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NOT ALL SCHOOLS IN DELHI PREPARED TO RESUME BUS SERVICES YET: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



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CENTRE EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR GST AMNESTY SCHEME TILL NOVEMBER 30



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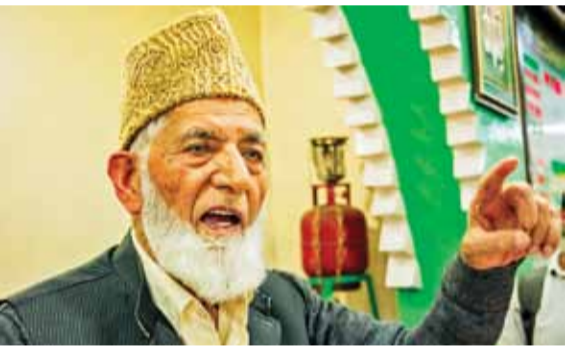
FARAH KHAN TESTS CORONA POSITIVE



HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

- 1 Sidharth Shukla passed away at the age of 40 on September 2. He was the winner of Bigg Boss 13
- 2 Jaipur shooter Avani Lekhara now wins bronze; becomes first Indian woman to win 2 Paralympic medals
- 3 Airlines overbook flights, deny boarding pass to students. Canada-bound pupils stuck in Mexico, seek help

Syed Ali Shah Geelani, face of Kashmiri separatist politics, dies at 92



SRINAGAR: Pro-Pakistan Kashmiri separatist Syed Ali Shah Geelani died at the age of 92 at his home in Srinagar late on September 1 evening. The hardliner Islamist leader -- who has been the face of the separatist politics in Jammu and Kashmir -- had been ailing for long and had resigned from politics and Hurriyat last year. The funeral is likely to take place in the morning. In March 2018, he suffered a minor heart attack and was hospitalised. "Saddened by the news of Geelani sahib's passing away. We may not have agreed on most things but I respect him for his steadfastness & standing by his beliefs. May Allah Ta'aala grant him jannat & condolences to his family & well wishers. Security has been strengthened in Kashmir Valley following his death late on Wednesday evening. Restrictions, including suspension of internet services, have been imposed in Kashmir Valley, said Vijay Kumar, a senior police officer in Kashmir. Security has also been strengthened outside Geelani's house in Hyderpora. Mobile phone services, except that of BSNL, too have been suspended. Some senior members of Hurriyat have been detained. Senior Hurriyat leader Mukhtar Ahmed Waza has been arrested from his residence in South Kashmir's Anantnag town. Geelani had quit the separatist body after 27 years' association, after he was sidelined by Pakistan and its army intelligence, the ISI, sources in the home ministry had told. **AGENCIES**

Taliban says have right to raise voice for Muslims in Kashmir: Report

KABUL: Taliban co-founder Mullah Baradar will lead a new Afghan government that could be announced soon, sources in the Islamist group said on September 3, as it battled rebel fighters while striving to ward off economic collapse. Baradar, who heads the Taliban's political office, will be joined by Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, the son of late Taliban founder Mullah Omar, and Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, in senior positions in the government, three sources said. "All the top leaders have arrived in Kabul, where preparations are in final stages to announce the new government," one Taliban official told Reuters, on condition of anonymity. The Taliban, which seized Kabul on August 15 after sweeping across most of the country, have faced resistance in the Panjshir Valley, north of the capital, with reports of heavy fighting and casualties. Several thousand fighters of regional militias and remnants of the government's armed forces have massed in the rugged valley under the leadership of



Ahmad Massoud, the son of former Mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Massoud. Efforts to negotiate a settlement appear to have broken down, with each side blaming the other for the failure. The government's legitimacy in the eyes of international donors and investors will be crucial for an economy grappling with drought and the ravages of a conflict that killed an estimated 240,000 Afghans. Humanitarian groups have warned of impending catastrophe and the economy, reliant for years on many millions of dollars of foreign aid, is close to collapse. Many Afghans were struggling to feed their families amid severe drought well before the Taliban took power and millions may now face starvation, aid agencies say. "Since August 15, we have seen the crisis accelerate and magnify, with the imminent economic collapse that is coming this country's way," Mary-Ellen, the director of the World Food Programme in Afghanistan, told Reuters from Kabul. The Taliban enforced a radical form of sharia, or Islamic law, when it ruled from 1996 to 2001. But this time around, the movement has tried to present a more moderate face to the world, promising to protect human rights and refrain from

- HIGHLIGHTS**
- Taliban co-founder Mullah Baradar to lead new Afghanistan govt
 - Inamullah Samangani, a member of the Taliban's cultural commission, says 34 members of the opposition forces were killed in the ongoing clashes
 - The United States, the European Union and others have cast doubt on such assurances, saying formal recognition of the new government, and the resultant flow of economic aid, was contingent on action.

reprisals against old enemies. The United States, the European Union and others have cast doubt on such assurances, saying formal recognition of the new government, and the resultant flow of economic aid, was contingent on action. The Taliban have promised safe passage out of the country for any foreigners or Afghans left behind by the huge airlift that ended when U.S. troops withdrew ahead of an Aug 31 deadline. But, with Kabul airport still closed, many were seeking to flee over land. **AGENCIES**

Don't attend mass events unless fully vaxxed: Govt

NEW DELHI: The Union health ministry stressed on September 2 that all large meetings should be avoided in the run-up to the country's impending festive season, adding that if attendance is absolutely necessary for someone, full immunisation should be viewed as a must. The country's second Covid-19 pandemic is "not yet gone," and a spike in cases has always been seen as the festive season approaches. While the national positivity rate has been falling since the week ending May 10, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan remarked during the government's Covid-19 press conference that certain districts still have very

high positivity rates. In the preceding week, 39 districts reported a positivity rate of over 10%, while another 38 districts recorded a positivity rate of 5-10%. Government experts urged people to get both their vaccine shots as soon as possible and to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour in the coming weeks. Around 700 million doses of the vaccine were administered to 514.6 million people, with 155.2 million people fully vaccinated and 359.4 million people receiving one shot, according to government data. When seen alongside the country's projected adult population of 940 million (according to the Census of In-



India's National Commission on Population, this means that while 54.7% of India's adults have received jabs, only 16.5% of those above the age of 18 are fully vaccinated. Several festivals across nearly all faiths such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussehra, Eid Milad un-Nabi, Diwali, along with holidays such as Gandhi

Jayanti, are lined up in the coming 8-10 weeks. Covid infections saw a major spike in Kerala in the past two weeks -- a phenomenon experts have attributed to Onam festivities and the laxity of restrictions on social movement through the festival. "The key message we wish to convey to everyone is that we must be careful particularly in the context of the festive season. Therefore, we make a very strong plea even as we accelerate the vaccination programme... our precautions must continue. The time has not yet come to live life without wearing a mask. Like last year, this year also festivals need to be celebrated in a modified way. We will have

to wait for celebrating festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Eid etc. with great fervour," said VK Paul, member (health), Niti Aayog. "It is best to celebrate within [your] family, and avoid crowding at places and stepping out unnecessarily. Shopping at market places must be done very carefully without overcrowding. The wave seems to be stabilising even though it is not over yet... virus mutations can still turn this tide against us," said Paul. Apart from celebrating at home, senior government experts stressed on the continuous importance of people being careful about ensuring Covid-appropriate behaviour is followed. **AGENCIES**

PM releases special commemorative coin on ISKCON founder's 125th birth anniversary



NEWDELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a special commemorative coin of Rs 125 to mark the 125th birth anniversary of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) founder Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Speaking on the occasion through video-conferencing, Modi lauded the religious organisation for its work and services, and said that it has played the role of a brand ambassador of Indian traditions and values. Citing ISKCON's global presence, the prime minister said he often gives the example of its success while speaking of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', a programme launched by his government to popularise 'made-in-India' products. "How we feel a sense of belonging and pride when we are greeted with 'Hare Krishna' in foreign countries. Imagine how we will feel if we find the same familiarity for 'made-in-India' products outside," the prime minister said. Hare Krishna is the greeting offered by ISKCON members. **AGENCIES**

Charuni hardens stand against Khattar govt



CHHAVI BHATIA Chandigarh
The standoff between the farmers and the Haryana government isn't showing any signs of abating anytime soon with state Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Gurnam Singh Charuni hardening his stance towards the government. Charuni, who has been holding meetings across Haryana as the state gears up for, panchayat and civic body polls said farmers will continue to protest against the Khattar government and boycott all political visits. He said they won't be intimidated by FIRs while warning the state police of not unleashing

of state machinery. We are back to living in the British era where head of states order their police to crackdown on defenceless, innocent citizens fighting for their rights," he said. "There is no humanity left in this government and those who run it. They treated us like criminals while we are then ones who put food on their plates." Reacting to Khattar's statement that the government will take strict action if farmers try to disrupt law and order in the garb of stir, Charuni maintained that the fight will continue unabated. "We are willing to even sacrifice our lives to protect our lands and livelihood. Over 600 of our people have lost their lives till now. This won't go in vain," he asserted. The leader also urged farmers to not vote for those who don't support the farmers' protest, in the upcoming local body elections. Charuni also remained firm on the demand of Rs 25 lakh as compensation and a job to the son of the farmer who died in the Karnal lathicharge, and Rs 20 lakhs each to those injured plus strict action against Ayush Sinha, the IAS officer who ordered the brutal crackdown on the farmers on August 28.

20-yr military presence in Afghanistan ends: US President Joe Biden

WASHINGTON: America's 20-year-old military presence in Afghanistan has ended, President Joe Biden announced, hours after the United States withdrew all of its soldiers from the war-ravaged country. "Now, our 20-year military presence in Afghanistan has ended," he said, thanking armed forces for their execution of the dangerous retrograde from Afghanistan as scheduled - in the early hours of Tuesday (August 31) - with no further loss of American lives. Biden said he would address the nation. "For now, I will report that it was the unanimous recommendation of the Joint Chiefs and of all of our commanders on the ground to end our airlift mis-



sion as planned. Their view was that ending our military mission was the best way to protect the lives of our troops, and secure the prospects of civilian departures for those who want to leave Afghanistan in the weeks and months ahead." The President said he had asked the Secretary of State to lead the continued coordination with US international partners to ensure safe passage for any Americans, Afghan partners and foreign

nationals who wanted to leave Afghanistan. This would include work to build on the UN Security Council Resolution that sent the clear message of what the international community expected the Taliban to deliver on moving forward, notably freedom of travel, he added. "The Taliban has made commitments on safe passage and the world will hold them to their commitments. It will include ongoing diplomacy in Afghanistan and coordination with partners in the region to reopen the airport allowing for continued departure for those who want to leave and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan," Biden said. **AGENCIES**

Death toll due to dengue, viral fever climbs to 50 in UP's Firozabad: Official

THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE (DM) SUSPENDED THREE DOCTORS WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON THURSDAY ON CHARGES OF NEGLIGENCE AND WARNED GOVERNMENT DOCTORS OF STRICT ACTION FOR ANY NEGLIGENCE IN THE TREATMENT OF THE PATIENTS

FIROZABAD: With three fresh fatalities, the death toll due to dengue and viral fever has climbed to 50 in this Uttar Pradesh district, official sources said. "So far, 50 people have died due to dengue and viral fever. Ten areas -- nine blocks and a Nagar Nigam area -- in the district are affected," Chief Medical Officer Dinesh Kumar Premi said in a statement. There are 36 active



campers in the district and 3,719 people, including those who have

fever, are undergoing treatment there, he added. Amid the rising death toll, District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh has made the chief development officer (CDO) the nodal officer of the district to oversee the treatment and other facilities for the patients. The district magistrate (DM) suspended three doctors with immediate effect on Thursday on charges of negligence and warned government doctors of strict action for any negligence in the treatment of the patients. Dr Girish Srivastava of the Primary Health Centre at Salai, Dr Ruchi Srivastava, a public health expert, and Dr Saurav were suspended. Firozabad's Chief Medical Officer Neeta Kulshrestha was removed on Wednesday following the spate of deaths, mostly of children, since August 18 due to suspected cases of dengue. **AGENCIES**

Not all schools in Delhi prepared to resume bus services yet: School principals

NEW DELHI: Travelling to school once physical classes resume may be a challenge for students as not all schools are prepared to resume their bus services yet, according to school principals.

Following a marked improvement in the Covid-19 situation in the National Capital, the Delhi government on Friday announced that schools for classes 9 to 12, colleges and coaching institutions will reopen from September 1.

"As of now, the school is not providing school buses or any transport facility. Students who are willing to join the school will have to come on their own. It is not mandatory for students to come to school. Those who wish to continue their studies online will be free to do so," Alka Kapur, Principal, Modern Public School, Shalimar Bagh told PTI.

"School will provide transportation facilities once the government issues the guidelines or the Covid situation



is under control. It will take us some time to adjust to the new post-Covid realities," she added.

The Delhi government has clarified that no student will

tend classes physically. We will reach out to parents in the coming week and if we get a good number of students we will speak to the bus operators and make arrangements.

"Since almost a year, the arrangements with transport operators have been suspended and no transport fees is being charged from students," said the principal of a private school, who did not wish to be identified.

Another school principal said, "We will wait for the SOPs issued by the government to see what are they recommending about travel in school buses. We are definitely not prepared to begin bus service from September 1, but we will take a call in the coming weeks after evaluating all factors."

Separate entry and exit to avoid crowding, calling 50 per cent students of classroom seating capacity, increased facility for cleaning and sanitisation, availability of quarantine

room and random collection of samples of students and staff on regular basis, no sharing of lunch and stationary items by students are among the SOPs recommended by the DDMA committee.

The DDMA panel has not made any recommendations for the SOPs for travel by students in school buses.

Schools in the National Capital were ordered shut last year in March ahead of a nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus. While several states started partial reopening of schools from October last year, the Delhi government allowed reopening in January only for classes 9 to 12.

However, schools were again completely shut in April following an aggressive second wave of Covid-19.

Majority schools in the National Capital had not resumed their bus services when schools reopened briefly earlier this year.

AGENCIES

Delhi govt making 'thorough' preparations for possible third Covid wave: Jain

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government is not taking any chances and making "thorough" preparations for an impending third wave of Covid-19, Health Minister Satyendar Jain has said.

Jain also thanked doctors who sacrificed their lives during the pandemic and said their names will be written in golden words. Jain urged people to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and asked them not to become negligent.

The health minister was speaking at the sixth felicitation ceremony for healthcare workers of government hospitals—Institute of Liver & Biliary Sciences (ILBS), Vasant Kunj; Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital in Ashok Vihar; Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Mangolpuri and Burari Hospital—in northwest Delhi at Delhi Vidhan Sabha on Friday.

