

CENTRE DID POLITICS OVER OXYGEN CRISIS IN DELHI, TRIED TO HIDE DEATHS: **SATYENDAR JAIN**



NEED TO MAINSTREAM GREEN FINANCE: RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR M RAJESHWAR RAO



RAJ KUNDRA BACK HOME AFTER 2 MONTHS

PM CARES not a govt fund, Prime Minister's office tells HC

Fund is not a Government of India fund and the amount collected by it does not go to the Consolidated Fund of India, the Delhi High Court has been informed.

An affidavit filed by an Under Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) who is discharging his functions in the PM Cares Trust on honorary basis, has said the trust functions with transparency and its funds are audited by an auditor - a chartered accountant drawn from the panel prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

The affidavit was filed in response to a petition seeking a direction to declare the PM CARES Fund a 'State' under the Constitution to ensure transparency in its functioning.

A bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Amit Bansal has fixed the matter for further hearing on September 27.

"To ensure transparency, the audited report is put on the official website of the trust along with the details of utilisation of funds received by the trust," says the affidavit filed by Pradeep Kumar Srivastava, Under Secretary at the PM's

"I state that when the petitioner is claiming to be a public-spirited person and seeking to pray for various reliefs only for transparency, it does not matter whether PM Cares is a 'State' within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution of India," the officer said in the affidavit.

Irrespective of whether the trust is a 'State' or other authority within the meaning authority' within the meaning said.

meet domestic requirements.

excess doses would be exported.

Covid-19," said the Minister.

with great speed," the minister said.

Vaccine Maitri: Govt to resume

NEW DELHI: India will resume Covid-19 vaccine exports in

the fourth quarter of 2021 starting October this year, Union

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced, in a major

policy shift from April this year when exports were banned to

Citing massive ramp-up on the vaccine production front

with 30 crore doses expected in October, Mandaviya said

'Vaccine Maitri' would be resumed starting October and only

On the expected production in the coming months, the

Minister said more than 30 crore doses would be produced

in October and more than 100 crore were expected in the last

three months of the year as Biological E too would begin its

production. The Minister said not only would India "help other

countries with Covid vaccines starting the last quarter this

year, it would also fulfil the commitment towards COVAX, the

global vaccine initiative, in line with the motto of Vasudhaiva

Kutumbakam". COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for

Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World

Health Organisation. "We will receive 30 crore vaccines and

may be more in October once Biological E begins production

and the surplus supply of vaccines will be used to fulfil our

commitment towards the world for the collective fight against

Mandaviya said in September alone, 26 crore doses would

Highlighting the importance of indigenous research and

production of Covid vaccines in India, Mandaviya said it was

due to the relentless efforts and guidance of PM Narendra

Modi that India was simultaneously undertaking research

and development and production of Covid vaccines in line

with the global developments. "India's vaccination drive has

been a role model for the entire world and it is marching ahead

be received from indigenous vaccine makers.

vax exports from October



of provisions of the Right to Information Act (RTI), it is not permissible to disclose third party information, it added.

It said that all donations received by the trust are received via online payments, cheques or Demand Drafts and the amount received is audited with the audited report and the expenditure of trust fund displayed on the website.

"The trust functions on the principles of transparency and public good in larger public interest like any other charitable trust and, therefore, cannot have any objection in uploading all its resolutions on its website to ensure transparency," it said, while reiterating that "the trust's fund is not a fund of Government of India and the amount does not go in the Consolidated Fund of

The officer said he is discharging his functions in the PM Cares Trust on honorary basis which is a charitable trust not created by or under the Constitution or by any law made by the Parliament or by any State legislature.

"Despite being an officer of the Central government, I am permitted to discharge my of Article 12 of the Constitu- functions in PM Care Trust tion or whether it is a 'public on an honorary basis," he authority within the meaning said. AGENCIES

Modi, Suga reaffirm commitment for free, open Indo-Pacific region

QUAD MEETING

DURING THEIR MEETING, THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS AGREE TO ENHANCE BILATERAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE COOPERATION

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Yoshihide Suga have reaffirmed their commitment towards a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, as they reviewed the multi-faceted bilateral relationship and exchanged views on recent global developments, including in Afghanistan, ahead

Kamala Harris is a source of inspiration for many around the world: Modi

President Joe Biden.

of the first in-person Quad

meeting to be hosted by US

During their meeting here on Thursday, the two Prime Ministers agreed to enhance bilateral security and defence cooperation, including in the area of defence equipment and technologies, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs

Modi thanked Suga for his personal commitment and leadership, both as Prime Minister and Chief Cabinet



great advances in the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership over the last few years, it said.

"The two Prime Ministers reviewed the multi-faceted relationship between the two countries and exchanged views on recent global and regional

Afghanistan. They reaffirmed their commitment towards a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region," it said.

The two Prime Ministers welcomed the increasing economic engagement between the two countries.

he two countries. ship augurs well for the en-Prime Minister Modi in a tire planet," Modi tweeted.

in a tweet after the meeting. Prime Ministers @narendramodi and @sugawitter had a fruitful meeting in Washington DC. Both leaders held discussions on several issues including ways to give further impetus to trade and cultural ties," it said.

TOP AMERICAN CEOS APPRECIATE RECENT REFORM MEASURES

"Furthering friendship with Japan," the MEA said

IN INDIA, SHRINGLA SAYS AFTER THEY MEET MODI

"Discussed a range of issues: Indo-Pacific, regional developments, supply chain resilience, trade, digital economy & P2P ties," the MEA said in another tweet.

A special strategic and global partnership with Japan - firmly rooted in history and based on common values, it further said.

They welcomed the launch of the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) between India, Japan and Australia earlier this year as a collaborative mechanism to enable resilient, diversified and trustworthy supply chains, the statement strong India-Japan friend-

Prime Minister Modi high-

lighted the need to develop bilateral partnerships in man-ufacturing, MSME and skill development.

Prime Minister Suga informed Modi that in order to operationalise the Specified Skilled workers (SSW) agreement which was signed earlier this year, the Japanese side would be undertaking skill and language tests in India from early 2022, it said.

They discussed the Covid pandemic and efforts to address it and highlighted the increasing importance of digital technologies and in this regard positively evaluated the progress in the India-Japan Digital Partnership, especially in start-ups.

The two leaders exchanged views on further collaboration in various emerging technologies. Discussions also took place on climate change issues and green energy transition, and the potential for Japanese collaboration with India's National Hydrogen Energy Mission, the

statement said. AGENCIES

CONGRESS POLITICS IN PUNJAB!

Polls ahead: Capt Amarinder quits, now Channi a new CM

Chandigarh

The fact is chief ministers come and go on a regular baof Captain Amarinder Singh's resignation resides in what it says about the Congress party today, not in what it means for Punjab politics. With each passing day, it becomes increasingly evident that this is not the Congress that was elected in 2004 and 2009, but rather a whole other political

The first distinction is in Amarinder Singh's treatment. Singh is a Congress veteran who has won Punjab for the party and is well-liked across the country. When complaints about his leadership began to arrive - claims that he was inaccessible to his MLAs, that governance had been outsourced to bureaucrats, that he had done nothing to combat anti-incumbency, and so on the party would have assessed whether these claims were true at one point or another.

If the allegations were proved to be true, Sonia Gandhi would have dispatched a senior aide (likely Ahmed Patel) to speak with the Chief Minister and urge him to take quick corrective action in the party's best interests.

The Congress leadership did



HIGHLIGHTS

- PUNJAB GOVT ORDERS REMOVAL OF EX-CM AMARINDER'S POSTERS FROM BUSES
- 9 IAS, 2 PCS OFFICERS TRANSFERRED ON SECOND DAY OF CHIEF MINISTER CHANNI ASSUMING
- NCW CHIEF SEEKS NEWLY APPOINTED PUNJAB CM CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI'S RESIGNATION

not bother to do that this time because Ahmed Patel is dead, role, and anyway, that is not how the party functions now. Channi took oath

Congress leader Charanjit making him the first Dalit to

hold the top post in the state. Sukhjinder Singh Randnobody else is playing that hawa and OP Soni were also sworn in. They will be designated as deputy chief ministers.

Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit administered Singh Channi was sworn in the oath to the 58-year-old as chief minister of Punjab, Channi at a ceremony held at the Raj Bhawan.

India seals historic airbus military aircraft

'Ready to make any sacrifice to stop Navjot Sidhu becoming CM'

India's most valued partners.

ing with PM @sugawitter

on a variety of subjects that

would further boost coopera-

tion between our nations. A

"I had an excellent meet-

rinder Singh declared that he would fight Navjot Sidhu's elevation to Punjab chief ministership tooth and nail, and was ready to make any sacrifice to save the country from such a dangerous man.

Even as he reiterated his to counter any move to make Sidhu the state's CM face, Amarinder said

he will pit a strong candidate against the PPCC president in the 2022 Assembly polls to ensure his defeat. "He (Sidhu) is dangerous for the state," said the former Chief Minister in a series of media interviews.

Asserting that he will only leave politics on a high, the former Chief Minister said, "I was ready to leave after victory but never after a loss." He said he had offered his resignation to Sonia Gandhi three weeks earlier but she had asked him to continue. "If she had just called me and asked me to step down, I would have," he said, adding that "as a soldier, I know how to do my task and leave once I am called back".

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

States to provide ₹50,000 compensation for each Covid death: Centre

India still has some Covid: UK on stricter Quarantine rules for

National Covid recovery rate recorded at 97.77 per cent, highest since March 2020

Defence Ministry places Rs 7,523 crore order for 118 battle tanks



NEW DELHI: The Defence Ministry sealed a contract to procure 118 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) Arjun for the Indian Army at a cost of Rs 7,523 crore, in a major move to boost its combat capabilities.

The defence ministry placed the order for the Arjuna Mk-1A tanks with the Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF), Avadi, Chennai.

The MBT Mk-1A is a new variant of Arjun Tank designed to enhance fire power, mobility and survivability, infused with 72 new features and more indigenous content from the

"The Ministry of Defence (MoD) placed an order with Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF), Avadi, Chennai for supply of 118 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) Arjun Mk-1A for the Indian Army on September 23," the ministry said in a statement.

"The order, worth Rs 7,523 crore, will provide further boost to the "Make in India" initiative in defence sector and is a big step towards achieving "Aatmanirbhar Bharat","

tanks would ensure effortless mobility in all terrains, besides precise target engagement during day and night. It has been designed and

developed by the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) by incorporating numerous upgrades. on Arjun MBT, the in-service main battle tank with the Indian Army.

"The MK-1A is equipped with accurate and superior firepower, all-terrain mobility and an invincible multi-layered protection provided by an array of advanced technology systems. It can take on the enemy during day and night conditions and in both static and dynamic modes," the ministry said.

It said the production order to Heavy Vehicles Factory will open up a large avenue in defence manufacturing for over 200 Indian vendors including MSMEs, with employment opportunities to around 8,000 **AGENCIES**

Teen gang-raped multiple times, 24 arrested, 2 boys detained **NEWDELHI:** Rape cases are the crime. He used the video his friends and acquaintances

AGENCIES

still on verge in India. In one of the case, over 30 people have been accused of gang-raping a 15-year-old girl multiple times over a period of nine months near Mumbai, in a case that has left Maharashtra shaken to the core. The girl has named 33 attackers, of which 24 have been arrested. Two minors have also been detained.

The tragic story began in January when the girl's friend allegedly raped her and filmed

to blackmail her and rape her again. He allegedly shared the video with many others - friends and acquaintances - and they all used it to blackmail the teen.

The girl was gang-raped by the group multiple times and at several spots near Mumbai, according to the police.

"It all started when the lover of the girl raped her in January and made a video of the incident. He started blackmailing her on all the attackers, the police the basis of that video. Later on, said.

gang-raped her at least on four to five occasions at different places, including Dombivili, Badlapur, Murbad and Rabale in the district," Additional Commissioner of Police (East region), Dattatray Karale said.

The girl approached the police last night and is being treated in hospital. Her wrenching account led to the arrest of 24 men. She knew almost AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: The Defence Ministry inked a nearly Rs 20,000 crore deal with Airbus contract. Defence and Space of Spain to procure 56 'C-295' medium maining 40

transport aircraft which will replace the ageing Avro-748 planes of the Indian Air Force.

It is the first project of its kind under which military aircraft will be manufactured in India by a private company, officials said. Under the deal, 16 aircraft

factured in India by a consortium of the Airbus Defence and Space and Tata Advanced Systems Limited

deal, Ratan Tata says bold step

signing the

The re-

planes will

ing the contract, officials said. The Chairman of Tata Trusts, will be delivered in a flyaway condition by the Airbus Defence Ratan Tata, congratulated the Airbus Defence, Tata Advanced and Space of Spain within 48

fence Ministry on the inking of the historic contract. In a signed statement posted on Twitter, Tata said the clear-

Systems Limited and the De-

ance of the joint project between Airbus Defence and Tata Advanced Systems to build the aircraft is a "great step" forward in the opening up of the aviation and avionics projects in India.

(TASL) within 10 years of sign-"It will create a domestic supply chain capability to international standards, which has never been undertaken before,' Ratan Tata said. AGENCIES

Gurdwara Bangla

Sahib shut: Delhi

administration flayed

Centre did politics over oxygen crisis in Delhi, tried to hide deaths: Satyendar Jain

Minister Satyendar Jain accused the Centre of doing politics over the issue of oxygen crisis here during the second wave of the Covid pandemic, and also trying to stop the formation of a city government's panel to probe deaths allegedly due to its shortage.

His remarks in response to a question during a press conference came a day after the Delhi High Court said that it saw no difficulty in the constitution of a high-powered committee (HPC) by the AAP government to probe the deaths caused by the alleged medical oxygen

The court, which was dealing with a plea to operationalise the HPC, noted the Delhi government's stand that the committee would not attribute any fault to any hospital and any compensation will be paid and absorbed by the government alone.

