CORPORATES & INDUSTRY



NEARLY 25% INCREASE IN RICE EXPORT BRING RELIEF TO HARYANA FARMERS,



SAINA NEHWAL DECIDES TO **SKIP SELECTION TRIALS FOR COMMONWEALTH GAMES, ASIAN GAMES**

CNG price hiked by Rs 2.5 per kg, piped cooking gas by Rs 4.25

New Delhi: Prices of CNG in the national capital on Thursday were hiked by Rs 2.50 per kg and that of piped cooking gas by Rs 4.25 per unit to record levels on the back of surge in raw material cost.

CNG in the national capital territory of Delhi now costs Rs 71.61 per kg, up from Rs 69.11 per kg, according to the information posted on the website of Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) -- the firm which retails CNG and piped cooking gas in the national capital and adjoining cities.

This is the third price hike this month and the 11th since

In all, the CNG price has risen by Rs 15.6 per kg in less than six weeks. This includes a Rs 7.50 per kg hike in this

In the last one year, prices have increased by Rs 28.21 per kg or 60 per cent, according to data compiled by PTI.

Alongside, the rates of gas piped to household kitchens, called piped natural gas (PNG), were hiked by Rs 4.25 per cubic meters to cost Rs

PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

BOOST INDUSTRY

BHAGWAN MANN ASSURES OF

CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE TO

City gas distributors have been periodically raising prices since October last year when domestic as well as international gas prices started to climb as economies world over recovered from the pandemic-induced slowdown.

45.86 per scm.

Prices rose by Rs 8.74 per

kg in the last three months of 2021, and from January there was a steady increase of about 50 paise a kg almost

every week.

The rates have gone up after the government more than doubled the price of natural gas to USD 6.1 per million British thermal unit from

Natural gas when com- Rs 4.50 to Rs 45.50 per scm.

pressed becomes CNG for use as fuel in automobiles. The same gas is piped to household

kitchens and industries for

cooking and other purposes. On Wednesday, Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL) raised Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) price by Rs 5 per kg to Rs 72 per kg in Mumbai. It also raised PNG price by

Prices vary from city to city depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT.

The increase in CNG prices follows a Rs 10 per litre hike in petrol and diesel prices in 16 days and a Rs 50 per cylinder raise in the cooking gas LPG rates.

A record 137-day hiatus in petrol and diesel price revision ended on March 22. On the same day, the price of a 14.2kg LPG cylinder was increased to Rs 949.50 in the national capital. In some places, the LPG price has touched Rs 1,000 per cylinder.

Petrol and diesel prices have been on a freeze for the last eight days. The last price revision took place on April 6.

According to IGL, CNG will now cost Rs 74.61 per kg in Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad and Rs 79.94 per kg in Gurugram, the cities adjoining Delhi.

PNG in Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad will now cost Rs 45.96 per scm and Rs 44.06 in Gurugram. Egypt approves India as wheat supplier: Piyush Goyal

and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said Egypt, which is one of the largest importers of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, has approved India as a wheat supplier. There is a sharp decline in

availability of wheat in the global markets due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both the nations are major producers and exporters of wheat.

Egypt imported wheat worth about USD 1.8 billion from Russia and USD 610.8 million from Ukraine in 2020.

The African nation is looking to import 1 million tonne of wheat from India and would need 2,40,000 tonne in April.

Indian farmers are feeding the world. Egypt approves India as a wheat supplier. Modi Govt. steps in as the world looks for reliable alternate sources for steady food supply. Our farmers have ensured our granaries overflow and we are ready to serve the world, Goyal said in a tweet.

India>s wheat exports increased to USD 1.74 billion in April-January 2021-22 as against USD 340.17 million

in the same period last year. In 2019-20, wheat exports were worth USD 61.84 million, which rose to USD 549.67 million in 2020-21.

India>s wheat exports are mainly to neighbouring countries with Bangladesh having the largest share of more than 54 per cent in both volume and value terms in 2020-21. It has entered new wheat markets such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar and Indonesia.

The top ten countries importing Indian wheat in 2020-21 were Bangladesh, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Afghanistan.

Qatar, Indonesia, Oman and Malaysia.

India accounts for less than 1 % in the worlds wheat export. However, its share has increased from 0.14 % in 2016 to 0.54 % in 2020. India is the second largest producer of wheat with a share of around 14.14 per cent in the world>s total production in 2020.

India produces around 107.59 million tonne of wheat annually while a major chunk of it goes towards domestic consumption. Major wheat growing states in India are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and

AGENCIES Guiarat.

India's March retail inflation at 17-month high of near 7 per cent



Higher cost of food items, as well as expensive fuel and India's retail inflation to a 17-month high in March 2022. As per the data furnished by the National Statistical Office

on Tuesday, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 6.95 % last month from 6.07 % in February 2022.

Similarly, on a YoY basis, last month's retail inflation rose at a faster rate than the 5.52 per cent increase in prices recorded for March 2021.

The trend assumes significance as retail inflation rate remained well above the target range of the Reserve Bank of India, which has a CPI target range of 2 to 6 %.

As per the NSO data, the rate of rise in the Consumer Food Price Index, which measures the changes in retail prices of food products, increased by 7.68 per cent last month from 5.85 % in February 2022 and 4.87 % in March 2021.

In terms of CPI inflation rate, pulses and products' prices jumped by 2.57 % in March 2022 YoY. Besides, meat and fish prices rose by 9.63 %, eggs were dearer by 2.44 % and oils & fats prices rose 18.79 %

Similarly, the overall price of food and beverages category was up 7.47 %. Besides, vegetable prices were up by 11.64 % Furthermore, as per the official data, the inflation rate for fuel and light was higher by 7.52 %.

In addition, sub-group of clothing and footwear showed a price acceleration of 9.40 %. "The CPI inflation shot up well beyond our expectations, touching a 17-month high of 6.95 per cent in March 2022, led predominantly by a sharper than anticipated surge in some components of food and beverages such as meat and fish, "said Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA.

Hindu Sena puts up saffron flags outside JNU

NEW DELHI: Hindu Sena a right wing organisation on Friday morning put up saffron flags outside the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus in the national capital forcing the police to initiate legal action and remove the said flags from there.

It has come to notice that few flags and banners have been put on the road and adjoining areas near JNU. In view of recent incidents, these were promptly removed and suitable legal action is being taken, "Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Manoj C said.

Hindu Sena national vice-president, Surjit Yadav said the saffron has been insulted all along by the anti-saffron people at Jawaharlal Nehru University. "The Hindu Sena warns them. We respect you, respect each and every religion and every thought process. But the way the saffron is being insulted at JNU, the Hindu Sena will not tolerate it and can take stringent steps against it, "Yadav said. Apart from the saffron flags, tied all across the main road outside JNU, some banners were also installed that read - 'Bhagwa JNU'.

Expressing similar sentiments, Hindu Sena president Vishnu Gupta, confirmed to IANS about putting up the saffron flags and banners by his organisation's vice president."It is very wrong that saffron is being constantly insulted at JNU. Saffron is in India's culture. None should oppose it, **AGENCIES** Gupta said.

Cong remembers Dr.BR Ambedkar, says Babasaheb gave India its strongest pillar of strength

NEW DELHI: The Congress Ambedkar remains a champion on Thursday paid tributes to B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary, with former party chief Rahul Gandhi saying he gave India its strongest pillar

of strength the Constitution. A key architect of India's Constitution, Ambedkar is regarded as an icon, especially by Dalits, for his relentless work for social reforms and empowerment of the disadvantaged sections of society.

birth anniversary, my tributes to Babasaheb Dr BR Ambedkar, who gave India its strongest pillar of strength - our sacred Constitution," Gandhi said in a tweet.

On its official Twitter handle, the Congress said Babasaheb

of equality, human rights and social justice. "His life and actions have

been a source of inspiration for crores all over the world. On his birth anniversary, we celebrate the legacy of the man who gave India her Constitution," the party said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra paid rich tributes to Ambedkar, saying that it was due to his efforts that the country go such a Constitution, in whose preamble there was the mantra for the strength of the country.

"Babasaheb gave the blueprint of nation building based on the ideas of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, self-respect and unity and integrity of the



country these are our basic in Hindi.

Various forces are attacking

these values ?? which have been acquired from history, Priyanka Gandhi said, adding that they are "weakening the Constitution". "In the honour of Babasaheb, we all have to stand firm and defend the Constitution and the values ??enshrined in it," she said.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress general secretary in-charge organisation, K C Venugopal, party's chief jewala, along with several other party leaders paid rich tributes to Ambedkar on his birth anniversary. Dr. BR Ambedkar was born in 1891 and was India's first law minister. He was given Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, in 1990.

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana visits Sri Harmandir Sahib



NEW DELHI: Chief Justice N V Ramana visited the Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar on Wednesday on the occasion of Vaisakhi.

CJI Ramana was offered 'siropa' at the Golden Temple. He greeted the people on the occasion of Baisakhi and wished the people of Punjab peace and prosperity. "My good wishes for Baisakhi. I am very happy today, my lifetime dream came true as my family members and I reached the Golden Temple. I thank the managing committee. Ramana said. The CJI also visited the Border Security Force museum and the Attari-Wagah Border where he attended the Beating Retreat ceremony.

On the 103rd anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Ramana paid tributes to martyrs. The CJI is on a visit to Punjab with his family. He was received by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann dur-

ing his visit to the state. Govt exempts all customs chief minister Amarinder Singh. «I am taking all decisions,» Mann told reporters in Ja-

meeting. When asked that he was not present in the meeting held by Kejriwal with state officials in Delhi, Mann said. «I had sent them. For training, the same officers had gone to Gujarat and for training they had gone to Tamil Nadu. If we have to send them to Israel for Punjab>s benefit, I will send

them there too.» «In coming days, I will send my officers to Delhi, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu,» he said.

«If I find something good in West Bengal, then I will send my officers there. If I find something good in Gujarat, I will send them there too,» added Mann.

duty on Cotton imports till 30th Sep 2022 landhar while defending the Union Government has de-

cided to exempt all customs duty on import of cotton to lower the price of cotton in the public interest. This exemption would benefit the textile chain-yarn, fabric, garments and made ups and provide relief to textile industry and consumers.

Industry has been demanding for removal of 5% Basic Customs Duty (BCD) and 5% Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on raw cotton. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) notified the exemption from Customs duty and Agriculture Infrastructure development Cess for import of cotton. **AGENCIES**

No body can stop AAP having dreams to win 85 seats in 2024 Haryana VS polls Chander Mohan ers in the state former Dy. CM

SATISH HANDA

Ambala

While addressing media persons at Ambala on Sunday, former Deputy Chief Minister Haryana Chander Mohan son of former Haryana Chief Minister Late Ch. Bhajan Lal reminded the time his father was ruling in the Haryana when every hand in the state was having enough work to do, every resident was having own roof over head and every stomach was having enough both ends meal in the state. He assured people in the state to make available similar facilities for rvrty resi-

Amazon is taking a step to

offset its rising costs, an-

nouncing it will add a 5%

fuel and inflation surcharge

to fees it charges third-party

sellers who use the e-com-

merce giant's fulfilment

the added fees, which take

one announced in November

ately respond to a request for

services.

apparel items.

dent in the state once again after 2024 Vidhan Sabha polls when Congress will be in power again in Haryana after wiping out ruling BJP-JJP government

from the state. On the claims by Dr Sushil Gupta a Rajya Sabha member of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to win 85 seats in coming Vidhan Sabha polls in

Harvana, Chander Mohan said we cannot stop any one having daytime dreams. On a question over in-fight

between senior Congress lead-

move. But in a notice sent

to sellers Wednesday, the

company said its costs had

gone up since the beginning

of the COVID-19 pandemic

due to increases in hourly

said differences arrive in every family and solved, whereas all political leaders in Congress are one and contest coming polls together. On the question of AAP claim over Chandigarh as their capital Chander Mohan said, Chandigarh belongs to Haryana in past as well as at present and will remain with Haryana in future too rest assured. He said, new government in Punjab should first solve long pending SYL canal water issue and release water of Haryana share for which Supreme Court of India has already given deci-

Amazon adds 5 % 'Fuel & Inflation surcharge' to seller fees further details on the recent

wages, the hiring of workers The Seattle-based comand construction of more pany said on its website that warehouses. It said it had absorbed effect April 28, are subject costs whenever possible, to change and will apply and only increased fees to to both apparel and nonaddress permanent costs and to be competitive with The latest fee hike follows

other providers. Amazon competitors FedEx and UPS and went into effect in Januboth have fuel surcharges. ary. Amazon didn't immedi-In 2022, we expected a

return to normalcy as CO-

VID-19 restrictions around the world eased, but fuel and inflation have presented further challenges, the company said in the notice. Federal data released Tues-

day showed inflation jumped 8.5% in March, its fastest pace in more than 40 years. Gasoline prices have rocketed 48% in the past 12 months. Though the company is blaming inflation and rising fuel costs for the surcharge, Stacy Mitchell, co-director for the antimonopoly group Institute for Local Self-Reliance, criticized Wednesday's announcement, saying Amazon was taking advantage of the moment.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann defends state officials' meeting with Kejriwal



CHANDIGARH: Facing criticism over a meeting of sion in favour of Haryana state. Punjab officials with AAP national convener Arvind Keiriwal, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday said it he who is calling the shots in the state and rejected the accusations that his government is being run through «remote control» from

Delhi.

Mann said it was he who sent officials for the meeting with Delhi CM Kejriwal and will continue to send them to other states to learn anything that can be implemented in

Newly elected AAP government in Punjab had come under fire from opposition parties, who had described the meeting as an interference in the state affairs and the breach of federalism.

The Punjab CM was called a «rubber stamp» by former

Mann assures of congenial atmosphere to boost industry

sizing of the need to create industry friendly atmosphere in the state, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday directed the Industry department to simplify procedure for inter-departmental clear-ances in order to further strengthen single window system of providing No Objection Certificates (NoCs) to the industry besides framing policies to attract employment generating industry.

Chairing a review meeting of the Industries and Commerce department, Mann said that the Aam Aadmi Party government's efforts to create corruption free and people friendly environment in the state would give further fillip to the industrial growth in the state.