"Their (healthcare workers) dedicated service saved precious lives, their supreme sacrifice cannot be forgotten and shall be written in the pages of history in letters of gold. "The Arvind Kejriwal government salutes the selfless and dedicated service of healthcare workers, who had put their own lives at stake and stood with the Delhi government day in and day out to fight this deadly disease."

He said the government is doing its best and learning from experiences to prevent the third wave but following Covid-appropriate behaviour is very important, and thus people must not become negligent. Jain stressed that the government's preparations for an impending third wave are "thorough". The government



has its ear to the ground and is not taking any chances, he said, asserting that 37,000 Covid-19 dedicated beds are being laid out, including 12,000 ICU beds.

"Along with this, 47 PSA oxygen plants along with five LMO storage tanks have already been set up in the city with many more to come up. "Moreover, our vision is to move a step forward by making ICU facilities so readily available in the capital that even a normal oxygen bed can be converted into an ICU one instantly without having to shift the patients," he said.

The health minister asked people to remain vigilant to stop another outbreak, and advised them to not panic in case they get infected or have symptoms. "Being motivated and calm boosts the recovery process," he said. Vidhan Sabha Speaker Ram Niwas Goel also praised the senior doctors and healthcare workers. "The name 'frontline warriors' given to doctors and healthcare workers is absolutely correct as just like the army on the border, they didn't think about their lives but worked selflessly towards rescuing precious lives from the clutches of the deadly coronavirus," he said.

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NEWSBRIEF

Delhi govt to strengthen doorstep delivery of services, set up 6,800 new beds in hospitals: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government will strengthen doorstep delivery of services and set up 6,800 new beds in its hospitals, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said. Inaugurating cloverleaf ramps, service roads and cycle track at the Mayur Vihar Phase-one flyover, the chief minister said the Barapullah project will be completed in the next one-and-a-half-years. According to Kejriwal, the cabinet has also decided to award Rs 130 crore tender for Health Management Information System (HIMS) to a private company. With this project, people will no longer have to stand in long queues at hospitals, he said. Under the cloud-based HIMS, people will get e-health cards and will be able to book online appointment with doctors at government hospitals. He said the doorstep delivery of services scheme will be strengthened by floating tenders for hiring two vendors. The contract of the current vendor ends this month and involving two companies will fuel competition, he added. The current strength of around 10,000 beds in Delhi government hospitals will be increased by 70 per cent by setting up 6,800 more beds in the next six months, he said.

Shopkeeper shot at for refusing to pay extortion money, 3 held

NEW DELHI: Three men were arrested for allegedly opening fire at a 25-year-old shopkeeper in northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura area after he allegedly refused to pay them extortion money, police said. The accused were identified as Nav Prabhat (35), Junaid (27) and Md. Asif (32), they said. According to police, the incident took place when the victim, Alauddin, was at his shop and the three men reached there and asked him to pay Rs 2,000 every week or face dire consequences. When the victim refused, Junaid fired at him and the trio fled from the spot, police said, adding that Alauddin survived the shooting. "Through technical surveillance as well as manual sources, the location of the accused was traced and on Friday, our team conducted a raid and apprehended the three from Kardampuri Pulia here," said Sanjay Kumar Sain, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast). A country made pistol was seized from Junaid, police said.

Delhi police issues over 2.5 lakh challans for Covid norms' violation

NEW DELHI: The Delhi police has issued as many as 2,68,645 challans between April 19 and August 26 this year to those found violating Covid appropriate behaviour in the National Capital. Of them, 2,35,768 challans were issued to those not wearing a mask, 28,539 to those found violating social distancing norms, 1,415 for consumption of liquor, pan, gutka, etc, 1463 for holding large public gatherings or congregations and 1,460 for spitting, the data showed.

'1 in 3 Delhi adolescents report airway obstruction/asthma due to pollution'

NEW DELHI: A study evaluating the lung health status of 3,157 adolescent school children has revealed alarming findings showing high prevalence of symptoms related to asthma and allergy, airway obstruction and childhood eczema.

In a first, the study by Lung Care Foundation and Pulmonary Research and Education Foundation across 12 randomly selected private schools in Delhi, Kottayam, and Mysuru, has also shown that obese children had a 79 per cent greater chance of having asthma.

The aim was to assess the respiratory health of adolescents in private schools in Delhi and compare them with relatively cleaner cities in terms of particulate matter air pollution—Kottayam and Mysuru.

On all indicators, Delhi's children were more vulnerable. In Delhi, 52.8 per cent school

children reported sneezing, 44.9 per cent reported itchy watery eyes, 38.4 per cent significant cough, 33 per cent itchy rash, 31.5 per cent reported shortness of breath, 11.2 per cent reported chest tightness, and 8.75 per cent reported eczema.

In Kottayam and Mysuru, corresponding proportions were lesser — 39.3 per cent; 28.8 per cent; 18.9 per cent; 12.1 per cent; 10.8 per cent; 4.7 per cent; and 1.8 per cent respectively.

Nearly 1 in 3 children from Delhi had airflow obstruction or asthma on spirometry test as compared to 22.6 per cent children in Kottayam and Mysuru. This difference was despite the fact that two factors associated with childhood asthma, namely family history of asthma and smoking in the family, were more prevalent in Kottayam and Mysuru.

High prevalence of obesity

and higher incidence of asthma was also noted in Delhi children, with 39.8 per cent children obese as compared to 16.4 per cent from Kottayam and Mysuru.

The study shows that obese children had a 79 per cent greater chance of having asthma on spirometry across all three sites combined. This association was 38 per cent higher in Delhi children as compared to their counterparts.

"The association between obesity and overweight in children and higher prevalence of asthma is being reported for the first time in any study from India. It is high time that the air pollution issue in Delhi and other cities is settled in a systematic manner to save the future of our children," Arvind Kumar, Founder Trustee Lung Care Foundation and lead study author said.

AGENCIES

Olympic medallists honoured with murals in North Delhi



NEW DELHI: Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, ace shuttler PV Sindhu and other sportspersons who brought laurels for India at the recently-held Tokyo Olympics have been honoured with murals in the national capital, officials said.

The artwork depicting these Olympians has been done on the pillars of a metro station in northwest Delhi. The idea was conceived by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation. "Big murals of Olympic medallists have been done on pillars of the Pitampura Metro Station in Rohini zone to laud the achievements of these sportspersons. Javelin hero Neeraj Chopra, Badminton star PV Sindhu, and others find a place in the artwork," a senior official of the civic body said.

Chopra won gold in men's javelin throw, becoming only the second Indian to win an

individual yellow medal at the Olympics. Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu had opened India's medal account at the Tokyo Games with a silver in the women's 49 kg category.

Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain made the country proud by winning a bronze medal in the women's welterweight (64-69 kg) category. Badminton star Sindhu picked up a bronze medal while Bajrang Punia also bagged a bronze in 65-kg wrestling, among other achievers.

The senior official said the NDMC had earlier used art to salute the contributions of the doctors, nurses, police personnel and other 'Corona warriors' who have acted as a virtual shield to protect people during this pandemic.

"Also, on the boundary walls of a crematorium in Panchkuania area, artworks have been done earlier depicting freedom fighters," he said.

AGENCIES

Heavy rains disrupt life in Gurugram, leave roads inundated



GURUGRAM: With the city of Gurugram recording more than 64.2 mm of rainfall, the residents turned helpless as multiple stretches across the district turned into a river full of water.

Heavy rains since morning left Gurugram clogged. While several underpasses have been flooded and thus closed for traffic, there is chaos on the stretch between Hero Honda Chowk and Kherki Daula. The police have issued an appeal to people not to step out unless it is urgent. Officials claimed that efforts are underway to clear waterlogging across the district. A few hours of rainfall on the second consecutive day caused heavy waterlogging along multiple stretches across the district. Both vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement have been disrupted due to waterlogging on several roads. Commuters faced huge problems due to rainwater. Morning rush hour traffic was affected and the police struggled

to keep the vehicles moving. The policemen were seen standing in knee-deep water while struggling to keep the traffic movement going. The rains started at 6 a.m. on Wednesday and it turned into a heavy downpour till 9 a.m. Traffic movement on the Delhi-Jaipur-Mumbai highway was severely hit due to waterlogging.

Nearly 70 per cent of the city was submerged in an average of 3 feet water with the worst-hit areas being the Signature Tower Chowk, Ram Chowk (Udyog Vihar), Narsinghpur (NH-48), Haldiram towards Manesar, Basai Road, Nathupur, Z Chowk near Huda City Centre Metro Station, Bilaspur Chowk, Dronacharya Metro Station, Ifco Chowk Metro Station, Gallerai Market Road, Good Earth Mall, Mayfield Garden Chowk, Sector-12 Chowk, Mini Secretariat, Sector-21/22 T-point, Medicity T-point and Sheela Mata Road.

AGENCIES

Not joining AAP, says actor Sonu Sood

MOGA: Hours after Sonu Sood joined AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal's event in Delhi, the actor denied reports that he was joining the party.

He said the Delhi Chief Minister had invited him for the launch of a project to mentor students. Nothing

political was discussed with him, he said. He said the reports highlighted in a section of the media

on his political ambitions were "false and baseless". Talking to The Tribune over the phone, he said: "My family and I have no interest in politics. We are not joining any political party." He said he had a long career ahead in the film industry, which was his top priority, apart from the social works he had initiated in the country.

AGENCIES

Court discharges BJP MP Hans Raj Hans in case of non-disclosure of information in poll affidavit

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court discharged BJP MP Hans Raj Hans in a case of allegedly giving ambiguous information in his affidavit filed along with his nomination form in the 2019 general elections.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dharmender Singh granted the relief to the Member of Parliament from north-west Delhi after finding that "no prima facie case is made against him".

The complaint was filed by Ramesh Lilothia, who had contested election against him. Lilothia claimed that at the time of filing of nomination form Hans furnished false information in affidavit and he did not disclose the material facts in it. He alleged that the accused did not give the correct information regarding his educational qualifications, financial status of his wife, income of his dependents and regarding holding of office in National Safai



Karamchari Commission. The court rejected the complainant's argument that the politician had stated his educational qualification as 'matric' however, he further pursued the studies and passed 'PREP' (equivalent to 11th class) from DAV College, Jalandhar, noting that he did not pass 'PREP' from the college.

Regarding the financial status, the complaint had claimed that while Hans' wife was shown as a housewife in the affidavit, however, the income tax dues had shown in the relevant column against her.

AGENCIES

Notice to Centre over Rakesh Asthana's appointment as Delhi Police Commissioner

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court issued notices to the Centre and Gujarat cadre IPS officer Rakesh Asthana on a petition challenging his appointment as Delhi Police Commissioner.

Issuing the notices on a petition filed by Sadre Alam, a Bench led by Chief Justice DN Patel listed the matter for further hearing on

September 8.

On behalf of Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), which has challenged Asthana's appointment as the Delhi Police Commissioner before the Supreme Court — advocate Prashant Bhushan alleged that Alam's petition was mala fide and a complete copy-paste of the NGO's petition before the top court.

AGENCIES

Point out law and procedure for monitoring, interception of phones: Delhi HC to Centre

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court allowed the central government to file a "detailed affidavit" on a PIL alleging "generalised surveillance" of the citizens by the authorities and sought details of procedure in relation to the monitoring and interception of phones.

"Time to file detailed affidavit granted to Union of India. Point out in detail the law and procedure followed by the Union of India for monitoring and interception of phones," said a Bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh which listed the matter for next hearing on September 30.

The Bench was hearing a PIL by two societies that have claimed that citizens' right to privacy was being "endan-



gered" by surveillance programmes like the Centralised Monitoring System (CMS), Network Traffic Analysis (NETRA) and National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID).

The plea by Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL) and Software Freedom Law Centre (SFLC) has contended that these surveillance sys-

tems allow central and state law enforcement agencies to intercept and monitor all telecommunications in bulk which is an infringement of the fundamental right to privacy of individuals.

Appearing for the NGOs, advocate Prashant Bhushan urged the court to constitute a committee under the aegis

of a retired judge of the high court or the Supreme Court to "find out what the government was doing" and that the government reply in the present case was "bald".

"They filed an affidavit saying everything is in accordance with the law. Government's reply is a bald reply," he stated.

He also submitted that the issue of alleged targeted surveillance by Pegasus software was pending consideration before the apex court and that the issue in the instant petition was more than that of phone tapping. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta asserted that all monitoring activities were being carried out as per the law and with requisite permissions.

AGENCIES

Transgenders get separate toilets at Delhi Metro stations

NEW DELHI: In a bid to enhance accessibility for passengers belonging to the transgender community, the DMRC has allowed them access to separate toilet facilities at its metro stations, which were hitherto meant only for persons with disability, officials said.

Besides, any transgender who wishes to use a gender-based toilet as per self-identified gender can also continue to do so, they say. At present, Delhi Metro has 347 such separate toilets across its stations, a senior official said.

"In its efforts to provide safe space and prevent gender discrimination against transgenders, Delhi Metro on a priority basis has designated its existing toilets meant only for 'Divyangjans' so far, to be accessible for the transgenders too," the DMRC said in



a statement. To guide transgenders to these toilets, bilingual signages (English and Hindi both),

along with symbols for both categories—Persons with Disability' and 'Transgenders'—have been installed adjacent

to these toilets. The DMRC later tweeted about this move, and shared pictures of a toilet facility with signages for both the categories of commuters.

"DMRC has made the provision of allowing them (transgenders) access to separate toilets, which were meant for 'Divyangjans'," Delhi Metro tweeted.

The provisions of section 22 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, mandates adequate welfare measures for the transgender persons at all public buildings including public toilet facilities, the statement said.

The Delhi Metro network spans about 390 km with 285 stations (including the Noida-Greater Noida Metro Corridor and Rapid Metro, Gurgaon).

AGENCIES

Catastrophic economic failure as in 1990s, new vision needed: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI: As oil marketing companies raised the prices of non-subsidised LPG cylinder by Rs 25, a second hike in 15 days, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the Indian economy was faltering as it did in the 1990s and the country needed a new economic vision.

"Catastrophic failures happened in the 1990s and the Congress gave the country the economy a new direction. Today again we need structural failures that warrant a new economic vision. The symptom of this catastrophic failure is the declining GDP. The PM is in panic mode and cannot fathom what to do. His core ministers are also panicking. We in the Congress know exactly what needs to be done and can send our experts to the PM," Gandhi said addressing reporters today.