Jain said the Delhi government had set up a four-mem- shortage were reported," Jain government, the criteria for

ber panel comprising medical experts in June and the files were sent to the Delhi Lt gov-

ernor for approval. However, the Centre tried to stop it via the LG office, he

The Centre also did politics over the issue of oxygen crisis and even said in Parliament that no deaths due to oxygen

They did a "wrong thing" by "trying to hide deaths" that may have occurred due to shortage of the life-saving gas, Jain charged, and added that the court had now cleared the way for the formation of

The high court had also recorded that as per the Delhi will be open to scrutiny and its task would not overlap with that of a sub-group constituted by the Supreme Court on allocation and utilisation

The job of this committee is to probe any death that any person claims has taken due to oxygen shortage, whether at home or a hospital. The panel will investigate and recommend a compensation of up to Rs 5 lakh accordingly. It will not probe any medical negligence, that is the job of the medical council," Jain told reporters.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had on July 21 charged the Centre with trying to "hide its fault" and alleged that its "mismanagement" and change in oxygen distribution policy after April 13 had caused shortage of oxygen in hospitals across the country, leading to

Jain said several media channels were reporting live from October 4.

on the oxygen crisis issue during the second wave of the pandemic in Delhi. Was it all wrong, he asked?

The number of COVID-19 cumulative cases stood at 14,38,556. Over 14.13 lakh patients have recovered from the virus, while the death toll stands at 25,085.

On the UK rules related to Covishield vaccine, the Delhi minister said the MEA will respond on this, but, "I feel there is no question of not recognising it," as it is the same vaccine used in the UK but with a different name of AstraZeneca.

The UK government added Covishield to an updated international travel advisory.

The move follows widespread condemnation of the Serum Institute of India manufactured vaccines not being included in a list of eligible COVID-19 vaccines recognised under Britain's reviewed international travel norms, effective

"The orders to close Gurdwara Bangla Sahib are a testament to the dictatorial attitude of the Delhi Government, which the Sikh community cannot tolerate. These should be withdrawn immediately

She said the contribution of gurdwaras in provided langar (food from community kitchen), oxygen, and other services to public during the Covid pandemic shouldn't be forgotten.

and the administration

must apologise," she said.

AMRITSAR: SGPC

president Bibi Jagir Kaur

termed the orders of Del-

hi administration to close

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib as

a 'Nadirshahi' (dictatorial).

Gurdwara body urges Delhi govt to stop painting Golden Temple on walls of underpass

New Delhi: Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) chief Manjinder Singh Sirsa wrote to PWD minister Satyendar Jain requesting him to stop the painting of Golden Temple on the walls on an underconstruction underpass at he wrote.

Rs 50,000 relief to be

paid to kin of Covid

victims: Centre to SC

Ashram Chowk here. Sirsa also termed the act as "disrespectful" to their religion according to the Sikh code of conduct.

"We would like to draw your kind attention to the painting work of Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) that is being carried out by the PWD on the side walls of an underpass being constructed at Ashram Chowk, New Delhi.

"For your kind information, as per the Sikh code of conduct, it is not permissible and considered as disrespectful to our religion. Delhi Sikh Sangat is taking serious objection to it," the letter read.

"You are requested to kindly issue the necessary orders for immediate stopping of the painting work," it added. Sirsa also shared the letter in a Twitter post. "Painting Darbar Sahib on the walls of Underpass at Ashram Chowk is highly objectionable. We urge @SatyendarJain Ji to immediately pass the order of stopping this painting work. "As per the Sikh code of conduct, such a painting is considered disrespectful,

NEWSBRIEF Delhi diesel generator

users asked to install emission control devices

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has directed all users of diesel generators of 125 KVA and above capacity in the capital to install emission control devices on their Diesel Generator sets by October end. In a reminder to an order issued on July 2, the pollution control authority said owners of such Diesel Generator sets will attract penal action if they don't comply with its directions within 120 days from the date of the first notice. It said the devices to be installed on Diesel Generator sets must be approved by one of the five Central Pollution Control Board-recognised laboratories and should capture at least 70 percent of the emissions. The users of such Diesel Generator sets also have the option to shift to gas-based generators. **AGENCIES**

Govt's mega PTM helped parents get involved in **Children's Development Process: Research**

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government>s "Mega PTM" initiative has helped 97 per cent of the parents increase their participation in the overall development of their children, according to an SCERT Delhi research, a statement said. Mega PTM was an initiative launched by the Arvind Kejriwal government in 2016 to increase parental engagement in its schools and connect the society with these institutions. Its purpose, the statement said, was to bridge the communication gap between parents and teachers. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said along with teacher training, SCERT Delhi was also playing an important role in the field of educational re-search. **AGENCIES**

BJP, Cong replaced their CMs out of fear of Kejriwal model: AAP

PANAJI: The fear of the Ar-

vind Kejriwal "model" prompt-

ed Congress and BJP to replace their chief ministers in some states, where Assembly elections are due early next year, an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) functionary said here. The comments of Goa AAP conagainst the backdrop of the BJP replacing its chief minister Vijay Rupani in Gujarat last week and Congress appointing Charanjit Singh Channi as the new CM of Punjab after incumbent Amarinder Singh resigned a day before following a bitter power tussle. He said AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will arrive in Goa, where Assembly polls are due in February next year, on September 20. "BJP and Congress replaced their chief ministers in some states due to the fear of the Kejriwal model," Mhambre said. Kejriwal had announced that the AAP will provide up to 300 units of free electricity if voted to power in Goa during his earlier visit. He had also assured 24x7 uninterrupted

electricity supply, Mhambre

Mhambre said Kejriwal's

pre-election promises had

forced Goa chief minister

Pramod Sawant to announce

schemes promising free water

supply for people and doorstep

services "which he blatantly

papers headlines but in the

5-star hotel chef arrested for snatching incidents in South Delhi

NEW DELHI: A chef of a fivestar hotel was arrested in connection with multiple cases of snatching in South Delhi, police

Based on a tip off, Harish (35) was arrested from Neb Sarai area where he had gone for more snatchings, they said. The accused, who holds degrees in BA and hotel management, worked at a five-star hotel near the IGI Airport and had a good salary but he took to snatching to pay off his gambling debts, the police said. A resident of Sangam Vi-

har, Harish especially targeted women going for a walk or travelling to offices near Saket Metro Station. Other times, he would lurk in the park adjoining the Metro station or at Ambedkar Nagar bus stand on Mehrauli-Badarpur (MB) Road, Deputy Commissioner



Thakur said. After snatching valuables from his victims, he would usually shout "Pakdopakdo" or "Chor-chor" to give an impression that he was chasing the culprit and would run like a trained athlete, he said. Thakur said that for more than a month, his team scrutinised hundreds of CCTV footage and analysed the timings and specific area

Neb Sarai area. "Finding himself trapped, the accused took out his country-made pistol but the police personnel overpowered him and snatched the firearm from his hand," he said.

After his arrest, Harish disclosed that he had sold three snatched gold chains to a goldsmith in Sangam Vihar area. On the basis of his testimony, police arrested Rajender Aggarwal for buying the stolen property, the DCP added. "During interrogation, he (Harish) disclosed that around two years ago, he started gambling through an online app 'Satta King'

"Initially, he succeeded, but later suffered losses and incurred huge debts. He then chose to make money by snatching gold chains and mobile phones, preying on soft targets in the morn-

of incidents to nab the suspect. Based on a tip-off, the team ing and evening hours," Thakur of Police (South) Atul Kumar laid a trap on the MB Road in said. HC stays trial court proceedings against

in the trial court against cricketer-turned-politician Gautam Gambhir, his foundation and others in a case related to the alleged illegal stocking and distribution of Covid-19 drugs.

Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar sought response from the Delhi Drug Control Authority on the petition by the Gautam Gambhir foundation, Gambhir and other accused, assailing the criminal complaint and the summoning order passed by the trial court in the case.

Listing the matter for further hearing on December 8. the judge said, "Till then the proceedings are stayed.'

Drug Control Department has filed complaint against Gautam Gambhir foundation, its CEO Aprajita Singh, Aprajit Singh, Seema Gambhir, Gautam Gambhir and Natasha Gambhir for offences under section 18(C) read with section 27(b)(ii) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

Two separate complaints were also filed against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs Praveen Kumar and Imran Hussain alleging the commission of offences.



Section 18(C) prohibits manufacture, sale distribution of drugs without a licence and Section 27(b)(ii) makes sale, distribution without valid licence punishable with imprisonment for a term, not be less than three years but which may extend to five years and The trial court noted that

complainant has been able to prima-facie prove the commission of the offence.

The trial court in its July 26 order had recorded that the prosecution case is that Gautam Gambhir and others from the foundation allegedly stocked and distributed drugs namely Favipiravir tablets and Medical Oxygen during a medical camp held from April 22, 2021 to May 18, 2021.

Last month, the trial court had listed the case against the foundation for further hearing on February 7, 2022.

On June 3, Delhi's drug controller had told the Delhi High Court that Gambhir Foundation was found guilty of unauthorised stocking, procuring and distributing fabiflu medicine to Covid-19 patients.

The high court had deprecated the manner in which a huge quantity of the drug was procured and said that the genuine patients who needed the medicine at that particular time could not get it as the bulk stock was taken away by Gambhir.

The drug controller also submitted that action will be taken without delay against

Shift public transport vehicles in NCR to CNG: Delhi to neighbouring states



NEW DELHI: Delhi has suggested its surrounding states to shift their public transport vehicles in the National Capital Region to CNG and adopt a policy to promote electric vehicles, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said. It has also urged the neighbouring states to ban firecrackers to tackle pollution, he said. Rai made the suggestions during an online meeting of NCR states convened by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav. M M Kutty, the chairman of the tended the meeting. "Delhi has suggested that neighbouring states shift their public transport vehicles in the National and adopt an electric vehicle policy," Rai told a press conference after the meeting.

Delhi's public transport fleet

to ply on the streets of the national capital which negatively impacts the efforts made by the city government, he said. He said no extension should

be given to thermal power plants in NCR that are operating without emission control devices."These TPPs are to be retrofitted with new technology to control emissions but they operate without it after paying a penalty. The gases they emit are the most harmful," Rai said. The minister said he also

urged the neighbouring states Centre's Commission for Air to spray bio-decomposer on measure" to prevent stubble burning. If they don't do it in time, Delhi and the entire north India will have to bear Capital Region (NCR) to CNG the brunt of stubble burning this year too, he said."We have also suggested that Haryana and Uttar Pradesh constitute a task force for pollution hotspots has already shifted to CNG, but in their areas surrounding Deldiesel-operated vehicles from neighboring states continue hi for ground visits and focused work," he said. **AGENCIES**

DU's first cut-off list likely to be announced on October 1: Sources

versity will release its first cutoff list on October 1 for undergraduate college courses and a special cut-off after the third list has been issued, according to sources. The schedule for the list was finalised in a meeting of admission committee members and college principals, they said.

Nearly 70,000 seats under various courses are up for grabs and the admission process is online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. October

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Unifor the first cut-off list with the second cut-off likely to be released on October 8 or 9, the sources said.

The varsity is likely to release the special cut-off after the third cut-off list has been issued, they said. Special cut-offs are released for those students who could not apply for the earlier lists, despite meeting the eligibility criteria. "When the admissions were held offline, the special cut-offs were released after every list but it is not possible in the case of online was statutorily mandated to pro-

Covid victims, including those involved in relief operations, will be given Rs 50,000 compensation from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), the Centre told the

Supreme Court.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has framed guidelines in this regard following directions issued by the top court. The families of those who died of Covid will have to apply for compensation in the Disaster Management Office of their respective district along with medical/death certificate mentioning 'death due to Covid'.

The compensation will be paid against not only the deaths that have already occurred, but for future ones, the Centre said. The top court had on June 30 directed the NDMA to frame guidelines for payment of compensation to the kin of those who died due to Covid, saying the authority

NEW DELHI: The families of ex-gratia to the victims of the pandemic.

Holding that by not providing an ex-gratia amount the NDMA had failed in discharging its statutory duty, a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan had directed the NDMA to determine in six weeks the ex-gratia amount to be paid to the family of each Covid victim.

However, it had said it won't be proper for the court to direct a particular amount to be paid. On September 3, it had expressed displeasure over delay in framing guidelines for issuance of death certificates to the families of victims.

The order had come on PILs seeking an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each to the kin of the deceased. The Centre had opposed it, contending that giving an ex-gratia amount of Rs 4 lakh each to kin of Covid victims wasn't possible due to limited resources as it would affect pandemic response on other aspects, leading to more damage

copied from the Aam Aadmi the foundation. AGENCIES 1 has been finalised as the date admission process. AGENCIES vide minimum relief, including **AGENCIES** than good. 7 towns in Haryana among 50 highly polluted cities in the world

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

According to World Air Quality 2020 Report, seven towns Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak, Hisar Fatehabad, Jind and Yamunanagar in Haryana state have been identified among 50 highly polluted cities in the world. Among those seven polluted towns include Gurugram prominent IT hub in the world tops, followed by biggest industrial town in the state Faridabad ranking second position. According to health experts, increasing pollution is a mat-

ter of concern causing adverse effect on the health of residents in the area causing asthma, allergy, heart and lungs diseases. According to health experts, a person consumes nearly three litre oxygen with the help of respiration 22000 times in a day.

Information reveals, as regard pollution Gurugram hold 7th position, Faridabad hold 11th position, Jind hold 13th position and Hisar hold14th position in the world. Drop in pollution was recorded during first phase of COVID-19 in the state last year which witnessed rise during second phase of KOVID-19 this



year. According to scientists, pollution spreads by smoke released from automobiles, municipal solid waste, industrial chimneys, brick kilns, thermal plants and during crop harvesting season when farmers burn crop remains in open.

