence, wasn't there a crisis? Or, if there was one, is it all over?

"Crisis" is a subjective term. There are no objective criteria of determining whether there is a crisis or not. However, "shortage" can be determined objectively. No one can deny the fact that the supply of coal in India is well below the demand. Whereas the demand is nearly a billion million tonnes (MT), the supply is well below 800 MT within the country. When this shortage becomes acute, in terms of the availability of coal at power plants, it is sometimes called a crisis. The acute shortage can be on the account of production, an increased demand or a failure of supply chain management when the stocks are sufficient at the pit head but requisite supply is not made to the power plants.

Coal crises keep recurring in the country primarily due to the shortage in coal production. Ironically, India sits on 300 billion MT of coal and, as mentioned earlier, our annual requirement is around a billion MT per annum. A similar crisis had occurred in 2014. Back then, it was on account of a Comptroller and Auditor General who played to the gallery after making his calculations just like an accountant. It led to devastating consequences and coal production suffered. The crisis was managed through meticulous planning



and execution.

The immediate coal crisis is attributed to an increase in the demand for power on account of the post-pandemic economic recovery, an increase in international prices of coal, unseasonal rainfall and a mismanagement of the supply chain within the country. Apparently, some of it has been managed and we are no longer discussing the crisis. No one seems to be talking about the stagnation in the production of coal by Coal India Limited (CIL). The production has stood at 600 MT for the past three years. Had the production grown at the rate at which it was increasing (8-9%) during 2014-16, the current production of CIL itself would have been more than

750 MT. Also not being discussed is the stagnant coal production from the non-CIL domain. A number of mines were allocated to entities other than CIL. Why haven't these mines augmented coal production? Non-CIL coal production fell from 128 MT in 2019-20 to 120 MT in 2020-21. The dependence on imported coal increased and, hence, when the international prices shot up, as they did recently, there is a crisis.

The crisis will recur in case the coal production is not augmented. How then can the production of coal be increased? Some of the answers lies in what happened during 2014-16.

Supported, not monitored

CIL has a fabulous team. It needs to be supported and not "monitored". The Union Government has an important role to play. CIL should focus on mining. Government officers should interact with the States, but before that, this ongoing "war" between the Union Government and the States will have to stop. Ironically, all the coal resides in States that are ruled by non-National Democratic Alliance (NDA) parties. Officers from the Union Government will have to go down to the States, convey a value proposition and sit with State-level officers to resolve issues related to land acquisition and forest clearances. During 2014-16 not a single meeting with the States was held in Delhi. All meetings were held at the State headquarters.

The Union Government will also have to take up clearance-related issues with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The evacuation of coal from the interior areas is dependent on the timely availability of rakes in adequate numbers. Interaction with the Ministry of Railways also becomes critical. This job, too, will have to be performed by Union Government officers.

CIL, which had reserves of around Rs 35,000 crore in 2015, now appears to be strapped for funds, especially cash flows as power generating companies (GENCOs) owe more than Rs20,000 crore to CIL. Funds will have to be arranged for the expansion of existing mines as well as the opening of new ones. First, the Union Government should stop squeezing more funds out of CIL as it has done during the past few years by way of dividends to balance its own Budget, when this money should have been used for opening new mines and expanding existing ones. Second, it should consider providing cash to CIL against the dues owed by GENCOs. Non-CIL production will have to be augmented. There was an inter-ministerial Coal Project Monitoring Group (CPMG), which was set up in 2015 to fast-track clearances, that became dormant. This will need to be revived.

Anil Swarup is a retired civil servant and a former Secretary in the Government of India. Views are personal

BOOKS: REVIEW

Gandhi wasn't anti-business, anti-capitalist, says book

Mahatma Gandhi was not against business and capitalists but had a positive approach towards business, says a new book which also seeks to look at him as an unlikely management guru and an original thinker who enriched the discourse around market capitalism.

