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Ukraine Crisis: United Sikhs' volunteers support war refugees



United Sikhs, the United Nations affiliated human rights and advocacy organisation, has started relief work and humanitarian aid in Ukraine for more than three weeks, serving the emergency needs of refugees escaping the war. United Sikhs is the only organisation of the Sikhs that has reached ground

zero in the war-torn Ukraine and its neighbouring country Poland serving the Ukrainian refugees, selflessly, ignoring the danger of war when two nations Russia and Ukraine are locked in a severe war, leading to huge loss to men, material and properties.

More than a dozen United Sikhs volunteers from the US,

Germany and the UK have set up a relief base camp in Medyka (Poland) close to the Ukrainian border. At least 1,00,000 refugees have been served by the United Sikhs' humanitarian mission till date and the relief work is continuing.

Its teams have been serving hot meals, sanitation kits,

water, clothing, other goods of daily needs and even toys for the newborn. A team of volunteers drove for 36 hours with a commercial van full of supplies from the UK to reach the base camp last week, delivering power generators, water pumps, blankets, quilts, sleeping bags, sanitary pads, tents,

stoves and utensils, etc. The organisation is also providing heated shelters at the Ukraine border, serving hot meals and rescuing families from Lviv.

United Sikhs is also collaborating with Polish Red Cross Polski Czerwony Krzyz to provide medical assistance to the refugees escaping Ukraine. **AGENCIES**

Yogi takes oath as UP CM for second time; Maurya, Pathak as Deputy CMs

THE YOGI 2.0 COUNCIL HAS 16 CABINET MINISTERS, 14 MINISTERS OF STATE WITH INDEPENDENT CHARGE AND 20 MINISTERS OF STATE. THERE ARE 31 NEW FACES IN THE GOVERNMENT. TWENTY-FOUR MINISTERS FROM THE FIRST TERM HAVE BEEN DROPPED

LUCKNOW: Yogi Adityanath on Friday took oath as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister for the second term at a mega ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top BJP leaders, including Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and JP Nadda. Chief Ministers of party ruled states and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar were also present on the occasion. Yogi was sworn in along with 52 ministers, including Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brijesh Pathak as Deputy CMs, all hand-picked by Modi and Shah keeping in mind regional and caste equations and giving representation to all sections. The Yogi 2.0 council has 16



Cabinet ministers, 14 ministers of state with independent charge and 20 ministers of state. There are 31 new faces in the government. Twenty-four ministers from the first term have been dropped.

While the party has retained top OBC leader Keshav Prasad Maurya despite him losing his seat, several big names, including Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma and cabinet ministers Shrikant Sharma and Sidharth Nath Singh, were dropped.

Shrikant Sharma's name is, however, doing the rounds for the post of UP state president. The buzz is that after party president JP Nadda completes his term, some names from UP may figure in the organisation headed by the new chief.

PM's close confidante and former bureaucrat AK Sharma has also made it as the UP Cabinet. The inclusion of AK Sharma, an MLC, is an acknowledgement of his handling of the second wave of Covid-19 in Varanasi/Purvanchal region.

Among the new ministers are former Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya and Jitin Prasad, Brahmin leader who quit the Congress last year. Former police officer Aseem Arun and Kalyan Singh's grandson Sandeep Singh have been included as ministers of state (independent charge). Those dropped include Mohsin Raza, Ram Naresh Agnihotri, Ashok Kataria, Jai Prakash Nishad, Ramapati Shastri, Neelkanth Tiwari and Ashutosh Tandon. **AGENCIES**

Punjab Ex-MLAs to get pension for one term only: CM Mann



FW BUREAU

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday said former MLAs will now get pension for only one term, doing away with the practice of drawing the benefit for each term served by them. "Ex-MLAs in Punjab, even if they have won twice, five times or ten times, they will now get pension for one term only," said Mann in a video message while adding that several MPs are also getting pension for remaining MLAs earlier.

Punjab CM said money saved from it will be spent on the welfare of people. "Our political leaders, including MLAs, seek votes from you with folded hands by saying that give us a chance to serve you," Mann said addressing people.

But you will be surprised to know that several MLAs who won thrice, four times or five times and then after losing the elections or after not getting tickets for contesting the polls, get lakhs of rupees in pension per month, Mann said.

Corporate tax reduction helped economy: Finance Minister

TO SUSTAIN HIGH GROWTH RATE, THE CENTRE HAS EARMARKED A MASSIVE BUDGETARY OUTLAY OF RS 7.50 LAKH CRORE FOR FY23

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said that corporate tax reduction has helped the economy. Replying to the debate on the Finance Bill, the minister told the Lok Sabha that corporate tax collections stood at Rs 7.3 lakh crore so far this fiscal.

Besides, Sitharaman pointed out that the Central government did not increase taxes last year or this year.

She cited that 32 countries like Germany, France, Canada, UK among others increased taxes.

The Minister said that this budget has not burdened the public but yet put the money where the multiplier would be maximum where infra creation of assets will happen.

To sustain high growth rate, the Centre has earmarked a massive budgetary outlay of



"The Lok Sabha on Friday approved the Finance Bill, thereby completing the budgetary exercise for fiscal year FY23. The Bill was approved in the lower house by a voice vote, after 39 official amendments, moved by Sitharaman, were accepted

Rs 7.50 lakh crore for FY23. Furthermore, she said that tax payers numbers have increased to 9.1 crore from 5 crore a few years ago.

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thereby completing the budgetary exercise for fiscal year FY23. The Bill was approved in the lower house by a voice vote, after 39 official amendments, moved by Sitharaman, were accepted. **AGENCIES**

CBI books 3 Indian Oil officials in bribery case

NEWDELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday said it has lodged two bribery cases against three officials of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), and also arrested them. A senior CBI official said that the first case was registered on the complaint against NP Rodge, General Manager, IOCL, and Manish Nandle, Chief Manager, on the allegations of demanding bribe of Rs 1 lakh to execute an agreement with the present owner, and also transfer of the ownership of retail outlet from the previous owner to the present owner. It was further alleged that Rodge directed the complainant to pay the bribe amount to Nandle. The CBI laid a trap and Nandle was apprehended while demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 1 lakh from the complainant. The second case was registered on complaint against Sunil Golar, the sales officer of IOCL, Gondia (Maharashtra) on the allegations of demanding bribe of Rs 1 lakh for allowing the smooth functioning of complainant's petrol pump without any delay caused by IOCL in providing the stock, and also previous favours rendered to the complainant. **AGENCIES**

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

- 1 BMW India to increase prices from April 2022**
- 2 Mobile phone exports from India to touch \$5.5bn**
- 3 Anil Vij will participate in "Global Investors Growth Summit" to be held in Dubai**

SC reserves verdict on plea for enhancing Sidhu's sentence in 1988 road rage case

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday reserved its verdict on a review petition seeking a direction to enhance the sentence of Congress' former Punjab unit chief Navjot Singh Sidhu in the 1988 road rage case, where he was let off with a mere Rs 1,000 fine.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, representing Sidhu, submitted before a bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar that sentence was a discretion of court and no interference, could be done, except in cases of death penalty, given in rarest of the rare cases, and in the present case, there is no need to have a relook at the 2018 judgment. "Appeal on adequacy of sentence should not be entertained. The state is not in appeal against the sentence and the victim cannot challenge the adequacy," he submitted. He further added that there has been no allegation of lack of cooperation on the part of his client. The bench, also comprising Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, noted that the issue before it is only whether despite the court having issued limited notice on point of sentence, the provision under which sentence has been imposed needs to be looked at. **AGENCIES**

India-UK conclude second round of talks for Free Trade Agreement



FW BUREAU

On Thursday 17 March 2022, the Republic of India and the United Kingdom concluded the second round of talks for an India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA). A delegation of Indian officials undertook technical talks in London. The negotiations were conducted in a hybrid fashion, with some negotiators in a dedicated UK negotiations facility, and others attending virtually. For this round of negotiations, draft treaty text was shared and discussed across most chapters that will make up the agreement. Technical experts from both sides came together for discussions in 64 separate sessions covering 26 policy areas. The third round of negotiations is due to be hosted by India in April 2022.

Nepal's economy suffers amid surge in energy prices

KATHMANDU: WNePal has failed to import electricity from India as electricity prices in the neighbouring country have been rising lately.

Nepal's most bids for power from the India have failed recently because other buyers outbid the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). On Wednesday, Nepal was forced to cut power to its industries for several hours, Xinhua

news agency reported. "The electricity prices in India have been rising because of growing input costs for thermal power plants to produce electricity amid high fuel prices globally," Suresh Bahadur Bhattarai, the NEA's Spokesman, told Xinhua.

Nepal is facing ripple effects of the current Russia-Ukraine tensions, "as it is being forced to pay higher

prices for electricity than the usual market prices," he added. The NEA, the sole power utility body in Nepal, buys electricity from India in the dry season when Nepali hydropower plants produce insufficient power because of reduced water levels in the rivers.

In Nepal, the peak hour demand for power is around 1,600 megawatts (MW),

while the power plants are producing around 650MW of electricity currently. In the monsoon season, it produces more power than it needs and sells the surplus energy to India. As the NEA is now paying a higher amount for power purchases than it charges customers, Bhattarai fears a serious consequence for the financial health of the power utility body. **AGENCIES**

After huge victory in Punjab assembly election, AAP sets eyes on HP

FW BUREAU Chandigarh

After bumper victory in Punjab elections, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is now preparing to move ahead towards Himachal Pradesh for November Assembly polls.

A strong anti-incumbency wave against the state ruling BJP evident from the loss of three Assembly and one parliamentary seat in the October 2021 by polls - and the absence of the veteran Chief Minister faces may work for the party that is already ruling in two states.

Both the conventional game changers Virbhadra Singh of the Congress and Prem Kumar Dhupal of the BJP are out of



the scene. Virbhadra Singh is no more, while Prem Kumar Dhupal is virtually in political exile after his defeat in the previous Assembly polls.

Himachal Pradesh was traditionally dominated by the Congress and saw its first non-Congress chief minister,

Shanta Kumar, in 1977, when the Janata Party came to the helm.

In current political scenario some rebels from both Congress and BJP have been emerging. Aam Aadmi Party is not active for the first time in the state. "It had contested

the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. After big win in Punjab, AAP is hyperactive.

Himachal Pradesh is a small state where the traditional parties have deep roots and the new one is yet to establish its credibility. Former Union minister Sukh Ram was exceptional case, who had to resign as the communications minister in the Narasimha Rao government in 1996 in the wake of a financial scandal, floated the Himachal Vikas Congress (HVC) in the 1998 Assembly polls and won five seats.

In the next Assembly polls, the HVC got one seat and finally merged with the Congress.

In 2017, Sukh Ram and his

son Anil Sharma joined the BJP. The list of politicians switching sides include Vijay Singh Mankotia, who quit the Congress ahead of the Assembly polls in 2007 and joined the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), winning a seat. Vijay Singh Mankotia, who faced defeat, later joined the Congress. Now, he is looking for a 'credible' third alternative.

In 2014 some rebels from traditional parties opted for AAP to fight all four Lok Sabha seats. The leaders, who joined the AAP, were keen to contest the 2017 Assembly elections, but AAP decided not to enter the fray. In that poll, the BJP won a majority with 44 seats in the 68-member Assembly.

Congress revamps Gujarat organisation, appoints new Secretaries

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Friday appointed three Secretaries to work in Gujarat where elections are due later this year, and removed the current leaders. Umang Singhar, Virender Singh Rathore and B.M. Sandeep have been given the responsibility of assisting Raghu Sharma who is in charge of the state. Ramkishan Ojha has also been drafted for party work in the state.

The Congress is out of power in Gujarat since 1989 and in the last elections, despite coming close, could not dislodge the ruling BJP. The party is preparing to galvanise the state organisation in order to mount a serious challenge. In a recent meet chaired by senior leader Rahul Gandhi, state leaders mentioned the option of poll strategist Prashant Kishor being brought in for strategy. However, there was no decision and the leaders moved on to discuss the organisational issues of the party, a source said. There are said to be back-channels talks going on again after the initial negotiations failed, but the Congress denied it. However, the party has taken on board a close aide of Kishor, to work for the party without any condition, as the joining of the political consultant was stalled by Congress leaders because he wanted a major say in ticket distribution. **AGENCIES**

Anil Vij will participate in "Global Investors Growth Summit" to be held in Dubai

M KUMAR Chandigarh

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij will participate in the upcoming "Global Investors Growth Summit" to be held in Dubai from March 26 to March 28, 2022. He has been invited to attend the summit by His Highness Sheikh Majid Rashid Al Mualla, a member of the Royal Family of the United Arab Emirates. Giving information in this regard the "Global Investors Growth Summit" to be held in Dubai, Sh. Vij said that this summit is being organized by the company of Sheikh Majid Rashid Al Mualla, Majestic Investment and Champions Group, in which the top business leaders of corporate sector from all over the world and entrepreneurs will participate. The Home Minister said that more than 100 fast growing firms and billion-dollar companies and Unicorns will participate in this summit. In addition, top companies



buyers and decision makers from over 100 leading companies will also participate in the summit.

The summit will be attended by top emerging start-up companies and stalwarts of 5 trillion dollar companies under management.

He said that the top leaders of fast growing firms, health-care and pharma, real estate and developers, manufacturing, technology (Data/AI/ML/BC), tourism and hospitality and education sector will also

participate in this summit. Sh. Vij said that under this summit, Global Networking Summit and Growth Enhancing Conference will also be organized.

Vij said that business tycoons and stalwarts of corporate will be invited to invest in Haryana through this summit to be organized at the international-level and the facilities, other arrangements being provided for the industries in Haryana will also be shared in the summit.

Haryana CM Khattar attends in swearing-in ceremony of Yogi

CHANDIGARH: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar attended the swearing-in ceremony of Yogi Adityanath, who has been elected as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for second term consecutively.

The Chief Minister of Haryana congratulated the newly elected Chief Minister and extended best wishes for his second term. The swearing-in programme was done at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. The Chief Minister expressed hope that Yogi Adityanath will do better than his first term as Chief Minister.