Cutting trees is another prominent reason for increasing pollution in the state. A fully developed tree on an average consumes nearly 5000 polluted particles According to National Forest Policy there should be minimum one third the state for a healthy and pol-

lution free environments. During year 2006, State government Haryana had constituted a policy to have nearly 20% forest area in every district but Forest Survey of India specified that hardly between 1.5 to 2% area in most of the towns in the state have greenery.

Expressing deep concern, Independent MLA in Gurugram district Rakesh Daulatbad also Chairman Haryana State Agro Industries Corporation expressed deep concern over fast increasing pollution forest area in every district in in most of the towns in the state and suggested Urban

Development Department in the state to cultivate minimum 10 lakh plants in Gurugram district declared highly polluted town the state in coming three vears.

According to information, Government of Haryana had plans to cultivate two crore plants in Haryana state every year during rainy season in coming three years in order to make state pollution free. It is generally seen, political leaders of ruling government announce plantation programmes every rainy season to attract publicity on news-

absence of care maximum number of these plants die and none of the political leader or bureaucrat has ever tried to find out the reason for collapsing of plants and take action against those responsible for neglect. Daulatbad said, in past two years more than six lakh plants were cultivated at Gurugram, whereas the town is having nearly two crore automobile vehicles and population over 40 lakh in the district which will have hardly any effect to control increasing pollution.

Women's NDA entry not this year: Govt

NEED TIME TO DEVELOP FACILITIES, IT TELLS SC.

NEW DELHI: Women cadets' entry into the National Defence Academy (NDA) will not be possible this year as various facilities have to be developed for them before they are allowed into the academy, hitherto open to men alone, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

Notification in May

A notification allowing women candidates to take the entrance exam for entry into the NDA will be released in May 2022. Ministry of Defence

In an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Ministry of Defence said a notification allowing women candidates to take the entrance exam for entry



had told the top court that it However, it had sought an ex-

On September 8, the Centre was hitherto open to men alone.

cadets into the NDA, which decision for this year's examination scheduled for November 14 as certain procedural and be needed before the entry of women cadets into the NDA.

The decision followed the top court's August 18 interim order that said debarringwomen amounted to gender discrimination. It had directed the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to issue an appropriate notification, taking into account its order and give it due publicity.

The NDA entrance exams are held twice a year and the government proposes to have necessary mechanisms in place by May 2022, the time by which the UPSC is required to publish the first notification next year, for the exam. A Bench led by Justice SK Kaul is expected to consider the MoD affidavit on Wednesday.

Placing on record its "clear and categorical stand" that the women candidates shall be considered for entry in the three Defence Services, in the existing streams, through the NDA, the Centre said a study group had been constituted by the Defence Services, comprising experts to expeditiously formulate the comprehensive curriculum for women cadets at the NDA.

A Board of Officers had also been convened to give a holistic and futuristic proposal for training of women cadets at the NDA, incorporating all relevant aspects, it submitted.

Noting that any dilution of physical training and service subject such as firing would invariably impact the battle worthiness of the armed forces adversely, it said, therefore, facilities such as equitation, swimming, games and sports were needed to be developed for the women

Bengaluru rape case: Cabbie took selfie before assaulting woman

BENGALURU: Karnataka not realise this. The driver Police investigating the alleged rape of a woman traveller by the driver of a reputed cab service in Bengaluru have found a selfie with the victim from the mobile phone of the accused, police sources said.

Jeevan Beema Nagar police arrested cab driver Devaraj alias Devarajulu, a resident of Avalahalli near KR Puram. The accused belongs to Andhra Pradesh.

The incident had taken place in the wee hours of Wednesday. The victim had rushed out of the cab following the crime after grabbing her bag and the driver's mobile phone. She handed over the cell phone to the police.

The police are surprised to find the selfie on the accused's mobile. The accused before committing the crime had clicked the selfie with the victim, who in the picture is asleep. Sources said the cab was booked at 3.20 am by the victim from her friend's place at HSR Layout. She reached her home at 3.40 am. However, she was asleep and did woman.

opened the cab door for her and realised that she was asleep. He took the vehicle to an isolated place. There he clicked the selfie and raped her in the backseat of the cab, sources said.

By the time the victim got back to her senses it was too late. She managed to push the accused off and ran towards her home. She reached her house around 4.45 am. The accused escaped from the scene. The police said the woman sounde the police. Immediately, a police team led by a woman police officer was sent to the house. Preliminary investigation has suggested sexual assault and the police are waiting for the medical report.

The accused had come to Bengaluru two years ago for a livelihood. The police suspect his involvement in many such cases and are questioning him. Though he denied having committed the crime initially, later he confessed to

Assam: Two killed in firing during protests against eviction

GUWAHATI: Two persons were killed and at least ten others, most of them policemen, were seriously injured on Thursday in firing by the force on protesters demanding rehabilitation of 800 families evicted by Assam's Darrang district administration and the clash that followed between the two sides, police said. The evicted families had launched a protest at Sipajhar demanding that the eviction be stopped and that they be provided with a comprehensive rehabilitation package.

Trouble broke out when a mob of protesters, who were armed with sharp weapons, started pelting stones and attacking policemen and general people present at the spot, Darrang Superintendent of Police Sushanta Biswa Sarma said.The police opene fire in self-defence, killing two persons, both civilians. This led to the two sides coming to blows, in which at least ten others were injured, he said.Most of the injured were policemen and the condition of an assistant sub-inspector Moniruddin was stated to be critical by doctors treating him. He has been shifted to Gauhati Medical College Hospital, he said. The dead have been identi- is done". The eviction will stop



fied as Saddam Hussain and Sheikh Forid, Sarma said.The situation was later brought under control and the mob dispersed. The eviction is on in DholpurI and Dholpur III villages despite the tension in the area after the clash with the police.Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in Guwahati that the ongoing eviction will not be stopped. "The police have been entrusted with the responsibility of clearing the land of illegal encroachers and they will continue till the job

when it turns dark and resume

again on Friday, he added. The Darrang district administration has cleared 602.04 hectares and evicted 800 families since Monday and demolished four "illegally" constructed religious structures at Sipajhar, officials said. The Chief Minister had visited the area on June 7 and inspected the riverine areas allegedly encroached by "illegal settlers" near Dholpur Shiva Temple and had directed the district administration to clear the area for a community AGENCIES

PMGSY-3 puts UP in fast lane



LUCKNOW: The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has put Uttar Pradesh in the fast lane. Around 6,208.45 km of new roads are being constructed at a cost of Rs 4,130.27 crore under PMGSY-III.

According to the government spokesman, in the past 4.5 years roads have been the priority of the Yogi Adityanath government in order to augment infrastructure and improve the lives of the rural population."The state government is committed to inclusive development and the welfare of the people. The construction of roads under PMGSY-III will boost growth, create jobs and raise the standard of living for hundreds of millions in rural areas. The road projects taken up by the government are also generating direct and indirect employment as the manpower is engaged in the construction works," the spokesman said. All work under the first and second phases of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been completed in Uttar Pradesh.The state has already constructed over 57,162.55 km of road under the same. The maintenance work of five years has been assigned to the road contractors.Bhanu Chandra Goswami, Chief Executive Officer, Uttar Pradesh Rural Road Development Agency, said that

In the third phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, the Government of India has set a target to construct roads of 18,937.05 km in Uttar Pradesh by the year 2024-25. With the construction of new roads, ambulances and other medical facilities are now easily accessible in **AGENCIES**

being constructed.

Court seeks action taken report from police on plea against Rahul Gandhi

 ${\color{red}{\sf NEW DELHI:}}\ {\rm A\ Delhi\ court}$ sought an action taken report from the Delhi Police on a private complaint filed against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for allegedly dis-closing the identity of a minor rape victim, the lawyer for the complainant said.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dharmendra Singh directed the police to file the report by September 29, when he will further hear the matter, the lawyer said.

Advocate Neeraj, who filed the complaint on behalf of local BJP leader Naveen Kumar Jindal, alleged that Rahul Gandhi "wilfully, intentionally and deliberately disclosed the identity of a minor rape victim through his social media account twitter handle".

The complaint urged the court to direct the officer conin the third phase of the scheme, cerned of the Crime Branch 6,208.45 km of new roads are of Delhi Police to lodge an FIR under relevant provisions of law and investigate the matter.

The complaint has sought the prosecution of the Congress leader under the relevant sections of Juvenile Justice Act, Prevention of Child from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act and Indian Penal Code.

SC to set up expert panel to probe Pegasus row; order expected next week

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court said it would set up an expert committee to probe into the allegations that politicians, journalists and activists were snooped on using A Bench led by Chief Justice NV Ramana -- which had

on September 13 reserved its order on petitions seeking an SIT probe into the allegations -- said a detailed order to set up the committee could be expected next week. The court wanted to pass an order this week but it couldn't

as some of the experts it had in mind for the committee didn't want to participate due to personal reasons, CJI Ramana told senior advocate CU Singh, who represented some of the petitioners in the case. The Supreme Court had on September 13 said it would

pass an interim order on petitions seeking a court-monitored SIT probe into the alleged snooping.
Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had said the government

didn't want to file any additional affidavit to publicly clarify if Pegasus spyware was used for snooping or not even if he maintained that the Centre had nothing to hide. You have repeatedly been saying that the government

doesn't want to file an affidavit. We also don't want any security issues to be put before us. You say that a committee will be formed and the report will be submitted...We have to look into the whole issue and pass an interim order," the Bench had said.

NCRB Report: 66,01,285 crimes reported in 2020

Chandigarh

According to National Crime Report Bureau (NCRB), 66,01,285 criminal cases were registered in the country during past year 2020, which witnessed drop in crime cases against women, children, rapes and kidnappings as compared to previous year 2019, whereas cases of murder, cyber crime, theft and snatching were increased during the year. Out of total number of 66,01285 criminal

cases registered by the police in 2020 in all all in 2020 include 42,54,366 cases registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 23,46,929 cases registered under Special & Local Lodge (SLL) as against total number of 51,56,158 cases registered in the year 2019. According to report,

4,05,326 crimes against

women were registered in the country during year 2019 and 3,78,236 crime cases against women were registered during year 2018. The number of such crimes against women were reduced to 3,71,503 in the year 2020 on an average 77 rape cases reported daily, which included 1,11,549 cases were related to torture by husband and other members of the family, 85,392 cases of sexual harassment, 62,300 kidnapping cases, 28,046 rape cases, 3,741 cases of attempt to rape, 6,966 cases of dowry demand and 105 cases of acid attack on females. Similarly, the number of crime against children also reduced to 1,28,531 in 2020 as compared to 1,48,090 cases in 2019.

Out of total number of 28,016 rape cases registered in the year 2020 more than 28153 females were sexually molested included 25,498 adults, 2655 children and minors of age below 18. Information reveals, the number of sexually assaulted females was much more since large number of such type of cases are usually not reported to police Among rape victims included maximum number of 5210 victims from Rajasthan. Whereas, according to NCRB report the number of rape cases was registered as 32,033 cases in the year 2019, 33,356 cases in the year 2018 and 32,559 in the year 2017.

As regard cases of murders, on an average 80 murders cases were registered every day in the country with the total number of 29,143 persons were reported killed during year, which included 3779 persons killed in U.P and among victims 35.9% were between age 18 to 30 years, 38.5% between age 31 to 40 years and 18.4% between age 41 to 60 years killed during the year as compared to 28,915 persons reported killed in the year 2019. NCRB information reveals, fall in kidnapping cases was registered in year 2020 with 84,805 kidnapping cases were reported to police which included 56,591 children as compared to1,05,032 kidnapping cases registered in 2019.

MAHARASHTRA NEWSLETTER

Maharashtra Billion Dollar Contributor to India's GDP: Thackeray

DOMINICK RODRIGUES

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray recently reiterated the Government's efforts to invest heavily in the "Auric City" project in the State. AURIC -- an industrial city with tens of thousands of acres of well-equipped infrastructure – is an important initiative of the Central and State Governments with and the AURIC City area under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor featuring well-planned infrastructure facilities for various industries.

Thackeray, who was accompanied by Maharashtra **Industry Minister Subhash** Desai, reviewed the AURIC project and noted that even adverse conditions like Covid did not hamper industrial development as entrepreneurs are keen to invest in it due to its well-planned infrastructure for industry.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Industry department recently held -- in collaboration with Gem and Jewellery **Export Promotion Council** (GJEPC) and DGFT -- a two-day 'Vanijya Utsav' from September 21 at the World Trade Centre here with focus on promotion of exports from India. This event was held to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Indian Independence, by the Government of India, under which Department of Commerce is organizing 'Vanijya Saptah' from 20th to September 26, 2021 with a focus on economic growth and promotion of exports from India

The Utsav highlighted panel discussion on various sectors Food, Engineering, Textile, Leather, Chemicals and Phar-



ellery, Handicraft and Services, besides involving DGFT, Customs, Consulate Generals, Infrastructure bodies and Financial organizations. The event witnessed all relevant stakeholders gathering under a single roof to highlight the progress made in exports from Maharashtra, showcase export potential, hold panel discussions and focus on strategies to improve export scenario from the State.

The panel discussion on "Bilateral Trade Opportunities" drew keen industry audience attention including from diplomatic representation from Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Spain and Mauritius, who sought to highlight opportunities emerging in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several insights were shared by the panel members -- emphasizing value-added trade with complementarities like capital goods and formulation drugs which would fuel each others' export capacities and competencies, besides also Trade Infrastructure and Sustainable Development as potential collaboration areas.

leader in the economy, GSDP,

Describing Maharashtra as

tors in India, State Industries Minister Subhash Desai said Maharashtra is the largest economy in the country with a whopping US\$ 480 billion contribution of 15% of India's GDP. With 31.4% of FDI flows in the State and contribution of 25% to India's exports, Maharashtra is growing and the Government will continue upgrading the export ecosystem to nourish the Export sector, he said. Desai highlighted the ex-

port-oriented infrastructure projects being developed in the state, including a "Bulk Drug Park" in Raigad and the envisaged "Gems & Jewellery Park" in Navi Mumbai. He also announced the State Government's stimulus initiatives for the export sector, in which he assured of a reduction in power tariffs to benchmark rates and an amnesty scheme for export oriented MSMEs on net GST At current prices, Maha-

rashtra's gross state domestic and Pharmaceuticals, Motor product stood at Rs. 26.62 trillion (US\$ 366.67 billion) in 2020-21AE. GSDP increased at a CAGR 6.42% from 2015-16. The State capital – Mumbai

Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane highlights Building technology Centres

The Union MSME Minister Naravan Rane recently reiterated the need to build a strong nation through setting up of more technology centres. He was speaking while digitally inaugurating the Rohtak Technology Center in Haryana

Dr. Arvind Sharma, Member of Parliament, B.B. Swain, Secretary (MSME), Devendra Kumar Singh, Ms Preeta Verma, ČEO, KVIC and other senior dignitaries were present on the occasion when the MSME Minister inaugurated the Technology Center at Rohtak, Haryana digitally from the KVIC's Mumbai Office.