In a jibe on the government he said the only thing rising



under the NDA government was the price of another kind of GDP—gas, diesel, petrol. Comparing global crude oil prices under the UPA regime in 2014 with today, Gandhi said despite low global prices of gas, and crude oil, domestic

rates were rising. "There is a 116 pc increase in cooking gas, 42 pc increase in petrol and 55 pc increase in diesel prices today as compared to 2014 when UPA decided office. This when global crude oil prices were 32 pc

Rahul Gandhi doing what he is best at, spreading 'falsities' & 'lies': BJP

NEW DELHI: The BJP accused Rahul Gandhi of spreading "falsities" and speaking "lies", soon after the Congress leader attacked the Modi government over the issue of fuel price rise. BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said an LPG cylinder price was Rs 1,241 on January 1, 2014 and Rs 1,080 on March 1 in the same year, when the Congress-led UPA government was in power, against Rs 834 it costs now. He noted that Gandhi quoted the subsidised price during the UPA government while referred to non-subsidised cost of the cylinder during the BJP government.

"Rahul Gandhi has yet again done what he is best at. He has spread falsities and he has



lied," Patra told PTI, accusing the Congress leader of giving misleading information on the proposed monetisation scheme as well. Noting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement, he said the government has also had to deal with the legacy fallout of the oil bonds worth Rs 1.4 lakh crore issued by the UPA dispensation.

After Gandhi took a jibe at the

government by referring to the GDP rise as gas, diesel and petrol price increase, the BJP leader hit back saying, "Those who ran a government of CNP—corruption, nepotism and policy paralysis—are trying to spread falsity about India's GDP." The "historic" rise of 20.1 percent in the GDP in the first quarter this fiscal following an over 24 percent contraction during the corresponding period in the last fiscal underscores Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decisive leadership, he said. Patra accused Gandhi of lying that the government was selling off its assets through monetisation, asserting that it has made clear that they will be leased out for a specific period and money will be used for the public good. **AGENCIES**

higher and international gas prices were 26 pc more in UPA times. This is truly intriguing,"

the former Congress chief said, accusing the government of shifting "wealth from the poor

to a select rich under the policy of demonetization followed by asset monetisation." **AGENCIES**

Depended on Mukherjee for his sagacious advice, guidance: Manmohan Singh

NEW DELHI: Paying rich tributes to former President Pranab Mukherjee on his first death anniversary, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he depended on a great deal on his sagacious advice and guidance on various issues.

Singh said Mukherjee had a long and illustrious political career spanning over five decades during which he held several important portfolios in several ministries of the Government of India.

He also described him as one of the most distinguished leaders of the Congress Party. "To all positions he occupied he brought his immense wisdom, deep knowledge, extensive experience of life and leadership skills spearheading critical decisions of the government on a wide range of issues," Singh said.

Singh attended the first annual Pranab Mukherjee Memorial Lecture organised by the Pranab Mukherjee Legacy Foundation to mark his first death anniversary. **AGENCIES**

Possible axis of China, Pak and Taliban-controlled Afghanistan cause for worry

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram said it is too premature to congratulate ourselves over the UN Security Council adopting a resolution on Afghanistan, and cautioned that the possible axis of China, Pakistan and Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is a cause for worry.

His remarks came after the UN Security Council, under India's Presidency, adopted a strong resolution demanding that the territory of Afghanistan not be used to threaten any country or shelter terrorists and that it expects the Taliban will adhere to commitments made by it on regarding the safe and orderly departure from the country of Afghans and all foreign nationals.

Reacting to the development, Chidambaram said the government is congratulating itself for the UNSC resolution adopted on Afghanistan.

"Resolution' has two meanings. The first is that the issue has been 'resolved' or settled to

India's satisfaction. That is not what happened at the UNSC. The second meaning is that we have put our wishes on paper and got some others to sign that paper! That is what happened at UNSC yesterday," the former Union minister said on Twitter.

It is too premature to congratulate ourselves, Chidambaram said. The possible axis of China, Pakistan and Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is a cause for worry, he cautioned.

The Security Council on Monday adopted the resolution sponsored by France, UK and the US with 13 members voting in favour, none against and permanent, veto-wielding members Russia and China abstaining.

This was the first resolution adopted by the powerful 15-nation Council on the situation in Afghanistan following the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban and came on the penultimate day of India's Presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. **AGENCIES**

RS ex-MP and veteran journalist Chandan Mitra passes away

NEW DELHI: Chandan Mitra, Editor-in-Chief of the Pioneer, who was Rajya Sabha member on two occasions, died here on September 2.

He was 65. Mitra had left behind his wife and two sons from a previous marriage. "Dad passed away late last night. He had been suffering for a while," Mitra's elder son Kushan said in a tweet. Shakya is the name of Mitra's younger son.

In a tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Shri Chandan Mitra Ji will be remembered for his intellect and insights. He distinguished himself in the world of media as well as politics. Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she was sad to hear about Mitra's death. Mitra was a commentator on life and society. "His death is a great loss for the world of journalism," Banerjee said in a message.

In an emotional tweet, Rajya Sabha member Sawapan Dasgupta said, "I lost my close



est friend—editor of Pioneer & former MP Chandan Mitra. We were together as students of La Martiniere (Kolkata) & went on to St Stephen's & Oxford. We joined journalism at the same time & shared the excitement of Ayodhya & the saffron wave."

Mitra, who was close to BJP leader LK Advani, had his first stint in the Rajya Sabha as a nominated member. His became a member of the Rajya Sabha for the second time as a BJP candidate from Madhya Pradesh. Mitra also unsuccessfully contested the Hoogly Lok Sabha seat from West Bengal on a BJP ticket in

the 2014 general election. With the emergence of the Modi-Shah combine in the BJP as the party's main power centre, Mitra got sidelined. He joined the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress in 2018 but never actively took part in the activities of the party.

When the Thapar group disinvested from the Pioneer, Mitra, who was then Editor-in-Chief of the daily, took over as the proprietor of the publication. Mitra had earlier worked on the Statesman, The Times of India, The Sunday Observer and the Hindustan Times. **AGENCIES**

SC rejects Asaram's plea seeking suspension of sentence to undergo Ayurvedic treatment

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court dismissed the plea of self-styled godman Asaram Bapu, facing varying jail terms including life sentence in sexual assault cases, that his sentence be suspended for few months for undergoing Ayurvedic treatment, saying the offence was not an "ordinary crime at all".

A bench comprising justices Indira Banerjee, V Ramasubramanian and Bela M Trivedi took note of the response of the Rajasthan government that the convict has been provided requisite treatment and dismissed the plea.

"Sorry... It is not an ordinary crime at all. You will get all your Ayurvedic treatment in jail," the bench observed orally while dismissing the plea. Senior advocate R Basant, appearing for the convict, said that an interim bail for a period of two months can be considered for allowing him to get the holistic treatment of his ailments. Senior Advocate Manish Singhvi, representing the state, the convict has been getting the best possible treatment in jail and urged dismissal of the plea.

A vacation bench, on June 4, had sought the response of the state government on Asaram's plea that his sentence be suspended for two months for undergoing treatment at Prakash Deep Institute of Ayurved near Haridwar in Uttarakhand. In its response, the state government had said that Asaram was hospitalised and in the intensive care unit for the treatment and his plea for transferring him had become infructuous. Prior to this, the state government had told the top court that Asaram was fit and stable but trying to change the venue of his custody on the pretext of medical treatment. Asaram is serving varying jail terms including life sentences in two sexual assault cases.

"The accused/petitioner with ulterior motives has been attempting to change the venue of his custody, under the guise of medical treatment. Such change, with due respect, is an abuse of the process of law," the state government had said in its affidavit. "The accused is also deliberately delaying the pending trial at Gandhi Nagar as well as Jodhpur, raising such pleas with mala fides whereas he is stable and fit," it had said. The state government had said Jodhpur is one of the rare centres, where both the allopathic and ayurvedic treatments are available. It had also said Asaram was tested positive for Covid-19 on May 6 and was having mild symptoms, with low-grade fever and was treated properly. **AGENCIES**

State Govt not against any festival, but against Corona: CM



DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

"Corona is not a government program; one has to abide by global discipline and regulations to arrest its spread," said Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray recently, while reiterating that the State Government was "not against any festival", but was focused in the battle against the Coronavirus.

Clarifying that the Centre too has asked the state government to take sufficient care during these festivals on account of possibility of further spread of the pandemic, Thackeray appealed to people to observe the festival of 'Gokul Ashtami' in a simple way and celebrate the 'Health Festival' (Arogya Utsav).

Noting that "agitations are planned, violating the corona protocols. If at all they want to agitate, let them do it against corona," the Chief Minister said that with possibilities of the third wave of corona being forecast, there is need to create more health facilities to battle the corona virus threat and even the Centre has written to the Maharashtra Government to avoid crowds during 'Dahi Handi' and 'Ganesh Festival.'

Responding to his appeal, the Sanskruti Pratishthan had organized 'Arogya Utsav' instead of 'Dahi Handi Utsav.' As part of this festival, the Chief Minister virtually dedicated an Oxygen Plant of Pratap Sarnaik Foundation and Vihang Charitable Trust Thane.

"Maharashtra is in the forefront of setting up an ultramodern regulatory system through the Department of Transport for action against vehicles and drivers violating traffic rules," said the Chief Minister, while recently launching 76 new +Interceptor+ vehicles for the 'Flying Squad' of the Motor Vehicles Department.

Describing the 'Interceptors' as useful in preventing road accidents and loss of life, Thackeray bemoaned the loss of innocent lives caused by rash drivers, and expressed the need for making the flying squad more capable, besides an updated motor transport system.

Speaking at a recent Industrial Conclave 2021 about positive changes in infrastructure for industrial progress that could enable Maharashtra become a "One-Lakh-crore-dollar Economy," the Chief Minister highlighted the need to concentrate on various fields

emerging with time for employment generation, including also the enormous hidden opportunities in the tourism sector, where tourism has been accorded status of a hospitality industry.

While the Department of Industries would prepare a State revenue division-wise Industry Map highlighting regional features and availability of infrastructure for suitability in setting industries in the respective divisions, necessary facilities would be provided to industry and scope for local employment generation would be enlarged, he said while assuring Government support to investors.

Besides existing industries, new industries are opening in the state including one based on medicinal plants launched in Kudal with guidance from Ayush ministry. Nasik is witnessing Reliance investing Rs. 5.5 crores for research in bio-science sector, while the Vital group power plant is proposed at Yavatmal at expenditure of Rs. 60,500 crore, besides GAIL India starting CNG and fuel manufacturing project near Alibaug in Maharashtra.

Thackeray also directed the MHADA and Slum Rehabilita-

tion Authority (SRA) to expedite long pending slum rehabilitation projects in Mumbai and prepare compatible set of rules regarding permanent transit camps to provide relief to people, besides paying pending rent of residents who were homeless due to SRA project, giving some concessions for completing projects, and framing rules so that projects are completed in a time-bound manner in stipulated time.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister also urged for +Out-of-the-Box+ thinking and priority in measures to avoid human-wildlife conflict, while ensuring saving forest cover and progressive developments.

Interacting with probationary officers of the Indian Forest Service recently, he said rehabilitation efforts and measures were needed -- to reduce dependence of forest-dwellers on the jungles -- in coordination with the revenue, village development and forest departments. Planning for development works like roads, railway lines in forest areas should ensure priority for wildlife through elevated bridges and roads to provide safe passage for animals, he added.

BJP selling what Cong created in 70 years: Pawan Khera

AHMEDABAD: Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera hit out at the Narendra Modi government over its recently-announced asset monetisation plan, saying that the BJP was selling what the Congress created in 70 years, and if the Centre was not stopped, an entire generation would get destroyed.

He said the BJP government has announced a "clearance sale" of the assets as the country was not important for it.

Addressing a press conference at the Gujarat Congress headquarters here, Khera said the Centre's plan to sell or lease out public infrastructure would only create a monopoly in key sectors, something that the previous Congress-led governments always avoided.

"If we do not stop them now, an entire generation will be destroyed. Before coming to power in 2014, BJP used to ask what Congress did during the last 70 years. The answer is the list of assets which you are now selling. While we built India in those 70 years, BJP is now busy selling India," he alleged.

"There is a difference between the previous Congress



governments and the BJP dispensation. A sensible government always takes care that strategic sectors do not slip into the hands of a few. No sensible government encourages monopoly. "But, for the BJP government, the country is not important. They just think about votes and making BJP the world's richest party," he said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently unveiled an ambitious Rs 6 lakh crore National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) that included unlocking value by involving private companies across infrastructure sectors - from passenger trains and railway stations to airports, roads and stadiums. **AGENCIES**

BSP will extend support to protesting farmers in Haryana, MP: Mayawati

LUCKNOW: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati instructed her party workers to extend support to the farmers' protests in Haryana and Madhya Pradesh against the new agriculture laws.

Addressing a meeting of the party's office-bearers, the BSP chief said that due to the rigid stand of the Centre, the governments in BJP-ruled states are in a way considering the farmers their opponent.

The attitude of the Haryana government in particular has been extremely anti-farmer, she said. Owing to these anti-farmer and anti-people policies of the BJP, the condition of the public in Uttar Pradesh and in the rest of the country is bad, Mayawati added. The BSP will always stand with the genuine demands of the protesting farmers, and the party has been raising its voice for them both inside and outside Parliament, she said. BSP workers will extend their support to the farmers with strict discipline, Mayawati added.

Agitated farmers have declared that they would intensify their stir in UP, and hence the BJP government in the state is requested to not behave in a barbaric manner, the BSP supremo said. She said the Centre must withdraw the farm laws, adopting a sympathetic view in honour of farmers and in the interest of the country.

Mayawati reviewed the working of the party's polling booth committees, and issued instructions to finish the rest of the work on a war footing. **AGENCIES**



Lokayukta hearing plea on MSRTC irregularities on September 2: BJP



DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Mihir Kotecha, BJP MLA and state party treasurer, has stated that the State Lokayukta has taken cognizance of his complaint -- regarding the irregularities in the purchase of electronic ticket vending machines by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation -- and will hear the plea on September 2.

Kotecha stated that he had written to the Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiari and raised concerns about irregularities in the purchase of the electronic ticket vending machines. The governor had taken cognizance of the complaint and directed the Lokayukta to enquire into the matter, where the case will be heard on September 2, he said.