Sharing more information in this regard here today, a spokesperson of Haryana Government said that Chief Minister was given a grand welcome at the oath taking ceremony. Hoardings and banners were put up in his honour. The oath taking ceremony was organized in a grand manner wherein Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with members of his cabinet and Chief Ministers of 12 BJP ruled states participated. It is also worth mentioning here that the second term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been termed as Modi-2, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal's second term as Manohar-2 and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's second term as Yogi-2. This also became a matter of discussion among the distinguished persons at the oath taking ceremony.



Foreign investors appreciated policies of Haryana, hope for new investment: Dushyant

M KUMAR Chandigarh

In the era of modern technology, a huge door of opportunities is going to open for investment and employment in Haryana. For this, the civil aviation sector is getting ready to take a new flight of progress. Today, the civil aviation policies of Haryana are also discussed at the International Level and Foreign Investors are very much influenced by the policies being made by the Haryana Government, which means there is immense potential for big investments in this sector in the coming future.

This information was given by Haryana Deputy Chief Minister, Dushyant Chautala, who also holds the portfolio of Civil Aviation in Haryana, after participating in the 'Wings India-2022 International' summit held in Hyderabad on Friday.

The Deputy Chief Minister informed that he participated in Asia's largest civil aviation 'Wings India-2022 International' summit in Hyderabad. In this, international investors have shown interest in



the field of commercial aviation in Haryana, because they were very excited when they were made aware of the civil aviation plans of Haryana at the summit. He said that the possibilities of investment in Haryana have been discussed with foreign investors at the summit and after the discussion, there is the hope of new investment in this sector in the state.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Haryana Government is accelerating the pace of development and modernization of its infrastructure in the civil aviation sector due to which, this time the State Government has increased the budget of the Civil Aviation Department by 380 percent so that many big projects

related to it will be completed. Apart from this, the state government is soon coming up with an aerospace and defense policy so that more and more industries related to the sector can be invited to the state and Haryana should emerge as a hub in these sectors.

The Deputy Chief Minister informed that in this direction, an aviation hub is being set up in Hisar so that other industries of the aerospace and defense sector also get an opportunity to invest. Along with this, continuous emphasis is being given on developing airstrips of different districts, flying schools, arrangement of runway lights on airstrips, hangars, etc. in Haryana.

After bumper victory in Punjab AAP likely to move ahead towards Haryana

SATISH HANDA Ambala

Political scenario in Haryana state has witnessed change after bumper victory of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in recent Vidhan Sabha polls in Punjab. Congress leaders in Haryana state have become active visiting their Delhi Durbar frequently, whereas ruling Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) having alliance with Janhit Janta Party (JJP) in Haryana state has started seminars in every district in the state making attractive developmental offers, assurances to people in the state in order to remain in power and keep alive their Vote Bank in the state. Information reveals, all political parties in the state have become active to remain alive after drastic change in government in Punjab and dis-satisfied senior leaders of all political parties in Haryana are now willing to join hands with AAP likely to spread their network in the state on the basis of their Delhi model, which brought party in power with majority in Punjab. Sources reveal, Arvind Kejriwal Chief Min-



ister Delhi yet busy in strengthening newly formed AAP government in Punjab has now decided to spread its network in Haryana, Himachal and Gujarat states also as such unsatisfied senior political leaders of parties in opposition including Congress, INLD, BSP, JJP and even few unsatisfied BJP leaders denied tickets in last Vidhan Sabha polls has now started searching their future political career in AAP. Recently, while talking to media persons Ram Kumar Gautam MLA Narnaul suggested all ruling government Ministers, MLAs and MPs wholeheartedly support people in the state to keep alive ruling government and remain alert in their constituencies. Present political scenario in Haryana

state reveals, Congress in the state in spite of having strength of 31 members in Vidhan Sabha facing severe crisis in the party due to in-fight between senior party leaders as well as alleged erratic policies by party high command. INLD having a single MLA in the state out of total number of 90 Vidhan Sabha constituencies have no political base in the state. However, JJP having 10 MLAs in Haryana state have alliance with BJP to form government in the state but most of JJP legislators are seen unsatisfied feeling themselves neglected and may switch over to AAP if given chance to contest in coming Vidhan Sabha polls in 2024 in case of entry of AAP in Haryana state. It is only due to expected entry of AAP in Haryana state, senior Congress leaders like former Haryana chief minister including Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Kumari Shehja, Kuldeep Bishnoi, Capt. Ajay Yadav and Kiran Choudhary are active in holding frequent meetings with Congress high command to keep party alive in Haryana state.

Treatment for rare, chronic bone infection in both ankles

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

Addressing a press conference in a local hotel Dr Ravi Gupta having vast experience in Orthopedics surgery presently Director of Orthopaedics (Sports medicines) of Fortis Hospital at Mohali told that 11-year-old Ambala-based patient was suffering from pain and limp due to severe pain around both his ankles and was not able to walk for some time since the past 8 months. His condition worsened with every passing day, despite seeking treatment from several hospitals.

Dr Gupta said, patient visited hospital in November last year where his medical investigations revealed rare bone infection in both the leg bones, adjacent to the ankle joint, due to which the patient was walking with a limp and was in excruciating pain. The investigation also revealed that due to infection in the leg bones, there was fluid collection in both muscle joints.



HIGHLIGHT

□ Patient had Brodie's Abscess in both legs – a rare bone infection caused by microorganisms that had caused painful inflammation in the bone marrow, above both his ankles for the past one year

He said, timely intervention by the highly-skilled team of doctors led by him successfully operated on both the legs in a single surgery. "We also conducted Ankle Arthroscopy as the patients MRI had also revealed an effusion in the ankle joint. Ankle arthroscopy is a procedure where the ankle joint is operated with a scope in a minimally invasive manner with small cuts. It leads to better and faster recovery after the surgery.

Discussing the case, Dr Gupta said, "Patient had Brodie's Abscess in both legs – a

rare bone infection caused by microorganisms that had caused painful inflammation in the bone marrow, above both his ankles for the past one year. As the infection progressed, the patient had started walking with a limp. The infection had also infected the growth plate of both leg bones." Growth plate is the plate of cartilage which adds to the height of the person.

Sports meet organised at Gian Jyoti Institute of Management & Technology-Mohali



FW BUREAU

Gian Jyoti Institute of Management and Technology, Mohali came up with the Sports Day Meet on its campus wherein students keenly participated with full fervor and enthusiasm. Sports day eventually started with The Ribbon Ceremony. Team Competitions like Basketball, Kho Kho and the Tug of War were held wherein team spirit was seen. Students actively participated in the Track events such as

100meters and lemon spoon race. Addressing on this occasion, J. S. Bedi, Chairman GJIMT said that sports are an integral part of student's life which is necessary for the overall development of students. Dr. Aneet Bedi, Director GJIMT, in her address also motivated the students to participate in sports and other physical activities to achieve physical as well as psychological health. Winners of various competitions were felicitated in prize distribution ceremony held at the end of the event.

Punjab CM receives complaints on corruption helpline

M KUMAR Chandigarh

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday said he has received a complaint on the newly-launched anti-corruption helpline. In a tweet, he said: "I received a complaint on our anti-corruption action helpline. Directed the authorities for immediate investigation, those caught asking for bribes will face severe consequences. Corruption won't be tolerated in Punjab now." "The anti-bribery helpline 9501 200 200 has received around 20,000 complaints so far. However, a majority of these do not have an audio or video proof to support their claim. Asking strong cognizance of the complaints received on the helpline number, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has issued orders to register a case against a clerk of tehsil office in Jalandhar. AAP spokesperson Malwinder Singh Kang and state Joint Secretary Sunny Ahluwalia told the media the government is continuously taking public-friendly decisions and the Chief Minister on Friday making a big change in the formula of pension to the MLAs, announced 'one MLA, one pension' to cut down multiple pensions of MLAs. Ahluwalia said Mann has taken a historic decision by making a big change in the formula of pensions being received by MLAs and ministers.

SGPC objects Himachal CM's Statement on photos of Sant Bhindranwale



FW BUREAU

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhani has raised strong objection to the statement of Chief Minister (CM) of Himachal Pradesh (HP) Jai Ram Thakur regarding the issue of Sikh flags and photo of Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale. "Sadly, instead of restraining the police administration on this issue, the state Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has made a statement against the Sikh sentiments. It is not appropriate for him to question the photo of Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale. He added that the constitution of the country gives religious freedom and freedom of expression to everyone but the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh is expressing hatred towards the Sikh leader", said Advocate Dhani. SGPC President said that the Sikhs have always contributed to the progress of the country and served every community without discrimination in times of crisis or calamity befalling the country. He added that the HP CM should not forget that if the whole country is enjoying the warmth of freedom today, it is because of the great contribution of the Sikhs.

Sub-standard material used in 64 multi-storey buildings in NCR

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

After unfortunate incident of collapse in a multi-storey building Chintels Paradiso Society at Gurugram on February 10 this year in which two residents died and several others residing in the building sustained severe injured when Haryana state government constituted a committee of experts from IIT New Delhi and IIT Roorkee led by a senior government bureaucrat to investigate the reason of building collapse and registered case against builders apart from a thorough structural audit of all multi-storey buildings in the state, besides another five buildings at Gurugram. Information reveals, complaints of use of sub-standard building material in construction of buildings has been detected in 64 multi-storey buildings in National Capital Region (NCR) in which sub-standard building material has been alleged used, which include maximum number of 58 multi-storey buildings at Gurugram, three multi-storey buildings at Jhajjar, two multi-



storey buildings at Faridabad and one multi-storey building at Sonapat. Investigating team experts has started thorough structural audit as regard all multi-storey buildings in Haryana, especially in five districts in NCR. The issue was widely raised in recent Vidhan Sabha session at Chandigarh by several prominent leaders of political parties in opposition including Abhey Chautala INLD General Secretary, Neeraj Sharma Congress MLA and independent MLA Rakesh Daulatabad in whose constituency area Chintels Paradiso Society mishap happened, who raised a question over this highly

sensitive issue caused danger to the lives of innocents residents in the building due to neglect on the part of builders demanding stern action under section 304 IPC against those responsible for mishap used sub-standard building material in construction and also violated Haryana Building Code 2017 having no provision for structural audit on completion of construction of multi-storey buildings by an expert organization prior to possession by society members. According to investigation report submitted to the committee, it was identified that in as many as 28 multi-storey

242 on-line cheating cases admitted by offenders in Faridabad

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

During police remand six arrested members of a gang arrested by police Cyber Crime Cell Faridabad allegedly involved on-line cheatings admitted 242 frauds posing themselves as insurance company officers. They were identified as Ravinder a resident of Malviya Nagar, Pradeep Kumar resident of Ram Nagar, Tarun Singh resident of Mohan Garden, Amit Aggarwal resident of Bindapur, Ashok Kumar resident of Sirapur all in Delhi and Shaan Mohd resident of Mahoba in U.P. Whereas remaining two members of the gang are yet absconding and police conducting raids for their arrest. Accused of the gang were operating a call centre at Delhi and a cheating case registered against them on the complaint of Vinod Kumar at Faridabad police station a resident of village Tiganon allegedly cheated amount worth Rs 8.5 lakh for release of his insurance amount of policy lying pending with Life Insurance Corporation against a lapse insurance policy. The case was forwarded to Cyber Crime branch for investigation.

Cyber Crime Inspector Basant Kumar told that the gang was running a fake call centre in a commercial building at Janakpuri New Delhi and collecting data of all insurance policy holders, most of those stopped remitting amount towards premium or their insurance policy was lying unpaid in the absence of remitting timely premium when the gang members introducing themselves as insurance company officer assuring them in getting released amount lying pending with the Insurance Corporation quickly remitting in their bank accounts used to collect all particulars and documents from lapsed policy holders who in a hope to get pending amount deposited by them in their irregular account used to forward them all documents required by the cheaters posing themselves as bank employee but failed to get any response after this.

Developmental announcements by ruling Haryana government in budget merely as eyewash: Hooda

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha while addressing media persons after the session accused ruling state government responsible buried state under heavy debts for amount worth Rs 3 lakh crore. Hooda said, ruling state government is in the habit of making tall developmental announcements in the state but fails to implement or complete majority of these generally prove fake. Hooda surprisingly said, the ruling government is in the habit of making fake, lucrative announcements including opening of new



medical colleges in every district, finish unemployment and several others during budget session to attract people in the state which never complete in the absence of funds, even government have to secure fresh loans to pay payment of old loans and meet routine expenses to run the government in

HIGHLIGHT

□ Ruling state government is in the habit of making tall developmental announcements in the state but fails to implement or complete majority of these generally prove fake.

the state, which is merely to divert attention of people in the state well aware of the announcements made while declaring budget by the government are merely an eyewash to attract public attention, headlines in newspapers and remain in power. Hooda said, ruling Haryana government in present budget has fixed a target for amount worth Rs One crore lakh for fresh invest-

ment in Haryana state during year 2022-23 as compared to previous year recorded hardly Rs 1600 crore during the year. Hooda said, this budget has disappointed people in every sector in the state including farmers, labourers, people in trade and small scale industry, employees, unemployed youths as well as every citizen due to fast rising prices of every essential commodity.

'Centre mulling granting online voting rights to 'Pravasi' Indians'

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING STEPS TOWARDS THIS... TO STOP FRAUDULENT VOTING, AND TO HAVE A SINGULAR ELECTORAL ROLL WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED BY ALL THE STATES. SUCH ELECTORAL REFORMS WILL HELP DETERRING BOGUS VOTING

NEW DELHI: The Centre is considering granting online voting rights to Indians working abroad, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju said during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

"I have already told the Election Commission that we will make provisions and give suggestions as to how we will allow our people staying outside the country to cast their votes," Rijju said while replying to a question on 'Pravasi' voting rights raised by Congress member K. Muraleedharan.

"But before making any declaration, we have to ensure the



safety, transparency and protection from any malpractices or misuse," Rijju said.

Responding to another question on 'one nation, one voter ID', the minister said, "The government is considering steps towards this... To stop fraudulent voting, and to have a singular electoral roll which will be followed by all the states. There is a possibility that such electoral reforms will help deterring bogus voting."