Highlighting the Centre's 20 acres setup that would skill over 8400 trainees annually, Rane observed that India needed more technology centres to benefit the country's 135 crore population as the technology developed by these MSME Centres would provide a "good impetus" to Aatmanirbhar Bharat during the present tough times

comprising the pandemic. These Centres' new technologies would enable building a nation of entrepreneurs, while making them financially stronger, enhancement in GDP and also boosting India's rise as a "Superpower," he said while lauding the efforts of concerned Maharashtra officials and PMEGP institutions.

commerce capital of India, besides also being the financial center of India and evolved into a global financial hub.

Maharashtra is the leading State for exports in India with total exports constituting 22.7% of India's exports. With total export value at US\$ 58.40 billion (Rs 4,31,699.84 Crore) in FY 2020-21, Maharashtra has set a benchmark for other states regarding exports and export supply chain in the current financial year.

Maharashtra's top export sectors include: Precious Stones and Jewellery, Drugs Vehicles & Cars, Engineering products, Iron & Steel, Textiles and Agro & Food products. While the Gems and Jewelry sector in India -- is known as the trade and is one of the largest in the Hong Kong, USA, Belgium, and Italy.

world by contributing to 29% of global demand, the State accounts for approximately 35.1% of the country's output of automobiles by value. The food processing industry (FPI) in Maharashtra has more than 13% share in Indian food processing. There has been a significant growth in exports year to year from Maharashtra and this would help in achieving the 100 bil-

lion export target for India.

Major Exports from Maharashtra: The total exports of Gems and Jewellery Exports in FY 2020-21: US\$ 18.64 billion (71.17% of the total exports of India) and the sector is expected to grow to US\$ 19.57 billion (approx. 5% growth). Currently the top markets for export are

India's Mamta Binani bags prestigious IWIRC **WOYR(A) Award**

"Tough times don't last, Tough people do," was the message driven home by the International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation (IWIRC), the premier international, networking and professional growth organization for women in the restructuring and insolvency industry which is highlighting 'exceptional' women in Asia who -even despite the present challenging times -- have sought to advanced their careers alongside promoting other women.

The IWIRC statement came even as it announced India's Mamta Binani as the 2021 winner of the 4th edition of the WOYR(A) Award -- which complements IWIRC International's pre-existing award program "Woman of the Year in Restructuring Award" that has been administered internationally since 2006.

UAE, Israel.

The total exports for Pharmaceuticals Exports in FY 2020-21: US\$ 3.6 billion (18.92% of the total exports of India), and the sector is expected to grow to US\$ 3.99 billion (10.72% CAGR). The Auto and Auto Components Exports in FY 2020-21 stood at US\$ 1.3 billion (25.54 % of the total exports of country) and is expected to grow to US\$ 1.33 billion (approx. 2% growth). Top countries for exports are USA, Germany



NRC process doesn't need another reboot

he next twist or turn in the longrunning saga of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) update for Assam is never far. The latest seeks to imbue a sense of finality to the exercise, though it has come from what is only a quasi-judicial body. A Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) in Karimganj district of southern Assam, while removing the ambiguity around a man's citizenship, has pronounced that there is no doubt that the NRC published on August 31, 2019, is the final one. The exercise left out over 1.9 million from a list of around 33 million applicants, whose citizenship would be determined at the FTs. The entire updating process was monitored by the Supreme Court and executed by the State's administrative machinery. Its publication annoyed political parties across the ideological divide, with some alleging it victimised document-less Bengali Hindus and indigenous Assamese people and others that it targeted the Bengali-origin Muslims. In the run-up to the publication of the final document, Assam and the Centre had petitioned the Supreme Court for reverification of a sample of names included in the draft NRC -20% in the border districts and 10% elsewhere – but this was dismissed after Prateek Hajela, the State NRC Coordinator, said re-verification of 27% names had been already done. In May this year, the State NRC authority filed a petition in Supreme Court seeking re-verification of the August 31, 2019 list, citing inclusion of ineligible names and exclusion of eligible ones, and other errors. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma had said the State government wants 20% re-verification in the districts bordering Bangladesh and 10% in others. The crux of the matter is that post-publication progress on the NRC has been excruciatingly slow, and not just due to the pandemic. Mounting another gargantuan exercise at a colossal cost may only add to troubles and discontents.

FIVE OBSERVATIONS

CASTE GAME

CONGRESS ON CHOOSING A NEW CM OF PUNJAB

Congress has tried to tick all the caste boxes. Choosing a Dalit CM had become an electoral compulsion for the party after the Shiromani Akali Dal, which is contesting the 2022 polls together with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

PROIECTING AAM AADMI

Channi is already busy projecting himself as the 'aam aadmi a la AAP, a radical departure from what was perceived to be the overly bureaucratic functioning of his predecessor's

POLL PROSPECTS

More importantly, Channi's job is to

consolidate the SC vote — to the detriment of the rival parties' poll prospects.

PARTY CAMPAIGN

The Opposition pounced on AICC general secretary Harish Rawat's statement that the party's election campaign would be spearheaded by Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu.

ELECTION STUNT

BSP president Mayawati dubbed Channi's elevation as an election stunt, claiming that the Congress was keen on a non-Dalit as the

LETTERBOX

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SYED MUNIR KHASRU EXPLORES HOW NEW DELHI CAN UPDATE ITS NDCS TO MEET THE SET TARGETS

A climate change narrative



n a keynote speech on September 8 in a seminar organised by a think tank, R.K. Singh, Union Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy stated, "Environment is something we are trustees of and have to leave behind a better environment for our children and great grand children." However, a recent report, "Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region" by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) reveals that India has warmed up 0.7° C during 1901-2018. The 2010-2019 decade was the hottest with a mean temperature of 0.36° C higher than average. Heatwaves continued to increase with no signs of diminishing greenhouse gas emissions despite lower activity since the novel coronavirus pandemic. Prolonged exposure to heat is becoming detrimental to public health, especially the poor unable to afford support for coping with the heat. Assessment by the MoES shows that India may experience a 4.4° C rise by the end of this century.

India has also suffered two of the 10 most expensive climate disasters in the last two years. Super-cyclone "Cyclone Amphan" that hit India in 2020, cost more than USD13 billion even as the country was just recovering from "June-October Monsoon Flooding" that cost USD10 billion and around 1,600 lives. It was India's heaviest monsoon rain in the last 25 years and the world's seventh costliest. In early 2021, India suffered two more cyclones: Cyclone Tauktae hitting the west coast and Cyclone Yaas from the east.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, India's Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) are rising due to damaging climate events. Uttarakhand residents began deserting their homes after the Kedarnath floods in 2013 due to heavy precipitation that increases every vear. Within 2050, rainfall is expected to rise by 6% and temperature by 1.6° C.

To make things worse, India lost about 235 square kilometres to coastal erosion due to climate change induced sea-level rise, land erosion and natural disasters such



as tropical cyclones between 1990-2016. About 3.6 million out of 170 million living in coastal areas were displaced between 2008-2018. Recent figures are more alarming with 3.9 million displaced in 2020 alone, mostly due to Cyclone Amphan.

India's Deccan plateau has seen eight out of 17 severe droughts since 1876 in the 21st century (2000-2003: 2015-2018). In Maharashtra and Karnataka (the heart of the Deccan Plateau), families deserted homes in 2019 due to an acute water crisis. Hatkarwadi, a village in Beed district of Maharashtra State, had as few as 10-15 families remaining out of the previous population count of 2,000 people.

India held the top 10 position for the second year in a row in 2020's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI). The country received credit under all of the CC-PI's performance fields except renewable

energy where India performed medium. India vowed to work with COP21 by signing the Paris Agreement to limit global warming and submitted the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with a goal of reducing emissions intensity of energy resources (non-fossil-oil based) to 40% of installed electric power capacity bv 2030.

India cofounded with France at COP21, in 2015, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) — a coalition of about 120 countries with solar rich resources— which aims at mobilising USD1 trillion in investments for the deployment of solar energy at affordable prices by 2030. Despite leading ISA, India performed the least in renewable energy according to the CCPI's performance of India. The question is, are these global alliances and world-leading policies being practised or are merely big promises with little implementation?

The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report asserts that the contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from various activities is the scientific basis for global warming and climate change.

Experts agree that India can achieve the 2° C target of COP15 Copenhagen in 2009. But it also observes that the country is not fully compliant with the Paris Agreement's long-term temperature goal of the NDCs and there are still risks of falling short of the 2° C goal. According to India's carbon emission trajectory, the country is en route to achieve barely half of the pledged carbon sink by 2030. To achieve the Paris Agreement's NDC target, India needs to produce 25 million-30 million hectares of forest cover by 2030 — a third of current Indian forestation and trees. Going by the facts, it seems India has overpromised on policies and goals as it becomes difficult to deliver on the same.

The Glasgow COP26 offers India a great opportunity to reflect on the years since the Paris Agreement and update NDCs to successfully meet the set targets. India is expected to be the most populated country by 2027, overtaking China, contributing significantly to the global climate through its consumption pattern. India is in a rather unique position to have a significant influence on global climate impact in the new decade.

Alok Sharma, President of the COP26 met Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav in August to persuade India to deliver a more ambitious NDCs for 2030 to which the Minister responded by stating, "India believes that climate actions must be nationally determined... UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement for developing countries should be at the core of decision-making...

Being one of the observer states of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) as well as an influential member of COP26, India has the ability to improve its global positioning by leading a favourable climate goal aspiration for the world to follow. The country has the opportunity to not only save itself from further climate disasters but also be a leader in the path to climate change prevention.

Syed Munir Khasru is Chairman of the international think tank, The Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance (IPAG), New Delhi, with a presence in Dhaka, Melbourne, Vienna and Dubai. Views are personal

PARASHRAM PATIL BELIEVES INDIA HAS POTENTIAL TO BE A GLOBAL LEADER IN FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

Changing the agri exports basket



he Indian government has been encouraging agricultural exports to meet an ambitious target of \$60bn by 2022. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries shows that the contribution of agricultural and processed food products in India's total exports is 11%. Primary processed agricultural commodities form the majority share. India's export earnings will increase by focusing more on value-added processed food products rather than primary processed agriculrai Hussai From 2015-16 to 2019-20, the value of agricultural and processed food increased significantly from \$17.8bn to \$20.65bn. The Indian agricultural economy is shifting from primary to secondary agriculture where the focus is more on developing various processed foods. The Indian food processing industry promises high economic growth and makes good profits.

India's agricultural export basket is changing from traditional commodities to non-traditional processed foods. Traditionally, Basmati rice is one of the top export commodities. However, now there is an unusual spike in the export of nonbasmati rice. In 2020-21, India exported 13.09 million tonnes of non-basmati rice (\$4.8bn), up from an average 6.9 million tonnes (\$2.7bn) in the previous five years.

Similarly, Indian buffalo meat is seeing a strong demand in international markets due to its lean character and near organic



nature. The export potential of buffalo meat is tremendous, especially in countries like Vietnam, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

In 2020-21, the export of poultry, sheep and goat meat, cashew kernels, groundnuts, guar gum, and cocoa products went down in terms of value and total quantity.

The export of processed food products has not been growing fast enough because India lacks comparative advantage in many items. This may imply that the domestic prices of processed food products are much higher compared to the world reference prices.

The main objective of the Agriculture Export Policy is to diversify and expand the export basket so that instead of primary

products, the export of higher value items, including perishables and processed food, be increased. The exporters of processed food confront difficulties and non-tariff measures imposed by other countries on Indian exports (Siraj Hussain, 2021). Some of these include mandatory pre-shipment examination by the Export Inspection Agency being lengthy and costly; compulsory spice board certification being needed even for ready-to-eat products which contain spices in small quantities; lack of strategic planning of exports by most State governments; lack of a predictable and consistent agricultural policy discouraging investments by the private sector;

prohibition of import of meat- and dairy based-products in most of the developed countries; withdrawal of the Generalised System of Preference by the U.S. for import of processed food from India; export shipments to the U.S. requiring an additional health certificate; and the absence of an equivalency agreement with developed countries for organic produce.

The way forward

The Centre's policy should be in the companies, ensuring low cost of production and global food quality standards. and creating a supportive environment to promote export of processed food. Developed countries have fixed higher standards for import of food items. Reputed Indian brands should be encouraged to export processed foods globally as they can comply with the global standard of codex. Indian companies should focus on cost competitiveness, global food qualitv standards, technology, and tap the global processed food export market. India has competitive advantages in various agricultural commodities which can be passed onto processed foods. It has the potential to become a global leader in the food processing sector.

Parashram Patil is an Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Fellow, New Delhi. Views are personal



BOOKS: REVIEW

Basing Nepal ties on old foundations insufficient

The old foundations for India's relationship with Nepal are no longer sufficient and there is need to provide an overarching economic vision for the ties both bilaterally and at the sub-regional and regional levels, says former Indian ambassador to Nepal Ranjit Rae.