"Transport minister Anil Parab had directed changes in the terms and conditions of the tender process for the purchase of electronic ticket vending machines -- citing reasons that the IT companies were severely affected during the lockdown

period. Accordingly, the condition about the annual turnover requirement of the contractor was reduced from Rs 150 crore to Rs 100 crore," Kotecha stated, adding "Also some more changes were made in the terms and conditions of the tender. The managing director of the MSRTC Pandurang Raut had directed that the changes made in the tender process must be kept before the board of directors for approval. However, the transport minister ignored the directive and instead got the tender published and also ordered that it gets placed before the board of directors for approval later."

Alleging that the changes done in the tender were to grant the contract in favor of a specific Gujarat-based company at the discretion of the chairman of the MSRTC, Kotecha stated that "If the tender is approved under the changed terms, the MSRTC will have to suffer a loss to the tune of Rs 250 crore. This is waste of public money and hence this tender process must be scrapped."

Time to balance development and conservation

The need for infrastructure development in the Himalayan region rubs up against the environmental and ecological challenges that they pose. The Uttarakhand government has for decades envisaged hydroelectric projects as the way forward to power the State, premised on the region's undulating topography. However, the rising frequency of intense rains has been contributing to landslides, avalanches, and the loss of lives and property. All of this has a bearing on hydroelectric projects being situated in terrain prone to environmental shocks. In the aftermath of the devastating Kedarnath floods of 2013, the Supreme Court ordered a halt to hydroprojects in the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi river basins pending a review. The last few years have seen considerable friction on this issue, especially because the future of hydroprojects is closely linked to the National Mission for Clean Ganga programme. For the health of the river, it must be allowed to flow unimpeded, and hydropower projects are an obstacle. Through the years, whenever a group of experts has recommended a cessation of infra development, there is always another group of experts, usually affiliated to government institutions, that differ and recommend the opposite. The Centre has been saying that it is not too keen on new hydropower projects and is only permitting those that are at least 50% complete to go ahead given the sunk costs. While such statements have been made in Parliament, they do not appear in the latest affidavit to the Court; so there are concerns on whether this is indeed a lasting policy commitment. Uttarakhand is not immune from the demands for reliable power and infrastructure. Along with better dialogue, power firms and the Centre must inspire greater trust in the residents of the region. infra development will have to necessarily account for the region's constraints.



PATRICK SUCKLING BELIEVES INDIA MUST TAKE A STAND ON CLIMATE CHANGE OR RISK BEING CAST AS AN OUTLIER

Let's commit to net zero emissions

India is at the risk of being cast globally as an outlier on climate action, with a negative fallout. With over 50% of the global economy already committed to net zero emissions by 2050 — and China committing to be so before 2060 — this is not where you want to be.

The pace and scale of climate action is only set to increase, with the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report unequivocal on the need for urgent and stronger responses. Events around the world underline the point — towns washed away in Germany, suburbs turned into storm water drains in China, forests fried in the United States and so many more lives lost to flooding in India.

It is not only governments that are increasing climate action. The business world is too, not just to protect themselves against the risks of climate change but also to take advantage of the massive opportunities arising as the global economy shifts to net zero emissions. Last year, investors injected over \$500 billion into climate transition. In my country, Australia, the number of major companies that have put in place a target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050 has more than trebled in the past year.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November in Glasgow is shaping up to be the most important climate meeting since the Paris Agreement in 2015. It is squarely focused on supercharging global ambition and action on climate change, as all countries, including India, agreed to do in the historic Paris Agreement.

Over 100 countries have already committed to net zero emissions by 2050, with more expected at COP26. Two key holdouts are India and Australia. In the case of my country, under mounting pressure at home and internationally, the government is moving toward such an announcement and I am confident they will do so by or at COP26.

I am not so confident about India. From what I hear through networks from my time as the Australian High Commissioner to India and as Australia's Ambassador for the Envi-



ronment, India is resolutely not committing to net zero by 2050, including on the basis that as a developing country, it needs to see significant support from developed countries for climate action as part of making any such commitment.

Perhaps this is negotiating tactics. Either way, I fear India may shoot itself in the foot by resisting net zero by 2050.

First, India itself has a national interest in ambitious global and national climate action. Like Australia, it is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change and, therefore, should be among the more active against the threats. India faces harmful impacts related to sea level rise, heat stress, drought, water stress and flooding, biodiversity and natural disasters. Climate change is not coming — it is here.

Second, as a rising power, India naturally seeks stronger influence globally. Being an outlier on the global challenge facing our generation does not support this aim. India is already the third largest emitter in the world, and is set to be the largest as the United States, China, and the European Union are all now signed up to net zero.

This will become a significant drag on India's international diplomacy. This applies not just to key relationships like with the U.S., where President Joe Biden's administration is mainstreaming climate action into its eco-

economic, foreign and security policy, but also with much of the Group of 77 (G77) states, who are increasingly concerned to see climate action, and in multilateral groupings such as the United Nations and ASEAN-APEC.

Finally, as the famous phrase goes, "it's the economy, stupid". There is no longer a trade-off between reducing emissions and economic growth. For example, the U.K. has reduced emissions over 40% and grown its economy over 70% since 1990. Solar energy costs have fallen 90% in recent years, providing the cheapest electricity in India ever seen. Also, given the negative impacts, addressing climate change in India's economic development is now central to success, not an added luxury to consider. For example, agricultural policy that does not consider adaptive approaches to maximise productivity in the face of increased flooding and drought due to climate change is derelict.

The transition of the global economy to net zero emissions is the biggest commercial opportunity in history. In just the energy sector alone, an estimated \$1.6 to \$3.8 trillion of investment is required every year until 2050. China gets this, which is why it is investing heavily in gaining an advantage in the technologies of the new economy, be it renewable energy and storage, electric and hydrogen transport, low emissions industry, green cities or sustainable agriculture. India needs to be riding this wave.

It is not as if India is at a standing start. It is set to significantly exceed its Paris Agreement commitment of reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% below 2005 levels by 2030, providing ready room for higher ambition. India is impressing the world with its leading roll-out of renewable energy and target for 450GW by 2030, linked to its leadership on the International Solar Alliance and recent national hydrogen strategy. Indian corporates are also stepping up, with the Tata Group winning awards on sustainability, Mahindra committing to net zero by 2040 and Reliance by 2035. There is plenty on which to build.

And India should not be expected to build alone. India's national interests on climate

action are now engaged in ways that go significantly beyond waiting for donor support to drive ambition, notwithstanding reasonable arguments about historical responsibility, per capita emissions and equity. With growing wealth and stature, India is increasingly disinclined toward handouts. But that does not mean well-targeted donor investments and international partnerships should not be a factor in raising India's climate ambition. In fact, they should be, as it is more and more obvious that the world needs to work together for success.

This could come in many guises, from stronger political engagement and dialogue to policy support in areas of mutual challenge such as energy policy, carbon markets and post-COVID green economic recovery. Practical support and cooperation in areas like rolling out renewable energy and integrating it with the national grid, zero emissions transport, decarbonising hard to abate sectors like steel, cement and chemicals and decarbonising agriculture offer significant scope to raise ambition. As does working with India on innovative green financing for decarbonising investments, including using donor support to mobilise private sector finance, green bonds and climate transition funds. Whichever it is, they need to be lasting partnerships that deliver results.

Yet, in the end, India's trust with destiny rests in its own remarkable hands, as it always has been. In a land where the earth is called mother, and Mahatma Gandhi, major religions and the Constitution enshrine environmental care, commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 should almost be foretold. The world hopes we will see it soon.

Patrick Suckling was Australia's High Commissioner to India and Ambassador for the Environment. He is a senior fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) and senior partner in Pollination, a specialist climate advisory and investment firm. This oped draws from his recent paper for ASPI on Catalysing India's Climate Ambition.



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN EXPLORES HOW INDIA AND CHINA USE PRESENT WORLD SYSTEM TO FASHION THEIR RISE

Liberalism versus nationalism

Liberalism and nationalism mean different things to different people, and the two concepts are often considered mutually exclusive. Over 70 years after Indian independence, it is worth recalling that the British claimed that their empire rested on liberal foundations and the transfer of power to nationalists evidenced this claim. But liberalism often clashed with anti-colonial nationalism; the greatest material support to anti-colonial movements during the Cold War came from the illiberal Soviet Union.

After the rise of the nation state, wars were attributed to the power and expansionist policies of nations. In Europe, nations were in almost constant conflict, and Japanese nationalism led to wars, particularly with China. In the early period of the last century, nationalism was regarded as the root cause of war, but this was an oversimplification, since many, especially Marxists, would argue that capitalism, which led to colonialism, was equally if not mainly responsible. In Europe, as the national idea spread, it became ethnic-oriented and increasingly illiberal, with an exception being Giuseppe Mazzini's nationalist idealism.

Before Indian independence, nationalism was regarded with suspicion; Rabindranath Tagore had considered it a malign ideology, making a subtle distinction between the Nation of the West, which he critiqued as a mechanical and soulless, and the Spirit of the West representing Enlightenment values of internationalism and universalism. There were alternative strands of thinking; Vinayak Damodar Savarkar contrasted his



espousal of Hindutva nationalism with Buddha's universalism, the latter's non-violence being regarded by him as weakening Indian patriotism, since "Buddhism had its centre of gravity nowhere".

Jawaharlal Nehru saw merit in nationalism as the focus of the Independence movement. In 1950, he asserted that "the strongest urge in Asia ... is the anti-colonial urge and the positive side of it is nationalism", and in 1953, "nationalism has been and is a very good thing. It has been a great liberating force in certain stages of a country's history". Yet, he feared that extreme nationalism among colonised peoples could degenerate into fascism and expansionism.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party's dogma harks back to the thinking of Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar, representing Indian cultural nationalism and attempting an impossible balance between the projection of hard power and promotion of peace. Nationalism may take various forms but essentially, it is about collective identity, whereas liberalism implies the defence of individual freedom and

self-determination, the state's role being to protect the private sphere. In practice, liberalism has advantages and disadvantages; it can underpin universal rights and Adam Smith's natural laws of economics, but its appeal is mainly to the professional educated class, and lacks nationalism's emotional appeal.

Asian politics are politically conservative when the economy is booming, shown by lengthy autocratic governments in China, Singapore and Vietnam, whereas the Asian financial crisis of 1997 led to a democratic impulse in Taiwan, Indonesia, South Korea, and intermittently in Thailand. Democracy in Asia is not shaped by the liberalism of the West; the centrality of civil and political rights is less dogmatic and a degree of state intervention considered acceptable when it comes to individual autonomy.

The liberal tradition contributes the ideas underlying the post-Second World War international system, embracing democracy, free trade, international law, multilateralism, environmental protection and human rights. Problems arise when such ideas become a doctrine for nation-building irrespective of the context, with western intervention in the developing world and its consequences of turmoil and Islamist extremism and terror. The current example of Afghanistan is a case in point.

Liberalism is now attacked in the West by both the far-right populism illustrated by former U.S. President Donald Trump, and the left represented by such as Senator Bernie Sanders who regard the global situation as the neo-liberal preserve of the rich

and powerful. Despite American diplomatic rhetoric, there never has been a community of mutually supportive liberal democracies. International relations are conducted at the axial point of an egalitarian order of law and a hierarchical order of power: the United Nations represents this tension in the differing principles on which the Security Council and General Assembly are based. This is why the reform of the UN to include India, Japan, Germany and a few others as permanent members of the Security Council proves so difficult to achieve.

How will nationalism and liberalism be reflected in a future Asia? Both India and China were at the receiving end of western imperialism and emerged as supporters of principles of international society reflected in the Panchsheel, namely sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. This implies rejection of western efforts to qualify sovereignty by making it dependent on human rights protection. The Non-Aligned Movement and Afro-Asianism were efforts to project a soft power model, but soon China, India and Pakistan joined the nuclear weapons club of hard power. The two leading Asian nations, India and China, used the present world system to fashion their rise while protesting against the control of the United Nations and world financial institutions but have not formulated any alternative based on Asian nationalism. Their current rivalry makes such a desirable outcome a remote prospect.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary. Views are personal

FIVE OBSERVATIONS

COVID IS NOT OVER

- SITUATION OF CORONA**
The danger of the situation getting out of hand because of the rapid transmission of the disease remains, calling for preventive measures.
- DESPITE VACCINATION**
Health Ministry data said that more than half of India's daily cases were from Kerala alone. All this amid claims by the government of the vaccination drive covering over 60 crore doses.
- ANTIBODIES**
Kerala, a number of reasons have been attributed for the increase in cases, such as relaxation in lockdown measures, targeted testing of symptomatic people and a low seroprevalence rate that estimates the percentage of people in a population who have antibodies.
- THE VARIANTS OF COVID**
The claims of the vaccination drive doing well, overcoming odds like the shortage of jabs come amid reports that new Covid variants may escape vaccine protection.
- RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVT**
The government should not permit a sense of drift and act responsibly.

BOOKS: REVIEW

New book by employees chronicles Wipro's journey

A new book documenting the "exceptional" entrepreneurial journey of IT giant Wipro spanning 75 years will hit the stands on September 20, announced publishing house Westland on Friday.

The coffee-table book, "The Story of Wipro: A Journey from 1945", is penned by the first few employees of the tech-giant.

Published under Westland's 'business' imprint, the commemorative volume is the first authoritative account of "how the company went from being a family-run manufacturing business to a professional corporation, now owned by a philanthropic foundation".

"It's a pleasure and a privilege to present 'The Story of Wipro'. As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of Wipro, we realize that Wipro's story belongs to many people:

the thousands of employees and clients, past and present, who grew with us, stakeholders and observers who believed in us, and all those who wished us well over the decades. We hope you will enjoy the journey as much as we have," said Rishad Premji, Chairman of Wipro Limited.

Wipro, which was founded by MH Hasham Premji in 1945 as a vegetable oil manufacturing company, reinvented itself as a leader of the tech industry under the leadership of Hasham Premji's son and Wipro Limited founder chairman Azim Premji — also known as the Czar of the Indian IT industry.

The company, with its IT, consumer and engineering businesses, has its presence in over 60 countries currently.

According to the publishers, the book is a celebration of Wipro's

'It's a pleasure and a privilege to present 'The Story of Wipro'. As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of Wipro, we realize that Wipro's story belongs to many people: the thousands of employees'

journey, with all its twists and turns, achievements and failures, struggle and resilience and the many men and women who made it happen.

"The Story of Wipro marks a milestone for our business imprint. If there is one journey of success and growth that has excited the public imagination in recent years, it is that of Wipro, and it's hugely satisfying to be



IT services company. Given that it occupies a bigger mind space than Wipro does, one expected at least a couple of similar books on Infosys, but surprisingly, Premji's Wipro has found itself shelf space earlier than its cross-city rival.