"The industry will soon start witnessing a promising future in the state but we want to focus on attracting employment generating industry to create enormous employment opportunities for our youth", said Mann while directing the industry department to come up with a policy attracting such



Reviewing the single window system of providing NoCs to new industry, Chief Minister made some important observations to further improve the system and asked the department to bring innovative changes in it the Chief Minister regarding to ensure efficient, transparent

the investors. "Success speaks for itself, let the industrialist praise the state for its policies and initiatives", said the Chief

Meanwhile, Tejveer Singh, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce apprised present growth rate of indusand hassle free services for try in the state, incentives

provided to this sector and the major challenges being

Prominent amongst others, A Venu Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary to CM, Rajat Agarwal, CEO, Punjab Bureau of Investment Promotion, Sibin C, Director, Industries and Commerce were also present in the meeting. **AGENCIES**

PSPCL special efforts to prevent fire incidents involving wheat crops due to fire

PATIALA: Punjab State Power Corporation Limited has issued instructions to all chief engineers and field officers of distribution zones to ensure and take appropriate action to prevent incidents of fire during wheat crop harvesting season in Punjab.A spokesman of PSPCL said that in order to avoid fire incidents involving wheat crops due to electrical sparks. Punjab State Power Corporation Limited has made special efforts in this direction.

The lose wires of HT / LT lines assing through the fields should be tightened, where the distance between electric poles are more, it should be set right by placing another intermediate pole. Instructions have been issued to ensure setting of proper gap of

SATISH HANDA



crossings. Apart from this, loose jumpers of all transformers/poles should be repaired. Besides this, farmers are also appealed that in view of enhanced possibility of fire due to high temperature during 15 days of crop harvesting season, power supply to the AP loose lines between two lines at feeders will be provided dur-

Murder mystery of 5 years old Jash solved within 48 hours

ing night as per requirement instead of day timings. PSPCL has requested farmers of the state to cooperate and take care of the power infrastructure while harvesting with combines so as to avoid fouling with transformers, poles and stays etc. Punjab State Power corpo-

ration limited has appealed to all farmers and general public that in case any electric line is sparking, the staff of PSPCL, J.E/S.D.O. may be informed immediately on the phone. Wherever the electrical wires are loose or low, consumers can register this information on PSPCL 24 hours control room telephones nos. 9646106835 and 9646106836 for electricity related complaints. AGENCIES

shed of a near by house in the area

hardly after 20 minutes. According

to FSL team arrived at the spot for

investigation the cause of death of in-

nocent child due to strangling. Police

also recovered blood oozing from

victim's neck.\Ganga Ram Poonia SP

constituted an STI led by Himadri

Kaushik ASP along with two CIA

teams shall arrive in the State tomorrow and will visit fifteen districts to get a first hand assessment of the extent of shrivelled grain arriving in the Mandis. This data will then help the Government of India in tak-

GOI accedes to request

of Punjab Government

CHANDIGARH: On the request of the Punjab government to revisit the specifications of

shrivelled grains in the wheat

being purchased accross the

state, the Department of Food

and Public Distribution, Government of India today decided

to constituted five teams to as-

sess the extent of the problem

While sharing these details

a spokesperson of the Punjab

Government stated that these

in the state.

specifications, he said. It may be noted that due to extreme heat conditions the wheat grain has become shrivelled in many places and the grain coming in certain Mandis contains shrivelled grain beyond

ing a final decision on grant of

appropriate relaxation in the

the permissible limit of 6%. Official spokesperson further added that during the visits of these teams, the ongoing purchase in certain Mandis may be temporarily disrupted and he appealed to the farmers and the functionaries of the procurement Agencies to cooperate in

Wheat purchase breaks five year record

CHANDIGARH: As the wheat arrivals surge in most parts of the state, the Procurement Agencies have also stepped up their efforts to ensure that Mandi operations are executed with greater efficiency.

Disclosing this today a spokesperson of the government said that the total purchase of wheat by the government agencies, as on 10th April, has broken all records for wheat purchase till the corresponding date in the past five years. This year the Government Agencies have already procured 4.3 Lakh MT of wheat whereas the earlier peak for the same period was 38, 019 MT in the year 2018, he said.

Divulging further he said that this year the State Government has already ensured that MSP payments worth Rs. 138 crore stand transferred directly into the bank accounts of farmers whereas the earlier high was Rs. 6.5 crore in the

Terming these record breakticulous arrangements made by the State Government, he said that Punjab Government was committed to farmers' the hard earned produce of

Industry, domestic consumers suffering from frequent power cuts in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

The consumption of electricity in Haryana state has become double due to summer season especially in southern part of Haryana where industry and domestic electricity consumers are suffering due to frequent power cuts. Gurugram, Panipat and Faridabad districts in the state are highest electricity consumers in the state. According to Harvana Vidvut Prasaran Nigam (HVPN) comprising of two divisions in the state NHVPN meeting the demand of consumers in Northern part of state and SHVPN meeting the demand of southern part of state. Talking to media persons Ranjit Chautala Power Minister Haryana told that every effort is being made to make available regular supply of electricity to industry sector in the state. However, there are frequent power cuts being faced by domestic consumers as well in agriculture sector.

load every day which include over 2100 MW load required by NHVPN and over 3500 MW load by SHVPN. Information welfare and would continue reveals, Gurugram district in to take all possible steps to the state alone requires highfacilitate the seamless sale of est nearly 1250 MW load every day, whereas Narnaul district



power load in the state daily. Haryana state facing acute shortage of electricity at present since two power production units at Panipat and three power production units at Yamunanagar are lying closed. According to Additional Chief

Secretary P.K. Das Haryana has vet to procure 1424 MW electric supply from Adani group since their three power units in Gujarat having 660 MW capacity each are lying shut as well as HVPN awaiting power supply from Bhakra Beas Management Board when condition of power supply in Haryana state will improve. Das told that state government getting nearly According to information, 4800 MW electricity from outer Haryana state requires nearly sources to provide facilities to residents in the state. He said Rajiv Gandhi Thermal Plant at Khedad in Hisar district has capacity to produce 600 MWelectricity every day.

Information reveals, several thermal plants in the state including at Panipat, Yamumamagar and Khedad in Haryana state are producing 1784 MW electricity.

Punjab CM pays obeisance at Takht Sri Damdama Sahib on Khalsa Saajna Diwas

Police solved murder mystery of five

years old Jash strangled to death by

his aunt Anjali with the wire of her

mobile phone battery charger was

solved by police within 48 hours. The

body of victim child reported missing

was recovered lying on the window

TALWANDI SABO: Puniab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday paid obeisance at Takht Sri Damdama Sahib on the auspicious occasion of Khalsa Saajna Diwas and Vaisakhi. Chief Minister arrived Bath-

overnight stay here he reached Takht Sri Damdama Sahib this morning to offer prayers. Bhagwant Mann greeted the devotees with folded hands

inda late last evening and after

and bowed before Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Later replying to media query on how the AAP Gov-

ernment in Punjab will fulfil its

during assembly polls, Bhagwant Mann said, "With the blessings of God and enormous trust and confidence reposed

by public in us, we will leave no stone unturned to cherish the aspirations of people by fulfilling our promises in the right earnest". AGENCIES



'Action against government officers neglecting ministers,MLAs in Haryana'

SATISH HĀNDA

Chief Minister Haryana Manohar Lal Khatter on the complaints by ministers, MPs and large number of MLAs from BJP, JJP and different political parties in opago had warned all government officers in the state to improve their attitude, failing which ruling government will be compelled to take action against such officers. Most of MLAs in state has expressed deep concern over the attitude of such government officers including few senior IAS



officers having no change in their behaviour towards them and taking no action to solve public grievances made by them, rather neglecting important matters referred to them as such people of their constituency are losing faith in them. Dis-satisfied senior

political leaders as well as MLAs in the state said, most of senior officers working in different government offices even avoid to pick their telephone calls or avoid to reply back and situation turning bad to worst.

warned such government officers to extend full cooperation to all ministers, MPs, MLAs and senior party political leaders in the state and try to solve public grievances immediately reported by them, repeating stern action against such government officers neglecting them will be taken.

Punjab government recovered Rs.28.78 crore from accounts of deceased beneficiaries

CHANDIGARH: Ensuring judicious distribution of funds under various social security schemes, the Punjab Government has recovered Rs.28.97 crore from bank accounts of deceased beneficiaries of various Social Security Schemes.

While disclosing this here, Punjab Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur said, "after assuming the charge of office, she had directed the officials of Social Security, Women and Child Development Department to

thoroughly review all the schemes to ensure judicious distribution of monetary assistance under these schemes amongst the needy and actual beneficiaries besides saving public exchequer.

The Cabinet Minister informed, the department

has recovered Rs.28.97 crore from bank accounts of 1, 27, 643 deceased beneficiaries and credited the amount in Public Exchequer, adding that the Punjab Government is providing financial assistance to the tune of Rs.1500 per month to Old age pensioners, Widows, Destitute Children and Persons with Disabilities. She apprised that as many as 28.85 lakh beneficiaries are getting their pensions, wh amounts to Rs.432.75 crore every month. She further added that total 19, 47, 427 Old Age pensioners, 5, 38, 010 Widows or Destitute Women, 1, 75, 135 Destitute Children and 2, 24, 513 PWDs was getting their monthly pensions.

Divulging more, Dr. Baljit Kaur said that the department has received Rs.4420.70 crore as budgetary allocation under these Social Security Schemes, out of which Rs.4353.64 crore has been disbursed to total 28, 85, 085

Haryana Cong Chief Kumari Selja seeks relief for farmers

Congress president Kumari Selja on Wednesday urged the state government to give compensation to farmers for the loss of yield due to extreme weather conditions. Due to a sudden rise in temperature for the past several days, wheat and sunflower crops are most affected, Selja

«Due to this, the crop production fell. Therefore, the BJP-JJP alliance government of the state should come forward to compensate farmers for their loss,» she said in a statement.

«This time, farmers had to work harder as compared to other years in preparing the crop for the Rabi season. Amidst the scarcity of DAP and urea fertilisers, farmers had to spend nights in the mandis during cold winter and then the unseasonal rains spoiled their dreams,» she

«Many times rain and hailstorm kept causing damage but farmers did not lose hope and kept themselves busy in fields,» she said, adding that early onset of scorching weather conditions has added to their woes.

When the crop was getting ready, the temperature started increasing rapidly and the crop ripened before time

CHANDIGARH: Harvana due to which the wheat grain remained weak, she said.

Kumari Selia said according to experts, the wheat grain was 22 % weaker than normal, due to which the production had fallen by five quintals per acre.

«Thus, farmers were losing more than Rs 10,000 per acre,» she said. Kumari Selja, a former Union minister, said farmers, who had got crop insurance, should be compensated for drop in yield and those without crop insurance, should be compensated by the state government. The maximum temperature in Haryana has been hovering well above the normal limits for the past about three

In neighbouring Punjab, a farmers> union had on Tuesday said there will be a drop in wheat yield in the current season because of early onset of the summer season followed by a sudden rise in temperature.

Wheat growers have also demanded adequate compensation for the loss. «Farmers are reporting a loss of around five quintals per acre in wheat yield because of rising temperatures,» Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lakhowal) general secretary Harinder Singh Lakohwal said on

Bhagwant Mann welcomes CJI on his visit to Punjab



Minister Bhagwant Mann on during his visit to the state Wednesday welcomed Chief here.

Mann said that the people SATISH HANDA of Punjab and its government are elated to welcome the CJI and his family on their visit to the state

He also gave a replica of the Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) to him. Chief secretary Anirudh Tewari, Director General of Police VK Bhawra, and District and Sessions Judge Harpreet Kaur Randhawa joined the CM in receiving **AGENCIES** the CJI.

Rohtak Team of Chief Minister Flying Squad from Gurugram on a clue conducted raid at a books shop at Rewari while driver of a Eco Sports car supplying fake NCERT books. Arrested driver of vehicle identified as Narender Kuar a resident of village Baloud in Rohtak district told that the racket involved in supplying fake books all over in the area getting printed from Meerut operating from a



godown at Naew Grain Market on Malgodam Road Rohtak.

Inspector Sube Singh told media persons that huge stocks of fake books along with the vehicle were seized and case registered

against cheats involved in illegal

Ram Thakur and to prepare

printing and supply of books. The stocks of fake books were so huge police had to spend more than 18 hours in counting the stock. Officers from education department also arrived at the spot during raid.

No change of leadership in Himachal: Nadda

lations of the change in leadership just ahead of the assembly polls in Himachal Pradesh, BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday said Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur would continue his full term, and the next election would be contested under his

Ruling out the possibility of change in guard in the state, Nadda's assertions set aside claims of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia that Union minister Anurag Thakur would be replacing Thakur.

Nadda, who belongs to this state, told the media here that "there is no possibility of replacing Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur. The BJP would go to the polls under the leadership of Jai Ram Thakur, the govern-

SHIMLA: Setting aside specument is functioning well and in future too he will lead the government". Also, there is a possibility that tickets might be denied to some of the legislators due to anti-incumbency. The 68-member assembly is likely to go the polls by year-end along with another BJP-ruled state Gujarat. Patting the back of the Chief Minister, he was categorically clear in saying that the state government is performing well and there is no possibility of leadership change.

However, when asked if ticket could be denied to sitting MLAs, without mincing words Nadda said there was always a possibility and it would be determined by changing circumstances. "In any election, we do change 10-15 per cent of the total ticket." He said that tickets have been



tion of four years tenure of the changed in Uttar Pradesh and Manipur assembly elections and state government, Prime Minin Himachal Pradesh too it can ister Narendra Modi had laid be done. "I am fully satisfied and foundation stones and dedicated happy with the coordination projects worth Rs 11, 500 crore between the party and the govr the state. ernment, "said Nadda, ruling out the possibility of a Cabinet

Nadda, who reached the state capital on Saturday, conducted reshuffle. The BJP national a roadshow here along with along Anurag Thakur and Jai president said on the comple-

Chief Minister from Mandi,

the second biggest district of Himachal after Kangra. Earlier, Chief Ministers hailed from Shimla, Kangra and Sirmaur districts. For Thakur, who believes development work and no witch hunting is the mantra for success, unprecedented development will remain the party's main poll plank for this vear's polls to the 68-member Legislative Assembly.