"Economist Gandhi: The Roots and the Relevance of the Political Economy of the Mahatma" by retired entrepreneur Jerry Rao provides insights into a hidden facet of Gandhi's personality - his thoughts on economics and capitalism - and also highlights some of his views on religion, ethics, human nature, education and society.

It explains Gandhi's positive approach towards business: even though he greatly reduced his individual wants, he was against poverty and wanted every Indian to

enjoy a materially comfortable life.

"Gandhi's positive approach to business, trade and wealth may have been in part a function of his caste origins. It was also reflected in many of his actions," the author writes.

"He went to South Africa as an attorney for Gujarati Muslim merchants who themselves originally belonged to the Bania caste and were relatively recent converts to Islam. In South Africa, two of his important associates, Polack and Kallenbach, were Jewish businessmen. Back in India, Gandhi was quite close to Ambalal Sarabhai, who provided funds for Gandhi's ashram in Ahmedabad," he says.

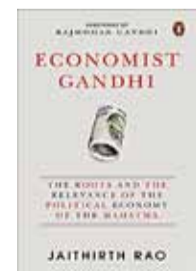
"Gandhi was also close to the Marwari Bania businessman Jamlalal Bajaj, who was sometimes referred to as Gandhi's fifth son," he writes.

According to Rao, the evolu-

Gandhi's positive approach to business, trade and wealth may have been in part a function of his caste origins. It was also reflected in many of his actions

tion of the caste system, trade and finance networks, and organised charity in Gandhi's home state of Gujarat, clearly influenced Gandhi in the development of his own admittedly idiosyncratic, but equally insightful and powerful views in the field of political economy.

He says Gandhi was a personality quite comfortable living with massive contradictions, articulating



Economist Gandhi: The Roots and the Relevance of the Political Economy of the Mahatma By Jerry Rao Penguin Portfolio 256 pages; Rs599

Gandhi's success in politics, Rao writes, was almost entirely dependent on his ability to literally create a dedicated cadre of disciplined and trained followers.

It was with this admittedly non-violent 'human capital' that he confronted the economic, military and administrative power of the British Empire, he says.

Rao hopes that in the years to come, references to Gandhi will exponentially increase in the literature on economics and management and not remain confined to the cloister of 'Gandhian Studies'.

"When Gandhi goes beyond stakeholder analysis and corporate social responsibility studies and starts cropping up in papers on identity economics, behavioural economics and public policy, we can make the claim that economist Gandhi has arrived," he writes.

Rajmohan Gandhi, who has written the foreword to the book, says, "One of the most charming things about Gandhi is that he allows writers - encourages them, makes it easy for them - to write freely about him. If only other famous figures had this quality!"

FIVE OBSERVATIONS

VACCINATION DRIVE

- GREAT RELIEF**
The country has come a long way in its vaccination drive against the Covid-19 virus ever since it began in January this year is a matter of great relief
- VACCINATION DRIVE**
The drive has struggled to overcome difficulties like ensuring the availability of vaccines, their prices, adequate spacing between doses to ensure that it reaches all sections of society.
- CERTIFICATES**
With travel, social and political gatherings increasing, the country has to sort out the issue of acceptability of its vaccine certificates by other countries.
- COVID BEHAVIOUR**
Along with this, there is still need to adhere to Covid-appropriate behaviour to minimise risks.
- NOD IS STILL AWAITED**
The emergency use authorisation of Covaxin on 2 to 18 years old has been recommended, but the DCGI nod is awaited.

LETTERBOX
Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to fletters@gmail.com. We will publish them on this page.