Perhaps what made it easier for the authors to take the decision to write a book on Premji was his willingness to not restrain his colleagues and those close to him from opening up to the authors. But that was perhaps the only easy part.

As the author-duo in the early chapters revealed, once they started researching about the man and his work, Premji, as one expected him to, steadfastly refused to be interviewed for the book saying that he had hardly anything substantial to contribute.

These are the kind of stumbling blocks authors writing about Indian businessmen face routinely. Not only are there not enough published material to lean on, but as the authors point out, navigating through the very dynamic nature of Indian businesses can be quite a task.

able to publish the book that captures the essence of this story in text and images," said Gautam Padmanabhan, CEO, Westland Publications.

In November 2020, another book Azim Premji: The Man Beyond the Billions written by seasoned journalists, Sundeep Khanna and Varun Sood, gave a comprehensive view of the life of Premji, and how he built a very successful IT services firm which is now among the top five domestic companies in its domain.

Wipro Ltd has always been perceived as playing second fiddle to a more flamboyant, if one can use that term to describe a company rather than a person, Infosys, another Bengaluru-based

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NEWSBRIEF

Time for tariffs to go up: Airtel

NEW DELHI: Airtel chairman Sunil Mittal pitched for hike in tariffs and a cut in levies to save the industry. He said 35% of industry's revenue goes to the government in taxes and telcos are loaded with an extraordinary debt of AGR dues and spectrum payments. AGENCIES

TaMo gets nod to hive off passenger vehicles biz

NEW DELHI: Tata Motors Ltd (TML) said it has received approval of the NCLT Mumbai Bench to hive off its passenger vehicles business unit into a separate entity. Last year, Tata Motors had said it would turn its domestic PV business unit into a separate entity and seek a strategic partnership in order to help the unit secure its long-term viability. AGENCIES

SEBI slaps Rs50-lakh fine on Kotak Mahindra AMC

NEW DELHI: SEBI imposed a Rs 50-lakh fine on Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company (AMC) and barred it from launching new fixed maturity plan (FMP) schemes for six months for violating norms. It has been directed to refund a part of the investment management and advisory fees collected from unitholders of six FMP schemes along with 15% interest per annum. AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: SEBI imposed a Rs 50-lakh fine on Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company (AMC) and barred it from launching new fixed maturity plan (FMP) schemes for six months for violating norms. It has been directed to refund a part of the investment management and advisory fees collected from unitholders of six FMP schemes along with 15% interest per annum. AGENCIES

Volkswagen to hike Polo, Vento prices from September 1

NEW DELHI: German carmaker Volkswagen said it will hike prices of hatchback Polo and mid-sized sedan Vento by up to 3 per cent from September 1. The upward revision in prices has been undertaken because of the rising input costs, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India said in a release. "Volkswagen Passenger Cars India will increase prices, from September 1, across its flagship models - Polo and Vento, in lieu of the rising input costs. The price revision will be up to 3 per cent and 2 per cent across the variants of Polo and Vento, respectively," the carmaker said. The price increase will not be applicable on the GT variant of the Polo carline, it said. As part of its commitment towards customers, Volkswagen will offer protection from the price increase to customers, who have booked their vehicles by August 31, it added. AGENCIES

Bharti Airtel aims to cut down debt, fuel growth with Rs 21,000 crore capital raise



NEW DELHI: Bharti Airtel founder chairman Sunil Mittal said that the wireless carrier wanted to improve its access to growth capital and reduce its debt leverage, a day after it announced its plans to raise up to Rs 21,000 crore (\$2.87 billion) via a sale of shares to existing shareholders.

Mittal said the company had been burdened with extraordinary debt and he felt confident that now was the time to invest and grow.

The telecom operator is raising money at a time when it is preparing for the launch of 5G services which it hopes will be a reality by the second half of the next year.

With more than 352 million subscribers, Airtel which is India's second biggest carrier said it will not shy away from raising prices further but will move towards it gradually.

In the last few years India's telecom market has seen an intense price war after Mukesh Ambani-controlled Jio Infocomm entered the market in late 2016 and launched free voice calls and cut data prices.

Mittal also expects mobile average revenue per user (ARPU), a key metric for telecoms companies to inch up to Rs 200 by the end of this financial year.

Airtel's quarterly ARPU was Rs 146 for the quarter ended June.

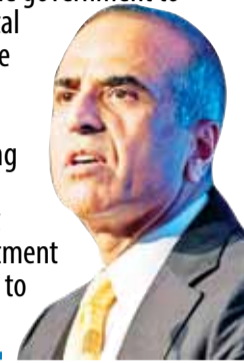
HIGHLIGHTS

- Mr Mittal also expects mobile ARPU, a crucial statistic for telecom operators, to rise to 200 by the end of the current fiscal year. For the quarter ending in June, Airtel's ARPU was 146.
- Bharti Airtel's shares ended 4.3 percent higher after the investor call, their greatest daily rise in over a month, boosted by Mr Mittal's comments.
- Mr Mittal also encouraged the government to increase investments in digital infrastructure, stating that he expects telecom businesses' levies and costs to decrease. "We've also been encouraging the government to address several serious concerns that are preventing further investment in the sector due to negative to low returns," he said.

Buoyed by Mittal's speech Bharti's shares ended 4.3 per cent higher after the investor call with the shares posting their biggest daily gain in over a month.

Mittal also urged the government to step up investments in digital infrastructure as he

expected the levies and burdens on telecom companies to come down. "We have been also urging the government to attend to some pressing issues inhibiting continued investments in the sector given the negative to low returns," he added. AGENCIES



Future files fresh case against Amazon over \$3.4 billion retail deal: Report

NEW DELHI: Future Retail filed a new case against Amazon.com Inc at the Supreme Court in its latest effort to seek clearance for its \$3.4 billion retail assets sale, which the U.S. firm has challenged.

The Supreme Court this month dealt a blow to Future when it said an interim decision by a Singapore arbitrator in October 2020 that put its deal with Reliance Industries on hold - following Amazon's complaint - was valid in India.

The top court had also said Future could not appeal a lower court's decision against it. The retailer is now asking the top court to hear the challenge, people familiar with the case said.

In its over 6,000-page filing, Future has argued that if the deal with Reliance doesn't go through, it would cause "unimaginable" damage to the group, including possible job losses for 35,575 employees, and put at risk roughly Rs 28,000 crore (\$3.81 billion) in bank loans and debentures.

"There is extreme urgency to hear this petition," Future counsel Yugandhara Pawar Jha said in the Supreme Court



filing, which is not public. Reuters has seen the filing. Amazon and Future spokespersons did not respond to requests for comment on Saturday.

Amazon has for months been locked in a dispute with Future, and accuses the Indian firm of violating contracts when it sold its retail assets to market leader Reliance last year. Future denies any wrongdoing.

The outcome of the tussle involving two of the world's richest men, Amazon's Jeff

Bezos and Reliance's Mukesh Ambani, is seen as reshaping India's pandemic-hit shopping sector and deciding whether Amazon can blunt Reliance's dominance of the country's nearly trillion-dollar retail market.

The dispute started after Future, India's second-largest retailer, with more than 1,700 stores, including popular Big Bazaar supermarkets, entered a deal last year to sell its retail businesses to Reliance after COVID-19 hit its operations hard. AGENCIES

Ola aims to raise \$1 billion through initial public offer

NEW DELHI: Ride-sharing giant Ola plans to raise up to \$1 billion through an initial public offering (IPO) and is finalising banks to advise on the fund-raise, three sources told Reuters, becoming the latest startup to join the capital markets boom.

Ola, backed by Japan's Softbank Group, has roped in Citigroup, two people with direct knowledge of the matter said. It has also brought Kotak Mahindra and Morgan Stanley on board, said two other people familiar with the plans.

The company, which competes with Uber Technologies, is also in talks with Bank of America and JP Morgan, one of the people said.

Ola, JP Morgan and Kotak Mahindra did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Bank of America, Citi and Morgan Stanley declined to comment.

The successful listing of food delivery service Zomato,



backed by China's Ant Group, in July has made other technology startups more bullish about raising money through capital markets, two of the people said.

Over half a dozen startups including payments company Paytm, e-pharmacy PharmEasy and online insurance aggregator Policybazaar are preparing for IPOs, giving investors like Ant and Softbank an opportunity to exit.

Founded in 2010 by Bhavish Aggarwal, Ola has a majority

share of India's ride-hailing market which took a hit last year as lockdowns kept people at home, forcing the company to cut its workforce and temporarily halt the bulk of its business.

Ola also has a growing presence in several global markets such as Australia and the United Kingdom.

In July, private equity firms Temasek and Warburg Pincus invested about \$500 million in Ola ahead of its planned IPO. AGENCIES

Competition commission clears Rajam rubbers and Dhinarama mobility's stake acquisition

NEW DELHI: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has given its approval to T S Rajam Rubbers Private Limited and Dhinarama Mobility Solutions Private Limited to acquire stake in TVS Supply Chain Solutions Private Limited.

The approval by the competition watchdog was given on Tuesday. Both T S Rajam Rubbers and Dhinarama Mobility Solutions are owned and controlled by T S Rajam family.

The two entities have acquired the stake in TVS Supply

Chain Solutions from an existing shareholder.

"The acquirers (the two entities who have taken the stake) are wholly owned subsidiaries of TVS Mobility Private Limited, which is owned and controlled by Shri T S Rajam Family. The T S Rajam Family members are the promoters of the target (TVS Supply Chain Solutions)," a statement issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs said.

The target is an unlisted public company and along

with its affiliates, it is engaged in provision of logistics and supply chain solutions services in India and abroad, the statement added further.

"The proposed transaction will simplify the shareholding structure of the target and will help in better alignment between strategic objectives of the management and shareholders as the acquirer promoter group would be holding a majority stake in the target post the proposed transaction," a notice filed earlier with CCI said. AGENCIES

Bharat Biotech scouts international Covid-19 vaccine partners

NEW DELHI: Indian vaccine maker Bharat Biotech is seeking international manufacturing partners as it targets a billion doses of its Covid-19 vaccine each year, the company said.

COVAXIN, the company's home-grown Covid-19 vaccine approved for emergency use in India, is one of two shots driving the country's massive vaccination programme.

But Bharat Biotech has struggled to boost output, missing supply commitments to the central government, which is also relying on a version of the AstraZeneca vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India and Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

The company rolled out the first batch of COVAXIN shots from a facility in Ankleshwar in Gujarat that



has the capacity to produce more than 10 million doses per month.

Bharat Biotech said it was exploring opportunities with its international partners who have expertise in commercial-scale manufacturing of inactivated viral vaccines.

"We want to ensure that Bharat Biotech can ably meet the demand for COVAXIN such that individu-

als across the country, and the globe, have access to the vaccine," chairman and managing director Krishna Ella said in a statement.

Last month, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya told parliament that Bharat Biotech would supply 25 million doses in July and 35 million in August, less than half what the government had initially expected. AGENCIES

Microsoft 'threatens' to withhold Windows 11 updates on old CPUs

NEW DELHI: Microsoft is reportedly threatening to withhold Windows 11 updates—potentially even security updates—if you have an old CPU.

According to a report in The Verge, unsupported PCs won't be entitled to receive Windows Updates, "and that even security and driver updates may be withheld".

Microsoft had earlier said that it won't actually block users from installing Windows 11 on a PC with an older CPU, "so long as you download and manually install an ISO file all by yourself".

The company had announced that it allow people to install Windows 11 on older PCs. The tech giant has slightly updated system requirements for a Win-



dows 11 upgrade. Windows 11 will now officially support Intel Core X-series, Xeon W-series, and the Intel Core 7820HQ.

Users can install Windows 11 manually from an ISO file. This is as long as the system has a 64-bit CPU clocked at 1 GHz and above, with at least 4GB of RAM and 64GB of storage.

"We have concluded that the compatible 64-bit processors selected, 4GB of memory, 64GB of storage, UEFI secure boot, graphics requirements and TPM 2.0 are the right minimum system requirements to deliver on the principles we established to the best support you," Microsoft said in a statement. "We did identify a set of PC models that meet the principles while running on Intel 7th gen processors that we did not originally include in our minimum system requirements".

Microsoft announced its Windows 11 minimum hardware requirements in June, and made it clear that only Intel 8th gen and beyond CPUs were officially supported. AGENCIES

Maruti Suzuki expects massive hit on September production due to chip shortage



NEW DELHI: The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said it expects vehicle production in September to be just 40 per cent of its normal output due to the shortage of semiconductor chips.

"Owing to supply constraints of electronic components due to the semiconductor shortage situation, the company is expecting an adverse impact on vehicle production in the month of September in both Haryana and its contract manufacturing company, Suzuki Motor Gujarat Pvt. Ltd. (SMG) in Gujarat," MSI said in a regulatory filing.

Though the situation is quite dynamic, it is currently estimated that the total vehicle production volume across both locations could be around 40 per cent of normal production, it added.

The company's production capacity at Gurgaon and Manesar plants in Haryana is around 15 lakh units per annum.

SMG Gujarat, which supplies vehicles exclusively to MSI, has an additional installed production capacity of 7.5 lakh units per annum.

According to the company's sales data, Maruti Suzuki India had sold 1,62,462 units in July 2021. AGENCIES

Prosus goes bullish on India with \$4.7 bn billdesk deal

NEW DELHI: Prosus NV doubled down on its investment in India with a \$4.7 billion deal for payments platform BillDesk, making it one of the biggest players in the country's fast-growing fintech sector.

Prosus, Europe's answer to SoftBank and its Vision Fund, said BillDesk will complement its own PayU business, which operates in India, Latin America and Europe.

India has been a major focus for Netherlands-based Prosus but the BillDesk deal is its biggest investment there to date.

"This is really a transformative transaction for PayU and its position as one of the leading payment and fintech providers in India and actually in the world," Prosus



CEO Bob van Dijk said on a media call.

Prosus, which was spun out of Naspers of South Africa in 2019, owns stakes in consumer internet companies in online marketplaces, educational software, food delivery and fintech. It oper-

ates some of the companies.

Best known for its 28.9 per cent stake in Tencent of China, Prosus is betting that its long-term investments can fill a yawning valuation gap and give it the same name recognition as one of the world's most aggressive

technology investors.

The rapid growth of the payments industry worldwide has been helped by rising demand during the pandemic.

PayU processed \$55 billion in payments in the year ended March 31, 2021, a

51 per cent increase on the previous year.

The companies did not give a comparative figure for BillDesk, but Prosus said it was more than \$90 billion. BillDesk made a net profit of 271 crores (\$37.05 million) for the year ended



March 31 2021, suggesting an acquisition price of more than 100 times earnings.