In an interview with IANS on Saturday, Thakur despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the state

the roadmap for the Shimla Congress government. Municipal Corporation and Also the global investor sum-Assembly elections. The BJP mit of 2019 has started yielding had won a majority in the 2017 Assembly polls with 44 seats in the 68-member state Assembly. Jai Ram Thakur is the first

borrowed less than the previous

results. Besides, the state and the people are fortunate to have benevolence and affection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi he added. "As far as the impact of Covid-19 on the economy is concerned, you know it was a global pandemic. Despite this, we have made a rapid recovery. Himachal's economic growth rate for fiscal 2022-23 is estimated at 8.3 per cent, "Thakur said. On the major challenges before him in the first year of rule, Thakur candidly replied: "My government inherited a loan burden of over Rs 48, 000 crore from the previous government due to unmindful expenditure and fiscal mismanagement.

Violence on campus will not be tolerated, no bar on serving non-veg food: JNU administration

ministration on Monday warned students against indulging in any kind of violence on campus and said the clashes broke out on Sunday after some students objected to a 'hawan' conducted «peacefully» on the occasion of Ram Navami, an assertion also made by the RSS-affiliated

However, the JNU Students Union (JNUSU), which is led by Left-affiliated outfits, has alleged that ABVP members attacked the students while opposing the serving of nonvegetarian food in the Kaveri Hostel mess on the Hindu festival. In a statement, the university clarified there is no bar on serving non-vegetarian food, stressing that the mess is run by the student committee and the administration has nothing to do with their menu.

Police said that 20 people were injured in the Sunday clashes between the two groups. «Taking serious note of the incident, the Vice Chancellor, rector and other officials visited the hostel and met the

students. The VC conveyed that

Bihar receives Rs 817

for data centres

Cr investment proposal

PATNA: Bihar has received

an investment proposal of Rs

817 crore for setting up data

Data management firm Vue-

Now, which is planning the

investment, will develop a

four-tier data centre of 100

racks with Patna as the mas-

ter hub. Four other centers

will come up in Dharbhanga,

Bhagalpur, Purnea and Buxar

in the first phase, said an of-

Hyderabad gets 'Tree

Cities of the World' tag

the 'Tree Cities of the World'

by Arbor Day Foundation and

Food and Agriculture Orga-

nization of United Nations.

official tweeted on Tuesday.

This is for the second consecu-

tive year of this achivement

Matter of immense pride that

#Hyderabad city is recognised.

for the 2nd consecutive year,

among the tree cities of the

world by the Arborday Foun-

dation @arborday& @FAO-

Special Chief Secretary, Ur-

ban Development. As many

as 3,50,56,635 tress have been

according to the certification of

centres across the state.

campus and appealed to the students to maintain peace and harmony,» the JNU Registrar said in an official appeal to the students. «JNU administration reiterates its resolve for zero tolerance towards any form of violence on campus. The students are also warned to refrain from involving in such incidents

no violence will be tolerated on

rules.» he added. In the statement issued later in the day, the university said that there was a scuffle on the

which disturb the peace and

harmony on campus. If any-

one is found indulging in such

acts, they will be liable for disci-

plinary action as per university

campus on April 10 between student groups.

«It was the occasion of Rama Navami and Hawan was organised by the students in the Kaveri Hostel and there were who were objecting to this. The wardens and Dean of Students tried to pacify and the Hawan was concluded peacefully.

«Despite this, some group of students were not happy with this and soon after, at the time of dinner, a ruckus was created over there and heated arguments were followed by an altercation between both the groups in the Kaveri Hostel,» said the statement by JNU reg-





ficial statement. The investment proposal regulator TRAI on Tuesday was discussed at a meeting chaired by Information Techsought views from various nology Minister Jibesh Kustakeholders on the need for mar on Wednesday. "We are monitoring cross media ownlooking forward to finalisation ership and control, mechanism and related issues in the wake of the proposal. After proper evaluation of the proposal, it will be sent to the Chief Minisof drastic changes in the sector with the advent of digital ter's Office for final approval,"
Kumar said. AGENCIES technology.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released a tation paper read. consultation paper on 'Issues has been recognised as one of tions made in 2014 in light of the changes in the media and entertainment industry with the advent of new digital technologies such as over-thetop (OTT) platforms. a senior state government

'Considering (the) overall scenario, do you think there is a need for monitoring cross media ownership and Control? Should there be a common mechanism to monitor ownership of print, television, radio, or other internet-based news media," are some of the issues on which TRAI has sought

#UN, tweeted Arvind Kumar, views from the stakeholders. TRAI has sought written comments on the issues raised planted over the last two years, in the consultation paper from the stakeholders by May 10, and counter-comments by

It observed that the digital media landscape was marked by the dominance of a limited number of very large players who have wherewithal to consolidate by acquiring smaller players. "This can reduce media pluralism by undermining the diversity of new age portals and online media," the consul-

The paper also sought views Relating to Media Ownership' on whether there was a need after the government asked it for any additional regulatory/

"Do you think there is a need to monitor takeovers, acquisitions of media companies, especially the news media companies," it asked.

TRAI also noted that with the emergence of social media platforms and apps which depend on user generated content, the news and facts do not depend upon any media organization for its conveyance to the public. TRAI had made recommendations to the government on issues relating to media ownership in August 2014. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting asked the TRAI last year to reconsider the recommendations in the wake of the advent of digital media. AGENCIES

Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that his government is com- for homeless poor families, an mitted to the goal of providing official statement said. Jain houses to every needy family, asserting it is making sincere efforts to bring positive changes in the lives of citizens through various welfare schemes. PM Modi wrote this in his

Congratulating him on getreply to a beneficiary of the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana', saying happiness of getting your own roof and house is priceless. The beneficiary, Sudhir Kumar Jain of Sagar

the housing scheme as a boon said he had been living in a rented house and had changed houses many times. He also shared his pain of changing houses frequently, it noted.

ting his house, the prime minister said a house is not just a structure made of bricks and cement. Our feelings and aspirations are also attached to it, but also give the confidence of and the boundary walls of the district in Madhya Pradesh, in house not only provide security



a better tomorrow.

house has come true through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Your sense of satisfaction nation".

after this achievement can eas ily be felt by your words in the letter. This house is like a new foundation for the dignified life of your family and a better future for both your children," he said. PM Modi noted that crores of beneficiaries have got 'pucca' houses under the scheme. In the letter to Sudhir Kumar Jain, the prime minister said these "memorable moments" in the lives of beneficiaries give him inspiration and energy to continue "working tirelessly and non-stop in the service of the **AGENCIES**

CBIC Chairman releases National Time Release Study, 2022



tral Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), presented a set of Time Release Studies (TRS) conducted by the department.

TRS are essentially a performance measurement tool for assessing the cargo clearance process of the international trade, as recommended by the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the World Customs Organization (WCO). It adopts average cargo release time, i.e. the time taken from the arrival of the cargo at the customs station to its eventual release for import or export, as the case may be.

The National Time Release

Study (NTRS) 2022 covered 15 major Customs formations, including four port categories seaports, air cargo complexes (ACCs), inland container depot

is based on the sample period between 1st-7thJanuary 2022. The NTRS 2022 has reported further improvement in the average cargo release time for all the four port categories in 2022 over corresponding period of the previous year: by 2 percent

(ICDs) and integrated check

posts (ICPs), which handle

about 80 percent of the bills

of entry (imports documents)

and 70 percent of the shipping

bills (export documents) and

sea port or inland container depots average release time has improved by 12 percent. With this improvement, the ICPs have achieved the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) target release time to be achieved by 2023, whereas the other three port categories have reached 75 ercent of NTFAP target. NTRS 2022 and the Custom

sea cargo cleared through the

House level Time Release Studies, which have been conducted using the same data set, obtained from the customs automated system and following the same methodology, have found strong affirmation for the four-fold path to promptness', namely: advance filing of import documents enabling prearrival processing, risk based facilitation of cargo, benefits of trusted client program - Authorized Economic Operators, and Direct Port Delivery (DPD) facility. In case of Exports, the Study noted that the documentary clearance of export consignments, measured by the time taken from arrival of the goods at the customs station to grant of Let Export Order has been significantly minimized, ranging from 4:04 hours in the for ICPs to significantly higher case of ACCs to 47:41 hours in 16 percent for ACCs. For the the case of ICDs.

J&K Delimitation Commission likely to submit report by the end of April



FW DESK

The Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission which has enhanced J&K Assembly seats from 83 to 90 is likely to submit its report to the government by the end of April, according to sources.

Home Minister Amit Shah has already said that once the Commission submits its report, the Centre may take a call on holding the Assembly elections in the union ter-

Headed by Retired Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai and comprising Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra and State Election Commissioner (SEC) KK Sharma, the Commission was established on March 6, 2020 with a one-year term which

was extended by another year. While the term was due to expire on March 6, 2022, it was granted two months extension. The Commission is unlikely to get another extension.

The commission has proposed six new assembly constituencies in the Jammu region taking the number of Assembly seats in the region from 37 to 43. In Kashmir region, the commission has proposed just one more seat taking the number from 46

J&K Delimitation Commission is headed by the former Supreme Court Justice Ranjana Desai, and comprises Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and State Election Commissioner K.K. **AGENCIES**

PM Modi greets everyone on the occasion of Khalsa Saajna Diwas



The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has greeted everyone especially the Sikhs on the special occasion of Khalsa Saajna Diwas. He said that the Khalsa Panth motivates countless people across the world. Inspired by it, Sikhs have distinguished themselves globally in diverse fields. In a tweet Prime Minister said: "Greetings to everyone, especially the Sikhs on the special occasion of Khalsa Saajna Diwas. The Khalsa Panth motivates countless people across the world. Inspired by it, Sikhs have distinguished themselves globally in diverse fields.»AGENCIES

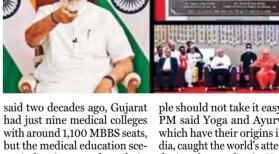
India to get record number of doctors in next 10 years due to Govt push for medical education: PM BHUJ: Prime Minister Nar-

endra Modi on Friday said the country will get a record number of doctors in the next 10 years due to the central government's policy of establishing at least one Speaking after dedicating to

the nation a 200-bed K K Patel Mutli-speciality Hospital in Bhuj in Gujarat's Kutch district via video-conferencing, he said coronavirus is still lurking and people should not take it easy and be watchful.

The modern health facility is the first charitable multispeciality hospital in the Kutch region and it has been built by the Leuva Patel community of Bhuj with help from donors based in India and abroad.

The goal of having at least one medical college in every district and ensuring that medical education was in reach of everyone will result in the country getting a record numbers of doctors after 10 years, the PM said. He



nario has improved vastly in the last 20 years. Now, the state has one AIIMS and over three dozen medical colleges. Earlier, only 1,000 students used to get admission in medical colleges of Gujarat, now around 6,000 students get admission in these colleges. AIIMS in Rajkot has started admitting 50 students from 2021, Modi said.

Stressing that coronavirus has still not gone away and peo-

ple should not take it easy, the PM said Yoga and Ayurveda, which have their origins in India, caught the world's attention during the pandemic. He said export of turmeric from India has increased after the advent of the pandemic as people across the globe learnt about its health benefits. To spread the message of healthy living, Modi urged the people of Kutch to

set a world record by ensuring maximum participation of citizens in the district during

on June 21.

the International Day of Yoga

OIL headquarter under cyber attack DIBRUGARH: PSU major

Oil India Limited's registered headquarter at Duliajan in Assam's Dibrugarh district is purportedly under a cyto the company shutting down all its computers and IT systems at the office, a company spokesman said on Tuesday. The systems have been on shut down since Monday and efforts are on to resolve the issue, OIL spokesperson Tridiv Hazarika said. We have been forced to withdraw all our computer system from LAN connection after it came to our knowledge that three to four computers were hit by a virus Monday. No computer at the headquarter now has access to internet connectivity, he said. The IT department is yet to ascertain the extent of damage. OIL is working on solving the issue. Previously too OIL faced such problems, but this time it seems to be a major IT-related crisis which will take time to resolve, Hazarika added. AGENCIES

Second arrest made in

day in connection with alleged rape of a minor girl

VP Naidu calls for improving cotton yield and productivity, stresses priority of farmer incomes Vice President, M. Venkaiah tile workers, and hand-holding starting with the 'Swadeshi Naidu called upon all stake-small firms to give a boost to Movement'. He said that by

large hoardings of soyabean ing action under EC Act. In order to ensure strict and mustard seeds in Dewas, Shajapur&Guna districts of enforcement of the Central Order of 30th March 2022 and Madhva Pradesh. These seeds were much above the stock limit. 3rd February 2022, Central prescribed by the Government. teams from the Department Hoarding of seeds have pushed of Food & Public Distribution up the prices of soyabean oil. The State Government has been asked to step in to take necessary action under the EC Act, 1955. In Maharashtra and Rajasthan, large quantities of edible

Central teams unearth large hoardings of

Shajapur&Guna districts of Madhya Pradesh

Inspections have revealed very chain is not affected while tak-

soyabean and mustard seeds in Dewas,

oils were found in excess of the prescribed quantities of the control order. Wholesalers and Big Chain Retail outlets were the main violators. The State Governments have been requested to take corrective measures in accordance with the relevant sections of the EC Act. Inspection is ongoing in the

remaining five States.

State Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have also been requested to ensure that supply

have been deputed to conduct surprise inspections of the stocks of edible oils & oilseeds held by Retailers, Wholesalers, Big Chain Retailers and Processors in major oilseed producing and consuming States. Teams have been sent to Maharashtra, Raiasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Gujarat& Delhi.

The Government of India has taken several proactive steps in the last few months to stabilize the prices of edible oils in the country, including declaration of stocks by all stockholders of edible oils and oilseeds under the Essential Commodities Act (EC Act),

holders to make concerted efforts to improve cotton yield and productivity in India to enhance farmers' incomes. Expressing his concern over the low yield of Indian cotton compared to other major cotton growers in the world, Naidu said that steps must be taken to guide the farmers through better research and by

adopting best practices. Naidu called for increasing the global competitiveness of Indian cotton textiles and "capitalize on our traditional strengths, shift to modern agronomic practices and consolidate our position as a global

leader in the cotton industry". Noting the importance of the textiles sector as the secondlargest employer in the coun-

small firms to give a boost to the sector. Naidu also suggested diversifying into specialty cottons such as the extra-long staple (ELS) cotton and organic cotton.

Vice President of India was inaugurating the CITI-CDRA Golden Jubilee Celebrations from Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi today. Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) is a leading industry chamber of the textile sector in India and the Cotton Development and Research Association (CDRA) is the extension arm of CITI, undertaking various seed development and extension activities in the cotton sector.