The diplomat draws from his experience in bilateral relations with Nepal and personal recollections from his days as ambassador to give a behindthe-scenes view of important contemporary moments in the India-Nepal relationship in his

"Kathmandu Dilemma: Resetting India-Nepal Ties" examines India's perspective on developments in the context of the civilisational and economic underpinnings of the relation-

continue to prevent it from exploiting its full potential. Relations between asymmet-

ric neighbours are never easy; both sides need to demonstrate sensitivity to the aspirations and interests of the other, the author argues.

'India must respect Nepal's desire for greater political space and an independent foreign policy, just as we strive for greater strategic autonomy as part of our own foreign policy goals. India should not view every Nepalese agreement with China as adversely impacting Indian security, especially when we ourselves have substantial cooperation with China," he writes in the book published by Penguin Random House India.

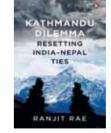
Nepal, on the other hand, he says, must ensure that nothing

ship, as well as the issues that **We have to lay** deeper foundations by providing an overarching economic vision for the relationship both bilaterally and at the sub-regional and regional levels

that it does affects India's security interests, particularly since the two countries share an open, friendly border.

According to Rae, any close, even intimate relationship such as the one between India and Nepal, is prone to misunderstandings and differences; there is a tendency for complacency to set into the relationship.

The relationship needs to be nurtured constantly through ever



"Kathmandu Dilemma: Resetting India Nepal Ties" By Ranjit Rae: Vintage Books; 224 pages; Rs499

greater engagement at all levels, he suggests.

"The old foundations for our relationship with Nepal, though important, are no longer sufficient. We have to lay deeper foundations by providing an overarching economic vision for the relationship both bilaterally and at the sub-regional and regional

And with SAARC almost becoming non-functional, he suggests the focus should be on subregional cooperation, particularly among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.

levels," he says

The first two decades of the new millennium have witnessed a dramatic socio-political transformation of Nepal. A violent Maoist insurgency ended

peacefully, a new constitution abolished the monarchy and established a secular federal democratic republic. Nevertheless, political stability

and a peace dividend have both remained elusive. Nepal is also buffeted by changing geopolitics, including the US-China contestation for influence and the uneasy relationship between India and As a close neighbour, India has

been deeply associated with the seminal changes in Nepal, and the bilateral relationship has seen many twists and turns. Rae also says that China is no

longer viewed as a mere counterbalance to India. "Nepal sees huge opportuni-

ties for economic benefit from its engagement with China. Like our other neighbours, it is attracted to the 'no strings' support. It enthusiastically participates in the BRI, despite being aware of the pitfalls of a debt trap and unmindful of Indian concerns. Indeed, for some, China is the only economic game in town," he writes.

ALSO READ | STRONG FEEDBACK WILL LEAD TO ROBUST E-COMMERCE RULES: PIYUSH GOYAL * P7 | GOVT CUTS PATENT FEES FOR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS BY 80 PER CENT * P7

NEWSBRIEF

Twitter to pay \$809m to settle shareholder lawsuit

SAN FRANCISCO: Twitter said it will pay \$809.5 million to settle a lawsuit alleging that the company misled investors about how much its user base was growing and how much users interacted with its platform. The company said the proposed settlement resolves all claims against it without Twitter admitting any wrongdoing. The original lawsuit filed in 2016 by Twitter investor Doris Shenwick claimed that Twitter executives "knowingly made inaccurate public statements regarding these metrics, and failed to disclose internal information about them, resulting in an inflated share price that fell when the truth about user engagement became known." **AGENCIES**

Telecom Dept initiates new reforms with simplifying KYC process

NEW DELHI: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) started the implementation of new telecom reforms by simplifying the KYC (Know Your Customer) process. The Union Cabinet had last week approved a slew of measures for its cashstrapped telecom sector including a four-year moratorium on airwaves payments due to the government and 100% FDI through automatic route in the sector.

The department said, "Customer consent has been made compulsory in case the Aadhaar is being used and demographic details are being obtained electronically from UIDAI.

For contactless, customer centric and secured KYC process, the DoT said that it has implemented three fresh wavs

1) Aadhaar-based e-KYC: The process has been re-introduced for new mobile phone connections. Service providers will be charged Re1 per customer authentication by the UIDAI for this paperless and digital process.

2) Self-KYC: Issuance of mobile connection is done online process wherein customers can apply for connection sitting at home or office and can get their SIM card delivered at door step using documents electronically verified by UIDAI or DigiLocker.

3) OTP based conversion of connection: The implementation of OTP based conversion process enables a subscriber to convert his mobile connection from prepaid to postpaid and vice-versa virtually via

OTP-based authentication. Aadhaar is a 12-digit identification number issued by UIDAI.

Currently, a subscriber needs to visit a Point of Sale (PoS) unit with original identity documents and address proof for KYC

Amazon spends Rs 8,546 cr in legal expenses during 2018-20 to maintain presence in India

merce giant Amazon, which is said to be investigating alleged bribes paid by its legal representatives in India, spent a staggering Rs 8,546 crore or USD 1.2 billion in legal expenses for maintaining a presence in the country during 2018-20, sources said.

Sources aware of the firm's public account filings said entities of Amazon - including Amazon Retail India Pvt Ltd, Amazon Seller Services Pvt Ltd, Amazon Transportation Services Pvt Ltd, Amazon Wholesale (India) Pvt Ltd, and Amazon Internet Services Pvt Ltd (AWS) – paid Rs 3,420 crore in India during 2018-19 and Rs 5,126 crore during 2019-20 towards legal fees.

Amazon is locked in a legal tussle over the takeover of Future Group and is facing a probe by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

While the company declined to comment on the legal fee issue, traders body CAIT claimed that Amazon spending 20 per cent of its revenue on lawyers was questionable.

"The whopping amount spent under legal professional Its senior corporate counsel



fees clearly shows how Amazon has reportedly been sent on leave in this matter. and its subsidiaries are misus-The company had stated ing their financial muscles to bribe and manipulate Indian that it takes allegations of imgovernment officials," CAIT proper actions seriously and National Secretary General investigates them fully to take

appropriate action. While it Praveen Khandelwal wrote to Commerce Minister Pivdid not confirm or deny the ush Goyal. Without offering allegations, Amazon haď said it has "zero tolerance for corany proof for his claim, he demanded a CBI inquiry. A report by Morning Context stated that Amazon has

Which company over the globe while spending more initiated an investigation than 20 per cent of its accrued against some of its legal reprerevenue on paying to lawyers sentatives for allegedly bribing is able to sustain in business and that too even making Indian government officials.

global e-tailer Amazon in India which is a living example of this mind-boggling acrimony," CAIT alleged on Tuesday.

Khandelwal in a statement claimed that Amazon has spent about "Rs 8,500 crore on legal and professional fees against a turnover of about Rs 45,000 crore in two years (2018-20)".

Amazon also faces a probe by India's fair trade watchdog CCI for alleged anti-competitive practices, predatory pricing and preferential treatment of sellers.

The US-based firm has also locked in a legal tussle with Future Group. Amazon is contesting a Rs 24,713-crore deal between Future Group and Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd and has dragged Future Group to the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC). It has argued that Future violated the contract by entering into the deal with rival Reliance.

Amazon and Future Group had also filed litigations in Indian courts, including the Supreme Court, on the issue. Amazon is an investor in Future Coupons, that in turn is

a shareholder in Future Retail **AGENCIES**

A dream come true: Freshworks CEO after company gets listed on Nasdaq

NEW DELHI: 'Today is a dream come true for me, said Freshworks Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Girish Mathrubootham after India's first software-as-a-service (SaaS) tech startup got listed on US stock exchange Nasdaq. Mr Mathrubootham acknowledged the contribution of employees, partners, and investors, and took to Twitter expressing his gratitude for believing in the dream.

"Today is a dream come true for me - from humble beginnings in #Trichy to ringing the bell at @Nasdaq for the FreshWorks IPO. Thank you to our employees, customers, partners, and investors for believing in this dream," wrote Mr Mathrubootham on Twitter.

After raising \$1 billion in the initial public offering (IPO) - priced above the market range, shares of Freshworks Inc rose 32 per cent after getting listed on the US stock exchange with its market capitalization hitting \$13 billion. Freshworks IPO was led by Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase & Co. and

shares are now trading on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol 'FRSH'.

The newly-listed software services company sold 28.5 million for \$36 each after marketing them for \$32 to \$34, - a target that the company had elevated from \$28 to \$32.

"Welcome to the Nasdaq family, FreshworksInc! Designed with the end-user in mind, #Freshworks builds and delivers software-as-aservice that makes it easy for businesses to delight their customers and employees,

After the COVID-19 pandemic prompted businesses to go digital, Freshworks boosted revenue about 40 per cent last year, and sales continued to grow in the first half of 2021, while its net loss reduced.

Freshworks was founded in India and moved to the Silicon Valley to be closer to customers. The company still retains a substantial workfoce in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The company is primarily involved in delivering software services to the end-user-mostly building tech for sales, marketers, IT, customer service, HR, among others. AGENCIES

Zee Entertainment,

Sony Pictures

Network India

announce merger

NEW DELHI: India's larg-

est publicly-traded television

network Zee Entertainment

Enterprises will merge with

Sony Pictures Network India

(SPNI), capping days of high

drama during which the firm's

shareholders sought removal of

Sony, which will invest USD

1.575 billion, will hold 52.93 per

cent stake in the merged entity

and Zee the remaining 47.07,

Zee Entertainment Enterprises

In recent days, Zee has seen

its top investor seek a man-

agement reshuffle, including the exit of chief executive Pu-

nit Goenka. A majority of the

merged company's board would be nominated by Sony, while

Goenka would lead it, according

The move was seen as an at-

tempt to end the sway of found-

er Subhash Chandra's family

over the company founded in

1992. While the deal may take

some pressure off Zee, it will

help expand Sony's media business in India. In an exchange filing, Zee said it has entered

into a non-binding term sheet

with SPNI to bring together

their linear networks, digital

assets, production operations

(ZEEL) said in a statement.

key officials.

Bharti Airtel's rights issue to open on October 5; price fixed at ₹ 535 per share

NEW DELHI: Bharti Airtel's Rs 21,000 crore rights issue will open on October 5, the company said in a filing to the stock exchanges. The telecom major's right issue will close on October 21, 2021. A total of up to 392,287,662 shares will be offered as part of the rights issue, the company's special committee of directors for rights issue decided at its meeting held on Wednesday, September 22, 2021. The rights shares will be

NEW DELHI: Maruti Suzuki

India will keep developing and

ing a purchase decision, a senior

maker—which has launched

a campaign 'Kam Se Kaam

Banega' to celebrate three de-

cades of leadership in offering

the country's most fuel-efficient

cars—noted that efficiency goals

promising on the performance

shown that fuel efficiency has

been high in buying criteria even

when fuel prices were down. Now

with so much increase in fuel

prices, it has become an even

more important factor," MSI

Senior Executive Director (Sales

and Marketing) Shashank Sriv-

astava told PTI. He noted that

the fuel prices were not expected

to come down any time soon

and thus customers would look

for a product with better fuel

"Our internal studies have

will be achieved without com-

The country's largest car-

company official said.

of the vehicles

tomers while mak-



and a premium of Rs 530 per share. Eligible investors will receive one share for evissued at a price of Rs 535 ery 14 shares held as on the per fully paid-up share, in- record date. The record date cluding face value of Rs 5 for determining shareholders'

Development of fuel efficient cars to remain

launching cars with great fuel was also important for the com- HEARTECT platform etc. "It

efficiency as it remains a critical panies to achieve the stringent has been possible due to these

norms, which come into play in the country from next year.

"The second phase of CAFE

norms are due in 2022 and the

third phase in 2027. So, obvi-

ously every OEM would have

to improve the fuel efficiency

of their cars. We are currently

quite comfortable in this regard,"

Corporate Average Fuel

Economy (CAFE) norms are

embedded in BS-VI emission

regulations and are part of the

government's efforts to reduce

In Phase 1 (2017-2022), CAFE

norms require average corporate

CO₂ emissions to be less than

130 gm/km. In Phase II (2022

onwards), emissions need to be

further reduced to less than 113

able to improve fuel efficiency

figures in some of its models by

up to 30 per cent in the last de-

Śrivastava said MSI has been

vehicular carbon footprint.

rivastava stated.

Srivastava pointed out that innovations like a smart hybrid,

developing fuel-efficient cars S-CNG, K-Series engines and

critical in sales strategy: Maruti Suzuki

eligibility to participate in the rights issue has been fixed as September 28.

Bharti Airtel is the second largest telco in the Indian telecom market, with a mobile user base of 35.2 crore. It added 38.1 lakh wireless subscribers in June, as per subscriber data recently released by telecom regulator, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

A rights issue or rights offer refers to the rights being offered by a company to its existing share holders to buy additional

categories when it comes to fuel

efficiency with products like Alto,

Wagon R, Baleno Smart Hybrid,

Dzire, Ciaz, Ertiga, Vitara Brezza,

Eeco. These are the most fuel-

efficient cars in their respective

The company has already sold

70 lakh cars with the K Series

engines, known for fuel efficiency

and performance, he added. "Go-

ing ahead also, our focus would

remain on achieving fuel effi-

ciency without compromising on

the performance of the vehicles.

In fact, the performance of our

vehicles has become better over

the last few years," Srivastava

Maruti Suzuki has always been

categories," Srivastava said.

Google suing competition commission of India over probe report leak

NEW DELHI: Alphabet Inc's Google said it was suing the Competition Commission of India (CCI) following the leak of a confidential CCI report into an antitrust investigation of the US tech giant.

The Times of India newspaper, and then Reuters, reported that a CCI investigation had found Google abused the dominant position of its Android operating system in India, using its "huge financial muscle" to illegally hurt competitors. Google said last week it

looked forward to working with the CCI to "demonstrate how Android has led to more competition and innovation, not less." In statement the company

said it had filed a legal chal-Delhi High Court "to pre-



vent any further unlawful disclosures of confidential

Google said it was "protesting against the breach of confidence which impairs Google's ability to defend itself and harms Google and its partners."