PayU CEO Laurent le Moal defended the price tag, arguing it makes sense given the rapid growth in BillDesk's market, its leadership position, its current profit margins and the potential for the combined companies to enter adjacent markets.

The deal to buy BillDesk, which was founded in 2000, is subject to regulatory approvals, including by the Competition Commission of India.

Prosus said Tuesday's acquisition brings the total it had invested in the India, it is a major investor in Swiggy, one of two food delivery platforms fighting for dominance. AGENCIES

Markets tumble from record highs on profit-booking; IT, metal stocks weigh

MUMBAI: The Sensex and Nifty ratcheted up to fresh lifetime highs on Wednesday but failed to hold on to the gains as investors took some money off the table amid concerns over frothy valuations.

IT, metal and auto counters bore the brunt of the selling pressure, while FMCG stocks saw brisk demand. After touching a lifetime high of 57,918.71 during the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex pared all gains to end 214.18 points or 0.37 per cent lower at 57,338.21, breaking its four-session winning run.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty snapped its seven-day record-setting spree, settling 55.95 points or 0.33 per cent lower at 17,076.25. It touched an intra-day record of 17,225.75. Auto stocks

were subdued after companies posted muted sales numbers for August. M&M was the top loser among the Sensex constituents, shedding 2.89 per cent, followed by Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, TCS, HDFC, Infosys and HCL Tech. On the other hand, Asian Paints, Nestle India, Axis Bank, Dr Reddy's, Titan and L&T were among the gainers, climbing up to 3.20 per cent.

"Despite a strong opening after favourable GDP data, domestic indices failed to hold onto its early gains due to profit booking strategy from the recent rally," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. India's GDP rose by a record 20.1 per cent in Q1 due to the low base effect and was powered by private consumption expenditure and investment. AGENCIES

ALSO READ | SHOOTER AVANI FIRST INDIAN WOMAN TO WIN GOLD IN PARALYMPICS * P8 | FARAH KHAN TESTS CORONA POSITIVE * P8

Centre extends deadline for GST amnesty scheme till Nov 30, 2021

NEW DELHI: The Finance Ministry has extended the last date for availing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) amnesty scheme where taxpayers pay a reduced fee for late filing of monthly returns, till November 30, 2021.

Earlier the last date for submitting GST returns with reduced late fees was August 31, 2021.

"The Government had provided relief to the taxpayers by reducing or waiving late fee for non-filing Form GSTR-3B for the tax periods from July 2017 to April 2021, if the returns for these tax periods are furnished between June 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021,"



A Finance Ministry notification received from establishments, who requested for more time to do the needful.

The Finance Ministry said that the extension was given on the basis of several representa-

cancellation of registration, has been extended till September 30, 2021. The actual date for it was August 31, 2021. The extension however would be applicable only in those cases where registrations have been cancelled under clause (b) or clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 29 of the CGST Act.

Centre releases draft rules for withdrawal of retrospective tax demands

New Delhi: Days after bringing in the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act 2021 - which scraps the rule that empowered the government to retrospectively (going as far back as 50 years) impose capital gains tax on assets located

in the country but whose ownership had changed abroad - the Centre has released draft rules for the legislation.

The draft rules say that the government will not proceed with demands related to retrospective tax levy, provided that all companies with which such cases had been taken up, give an undertaking that they will withdraw all legal cases against it and will not pursue them in the future as well.

With this development, all the retrospective tax demand cases with companies like Cairn Energy and Vodafone Plc, in which the Centre was involved, will come to a close. **AGENCIES**

Goldman Sachs, J P Morgan Chase among 10 merchant bankers to manage LIC IPO

NEW DELHI: The government has shortlisted 10 merchant bankers, including Goldman Sachs Group Inc., J P Morgan Chase & Co, and ICICI Securities, to manage the mega initial public offering (IPO) of the country's largest life insurer LIC.

As many as 16 domestic and international firms had made presentations before the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) on August 26 to act as book running lead managers (BRLMs) for the IPO—touted to be the biggest share sale in the country's history.

"Goldman Sachs Group Inc, JPMorgan Chase & Co,

ICICI Securities Ltd, Kotak Mahindra Capital Co, JM Financial Ltd, Citigroup Inc and Nomura Holdings Inc are among the 10 BRLMs that have been shortlisted," an official said.

With the merchant bankers in place, once the embedded valuation of LIC is arrived at, the government will go ahead and file draft IPO papers with market regulator Sebi. Actuarial firm Milliman Advisors LLP India is working out the embedded value of LIC, while Deloitte and SBI Caps have been appointed as pre-IPO transaction advisors.

The government aims to come out with the IPO and subsequent listing of Life In-

urance Corporation (LIC) on the bourses in the January-March quarter of 2022.

The government is also mulling allowing foreign investors to pick up stakes in the country's largest insurer LIC. As per Sebi rules, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) are permitted to buy shares in a public offer. However, since the LIC Act has no provision for foreign investments, there is a need to align the proposed LIC IPO with Sebi norms regarding foreign investor participation. The DIPAM on July 15 had invited applications for appointment of up to 10 merchant bankers for LIC IPO. The last date for bidding was August 5. **AGENCIES**

NEWSBRIEF

Centre gives Rs 13,385 crore rural bodies grant to 25 states

NEW DELHI: The Centre has released Rs13,385 crore to 25 states for providing grants to their respective rural local bodies. This grant-in-aid is the first instalment for the rural institutions for the current financial year. These grants are given to rural local bodies for improving critical services like sanitation and maintenance of open defecation free status and drinking water supply along with rain water harvesting and water recycling systems. Out of the total aid allocated for Panchayat Raj institutions, 60 per cent is "tied grant" and meant for national priority areas like drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting and sanitation. The remaining amount is called "untied grant" and it is to be used by these rural institutions as per their discretion for local needs. Tied grants are meant to ensure availability of additional funds to rural local bodies and these are over and above the funds allocated by the Centre and states for sanitation and drinking water under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme head. **AGENCIES**

RBI to conduct fine-tuning operations to manage liquidity flows: Shaktikanta

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will conduct fine-tuning operations to manage unanticipated and one-off liquidity flows, Governor Shaktikanta Das said. As the market settles down to regular operations, the RBI will conduct fine-tuning operations from time to time, as needed, to manage unanticipated and one-off liquidity flows so that liquid conditions in the system evolve in a balanced and evenly distributed manner, Das said. He was speaking at a conference organised by the Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (FIMMDA) and the Primary Dealers' Association of India (PDAI). The governor said government securities are distinct asset classes, and it is important to appreciate the role of the g-sec market in the overall macro interest rate environment of the economy. **AGENCIES**

RBI slaps Rs 6-cr fine on four White Label ATM operators

MUMBAI: The RBI on Friday imposed penalties totalling Rs 6 crore on four White Label ATM (WLA) operators, including Hitachi Payment Services, and Tata Communications Payment Solutions, for deficiencies in regulatory compliance. In a release, it also said a penalty of Rs 3 crore has been imposed on Transaction Analysts (India) Pvt Ltd for contravention of certain provisions of directions related to issuance and operation of prepaid payment instruments and KYC. Penalty has also been imposed on four WLA operators for "contravention of /non-compliance" with certain provisions of the directions in the 'White Label ATMs in India - Guidelines' dated June 20, 2012. A penalty of Rs 2 crore each has been imposed on BTI Payments and Hitachi Payment Services, and Rs 1 crore each on Tata Communications Payment Solutions Ltd and Vakrangee Ltd. **AGENCIES**

I-T portal glitches force govt to extend deadline for various tax compliances

NEW DELHI: The income tax department extended the deadline for various compliances, including filing of statement for equalisation levy and remittances.

The deadline for filing the Equalisation Levy statement in Form-1 for the Financial Year 2020-21 has been extended till December 31, against the original due date of June 30.

The quarterly statement in Form 15CC to be furnished by authorised dealers in respect of remittances made for June and September quarter, can now be filed by November 30 and December 31, respectively. The original due date for filing this statement was July 15 and October 15, respectively.

In a statement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said on consideration of difficulties reported by the taxpayers and other stakeholders in electronic filing of certain forms it has been decided to further extend the due dates for e-filing of these forms.

In a separate statement, the CBDT announced extending the deadline for making payments under the

direct tax dispute resolution scheme Vivad Se Vishwas (VsV) by a month till September 30. However, taxpayers have the option to make payments till October 31, with an additional amount of interest.

Also, the due dates for electronic filing of forms related to intimation by pension funds and sovereign wealth funds too have been extended. Intimation to be made by Pension Fund and sovereign wealth fund in respect of investment made in India for the June and September quarter, which is required to be furnished by July 31 and October 31, would now have to be furnished by November 30 and December 31, respectively.

The CBDT also extended the due date for uploading of declarations received in Form 15G/15H for the June and September quarter till November 30 and December 31 respectively. The original due dates were July 15 and October 15 respectively. The deadlines are being extended as glitches marred the functioning of new income tax portal 'www.incometax.gov.in', launched on June 7. **AGENCIES**

Jan Dhan accounts swell to 43 cr with total deposits over Rs 1.46 lakh-crore

NEW DELHI: Bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna (PMJDY) have increased to 43 crore with total deposits over Rs 1.46 lakh crore, the Finance Ministry said as the government's flagship financial inclusion scheme completes seven years of implementation.

The PMJDY was launched on August 28 to ensure people have access to financial services, namely, banking, remittance, credit, insurance, pension in an affordable manner.

As on August 18, 2021, the number of total PMJDY accounts stood at 43.04 crore. Of this, 55.47 per cent (23.87 crore) Jan-Dhan account holders are women and 66.69 per cent (28.70 crore) holders are in rural and semi-urban areas, the finance ministry said in a statement. During the first year of the scheme, 17.90 crore PMJDY accounts were opened.

Out of total 43.04 crore PMJDY accounts, 36.86 crore or 85.6 per cent are operative, and the average deposit per account is Rs 3,398, as per the statement.

Increase in average deposit is another indication of increased usage of accounts and inculcation of saving habit among account holders, it said.



Total RuPay cards issued to PMJDY account holders rose to 31.23 crore. For account opened after August 28, 2018, the free accidental insurance cover on RuPay cards increased from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2 lakh.

On this occasion, the Prime Minister tweeted, "Today we mark seven years of #PMJanDhan, an initiative that has forever transformed India's development trajectory. It has ensured financial inclusion and a life of dignity as well as empowerment for countless Indians. Jan Dhan Yojana has also helped further transparency."

Appreciating the untiring efforts of all those who have worked to make PMJDY a success, he said, their efforts have ensured the people of India lead a better quality of life. **AGENCIES**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while underlining the importance of the scheme, said the journey of PMJDY led interventions undertaken over a short span of 7 years has in effect, produced both transformational as well as directional change, thereby making the emerging financial inclusion ecosystem capable of delivering financial services to the last person of the society—the poorest of the poor.

"The underlying pillars of PMJDY, namely, Banking the Unbanked, Securing the Unsecured and Funding the Unfunded has made it possible to adopt multi-stakeholders' collaborative approach while leveraging technology for serving the unserved and underserved areas as well," she said. **AGENCIES**

M-cap of eight of top-10 most valued firms jumps over Rs 1.90 lakh-crore

NEW DELHI: Eight of the top-10 most valued companies together added Rs 1,90,032.06 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries Limited being the prominent gainers.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex gained 795.40 points or 1.43 per cent.

Equity gauges—BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty—hit new closing highs on Friday. On the top ten chart, among the gainers were Reliance Industries (RIL), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL), ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India (SBI) and Wipro. On the other hand, Infosys and HDFC were the two laggards.

The market valuation of TCS zoomed by Rs 60,183.57 crore to reach Rs 13,76,102.60 crore, becoming the biggest gainer among the top-10 firms.

RIL added Rs 51,064.22 crore taking its valuation to Rs 14,11,635.50 crore.

HDFC Bank's valuation jumped Rs 19,651.18 crore to Rs 8,57,407.68 crore and Bajaj Finance gained Rs 18,518.27 crore to settle at Rs 4,20,300.85 crore. **AGENCIES**



The market capitalisation of HUL climbed Rs 14,215.01 crore to Rs 6,29,231.64 crore and that of ICICI Bank went higher by Rs 13,361.63 crore to Rs 4,84,858.91 crore.

Wipro's valuation rallied Rs 8,218.89 crore to Rs 3,47,851 crore and SBI jumped Rs 4,819.29 crore to reach Rs 3,68,006.36 crore.

In contrast, the valuation of Infosys tumbled by Rs 10,053.22 crore to Rs 7,24,701.90 crore and that of HDFC dipped Rs 738.75 crore to Rs 4,90,991.24 crore.

RIL remained the most valued domestic firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, HUL, HDFC, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, SBI and Wipro. **AGENCIES**

Come Sept 1, non-filers of 2 monthly GST returns to be barred from filing GSTR-1

NEW DELHI: Businesses that have not filed GSTR-3B returns in the preceding two months will not be able to file details of outward supplies in GSTR-1 from September 1, GSTN has said.

While businesses file GSTR-1 of a particular month by the 11th day of the subsequent month, GSTR-3B, through which businesses pay taxes, is filed in a staggered manner between 20th-24th day of the succeeding month.

In an advisory to taxpayers, GSTN, which manages the technology backbone for Goods and Services Tax, said that Rule-59(6) of Central GST Rules



which provides for restriction in filing of GSTR-1, will come into effect from September 1, 2021.

According to the rule, a registered person shall not be al-

lowed to furnish the details of outward supplies of goods or services or both in Form GSTR-1, if he has not furnished the return in Form GSTR-3B for preceding two months.

For taxpayers filing quarterly return, GSTR-1 filing would be restricted if he has not furnished the return in Form GSTR-3B for preceding tax period.

EY Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said this is a well thought restriction and a necessary control check to eliminate the cases where taxpayers although report their supply invoices in GSTR-1 (due to constant follow ups from recipients' side) but they do not submit their corresponding GSTR-3B return through which tax is actually paid to government.

"Compliant taxpayers would appreciate this move as till

now their input tax credit was also at risk in case vendors do not file their GSTR-3B even though such invoice is appearing in GSTR-2A," Jain added.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said from September 1 GSTN is implementing GST rules that bars a taxpayer to file GSTR 1 wherein taxpayer has not paid taxes for previous two consecutive tax periods.