"Linking Aadhaar with the electoral roll is one of the ways. As of now, linking Aadhaar with electoral rolls is voluntary.

Our aim is to ensure 'one nation, one electoral roll' to check fraudulent voting and ensure a clean polling process," he said.

Replying to a question raised by Congress member Manish Tewari on whether source code of the EVMs remains with the company which manufactures them, or it is passed on to the EC, Rijju said that it is like appointment of judges. "The judges are appointed by the government, but once they are appointed, they become independent. No one should question the EVMs and there should not be any inference too," he said. **AGENCIES**

N Biren Singh takes oath as CM; Biswajit, Khemchand, Govindas, Nemcha, Awangbow as ministers

SWEARING-IN INCLUDES - FOUR BJP MLAS TH BISWAJIT SINGH, YUMNAM KHEMCHAND, GOVINDAS KONTHOUJAM, NEMCHA KIPGEN, AND ONE NAGA PEOPLE'S FRONT MLA - AWANGBOW NEWMAI

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT Imphal

N Biren Singh on Monday took oath as the Chief Minister of Manipur for the second term at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal. Governor La Ganesan administered the oath of office and secrecy to Biren and five other cabinet ministers, including BJP stalwart Biswajit, who was rumored to be one of the forerunners for the CM's post.

On Sunday evening, union cabinet ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Kiren Rijju, who were BJP observers for the 'election' of the legislative party leader in Manipur, handed over the letter of



unanimously electing former Chief Minister N Biren Singh as the leader of the BJP legislature party.

Today's swearing-in includes - four BJP MLAs Th Biswajit Singh, Yumnam Khemchand, Govindas Konthoujam, Nemcha Kipgen, and one Naga People's Front MLA - Awangbow Newmai. Notably, Biswajit, Khemchand, and Govindas were in the news to be the aspirants for Chief Minister's post.

BJP supremo JP Nadda, who arrived in Imphal today, attended the event. Also among the attendance were Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb, former

Manipur CM Okram Ibobi, leaders of various political parties, and state government officials. After nine days of speculations and various trips to Delhi, the CM's face was declared by Nirmala Sitharaman yesterday after a meeting of less than an hour at the BJP's state head office, Thambal Shangle, Imphal. The BJP kept mum on the announcement of the Chief Minister of the Manipur even after clinching the absolute majority and after nine days of declaration of results, indicating the selection of a new face for the Chief Minister post. But, the former Chief Minister's appointment was a surprising move from the saffron party.

Gita not just religious book but a philosophy: Syed Shahzad

NEW DELHI: The Gujarat government's decision to include the Bhagvad Gita in the syllabus of secondary and higher secondary schools from the upcoming academic year, has been appreciated by the acting chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities, Syed Shahzad.

Justifying teaching the Gita in schools, she said: "It is not just a religious book but a philosophy. It is a sacred scripture."

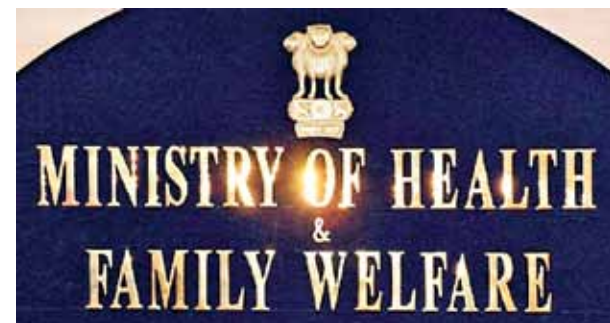
However, she also said: "People who are willing to teach other religious books are also welcome as we cannot say anything on this. Different people have different sentiments in this country. Everyone is welcome to have their own views on this."

As per the Commission, no objection has been lodged with them from anywhere on

this issue, no action can be taken in advance in this matter. Starting from the 2022-23 academic year, the state government has decided to add the Hindu religious book to the curriculum of classes 6 to 12. Meanwhile, addressing the violent situation in West Bengal's Birbhum district, where a dozen houses were set ablaze by an angry mob, Syed Shahzad said that the Commission is preparing to send a notice to the State Chief Secretary, regarding the death of eight people in the attack that was allegedly triggered by the murder of a Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader, Bhadr Sheik. "We will send a notice to the Chief Secretary and seek a report and members of the Commission are also contemplating to visit the area soon," she said. **AGENCIES**



'Health research budget insufficient to meet existing, future challenges'



NEW DELHI: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare in its report has said that the increase in the health research budget year on year is very meagre and is not commensurate with the tasks DHR-ICMR are entrusted to deal with. The allocated budget is grossly insufficient to meet the existing and future healthcare challenges, said the Committee.

"The Committee feels that higher budgetary allocation for health research will result in more research based findings which in turn would help in devising more informed affordable and practical plans, methodologies for diagnosis

and treatment of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Higher allocation for health research would also make the country better prepared for tackling any future outbreaks and health exigencies" said the committee in its report which was tabled in Parliament on Thursday.

The Committee has also recommended considering global standards with respect to investment in health research adding that the Government must invest at least 0.1 per cent of the GDP in the next five years.

Taking note that no allocation has been done for Covid-19 to ICMR in 2022-

23 and also no expenditure has been incurred under the scheme PM-ABHIM for which Rs 140 crores were allocated in RE 2021-22, the Committee said that the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) which was launched in October last year has not yet seen the light of the day. The Committee feels that the PM-ABHIM is to be implemented from 2021-22 to 2025-26 i.e. for 5 years, thus non-utilisation of funds allocated for the very first year casts serious doubts over the scheme achieving its intended targets.

The Standing Committee has also expressed concern that many states are not performing well on several health parameters and lack the adequate absorption capacity to judiciously manage the allocated funds. The Committee has recommended to the government to incentivise the States and UTs to make ground assessment of the efficacy of the health policies and help the states design policies suiting the needs of the respective region. **AGENCIES**

TN issues red alert in coastal areas fearing Lankan refugee influx

CHENNAI: After 16 Sri Lankans landed at Rameswaram and Mandapam on Tuesday, the Tamil Nadu government has issued a red alert in the coastal areas to prevent a larger inflow of refugees from the island nation.

Sri Lanka is beset with an economic crisis with prices of essential commodities including milk, rice and other items going through the roof and fuel prices also shooting up. There are reports of people having to stand in queues for hours to get essential items while those without money are left stranded. While the three adults who had reached Rameswaram on Tuesday morning were remanded to judicial custody along with two children, the ten who came at night were shifted to the Mandapam camp. This was owing to the directive from the Tamil Nadu government to consider those who arrive as refugees. A senior state government official told IANS, "During 1980 and then 2010 during civil wars, Sri Lankan Tamils had come in large numbers to Tamil Nadu, and around 1 lakh people are still in rehabilitation camps in



the state. However, according to the United Nations charter of 1951, economic crisis in a country cannot be considered to provide refugee status."

The Tamil Nadu government has contacted the Centre on the status of those refugees who reach the state. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin while speaking in the Assembly on Thursday said that the state government would act according to the directive of the Union government.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu police said that on Friday morning some Sri Lankan Tamils had reached near Rameswaram but were spotted by fishermen and sent back to Sri Lanka. The 'Q' branch of the Tamil Nadu police and the Marine police are taking steps to prevent a larger inflow of refugees. **AGENCIES**

Oct 5 to be celebrated as 'National Dolphin Day' every year

MUMBAI: Coinciding with the day that river dolphin was declared as India's National Aquatic Animal, October 5 would now be celebrated as the 'National Dolphin Day' every year, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced on Friday. Just as a tiger is considered an indicator of a good forest, river dolphins are an indicator of a healthy river and act as an umbrella species of the river ecosystem. There are currently two species of the river dolphins inhabiting India, Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) and the Indus river dolphin (*Platanista minor*). Ganges river dolphin is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 in India, and was declared as the National Aquatic Animal of India on October 5, 2010. They are also accorded the highest protection priority for conservation, especially after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced 'Project Dolphin' in his Independence Day speech in 2020. **AGENCIES**

Either surrender or face consequences, Manipur CM tells drug peddlers

IMPHAL: Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Friday gave a strong warning to all drug peddlers operating in the northeastern states to surrender or face the consequences.

In his first media interaction, Singh said that the abuse of drugs is destroying the future of the young generation and creating a serious negative impact in the society. "Due to the misuse of drugs, lots of lives have been lost untimely. Our government's war against drugs would be intensified. All kinds of laws including the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act would be invoked to deal with the drug menace," the Chief Minister said. He said that after the new government assumed office on March 21, huge quantities of drugs worth over Rs 9 crore have been seized from different parts of the state and two drug traffickers were arrested. Taking to Twitter, Singh said: "With the massive seizure of drugs worth over 9 crores in international market under 'War on Drugs,' the fight against drugs will further get intensified now. I strongly urge all illicit drug traffickers to surrender or face consequences."

The Manipur government has recently formed an Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) to conduct raids and take appropriate legal actions against the drug peddlers and abusers. The Chief Minister said that the police should chase the drug smugglers and should not give excuses that the traffickers run away. He said that drones would be used to check the illegal plantation of poppy plants. Besides the state police the central forces would also be used wherever and whenever the situation dictates. **AGENCIES**



On Stalin's trip, TN eyeing tie-ups with UAE in MSME sector

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin who is on a four-day visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) met its Minister for Economy, Abdullah Bin Touq Al Marri, and Minister for Foreign Trade Thani Bin Ahmed Al Zequodi at the Dubai International Financial Centre on Friday, an official statement said. The Tamil Nadu government, according to the statement, is for entering into a tie-up with the MSME sector of the UAE for improving the industrial climate and the prospects for Tamil Nadu and the UAE in

agriculture, food processing, textiles, jewelry and gems, electric vehicles, and renewable energy sectors.

According to the statement, the Chief Minister elaborated on the prevailing conditions in Tamil Nadu that were favourable for business and invited both the ministers to the state.

A member of the Chief Minister's delegation told IANS that "food processing industries, logistic parks, and investment into major infrastructure projects in Tamil Nadu were discussed between Stalin and the UAE ministers. **AGENCIES**

Hooda attempts to tie knot between dis-satisfied Congress leaders & high command

SATISH HANDA

After sweeping Punjab with their 'Jhadu' in recent Vidhan Sabha polls now Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) succeeded to form government in the state having victory in 92 Vidhan Sabha constituencies out of total number of 117. Earlier, AAP had formed government at Delhi in Vidhan Sabha polls in February 2015 winning 67

seats out of total number of 70, followed by again won 62 seats in February 2020 elections and formed government second time. Sources reveal, AAP has decided to participate in coming Vidhan Sabha polls in Haryana likely to be held in October 2024 and has already started political activities in the state.

Information reveals, AAP has announced to contest in all

48 seats which include 29 Municipal and 19 'Nagar Parishad' seats to be conducted by Urban Local Body department in Haryana state likely to be held within a couple of months.

Moreover, village Panchayat polls in the state are also pending since past about a year and there is possibility AAP may contest in these much awaited polls in Haryana state as such leaders of both ruling as well

as Congress having strength of 30 MLAs in the state are worried.

Tension among senior Congress leaders in Haryana state exists due to rift between groups of party leaders led by former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda having blessings by Rahul Gandhi and state party president Shelja former Union Minister having

blessings by Smt Sonia Gandhi as such Congress ruling over in several states in past years now reduced to only few states and badly defeated in Vidhan Sabha polls in five states recently. Sources reveal, Hooda is trying his best to tie knot between dis-satisfied party leaders and Congress high command and resolve all issues between senior party leaders. Sources further re-

veal, Hooda had a talk with party high command and made agree to have changes in party leadership and there is possibility for appointment of state president a person of Hooda's choice since Hooda is the only leader in Haryana state having faith of all dis-satisfied Congress leaders in Haryana state as well as senior national level leaders and also party high command.

GOA NEWSLETTER

Pramod Sawant becomes Goa CM for second time

DOMINICK RODRIGUES Panjim

Goa caretaker Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has been unanimously elected by the BJP leaders to head the Goa Government for the second time. The decision came after a marathon meeting by BJP Central observer and Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar with each BJP MLA, followed by legislature party meeting. Ending speculation that Sawant would be replaced after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Tomar said that Sawant would continue to be the leader of the Goa Legislature Party for the next five years. The swearing in ceremony of Sawant as chief minister will be held on March 28. Meanwhile, even as the BJP pondered the choice of chief ministers for the various states that they won

from, some MLAs got to work in their respective constituencies. Prominent in this respect was Aldona village MLA Carlos Alvares Ferreira, who started hot-mixing of damaged roads and cleanup of the river environment.

Ferreira, who quit his job as India's Assistant Advocate General to help create a "cleaner, greener environment and political system in Goa, highlighted keeping his election manifesto promises. He started off with the cleanup of the Mapuca river which has been clogged with fast-growing water hyacinth plant and thanked Cecile Pinto of Aldona Matere for highlighting this issue. "Scientists, environmentalists and many others seeking a good ecology and environment are helping us, and the water hyacinth is the cause of our trip here to this river," he said.



While local fisherfolk were facing hardships due to the water hyacinth choking the river and preventing fish breeding, access and damaging the nets, village Moira Deputy Sarpanch Oswald Cordeiro teamed up with local residents to manually remove these weeds from the Mapuca River over a two-kms stretch in their effort to clear a five-kms

weed-covered area. Meanwhile, signalling his no-nonsense approach towards corruption and goondaism problems, MLA Ferreira said "I will not allow goondaism in Aldona (constituency) and I will work to regain its pride. Calangute Congress MLA Michael Lobo lambasted the Central Government for increasing fuel prices and said that the BJP wants

common people to use chulhas instead. "Internationally fuel prices have not risen, but they have risen in India. Everything becomes costly in the wake of increased fuel prices and if this continues, what will one earn and eat?", he queried while leading a protest to submit a memorandum at the Collector's office along with other Congress MLAs including former Goa chief minister Digambar Kamat and newly-elected Congress MLAs Yuri Alemao and Rudolf Fernandes. Meanwhile, farmers in South Goa villages of Benaullim, Seraulim, Navelim and Colva are agitating against the Western Bypass being made on their lands and have demanded that this project be built on stilts, instead of their lands.

