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MINORITY KILLINGS: Many Hindu families flee Kashmir

FW BUREAU

Following the targeted killings of two employees from the minority community, over a hundred Hindu families have fled Kashmir, first time this has happened after the early 1990s exodus of Kashmiri Pandits.

In the last three days, militants first killed a government school teacher Rajni Bala, 36, outside a government school in Kulgam. And later a bank employee from Rajasthan was shot dead in the same district.

Last month, seven civilians were killed in the Valley, a majority of them Muslims. But it is the killings of members of a minority community that has created a deep worry for the security forces. There



is now widespread scare among the minority communities in Kashmir. More than hundred Hindu families have fled the Valley in the wake of targeted killings by militants. Avtar Krishan Bhat, President of a Hindu Kashmiri Pandit colony in Baramulla told

media that around half of the 300 families living in the area had fled since the killings. There are several thousand employees from the minority communities in Kashmir who now fear for their and are urging the government to post them out of the Valley.

ED issues fresh summons to Rahul Gandhi for June 13

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a fresh summons to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi to appear before it on June 13 for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper, officials said on Friday.

He was earlier asked to depose on June 2 but the Lok Sabha member from Wayanad seat in Kerala sought a fresh date as he was out of the country.

Officials said Rahul Gandhi, 51, has now been asked to appear on June 13 at the headquarters of the federal agency in central Delhi. His mother and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, 75, has been asked to depose before the agency on June 8. The case pertains to the ED probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the party-promoted Young Indian that owns the National Herald newspaper.

The agency, officials said, wants to record the statements of Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi



under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The National Herald is published by Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and owned by Young Indian Pvt Limited. The agency recently questioned senior Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Pawan Bansal as part of the investigation.

The questioning of the senior Congress leaders and the Gandhis is part of the ED's investigation to understand the share holding pattern, financial transactions and role of the promoters of Young Indian and AJL, officials had said.

Centre will soon arrest Manish Sisodia in 'fake' case to hinder Delhi's progress: Kejriwal

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday claimed the Centre has directed its agencies to arrest his deputy Manish Sisodia in "false" cases to hinder the progress made by the city in the field of education, even as he took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi to arrest all his ministers in one go.

The AAP supremo also said the progress of several important projects of Delhi like Yamuna cleaning and opening of new mohalla clinics has been hampered following the arrest of Health Minister Satyendar Jain. Jain was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case on Monday. On Tuesday, he was sent to ED custody till June 9 by a court here which noted that his interrogation was required to unearth the alleged larger conspiracy.

Kejriwal said he had learnt about the arrest of Jain from credible sources a few months back and had shared that information (in the public domain) and the same sources have informed him about Sisodia's arrest. The Centre is fabricating false



charges against Sisodia just like they did to arrest Satyendar Jain. The Centre has directed all its agencies to allot all their resources on framing bogus cases to arrest Sisodia," he claimed during a media briefing.

Referring to Sisodia as the pioneer of India's education revolution and perhaps the best education minister of independent India, the chief minister said he is a ray of hope for not just Delhi, but for the children of the entire country.

"It is because of him they are confident that someone can transform their schools too. He has brought fame to India on a global stage and people like him should be transforming schools all over India instead of being sent to jail," he said.

Delhi CM Kejriwal defends his arrested health minister

NEW DELHI: Defending Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain who has been arrested in a money laundering case, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said he is a hardcore patriot and an honest person and the allegations against him are "completely false".

"During a media briefing, the AAP supremo alleged that Enforcement Directorate on Monday was carried out due to political reasons and asserted he would come out clean in the case eventually.

"We are hardcore patriots. We consider corruption a betrayal to the country. We can die but cannot betray our country," Kejriwal said.

Citing the recent case of Punjab, he said that state Health Minister Vijay Singla was sacked over graft charges. He was arrested shortly, with Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann asserting his government has zero-tolerance for corruption.

Special Cell gets five day remand of Lawrence Bishnoi in Moosewala case

NEW DELHI: In the latest development in connection with the gunning down of singer cum Congress leader Sidhu Singh Moosewala, the Special Cell of the Delhi Police has brought gangster Lawrence Bishnoi on five days remand to grill him in the case.