"We cooperated fully and

and expect the same level of confidentiality from the institutions we engage with," its statement added.

The CCI did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the legal action. A Google spokesman declined to comment on whether it had sought cease and desist

Vodafone idea eyes funding

NEW DELHI: Vodafone Idea is confident it can reach a fundraising deal with potential investors, bolstered by a government package that provides much-needed relief to the debtridden mobile carrier, its chief

Vodafone Idea, with a net debt of Rs 1.91 lakh crore (\$25.86 billion) and other government dues of Rs 1.68 lakh crore, had expressed repeated concerns about its ability to

Investors were waiting to a champion in offering fuel-efficient cars and with every new model and upgrade, the company brings innovation and technology to address the customer's need for better mileage and performance, he added. AGENCIES



Ravinder Takkar, the CEO of

change our business plans will have to be updated, which means our funding requirements will also have to be updated.'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government last week approved a relief package for the cash-strapped telecoms sector, including a four-year moratorium on airwaves fees due to the state. Telecoms sector ran into trouble in late 2016 with the entry of tycoon billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio, which sparked a price war that forced some rivals out of the market and

late 2019 also added to the sector's pain, saddling telecoms companies with dues of roughly \$13 billion.

maintained confidentiality orders on further media covto the terms of the deal. lenge against the CCI at the throughout the investiga- erage of the contents of the Invesco Developing Markets tive process, and we hope CCI report. Fund and OFI Global China Fund LLC, which together hold about 17.9 per cent stake in Zee, general meeting of shareholders last week to oust Goenka along with two board members.

on govt package boost

executive officer said.

stay afloat without federal help.

see whether New Delhi would ensure that at least three players exist in the telecoms sector and also wanted the funding to be used for business rather than paying government dues,



Vodafone Idea, said in a video interview. "With this package all of those fears to some extent have been put aside," said Takkar, without specifying the names of investors the company was in talks with or a timeline for the fundraising. With this tremendous

and programme libraries. The combined entity will own over 70 TV channels, 2 video streaming services (ZEE5 and Sony LIV) and two film studios (Zee Studios and Sony Pictures turned profits into losses. Films India) making it the larg-A Supreme Court ruling in est entertainment network in India. Its nearest rival would be now Star and Disney in the **AGENCIES** Indian market. The merger of ZEEL and SPNI would bring together two

MG Motor India unveils Astor, with personal AI assistant and Autonomous (Level 2) technology have placed design at the centre customers."

THE PHILOSOPHY OF **EMOTIONAL DYNAMISM** THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE WITH THE CAR

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

MG Motor India has unveiled MG Astor, India's first SUV with personal AI assistant and first-insegment Autonomous (Level 2) technology. Astor is based on the MG's successful global platform, ZS. The SUV was unveiled simultaneously at MG dealerships of Krishna Motor Garage at Elante

Mall here and Sec 82, Mohali. Based on MG's design philosophy of Emotional Dynamism, Astor's contemporary style will connect with consumers. It has a prominent Bold Celestial Grille that makes a solid on-road impression. The SUV poses an elegant and ready-for-action stancewith a classic leopard jump shoulder line. Astor's nine crystal diamond elements in the LED headlamps make for a distinct hawk-eye expression with precise The interiors are elegantly

crafted with soft-touch and premium material. It will be coming in two engine options - the Brit Dynamic 220TURBO petrol engine with a 6-speed AT delivering a whopping 220 Nm of torque and 140ps of power. And the other - VTi Tech petrol engine with a manual transmission & an 8-speed CVT, delivering 144 Nm of torque and 110ps of power.



MG Astor will be on display at MG showrooms from 19th September and bookings will start soon thereafter Talking about the appeal of Astor, Carl Gotham, an exceptional level of detailing

The much-awaited mid-size the MG's Global Design Centre in London, UK, said, "The concept of Emotional Dynamism brings a premium feel to Astor. The midsize SUV is a visual delight with the Advanced Design Director at and remarkable features. We of creating the car to make it look as good as its technology. It takes

forward the MG's brand's legacy with cutting-edge technology and design excellence. India can look forward to immersing into a seamless driving experience with personal AI assistance inside MG Astor." Speaking at the unveiling of

Astor, Rajeev Chaba, President and MD, MG Motor India, said, "We have introduced several industry-firsts with our SUVs to the Indian automotive market. This time we have Autonomous (Level 2), MG Astor, with a personal AI assistant. With its elegant exteriors, luxurious interiors, and futuristic technology, we believe that Astor is a desirable package that will strike a chord with the

MG Astor's personal AI assistant depicts human-like emotions and voice. The Paralympic athlete Deepa Malik has lent her voice to the personal AI assistant, thereby humanising the experience. The AI technology in Astor is developed around MG's vision of Car-as-a-Platform (CAAP) of possibilities, which will enable the users to personalise the services as per their requirements.

MG has partnered with BOSCH for ADAS (Advanced driver-assistance systems) in Astor. AI technology, six radars and five cameras equip the SUV to manage 14 advanced Autonomous Level 2 features. The car ensures a safer driving experience with 27 standard safety features like ESP, TCS and

HDC. Among its host of comfort, convenience and safety features include 6 airbags, 6-way poweradjustable driver seats, electric parking brake, heated ORVM, rain-sensing wiper, PM 2.5 filter, panoramic sky roof, rear AC vent and front and rear armrest,10.1inch HD infotainment system for the cinematic experience and full digital cluster with 7-inch embedded LCD screen Astor has 80+ internet fea-

tures residing on MG i-SMART technology. On top of it, building on CAAP (Car as a platform), MG Astor hosts subscriptions and services, including maps and navigation with MapMyIndia, Jio connectivity, the first-of-its-kind Blockchain-protected vehicle digital passport by KoineArth and more. MG car owners will also get access to music on the JioSaavn app, along with the industry-first feature of reserving a parking slot through a head unit (powered by Park +, select cities to begin with) and access to unlimited information with

leading Indian media network businesses, benefitting consumers throughout India across content genres, from film to sports. The combined company is expected to benefit all stakeholders given strong synergies between ZEEL and SPNI," said SPNI in a statement. While in a separate statement ZEEL said,

its board in a meeting held on Tuesday unanimously provided an in-principle approval for the merger between SPNI and the company. "The board concluded that the merger will be in the best interest of all the shareholders and stakeholders. The merger is in line with ZEEL's strategy of achieving higher growth and profitability as a leading media and entertainment company across South Asia," it said. According to ZEEL, "With

this corporate development, the merged entity will result into an accelerated growth and a significant opportunity to create tremendous value for all its stakeholders.' **AGENCIES**

ALSO READ | SAIF ALI KHAN LAUDS BHOOT POLICE CAST * P8 | JUSTIN TRUDEAU PARTY WINS BUT FALLS SHORT OF MAJORITY

Need to mainstream green finance: RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao

NEW DELHI: RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao emphasized on the need to mainstream green finance and think of ways to incorporate the environmental impact into commercial lending decisions. He added that it is simultaneously important to balance the needs of credit expansion, economic growth and social development. Green finance can apparently be defined as financing of investments that deliver environmental benefits in the broader context of environmentally sustainable development.

Addressing the CAFRAL Virtual Conference on Green and Sustainable Finance, Rao said, «Climate risks can impact the financial sector through two broad channels; first - physical risks which mean economic costs and financial losses resulting from the increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events and long-term climate change and second - transition risks which arise as we try to adjust towards a low-carbon economy.»



Commenting on sustainable finance and role of RBI in a dynamic world, he said, financial system are not static, «The Reserve Bank of India>s mission (Utkarsh 2022) state- spond to the changes around

He stated that the fight ment encompasses universal a robust, dynamic and responsive financial intermediation infrastructure and recognizes the importance of active and receptive financial intermediation. As the economy and we need to appropriately reus. We also need to proactively consider new and emerging risks and opportunities while delivering monetary and financial stability in a time consistent manner.»

He added that the Reserve Bank had already advised banks in 2007 to put in place an appropriate action plan towards making a meaningful ress."

development. In 2012, RBI included loans sanctioned by banks directly to individuals for setting up off-grid solar and other off-grid renewable en-ergy solutions for households and in 2015, the PSL (Priority Sector Lending) criteria was expanded to bank loans up to a limit of Rs 15 crore to borrowers for purposes like solar based power generators, biomass based power generators, wind mills, among others. In 2020, the above limit for bank loans was doubled to Rs 30 crore.»

contribution to sustainable

The Reserve Bank Deputy Governor also mentioned that the global understanding of systemic impact of climate change on the economy and the financial system as also its resultant impact on financial stability is evolving and, accordingly, the responses of central banks and supervisors around the world have also been developing.

Rao further said that «the private and the public sector need to build on early prog-

Greater funding in infrastructure sector to boost growth, says RBI Governor

reforms in the labour sector and the need to have enhanced investment in infrastructure will help in achieving sustainable growth in the post pandemic era, Reserve Bank of India Shaktikanta Das said.

The central bank chief, who was addressing a convention organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA), listed sectors like healthcare education as well as digital and physical infrastructure which require greater investment.

This, he said, will help in but also facilitate employment generation.

"Our endeavour should be to ensure livable and sustainable growth in the post-pandemic future. Restoring the durability of private consumption, which has remained hisaggregate demand will be very crucial going forward," he observed.

Speaking on life after the pandemic, Das said, "there are very few parallels of a and companies are resetation pattern is changing and companies are resetation pattern is changing and companies are resetation pattern is changing and companies." AGENCIES



shock like Covid-19 in history which left policymakers globally as well as locally. tory which left policymakers with no template to navigate through the crisis. Both health systems and human ensuring not only growth endeavour to deal with the crisis were stretched to the limit. The pandemic is likely to leave indelible mark on the way economies and so-

cieties function." Das added that the pandemic has induced several structural changes like shift to work from home, due torically the mainstay of to which technology has gained potential to boost productivity by saving on travel time.

tion pattern is changing

These changes will have wider ramifications for the economy," he noted.

Highlighting the need to bolster warehousing and supply chain infrastructure, which will be critical for enhancing productivity in the agriculture as well as horticulture sector, the RBI Governor said, "this will create employment opportunities in semi-urban and rural areas and promote inclusive growth. The demand for warehousing infrastructure has also gone up in tier-II "As a result, consump- and tier-III cities in the

Former CAG Vinod Rai sacked as IDFC director

NEW DELHI: Irate shareholders of private financial company IDFC showed the door to former CAG Vinod Rai, who had sought to guide the destiny of Indian cricket and had landed the UPA government in a soup after his audit reports on the 2G and coal auctions. The die for Rai's removal was cast after he failed to satisfy shareholders of IDFC Ltd in his capacity as non-executive, non-independent director. Shareholders had then questioned the delay in unlocking value of the company. Rai in defence sought to explain that it is a huge task to unwind the complex corporate structure of the company but shareholders were unwilling to wait for a longer time as there had been considerable wealth destruction. The dissatisfaction with his innings led to Rai's removal as the non-executive director. As many as 62.3% votes went against the proposal for Vinod Rai's re-appointment as non-

Uday Kotak's term as IL&FS chief extended

NEW DELHI: The government extended the term of Uday Kotak as non-executive chairman of debt-ridden IL&FS group by another six months. The government through a gazette notification extended the term of Kotak, who is also the MD and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank, till April 2, 2022. The notification was issued by the Department of Financial Services in the Ministry of Finance dated September 21, 2021. Last year, the government had extended his term by 12 months till October 2, 2021. The extended six-month term will commence from October 3, 2021.

Under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, a bank cannot be managed by any person who is a director of any other company. He can be given a temporary exception for three months or nine months with the concurrence of the RBI. $\,$ AGENCIES

India records 22% rise in export of agricultural, processed food products in April-August NEW DELHI: India has ports of fresh fruits and

increase of 21.8% in exprocessed food products current fiscal year 2021-22 comparison to the corresponding period of 2020-21 (FY21). "The overall export of Agricultural and port of Agricultural Export Development Authority (APEDA) products increased from \$6,485 million in April-August 2020 to \$7,902 million in April-August 2021," the Ministry of Commerce & Industry stated in a release on Tuesday. The rise in exports has been achieved despite the Covid-19 restrictions, it added.

Rice exports, which recorded a positive growth in April-August FY21. of 13.7%, increased from \$3 350 million in April. August 2020 to \$3820 (WTO)s) trade map, India million in April-August 2021, the ministry noted. in the world ranking with

registered a significant vegetables registered a 6.1% growth in terms of port of agricultural and dollar, while shipment of processed food products in the first five months of like cereals preparations and miscellaneous pro-(April-August FY22) in cessed items reported a growth of 41.9%

Processed Food Products of \$1,013 million which rose to \$1,075 million in April-August FY22. The ministry statement

also highlighted that India reported a significant 142.1% jump in export of other cereals while the export of meat, dairy & poultry products witnessed an increase 31.1% in the first five months of the FY22).

The cashew export witnessed a growth of 28.5%

According to World is ranked at ninth position As per the Centre's the total agri-exports of \$37 Quick Estimates, the ex-billion in 2019. AGENCIES

HDFC announces home loan rates at 6.7% amid festive season

NEW DELHI: Leading mortgage lender Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) announced a special limited period offer for the festive season with the latest home loan interest rates starting at 6.70 per cent. As part of the festive season offer, customers can avail the HDFC home loans at 6.70 per cent from September 20, 2021, according to a regula-tory exchange by the company to the stock exchanges. The festive season offer

on home loans will be applicable to all new loan applications irrespective of the loan amount or the employment category, and this special rate is linked to the borrower's credit score. It is a close ended scheme and will be valid till October 31, 2021, added the premier housing finance company in its statement, September 21. Customers can visit the official website -https://www.hdfc.com/, to

current interest rate. "Housing is much more

the home loan at the



more or less remained the and an intra day low of Rs same in major pockets across the country while income levels have gone up. Record low interest rates, subsidies under PMAY and the tax ben-Director, HDFC Limited.

were last trading 2,750.30 apiece on the BSE.