Referring to the importance of cotton to the Indian economy, the Vice President said that cotton also has a "great try after agriculture, Naidu symbolic value to our civiliemphasized on improving zational heritage". He recalled farm productivity, increasing that cotton played a crucial mechanization, upskilling texrole in our freedom struggle,

connecting all sections of society, "cotton was one of the most important binding factors for people to fight against the British Raj".

Naidu expressed his concern over that despite being the largest cotton producer (23%) in the world and having the highest area under cotton cultivation (39% of world area), the yield per hectare in India remained at a low of 460 kg lint per hectare when compared to the world average of 800 kg lint per hectare. To address this, he called for improving the planting density, taking up mechanization of cotton harvest and giving a thrust to agronomy research.

Recalling the benefits of the first Technology Mission on Cotton, the Vice President said there is every need to renew the Mission in an upgraded format.

Iqbal Singh Lalpura assumes charge as Chairperson of NCM



sumed charge as Chairperson for Minorities, NCM, in New Delhi after being re-nominated as Chairperson vide Ministry of Minority Affairs Notification dated 12.4.2022. During his previous term the Gove

Iqbal Singh Lalpura has as- as Chairperson, NCM, he worked tirelessly for the of the National Commission welfare of all the Minorities with a focused approach to ensure that the grievances of the Minorities are addressed and they avail the benefits of the Welfare schemes run by

Hanskhali rape case NADIA: A second suspect was arrested early on Tues-

in Hanskhali area of West Bengal's Nadia district, a senior police officer said. He is a friend of the main suspect in the case, the officer said. Two others have also been detained for questioning, he stated. A minor girl was allegedly raped at a birthday party at the house of the main accused on April 4. She bled to death later that night, according to her parents who lodged a police complaint on April 9. The main accused, son of a TMC leader, was arrested shortly after the complaint was filed. "We have arrested another person this morning. He was present at the birthday party. His involvement is been investigated. We have found discrepancies in his versions of the incident. AGENCIES



Recovery stays ragged and vulnerable

he World Bank pared its 2022 growth projections for South Asian economies to 6.6 percent earlier this week, from an estimate of 7.6 percent released in January, emphasising that postpandemic growth was already uneven and fragile before the Russia-Ukraine conflict triggered fresh challenges. The ripple effect of high oil and food prices that prevailed even before the war and were exacerbated since February 24, are key factors worrying the Bank as people's real incomes take a hit. India's GDP, the Bank reckons, may now grow by 8 percent in 2022-23, not 8.7 percent as it had earlier forecast, before dropping further to 7.1 percent in 2023-24. The Bank's chief economist has said that their overall assessment is that GDP growth could actually be 1.3 percentage points lower, or 7.4 percent, but they refrained from making an adjustment of that magnitude in their headline projection due to some positive surprises in recent data such as strong digital services exports. The tepid post-COVID recovery in India's household consumption will be further hemmed in by high inflation and the incomplete labour market revival. Monetary and fiscal policy mandarins need to address inflation more aggressively, lest it derails the recovery. There is a need to rethink growth engines as well — the pursuit of free trade agreements indicates a fresh stance. The shunning of RCEP needs a revisit, as advised by key ally Japan — lest rivals like Vietnam dent India's future exports in job-intensive sectors such as textiles. The farm sector, that has so far been resilient through the pandemic's worst phases and could now gain due to high global food prices, needs careful handling too. While the normal monsoon forecast bodes well for the kharif crop and hopefully, rural demand, the cost of inputs — be it fertilizers or chicken feed — is rising sharply for farmers too.

LETTERBOX

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EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

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SUSHANT SINGH EXPLAINS HOW RESETTING TIES WITH CHINA WILL ALTER INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH US

Beijing's move, India's turn

ooking at the long list of diplomats, officials, and ministers from across the globe rushing to New Delhi in the last few weeks, one would assume that India was playing an active role in resolving the crisis in Europe. Despite his ambitions to be hailed as a global statesman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has scrupulously avoided engaging with the crisis. India has refused to condemn Russia's military invasion, continues to trade with

Russia, and has abstained from voting on

United Nations resolutions.

India is the centrepiece of the Joe Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy. Indian Foreign and Defence Ministers recently held the '2+2' meeting with their American counterparts. The Japanese Prime Minister was in New Delhi last month. The Australian Prime Minister held a virtual summit with Mr. Modi days before the two countries signed an interim trade deal. He had to then explain that he had not betrayed Ukraine by signing the deal with India.

Even as India's Quad partners (U.S. Japan, Australia) impose trade sanctions on Russia, condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin and provide military aid to Ukraine. India recently welcomed the Russian Foreign Minister to New Delhi. The signalling was unmistakable: he was the only visiting foreign official among the many in New Delhi to get a personal meeting with Mr. Modi.

A shift is nevertheless discernible: India has chosen to increase, rather than reduce, import of its meagre crude oil supplies from Russia, being offered at a discount. Despite a warning by the U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh in New Delhi that there will be "consequences to countries that actively attempt to circumvent or backfill the sanctions," India and Russia are exploring ways of conducting bilateral trade by bypassing the dollar-based financial system.

India's Quad partners have been exceptionally sympathetic towards New Delhi's case so far, but the underlying stress in their ties with India will come to the surface as the crisis drags on. These tensions have been noted in Beijing, which has praised India for pursuing an independent foreign



policy. In recent years, Chinese officials had looked at Indian moves in the region through the prism of their U.S. policy, but India's stance on Ukraine has triggered a rethink in Beijing. Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to New Delhi in March was driven either by the need to wean India away from the Quad or as an exploratory step towards a larger strategic reset with New Delhi.

It would be erroneous to focus on the minimal outcome of the visit to deem it a failure. That the visit took place is itself a big success given that some 90,000 soldiers from both armies have been deployed in Ladakh for nearly two years now, after Chinese troops moved in to occupy certain territories that were hitherto in Indian control. Despite 15 rounds of negotiations between senior military commanders. China continues to occupy at least three such areas. From other such areas, both the armies have disengaged i.e., moved their soldiers a couple of miles behind, but there has been no de-escalation i.e., they have not moved the troops to their

In his meetings with Mr. Wang, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar did not demand the restoration of status quo ante of April 2020 in Ladakh; disengagement from remaining "friction points" was the only precondition for return to normalcy in China-India ties. In a rush to declare the crisis as

resolved. India made further concessions to China by seeking disengagement only from Patrolling Point 15, suggesting that the other two areas — Depsang and Demchok 'legacy issues". This is in keeping with Mr. Modi's stance since June 2020, when he first denied Chinese occupation of Indian territory in Ladakh and has since kept silent on the matter. Questions on the border crisis have been denied in Parliament. No official media briefings have taken place in two years. The government has thus successfully kept the truth of Chinese ingress hidden from the Indian public

Mr. Modi's desire to downplay Chinese bellicosity was confirmed by former U.S. Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster, when he said that the Indian government had instructed the U.S. officials to neither mention the Chinese aggression in any joint statement nor raise it in a strong manner otherwise. While New Delhi is being excessively accommodative of Beijing, China is unconcerned about Indian sensitivities. Before coming to New Delhi, Mr. Wang signed a provocative statement on Kashmir in Islamabad with the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries and asserted China's strong ties with Pakistan. While it has allowed South Korean and Pakistani students to return to China, Beijing has not extended the same

courtesy to over 23,000 Indian students. If China is extending a handshake to India, it is only on its own terms.

Despite the border crisis, India's trade with China reached a record high of \$125 billion in 2021. India remains the biggest recipient of loans disbursed by the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank. The Modi government did not criticise China's clampdown in Hong Kong and has never raised the issue of mistreatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang, although it may have been driven by a defensiveness about the criticism of its own strong-arm policies in Kashmir. The activities of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community in India have been calibrated to remain within limits that do not provoke Beijing.

China is the glue that binds the Quad together. While Indian and American policies are at variance in countries such as Myanmar, Iran and Afghanistan, China is the one interest that aligns the two countries ogether. That basic premise of a collaborative partnership with India will be tested by these recent moves from Beijing towards New Delhi. Questions have always been raised in whispered tones in Washington about the relative power gap between the two Asian powers (China's economy is nearly six times India's size). This notwithstanding, it has been an article of faith in Washington in the past couple of years that having suffered from Chinese military aggression in 2020, India realises that it needs the U.S. to counter the threat from Beijing. This was the thrust of Mr. Singh's blunt counsel in New Delhi.

During Mr. Wang's visit, China offered to create a virtual G-2 in Asia by protecting India's traditional role and collaborating on developmental projects as 'China-India Plus' in South Asia. Once India's limited preconditions for declaring the border crisis resolved are met, the offer will seem more alluring and real than it does today. When Mr. Modi as Chief Minister of Gujarat was denied a visa to travel to the U.S. owing to his association with the 2002 Gujarat riots, he made regular visits to China.

Sushant Singh is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research. Views are personal.



DR KR ANTONY BELIEVES ADDRESSING UNDERNUTRITION IS KEY TO REDUCE TB AND MORTALITY IN INDIA

The food vaccine as right, more so for TB patients

every ill had a pill and the pill killed the germs that made you ill. That germ could be a bacteria, virus or a parasite. Factors such as genetic and metabolic causes, hormonal imbalance and altered neuro-chemical transmitters causing illnesses were less known then. But there was fairly good knowledge of how good air and nutrition reduced consumption illnesses such as tuberculosis (TB).

This is why sanatoriums/sanatoria were

t un in mountain terrain, with fresh pure water and good food, in the quest for a cure for TB. There were no drugs for TB till the discovery of streptomycin in 1943. With improved wages, better living standards and the accompanying higher purchasing power for food, the TB mortality rate came down from 300 people per 1,00,000 population to 60 in England and Wales. TB disappeared from socio-economically developed countries long before the advent of chemotherapy. After the Second World War, in 1946 G.B. Leyton reported a 92% reduction in the incidence of TB among British soldiers who were fed an additional Red Cross diet of 1,000 calories plus 30 grams of protein when compared to Russian soldiers who were fed only a camp diet. This historical importance of good nutrition was ignored by the modern therapist who tried to control TB initially with streptomycin injection, isoniazid and para-aminosalisylic acid. In the ecstasy of finding antibiotics killing the germs, the social determinants of disease were ignored.

With more drug arsenals such as rifam-



picin, ethambutol, pyrazinamide, the fight against TB bacteria continued, which became multidrug resistant. Sharper bullets were fired into the frail body of patients. It was bacteria targeted, not patient-centric. The regimes and the mode of delivery of drugs were changed to plug the loopholes of alleged "non-compliance of illiterate and irresponsible patients". Blister packs of a multi-drug regime were provided at the doorstep, and the directly observed treatment/therapy (DOT) mechanism set up. There was little done to try to understand where patients lived, what work they did for a living, how much they could afford to buy food, and how much they ate.

Many of the poor discontinued blisterpackaged free drugs thinking that these were "hot and strong" drugs not suited for the hunger pains they experienced every

from their emaciated body to infect many around them. It is no wonder that TB was never brought under control Let me narrate this example. I was

defending a project proposal to provide nutritional supplementation of additional rice, dhal and cooking oil for TB patients in the tribal areas of Bastar-Chhattisgarh as part of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) plan in 2009-10. But it was rejected twice by the central technical team ithout proven benefit

"The nutrition of the individual, is the most vital factor in the prevention in tuberculous disease," said Dr. J.B. McDougall of the World Health Organization (WHO), in1949. And, Dr. René J. Dubos in the Journal of the American Medical Association, in 1960, said, "It is most unlikely that drugs alone, or drugs supplemented by vaccination, can control TB in the underprivileged countries of the world as long as their nutritional status has not been raised to a reasonable level.

The fact is that 90% of Indians exposed to TB remain dormant if their nutritional status and thereby the immune system, is good. When the infected person is immunocompromised, TB as a disease manifests itself in 10% of the infected. India has around 2.8 million active cases. It is a disease of the poor. And the poor are three times less likely to go for treatment and four times less likely to complete their treatment for TB. according to WHO, in 2002. Scientists like Rudolph Virchow (before 1902), Sir William Osler (before 1919) and Dr.

night. They coughed up virulent bacteria Dubos (from 1960) have been saying the same thing.

The work and the findings of a team at the Jan Swasthya Sahayog hospital at Ganiyari, Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh (led by Dr. Anurag and Madhavi Bhargava, Yogesh Jain, Biswaroop and Madhuri Chatterjee, Raman Kataria, Gajanand) established the association of poor nutritional status with a higher risk of TB. In the period 2004-09, among the 1,695 pulmonary TB patients they treated, men had an average body (BMI) of 16. For women, the average body weight was 34.1 kg and a BMI of 15. With these levels of undernutrition, there was a two to four-fold rise in the mortality associated with TB.

In 2014, research led by Dr. Anurag Bhargava (professor of medicine) showed that undernutrition in the adult population was the major driver of India's TB epidemic. Subsequently, the central TB division of the Ministry of Health came up with a "Guidance Document - Nutritional Care and Support for Patients with Tuberculosis in India" after a national workshop held in February 2016 at Yenapoya Medical College, Mangaluru, Karnataka. The 2019 Global TB report identified malnutrition as the single-most associated risk factor for the development of TB, accounting for more cases than four other risks, i.e., smoking, the harmful use of alcohol, diabetes and HIV.

Dr. K.R. Antony is a paediatrician at Kochi, Kerala and former Director of the State Health Resource Centre (SHRC) Chhattisgarh



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book features artefacts of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum in Jaipur

The latest book in a series on the collections at the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, City Palace, Jaipur, brings to readers some of the most exquisite images of artefacts, paintings, monuments and historical treasures of the Jaipur Court.

A tribute to the Museum's collections, "Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court", published by Niyogi Books, also features contributions from several Indian and international scholars — who contributed two-thirds of the entries in this volume. It is edited by historians Giles Tillotson and Mrinalini Venkateswaran

"This book is a fantastic testament to Jaipur's treasures, and the generosity of visiting scholars to the Museum who contributed

individual voices, and passion for these objects to connect with our readers and visitors, and hope it inspires others to learn more about, or research the collections.

"But it is also a beautiful book almost gorgeous enough to eat, one person said to me — so it's meant to be enjoyed too, whether before or after a visit to Jaipur!" said Venkateswaran, museum consultant at the City Palace in Jaipur.