"This system will cumulatively result in barring the flow of tax credit to the customers of a non-compliant vendor," Mohan said Implementation of this Rule on the GST Portal would be completely automated and digital, thereby no separate approval would be necessary from the tax-officer to restore the facility for filing of GSTR-1. Mohan added. **AGENCIES**

PayU to buy BillDesk for Rs 34,376 cr

NEW DELHI: In one of the biggest deals in the Indian consumer internet space, global player Prosus NV said its fintech business PayU will buy digital payments provider BillDesk for \$4.7 billion (around Rs 34,376.2 crore). With the deal, the Netherlands-incorporated Prosus NV's investment in India will jump to more than \$10 billion.

The PayU-BillDesk transaction, which is subject to approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI), is expected to close by early 2022, Prosus Group CEO Bob van Dijk said. "The combination will create a leading digital payments company in India and globally, and it's exceptionally well-positioned to expand deeper into the Indian fintech ecosystem as more and

Deal likely by early next year

- The transaction is expected to close by early 2022, Prosus Group CEO Bob van Dijk said
- The latest transaction builds on previous acquisitions by PayU in India, including CitrusPay, Paysense and Wibmo

more Indian customers move from cash to digital transactions," he said. Dijk noted that Prosus has been a long-term investor in India and has invested close to \$6 billion in India in tech companies since 2005. **AGENCIES**

RBI imposes Rs 25 lakh penalty on Axis bank for violating norms

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 25 lakh on Axis Bank for violation of rules. The RBI, in an order dated September 1, held Axis Bank responsible for failing to comply with the provisions of Reserve Bank of India - (Know Your Customer (KYC)) Direction, 2016.

The banking regulator carried out scrutiny during February 2020 and March 2020 in a customer account maintained with the leading private bank. RBI observed that Axis Bank had failed to comply with the directions issued by it as it failed to monitor or carry out ongoing due diligence in the particular account to ensure that the transactions were consistent with its knowledge about the customer, customer's business, and risk profile.

Subsequently, RBI issued a notice to Axis Bank, asking why

the penalty should not be imposed on it for the contravention of the directions.

After considering the reply to the notice and the verbal submissions made during the personal hearing, the RBI said it "came to the conclusion that the charge of contravention of/non-compliance with the aforesaid RBI directions was substantiated" and then imposed the monetary penalty.

However, the RBI added that the penalty is based upon the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and will not impact the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by Axis Bank with its customers.

On September 1, shares of Axis Bank settled 1.54 per cent higher at Rs 798.50 apiece on the BSE. Axis Bank opened on the BSE at Rs 796, swinging to an intra day high of Rs 819, and an intra day low of Rs 795.95, throughout the trading session so far. **AGENCIES**

Central banks should not mandate 'green' investments: Raghuram Rajan

NEWDELHI: The onus of promoting sustainable investments should lie with governments and not central banks, which already have significant other policy commitments, said Raghuram Rajan, former Reserve Bank of India governor.

Central banks should steer clear of politically-driven unlegislated areas such as "green" investments, as their mandates of providing financial and monetary stability are already quite wide, Rajan told the Reuters Global Markets Forum.

"Asking the central bank to say you should buy only green bonds, not brown bonds, etc., is asking the central bank to impose its own views on something which is primarily a fiscal matter," he said.

Rajan, who earlier served as chief economist for the Inter-

national Monetary Fund, said central banks should instead turn their focus to the financial stability of these green investments and other threats such as crypto currencies and cyber security. Crypto currencies have a "potential future," particularly well-regulated stablecoins, Mr Rajan said, but it wasn't clear what fundamentals were backing their valuations other than a "heady environment," with easy monetary policy fuelling all asset prices.

Cryptos won't be "your last resort" in a doomsday scenario, he said. "I would be much more confident about the value of these cryptos once they find proper use cases," such as an effective means of payment, especially in cross-border transactions. Rajan, who is professor of finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, did not expect markets to



react in a 2013-style "taper tantrum" as the US Federal Reserve unveils its plan to withdraw stimulus, which he said was unlikely to happen at Jackson Hole on Friday.

"Ideally, the Fed would like to observe as long as possible, (and) ... make sure that

the economy is well on track towards growth, he said. "Of course, the problem is the Delta variant, plus whatever variants are lurking in the background."

He expected inflationary pressures in the United States to be transitory, but said prices may remain elevated for longer than expected due to strong wages, unavailability of workers, and additional fiscal stimulus measures. "Firms are feeling confident enough to pass through price increase ... they don't do that until they think that these higher prices are to stay," Rajan said. Referring to India, Rajan said inflation there could rise in the short term as pent-up demand takes hold, resulting in supply-side bottlenecks, but demand will fall over the medium-term due to stressed households and economic scarring from the pandemic. Central banks in many emerging countries are being proactive and raising interest rates, Rajan said. "Now, obviously, the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) is watching the data and it will make the decision when it when it has to make it." **AGENCIES**

Economy grows by record 20.1% in June quarter after Covid slump

GDP grows 20.1%, yet to recover fully



NEW DELHI: India's gross domestic product (GDP) showed an impressive growth as it shot up to record a 20.1 per cent rise in the April-June period or the first quarter of 2021-22. The growth is a remarkable recovery from the negative growth which was witnessed during the corresponding period of last fiscal when it was a dismal -24.4 per cent, mainly due to Coronavirus induced lockdowns.

fierce second wave of the pandemic suggests that the country's economy recovered rapidly after registering negative growth for the first two quarters of 2020-21. This is the third consecutive quarter when positive growth has been witnessed, as GDP had grown by 0.5 per cent third quarter of 2020-21 and 1.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020-21.

However the double digit growth in GDP is in sync with predictions of several polls as well as that of the Reserve Bank

Economic toll from second Covid-19 wave not as bad as feared

NEW DELHI: The economic toll from a deadly second wave of Covid-19 that swept through India last quarter doesn't appear to be as bad as feared, with analysts still seeing the nation pulling off the world's fastest growth this year.

A better-than-expected manufacturing performance and a milder hit to services, combined with a robust pace of vaccinations, have helped keep the annual growth outlook for the economy steady at 9.2%, according to a Bloomberg survey. That pace is the same seen in a poll last month and the quickest among major economies.

"The economic damage appears to be less than previously expected," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist at Barclays Bank Plc. "With the second outbreak brought under control, a rapid recovery appears underway," he said.

Data due later Tuesday will likely show gross domestic product grew 21% in the three months through June from a year ago, according to the median of 45 estimates compiled by Bloomberg, mainly as a bounce back from last year's crash.

The big pop, however, will likely obscure a slowing from the previous quarter, caused by activity curbs to stem the second wave of the virus. While the government doesn't report an official quarter-on-quarter figure, Bloomberg Economics estimates the economy slumped sequentially, contracting 12% from the January-March period.

In recent months, India's annual growth forecast has gone from being upgraded to double digits to slashed by the steepest rate amid uncertainty about Covid's devastation on the economy. But recent data from high-frequency indicators have shown the impact of pandemic restrictions were less severe than last year, with demand staying resilient.

Factory managers in India saw a surge in activity in July, reflecting a pick up in new orders, while a similar survey of services purchasing managers showed the sector was inching back toward expansion. Exports, which account for nearly a fifth of the economy, have been growing for the past eight months signaling strong global demand.

of India (RBI).

The central bank had predicted that the GDP in the first quarter of 2021-22 is likely to grow at 18.5 per cent from earlier projected growth rate of 26.2 per cent.

In the first two quarters of 2020-21, the growth was -24.4 per cent and -7.4 per cent respectively, as the country was under complete lockdown due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and all economic

activities had come to a halt.

Gradually after restrictions were lifted and festival season related activities started from October 2020 onwards, the third and fourth quarters showed meagre but positive growth. **AGENCIES**



NEW DELHI: The Indian economy grew by 20.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2021-22, on the back of a low base last year and a sharp rebound in the manufacturing and services sectors.

The GDP contracted by 24.4 per cent in the April-June quarter of 2020-21 as the country went into a lockdown. It later grew by 1.6 per cent in the fourth quarter (January to March), the first sign of an incipient pickup after the lockdown impact started receding.

should not be confused with a strong recovery because of the low base effect. Last year, the complete shutdown during May-June had seen GVA plummeting to Rs 26.95 lakh crore. This year's first quarter figures of Rs 32.238 lakh crore are still lower than the pre-pandemic GVA of Rs 35.66 lakh crore in the first quarter of 2019, indicating that the economy still has to recover fully.

Low base effect propels growth
 68.3% rise seen in the construction sector
 49.6% growth in the manufacturing sector
 18.8% rise in Gross Value Added in economy
 8.7% hike in exports
 5.3% fall in imports
AGENCIES

Manufacturing activities moderate in Aug constrained by Covid, surging costs

NEW DELHI: India's manufacturing sector activities moderated in August, as business orders and production rose at softer rates due to the pandemic and rising input costs, a monthly survey said.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 52.3 in August, down from 55.3 in July, indicating a softer rate of growth that was subdued and below its long-run average.

The August PMI data pointed to an improvement in overall operating conditions for the second straight month. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion

while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"August saw a continuation of the Indian manufacturing sector recovery, but growth lost momentum as demand showed some signs of weakness due to the pandemic. Yet, factory orders and output rose across the consumer, intermediate and investment goods categories," Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit, said.

A softer upturn in sales led companies to pause their hiring efforts, with business confidence dampened by concerns surrounding the damaging impact of Covid-19 on demand and firms' finances, the survey said.

"Uncertainty regarding growth prospects, spare capacity and efforts to keep a lid on expenses led to a hiring freeze in August, following the first upturn in employment for 16 months in July," Lima said.

August data pointed to back-to-back increases in new export orders, but here too growth lost momentum. The pace of expansion was only marginal.

Indian manufacturers signalled another monthly rise in cost burdens, thereby taking the current stretch of inflation to 13 months. The rate of increase softened, but remained elevated by historical standards. Cost pressures were linked by survey members to raw

material scarcity and transportation problems.

"Charges levied by manufacturers rose as some firms shared part of their additional cost burdens with clients, although to a lesser degree than selling prices. Input prices increased sharply, due to strong competition for scarce raw materials and transportation issues," Lima said.

Lima further noted that "the 12-month outlook for production remained positive, though confidence faded amid worries concerning the lasting scars of the pandemic and the adverse impact of rising costs on companies' finances parallel to a lack of pricing power." **AGENCIES**

Rupee hits two and a half months high

NEW DELHI: The rupee rose to its strongest in two-and-a-half months, after the US Federal Reserve chairman's comments sparked bets of a slower reduction in monetary stimulus.

The partially convertible rupee was trading at 73.48/49 per dollar at 0612 GMT after touching 73.39 earlier, its strongest since June 16. The currency had closed at 73.68 on Friday.

The dollar loitered around multi-week lows in the wake of Fed Chair Jerome Powell laying out a slower-than-expected path to rate hikes, as traders' focus shifted to U.S. jobs figures due on Friday for clues on a tapering timeline. "Powell re-emphasised that the pace of the asset purchase programme could slow by the end of the year. However, he



The benchmark 10-year bond yield eased slightly to 6.24 per cent compared to its close of 6.25 per cent.

The government raised a higher-than-planned Rs 34,000 crore at a debt auction with the central bank setting lower-than-expected cut-off yields.

On the domestic front, traders will now focus on the June quarter GDP data that is due to be released on Tuesday for clues on the economic revival and to gauge a possible timeline on the RBI's policy normalisation.

However, Governor Shaktikanta Das told a local news channel last week that the central bank will not surprise the market with any sudden measures and that all measures will be cautious and well calibrated. **AGENCIES**

Non-subsidised LPG cylinder gets costlier by Rs 25



MUMBAI: In another hit to the wallet of the common man, oil marketing companies have raised the prices of non-subsidised LPG cylinders by Rs 25.

In Delhi, the 14.2-kilogram non-subsidised cylinder will now cost Rs 884.50.

Price in Kolkata is the highest among the four metro cities at Rs 911 per cylinder, while that in Chennai and Mumbai stood at Rs 900.5 and Rs 884.50 per cylinder.

This is the second hike in 15 days. The previous hike was of Rs 25 on August 18.

Further, the price of a 19 kg commercial cylinder has also been increased by Rs 75, taking the price in Delhi to Rs 1,693 per cylinder.

The incessant rise in cooking gas prices has drawn criticism for the government from several quarters.

After the previous hike in LPG prices, the Congress slammed the government saying since November last year it has hiked the price of the cooking gas by Rs 265 per cylinder and it has not given any subsidy on the cooking gas since May 2020. **AGENCIES**

Policy support to continue for economy, inflation to be monitored: RBI Governor

NEW DELHI: Continued monetary policy support for economic revival amid the COVID-19 pandemic is necessary while remaining watchful of inflationary pressures, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said in the minutes of the latest monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting.

RBI Governor underlined the need for closely monitoring the price hike situation in order to anchor the inflation expectations, according to MPC minutes released on August 20.

"The need of the hour is two-fold: first, continue the monetary policy support to the economy; and second, remain watchful of any durable inflationary pressures and sustained price momentum in key components so as to bring back the CPI inflation to four per cent over a period of time in a non-disruptive manner," said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

Deputy Governor Dr. Michael Debabrata Patra said that the highest priority now is to revive growth along a sustainable trajectory that becomes compatible with the inflation target as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes.

"The economy is struggling to regain the momentum that



had gathered in the second half of 2020-21...although it seems meaningful to compare progress with a pre-pandemic year, it needs to be noted that in 2019-20, a cyclical downturn had matured over two and a half years, taking down real GDP growth to its lowest in the 2011-12 based series of national accounts," said Dr Patra.

"There is substantial slack in resource utilisation in the economy which needs to be drawn in to get economic activity back to normalcy," he added.

However, MPC member Jayant Varma said that the borrowing rate should be revised. The current reverse repo rate

was inappropriate and should be brought closer to the repo rate to anchor inflation expectations better, according to Mr Varma.

In its third bi-monthly monetary policy review for the financial year 2021-22 announced on August 6, the RBI maintained the status quo for the seventh time in a row, keeping the key lending rates steady.

The repo rate - the key interest rate at which the RBI lends money to commercial banks was kept steady at four per cent, and the borrowing rate or reverse repo rate - the rate at which the RBI borrows money from banks, was kept unchanged at 3.35 per cent. **AGENCIES**

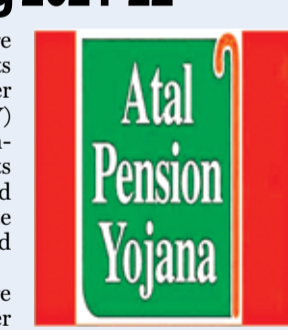
More than 28 lakh accounts opened under Atal Pension Yojana during 2021-22

NEW DELHI: With more than 28 lakh new accounts having been opened under Atal Pension Yojana (APY) during the current financial year itself, enrolments under the scheme crossed 3.30 crore as per Finance Ministry's data compiled till August 25, 2021.