2,730.05, in the trading session so far.

Recently, State Bank of India - the country's largest lender also lowered its home efits have also helped," said loan interest rate to 6.70 per Renu Sud Karnad, Managing cent, irrespective of the loan amount in a special festive On September 21, shares season offer for customers. Kotak Mahindra Bank also 0.25 per cent higher at Rs slashed its home loan interest rate to an all-time low of 6.5 affordable today than it ever HDFC opened on the BSE per cent in a limited period was. In the last couple of at Rs 2,75.35, registering an offer which will continue till years, property prices have intra day high of Rs 2,765.55 November 8, 2021. AGENCIES

Push to healthcare, infra

must for growth: RBI Guv

NEW DELHI: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das underlined the need for a big push to infrastructure investment, education and digital economy to achieve sustainable growth and generate jobs in smaller cities. "As we recover (from the pandemic) we must deal with the legacies of the crisis and create conditions for strong, inclusive and sustainable growth. Limiting the damage that the crisis inflicted was just the first step; our endeavour should be to ensure durable and sustainable growth in the post-pandemic future," Das said.

The Governor made these comments at the 48th AIMA National Management

As we recover (from the pandemic), we must deal with the legacies of the crisis and create conditions for sustainable growth. — Shaktikanta Das,

said, should entail building and productivity in the agrion macro fundamentals vi medium-term investments, he said.



healthcare, education, innovation, physical and digital infrastructure will be required. We should also continue with further reforms in labour and product markets to encourage competition and dynamism, and to benefit from the pandemic induced opportunities," he said. In addition, the warehouse and supply-chain infrastructure will be critical Sustainable growth, Das to bolstering value addition **AGENCIES**

Retail inflation for agricultural, rural workers fell slightly in August points, respectively.

NEW DELHI: Retail inflation witnessed a marginal climb down in August 2021 for agricultural and rural labourers to 3.90 per cent and 3.97 per cent respectively, according to data released by the Ministry of Labour.

The consumer price index (CPI) numbers for agricultural and rural labourers in July 2021 had stood at 3.92 per cent and 4.09 per cent respectively.

Food inflation at the same time was at 2.13 per cent and 2.32 per cent in August 2021 for agricultural and rural labourers respectively. In July 2021, the food inflation numbers for agricultural and rural and 2.74 per cent respective- for agricultural and rural la-



labourers were 2.66 per cent ly. Overall, the CPI numbers bourers for August 2021, went

Food inflation at the same time was at 2.13 per cent and 2.32 per cent in August 2021 for agricultural and rural labourers respectively. In July 2021, the food inflation numbers for agricultural and rural labourers were 2.66 per cent and 2.74 per

up by 5 points and 4 points to stand at 1,066 and 1,074

cent respectively"

The CPI for agricultural labourers and rural labourers were at 1,061 points and 1,070 points, respectively in July 2021. The main contributors for the increase in the general index of agricultural labourers and rural labourers were food groups, with 2.43 points and

2.28 points respectively. This was basically due to rise in prices of milk, groundnut oil, milk, tea leaf and other items. Andhra Pradesh witnessed maximum increase in CPI numbers for agricultural and rural labourers while maximum decline was seen by Kerala in the same numbers for August 2021. AGENCIES

Yes Bank partners with visa to issue credit cards



NEW DELHI: YES Bank entered into a partnership with Visa to issue credit cards to its customers on the payment platform, said the leading private sector bank in a recent statement. With the partnership, Yes Bank will begin the issuance of nine credit card variants - both consumer and commercial, on Visa's payment

It consists of nine credit card variants on the Visa platform that service all segments, including business cards, consumer cards, and corporate cards across YES Premia, YES First, and YES Prosperity, according to the statement by the full service commercial bank. The transition has been achieved within less than 60 days, for the convenience of customers

across segments. The Visa co-branded cards offer loyalty programs, under which the reward points never expire and can also be transferred or shared to the credit

card holders of YES Bank.

for daily as well as discretionary spends, we are now extending an already strong relationship with the Bank - across debit, digital and acceptance solutions - to a wide range of credit offerings," said Sujai Raina, Head - Business Development, India, Visa.

are turning to credit offerings

"Keeping in mind the varied consumers, businesses and corporate clients that the bank caters to, Visa aims to help expand access and enable inclusion to digital payments across these segment," added Raina.

YES Bank is also in the process of completing a technology integration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and plans to issue Rupay branded credit cards at a later stage.

On September 22, shares of YES bank were last trading 2.46 per cent higher at Rs 13.21 on the BSE. YES Bank opened on the BSE at Rs 13.09, swinging to an intra day high of Rs 13.36 and an intra day low of Rs 13.09, in the trading AGENCIES

session so far.

Trojan posing as I-T refund found attacking Android users

NEW DELHI: A banking Trojan malware has been detected in the Indian cyberspace that is lurking to attack bank customers using Android phones, the country's federal cyber security agency, CERT-In,

said in an advisory. Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said, the malware has already targeted customers of over 27 public and private sector banks.

The phishing (a social engineering computer virus attack to steal personal data) malware is masquerading as an "income tax refund" and it can "effectively jeopardise the privacy of

sensitive customer data and result in large-scale attacks and financial frauds,' the CERT-In said, adding: "It has been observed that Indian banking customers are being targeted by a new type of mobile banking campaign using Drinik Android malware."

Cyber security agency issues advisory Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said the malware has already targeted customers from more than 27 public and private sector banks It said the phishing malware is masquerading as an "income tax refund" and it can "effectively jeopardise



the privacy of sensitive customer data and result in large-scale attacks and

financial frauds" Describing the attack process, the agency said,

the victim receives an SMS containing a link to a phishing website (similar to the website of the Income Tax Department) where they are asked to enter personal information and download and install the malicious APK file in order to complete the required verification.

"If the user does not enter any information on the website, the same screen with the form is displayed in the Android application and the user is asked to fill in to proceed,' it said, adding the data to be filled includes full name, PAN, Aadhaar number, address, date of birth, mobile

number, email address and financial details such as account number, IFS code, CIF number, debit card number, expiry date, CVV and PIN.

Once these details are entered by the user, it said, the application states that there is a refund amount that could be transferred to the user's bank account and when the user enters the amount and clicks "transfer", the application shows an error and demonstrates a fake update screen. While the screen for installing update is shown, Trojan in the backend sends the user's details to the attacker's

machine

AGENCIES

"At a time when consumers

NEWSBRIEF

India scores 46th rank in **Global Innovation Index NEW DELHI:** India has climbed two spots and has

been ranked 46th by the World Intellectual Property Organization in the Global Innovation Index 2021 rankings, an official statement said. According to the statement, the consistent improvement in the GII ranking is owing to the immense knowledge capital, the vibrant startup ecosystem and the amazing work done by the public and the private research organisations. **AGENCIES**

JBM auto surges 17% on receiving orders for CNG, electric buses

NEW DELHI: Shares of bus maker - JBM Auto - rose as much as 17 per cent to hit fresh 52-week high of Rs 537 after the company informed exchanges that it has received orders for supply of electric and compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. JBM Auto received order for supply of 500 CNG and electric buses from various entities. JBM Auto received one order for supply of BS VI CNG buses for Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System Limited (DIMTS), JBM Auto said in an exchange filing. Other orders included supply of electric buses to Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), electric buses for Jhansi - Smart City and electric buses for multiple corporate clients. JBM Auto shares have so far this year advanced nearly 100 per cent outperforming the Nifty which has gained over 26 per cent during the same period of time. The Gurugram-based, JBM Auto sells buses under the brand name Citylife. As of 12:33 pm, JBM Auto shares traded 11.47 per cent higher at Rs 512.20, outperforming the Sensex which was up 1.7 per cent. AGENCIES

Adani takes on Ambani, to pump in \$20 bn in renewable energy

infrastructure conglomerate's green vision, billionaire Gautam Adani said his group will invest \$20 billion over the next 10 years in renewable energy generation and component manufacturing and will produce the world's cheapest green electron.

The port-to-energy conglomerate plans to triple its renewable power generation capacity over the next four years, foray into green hydrogen production, power all data centres with renewable energy, turn its ports into net carbon zero by 2025, and plans to spend over 75% of capital expenditure until 2025 in green technologies, he said.

Speaking at JP Morgan India Investor Summit, Adani Group chairman said the \$20 billion energy generation, component manufacturing, transmission and distribution.

Adani Group's "integrated value chain, our scale, and ex- Mukesh Ambani announced an perience puts us on the path investment of Rs 75,000 crore wealthiest man, Adani who has

investment will be in renewable to be the producer of the least expensive green electron any-

where in the world," he said. The announcement came weeks after India's richest man

(\$10 billion) in clean power and hydrogen fuel over three years.

Many have seen the June 24 announcement as the petrochemical czar's direct competition with the country's second-

had a strong presence in the renewable space for many years.

MANY YEARS

THREE YEARS.

HIGHLIGHTS

THE ANNOUNCEMENT CAME WEEKS AFTER INDIA'S

RICHEST MAN MUKESH AMBANI ANNOUNCED AN

INVESTMENT OF RS 75,000 CRORE (\$10 BILLION)

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AS THE PETROCHEMICAL CZAR'S DIRECT

This month, Ambani said hydrogen can be made from renewable energy at \$1 per kilogram in a decade's time. Hydrogen has no carbon emissions and can be used as fuel in industry and automobiles.

Adani outlined his vision with an investment size of \$20 billion world is building a renewable power portfolio on the scale the Adani group is doing. The group currently has 4,920 MW of operational renewable energy generation capacity and another 5,124 MW under execution. It has a confirmed pipeline of

and the cheapest green electron.

He said no company in the

9,750 MW and another 4,500 MW where it is likely to win **AGENCIES** contracts

ADB slashes India's GDP growth forecast

NEW DELHI: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered India's growth projections for the current financial year by a percentage point to 10%, mainly due to disruptions in economic activity caused by the second wave of the Covid pandemic. In April, ADB had projected a growth rate of 11%

Development Outlook (ADO) released, the multilateral lending agency has also trimmed the growth forecast for Asia as a region from 7.3% to 7.1% for 2021, though it retained the growth projections for China at 8.1%.

dia in fiscal year 2021 (ending March 2022) is revised down, as May's spike in Covid dented the recovery. The outbreak, however, dissipated faster than anticipated, resulting in several states easing lockdown measures and returning to more normal travel patterns,' said the ADO Update (ADOU) **AGENCIES**

Agriculture real strength supporting India's fuel energy security: Gadkari

NEW DELHI: Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari referred agriculture as India>s real strength and stated that the government intends to diversify it into the energy and power sector. While addressing the Bio-Energy Summit 2021, Gadkari said, «India»s fuel energy security can be well supported by agriculture as it provides opportunities for concepts such as waste to wealth and waste to energy and ultimately leading to the benefit of all.»

He mentioned that the target will be achieved through a five-phased strategy: adopting biofuels and renewables, implementing energy efficiency norms, improving refinery processes, increasing domestic production and achieving demand substitution. Gadkari said the five-phased

strategy uses a role for biofuels in the Indian energy basket.

India is committed to meet the Paris Climate Agreement, where efforts are centered to reduce carbon emissions by 33 to 35% by 2030, Gadkari stated. He also said tha t necessary steps are being taken to decarbonize the transport



sector by reducing the harmful Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. India aims for an eminently achievable clean energy-based economy, through an annual road-map for production, supply of ethanol till 2025-26, Gadkari further said.

In another set of development, Gadkari said that the government has been at the forefront of creating a business-friendly environment.

He said the Indias highways sector has been at the forefront of performance and innovation and the Centre has successfully rolled out several projects to speed up the construction of roads in the country by renewing the interest of private developers. AGENCIES

India, UAE to commence trade talks, aim to conclude negotiations by December

United Arab Emirates (UAE) have formally launched negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said. The first round of CEPA talks will be held from September 23. «Both sides will aim to conclude negotiations by December 2021 and sign a formal agreement in March 2022,» Ministry of Commerce & Industry stated in a notification.

This was communicated at a joint briefing by Goyal and his UAE counterpart Thani

and the UAE will hold talks aimed at improving bilateral economic relations, including expanding the existing trade and investment relationship,» the

In a joint statement, both the ministers emphasized that CEPA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in both nations. «A new strategic economic agreement is expected to increase bilateral trade in goods to \$100 signed agreement and increase trade in services to \$15 billion,» the statement read.

Currently, the UAE is India>s third-largest trading partner with bilateral trade in 2019-2020 valued at \$59 billion. The Arab nation is also India>s secondlargest export destination after the US, with exports valued at \$29 billion in 2019-2020. India was the UAE>s second-largest trading partner in 2019, with bilateral non-oil trade valued at \$41 billion. And, the UAE is the eighth-largest investor billion within five years of the in India, having invested \$11

billion between April 2000 and March 2021, while investment by Indian companies in the UAE is estimated to be over \$85 billion. In 2019-2020, India imported \$10.9 billion of crude oil from

In the joint statement, both the ministers underlined the need to coordinate and promote cooperation under the framework of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in January 2017 between the two nations for cooperation on trade remedy

in 2021-22 for India. In its update of the Asian

The growth forecast for In-

FDI inflows jump 62% to \$27.37 billion in April-July 2021-22 **NEW DELHI:** The government four months of FY22 to \$20.42

said that investment facilitation and ease of doing business taken on account of FDI policy reforms have resulted in ncreased inflows during the first four month of this financial year (April to July FY 2021-22). "India has attracted total FDI inflow of \$27.37 billion during first four months of FY22 which is 62% higher as compared to corresponding period of FY 2020-21 at \$16.92 billion,' the Ministry of Commerce &

The current Foreign Direct Investment status puts India as a preferred investment destination amongst global investors, it added.

Industry stated in a notification.