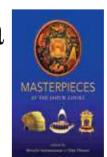
While previous books in the series covered one aspect of the collections, the new book showcases the highlights of the collection as

a whole. Other books in the series include 'Festivals at the Jaipur Court", "Textiles & Garments at the Jaipur Court", "Arms & Armour at the

entries readily. We wanted their it is also a beautiful book — almost gorgeous enough to eat, one person said to me — so it's meant to be enjoyed too, whether before or after a visit to Jaipur!

> Jaipur Court" and "Painting and Photography at the Jaipur Court".

"This book presents a selection of the finest objects from the City Palace across all categories — from paintings, textiles and arms, to nanuscripts and photographs and the fine buildings that house them. Ideal as a souvenir for visitors and a great overview of the collections for those currently unable to visit



Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court By Mrinalini Venkateswaran & Giles Tillotson Niyogi Books Pvt. 192 pages; Rs1,250

us in person," said co-editor Tillotson, who is currently the senior vice-president of Museum Exhibitions for New Delhi-based art

company DAG. The eminent scholars, whose contributions made it to the book, include names like Abhishek Kaicker, Allison Busch, Anjali Jain, Aparna Andhare, Audrey Truschke, Deepshikha Kalsi, Ebba Koch, Elaine Waisglass, Gayatri Sinha, Imre Bangha, Indira Vats, James

Mallinson, and Jean Michel Delire. According to the publishers, "Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court" is a beautiful addition to the series and will be of interest to both the expert and the general reader. "It showcases a range of treasures

from the Museum across its vast

collection of exquisite artefacts.

The pieces written by a range of

eminent scholars make this book

a true collector's item," said Trisha

Niyogi, COO and director, Niyogi Books. The book, priced at Rs 1,250,

is currently available for sale on offline and online stores.

Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court is the sixth in a new series of books initiated by the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, City Palace, Jaipur. Written by leading specialists, they are designed to be accessible and attractive for a new generation of readers and researchers.

Each of the other volumes covers one aspect of the collections. But the need was felt for something handier, which would showcase the highlights of the collection as a whole.

NEWSBRIEFS

TCS shares gain nearly 1% after earnings announcement



Consultancy Services on Tuesday gained nearly 1 per cent after the software services firm opened the fourthquarter earnings season with a stellar set of numbers, crossing the Rs 50,000-crore revenue mark for the first time and recording 7.4 % yearon-year growth in net profit.

The market heavyweight stock opened the trade on a tepid note and later gained 0.73 % to Rs 3,723.50 on the BSE. It hit a high of Rs 3,723.50 and a low of Rs 3,650.05 so far during the trade. At the NSE, it went up by 0.69 % to Rs 3,722 after a muted opening.

The country's largest software services firm Tata Consultancy Services on Monday said it has crossed the Rs 50,000 crore revenue mark for the first time. The company said its revenue jumped 15.8 per cent to Rs 50.591 crore in the reporting quarter on an annualised basis.

TCS closed fiscal 2022 with a bang, crossing for the first time USD 25 billion annual revenue of Rs 1,91,754 crore, up 16.8 per cent, driven by the highest-ever incremental revenue of USD 3.533 billion and an all-time high order book.

Its annual profit jumped 14.8 % to Rs 38,327 crore. "TCS results are in line and marginally above expectations. This can support IT stocks even if there is some profit booking," according to V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Factory output raises 1.7 % in Feb : Govt data

NEW DELHI: Factory output rose 1.7 % in February, mainly on account of rise in the mining sector and power generation. According to the Tuesday, the manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 0.8 %. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had declined 3.2 % in February 2021. The cumulative growth in April-February 2021-22 worked out to be 12.5 %. In the year-ago period, there was a contraction of 11.1 %. During the 11-month period, the manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 12.9 % whereas it was a decline of 12.5 % in the year-ago **AGENCIES**

Nearly 25% increase in rice export bring relief to Haryana farmers, exporters

After heavy slump in export of rice in past about one and half years due to epidemic outbreak now farmers as well as rice exporters in Haryana state are having relief due to nearly 25% increase in rice export in past few weeks due to worldwide unrest as a result of war between Ukraine and Russia causing increase in demand of Indian rice. Information reveals, during year 2020-21nearly 16% drop in export of rice to various countries was witnessed. Farmers in Haryana grain markets are selling 1121 variety rice at the rate of Rs 4400 per quintal, Basmati rice at the rate Rs 4000 per quintal and 1509 variety rice at the rate ranging between Es 1600-1700 per quintal which is being sold at the rate ranging between Rs 3200-3300 per quintal at present.

porters Association Vijay Setia ernment had reduced market



told that Haryana state had export between 16 to 17 lakh ton rice of value worth Rs 16000 crore last year since there was nearly 16% drop in export due to unavoidable circumstances, whereas 25% growth in export has now been identified. Setia President of India Rice Ex- said in case Haryana state gov-

fee from 4% to 1% similar to being charged in Ghaziabad and Narela grain markets the export of rice would have increased to 20000 ton this year. Chairman of Harvana Rice Millers Association Jwail Singh told that demand of Basmati, 1121 and 1509 varieties rice has suddenly increased all over in the world due to present

Ukraine-Russia war.

Districts situated on G.T. Road belt which including Kurukshetra, Karnal, Kaithal, Panipat and Sonipat districts in Haryana are famous for production of paddy crop in the state in which Kuruksetra and Karnal districts are producing maximum quantity of Basmati,

1121 and 1509 variety rice being exported to large number of countries across the world including Saudi Arab, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Muscat, Dubai, Africa and Australia. Singla told that Saudi Arab is biggest buyer of all types of rice from our country. He said, the prices of Basmati being sold earlier at the rate Rs 3300-3500 per quintal is now being sold at the rate Rs 4400 per quintal, whereas 1121 variety rice earlier sold at the rate Rs 3500-3700 per quintal presently being sold at the rate Rs 4100 per quintal. Similarly, 1509 variety rice earlier sold at the rate Rs 2500-2700 per quintal is available at the rate Rs Rs 4200 per quintal at present.

In view of fast declining water level in underground in Haryana state government is offering beneficial schemes in case of change of crop pattern from paddy requires huge quantity to alternate crops consuming less quantity of water offering incentive of Rs 7000 each acre area.

Infosys Q4 net profit up 12 % at Rs 5686 Cr



ond-largest software services company Infosys on Wednesday posted 12 % year-on-year rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,686 Cr. for March quarter 2021-22. Bengaluru-based company

had registered a net profit (after minority interest) of Rs 5,076 crore in the corresponding period previous year, according to a regulatory filing.

Infosys> revenue grew 22.7 % to Rs 32,276 crore in the quarter from Rs 26,311 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

The IT services giant has pegged revenue growth outlook at 13-15 % for 2022-23. In last fiscal year, Infosys> net profit was up 14.3 % to Rs 22,110 crore, while revenue was higher 21 % to Rs 1,21,641 crore compared to the previous fiscal year.

«We continue to gain said.

NEW DELHI: India's sec- market share as a result of sustained clients> confidence in our ability to successfully navigate their digital journeys,» Salil Parekh, CEO and MD of Infosys, said in a statement.

For 2021-22, Infosys board has recommended a final dividend of Rs 16 per share. «With a robust demand environment ahead, we envisage making appropriate long-term investments in capability building across sales, delivery and innovation. However, we plan to neutralize some of the impact through aggressive cost optimization programs and value-led pricing driven by service and brand differentiation. This, along with postpandemic normalization of expenses, is reflected in the margin guidance,» Nilanjan

Shree Cement hands over sporting rights to East Bengal



Limited on Tuesday officially ended their topsy-turvy twoyear association with East Bengal by handing over the sporting rights to the Kolkata heavyweight side.

In a last ditch attempt by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, the Hari Mohan Bangur-owned cement conglomerate bought a majority stake of 76 % in the two years, so it finally ended," beleaguered East Bengal to he added. After coming on help them enter India Super board, Shree Cement had

KOLKATA: Shree Cement League in 2020-21. The association did not go off well as the East Bengal executive committee refused to sign the final agreement, claiming discrepancies in the initial term. "The process to hand over the sporting rights was on for the

last couple of days. "They did not sign the final agreement and as per the term sheet the association was for promised a long term association with the red-and-gold brigade but trouble started brewing before the second season regarding the term sheet.

"Shree Cement Limited (SCL) has now decided to terminate its sporting collaboration pursuant to the termination, the club shall transfer its entire shares held in SCEBF (SC East Bengal Foundation) at book value to SCL and simultaneously SCEBF also agrees to handover all the sporting rights to the club, the SCL said in the letter issued to the East Bengal club president on Tuesday while ending its obligations"

It was at the behest of CM Mamata Banerjee, Shree Cement had agreed to continue for the last ISL edition where the club went worse as they finished at the bottom of the table with just one win from 20 matches, losing 11 times and drawing on eight occasions.

AGENCIES

Gangar Eyenation to Expand in Several Tier II & III Cities MUMBAI: Gangar Eyena-

tion, one of India's leading branded eyewear retailers has announced its expansion plans in tier II & III states such as MP, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka. The brand will invest up to 25 crores in opening new stores, while by the end of this financial year, the company is also expecting a large-scale tie-up with several brand partners to increase business in the existing and new markets. Whether or not, the demand

for offline stores is still relevant for today's tech-driven online shopper, Jigar Gangar, Director of Gangar Eyenation says, "The category of lenses and eyewear is paramedical and hence it is difficult to give prescriptions as eye testing is not advisable to conduct online. Moreover, every eyewear user has a different face shape and size so it becomes very tough to suggest the right be comfortable for the buyer. And hence, offline testing and buying are still preferred and



advisable when it comes to

Speaking about diving into tier II & III markets which are dominated mostly by unorganized players, Jigar Gangar says, "Our industry as a whole is 20% organized and 80% unorganized. We plan on beating the competition by spreading awareness on eye health, and offering modern and effective solutions." Focusing on the brand's vision of spreading awareness and early detection, product online which may not the stores will be equipped with modern eye-testing technology and quality customer **AGENCIES**

La Tim Metal & Industries announces a Stock Split MUMBAI: La Tim Metal & Industries, a listed company in

the steel trade since 1987, dealing with Colour Coated Steel Sheets, announced that subsequent to their Board of Directors meeting held on 8th April 2022, they have considered and approved a stock split.

Pursuant to regulation 30(2) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 the board has recommended a proposal of sub-division of the company's equity share of face value of Rs. 10 each into 10 equity shares of Re.1 each. The record date for the Split/Sub-Division of nominal value will

be intimated in due course subject to compliance of necessary laws. The proposal for consequential alteration of the Capital Clause (Clause V) of the Companies Act 2013, in the Memorandum of Association of the Company, was also approved by the Board subject to the final approval of the shareholders.



Brief details of amendments in Memorandum of Association of the Company: The Authorized Share Capital of the Company shall be Rs. 20.00.00.000/- (Rupee divided into 19,50,00,000 (Nineteen Crores and Fifty Lacs) Equity Shares of Re. 1/- (Rupee One only) each amounting to Rs. 19,50,00,000/- (Rupees Nineteen Crores and Fifty Lacs) and 5,00,000 (Five Lacs) Redeemable Preference shares of Rs. 10/- (Rupee Ten only) each amounting to Rs.50,00,000/-(Rupees Fifty Lacs). The Board also considered and approved the date for calling Extra Ordinary General Meeting for the approval of the above amendments to be scheduled on May 09, 2022. About La Tim Group: The La Tim Group is also in the business of Real Estate and Hospitality. Its real estate division, La Tim Lifestyle & Resorts, initiated land trading and real estate development from Panyel and its surrounding areas in Raigad district, Maharashtra. Currently, La Tim has a land bank more than 1000 acres spread out along the Khopoli Pali Road (State Highway 92), which is approximately 90 kms from Mumbai and 95 kms from Pune.

Trade Agreements signed with Australia and UAE will open that Trade Agreements would believe the property from the trade Agreements would be the property from the prope infinite opportunities for Indian Textiles - Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal said that new Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreements with Australia and UAE would open infinite opportunities for Textiles, Handloom, Footwear etc. He said that Indian and UAE would now face zero



textile exports to to Australia duty and expressed confidence and GCC countries would also that soon Europe, Canada, UK welcome Indian textile exports

Pivush Goyal was delivering the Keynote address at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the 'Confederation of Indian Textile Industry- Cotton Development and Research Association' (CITI- CDRA) in New Delhi today. The Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu was the chief guest at the celebration.

Union Minister mentioned

labor intensive industries. He added that India must also be open to receiving new technology, rare minerals, raw materials which are in short supply in India etc. from the world at reasonable costs. This will only increase our production, productivity and quality, which in turn will increase demand for our products all over the world, he said. Goval also said that Indian textile Industry has the potential to achieve USD 100 billion dollars in exports by 2030.

Mahindra & Mahindra hikes vehicle prices by 2.5 per cent

NEW DELHI: Mahindra & Mahindra on Thursday said it has increased prices of its entire model range by 2.5 per cent with immediate effect.

This will result in an increase of Rs 10,000 to Rs 63,000 on the ex-showroom prices across the range, depending upon the model and the variant, the home-grown auto major said

The price revision is the result of a continuous increase in prices of key commodities such as steel, aluminium, palladium, etc, it added.



has taken necessary initiatives to partially offset the unprecedented minimal percentage of cost increase to customers through a price revision, M&M noted. The company,

"The company

which sells models like Thar and XUV700, is working with its sales and dealer network to communicate the new prices to the customers appropriately, it added.

Earlier this month, the country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has also announced an increase in prices of its entire model range amid rise in input costs. The company is yet to come out with the quantum of the price hike.

Over the past year, the cost of the company's vehicles continued to be adversely impacted due to increase in various input costs, Maruti Suzuki India had noted in a regulatory AGENCIES

Honda unveils City e: HEV sedan; launch next month

auto major Honda Ĉars on Thursday unveiled its new offering for the Indian market - City e:HEV sedan, marking its foray into the mainstream strong hybrid electric vehicle segment in the country.

The company, which is present in India through a wholly-owned subsidiary, has commenced the bookings of the model and plans to introduce it in the market next month.

As per the company, the model, an extension of its City model range, would feahike in commodity ture self-charging two-motor prices to absorb the strong hybrid system conimpact, passing a nected to a 1.5 litre petrol engine, entailing a peak power of 126 PS and fuel efficiency of 26.5 km per litre.