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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NEWSBRIEF

Mineral production rose 23% in August 2021

NEW DELHI: Mineral production in August 2021 rose by 23 per cent compared to the corresponding period of last year. The cumulative growth in mineral sector for the April-August 2020-21 period was 25 per cent over the corresponding period of previous year. According to data released by the Ministry of Mines, the index of mineral production of mining sector was 103.8 for August 2021. Minerals which showed positive growth in production during August 2021 were chromite (189 per cent), lignite (74.2 per cent), magnesite (57.9 per cent), iron ore (52.2 per cent) and coal (20.8 per cent). However production of minerals which showed negative growth included diamond, gold and petroleum (crude). Some of the minerals which recorded high production levels in August 2021 were coal at 539 lakh tonnes, lignite at 37 lakh tonnes, natural gas (utilized) at 2,851 million cubic metres, petroleum (crude) at 25 lakh tonnes, bauxite at 1,737 thousand tonnes, chromite at 175 thousand tonnes, iron ore at 197 lakh tonnes and manganese ore at 180 thousand tonnes. AGENCIES

Bitcoin sets high, tops \$66,000 on mainstreaming excitement

NEW YORK: Bitcoin jumped to a record high, topping \$66,000, as it rides a wave of excitement about getting further mainstreamed by the financial establishment. Bitcoin was trading at \$66,109 as of 10:04 am Eastern time. It rallied back after sinking below \$30,000 during the summer to top its prior record set in April. That prior all-time high was nearly \$64,889, according to Coindesk. A day earlier, the first exchange-traded fund linked to Bitcoin attracted huge interest from investors looking to get into the surging field of cryptocurrencies. Shares of the ProShares BitCoin Strategy ETF changed hands 24.1 million in a resounding debut. The ETF doesn't invest directly in Bitcoin. It instead invests in the futures market tied to Bitcoin, but the industry sees the ETF as offering a way for a new class of investors to get involved in Bitcoin. AGENCIES

RBI says policy support needed to help economic growth

NEW DELHI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said that though demand has picked up after easing of lockdowns and dip in Coronavirus infections, policy support will still be required on a long term basis for sustained economic recovery. The central bank in its monthly bulletin for October 2021 said that premature tightening is likely to bring stagflation, which may stunt growth at a time when the economy is recovering from the shocks of the pandemic. RBI had earlier this month had kept key interest rates unchanged and had emphasised on the need to release Coronavirus-related stimulus gradually which would help in economic growth. AGENCIES

Opportunities galore for investors in India: Nirmala Sitharaman



NEW DELHI: Opportunities galore are there in India for all investors and industry stakeholders with the current reset in the global supply chain and clear headed and committed leadership in the country, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said.

Sitharaman arrived in New York after her visit to Washington DC where she participated in the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "With the current reset in the global supply chain and clear headed and committed leadership in India, I see opportunities galore in India

for all investors and industry stakeholders," Sitharaman said during her address to global business leaders and investors at a roundtable organised here by industry chamber FICCI and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum. Startups in India have grown tremendously and many are

FinMin SAID

- WITH THE CURRENT RESET IN THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN AND CLEAR HEADED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP IN INDIA, I SEE OPPORTUNITIES GALORE IN INDIA FOR ALL INVESTORS AND INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS
- INDIA HAS FULLY LEVERAGED THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITISATION EVEN DURING THE MOST CHALLENGING TIMES

now raising money through capital markets. This year itself, more than 16 of them will qualify as unicorns, she said. India has fully leveraged the potential of digitisation even during the most challenging times, the finance minister said. The role of technology in the financial sector is enabling pushing the frontier of financial inclusion and fintechs are playing a key role in this area, she said at the roundtable, the Finance Ministry tweeted.

Sitharaman also met Mastercard Executive Chairman Ajay Banga and Mastercard CEO Michael Miebach, FedEx Corporation President and Chief Operating Officer Raj Subramaniam, Citi CEO Jane Fraser and IBM Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna. Following his meeting with Sitharaman, Banga said India is on a "great pathway and trajectory" with its continuing reforms and he can see great momentum. AGENCIES

Petrol, diesel prices hiked again; cost 30 per cent more than ATF

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel prices was hiked again by 35 paise a litre and the auto fuels now cost a third more than the rate at which ATF is sold to airlines.