FDI equity inflow grew at a faster pace during April to

billion compared to the year ago period (\$9.61 billion), the ministry stated. Total FDI comprises equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital. It also highlighted that the

automobile industry emerged as the top sector during the first four months of FY22 with 23% share of the total FDI equity inflow followed by computer software & hardware (18%) and services sector (10%) respectively. Under the auto sector, majority of FDI Equity inflow (87%) was reported in Karnataka during the first four months of FY22.

Karnataka is the top recipient during the FY22 (up to July, 2021) with 45% share of the total FDI equity inflows fol-July 2021-22. The equity inflow lowed by Maharashtra (23%) increased by 112% in the first and Delhi (12%). AGENCIES

Finance Ministry suggests restarting decades-old apprenticeship scheme in Railways



NEW DELHI: The Finance Ministry has recommended the railways restart a 94-year-old apprenticeship scheme, which was discontinued in 2015, to "catch the talent young" and tailor them to meet the requirements of the rail transport sector.

prentice (SCRA) programme was conceived in 1927 under which candidates were selected by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to train in the undergraduate program in mechanical engineering at the Indian Railways Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Jamalpur.

The scheme was discontinued in 2015. In its report on the rationalisation of railways, the Finance Ministry has recommended the Railway Ministry reintroduce the programme, which involves hands-on training in the specialised field of technology used in the railways

The proposal is part of a report from the Finance Ministry which has made a slew of recommendations including the merger of rail PSUs and also of IT organisations like RailTel, CRIS and IRCTC into one entity. The report has also recommended the streamlining of the Railway Board and a review of noncore activities like running schools, hospitals catering -- most of which have been recommended by the Bibek

Debroy Committee earlier. The report prepared by the Finance Ministry's principal economic advisor has recommended the apprenticeship scheme be reintroduced in the railways at the National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), Varodara.

Explaining the rationale behind its recommendation, the finance ministry has said the pres-

" The report has proposed that NRTI should certify apprenticeship scheme on similar The Special Class Railway Aplines of the National Defence Academy and Indian Institute

> ent practice of taking graduates from regular academic institutions and spending resources to retrain them in rail-specific technology leads to a «drain of industry resources» as well as delays the induction of such specialised manpower.

of Space Science and

Technology"

Stating that the railways require specialised training and skills beyond what is part of a regular classroom graduation program offered by normal academic institutes, the report suggested it is imperative to reintroduce the apprenticeship scheme which involves handson training in the specialised field of technology used in railways.

«The report has proposed that NRTI should certify apprenticeship scheme on similar lines of the National Defence Academy and Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology.

«Under the scheme, shortlisted (UPSC to conduct separate examination) school graduates (Class 12 students) will be offered structured tech and diploma level programs where the course curriculum is suitably tailored to meet the requirements of the rail transport sector,» the report **AGENCIES**

Strong feedback will lead to robust e-commerce rules: Piyush Goyal **NEW DELHI:** Consumer Af-

fairs Minister Piyush Goyal said that "strong feedback" will help in preparing a robust e-commerce policy even as he termed reports of differences within the government on the proposed policy as efforts to

Stating that it is elementary to get feedback on the draft rules, the minister said, "this speaks of the robust way of the working of the government which is willing to engage with stakeholders and take different points of view on board and come up with a successful policy"

"We welcome all feedback because with strong feedback, we will be able to come up with a more robust and good policy that is helpful to all stakeholders," he said

Goyal was replying to a query on media reports on difference of opinion among various ministries and government thinktank Niti Aayog on the draft e-commerce rules. Earlier in the day, a govern-

ment official had said that there is "significant difference of opinion within the government" on the draft rules and flagged con-



cerns that continuous change of the policy causes a great deal of uncertainty.

Currently, the consumer affairs ministry is examining the public comments on ban on fraudulent flash sales and mis-selling as well as appointment of chief compliance officer or grievance redressal officer, which are among the key amendments proposed to the Consumer Protection (ecommerce) Rules, 2020.

"I am very amused with all that has been going in the newspapers... I am amazed by some of the reports that I read, trying to sensationalise any feedback

that you get," Goyal told reporters after launching the National Single Window System portal

A draft policy is framed to get public feedback, which is a process of stakeholders' consultation, he said, adding that every section has to survive and grow.

The consumer affairs ministry, which has received wide and varied comments on the draft rules, is examining the comments seriously as maximum consumer complaints received at the government's National Consumer Helpline were related to the e-commerce **AGENCIES**

Govt cuts patent fees for academic institutions by 80 per cent

NEW DELHI: In a significant move, the government has reduced the fees for filing patents by 80 per cent for educational institutions. The new fee structure has come into effect from September 21, 2021. The decision is aimed at encouraging a conducive environment for innovation in academic circles and institutions across the country, official sources said.

The Patents (Amendment) Rules 2021 have been notified for this purpose, a statement issued by the Commerce Ministry said.

While applying for patents, innovators have to do so in the name of the institution they represent and these institutions have to pay the patent fees for a large number of ap-



plicants, which burdens them financially.

Therefore in order to incentivise institutions into applying for patents in greater numbers, the decision to reduce the patent fees significantly has been

taken, sources said further. The government is keen to promote greater collabora-

tion between industry and

be done by facilitating commercialisation of research conducted by institutions. The various new technologies which are developed by

academia, which it says, can

innovators in educational institutions across the country need to be patented and since there are often multiple applications for patents from several educational bodies, the fees which is entailed for this purpose runs into a huge amount.

High patenting fees were acting as a restriction for academia in developing newer technologies, and with the government keen on promoting innovators and startups through its various schemes like Startup India, the decision to reduce patent fees was taken, sources said. AGENCIES

TN eyes \$100 billion exports by 2030, signs MoUs worth Rs 2,120.54 cr

government signed Memorandum of Understanding for 24 projects worth Rs 2,120.54 crore, while Chief Minister M K Stalin said the government's goal is to increase the states exports to \$100 billion by

The state government>s Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Trade and Investment Promotion Bureau (M-TIPB) entered into an MoU with Flipkart/Walmart for promotion of e-commerce among MSMEs in Tamil Nadu through a supplier development programme.

This initiative envisages expanding the capabilities of MSMEs through intensive training and support and equip them to scale up their businesses and become part of domestic and global supply

M-TIPB and The Indo Ger-

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu man Chamber of Commerce entered into an MoU for collaboration between MSMEs in the state and businesses in Germany. The MoU would facilitate linkages, interaction, technology collaboration programmes and export opportunities for MSMEs in the state.

Presided by Chief Minister Stalin, the inaugural of the Tamil Nadu Exports Conclave, organized by the departments of the state and central governments to showcase the strengths of Tamil Nadu in exports, was held here today.

The conclave is part of nationwide events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav). As part of the event, Stalin

released Tamil Nadu Exports Promotion Policy (TNEPP) and MSME Exporters Handbook and inaugurated an Ex-



the participation of 21 export units, export promotion centres and government depart-

On behalf of the Industries Department, 14 MoUs were signed with the 100 per cent signed on behalf of the MSME

port Exhibition, which saw Export Oriented Units, with a cumulative investment of Rs 1,880.54 crore, creating employment opportunities for 39,150 persons, an official release here said.

Another 10 MoUs were

Department, with a cumulative strengthen export related cominvestment of Rs 240 crore, providing employment opportunities for 2,545 persons.

In his address, Stalin said, «We have set up a target of \$1 trillion economy for Tamil Nadu by 2030. To achieve this, the states exports should be increased to \$100 billion from

the present \$26 billion.» To help attain the goal, public and private sector companies should work in cohesion, he said. The state shall adopt a two-pronged approach of export promotion and export diversification to achieve this objective, a key aspect of the

TŇEPP. The government has also planned developing two «Export Enclaves» at Manallore and Tuticorin with world class infrastructure amenities for

exporters, the CM said. The government has identified 10 export hubs and would

mon infrastructure projects in these places by reimbursing 25 per cent of the project cost, subject to a ceiling of Rs 10 crore per hub. The 10 identified locations are Chennai, Coimbatore, Hosur, Kancheepuram, Tirupur, Karur, Madurai, Ambur, Tuticorin and Pollachi, the CM said. Schemes have also been formulated to incentivize

production of value added products (Special Package Incentives) by exporters. Such initiatives are part of the TNEPP. Every district produces several unique products and to market them globally, Export Centres are being set up in every district. Similar to the «Made in India» tagline, «Made in Tamil Nadu» should echo and «this is not only our desire, it is our goal too and our journey will be towards that **AGENCIES** goal,» he said.



Saif Ali Khan lauds **Bhoot Police** cast

ctor Saif Ali Khan is overwhelmed with all the love coming his way for his performance in Bhoot Police. He says success is measured in strange and different ways, and that in a pandemic it can

be called a feather in his cap. Saif said, "There are certain love with immediately because you see the potential they hold. You find it important that it gets made in a certain way because you have a lot of hope Police is certainly one of them."

He added "I would also like to thank my co-actors Arjun, Yami and Jacqueline —Arjun especially, because we were in it together from the beginning and it was a lot of fun jamming with him on our scenes together." Saif said that horror and comedy are genres that are best viewed collectively in a group. "This scripts that you read and fall in is a family movie and you can watch it with your young children without them getting scared and that's always lovely. We are very happy with the enormous traction with that kind of script. Bhoot the movie has received," he

Raj Kundra back home after 2 months in jail

Kundra, who was released from jail in a pornography case on September 21, returned to his home after two months. He reunited with his wife Shilpa Shetty and arrived at his Juhu bungalow in a black Mercedes car.

As husband walked out of the Mumbai jail, actor Shilpa Shetty posted a motivational message on bouncing back

Taking to Instagram, Shetty posted a picture of herself along with a quote from Chinese philosopher Confucius.

The quote read: "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall".

In the caption, the 46-year-old actor wrote, "There are always going to be moments that push you to the ground. In times like these, I truly believe that if you fall seven times, make yourself strong enough to be able to stand back up eight times.

It takes a "lot of courage, grit, will-power, and strength" to get back up during the "difficult moments". Shetty added. AGENCIES



Accept it, move on: Virat Kohli's pep talk after RCB's loss to KKR

Royal Challengers meaning that we don't Bangalore's loss came as a disappointment for their fans, but Captain Virat Kohli wants and move forward.

accepting it imme- tournament," Kohli diately and being at said. Knight Riders. "Not ed.

look forward to the next one but, it should give us more hunger to get on to the field the team to accept it again. And play the cricket that we have "We are better off already played in this

peace with it," he told The franchise a dressing room full shared a video of a pep talk that both Kol his team's rather for- and head coach Mike gettable performance Hesson gave the team against the Kolkata to keep them motivat-

Justin Trudeau party wins but falls short of majority

TORONTO: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party secured victory in parliamentary elections but failed to get the majority he wanted in a vote that focused on the coronavirus pandemic but that many Canadians saw as unnecessary.

Trudeau entered election leading a stable minority government that wasn't under threat of being toppled but he was hoping Canadians would reward him with a majority for navigating the pandemic better than many other leaders. Still, Trudeau struggled to justify why he called the election early given the virus, and the opposition was relentless in accusing him of holding the vote two years before the deadline for his own personal ambition. The Libera Party was leading or elected in 158 seats — one more than they won 2019, and 12 short of the 170 needed for a majority in the 338-seat Parliament **AGENCIES**



$Chandigarh\,Air\,Force\,\,organises\,Air$ Show, enthralled many at Sukhna Lake

Air Force's freshly introduced Rafale fighter aircraft wowed hundreds of spectators who flocked to the Sukhna Lake.

The Chinook heavy-lift helicopter airlifted heavy underslung loads as well as inducted special forces for offensive operations showing its versatility in war and peace time.

Due to bad weather, however, the display of Surya Kiran, the aerobatics demonstration team of the Indian Air Force (IAF), was not carried out.

The air show was organised by the Chandigarh Air Force Station in association with the UT administration to mark Swarnim Vijay Diwas of the 1971 War. The event also coincided with the celebration of the diamond jubilee year of the air force station, which was established in 1961.

Punjab governor Banwari Lal Purohit, Haryana governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Himachal Pradesh governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, and chief justice of Punjab and Haryana high court Ravi Shankar Jha attended the event.

Streaking through the blue skies with blazing contrails just a few hundred feet above the ground, the tight formation of brightly painted red and white Hawk trainer jets of the Indian Air Force is an exhilarating sight as they execute a series of loops, barrel rolls and other breathtak-





ing aerial manoeuvres.
The team, considered among the top three nineaircraft aerobatic formations in the world, has left audiences across the country as well as in several countries, spellbound with its performance. Nine is



the higha tough regimen of careful

est number of aircraft in an aerobatic team anywhere. But behind the glamour and glitz of close formation

selection, extensive training, diligence and spectacular teamwork. In addition is the meticulous technical evaluaflying – the ultimate test of tion of its all manoeuvers and a fighter pilot's abilities of flying procedures that have to concentration, coordination be ratified and approved by the and unflinching nerves—lies IAF's Tactics and Air Combat

Development Establishment before they can be put into practice. To be a member of the

SKAT, volunteers must be fighter pilots, have eight years of service and a minimum of 1,000 hours of flying and be qualified flying instructors. Volunteers are invited to fly with the team, where their performance and personality traits are evaluated. Over the next six months or so, selected pilots then fly 70-75 sorties practising various manoeuvres before they get into the formation flying team.

Pilots have a tenure of about three years with the team. Generally, two new pilots join the team every six months. Starting off at high altitude with a single aircraft sortie, flying with the team leader or the deputy team leader, the fresh inductee moves on to two-aircraft and then threeaircraft formation flying. After mastering the skill of flying with two aircraft on either side, the fresher then goes in for four-aircraft and sixaircraft sorties before finally graduating to nine-aircraft sorties. All types of rolls, loops, dives and formations are flown at various training stages.

Although the organisers had asked visitors to maintain social distancing, protocols went for a toss amid crowding at the **AGENCIES**