The model would also come with various safety features including a high-performance front camera with a wideangle, far-reaching detection system to scan the road ahead and alert the driver to minimise risk of accidents and in some cases intervene to avoid a collision or lessen

In an interaction with PTI, the newly-appointed President & CEO of Honda



Cars India Takuya Tsumura noted that introduction of the model marks the start of the company's journey towards introduction of new-age electrified models in the country.

"We are committing to electric vehicles and towards carbon neutrality by 2050 globally. That is the company's direction..In India we are starting with City e:HEV and of course based on Honda's direction we will see what is the best solution we can bring to the market here," he said.

Honda globally plans to launch 30 EV models by 2030, with an annual production volume of more than two million units. The auto major aims to invest around

USD 40 billion over the next 10 years in the EV space.

The city e:HEV is a result of our consistent commitment to offer a product having reliable data with latest safety measures and which meets the environmental challenges of the future," Tsumura said.

The model is also in sync with the vision laid out by Honda global to realise carbon neutrality and zero collision fatalities by 2050, he added.

"We are all well aware of the environmental challenges of global warming and emissions. As a socially responsible enterprise, Honda is striving to sell two thirds of its global sales

like hybrid fuel cell vehicles and battery electric vehicles by 2030," Tsumura stated.

And by 2040, the company aims to achieve 100 per cent transition to EVs and fuel cell vehicles globally, he added.

"The government of India is also focused upon environmental and safety issues associated with mobility. And it brings us great joy and satisfaction to introduce the company's innovative products that contribute to this direction. We hold the firm belief that technology is for people and we have developed engine and mobility solutions that are designed to be beneficial

for everyone," Tsumura said. In order to offer advanced electrification products in India, the company is pleased to introduce the technology for Indian customers that uses energy more effectively while making everyone's daily lives more enjoyable, he said.

"At the heart of the City e:HEV, we have a self charging highly efficient modern sports hybrid system, which offers a rare combination of accelerating driving experience as well as very low emission levels,' Tsumura said. **AGENCIES**

Godrej Industries announces launch of Godrej Capital

MUMBAI: With the aim of scaling up its ambition in the financial services sector, Godrej Industries Limited (GIL) announced the launch of Godrej Capital Limited (GCL). GCL is a subsidiary of GIL and is the holding entity for Godrej Housing Finance (an HFC) and Godrej Finance Limited (an NBFC). With the ultimate aim of building a world class retail financial services business and a near term aim of building an INR 30,000 crore balance sheet by 2026, GIL has committed to invest INR 1,500 crore in capital in GCL.

Godrej Capital currently has its footprint across Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, Ahmedabad, and Pune and will soon be operational in six new cities, i.e., Jaipur, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Chennai, Indore and Surat. Speaking on the development, Pirojsha Godrej, Chairman, Godrej Capital, said, "Godrej Capital will form a key pillar in the overall growth of the Godrej Group. We started with home loans in select geographies in 2020. Having seen strong customer acceptance of our offering, we are very optimistic about the prospects of our financial services venture and will be entering new markets and enhancing our reach across key target sectors and consumer segments." The company will continue maintaining focus on the growth of secured loans consisting of home loans and Loans Against Property (LAP). Additionally, to fulfil business and geographic aspirations, the business aims to grow its team by 50% to approximately 500 people in this financial year.

Manish Shah, MD & CEO, Godrej Capital, said, "We have successfully implemented a digital-first approach at Godrej Housing Finance through innovative products such as Design Your EMI and end-to-end contactless solutions delivered digitally. This has inspired us to grow our footprint and to broaden our service offerings to different customer segments through affordable housing loans and unsecured loans." AGENCIES

RBI credit policy strikes a fine balance between inflation taming and sustainable growth: ASSOCHAM

Lawyered eyes 150 million revenue through partnerships

LAWYERED IS LOOKING FORWARD TO RAISING **USD 1MILLION FOR** THE NEXT PHASE **OF GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF THE** BUSINESS.

Spendings from the amount raised will be bifurcated to strengthen the operations teams. Through this partnership, Lawyered is looking forward to supporting its cli-ents in their claim settlement

Currently, Lawyered is on a mission to ensure that every citizen has the Right Legal Support . And Lawyered is



also solving users problems of Access, Awareness and Affordability.

Lawyered has partnered with 350+ accelerators, coworking spaces and incubators. As part of the association each of the startups working out of or incubated in these spaces will become eligible for Lawyered's Membership for Startups and Business.

Lawyered's Membership is a subscription offering for Startups and businesses. It's an annual subscription plan. As part of the subscription members get access to free consulting and guidance across all their legal and compliance

Lawyered is a legal tech initiative designed to change the way people interact with and within the legal industry. Founder and CEO of Lawyered Himanshu Gupta says, "we are here to make you legally empowered and on a mission to ensure that every citizen has access to the right legal support'

Lawyered currently attends to 95% of all district courts in India. Cumulatively lawyered has already solved 20,000 plus legal issues on its platform. Lawyered also has customers based out of the logistics sector like Bharat Logistics, Express Roadways Pvt Ltd, Om Logistics and more. **AGENCIES**

global challenges of elevated commodity and crude prices to limit the inflationary impact on the Indian economy without giving any jerk to a growth trajectory which is on a steady upward move," AS-SOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood. Deepak Sood said, RBI Gov-

response.

ernor Shaktikanta Das must be complimented for the way the RBI has helped the Indian economy sail through the last two years marked by an unprecedented global pandemic. <>Together with the Finance Ministry, the RBI held its ground of maintaining the accommodative interest rates, helping the country deal with the problem of the <twin balance sheet>. We are largely through this issue with the balance sheets of the banks and corporations looking a lot better. RBI and fiscal authorities deserve to be congratulated for the same».

NEW DELHI: Welcoming the RBI's decision to maintain the

accommodative policy Repo

rate of four per cent, ASSO-

CHAM today said, the Mon-

etary Policy Committee has

struck a fine balance with a

nuanced approach to encour-

age growth while calibrating

inflationary pressures and

defend the Indian economy

by navigating the current geo-

political storm with resolute

Credit Policy review by the

MPC is that the RBI is con-

tinuously trying various mon-

etary tools to face the unfolding

The best thing about the

Deepak Sood said now that the new challenge of global inflation and heightening of interest rates has resurfaced, the RBI has chosen a pragmatic path of gradual withdrawal of extra liquidity in the system, which was necessitated by the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic. Even the bias towards inflapolicy support. tion taming is being done by The chamber noted that protecting growth so that a sustainable economic expan-

ment continues to lead the economic growth, to be followed by private consumption and investment. ASSOCHAM Secretary General said RBI>s latest growth projection of 7.2 %

sion is ensured. One of the

key highlights of the policy is

to help the government with

its borrowing programme for

FY> 23 so that the govern-

ED issues summons to Xiaomi

and inflation forecast of 5.7 % for the current financial year have to be understood in the backdrop of uncertainty in the global economy and a continuing Ukraine-Russia war disrupting the supply chain. So far, India has managed the fast-evolving situation with a lot of maturity, courage and

the decision to continue with a liberalised risk weightage for individual housing loans by banks till March 31,2023 is a major positive for the housing sector. Measures like interoperable card-less cash withdrawals at the bank ATMs would enhance cyber security. Similarly, move towards improvement in customer service by banks through RBI guidelines would help both banks and customers

Retail inflation shoots up to 6.95 % in March

NEW DELHI: Consumer pricebased inflation jumped to 6.95 per cent in March, mainly on account of costlier food items. according to government data released on Tuesday. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation was 6.07 per cent in February. The inflation in the food basket was 7.68 per cent in March, up from 5.85 per cent in the preceding month. It is for the third straight month that the retail inflation remained above the Reserve Bank of India's comfort zone. RBI, which mainly factors in the retail inflation while arriving at its bi-monthly monetary policy, has been tasked by the government to keep the inflation between 2 and 6 per cent.

Duty free import of raw cotton to push exports of value added textiles: FIEO

NEW DELHI: Government's decision to waive customs duty on cotton imports will help boost exports of value added products of textiles, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President A Sakthivel said on Thursday. The move, he said, will promote exports of apparel and made-ups sectors significantly by softening the prices of yarn and fabrics as zell. The finance ministry on Wednesday waived customs duty on cotton imports till September 30, a move which will benefit the textile industry and lower prices for consumers. Currently, cotton imports attract 5 per cent Basic Customs Duty (BCD) and 5 per cent Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC). The industry had been demanding a duty waiver to lower domestic prices. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) notified the exemption from customs duty and AIDC for import of cotton. Cotton textile exports will get further boost as the high prices of cotton were blunting the competitive edge, Sakthivel said.

The government has provided all support to the textile sector and we should endeavour to reach USD 100 billion of textile exports by 2030, he added. AGENCIES

75 investors duped of Rs 3.61 cr in Nagpur

NAGPUR: As many as 75

people in Nagpur were allegedly duped of more than Rs 3.61 Cr by a private investment firm which collected money promising them huge returns, but reneged on its assurance, police said on Tuesday. 7 people, including directors and employees of the company, were booked after the fraud came to light, they said. Police said one of the 75 victims, aged 40, lodged a complaint that the accused promised him and other investors 30 per cent to 40 per cent returns on their investments. Between November 1, 2021, and April 11, 2022, he invested Rs 10 lakh in schemes launched by the company, the complainant told the police. In all, the victims invested Rs 3,61,74000 in different schemes of the company expecting high **AGENCIES**

ADB Financing to Support Urban Development in Nagaland fected by landslides during the

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank today signed a \$2 million Project Readiness Financing (PRF) Loan for designing climate resilient urban infrastructure, strengthening institutional capacity and improving municipal resource mobilization in 16 district headquarter towns (DHTs) in Nagaland.

The signatories to the PRF for the proposed Nagaland Urban Infrastructure Development Project were Shri Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance who signed for the Government of India, and Shri Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission who signed for ADB.

After signing the Agreement, Shri Mishra said that the facility would support key

preparatory activities for the ensuing project aimed at improving urban infrastructure and services in Nagaland to help the state realize its economic potential. He said that the Government of India is

"The ADB financing will ensure high readiness of the ensuing project through preparing an urban sector strategy, undertaking feasibility

studies and detailed engineering designs of selected subprojects and building capacity of state level agencies in project implementation, resource mobilization and anchoring reforms", said Mr. committed for development

Nagaland's towns and cities face the long-term challenges of climate change, lack of basic amenities, poor connectivity. Major transport routes around urban areas are severely af-

are in poor condition without proper stormwater drainage. Most cities face acute water shortage and except Dimapur have inadequate sewerage or septage management system. All these issues constrain economic development of the The PRF loan will help de-

monsoon season. Urban roads

sign water supply, sanitation, solid waste management and urban roads in 16 DTHs with climate resilient features and improved access to poor and vulnerable. Capacity building of state agencies will help augment own-resource mobilization by urban local bodies (ULBs), improve their readiness for implementing the ensuing project and initiating sector and institutional

CBI gets govt nod to prosecute Aakar Patel

NEW DELHI: The Centre has tral Government or any officer given the go ahead to the CBI to prosecute Amnesty International India and its former chief Aakar Patel for alleged violations of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), at Rouse Avenue against Patel paving way for a special court and Amnesty International Into take cognisance of its charge dia under Section 11 read with sheet filed on December 31 2021, officials said on Tuesday.

The CBI had sought the sanction of the government to prosecute the international human rights organisation because of mandatory clause of Section 40 of the FCRA.

Section 40 bars any court to take cognisance of offence previous sanction of the Cen-

authorised by that Government in this behalf.

The charge sheet was filed on December 31, 2021 by the agency in the Special CBI Court Sections 35 and 39 of the Ac after a two-year probe into alleged violations, they said.

The court will take cognisance of charges on April 18, they said.

Following the charge sheet the agency had issued a Look Out Circular against Amnesty International India Chair Patel under the FCRA without the on the basis of which he was stopped from leaving Bengaluru



Airport for the US where he was scheduled to deliver academic lectures in various universities.

A magistrate court had allowed withdrawal of the LOC but the order was overturned last Friday by a Special Judge who had asked Patel to not leave the country without its

The case was registered against Amnesty International India Pvt Ltd (AIIPL), Indians For Amnesty International Trust (IAIT), Amnesty International India Foundation Trust (AIIFT), Amnesty International South Asia Foundation (AISAF)

It was alleged that the provision of the FCRA and IPC were contravened by the aforesaid entities by receiving foreign contributions from Amnesty International UK through AIIPL even though prior registration or permissions were denied to AIIFT and other trusts under FCRA, the officials said. AGENCIES

global VP under FEMA **NEW DELHI:** Enforcement

Directorate (ED) has summoned the global vice president of Chinese mobile manufacturing company Xiaomi, Manu Kumar Jain, for questioning in a probe linked to alleged contravention of the foreign exchange law, officials said on Wednesday.

The federal probe agency, according to sources, is investigating the company and its executives under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Allegations related to violation of forex laws in the Indian over the last few years are being investigated, they said

Jain, the former India head of Xiaomi, has been asked to furnish some financial documents linked to the company by appearing in person on Wednesday or sending it through an authorised representative.

A Xiaomi spokesperson



and responsible company.»

«We give paramount importance to the laws of the land. We are fully compliant with all the regulations and are confident of the same. We are cooperating with authorities with their ongoing investigation to ensure they have all the requisite information,» the spokesperson said.

these trading firms

FEMA are civil in nature and the final penalty, post adjudication, can be at least three times the amount contravened under the law. Xiaomi and few other Chinese mobile manufacturing companies were raided by the Income Tax Department in December last year on charges of tax

Fraud by Hero Electric Vehicles Pvt Ltd in FAME2 Subsidy

When the Income Tax Department raided the premises of Hero Motocorp and allegedly found alleged illegal business expenses of over Rs 800 crore, Rs 60 crore "unaccounted" cash used to purchase land in Delhi and role of some shell companies, little did it know that the alleged fraud would be so huge.

A complaint sent on April 12 to Cabinet Minister for Road Transport Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari 11 of 245 of audited financial statements of FY 21), it is by Chartered Accountants, Akash Sharma and Hiren Shah lists several other financial regularities.



It says that FAME2 is a central government funded Electric Vehicle Subsidy program for the promotion of the sales and domestic manufacturing of EV

components/vehicles within the country. The Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP) defined under the FAME2 subsidy scheme mandates 100% or majority of the components to be manufactured in India for Electric 2W, who avail the subsidy scheme. The policy documents are attached with this mail.