Out of these 3.35 crore enrolments, around 78 per cent subscribers are those who have opted for Rs 1,000 pension plan, while around 14 per cent have opted for Rs 5,000 plan.

Also out of the total subscribers, 44 per cent are women while 44 per cent of subscribers belong with the age group of 18 years to 25 years.

Under APY, a guaranteed pension scheme of Government of India and administered by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), any Indian citizen between the age group of



India not to be impacted by US Fed's move to tighten liquidity: Subramanian



NEW DELHI: India will not be impacted by the U.S. Federal Reserve's move to tighten liquidity expected later this year, as India's macro-economic fundamentals are strong, Chief Economic Adviser K V Subramanian said.

Asia's third-largest economy has had memories of past attempts by the Federal Reserve to get away from crisis-mode policies, particularly in 2013 when mere talk of "tapering" stimulus prompted the rupee to sink to record lows. "Our macroeconomic fundamentals, whether it's inflation, whether it's a current account deficit, whether it's our forex reserves, and all the others metrics clearly indicate that our macroeconomic fundamentals are very very strong," Subramanian said. **AGENCIES**

Australia's economy slowed in Q2 ahead of lockdown downturn

SYDNEY: Australia's economy was already slowing in the June quarter before widespread coronavirus lockdowns slammed everything into reverse, leaving the country in a desperate race to vaccinate in the hope of opening up to recovery by Christmas.

Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics out showed gross domestic product (GDP) rose 0.7% in the June quarter. That was a step down from 1.9% in the March quarter, but topped forecasts of 0.5% and avoided analysts' worst fears of a negative outcome.

Annual growth was the fastest in modern history at 9.6%, but only because the pandemic

caused a severe contraction in the June quarter last year, which was dropping from the calculation.

That painful pattern was playing out again as strict stay-at-home rules in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra are set to see the economy shrink 2-3% or more this quarter.

The conservative government of Prime Minister Scott Morrison is pinning its hopes on a vaccination roll out that is gathering steam after a ham-fisted start.

Current projections are the country could reach 70% of adults vaccinated some time in October, which would allow for a relaxation of rules. Mass



lockdowns could be abandoned altogether at 80%, which is tipped for November.

"Assuming the vaccination rollout continues at its current pace it is likely the Eastern states

"But the shift to a new COVID-normal, where there are persistent cases within the community, will make some people cautious and the recovery this time around will be drawn out into 2022."

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has been counting on a rapid recovery once the restrictions ease, though the spread of the Delta variant has made its latest forecasts for growth look optimistic.

The central bank is now under pressure to delay a tapering of its bond buying programme planned for this month, and is not expected to raise interest rates from record lows of 0.1% until at least 2023. **AGENCIES**

The June quarter figures did show strength in consumer and government spending, housing and business investment, though much of that was offset by drags from net exports and inventories.

On the positive side, nominal GDP reached a record A\$2.07 trillion (\$1.51 trillion) for the year, making it the world's 11th largest economy. Output stood at A\$80,432 for every one of Australia's 25.6 million residents. That outperformance owed much to super-high prices for many of the country's resource exports, which boosted its terms of trade by a massive 7.0% in the quarter and 24% for the year. **AGENCIES**

Actor Sidharth Shukla dies of heart attack at the age of 40, tributes pour in



Popular television and film actor Sidharth Shukla, best known for his role in the long-running TV show *Balika Vadhu* and as the winner of *Bigg Boss 13*, died on September 2, said an official at the Cooper Hospital in Mumbai. He

was 40 years old. Sidharth Shukla suffered a massive heart attack in the morning, it is learnt, and was taken to hospital at around 11 am. He is survived by his mother and two sisters. "He was brought dead to the hospital some time ago," the senior

Cooper Hospital official told PTI. "Initial report indicates that he died of a heart attack. We, however, won't be able to confirm the cause of his death until we complete the post mortem," a senior doctor from the forensic department of the hospital told *Hindustan Times*.

Actor Manoj Bajpayee took to Twitter to pay tribute. He wrote, "OMG!!! This is So Shocking!!! Words will fail to describe the shock and sense of loss of his near and dear ones!!! May he rest in peace!!! No year!!!!" His *Bigg Boss* co-contestant Himanshi Khurana tweeted,

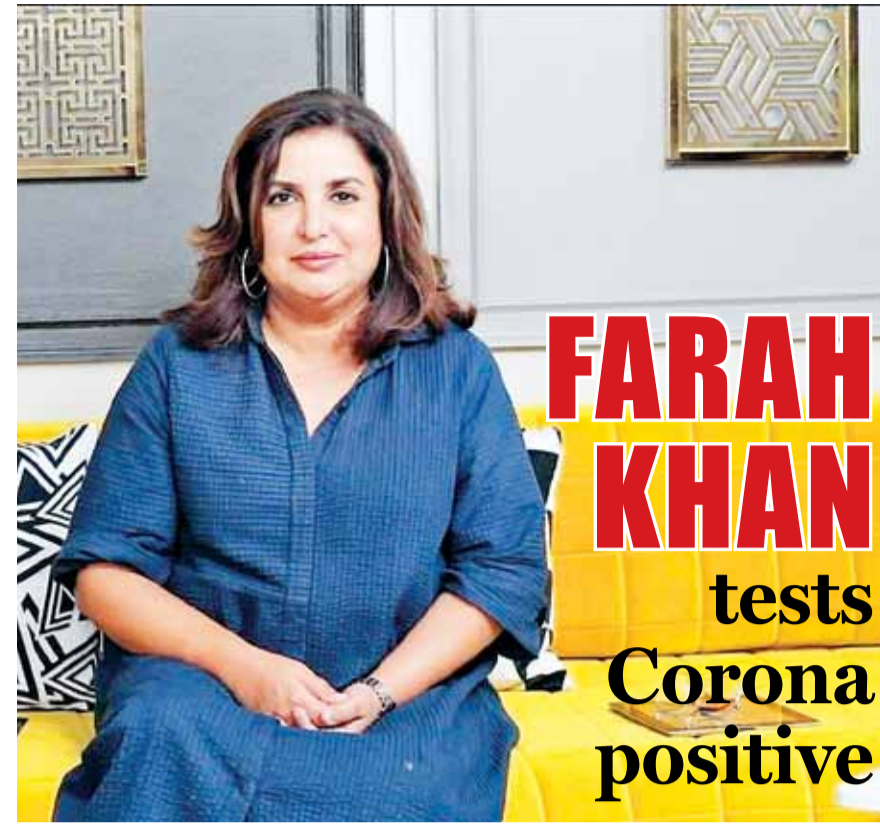
"Om Shanti." She added in another tweet, "Oh my God. It's hard to believe. RIP Sidharth Shukla."

Comedian and actor Sunil Grover tweeted, "Shocked and sad to know about Sidharth Shukla. Gone too soon. Prayers. Rest in peace." Actor Nimrat Kaur wrote, "Heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of late Sidharth Shukla. Terribly shocking and distressing news...." Manish Paul, Koena Mitra, Bipasha Basu and several others took to social media to pay tribute.

Sidharth Shukla made his acting debut with a lead role in the 2008 show *Babul Ka Aangann*

Chootey Na. In 2014, he made his Bollywood debut in a supporting role in *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*. He emerged as the winner of reality shows *Bigg Boss 13* and *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 7*. He hosted *Savdhaan India* and *India's Got Talent*.

Sidharth was also known for his strong friendship with *Bigg Boss* co-contestant Shehnaaz Gill, which was often thought to be a romantic relationship. The rumoured couple appeared in several popular music videos together and were fondly known as 'Sidnaaz' by their legions of fans. **AGENCIES**



FARAH KHAN tests Corona positive

Farah Khan has tested positive for Covid-19 even after two doses of vaccine. The choreographer-turned-filmmaker shared the news with fans on her social media.

Talking to her Instagram story, Farah wrote, "I wonder if this happened coz (because) I didn't put my 'kaala teeka'.

Despite being double vaccinated and working with mostly double vaccinated people, I've still managed to test positive for Covid. I've already informed everyone I came in contact with, to get tested. However, if I have forgotten someone (because of old age and fading memory) Please test yourself. Hoping to recover soon."

Farah was shooting for dance reality show *Super Dancer 4* on August 30 with Shilpa Shetty and others. She also shot a special episode of *Kaun Banega Crorepati 13* with Amitabh Bachchan.

Meanwhile, the filmmaker had made an appearance on *Arbaaz Khan's* chat show recently. **AGENCIES**

Covid: Cases of depression, social media addiction on the rise among youth: Docs



NEW DELHI: Cases of anxiety, depression and social media addiction have been on the rise among the youth during the Covid pandemic, a private hospital said. Doctors at Apollo Hospital said curbs on outdoor activity since the outbreak of the pandemic have led to issues of irritability, erratic sleep, appetite problems and weight gain becoming more common among youths.

"The number of OPD consultations for young adults have doubled for anxiety, depression, gaming and social media addiction and inability to concentrate and focus on studies," said Dr Sandeep Vohra, senior consultant, mental health and psychiatrist.

Therefore, he said, parents are advised to actively engage with their children, talk to them and observe all kind of behavioural changes shown by them.

Doctors compared average number of such cases in 2021 with the corresponding figures in 2019 to reach their conclusion, a spokesperson of the hospital said. With remote learning being the only solution

for continuation of studies during the pandemic, the use of internet has increased manifold, their study said.

Further, due to lack of physical activities, various behavioural changes have been observed among school and college-going students.

All these factors are contributing to the cultivating of a sedentary lifestyle among young adults, and a feeling of agitation and helplessness among them, it said.

Doctors highlighted the role of certain hormones—endorphins, serotonin, dopamine—released during physical activity, in keeping one happy and even-keeled. They stressed that mental health issues of young adults must be addressed by parents and teachers at the earliest.

If the issues persist still, they should seek professional help, the doctors advised, according to the statement.

Adolescence is an evolving stage of life, any disturbance in terms of both physical and mental health at this stage can hamper the future experiences in life, they said. **AGENCIES**



Great beer, seafood and service at Finley's



CHEF DHEERAJ KHANNA

Finley's reminded me like an old fishing boat harbour straight out of a Popeye movie when I first went in. It had a laid-back vibe to it, and the staff made us feel right at home. I expected the travel from Kalbarri, which is about six hours north of Perth, to be difficult, but it was actually fairly straightforward and peaceful. When we told people about Finley's, they all said the same thing.

"Great beer, seafood and service." I can say I agree. Steeped in an unusual history, the location was previously an ice works factory and then a fish processing plant before becoming a restaurant in 1989. The thing I found really interesting is that the original owner and founder of Finley's was Gary Finlay — yet the new owners and operators (since 2018) share the same surname of Finlay but are no relation at all.

Owners Melissa and Warrick try to get all of their produce from Kalbarri, but if it isn't possible, they will get it from Western Australia or elsewhere in Australia.



The Shark Bay Cockles in a Creamy Garlic and Wine Sauce were one of the more memorable dishes we tasted. The sauce was neither too runny nor too thick, and it was ideal for dipping the bread that came with the entrée.

The oysters sourced from Coffin Bay in South Australia were really fresh and popped in your mouth releasing that ocean feeling. Our host Dan Nielson recommended the Seafood Linguine, which was the special of the day, and I am glad he did. It had a great texture and flavour, our dish comprised of Kalbarri Crayfish, Shark Bay Cockles, tagliatelle pasta, white wine, garlic and chilli to give it a lovely mild heat also liked the fact that the crayfish was diced and displayed in its shell.

Chef Dheeraj Khanna made us a special dish of locally caught whole Red Throat Emperor. It was also on the special menu and was super fresh. It came with a crispy Asian salad featuring coleslaw, red pepper dressing and I think a bit of fish paste giving it an Indian touch that I really liked.

Visas of foreigners stranded in India due to Covid-19 to be valid till Sept 30: MHA

NEW DELHI: The government announced that it has granted the validity of Indian visa or stay stipulation period of foreign nationals stranded in India due to Covid-19 pandemic till September 30, 2021.

In an official statement the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said, "Due to the situation arising out of COVID-19 pandemic, a number of foreigners, who had come to India on various types of visas prior to March, 2020 and got stranded in the country in the absence of flights to their destinations, the Central Government had facilitated the stay of such people within India by giving deemed extension of their regular visa or e-visa or stay stipulation period on gratis basis without levy of any overstay penalty."

This facility which is presently available till August 31, 2021, has now been extended by the government till September 30, 2021, it said, adding that such foreign nationals "will not be required to submit any application to the FRRO/FRO concerned" for extension of their visas till the extended date.

Before exiting the country,



Due to the situation arising out of COVID-19 pandemic, a number of foreigners, who had come to India on various types of visas prior to March, 2020@

they may apply online for an exit permission on e-FRRO portal, which would be granted by the FRRO/FRO concerned on gratis basis without levy of

any overstay penalty, the MHA said in the statement.

"If an extension of visa is required beyond September 30, 2021, the foreign national concerned may apply for extension of visa on the online e-FRRO platform on payment basis, which would be considered by the FRRO/FRO concerned, subject to the eligibility as per the extant guidelines," the MHA said.

However, Afghan nationals already in India on any category of visa will be granted extension of visa under guidelines issued separately for Afghan nationals, it added. **AGENCIES**

Shooter Avani Lekhara becomes first Indian woman to win gold in Tokyo Paralympics



TOKYO: Shooter Avani Lekhara scripted history as she became the first Indian woman to win a gold medal at the Paralympics, firing her way to the top of the podium in the R-2 women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1 event here.

PM Narendra Modi congratulated shooter Avani Lekhara for winning a gold medal at Tokyo Paralympics. He tweeted: Phenomenal performance Avani Lekhara! Congratulations on winning a hard-earned & well-deserved Gold, made possible due to your industrious nature and passion towards shooting. This is truly a special moment for Indian sports. Best wishes for your future endeavours.

The 19-year-old finished with a world record equalling total of 249.6, which is also a new Paralympic record.

She's the fourth Indian athlete to win a Paralympics gold after swimmer Murlikant Petkar (1972), javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia (2004 and 2016) and high jumper Thangavelu Mariyappan (2016).

In the SH1 Rifle category, shooters are able to hold a gun with arms. The athletes have an impairment in their legs, for example amputations or paraplegia. Some athletes will compete in a seated position, while others will compete in a standing position. **AGENCIES**

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