The farmers lamented that the PWD contractor continued filling low-lying areas and

water bodies with mud, which was likely to cause major flooding in the monsoons, besides destruction of the environment. Newly-elected AAP MLA Venzy Viegas led a protest against this construction of the bypass on land without stilts and noted that farmers have cultivated their fields, but the PWD is continuing its work on the western bypass project. Viegas told media that the concerned department should have taken into consideration the 100-year floods and the project's effect for future generations. "It seems that the water bodies and fields will be under mud by the time we approach the court. We have plans to appeal to the Supreme Court, but we are expecting the petitioner - who has filed a case before the National Green Tribunal - to first make a move in this regard," he said.

Expediting FTAs likely to help in exports' rebound

The Centre's announcement that India's merchandise exports have already surpassed the target set for this fiscal year, with overseas shipments crossing a record \$400 billion mark by March 21, brings much-needed cheer to an economy still struggling to recover from the bruising impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The export rebound, coming on the back of last fiscal's pandemic-induced slump in global demand, is particularly heartening as the key value-added sectors of engineering goods and apparel and garments have done well this year. The fact that the export growth has been achieved against the backdrop of persistent logistical challenges, including container shortages and port congestion that have pushed up freight rates, is laudable and reflects the concerted effort made by the government in coordination with industry and the country's overseas missions. Interestingly, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal made a pointed reference to the role played by India's embassies and envoys in exploring new opportunities for Indian products, and if the current momentum in exports is to be sustained in the coming years, the diplomatic corps will need to enlarge their role in trade promotion. Imports have outpaced exports this year, almost doubling the trade deficit in the April-February period to \$175 billion. The gap is wider than the pre-pandemic year of 2019-2020 as well and points to the pressing need to step up the pace of export growth if the deficit is to be shrunk meaningfully. With the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia now posing fresh problems for exporters seeking to ship goods to not only these countries but other markets in Europe as well, policymakers must go beyond stopgap measures such as enabling rupee-rouble trade and expedite ongoing negotiations on the raft of free trade deals so as to at least help lower some of the tariff walls.



VINAY KAURA EXPLAINS WHY IT'S TIME FOR INDIA TO REDEFINE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA

Nations' relations during war and peace

Russia's war on Ukraine has decisively shaped international opinion. Indian foreign policy is also going to be affected in a profound manner. The most important question facing Indian diplomacy is how to navigate India's great power relations in the future. While there has always remained a pro-Russian popular sentiment in India, rooted in Moscow's support during the Cold War era, particularly against the pro-Pakistani diplomatic activism by powerful Western countries in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a majority of Indians today seem taken aback by Russia's misadventure against a sovereign country.

That Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, is moving closer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the hope of membership may be a sufficient reason for Russia to be infuriated, but it is still an insufficient condition for Ukraine to be attacked in violation of all norms of international law. However, India has not directly criticised Moscow's action. Memories of the historic Indo-Soviet partnership still seem to tip the scales when it comes to India's vote at the UNSC. Western countries have criticised India's repeated abstentions at the UNSC on the issue of the Russian invasion, while the Kremlin has praised India for taking an "independent and balanced" position. While India has not cared much about Western criticism of its "independent" approach to foreign policy, it is the Russian angle this time which has come to restrain India's strategic autonomy.

President Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine has put New Delhi in a foreign policy conundrum that will not disappear soon because Russia's action has changed the global order. The Western world has imposed unprecedented sanctions against Russia and banned energy imports. New Delhi is concerned about the impact of these sanctions on global finance, energy supplies, and transportation, amid growing signs that they will constrain India's ability to import Russian oil.

The image of the Russian military might be tarnished now as Russian forces have under-performed in their Ukrainian campaign. Ukraine has been able to hold the Russian forces back for a long time, which can be seen as a moral victory for a weaker nation. Mr. Putin is neither a crafty strategist nor a charismatic hero who has risen from the ashes of the Soviet defeat to lead Russia into a new period of resurgence.



His reputation has been severely bruised because a comedian-turned-politician next door has exposed the hollowness of Russia's military tactics and operational planning.

The real strategic challenge

China's blatant attempts to project its rising power as well as Russia's threats against its "near abroad" will continue to test India's strategic choices. Nevertheless, what must worry India is the fact that Russia will now become increasingly dependent on Chinese support to defend its policies. Mr. Putin may not know what he eventually wants in Ukraine, but he is aware of the ruble collapsing, the punishing sanctions being imposed, and the dire state of the Russian economy. This will push him further into China's military and economic orbit.

India's real strategic challenge is surfacing in the Indo-Pacific with the rise of China, as Beijing has consistently sought to expand its zone of military, economic and political influence through the Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, instead of smoothing the ruffled edges of India's insecurities, which are rooted in an undefined boundary, China has only aggravated them further. Though India would like the U.S. to continue to focus on China, it is not possible for Washington to ignore Russia's aggression along NATO's periphery.

Since the end of the Cold War, Indians have been debating the contours of strategic autonomy. For some, the notion is a re-branding of India's non-aligned posture during the Cold War. Others say that the

doctrine of 'multi-alignment' is the 21st century avatar of strategic autonomy as India has been expanding its engagement with all the major powers.

Reality has many dimensions. And in this case, history is relevant. Indian nationalists of various shades still fondly remember which countries were India's allies during the Cold War and which were not. Former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's advocacy of neutrality in the bloc politics was justified in the pursuit of an independent post-colonial foreign policy. The Soviet Union was seen as a trustworthy partner against Western hegemony. Following the disintegration of the USSR, India joined Russia and China against the unipolarity of the U.S. The purpose of this trilateral initiative was to promote a multi-polar world to constrain the U.S.'s unbridled power and ambition. India was also uncomfortable with the arrogance that defined Western attitudes towards Russia in the immediate post-Cold War period. For some time, this common concern about unipolarity put the three countries on the same path towards mutual cooperation and understanding. Later, Brazil and South Africa were also brought into this coalition. However, it soon became clear that India and China did not see eye to eye. Moreover, India was determined to maintain its partnership with Russia, an important arms supplier. Its ties with the U.S. have also improved significantly since the end of the Cold War. But continuing dependence on Russian weaponry has become India's strategic headache.

An unpredictable Russia

Nostalgia cannot be allowed to trump reality. Mr. Putin seems too frozen in old-fashioned grievances against the West to appreciate the value of India's friendship. Much of New Delhi's disillusionment stems from a failure to understand not only Mr. Putin's political thinking, but also Russia's place in the emerging global order. If it was a nuclear-armed superpower yesterday, Russia seems to be behaving like a nuclear-armed bully today. Under Mr. Putin, Russia is in a state of transition, swinging wildly from one crisis to another. Therefore, it is too risky for India to pursue vague aims vis-à-vis Russia in these uncertain times.

Those in India echoing Russian resentment against the eastward expansion of NATO are reminded by Western analysts that a NATO-Russia Council was formed specifically to alleviate Russia's concerns, and that Russia was recognised as one of the world's leading industrial powers through a formal admission into the elite G-7 not on the basis of its industrial might, but to soften its bruised superpower ego. Truth lies somewhere in between, which perhaps explains India's stance at the UNSC.

Everyone in and around government must think seriously about India's relations with Russia as the unfolding Ukrainian tragedy has introduced a new era in international relations. Though Moscow has drifted much closer to Beijing, and is sharply critical of India's engagement with the U.S. and the Quad, India finds it difficult to extend support to Ukraine. Prime Minister Narendra Modi may still personally like Mr. Putin, but he understands that in the halls of global diplomacy, nations have interests which are not determined by personalities alone. It goes without saying that the U.S. is the country most likely to bolster India's future as a great power.

It is not going to be easy for New Delhi to maintain its balancing act in the future as Washington hardens its position further. It is inevitable that during this time of diplomatic and strategic uncertainty, New Delhi needs to be ready to radically redefine its relationship with Moscow.

Vinay Kaura is Assistant Professor, Department of International Affairs and Security Studies, Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, and a Non-resident Scholar at the Middle East Institute, Washington D.C. Views are personal.

FIVE OBSERVATIONS

THE INVASION OF UKRAINE: WHAT NEXT FOR RUSSIA?

1 WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR?

Ukrainian counter-attacks are driving the Russians back some distance in a few places. The Russians have just failed to win it quickly and cheaply.

2 WHY HAS RUSSIA INVADED UKRAINE?

Russian President Vladimir Putin shattered the peace in Europe by unleashing war on a democracy of 44 million people, his justification was that modern, Western-leaning Ukraine was a constant threat.

3 WHAT DOES PUTIN WANT?

The Russian leader's initial aim was to overrun Ukraine and depose its government, ending for good its desire to join the Western defensive alliance Nato.

4 WHY PUTIN WANTS A NEUTRAL UKRAINE

Since Ukraine achieved independence in 1991, as the Soviet Union collapsed, it has gradually veered to the West - both the EU and Nato. Russia's leader aims to reverse that, seeing the fall of the Soviet Union as the "disintegration of historical Russia".

5 IS THERE A WAY OUT OF THIS WAR?

Both sides have made progress in negotiations but the prospect of a meeting involving the two presidents, considered key by Kyiv to ending the "hot phase" of the war, appears some way off.

LETTERBOX

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HARISH S. WANKHEDE ON HOW MAKING MORE FILMS ON DALITS AND ADIVASIS WILL LIBERATE HINDI FILM INDUSTRY

Adding spices to meaningful cinema

Three recent Hindi films — Jhund, Gangubai Kathiawadi and The Kashmir Files — suggest that Bollywood's conventional cinematic temperament is witnessing a bold change. These films are based on real-life stories, narrate the unnerving struggles of minority social groups, and reprimand dominant social taboos. The box office success of these films, especially of The Kashmir Files, may inspire filmmakers to make more films on crucial social realities and sensitive historical events. Though The Kashmir Files has received growing support from the state, civil society and filmgoers, it is the other two films that have effectively challenged Bollywood's conventional narrative style. By showcasing the heroic tales of the most disadvantaged (the Dalits, in Jhund) and vulnerable (sex workers, in Gangubai Kathiawadi) sections on the silver screen, Bollywood has offered its own version of social justice.

Compared to artistic 'world cinema', Bollywood has been unapologetic for serving its audience melodramatic films infused with banal songs, dance and action. The logic of commercial success has often disallowed filmmakers from engaging with sensitive or controversial subjects.



Though early Hindi cinema presented the stories of the poor working class (Do Bigha Zamin), migrants (Jagte Raho), patriarchal maladies (Sahib Bibi aur Ghulam), and political turmoil (Garm Hava), the logic of mainstream cinema has largely revolved around the commercial interests and values of the upper caste elites. Cinematic genres depicting social and religious fissures with serious intellectual and creative abilities have been rare or have often been referred

to as 'art house cinema' or 'parallel cinema'. Films depicting caste-based social divisions or highlighting the exploitation of Adivasis have been rare and few.

Dalits and Adivasis comprise one-fourth of India's population. In large States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Punjab, the average Dalit population is 25%. In Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, the Adivasi population ranges from 20% to 30%. A majority of the Dalit-Adivasi population faces social neglect and humiliation or coercion by state institutions. They suffer from socially sanctioned atrocities. They are forced to migrate to cities to engage in precarious labour. And the women often live in fear of violence. Against such brutal repressions, Dalits and Adivasis have had impressive sociopolitical struggles. Yet, the mainstream Hindi film industry has turned a deaf ear to their problems, claims and dreams. It has been disengaged from those challenging upper caste social values. On occasion, when it has offered stories around caste, the Dalit characters have been stereotypically presented as vulnerable (Sujata), powerless (Ankur) or wretched (Damul) and requiring the assistance of their upper caste masters.

Today, patriotism (Raazi, Mulk, Kesari),

Islamic terrorism (A Wednesday, Neerja, Hotel Mumbai), secularism (Chak De! India, Haider), communal tensions (Shahid, Parzania, Firaq) and inter-community love stories (Ishaqzaade, Kedarnath, Padmaavat) are popular themes in Bollywood. We also see a growing tendency of portraying Muslims as violent aggressors or anti-national. Though The Kashmir Files makes a bold claim for realistic portrayal, it stereotypes the Muslim as the 'other' or the terrorist. In the name of artistic liberty, tragic historical realities are twisted so that the narrative can be fitted to the political rhetoric of the governing class.

On the other hand, there are few films about the problems of Dalits (such as Masaan and Article 15) or that portray sex workers sensitively on screen (such as Chameli and Chandni Bar). Jhund and Gangubai Kathiawadi therefore deserve appreciation. Jhund showcases the everyday struggles of vagabond Dalit youngsters, haunted by the humiliating gaze of society. Gangubai Kathiawadi narrates the torturous tale of sex workers and showcases their grit and quest to live life with dignity and pride.

Harish S. Wankhede is an assistant professor at the Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi. Views are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

How colonialism subverts a fledgling democracy

Those who have seen David Lean's 'Lawrence of Arabia' may recall its rather downer ending with the Arab Council-administered Damascus sliding into chaos as its new rulers, shown as overwhelmingly Bedouin, bicker ceaselessly among themselves and are unable to get to grips with running a modern government, while cynical colonial representatives stand in the wings to take over. Does this stand historical scrutiny, or is it just Hollywood History?

The second largely, but not only due to artistic licence and the dictates of fashioning a celluloid epic. Nor is it even due to the prevailing Western view of the Middle East as a volatile region, notorious for its political instability, social backwardness, religious zeal, and opposition

to modernisation.

This perception may be valid, but rather to go down the obvious but rather erroneous path of attributing this to the region's prevailing ethos, evokes the seminal question that what caused this state of affairs, and was it inevitable/avoidable?

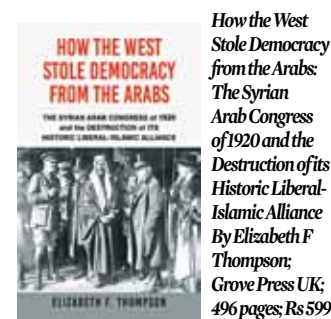
Offering some credible, and rather startling, answers to these questions is Middle East historian Elizabeth F. Thompson in her tale of the short-lived Faisal regime in Syria, the Syrian Arab Congress, and their entwined and sordid fate, and its consequences.