The fourth straight day of 35 paise per litre hike sent petrol and diesel rates to record highs across the country.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 105.84 a litre and Rs 111.77 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 102.52 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 94.57. With this rise, petrol is now at Rs 100-a-litre mark or more in all state capitals while diesel has touched the 100-mark in over a dozen states. Diesel crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Bengaluru, Daman and Silvassa. Petrol used in two-wheelers and cars now costs 33 per cent more than the price at which aviation turbine fuel (ATF) is sold to airlines. ATF in Delhi costs Rs 79,020.16 per kilolitre or Rs 79 per litre. The costliest fuel is in the border town of Ganganagar in Rajasthan where petrol comes for Rs 117.86 a litre and diesel for Rs 105.95. Since ending of a three-week long hiatus in rate revision in the last week of September, this is the 16th increase in petrol price and the 19th time that diesel rates have gone up. While petrol price in most of the country is already above Rs 100-a-litre mark, diesel rates have crossed that level in over a dozen states/UT including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Ladakh. AGENCIES

Markets skid for 2nd day as profit-booking takes hold

MUMBAI: The Sensex slumped 456 points while the Nifty closed below the 18,300-level as market participants pared exposure to overbought counters for the second straight session.



Midcap and smallcap stocks too saw heavy selling amid concerns over frothy valuations, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 456.09 points or 0.74 per cent lower at 61,259.96. Similarly, the NSE Nifty dropped 152.15 points or 0.83 per cent to 18,266.60. Titan was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.97 per cent, followed by

HUL, NTPC, L&T, PowerGrid, Bajaj Finserv and M&M. In contrast, Bharti Airtel led the gainers' chart with a jump of 4.03 per cent. SBI, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, ITC and HCL Tech were the other

winners. "Indices corrected quite meaningfully led by the expensive side of the market where valuations had got stretched," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities. Almost all sectoral indices ended in the red, although PSU banks were seen bucking the trend with investors cherry-picking for value in that pocket, he noted. Further, he said the street is taking note of the cost pressures emanating from higher input costs in companies that do not possess the pricing power.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "The ongoing market correction is not an overreaction and can sustain in the near-term due to high valuations. However, in the future Indian corporates will benefit from the reforms and China plus one strategy which happened during 2020-21." "Alongside, the long-term economy and market trend is intact due to further re-opening of the economy, low-interest cycle and fiscal and private spending. This correction will give leeway for value-buying..." he added. AGENCIES

Retail inflation for farm, rural labourers slid in September

NEW DELHI: Retail inflation for farm and rural labourers witnessed a slide in September 2021 as it stood at 2.89 per cent and 3.16 per cent respectively, driven by lower prices of food items.



Based on consumer price index (CPI) for agricultural labourers and rural labourers, the point-to-point rate of inflation stood at 2.89 per cent and 3.16 per cent in September 2021 compared to 3.90 per cent and 3.97 per cent respectively in August 2021.

Retail inflation for September 2021 has come down steeply compared to CPI for agricultural labourers and rural labourers in September 2020, when it had stood at 6.25 per cent and 6.10 per cent respectively. Labour Ministry in a statement said that the food inflation based on CPI-agricultural labourers and CPI-rural la-

bourers stood at 0.50 per cent and 0.70 per cent in September 2021, compared to 2.13 per cent and 2.32 per cent respectively in August 2021, thus showing a steady decline on a month to month basis. The rates had stood at 7.65 per cent and 7.61 per cent, respectively, during September 2020, the statement said. The All-India Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) for September 2021 increased by 1 point and 2 points to stand at 1,067 and 1,076 points, respectively. CPI-AL and CPI-RL were 1,066 points and 1,074 points, respectively, in August 2021. AGENCIES

IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath to leave job and return to Harvard University

WASHINGTON: IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath will leave her job in January next year and return to the prestigious Harvard University, according to the global financial institution.



The 49-year-old prominent Indian-American economist had joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as Chief Economist in January 2019. She was the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University when she joined the Washington-based global lender. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva announced that the search for Gopinath's successor would begin shortly. "Gita's contribution to the Fund and our membership has been truly remarkable -- quite simply, her impact on the IMF's work has been tremendous," Georgieva said. Mysuru-born Gopinath is the first-ever woman Chief Economist of the IMF.