The department of heavy industries (DHI) is currently disbursing subsidies to all such EV 2W OEMs who are submitting declarations or undertakings of compliance with the above policy guidelines. However, in matters of utilization

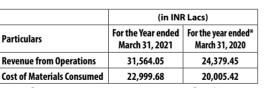


of public funds, the old adage of "Caesar's Wife Must be above Suspicion" is highly relevant. It is indeed baffling then how the leading electric two

wheeler OEM in the country is perpetuating a daylight

fraud by claiming the subsidy amount through falsified representation of being compliant with the PMP norms. even though a careful reading of their audited financial statements of FY21, reveals a completely opposite picture, and the same is attached along with this mail.

On the key financials and the Cost of Goods Sold (On Page 6 of 245 of audited financial statements of FY 21) it is declared as below:



On the Imports Components C.I.F Value (On Page

declared as below:			
	(in IN	(in INR Lacs)	
Particulars	For the year ended 31.03.2021	For the year ended 31.03.2020	
Raw Materials &	23,341.84	16,359.82	

Thus, strongly confirming the fraud that in FY 21, the domestic purchases by Hero Electric Pvt Ltd are insignificant and entire raw material to manufacture their electric scooters is being met through Chinese imports.

Further, a prima facie analysis of the imports declaration filed in the various bill of entries over the last 24 months, with the customs department (CBIT&C) including declared packing lists, business profile of the declared exporting Chinese company to Hero Electric, and the customs duty rates availed for the imports under the said declared bill of entries, reveals the exact nature of this fraud, to wrongfully claim the FAME2 subsidy benefits.

It is evident that on one side through their Audited Financial Statements, Hero Electric Pvt Ltd is importing (directly or indirectly) majority of their components,



while fraudulently availing the FAME 2 subsidy amount however, their indirect imports of critical components by claiming majority of the components as being domestically manufactured (as per the PMP norms) through wrongful declarations with DHI.

It alleges that this is indeed a daylight fraud being perpetuated by Hero Electric for wrongful claims under the FAME2 subsidy policy. The following key numbers can be noted from the

analysis of the limited data :

The total value of imports C.I.F done by Hero Electric Pvt Ltd is as follows:

FY21 (1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021): INR 233.4 Crore (as per Financial Statements) FY22 (1st April 2021 to 28th February 2022): INR

565 Crores (Approximate) The total value of the Lithium Ion Battery Packs imported

(C.I.F) by Hero Electric Pvt Ltd is as follows: FY21 (1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021): INR 120 Crores (Approximate)

FY22 (1st April 2021 to 28th February 2022): INR 251 Crores (Approximate)

In FY21, around 75,000 Lithium Ion battery packswere imported, and in FY 22 (11 month data) more than 1.40,000 Lithium Ion Battery packswere imported from China by Hero Electric Vehicles Pvt Ltd.

This is indeed a severe violation of the PMP norms considering that the deadline for imports of fully assembled Lithium battery packs has expired long ago in 2019 and Hero Electric Vehicles Pvt Ltd has neither built any in-house battery manufacturing capability nor purchased these Lithium batteries from domestic battery pack manufacturing companies. 93% of the overall imports are just from two Chinese trading companies, thus showing significant over dependence on Chinese trading firms. Approximately more than 1,45,000 (One Lakh Forty Five Thousand) DC Motors and INR 200 Croresworth of mechanical, lighting and body related components have been imported from China within 11 months of FY 22, and all these are in 100% violation of the PMP norms.

While the above data and analysis which captures only the direct imports of Hero Electric Vehicles Pvt Ltd fully establishes the fraudulent claims in the FAME2 subsidy, through trading agents in India, also further needs to be analyzed with the chain link establishment between the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 suppliers list declared by Hero Electric Pvt Ltd to DHI and checking the further direct imports data linked with the IEC registration of

Being a leading EV2W company in the country, the onus indeed lies strongly with Hero Electric Vehicles Pvt Ltd to come clean on this matter and offer a formal explanation to the relevant authorities which should be made public not only for protecting the integrity and stature of the FAME 2 subsidy, but also in the larger interest of safeguarding the reputation of Union Govt of India in-front of the International Investment Community, who have been showing significant interest in the recent times to deploy large PE funds in Indian EV start-up and components manufacturing eco-system.

It may be recalled that raids were conducted on March 23 at its offices in Delhi and nearby Gurugram, apart from the residence of its chairman and CEO Pawan Munjal.

The CBDT issued a statement later saying the operation was carried out covering more than 35 premise, "Incriminating documents and digital evidence have been found and seized indicating that the expenses ostensibly shown to have been claimed towards business purposes are not fully supported by evidences. "Expenditure aggregating to more than Rs 800 crore has been booked in the guise of purchase of services from a specific event management entity," the policy-making body for the tax department said.

Company version

While a statement from the company on the CBDT statement is awaited, it had said in a regulatory filing that it was a "law-abiding corporate, with robust internal financial controls" and its "financial statements are duly audited".

However, in the case of the real estate business entity, the CBDT said 'several incriminating documents' have been unearthed from the premises of persons involved.



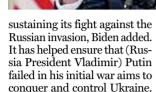
President Joe Biden approves \$800M India probably buys less oil in new military assistance for Ukraine

In anticipation of a new Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine, President Joe Biden has approved an 800 million package of military assistance, including additional helicopters and the first provision of American

The Ukrainians also will receive armored personnel carriers, armored Humvees, naval drone vessels used in coastal defense, and gear and equipment used to protect soldiers in chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological attacks.

This new package of assistance will contain many of the highly effective weapons systems we have already provided and new capabilities tailored to the wider assault we expect Russia to launch in eastern Ukraine, Biden said in a statement.

The steady supply of weapons the United States and its allies and partners have provided to Ukraine has been critical in



US President Biden announced the aid after a call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It is the latest in a series of U.S. security assistance packages valued at a combined

mitted to Ukraine since Russia invaded on Feb. 24. The weaponry and support material has played an important role in Ukraine's successful defense We cannot rest now

Biden is under pressure from members of both parties in Congress to expand and accelerate

Robert Gates, a former CIA director and defense secretary, said Wednesday he believes the 2.6 billion that has been com- administration needs to push

hard for weapon donations some training for a Ukrainian by NATO members in Eastern Europe, whose arsenals include Soviet-era tanks and other weaponry and equipment that could help Ukraine im-

The United States ought to be acting, 24/7 how do we mobilize the equipment and how do we get it into Ukraine and into the hands of the Ukrainians, Gates said in an online forum sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

It's critically important and critically urgent, and we ought to be sort of ransacking the arsenals of those states, and I think they would be cooperative, particularly if they are given assurances that the Pentagon will provide American replacements for the donated weapons.

The Pentagon said the 800 million package announced by Biden includes weapons and equipment that will require military not fully accustomed to American military technology. U.S. and allied forces had been present inside Ukraine to provide training for eight years before pulling out in advance of the Russia's latest invasion.

The new arms package includes 18 of the U.S. Army's 155mm howitzers and 40,000 artillery rounds, two air surveillance radars, 300 Switchblade kamikaze armed drones, and 500 Javelin missiles designed to knock out tanks and other armor. Also included are 10 counter-artillery radars used to track incoming artillery and other projectiles to determine their point of origin for counter

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said delivery of the material will be expedited, but he offered no specific time-

India's total purchase of oil from Russia in a month is probably less than what Europe does in an afternoon. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said.

"I noticed you refer to oil purchases. If you are looking at energy purchases from Russia, I would suggest that your attention should be focused on Europe. We do buy some energy, which is necessary for our energy security. But I suspect looking at the figures, probably our total purchases for the month would be less than what Europe does in an afternoon," Jaisĥankar told a reporter when asked about India's oil purchase from Russia.

Jaishankar was addressing a joint news conference with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh along with their American counterparts Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, after the conclusion of the 2+2 Ministerial on Monday. Jaishankar said India has

made a number of statements (on the Russia-Ukraine war) which outline its position in the United Nations, in the Indian Parliament, and in

positions state is that we are Again, it's 1 to 2 per cent at this against the conflict. We are for

lence, and we are prepared to

contribute in whatever way to

these objectives," he asserted.

from Russia: Jaishankar

The White House too came to India's defence on the issue of oil purchase noting that its total purchase is less than one and two per cent as against 10 per cent from the United States. "Did the President get a commitment from Prime Minister Modi not to accelerate or increase imports of Russian energy? White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki was asked during her daily news

"I'll let Prime Minister Modi "And briefly, what those and the Indians speak to that. point in time. They import dialogue and diplomacy. We 10 per cent from the United

conference.

of any sanctions or anything along those lines. It was a constructive, direct conversation. But I will let them speak for themselves," she said.

During the virtual summit earlier in the day, President Joe Biden conveyed that the United States is here to help India to diversify its means of importing oil. The imports from the

United States are already significant -- or much bigger than the imports that they get from Russia. And we, of course - the President conveyed very clearly that it is not in their interest to increase that. But beyond that. I would let the Indian leaders speak for them-

selves," she said. AGENCIES

Jaishankar meets UN chief Guterres, discusses key issues including Ukraine situation

hankar has held a wide ranging discussion with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and exchanged views on the global impact of the Ukraine conflict as well as the situation in Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Jaishankar arrived here on Wednesday evening following his visit to Washington.

A wide ranging discussion with UNSG @antonioguterres. Exchanged views on the global impact of the Ukraine conflict, especially on food and energy security. Implications for developing countries are serious, Jaishankar tweeted on Thursday. Spoke about latest developments in respect of Afghanistan



and Myanmar. Appreciate his interest in working with India to effectively address important contemporary challenges, he

The Taliban seized power in by the US-led West, to flee the

weeks before the US' complete troop withdrawal on August 31 after a costly two-decade war. This forced Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who was backed Afghanistan on August 15, two country to the UAE. AGENCIES

portance of this network as a

means to facilitate communica-

tion and create a support web

for all Women Ambassadors to

India. Lekhi spoke on Gender

equality which according to

her is not only a fundamental

human right, but a necessary

foundation for a peaceful,

prosperous and sustainable

world. She also highlighted the

need to realize the Sustainable

Development Goal 5 i.e. Gen-

der Equality through Women

Empowerment to create an

inclusive and just society. The

event also provided a cultural

touch of India to all the Ambas-

sadors as there were cultural

performances organized by

Shri Shovana Narayan presented a beautiful dance pre-

The Kathak virtuoso Padma

the Ministry of Culture.

US values its long standing cooperation with Pakistan

United States values its longstanding cooperation with Islamabad and has always viewed that a prosperous and democratic Pakistan is critical to the American interests in the region, the White House said on Monday, as Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif was sworn-in as the Prime Minister

says White House

Responding to a series of questions on major political developments in Pakistan and the election of Sharif as the new Prime Minister after Imran Khan was ousted in a no-confidence vote in the National Assembly on Sunday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the US value its long standing cooperation with Islamabad.

We value our long standing cooperation with Pakistan and have always viewed a prosperous and democratic Pakistan critical to US interests. That remains unchanged regardless of who the leadership is, she told reporters at her daily news conference

However, Psaki refrained from responding to questions on the possibility of a phone call between President Joe Biden and Sharif.

of a call at this point of time. Obviously, those are assessments made day by day and especially after new leaders are elected. Of course, we have a long, strong and abiding relationship with Pakistan, an important security relationship and that will continue under new leaders, Psaki said.

President Biden, who was inaugurated in January 2021. did not make a call to former prime minister Khan during his tenure. Before his ouster, Khan has alleged that there was a "foreign conspiracy" hatched in Washington to remove his government from AGENCIES

India, US to restart commercial dialogue, CEO forum later this year: Blinken India and the US are restart

ing their bilateral commercial dialogue and the CEO's forum later this year to deepen their bilateral trade and investment relationship, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has announced. Blinken made this announcement at a joint news conference with Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin along with their Indian counterparts -- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh after the 2+2 Ministerial here on Monday. During the 2+2 Ministe-

rial, the two sides discussed their goal of driving inclusive economic growth in the two countries and across the region, said the secretary of State. India and the US already trade to the tune of more than USD 150 billion each year, he said. We are deepening that relationship by restarting the US-India commercial dialogue and



private sector partners can offer recommendations to strengthen even more our trade and investment relationship, Blinken said.

Earlier during a virtual meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed President Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific Economic Framework Initiative. It can allow us to increase our collaboration the US-India CEO forum across more issues including

later this year, where our digital trade, supply chain resilience, infrastructure, and tax policy, Blinken said.

The last meeting of the India-US Commercial Dialogue was held on July 2020 through a telephonic conference. The CEO forum also last met virtually in July 2020. The forum is an effective platform to highlight key issues that affect business entities and to identify areas for closer collaboration for

mutual benefit of both economies. And our countries are working together to tackle the climate crisis. The United States is supporting India's ambitious COP26 clean energy commitments by investing in renewable energy projects and mobilising private sector financing, Blinken said. The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference is commonly referred to as

World Bank reduces Pakistan's growth forecast to 4.3% Mark Zuckerberg money won't be

Bank has slashed Pakistan's economic growth rate forecast for the current fiscal year to 4.3 per cent, down by almost one per cent against last year, and said the last ditch energy subsidies by the outgoing government put an additional burden on budget and threaten the International Monetary Fund programme.

Launching its latest 'South Asia Economic Focus Reshaping Norms: A New Way Forward' on Wednesday, the offer electricity and fuel price World Bank's Chief Economist for South Asia Region had earlier followed its agreement with the IMF to remove constitute a direct burden or



tax exemptions and increase the tax on fuels.

However, rising energy prices domestically and challenges from political opposition forced the government to relief in February.

While these measures can Hans Timmer said Pakistan help reduce fluctuations in domestic prices, they also

ment's budget, which could increase fiscal vulnerabilities going forward, Timmer was quoted as saying in a Dawn News report on Thursday.

GDP growth is expected to slow to 4.3 pc in FY22 (against 5.6pc last year) and to 4pc in FY23, he said.

In January, Pakistan's GDP growth was put at 5.2 per cent which has since been changed.

"This comes amid monetary tightening measures that began in September 2021, high base effects from the previous year, and continued high inflation eroding real private consumption growth, the Bank **AGENCIES**

hidden liability on the governing in next round of aid for elections

The non-profit that distributed most of the 350 million in donations from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to election offices in 2020 said Monday that it won't disburse similar donations this year after backlash from conservatives suspicious that the contributions tilted the outcome of the presidential race

toward Joe Biden.