In 'How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs: The Syrian Arab Congress of 1920 and the Destruction of its Historic Liberal-Islamic Alliance', Thompson, a Chair holder in the American University's School

Nor is it even due to the prevailing Western view of the Middle East as a volatile region, notorious for its political instability, social backwardness, religious zeal, and opposition to modernisation

of International Service, presents a riveting story, brimming with possibilities of not only the history and development of the region in question, but even the wider world.

As we learn, there was a small interval of hope in the wake of the First



World War as an unprecedented coalition, comprising both liberal reformers and traditional clerics, as well as other elites, sought to lead them 'Greater Syria' (present day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine) to a democratic, inclusive, and largely progressive future.

Even the US was in favour, but, as she shows, the domestic setbacks and indisposition of its President, and the machinations, racial attitudes, and territorial grab imperative of the victorious colonial powers, the UK and France, foiled these hopes - and the consequences have been bedevilling the Middle East since then.

Prevailing trends do not indicate that the lost time/chance - the book title is the clue - will be regained any time soon, as Thompson shows, citing the example of the Arab Spring.

She starts with debunking the depiction of Arab 'governance' in Lean's epic - they were not just the Bedouins but also educated, urban-dwelling elite who had held administrative/military posts under the Ottoman rule, and some other myths.

And then the life and efforts of King Faisal, cleric Rashid Rida, politician Dr Abd Al-Rahman Shahbandar, American envoy Charles Crane, and a clutch of British and French politicians, diplomats and soldiers - some honourable and forward looking, and some racist and devious/oblivious, including (former Viceroy of India) Lord Curzon, brings to life the account of hopes generated, encouraged, and ultimately betrayed, in the region, the great European capitals, and the League of Nations in Geneva.

ALSO READ | NEW RECORD HIGH: INDIA ACHIEVES \$400 BN MERCHANDISE EXPORTS TARGET * P7 | WINGS INDIA 2022 ALL SET TO TAKE OFF IN HYDERABAD * P7

NEWSBRIEFS

Akasa Air plans to launch first flight in June

NEW DELHI: SIndia's newest budget airline Akasa Air plans to launch its first commercial flight in June. The airline's chief executive Vijay Dube said on Friday that they are working with the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to get the required clearances for commencing the air operations. He was speaking at a session at Wings India 2022, India's civil aviation show at Begumpet Airport which was formally inaugurated by Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday. Dube, however, did not reveal which Indian cities the airline is looking at for commencing the operations. Backed by billionaire Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, the airline had received a no-objection certificate (NOC) from MoCA in October last year. Dube said that the airline plans to have 18 aircraft within 12 months from launch and add 12-14 a year later. Akasa Air had placed an order for 72 Boeing 737 MAX jets in November last year. **AGENCIES**

Airtel prepays Rs 8,815 cr to clear deferred liabilities for spectrum

NEW DELHI: Digital communications solutions provider Bharti Airtel on Friday said it has paid Rs 8,815 crore towards part prepayment of deferred liabilities pertaining to spectrum acquired in auction of year 2015. Accordingly, the payment was made to the Department of Telecom, Government of India.

"The prepayment is for installments due in FY 2027 and FY 2028," the company said in a statement. "Over the last four months, Airtel has cleared INR 24,334 crores of its deferred spectrum liabilities much ahead of scheduled maturities." **AGENCIES**

SEBI proposes to reduce timelines for share buy backs, open offers

MUMBAI: Securities market regulator SEBI of Friday proposed to reduce the time period taken for share 'buy backs' and 'open offers', on the back of technological advancements made in the tendering and settlement of shares.

"Considering the technological advancements in digital and fintech and changes made in the manner of tendering and settlement of shares, a need was felt to review the overall timelines for procedural activities, including the duration of the tendering period, involved in the open offers and buy-back tender offers..."

"... so as to conclude the same in a more efficient and time bound manner and also to synchronise the timelines of similar activities across all the tender offers, i.e. Open Offers, Buybacks and Delisting Offers", to the extent possible," it said in a Consultation Paper.

The regulator has proposed changes to various procedural activities involved in the 'buy back' tender offers which would help reduce the overall time required in the 'open offer' process from 43 working



days to 36 working days.

Besides, other proposed amendments would help reduce the overall time required in the 'open offer' process from the existing timeline of 62 working days to proposed timeline of 42 working days.

"It is proposed that the 5 working days' period required for publishing of DPS (detailed public statement) from the

PA (public announcement) may be reduced to 3 working days and the requirement of DLOF (draft letter of offer) submission to SEBI within 5 working days from the DPS may be changed to 5 working days from the date of PA, i.e. two working days from the date of DPS," the SEBI said in one of its proposals.

"Further, considering the

time constraint involved in creation of escrow account, which is required to be done at least two working days prior to the DPS, it is proposed that deposit of money in the escrow account may be linked with filing of the DLOF with the SEBI and may be effected at least two working days prior to the date of the DLOF." **AGENCIES**

Tata Teleservices hits 5% upper circuit, rise over 1,200% in 1 yr

NEW DELHI: Shares of Tata Teleservices hit the 5 per cent upper circuit on Friday, and it had risen over 1,200 per cent in the past one-year period.

A year ago, shares of the company were at just Rs 13. At 3.27 p.m. on Friday, it was locked in the upper circuit at Rs 167. Mumbai-based Tata Teleservices, a subsidiary of the Tata Group, deals in broadband, telecommunications and cloud services.

Notably, the shares of the company hit the 5 per cent upper circuit in several instances in the recent past. It is important to note that the



rise in share prices of the company comes at a time when major Indian telecom operators have raised their prepaid tariffs by around 20 per cent. Also, the country preparing

to launch the high-speed 5G network and augmenting the broadband Internet services in all villages are likely to have supported the telecom scrip. **AGENCIES**

India intends to add 100-120 aircraft every year: Scindia

NEW DELHI: India, the fastest growing civil aviation market in the world, intends to add 100-120 aircraft every year to meet the growing demand, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday.

Addressing the Wings India 2022 at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad, he said that India is looking at tremendous expansion in areas of airlines, airports and every facet of the civil aviation eco-system.

He said that fleet augmentation is also important for the sector. The country, which had 400



aircraft in 2013-14, has grown its fleet to 710 aircraft in the last seven years. "We added 310 aircraft. We intend to add 100-120 aircraft every year as we go forward," he said.

Scindia also urged the airlines to increase the fleet of wide-bodied aircraft along with their thrust on

narrow-bodied aircraft. "It is not enough to connect all points in India. We need to connect the world to India. Therefore, the Indian flag carriers should increase long-haul aircraft to touch every corner of the world."

He said that the aviation sector has emerged stronger, fitter and is ready to face challenges and opportunities. As India celebrates 75 years of independence and aims to emerge as a new powerful nation in next 25 years, civil aviation has extremely important role to play, he added. **AGENCIES**

BMW India to increase prices from April 2022



NEW DELHI: Luxury automobile manufacturer BMW India said it will increase prices by up to 3.5 per cent across its model range effective from April 1.

The price increase will be brought into effect to adjust the material and logistics costs, impact of current geo-political situation and exchange rates. Earlier, another luxury carmaker, Mercedes-Benz India had announced an upward revision in price of its entire model range effective from April 1. According to Mercedes-Benz India, the imminent price correction would be in the range of 3 per cent across the entire model range. It said that the constant increase in input prices in addition to an increase in logistics rates have been exerting significant pressure on the overall costs of the company. **AGENCIES**

Petrol, diesel prices hiked again, 4th time increase during last 5 days

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 80 paise a litre each on Saturday, the fourth increase in five days as oil firms passed on to consumers the spike in cost of raw material.

Petrol in Delhi will now cost Rs 98.61 per litre as against Rs 97.81 previously while diesel rates have gone up from Rs 89.07 per litre to Rs 89.87, according to a price notification of state fuel retailers.

All the four increases since the ending of a four-and-half-month long hiatus in rate revision on March 22, have been of 80 paise a litre.



These increase increases are the steepest single-day rise since the daily price revision was started in June 2017.

In four increases, petrol and diesel prices have gone up by Rs 3.20 a litre. Prices had been on a freeze since November 4

ahead of the assembly elections in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab a period during which the cost of raw material (crude oil) soared by about USD 30 per barrel.

The rate revision was expected soon after assembly elections ended on March 10 but it was put off. Oil companies, who did not revise petrol and diesel rates for a record 137 days despite prices of crude oil (raw material for producing fuel) rising to USD 117 per barrel compared to around USD 82 in early November, are now passing on to consumers the required increase in stages. **AGENCIES**

Gold, asset devaluation pulls India's forex reserve down by \$2.597 bn

MUMBAI: A Devaluation of gold and other asset classes pulled India's foreign exchange reserves lower by \$2.597 billion during the week that ended on March 18.

Reserve Bank of India data showed that India's forex reserves fell to \$619.678 billion from \$622.275 billion reported for the previous week. The country's forex reserves consist of foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, SDRs, and the country's reserve position with the IMF.

On a weekly basis, FCAs, the largest component of the forex reserves, edged lower by \$703 million to \$553.656



billion. Similarly, the value of the country's gold reserves

decreased by \$1.831 billion to \$42.011 billion, while the SDR value fell by \$62 million to \$18.865 billion.

On the other hand, the country's reserve position with the IMF remained flat at \$5.146 billion. "India's FX reserves decreased by \$2.60 billion to \$619.68 billion in the week ending 18th March largely due to valuation effects in gold by \$1.8 billion and \$0.7 billion in foreign currency," said Sajal Gupta, Head Fx & Rates, Edelweiss. "The week prior to that, the FX reserves had decreased by \$9.65 billion to \$622.27 billion." **AGENCIES**

Beware of financial frauds! RBI shows how

FW BUREAU

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a booklet on modus operandi of financial frauds, titled 'BE(A)WARE', as a part of the public awareness initiative by its Consumer Education and Protection Department.

Yogesh Dayal, Chief General Manager, RBI informed that the latest advisory comes in the wake of rise in the number of frauds reported in retail financial transactions after Covid-19 pandemic. He said that there has been a surge in usage of digital modes of payment in recent years and it has gained further momentum during the Covid-19 induced lockdowns.

While enhancing customer convenience, it also furthered the national objective of financial inclusion. However, as the speed and ease of doing financial transactions has improved, the number of frauds reported in retail financial transactions have also gone up. Fraudsters have been using innovative methods to defraud

the common and gullible people of their hard-earned money, especially the new entrants in the use of digital platforms who are not entirely familiar with the techno-financial ecosystem.

The RBI booklet has been compiled from various incidents of frauds reported as also from complaints received at the offices of RBI Ombudsman to provide maximum practical information of value, especially to those who are inexperienced, or not so experienced, in digital and electronic modes of financial transactions. The Central bank says that this booklet is intended to create awareness among the members of public about the modus operandi adopted by fraudsters to defraud and mislead them, while also informing them about the precautions to be taken while carrying out financial transactions.

How to protect your money

Yogesh Dayal, Chief General Manager, RBI emphasizes the need for keeping one's personal information, particularly the financial information,

confidential at all times and be-aware of unknown calls / emails / messages, practicing due diligence while performing financial transactions and changing the secure credentials / passwords from time to time.

While informing about the precautions to be taken while carrying out financial transactions, the booklet says that fraudsters create a third-party website which looks like existing genuine website, such as bank's website or e-commerce website or search engine, etc. These links are generally circulated by fraudsters through SMS / social media / email / Instant Messenger, etc. Most of the time, customers enter secure credentials by just having a glance and clicking at the link but not checking the detailed URL. The links are masked through authentic looking names of websites, but in reality, the customer gets redirected to phishing website. When customers enter secure credentials on these websites, the same is captured and used

by the fraudsters. Precaution One should not click unknown links and should delete the SMS / email immediately to avoid accessing them in future. Care should be taken to verify the website details especially where it requires entering financial credentials.

Imposters call or approach the customers through telephone call / social media as bankers / company executives / insurance agents / government officials, etc., and seek confirmation of the secure credentials by sharing few details such as name or date of birth to gain confidence. In some cases, the imposters pressurize / trick customers into urgently / immediately sharing confidential details citing emergency, details required to block transaction, payment required to stop penalty, get attractive discount, etc. These credentials are then used to defraud the customers.

Fraudsters pretend to be buyers on online selling platform and show interest in your product. Instead of paying money to you, they use "re-



quest money" option through UPI app and insist on approving the request to pull money from your bank account. Fraudsters use MLM / Chain Marketing / Pyramid Structure schemes to promise easy or quick money upon enrolment / adding of members. The schemes not only assure high returns but also pay the first few instalments (EMIs) to gain confidence of gullible persons and attract more investors through word of mouth publicity.

The schemes encourage the addition of more people to the chain / group. Commission is paid to the enroller for the number of people joining the scheme, rather than for the sale of products. This model becomes unsustainable after some time when the number of persons joining the scheme starts declining. Thereafter, the fraudsters close the scheme and disappear with the money invested by the people till then.

Do's and don'ts

Do not click on unknown / unverified links and immediately delete such SMS / email sent by unknown sender to avoid accessing them by mistake in future. Unsubscribe the mails providing links to a bank / e-commerce / search engine website and block the sender's e-mail ID, before deleting such emails. Be wary of suspicious looking pop ups that appear during your browsing sessions on the internet. Always check for a secure payment gateway (https:// - URL with a padlock symbol) before making online payments / transactions. Keep the PIN (Personal Identification Number), password, and credit or debit card number, CVV, etc., private and do not share the confidential financial information with banks / financial institutions, friends or even family members.

Avoid saving card details on websites / devices / public laptop / desktops. Turn on two-factor authentication where such a facility is available. Never open / respond to emails from unknown sources as these may contain suspicious attachment or phishing links. Do not share

copies of chequebook, KYC documents with strangers. One should be careful while making financial transactions for online products. Always remember, to receive money there is no need to enter your PIN / password anywhere. If UPI or any other app asks you to enter your PIN to complete a transaction, it means you will end up sending money instead of receiving it. Many customers click on the link without checking the detailed Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and enter secure credentials such as Personal Identification Number (PIN), One Time Password (OTP), Password, etc., which are captured and used by the fraudsters. Always go to the official website of your bank / service provider. Carefully verify the website details especially where it requires entering financial credentials. Check for the secure sign (https with a padlock symbol) on the website before entering secure credentials. Check URLs and domain names received in emails for spelling errors. In case of suspicion, inform the local police/cybercrime branch immediately.