Harvard University had extended her leave of absence on an exceptional basis by one year, which has allowed her to serve as Chief Economist at the IMF for three years. "She made history as the first female Chief Economist of the Fund and we benefited immensely from her sharp intellect and deep knowledge of international finance and macroeconomics as we navigate through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. "Gita also won the respect and admiration of colleagues in the Research Department across the Fund, and throughout the membership for leading analytically rigorous work and policy-relevant projects with high impact and influence," Georgieva said. The IMF said that as part of her many significant initiatives, Gopinath co-authored the "Pandemic Paper" on how to end the COVID-19 pandemic that set globally endorsed targets for vaccinating the world. This work led to the creation of the Multilateral Task Force made up of the leadership of the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the World

Health Organisation to help end the pandemic and the establishment of a working group with vaccine manufacturers to identify trade barriers, supply bottlenecks, and accelerate delivery of vaccines to low- and lower-middle income countries, the IMF said in a statement. Among her other key accomplishments, Gopinath helped set up a Climate Change team inside the IMF to analyse, among other things, optimal climate mitigation policies. "I would like to express my personal appreciation to Gita for her impressive contributions, her always wise counsel, her devotion for the mission of the Research Department and the Fund more broadly, as well as her widely recognised inclusive and accessible approach to colleagues and staff," Georgieva added. AGENCIES

Pakistan rupee tumbles to fresh all-time low at Rs 173.50

NEW DELHI: The Pakistani rupee's slide continued against the US dollar in the interbank currency market, ARY News reported.

The Pakistani rupee tumbled to a fresh all-time low at Rs 173.50 against the greenback. The greenback gained 37 paise at the start of the trading day.

The rupee closed at Rs 172.72 against the US dollar. Rising demand for the US dollar is driving up its value despite a number of measures introduced by the State Bank to ease the pressure on the exchange rate.

Earlier, the central bank introduced regulatory measures to enhance transparency in the foreign currency transactions by exchange companies and to curb the undesirable outflow of foreign currency, the report said. According to guidelines shared by the State Bank of Pakistan, persons travelling to Afghanistan will be allowed to carry only \$1,000 per person per visit with a maximum annual limit of \$6,000. AGENCIES

Service rendered by govt, not its agency, only exempt from GST

NEWDELHI: Private and public sector agencies providing goods and services and collecting charges from clients on behalf of the government will not be exempt from paying GST and have to pay the tax at applicable rates, the Telangana Authority for Advance Rulings (AAR) has ruled. Services by the Central government, state government, Union Territory or local authority are exempt from GST but this rule has a few exception, including services provided to business entities.



The AAR Telangana ruled that e-procurement transaction fee collected by an agency on behalf of the government is chargeable to GST. According to a senior partner at AMRG & Associates, Rajat Mohan, the authority also clarified that neither the

services rendered by a business entity to the government nor its activity acting on behalf of the government, qualify to be treated at par with services rendered purely by the government or its agencies that are exempt from GST. The AAR ruling came on an application by the Telangana State Technology Services Ltd (TSTSL), a public sector undertaking and a service agency

to the Telangana government and its departments relating to IT and related services. One of such services provided by the TSTSL is acting as a fund manager on behalf of state IT E&C Department in executing e-procurement process. TSTSL, as fund manager, receives entire amounts such as e-procurement transaction charges into a designated bank account. On receipt of the e-Procurement Transaction Fees (inclusive of GST), the TSTSL is paying 18 per cent GST on the fees on a monthly basis and recognises its share of service charges and again pays GST at 18 per cent on a monthly basis. The balance amounts are utilised for IT expenditure towards the specific requirements of the departments concerned. AGENCIES

China's economy stumbles on power crunch, property woes; GDP in Q3 declines to 4.9 pc