Instead, the Center for Technology and Civic Life is launching a different program. Dubbed the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, the 80-million, five-year effort is intended to create a network for the nation's thousands of local election officials, who can apply for aid to improve their

technology and processes. Unfortunately, years of underinvestment means many local election departments often have limited capacity and training. The U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence is bringing together world-class partners so that local election officials no longer have to go it alone, said Tiana Epps-Johnson, CTCL's executive director, who announced the new program at the TED2022 conference.

Meenakashi Lekhi leads the All Women Ambassadors' **Group meet in Delhi**



In a unique initiative, the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Meenakashi Lekhi led the first introductory meeting of All Women Ambassadors' Group in New Delhi. All the Female Ambassadors to India, spouses of male ambassadors and female Charge d'Affaires of all embassies attended the meeting. The other attendees of the event included female officers from both the Ministries of External Affairs and Culture. The event was organized as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of External Affairs to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

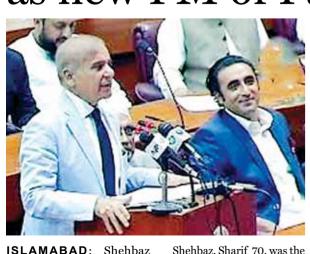
The intention to form this group lies in the keen desire to realize the universal theme of sisterhood and stand in solidarity with each other and for each other. The request to form an All-Women Ambassadors' Groups was floated to the Minister by H.E. Ritva Koukku-Ronde, Ambassador of Finland to India.

The formation of the grouping is of immense significance in political and private sector.

sentation which was followed by a presentation from Papiha Desai and dance troupe on "Dances of India" highlighting the kaleidoscopic diversity of dance forms of India - Garba. Dandiya, Giddah among many others. Meenakashi Lekhi high-

lighted the importance of the timing of the formation of the All-Women Ambassadors Group in the background of the just concluded Navaratri celebrations. She also informed the Ambassadors of the rituals and practices associated with the festival. **AGENCIES**

Shehbaz Sharif elected as new PM of Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president, was elected unopposed as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan by Parliament on Monday after rival candidate Shah Mahmood Qureshi announced that his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party will boycott the voting and staged a walkout.

only candidate left in the race after Qureshi's boycott of the election in the National Assembly. In the House of 342, the winning candidate should get support of at least 172 lawmakers. Shehbaz, the younger brother of former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, received 174 votes - two more than the simple majority of year term.

172. He is the 23rd prime minister of Pakistan.

He has served as chief minister of the country's most populous and politically crucial Punjab province thrice. Former president and Paki-

stan Peoples Party (PPP) cochair Asif Ali Zardari had proposed Shehbaz's name for prime minister's position in a joint opposition's meeting to replace Imran Khan through no-confidence motion. The process of electing the

new leader of the House began on Sunday after Prime Minister Imran Khan was removed from office through the noconfidence vote, becoming the first premier in the country's history to be sent home after losing the trust of the House.

Pakistan has struggled with political instability since its formation in 1947 with multiple regime changes and military coups. No prime minister has ever completed a full five-**AGENCIES**

US-Russia clash over cause of food price rises

UNITED NATIONS: U.S. ambassador to the United Nations accused Russia on Thursday of making the precarious food situation in Yemen and elsewhere even worse by invading Ukraine, calling it just another grim example of the ripple effect Russia's unprovoked, unjust, unconscionable war is having on the world's most vulnerable.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield told a U.N. Security Council meeting on war-torn Yemen that the World Food Program identified the Arab world's poorest nation as one of the countries most affected by wheat price increases and lack of imports from Ukraine.

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky shot back saying: The main factor for instability and the source of the problem today is not the Russian special military operation in Ukraine, but sanctions measures imposed on our country seeking to cut off any supplies from Russia and the supply chain, apart from those supplies that those countries in the West need, in other words energy. If you really



sanctions that you yourselves imposed, your sanctions of choice indeed, and poor countries will immediately feel the difference, he said. And if you're not prepared to do that, then don't get involved in demagoguery, and don't mislead everybody.

The sharp exchange took place a day after a U.N. task force warned that the war threatens to devastate the economies of many developing countries that are now facing even higher food and energy costs and increasingly difficult financial conditions.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched their report saying, As many as 1.7 billion people -- one-third of want to help the world avoid a whom are already living in povfood crisis you should lift the erty -- are now highly exposed to tions.

disruptions in food, energy and finance systems that are triggering increases in poverty and hunger. Thirty-six countries rely on Russia and Ukraine for more than half their wheat imports, including some of the world's poorest countries, he said, and wheat and corn prices have risen 30% just since the start of the

Rebeca Grynspan, secretarygeneral of the U.N. agency promoting trade and development who coordinated the task force, said the 1.7 billion people live in 107 countries that have severe exposure to at least one dimension of the crisis -- rising food prices, increasing energy prices and tightening financial condi-

AGENCIES

in the light of limited representation of women in the international diplomatic arena. Through periodic meetings and discussions, the group aims to gain an insight into female leadership and gender equality

Lekhi underscored the im-



Sikh devotees pay respects on the occasion of Vaisakhi at Sri Harmandir Sahib in on Thursday. Vaisakhi celebrate as a harvest festival and Khalsa Saajna Diwas (Foundation Day-1699)



Youths perform the traditional Punjab folk dance "Bhangra" at a wheat field on the outskirts of Amritsar on festival of harvest of Vaisakhi



POTPOURRI

RANVEER SINGH

to perform at 2022 IIFA awards MUMBAI: Bollywood star Ran-

veer Singh is all set to enthral the audiences with his performance at the 22nd edition of the IIFA Awards, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

The much-anticipated event, to be held on May 20 and 21 in Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, will be hosted by Salman Khan, Riteish Deshmukh and Maniesh Paul. The announcement was

made by the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) in a statement. Singh, who is the brand ambassador of Yas Island, said he is super thrilled to entertain the viewers with a performance that will be super special. «The 22nd edition of the biggest celebration of Indian cinema - the International Indian Film Academy & Awards, is taking place in Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, and it doesn>t get bigger than this! I am looking forward to a KHAAS IIFA experience at Yas because I know that from the hospitality to the awe-inspiring celebrations, its going to be



Besides Singh, actors Varun

Dhawan, Kartik Aaryan, Sara Ali Khan, Ananya Panday, Divya Khosla Kumar and Nora Fatehi are also set to perform at the award show.

The IIFA Awards will take place at the Etihad Arena, part of Yas Bay Waterfront on Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), and Miral.

4 Indian girl students bag bronze at **Mathematical Olympiad in Hungary**



All four contestants who represented India at the 11th European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad held in Eger, Hungary, during April 6-12, 2022, have won bronze medals. 12th standard students

Ananya Rajas Ranade from Pune, Anushka Aggarwal from Delhi and Sanika Amol Borade from Nashik and tenth standard student Gunjan Aggarwal from Delhi are the winners from the country

Anushka and Gunjan are sisters to represent India at the EGMO 2022. Both Ananya and Anushka missed silver by 1 point. This year India participated in full-strength onsite after a hiatus of two years forced by the pandemic. AGENCIES

Saina Nehwal decides to skip selection trials for CWG, Asian Games

NEW DELHI: Nehwal's chances of defending her title at the Commonwealth Games looks bleak as she has decided to skip the selection trials for the upcoming multi-

The big-ticket events include the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and the Hangzhou Asian Games.

The selection trials are scheduled here from April 15 to 20. The 32-year-old Hisar-born shuttler, a twotime CWG gold medallist and 2012 London Olympics bronze medallist, has informed the Badminton Association of India (BAI) about her decision to skip the trials.



"Saina has written to BAI, the only tournament to pick informing her decision to not players for CWG, Asiad and play in the trials which will be Thomas and Uber Cup,".

The CWG squad will consist of 10 members with equal number of men and women, while the Asian Games and Thomas & Uber Cup contingents will have 20 members each, including 10 men and 10 women.

The BAI has made it clear that players inside the top 15 in the BWF rankings will be picked directly, while the rest will be chosen from the trials which will see participation of shuttlers ranked between 16 to 50 in the latest world rankings, released on March 29. The national governing body will also be "finalising probables for the senior core group for the 2024 Olympic Games" during the

Ishaan Khatter wraps war drama 'PIPPA'



MUMBAI: Bollywood Actor Ishaan Khatter on Monday said he has finished filming for his upcoming war drama movie "Pippa". Backed by producers Ronnie Screwvala and Siddharth Roy Kapur, the film is directed by Raja Krishna Menon of "Åirlift

tank battle film that underscores the bravery of Brigadier Balram Singh Mehta (Khatter), a veteran of the 45th Cavalry tank squadron, who, along with his siblings, fought on the eastern front during the Indo-Pakistan

KRISTEN STEWART



to star in romantic

Hollywood star Kristen Stewart is set to topline a romantic thriller film from

Titled "Love Lies Bleeding", the film has been set up at Hollywood studio A24 and examines a romance fueled by ego, desire

and the American Dream. Glass, best known for ner 2019 indie hit "Saint Maud", is directing from the script she co-wrote with Weronika Tofilska. The story centers on the extreme qualities it takes to succeed odybuilder.

fired from Netflix

show after sexual

misconduct probe

Hollywood veteran Frank Langella has been fired by

Netflix from its upcoming

limited series "The Fall Of The House Of Usher" follow-

ing an investigation into his

The 84-year-old actor was

bv multi-

ple Edgar

Allan Poe

Howev-

er, the role

will be recast, even

cast to play Roderick Usher

though the show was about

halfway through production.

the actor.

alleged misconduct on set.

in the competitive world of bodybuilding. Stewart will take on the co-lead part, the protective lover of a female **Hollywood Actor** Frank Langella

Neetu remembers Rishi on the wedding of Ranbir-Alia

Veteran actor Neetu Kapoor on Friday penned a heartfelt note for late

husband Rishi

Kapoor following son Ranbir announce that they were now Kapoor's marriage to Alia Bhatt husband and wife. in a private ceremony.

continue to pour for the star Kapoor said her late husband, couple, who tied the knot after five years of dating at their 'Vastu' apartment in Bandra on Thursday in presence of Kapoor and Bhatt family, besides close fulfilled, she wrote along with friends such as Karan Johar, a photo of her with Ranbir and Shloka Ambani.

loved-up pictures with Ranbir Kapoor, 39, on Instagram post

> Taking to Instagram a day Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor's wish has been fulfilled.

This is dedicated to kapoor Saab your wish has has been Ayan Mukherji, Akash Ambani Kapoor from the wedding. **AGENCIES**

England's MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi pays obeisance at Harmandar Sahib with family



AMRITSAR: England's Sikh Member of Parliament Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi paid obeisance at Sachkhand Sri Harmandar Sahib with his family members including wife Bibi Manveen Kaur Dhesi, sons

Jogad Singh Dhesi and Toshab Singh Dhesi and listened to the divine Gurbani Kirtan.

Tanmanjeet Singh said that he got an opportunity to pay obeisance at the Guru's house with his blessings and while

congratulating the Sikh Sangat for Khalsa Sajna Diwas appealed the youth to connect to their heritage. He said this day is a symbol of the glory of dastar (turban) and the entire Sikh youth should move forward in the country and world while staying Sabat Soorat (in Sikh appearance with unshorn

On this occasion, SGPC assistant secretary Tejinder Singh, information officer Jaswinder Singh Jassi honoured Tanmanjeet Singh and his family members with Siropaos (robes of honour) and a photo of Sachkhand Sri Harmandar

Pop star Britney Spears pregnant with third child

Pop star Britney Spears has announced that she is expecting her third child. The singer, who got engaged to her longtime boyfriend Sam Asghari in September, shared the news on Instagram on Tuesday.

Spears, 40, who had previously expressed her desire to have a "family Asghari, said she had taken a pregnancy test after her partner teased her about being food pregnant. "So I got a pregnancy test and uhhhhh ell I am having a on the social media platform. Spears said she "won't be going out as much"

perinatal depression.

to avoid paparazzi photographers, adding that the pregnancy would likely be "hard" as she had previously gone through

The news comes over six months after a judge released Spears from a conservatorship arrangement that dominated her life for nearly 14 years. In June last year, the musician had told the judge that her conservatorship prevented her from marrying or removing her birth control.



Family members of martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre pay their tribute on the 103rd anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at the memorial in Amritsar on Wednesday The Amritsar massacre, also known as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, where on April 13, 1919, British Indian Army soldiers opened fire on an unarmed gathering, killied at least 379 men, women and children according to official records.

PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

Kangana Ranaut's 'DHAAKAD' to release on May 20 form for 'Dhaakad'. She also

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut-starrer "Dhaakad" will be released theatrically on May 20, the makers announced on Tues-

day.
The action movie is directed in the eight-episode horror project, by Razneesh Razy Ghai and produced by Deepak Mukut inspired and Sohel Maklai. The 35-year-old actor stars

in the movie as Agent Agni. I enjoyed the love and admiration that came my way for the way I pulled off the action scenes in 'Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi'. In our cinema, we rarely have heroines performing action scenes in the real sense.

The scenes that were filmed with Langella will now be When 'Dhaakad' came my reshot, reported Deadline. way, I felt happy to see that Netflix and Langella have someone had dared to visunot yet commented on the alise a woman in a hardcore investigation or the allegacommercial film as an action tion that was levelled against heroine. I'm all for dare-devilry and doing something that



pushes the envelope. There's nothing that does it like a good commercial film," the 35-year-

old actor said in a statement. The film also features Saswata Chatterjee, Arjun Rampal and Divya Dutta in pivotal roles

Razy Ghai lauded the Nawho not just worked on the tional Award-winning actor, looks of her character, but saying that she has worked

hard for the movie. While constructing this character, we were clear that Agent Agni had to be one of a kind. We've seen no one as feisty and bold as her. It was reassuring to have someone

like Kangana Ranaut with us

got into the mind space of the character wonderfully," the director said. Mukut said he hopes

'Dhaakad" sets new standards in how women-led actioners are designed in Bollywood.

We wanted a slick and engaging action thriller and we went all out to just make that with full gusto and all heart. The film has a sensitive subject at its core and I laud at how it's been rendered on screen. It's entertaining and a rollercoaster ride that I relished making," the producer said.

Maklai said he is happy that Ranaut has taken the film to the heights that the team had envisioned. "Dhaakad" is presented by Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt Ltd in association with Kamal Mukut, Sohel Maklai Productions and went all out to get in perfect Asylum films. **AGENCIES**