ALSO READ | MODERNA TO SEEK FDA APPROVAL FOR VACCINATING KIDS UNDER 6 YEARS * P8 | YOON URGES XI TO COOPERATE CLOSELY FOR N KOREAN DENUCLEARIZATION * P8

PNB acquires 5.97% stake in ONDC in first tranche

ONDC IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TO PROMOTE OPEN NETWORKS FOR ALL ASPECTS OF THE EXCHANGE OF GOODS AND SERVICES OVER DIGITAL NETWORKS.

NEW DELHI: Lending major Punjab National Bank (PNB) has acquired a 5.97 per cent stake in Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) in the first tranche.

ONDC is an initiative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to promote open networks for all aspects of the exchange of goods and services over digital networks.

It was incorporated on December 30, 2021, with an early investment from the Quality Council of India (QCI) and



HIGHLIGHT

WITH ONDC'S NETWORK-CENTRIC MODEL, BUYERS WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS ALL SERVICES CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY VARIOUS SELLERS ON DIFFERENT PLATFORMS, ON A COMMON NETWORK, THUS MAKING THE NETWORK INTEROPERABLE

Protean eGov Technologies. ONDC is expected to digitise the entire value chain, standardise operations, promote

inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiencies in logistics, and enhance value for consumers for almost all types of businesses.

"In the current platform-centric digital commerce model, buyers and sellers must use the same platform or application to do a business transaction," PNB said in a statement.

"With ONDC's network-centric model, buyers will be able to access all services currently provided by various sellers on different platforms, on a common network, thus making the network interoperable," it added. In its earlier meeting, the board of PNB had approved investing in ONDC with an equity participation of 9.5 per cent.

"Accordingly, the bank has invested Rs 10 crore for acquiring a 5.97 per cent stake of ONDC in its first tranche, as per the directives of its board," the statement said. **AGENCIES**

Committee of Secretaries discuss to give final shape for 5G spectrum auction

NEW DELHI: Committee of Secretaries (CoS) including Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Department of Space, discussed spectrum allocation among various user Ministries/Departments in the context of spectrum needs of emerging technologies/users (5G/IMT) and recommended the spectrum allocation in relevant key bands. Accordingly, Department of Telecommunications sent a reference to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on 13.09.2021, seeking recommendations on auction of spectrum in frequency bands identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT)/5G.

Government has planned to conduct auction of 5G in year 2022. Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are



conducting 5G trials in Delhi, Mumbai, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Gurgaon, Gandhinagar, Chandigarh, Pune and Varanasi including urban, semi-urban and rural areas. It is prerogative of TSPs

to launch 5G service in different cities as per their business/network plans. This information was given by the Minister of State for Communications, Devusinh Chauhan in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today. **AGENCIES**

Allana Group emerges as one of India's largest exporters of wheat

NEW DELHI: The Allana Group, India's largest exporter of processed food products and agro commodities has been nominated as one of India's largest exporters of wheat.

Catering to the greater need of the essential commodity, the Group ensured seamless facilitation of grains and has exported a total of 1,03,877 tonnes for the period of 2 years from 2019-2021. The group witnessed an exponential rise of 1812.30 per cent in their export, transporting over 1,48,000 tonnes in the period of 2021-22. The feat was lauded by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

In these unprecedented times, the war crisis in Ukraine has led to the unique opportunity to fulfil a massive gap of grain export in the market. The Allana Group has aggressively functioned to connect India with the global supply chain and has aided in restocking the essential food grains across the world. **AGENCIES**

NEWS BRIEFS

Major players join hands for study on sustainable aviation fuel

HYDERABAD: Airport operators Groupe ADP and GMR Airports, together with Airbus, Axens and Safran, on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conduct a joint study on Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and its potential in India. The objective of the study, conducted under the lead and coordination of Groupe ADP and GMR Airports and with the expertise of all partners, is to understand and evaluate the demand, the challenges and opportunities of supply, infrastructure and fuelling, as well as to prepare a business case for SAF production and use in India for all kind of aviation purposes. SAF is a clean substitute for fossil jet fuels. Rather than being refined from petroleum, it is produced from sustainable resources such as waste oils from a biological origin, agri residues, municipal solid wastes, or algae. SAF, produced using the most advanced pathways, can provide carbon dioxide emission reduction of up to 85 per cent across the entire SAF lifecycle. The study will be initiated in the second quarter of 2022 and is expected to be completed within one year. It may be further extended based on the agreement of all the parties involved.

In India, already the 3rd-largest domestic aviation market in the world and with a forecasted yearly growth of about 9 per cent going forward, SAF use will be a key element to achieve the targets of carbon reduction and net zero target of the country by 2070, set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. **AGENCIES**

Natural gas business of PSU upstream companies to turn profitable: ICRA



NEW DELHI: The natural gas business of PSU upstream companies would turn profitable as domestic prices are expected to increase substantially in the next revision, ratings agency ICRA said. Accordingly, the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine has led to a reduction in offtake of Russian crude and a consequent increase in crude oil and gas prices. The ratings agency noted that increasing oil prices add to the fiscal burden for the country, but it is a positive for upstream oil companies. "Additionally, domestic gas prices notified at \$2.9 per mmmBtu (GCV basis) for H2 FY2022 remain low and ac-

cordingly gas production remains a loss-making proposition for most of the Indian upstream producers." Besides, the agency said that demand for petroleum products in the current fiscal has witnessed some recovery compared to the preceding fiscal but remains lower than the pre-Covid levels. "Elevated crude prices may adversely impact the demand recovery witnessed in the recent months." "The benchmark Singapore gross refining margin (GRM) has witnessed improvement in the recent months, however, high crude prices and subdued global demand may adversely impact the GRM." **AGENCIES**

Financial impact of climate-related risks to Indian cos estimated at Rs 3,285bn

NEW DELHI: The financial impact of climate-related risks to Indian companies responding to global non-profit environmental disclosure system CDP was estimated at Rs 3,285 billion, with climate-related opportunities cited at Rs 3,000 billion.

CDP India launched its 2021 Annual Disclosure report on Thursday at a virtual event. The report, Disclosure Imperative for a Sustainable India, details the climate action disclosed by 88 Indian companies responding to CDP's climate, water and forests questionnaire in 2021.

CDP's new 2025 strategy, Accelerating the Rate of Change, recognises the urgent need for such climate commitments to be translated into swift, effective action, with increased accountability and transparent climate plans from companies, cities, states and regions alike.

It sets out how CDP will respond to the interlinked crises of catastrophic climate change and an irreversible loss of nature and habitats.

Indeed, this rate of change seems to be accelerating in the Indian market. In 2021, 85 Indian companies disclosed to CDP's Climate Change questionnaire in response to



a request to do so from investors, representing a 27 per cent growth since 2020 when 67 companies responded.

It is evident that Indian companies are becoming increasingly climate conscious, with 64 Indian companies joining the Science-Based Targets initiative in 2021, making India the leader among emerging economies when it comes to committing to making science-based targets for the transition towards a low carbon economy.

The report also showed that 72 companies, representing 85 per cent of all Indian companies responding to CDP, engaged with suppliers at different levels across their value chain on climate related issues, an essential step in addressing Scope 3 emissions. Tech giant Wipro has also become the first Indian company to

join CDP's Supply Chain Program as of 2022, representing an exemplary step forward in corporate climate action within the market. These many achievements by Indian companies responding to CDP in 2021 will be celebrated at the annual event, which will feature exclusive sessions engaging corporates on key areas of the transition to a sustainable India.

Parthana Borah, Director, CDP India, at the report launch said, "This report captures a landmark year for India's climate ambition trajectory, as the regulatory board SEBI introduced mandatory sustainability reporting for the top 1,000 listed companies by market capitalization and Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced at COP26 the country's commitment to reach net-zero by 2070." **AGENCIES**

POEM THE BEAUTY OF THE STOCK MARKET

Stock Market a place to earn, But before that, there's a lot to learn. Money there we need to invest, We always have to give our best.

Stocks we have to buy or sell, But before picking we have to choose well. Fundamentals have to be strong, Or the stock might be wrong.

Sensex and NIFTY are the index, The market is not too complex. Money is ours and we should take care, The profit and loss will be ours to bear.

As we know Fortune Favours the brave, Too many returns, we should not crave. Greed will make us lose all our money, And we may not be able to buy even a bottle of honey.

Carefully we have to pick the stocks, As it is like building blocks. Over the years portfolio, we have to make, A Portfolio that no crash can break.

Over the long term, we just have to wait, Coz if we do so the returns will be great. Investing is like a blossoming flower, Compounding's magic will show its power.



Saksham Bansal Class-8th

Mobile phone exports from India to touch \$5.5bn



NEW DELHI: Mobile phone exports from India will increase by 75 per cent from \$3.16 billion in 2020-21 to over \$5.5 billion in the current fiscal, a report said on Thursday.

The primary driver of this outstanding performance is the smartphone PLI Scheme launched on April 1, 2020, aimed at shifting GVCs to India and increasing India's share in global exports.

"The unprecedented increase in smartphone exports is a tribute to government-industry partnership under the most trying circumstances. The government led with its vision and trust in the mobile industry. The industry, in turn, has redefined Atmanirbhar Bharat as Make in India for the World. We are just getting started,"

Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman of ICEA, said in a statement.

After an uncertain start in 2020, owing to multiple Covid waves, the industry stabilised operations in 2021 and has delivered results

that exceed expectations.

Increase in mobile phone exports also marks an important shift in the export basket which is gradually transforming from primary commodities to more value-added, high-end products driven by technology industries.

The smartphone PLI saw participation from five global companies -- Samsung, Foxconn Hon Hai, Rising Star, Wistron and Pegatron -- and Indian champions, including Lava, Bhagwati (Micromax), Padget Electronics, UTL Neolyncs and Optiemus Electronics.

During a 5-year period, the approved companies under the PLI scheme are expected to lead to total production of over Rs 10.5 lakh crore, of which nearly 60 per cent will be contributed by exports to the tune of Rs 6.5 lakh crore.

It is also expected that during this period, nearly 8 lakh new jobs (2 lakh direct and 6 lakh indirect jobs) will be created in the country. **AGENCIES**

Prices of edible oils have shot up across the world: Piyush Goyal

SO FAR NO ONE HAS APPROACHED THE MINISTRY COMPLAINING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS BEING DISLOCATED DUE TO THE WAR

NEW DELHI: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday informed the Rajya Sabha that the prices of edible oils have shot up all across the world because of many factors including the war in Ukraine.



Responding to a question on the impact of the Ukraine war on the import of sunflower oil in India, he said that sunflower

oil constitutes only a smaller proportion in India's overall edible oil basket. Since it was being imported

from Ukraine before the war broke out between Russia and Ukraine, the government is now examining the possibility of importing it from other countries too. Goyal congratulated India's farmers for increased mustard crop sowing this year and said that this will reduce the country's dependence on import of edible oil. He called this an opportunity for India to encourage farmers to diversify their crops to include edible oil seeds and pulses.

Replying to a question asked by DMK member P Wilson about people who left their

businesses in Ukraine and returned to India after the war broke out, the Minister said that so far no one has approached the ministry complaining about their business being dislocated due to the war.

Although, business being done in a foreign land is an independent activity and the government will not be able to intervene in such matters, it is in talks with the importers and exporters who have been impacted by this situation and measures have been taken to ensure payments come on time, he said. **AGENCIES**

'India's domestic aviation sector set to recover fully by mid-2022'

HYDERABAD: India's civil aviation sector is likely to rebound quickly from Covid-19 crisis even as the rising oil prices, and the war in Ukraine will have an impact on the overall aviation market, a top Airbus official said.

Remi Maillard, President and MD, Airbus India and South Asia, believes that domestic traffic in India will fully recover by the middle of the current year while international traffic will rebound by the next year.

"The Covid crisis has had a massive impact on the industry and air traffic in India. We see traffic recovering on the back of strong demand," he said and welcomed the decision of the Civil Aviation Ministry to reopen to interna-



tional traffic from March 27. Addressing a news conference where he announced the company's latest market forecast for India, Maillard believes that the outlook is promising and fundamentals of the economy are strong.

To a query about rising oil prices and the Ukraine war, he admitted the crises would have an impact. Stating that the world is facing crises from a security and defence environment standpoint, he said they were impacting and

would continue to impact the aviation and aerospace industry. "Crises which we are observing will have an impact but I am also fully convinced that aviation will remain an engine to drive the economies of all countries and will remain a powerful force to unite people," he said.

Airbus has forecast that India will require 2,210 new aircraft over the next 20 years. "Just as the economy continues to improve, we believe traffic is going to go up here. This is going to drive the need for more aircraft. The fundamentals in general continue to improve. We are bullish where the market is going to go," said Brent McBratney, Head of Airline Marketing, Airbus India and South Asia.

The Airbus officials pointed out that India's air traffic grew by 9 per cent in the last 20 years and the country established itself as the third largest domestic market in the world. They believe India will replicate this performance in the international market in the next 20 years.

The passenger traffic in India is expected to grow at 6.2 per cent per annum by 2040, the fastest among the major economies and well above the global average of 3.9 per cent. They see a huge potential for India in the international long-haul market out of India. Foreign carriers have captured 94 per cent of the growth in the long-haul market over the last 20 years. **AGENCIES**

Shares of Vishnu Chemicals nearly doubled in 2022



NEWDELHI: Shares of specialty chemical maker Vishnu Chemicals nearly doubled during the year-to-date period of 2022. On Wednesday, the shares were locked in the five per cent upper circuit at Rs 1,677 per share, exchange data showed. Since the start of the year, it rose over 96 per cent. As a pureplay chemical manufacturer, the company has consolidated its position as a dependable supplier for global companies across steel, glass, pharmaceutical, pigments and dyes, leather and allied industries.