CHINA: China's GDP grew by 4.9 per cent in the third quarter, down from 7.9 per cent in the second, confirming the slowdown of the world's second-largest economy which was under pressure from the crisis-hit property sector, curbs on energy and tardy recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Early to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, China's economy in the first few months this year staged impressive recovery but caught up in numerous headwinds, including a property sector slump, power crisis, increasingly weak consumer sentiment and soaring raw material costs. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the third quarter (Q3) grew 4.9 per cent year on year, slower than the growth of 18.3 per cent in Q1 and 7.9 per cent

in Q2. The Q3 belied surveys of predicting five per cent growth. Releasing the Q3 data, spokesman of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Fu Linghui said that consumption contributed around 64.8 per cent to China's economic growth in the first three quarters of the year. "We must note that the current uncertainties in the international environment are mounting and the domestic economic recovery is still unstable and uneven," Fu said. "The overall national economy maintained the recovery momentum in the first three quarters... however, we must note that the current uncertainties in the international environment are mounting, and the domestic economic recovery is still unstable and uneven," the

Hong Kong-based South China Morning quoted Fu as saying. According to the official data, China's retail sales of consumer goods went up 16.4 per cent year on year in the first three quarters this year. The country's retail sales of consumer goods totalled around 31.8 trillion yuan (about USD 4.9 trillion) in January-September period as per the data. China's value-added industrial output went up 11.8 per cent year on year in the first three quarters, while fixed-asset investment went up 7.3 per cent year on year during the period. The country's surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at 4.9 per cent in September, 0.5 percentage points lower than the same period last year. During the January-September period, China added 10.45

million new urban jobs in the first three quarters, achieving 95 per cent of the target for the whole year, the NBS data showed. Acknowledging the declining trend of the economy, state-run Global Times in its report on Q3 data said China's economic slowdown in the third quarter not only came amid a lower base effect from last year when the coronavirus pandemic was largely controlled throughout the country, but also amid a range of economic challenges that China is facing now, such as the power crunch and supply chain issues. Already, a number of international financial institutions lowered China's third-quarter GDP growth. The Standard Chartered



bank lowered its prediction for China's third-quarter GDP from six per cent to five per cent based on factors including flooding and the lingering effect of regulatory tightening. The Goldman Sachs pro-

jected China's fourth-quarter GDP to grow 3.2 per cent from a year earlier, compared with previous forecast of 4.1 per cent. The Global Times quoted rating agency Moody's as stat-

ing that China's electricity cuts will add to the country's economic stress and weigh on its GDP growth for 2022. It said that its risks to GDP forecasts could be larger due to disruptions to production and supply chains. Wu Chaoming, the chief economist at Chasing Securities, told Global Times that China's third-quarter GDP growth has been weighed down partly by the resurgence of coronavirus in several Chinese provinces, and partly by the rise of bulk commodity price and power supply restrictions, which had a direct negative impact on the profitability of downstream industrial enterprises. He stressed that the 4.9 per cent GDP growth is still near the potential growth rate of 5.5-6.0 per cent, which means that

the country's economic growth is still within a normal range. Experts also said that China's GDP growth in the fourth quarter will face extra pressure, which may further drag down China's GDP growth for the whole of 2021. According to Wu, the biggest challenge now comes from the investment sector, as market expectations for the property market are trending down as a result of the banks' tightening home loan requirements as well as the Evergrande debt crisis. Evergrande, China's largest property company, sparked off a major crisis in recent weeks as it began defaulting its payment of instalments of its USD 309 billion debt. Also, several Chinese provinces reported acute power crisis due to shortage of coal. AGENCIES

BHUMI PEDNEKAR

teams up with Norwegian diplomat Erik Solheim for Climate Warrior initiative!

Bhumi Pednekar has joined hands with Erik Solheim, president of the Green Belt and Road Institute and former executive president of UNEP, Norway, for an initiative that will see the two do a beach clean-up at Carter Road in Mumbai's western suburbs.

This initiative has been made possible by Bhamla Foundation that has been doing exemplary work towards climate protection across the country.

Bhumi says, "There are incredible Climate Warriors doing brilliant work not just in our country, but also globally. My journey to advocate for climate justice has helped me meet and interact with some of these amazing people who are helping to put climate change at the forefront of our conversation." She adds, "I'm doing my bit to raise as much awareness as possible on the issue."

AGENCIES



HABIT: SHEHNAAZ GILL REMEMBERS SIDHARTH IN THEIR LAST MUSIC VIDEO



Shehnaaz Gill and Sidharth Shukla's last music video *Habit* released a day before it was promised and it took the Internet by storm within minutes. The song marks Sidharth Shukla's last project; he died at the age of 40 on September 3 in Mumbai. Sharing the song on social media, the makers wrote: "Thousands of #SidNaaz fans wanted the song immediately. Who are we to come in the way?" The song is a musical montage, where actual shots of the music

video featuring Sidharth Shukla and Shehnaaz Gill are accompanied by some behind-the-scenes clips that show the duo having fun on *Habit* set.

The music video shows Shehnaaz Gill lip-synching to the lyrics but getting emotional and teary-eyed in between. She was quite close to the late actor. Sidharth Shukla died before *Habit* could be completed.

Habit has been sung by Shreya Ghoshal and Arko Pravo Mukherjee. A couple of days ago, Shreya Ghoshal shared a poster

of *Habit*, announcing the release date of the music video. In her caption, she wrote about Sidharth Shukla: "He was a star and will be forever... The love of millions of hearts will shine bright forever... *Habit* our unfinished song... *Adhura hai par phir bhi poor* rahega (It is incomplete yet complete). *Sidnaaz ka yeh aakhri gaana, har fan ki khwahish, hamesha ke liye humare dilon mein zinda rahega.* (This last song of Sidnaaz, which is every fan's wish will remain alive in our hearts forever.)"

AGENCIES

Virat Kohli enjoys breakfast with Anushka Sharma and daughter Vamika in Dubai



MUMBAI: India captain Virat Kohli took to Twitter to share an adorable photo of himself with his wife Anushka Sharma and daughter Vamika. In the photo, Kohli and Anushka can be smiling and the duo are joined by Vamika at breakfast in Dubai. Kohli captioned the post with a red heart emoji. The India skipper is in the

UAE for the ongoing T20 World Cup. Anushka too had recently posted a few pictures from her time in quarantine in the UAE.

Giving her fans a sneak peek of her quarantine life, the Bollywood actress posted several images of Virat Kohli from her hotel room and captioned it as "Couldn't choose

between these two captions - Quarantine makes the heart fonder & Love in the time of bubble life #OhWell, you get the point."

Coming back to cricket, Kohli recently led India to a seven-wicket win over England in a T20 World Cup warm-up match.

Kohli himself couldn't get a big score but youngster Ishan Kishan dazzled with a scintillating knock of 70. He was well-supported by KL Rahul who also hit a half-century to help India chase down the 189-target with an over to spare.

India will face Australia in their second and final warm-up game on Wednesday before beginning their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan in Dubai. After the completion of T20 World Cup, Kohli, who had already stepped down as captain of his Indian Premier League franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore, will step down as the skipper in the shortest format of the game.

AGENCIES

Whatsapp chats reveal...: Why Aryan Khan was denied bail by Mumbai Court

MUMBAI: Aryan Khan's WhatsApp chats appeared to reveal that he regularly indulged in "illicit drug activities", a special court in Mumbai said, as it turned down the bail application filed by the son of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan in the drugs-on-cruise case.

"WhatsApp chats prima facie reveals accused Aryan Khan is dealing in illicit drug activities for narcotic substances on regular basis. Therefore, it cannot be said that Khan is not likely to commit similar offence while on bail," Judge VV Patil said in his order.

"As argued by the learned ASG (Additional Solicitor General), though no criminal antecedent are there, from WhatsApp chats of Applicant No.1 (Aryan Khan) it is reflected that he was indulging in illicit drug activities," it said.

The court also said that the material placed on record points to a "nexus" between Aryan Khan, 23, and suppliers and peddlers.

The court said that though nothing has been found from Aryan Khan, six grams of charas was found hidden in his friend



Arbaaz Merchant's shoe, and it seemed Aryan Khan knew about it.