The company based in Hyderabad supplies products to major geographies including Asia, China, South East Asia, Europe, the UK, North, South and Central America, and Africa. The rally in the share prices is somewhat linked to the company's strong earnings in the recent quarters.

During Q3FY22, the company reported highest ever consolidated revenues at Rs 299 crore, and profit after tax at Rs 25 crore, according to reports. Notably, ace investor Ashish Kacholia owned 575,000 equity shares or 4.81 per cent stake in the specialty chemical maker in late 2021. **AGENCIES**

New record high: India achieves \$400 bn merchandise exports target

NEW DELHI: India has achieved the \$400 billion merchandise exports target well before the set deadline, said Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles Piyush Goyal on Wednesday.

The merchandise exports from India crossed the \$400 billion mark in the current financial year, that too 9 days ahead of schedule. The previous record high for exports stood at \$330 billion achieved in 2018-19.

At a press conference, the Minister said that there was a detailed strategy in place which led to the achievement of the export target. The strategy included specific target sets such as - country-wise, product-wise and 'EPC'-wise - monitoring as well as course correction.

The target of \$400 billion of merchandise exports for 2021-22 was set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He had exhorted the exporting community to search for new products in the export basket, look for newer destinations and ensure deeper penetra-



tion of the existing product and markets.

"Thus, in order to achieve the target and approach set by the PM, the Department of Commerce disaggregated the \$400 billion target in terms of regions and countries as well as product or commodity groups. The government prepared a detailed strategy for achieving the targets and an elaborate monitoring system," the ministry said. "The disaggregated targets have enabled tight monitoring by 'Country or Region or Mission or Export

Promotion Councils."

Notwithstanding the challenges posed by successive waves of Covid, India's merchandise trade performance has shown impressive growth and exports remained above \$30 Billion for eleven consecutive months during April to February wherein December 2021 in particular recorded the highest ever monthly merchandise exports recorded at \$39.3 billion. Segment-wise, engineering goods exports have gone up by nearly 50 per cent vis-a-vis last year. **AGENCIES**

Tamil Nadu tourism gears up to welcome tourists

CHENNAI: With the international flights set to resume from March 27, Tamil Nadu tourism department is gearing up for tourist inflow to the state.

Tamil Nadu tourism secretary Chandramohan told IANS that the state is already prepared to receive the tourists. Celebrity photographers will be engaged to capture pictures of tourist destinations in the state to be displayed in all the airports.

As a first step, the photographs will be displayed widely in Coimbatore airport and from April onwards, Chennai and Madurai airports will follow suit, he said.



The state will also promote pilgrim tourism and a display system will be brought to provide details of these temples. It would also include details about the pooja timings, the period it was constructed and the deities. After the state has

reopened post-Covid-19, 75 per cent of the domestic tourism is back. Role of private-public partnership is being redrawn in the state Chandramohan said, adding that a new comprehensive tourism policy will emerge in the state

'India's air passenger traffic to surpass pre-Covid numbers'

HYDERABAD: India's civil aviation sector has emerged stronger from Covid-19 and passenger traffic will surge to 410 million by 2024-25, surpassing the pre-pandemic numbers, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday.

Before Covid struck, the passenger throughput (both domestic and international) was 344 million. With international operations set to resume from March 27, the minister exuded confidence that by 2022-23, the number will reach close to 300 million passengers and grow further to 410 million by 2024-25.

The minister was speaking at the inaugural session of Wings India 2022, Asia's largest civil aviation show being held at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad.

"I am confident in days to come, when you look at combination of domestic and international passengers, the throughput in India which was close to 344 million passengers in 2018-19 prior to Covid will reach close to 300 million by the

year 2022-23 and by 2024-25 we will surpass 410 million passengers creating a new history in India," he said.

The minister said the aviation sector has gone through tremendous change during Covid. "The number of air passengers in India in 2018-19 was 140 million but then we got hit by Covid but even through this Covid period between the first wave and the second wave and between the second wave and the third wave if there is one sector which reemerged strongly it is the civil aviation," he said.

He pointed out that post the second wave the sector recovered to reach close to 3.9 lakh passengers per day against the pre-covid number of close to 4.1 lakh passengers. "We were almost back to pre-Covid numbers but then Omicron came and again those numbers dipped to 1.6 lakh passengers per day. Post third wave numbers have again come back close to 3.83 lakh passengers," he said. **AGENCIES**

Expanded Hyderabad Airport to handle 34 mn passengers every year



HYDERABAD: The first phase of expansion of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) Hyderabad to increase its capacity to 34 million passengers per annum will go operational shortly.

Airport operator GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) stated this on Wednesday, the 14th anniversary of RGIA, the first Greenfield airport built under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in the country. The airport, commissioned in 2008 in a record time of 31 months, was initially designed for 12 million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA). It has grown to serve more than 21 million

passengers every year. With 6.2 MPPA in Financial 2009, the airport recorded 21.6 MPPA in FY20 with a pre-Covid 5-year CAGR of 15 per cent.

The airport had embarked on expansion in 2018 to take the overall capacity to 40 MPPA. The first phase of expansion will increase the capacity to 34 MPPA. The airport recorded air traffic movement (ATM) of more than 81,000 in FY 09 which gradually increased to around 1,84,000 ATMs in FY 20. In FY09, the airport was connected to over 36 destinations (domestic and international). The number of destinations has now gone up to 88. **AGENCIES**

Flybig to acquire 10 Twin Otter aircraft

HYDERABAD: Flybig, India's newest scheduled commuter airline, on Thursday announced that it will acquire 10 Twin Otter Series 400 aircraft from De Havilland Canada.

The airline signed a Letter of Intent with De Havilland on the sidelines of Wings India 2022, the civil aviation show which began in Hyderabad on Thursday.

These 19-seater aircraft will help in serving small and remote communities that are not accessible by air, the airlines said. Twin Otter 400 Series has a proven track record of safe, dependable operations, as well as versatility, which includes the ability to land on land or water. The letter of intent was signed by Captain Sanjay Mandavia, CMD, flybig and Yogesh Garg, Director, Sales, Asia Pacific, De Havilland Aircraft Canada.

With commercial flights to destinations in



the northeast, south, and central India, Flybig is a UDAN scheme beneficiary. The UDAN scheme's mandate is to provide one crore people with low-cost air tickets each year and to connect more than 300 cities across the country via air routes. About the Letter of Intent to acquire the aircrafts, Mandavia said that is a strategic and

necessary acquisition. "It will be a valuable asset for flybig in its quest to provide last-mile connectivity to hinterlands of India. This landmark acquisition will provide competitive thrust and open a niche travel segment in the Indian aviation industry as it can also be used over water to promote tourism." **AGENCIES**

Wings India 2022 all set to take off in Hyderabad

NEW DELHI: The stage is set for Wings India 2022, Asia's largest event on civil aviation, beginning at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad on Thursday. The four-day biennial event is being organised jointly by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Indian Industry (FICCI).

The best of the aviation industry would be showcasing their innovative technology and aircraft machinery at the event on commercial, general and business aviation.

Wings India will bring together buyers, sellers, investors, and other stakeholders on a common platform to discuss



various aspects of the aviation industry.

While the first two days are for business discussions, the remaining two days will be open for the general public.

As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the theme of the event is "India@75: New Horizon for Aviation

Industry". The focus will be on new business acquisition, investments, policy formation, and regional connectivity. The show will have exhibition, discussions, demonstration, exhibition and flying display by the Sarang team of the Indian Air Force, roundtable/panel discussion on helicopter

industry, business aviation, Krishi UDAN, golden age of drones, India-US Roundtable with AMCHAM, drone demonstrations, Global CEOs Forum, and the Wings India awards 2022 ceremony.

Several foreign dignitaries, ambassadors, representatives from various sectors of aviation like airlines, airport operators, airport agencies, civil aviation authorities, consultants, engineering, flight/simulator training, flight operations/transportation, maintenance, repair & overhaul (MRO) agencies, pilot/instructor, sales, service or support will be taking part in the event. **AGENCIES**

Sri Lanka ends ban on foreign exchange transactions

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan central bank has lifted a ban on foreign exchange transactions and allowed banks to provide forward sale and purchase of foreign exchange facilities to importers. Forward sale and purchase of foreign exchange are contractual agreements between two parties to exchange a pair of currencies at a specific time in the future, Xinhua news agency reported.

This new direction is expected to play a role in ending shortages of goods in the country. On April 25, 2021, the central bank prevented commercial banks from selling dollars to customers for future transactions, causing significant issues for importers who found it difficult to order goods from abroad. **AGENCIES**

IT officials visit for routine inquiry: Hero MotoCorp

NEW DELHI: Two-wheeler major Hero MotoCorp on Wednesday said the visit of Income Tax officials to its office premises was for "a routine inquiry, which is not uncommon before the end of the financial year".

Officials from the Income Tax department visited two of the company's offices in

Delhi and Gurugram and the residence of its Chairman and CEO Pawan Munjal on Wednesday.

In a statement, the company said: "We have been informed that this is a routine inquiry, which is not uncommon before the end of the financial year. We reassure all our stakeholders that it

continues to be business as usual."

"We at Hero MotoCorp are an ethical and law-abiding corporate, and maintain the highest standards of impeccable corporate governance. In keeping with this philosophy, we are extending our full cooperation to the authorities." **AGENCIES**

Millet Farming: Boost for India

WITH INCREASING WATER SHORTAGE, LESS LAND IS AVAILABLE FOR CULTIVATION, AND INCREASING HEAT DUE TO GLOBAL WARMING- MILLETS ARE A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR A POPULATED COUNTRY LIKE INDIA



Millets in India

Traditionally, India has a history of high Millet consumption and cultivation. After the green revolution, once rice and wheat were introduced to our diets and promoted aggressively, Millet farming and its consumption dramatically fell. The consumption of millets in India today is over-indexed in Tier 2 and 3 cities with most of them only known by their local names.

With increasing water shortage, less land is available for cultivation, and increasing heat due to global warming- Millets are a fantastic opportunity for a populated country like India. For one, the grain is not new to our diets and our households, as traditional recipes exist for most of them. For the conve-

nience-seeking population, we have a variety of Ready To Eat and Ready To Cook products available including Multigrain Flakes with Jowar and Bajra, Millet Granola with Bajra and Jowar flakes, and Mysore Millet Dosa Mix with Little, Kodo, Ragi and Jowar.

What's more?

Millets are well adapted to regional lifestyles in India from a relevant perspective. While Karnataka has Ragi (Finger Millet/Nachani), Maharashtra has Jowar (Sorghum) and Rajasthan has Bajra (Pearl Millet). Tamil Nadu is endowed with Kodo and Little Millets- this makes access to Millets very easy, from the supply chain point of view.

All this, while being gluten-free and rich in protein, fibre & antioxidants. The Future of India with Millets

In the context where 14% of our population stands at being undernourished, Millets can play a pivotal role in reducing the nutritional gap. Not only can Millets help meet nutritional needs optimally but they being hardy crops' aids the possibility of scaling their adoption to large populations.

Considering global warming and severe changes in our climatology in the years to come, the only solution is to shift to more economical means of cultivation that withstand extreme weather conditions while also benefiting the lives of the farmers. This again leads us to Millets. Millet farming will indeed become the rising star among all the other agricultural crops.

Adapting to the taste of Millets may not be everyone's cup of tea. The average city worker would not be ecstatic to come home to jowar, bajra or ragi roti, which were traditional favourites but have not been in mainstream consumption for a few decades.

To address this, brands are moving towards creating

newer products and innovating with Millets. There are already several Millet-based products in the market that can delight on sensorial, are modern in appeal & can easily become your healthy alternative to your staple meals.

Products such as Bajra Flakes, Jowar Flakes, Pancake Mix with Jowar flour, Ragi and Jowar Dosa Mix, Dessert Mix made with Ragi are a few examples.

While many brands are innovating and creating products, it is best to rely on brands who centre their process on using the best quality millet & keeping the final product clean i.e. without preservatives & chemicals.

Brands that leverage contract farming and those who have certifications like "Clean Label certified", "100 per cent wholegrain certified" can have an upper hand in terms of delivering maximum nutrition. Look out for them on the products you buy. Contract farming enables brands to source directly from the farmers thereby ensuring higher quality grains. And stamps from global bodies like Clean Label Project or Whole Grain Council help endorse the quality and nutritional goodness. **AGENCIES**

India requires 2,210 aircraft over next 20 years, says Airbus

COLOMBO: Aircraft maker Airbus has forecast that India will require 2,210 new aircraft over the next 20 years when the country's air passenger traffic is expected to grow at 6.2 per cent per annum, the highest in the world.

The fleet could comprise 1,770 new small and 440 medium and large aircraft.

To serve its growing aviation industry, India will also require an additional 34,000 pilots and 45,000 technicians by 2040. The forecast was announced by Airbus on the sidelines of Wings India 2022, Asia's largest civil aviation show which began here on Thursday.

Airbus said it would deliver more than one aircraft to India every week for the next 10 years.

"Over the next decade, India will grow to have the largest population in the world, its economy will grow the fastest among the G20 nations, and a burgeoning middle class will spend more on air travel. As a result, passenger traffic in India will grow at 6.2 per cent per annum by 2040, the fastest among the major economies and well above the global average of 3.9 per cent," said



Brent McBratney, Head of Airline Marketing, Airbus India and South Asia. India has witnessed an upward trend in the growth of air traffic over the last 10 years -- with domestic traffic growing almost threefold and international traffic more than doubling. Remi Maillard, President and MD, Airbus India and South Asia, said India has huge untapped potential in the long-haul market.

On international routes, India has only about 1/10th of the widebody fleet installed in similar markets, depriving homegrown carriers of a larger share of the profitable long-haul routes now dominated by foreign airlines.

"We have seen India's domestic market develop strongly with our flagship A320 aircraft. It is time now for Indian carriers to unlock the poten-

tial of international travel in and out of India, leveraging the country's demographic, economic and geographic dividends," said Remi Maillard. "Whether it is expanding existing airlines or supporting new airlines, there must now be a re-fleeting and rethinking about future-oriented solutions with technology that paves the way for sustainable long-range travel. The A350 is the perfect solution for that," he said.

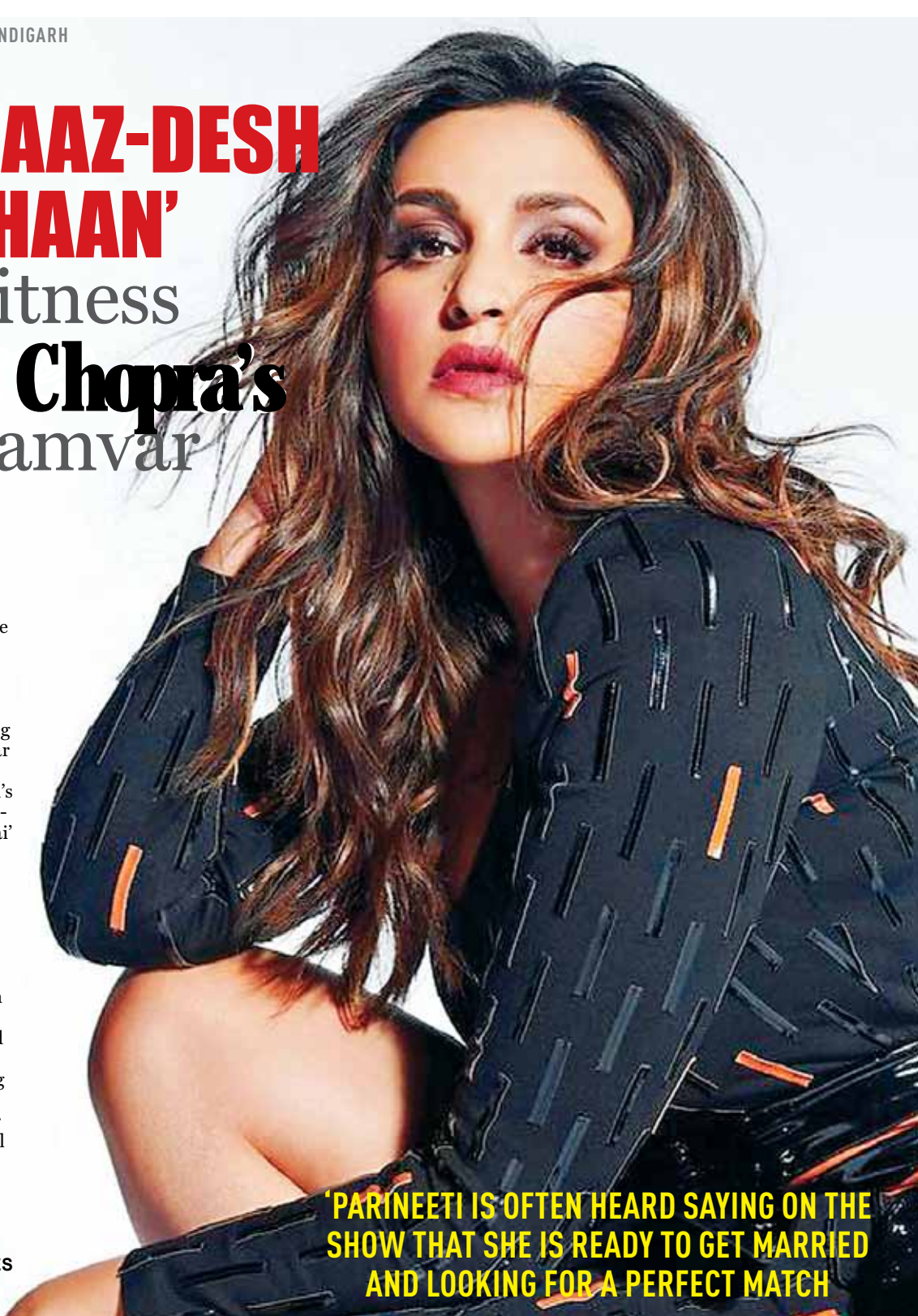
Airbus is displaying the A350 at the airshow which will continue till March 27.

The complete Airbus product line comprises the only aircraft specifically designed for the small single-aisle market, the A220, the world's best-selling A320 Family, the mid-size widebody A330/330neo and the Long-Range Leader, the A350. **AGENCIES**

'HUNARBAAZ-DESH KI SHAAN' to witness Parineeti Chopra's swayamvar

Bolly Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra is all set for her swayamvar in the upcoming weekend episode of 'Hunarbaaz-Desh Ki Shaan'. Parineeti is often heard saying on the show that she is ready to get married and looking for a perfect match. Few popular faces of the television industry are going to be part of Parineeti's swayamvar like 'Kumkum Bhagya' actor Arjit Taneja, 'Begusarai' actor Vishal Aditya Singh, 'Bigg Boss 13' fame Siddhartha Dey and former 'Khatron Ke Khiladi 10' contestant Shavin Narang. From bringing flowers, to dancing and to showing other acts, they will do everything to impress the 'Hasee Toh Phasee' actress. Judges Karan Johar, Mithun Chakraborty and hosts Bharti Singh and Haash Limbachiya will be seen helping Parineeti in taking the right decision. Veteran singer Kumar Sanu joins the panel as a special guest. Karan Johar will call the candidates on the stage one by one to show their talent and prove themselves. 'Hunarbaaz-Desh Ki Shaan' airs on Colors.

AGENCIES



'PARINEETI IS OFTEN HEARD SAYING ON THE SHOW THAT SHE IS READY TO GET MARRIED AND LOOKING FOR A PERFECT MATCH'

Anushka Sharma

STEPS AWAY FROM HER PRODUCTION COMPANY TO FOCUS ON ACTING



Anushka Sharma has stepped away from Clean Slate Filmz (CSF), a production banner that she co-founded with her brother Karnesh Ssharma in the year 2013. The actress shared the news of her departure from the production company through social media on Saturday. The actress wants to commit her time to the craft of acting and this decision allows her to dedicate her time and resources to her first love which is acting. The move makes Karnesh the sole decision maker and places him at the helm of affairs at Clean Slate Filmz. Taking to her Instagram, Anushka shared a long note as she wrote in the caption, "Onwards and Upwards @kans26 @officialcsfilms! My best wishes are always with you!!" The actress shared in the long note, "When I started Clean Slate Filmz with my brother Karnesh Ssharma, we were novices when it came to production but we had a fire in our belly and we wanted to try and set the agenda of entertainment in India through clutter-breaking content. AGENCIES



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann pays tribute to freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on the occasion of their 91st death anniversary at Hussainiwala, in Ferozepur on Wednesday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

IWL 2021-22 to start on April 15 in Bhubaneswar

NEW DELHI: The Hero Indian Women's League is all set for a return in the 2021-22 season, as it will be held in Bhubaneswar from April 15.

This season's Hero IWL will feature 12 teams that will fight it out for the top prize in Indian Women's Football, and will fight it out in a league format from April 15 to May 26, with the champions of the tournament getting the chance to play in the next edition of the AFC Women's Club Championship. The matches will be played at the Kalinga Stadium, the Seventh Battalion Ground and the Capital Ground.

Defending Champions Gokulam Kerala FC, who also join the league as the champions of Kerala, will also be joined by the champion teams from 10 other states - Odisha Police (Odisha), Hans Women FC (Delhi), Kickstart FC Karnataka (Karnataka), Gokulam Kerala FC (Kerala), Sethu Madurai (Tamil Nadu), PIFA Sports Colaba FC (Maharashtra), Mata Rukmani



FC (Chhattisgarh), Sirvodem Sports Club (Goa), Indian Arrows (AIFF's Developmental Team), SSB Women FC (West Bengal), Sports Odisha (Odisha), and one club from the Hero IWL Qualifiers. The qualifiers of the Hero

IWL will take place in New Delhi from April 1 to 5, where four clubs - Guwahati City FC, Golazo FC, ARA FC, and YWC will fight it out at the Ambedkar Stadium in New Delhi, in a round robin format with the top team proceeding to the tournament proper.

"It's great that we are being able to have the Hero IWL once again, and that too in Odisha, a state that has so closely been linked with Indian football over the past," said AIFF Leagues and Development CEO Sunando Dhar. "We will have the Hero IWL in a league format this time, which will allow the clubs to play more number of matches, and the champions teams from all the states will be fighting it out for the top prize."

"We will also have the qualifiers for the Hero IWL in New Delhi, and that will further help the other teams from other states get the opportunity to participate in the league as well," he further stated. AGENCIES

No regrets that my 175* was not recorded, it's still etched in my head: Kapil Dev

MANESAR: Former India skipper Kapil Dev on Thursday said he has no regret that there is no video footage available of his unbeaten 175-run innings against Zimbabwe during the 1983 World Cup.

The win in the '83 World Cup remains one of the greatest sporting achievements in Indian history. Scripting that victory would not have been possible if the then Team India skipper Kapil didn't come up with an epic knock at the Tunbridge Wells ground against Zimbabwe on June 18, 1983. But unfortunately for the Indian cricket fans, Kapil's innings was never recorded on camera because of a nation-wide strike by sole broadcasters BBC back then.

After India were reduced to 9/4 by Zimbabwe, Kapil then played some remarkable cricket to guide his side to a respectable total of 266/8 in 60 overs. India won the game by 31 runs. "I don't like to criticise people. People say



don't you feel bad it wasn't recorded, and I always say 'no' because it is recorded in my head," Dev said at an event organised by telecom operator Airtel to demonstrate some of its 5G-led immersive user experiences at its Network Experience Center in Manesar, Haryana.

At the event, the telecom operator demonstrated an immersive and India's first 5G-powered hologram of the former India cricketer

and recreated the in-stadia experience of the cricketer's unbeaten innings against Zimbabwe.

Also, the Haryana Hurricane's signature Natraj shot was shown in such a manner that a person can experience the moment at a 180-degree view. Asked if that particular innings was his finest performance, the legend refuted by saying that it was, however, an "important" innings. AGENCIES

Italian Embassy to host FDCI X Lakme Fashion Week opening show

NEW DELHI: Lakme Fashion Week and The Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) announced the Opening Show by Rahul Mishra is to be hosted by the Italian Embassy. The show will take place on the 22nd of March 2022 in New Delhi. The Opening Show will integrate the best of Italy with one of India's leading designers. The show marks the start of the full physical, season-fluid edition scheduled from 23-27 March 2022 in New Delhi.

Ambassador of Italy to India, H.E. Vincenzo de Luca said, "We are eager to partner this year with FDCI X Lakme Fashion Week. This collaboration kicked off in 2021 with Reliance Brands and has since then brought together the best of Italy and India in the field of lifestyle and fashion. We will have

onboard some of the most exclusive Italian brands which are the true actors of Italian soft power around the world. I am sure this partnership will open great opportunities for both the Italian and Indian market and will encourage a growing number of designers to showcase and work in both countries." Commenting on the showcase Rahul Mishra said, "Italy, like a second home, has always had a special place in my heart. Since my initial days as a designer studying in Milano, I have found influence in the Italian history of art, fashion and architecture. And it has significantly contributed to my overall perspective of design and helped shape my point of view towards the application of Indian craft in contemporary fashion. AGENCIES



Moderna to seek FDA approval for vaccinating kids under 6 years



WASHINGTON: US drug maker Moderna said it will request the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to grant emergency use authorization for its Covid-19 vaccine to inoculate children under 6 years of age. The company will submit the request to the FDA, as well as the European Medicines Agency and other global regulators "in the coming weeks", Xinhua news agency quoted Moderna as saying in a statement on Wednesday.

The submission was based on tests of its Covid-19 vaccine, known as mRNA-1273, in children aged 6 months to under 2 years, and 2 years to under 6 years.

The interim analysis showed a robust neutralising antibody response in both age groups after a 25 microgram two-dose primary series of mRNA-1273 along with a favourable safety profile, according to the company. In the study, vaccine efficacy in children aged 6 months to 2 years was 43.7 per cent, and 37.5 per cent in the 2 to under 6 years age group, said Moderna. AGENCIES

Yoon urges Xi to cooperate closely for N Korean denuclearization

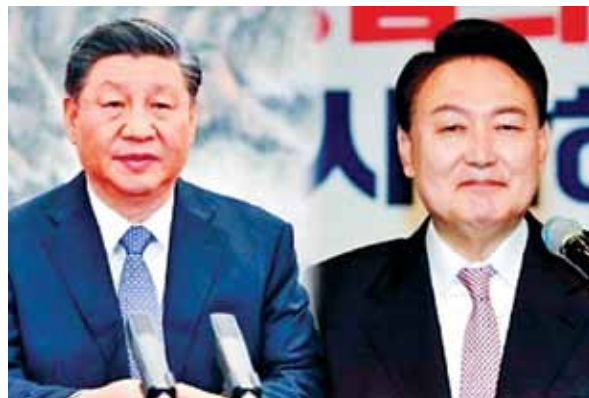
SEOUL: South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol on Friday called on Chinese President Xi Jinping to cooperate closely for North Korea's denuclearization and the stable management of the political situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Yoon made the call during a 25-minute phone conversation with Xi a day after North Korea test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time since 2017, reports Yonhap News Agency.

"Regarding North Korea's ICBM-class missile launch yesterday, President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol stressed that the people are greatly concerned over the rapid escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the region caused by North Korea's serious provocation," Yoon's spokesperson Kim Eun-hye said.

"(Yoon) called for the two countries to cooperate closely to realise the complete denuclearization of North Korea and for the stable management of the political situation on the Korean Peninsula."

Yoon and Xi agreed to communicate closely to set up a meeting between them at an early date after the President-



HIGHLIGHT

Yoon called for the two countries to cooperate closely to realise the complete denuclearization of North Korea and for the stable management of the political situation on the Korean Peninsula. China is North Korea's main ally and economic benefactor, and its cooperation is key to getting Pyongyang to dismantle its missile and nuclear weapons programs.

elect's inauguration in May, she added. North Korea earlier confirmed it successfully test-fired a new ICBM, called the Hwasong-17, on Thursday at the direct order of its leader Kim Jong-un, scrapping a self-imposed moratorium on long-range missile testing that

had been in place since late 2017.

China is North Korea's main ally and economic benefactor, and its cooperation is key to getting Pyongyang to dismantle its missile and nuclear weapons programs. AGENCIES

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