"Accused 1&2 are friends since long. They travelled together and they were apprehended together at the international cruise terminal. Further, in their voluntary statements, both of them disclosed that they were possessing the said substance for their consumption and for enjoyment. Thus, all these things go to show that Aryan Khan was having knowledge of contraband concealed by 2 in his shoes," the court said.

The court also held that charges of conspiracy were

for narcotic substances on regular basis. Therefore, it cannot be said that Khan is not likely to commit similar offence while on bail," Judge VV Patil said in his order.

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Indian diplomat meets Taliban team in Moscow



NEW DELHI: The Taliban leadership bilaterally met a diplomat from India in Moscow where both sides attended a multi-national conference on Afghanistan.

The Taliban delegation and Indian diplomat J P Singh discussed enhancing diplomatic and political ties, said Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid.

Singh had also met some members of the Taliban leadership in Doha after its takeover of Kabul on August 15. Mujahid said India had agreed to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. **AGENCIES**

T20 World Cup: India outplay Australia in final warm-up

DUBAI: India fine-tuned their T20 World Cup preparations with a convincing nine-wicket win over Australia in their final warm-up game but the sixth bowler's slot remained a worry as even Virat Kohli rolled his arm over going into the tournament proper.

Captaining the side with Kohli only taking the field to bowl, Rohit Sharma (60 retired off 41) showed sublime touch alongside opening partner K L Rahul (39 off 31) as India chased down Australia's 152 for five in 17.5 overs.

Suryakumar Yadav (38 not out off 27) came at number three in Kohli's absence and got valuable time in the middle which should boost his confidence going ahead.

Hardik Pandya (14 not out off 8) came at four to finish the game and he did it with a clean hit over the bowler's head.

Another plus for India was seasoned pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar finding rhythm after a poor outing against England. India had also beaten England in their earlier practice game.

The batting department looks more or less settled and the five specialist bowlers also inspire confidence but the same can't be said about the extra bowling option with Hardik not bringing his all-round skills to



the table at the moment.

"Hardik is coming along pretty well, but it'll be a while before he will start to bowl. He hasn't started bowling, but he should be ready by the start of the tournament," said Rohit at the toss for the warm-up match against Australia.

The team management is hoping he will be ready to bowl during India's World Cup campaign which begins with the marquee clash against Pakistan

on Sunday.

Skipper Kohli kept things tight with two overs of medium pace but to expect him to do the job in high-pressure scenarios would be asking for too much from him.

India conceded 58 runs off the last five overs and that is something they would like to improve on.

After losing the toss, India put up a decent bowling effort. Rohit mentioned at the toss

that Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami were rested from the game but the skipper took the field to bowl a couple of overs in which he conceded 12 runs.

India had Australia on the mat at 11 for three after Aaron Finch opted to bat first. David Warner's barren run continued after a failed attempt at a reverse sweep had him trapped in front off Ravichandran Ashwin.

With his very next ball, Ashwin got rid of birthday boy Mitchell Marsh who played for the turn which wasn't there only to edge it to the first slip. Ravindra Jadeja had Finch trapped LBW with a slider off his very first ball, leaving Australia with a lot of work to do.

Steve Smith (57 off 48) and in-form Glenn Maxwell (37 off 28) tried to break the shackles with a 61-run partnership.

While Maxwell used his reverse sweep to good effect, Smith kept himself busy by rotating the strike.

After Maxwell fell to a conventional sweep, Smith and Marcus Stoinis (41 not out off 25 balls) got together and provided a much needed final flourish to the innings.

Smith smashed Shardul Thakur for three successive fours in the 17th over before Stoinis hit a straight six and a boundary off mystery spinner Varun Chakaravarty, who conceded 23 runs off his two overs.

After a bad day in office against England, Bhuvneshwar found his rhythm and was effective both at the start and in the death.

India, however, would be a tad disappointed to give away so many runs in the death overs and help Australia's recovery. **AGENCIES**

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**



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