The Special Cell has already questioned Kala Jathedi, Shahrukh and Kala Rana for their alleged role in the killing. There are possibilities that the Punjab Police might seek their production warrant. The Special Cell will share all the information with the Punjab Police who are in touch with them.

Earlier in the day Bishnoi had alleged that the Punjab police can do mishapening with him under political pressure. His plea has been accepted by the Delhi High Court which will hear arguments in the matter. Moosewala's autopsy revealed

that he had 24 bullet injuries whereas 30 rounds were fired.

In less than 24 hours after his security was curtailed by the government, Moosewala, 29, was shot dead by gangsters close to his ancestral village in Mansa in broad daylight on Sunday. He was at the wheel of a Mahindra Thar SUV when the assailants, believed to be 10-12 in number, fired more than 20 rounds at point blank range at the singer and his two friends, who received serious injuries. It is learnt that the Russian AN-97 and AK-47 assault rifles were used in the murder as their shells were recovered from the crime scene. Goldy Brar, a Canada based gangster and Lawrence Bishnoi have taken the responsibility for the murder. The killing has sparked a huge political controversy and the Punjab Government is at the receiving end.

GST revenues up 44 pc at nearly Rs 1.41 lakh cr in May-2022

NEW DELHI: GST revenues bucked the two-month rising trend in May and stood at nearly Rs 1.41 lakh crore, registering a year-on-year increase of 44%.

Although the May Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues came in lower than the record high collection in April at Rs 1.68 lakh crore and Rs 1.42 lakh crore in March, it is still the fourth highest collection since the rollout of the new indirect tax regime on July 1, 2017. In February, revenues from taxing sale of goods and services was at Rs 1.33 lakh crore, while in January it was Rs 1.40,986 crore. "The gross GST revenue col-



lected in the month of May 2022 is Rs 1,40,885 crore of which CGST is Rs 25,036 crore, SGST is Rs 32,001 crore, IGST is Rs 73,345 crore (including Rs 37,469 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,502 crore (including Rs 931 crore collected on import of goods)," the Finance

Ministry said in a statement. The revenues for the month of May 2022 are 44 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year at Rs 97,821 crore. This is the fourth time that the monthly GST collection has crossed the Rs 1.40 lakh crore mark since the inception of GST and the third straight month since March 2022. "The collection in May, which pertains to the returns for April -- the first month of the financial year -- has always been less than that in April, which pertains to the returns for March, the closing of the financial year.

Kashmiri Pandits protesting but BJP busy celebrating its eight years: Rahul

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday slammed the government over the killing of a Hindu woman teacher in Kulgam, saying Kashmiri Pandits are protesting but the BJP is busy celebrating eight years of Modi government. His remarks come a day after school teacher Renu Bala was gunned down near her school in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam by terrorists.



Security personnel and civilians are dying in Kashmir and this is the truth and it is not a film, he said.

"In Kashmir, 15 security personnel have been martyred and 18 civilians have been killed in the last five months. Yesterday too a teacher was murdered," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

"Kashmiri Pandits are sitting on a dharna for the last 18 days but the BJP is busy celebrating eight years. Prime Minister ji, this is not a film but it is the truth of Kashmir today," Gandhi also said.

Modi given wings to dreams of every Indian citizen: Shah

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given wings to the dreams and aspirations of every citizen of the country and instilled in them new confidence during his eight years of government.

In a series of tweets in Hindi on the Modi government completing eight years in power, Shah said in the form of Modi India had got leadership in which every section has faith and pride. "Considering power as a medium of service, PM @narendramodi gave rights to the poor, farmers, women and the underprivileged, which instilled their faith in democracy and made them a participant in the development journey of the country. Congratulations to all citizens for these eight years full of historical achievements," he tweeted with the hashtag #8YearsOfSeva.

Govt to soon launch common platform for delivery of various schemes



To improve the ease of living for the common man, the government is planning to launch 'Jan Samarth' -- a common portal for delivery of various schemes run by different ministries and departments.

As part of the Narendra Modi government's vision of minimum government maximum governance, the new portal plans to initially onboard 15 credit-linked government schemes, sources said. The offerings will be gradually expanded, depending on compatibility, as some of the

they said, adding State Bank of India (SBI) and other lenders are doing the testing. They said the portal will have open architecture enabling state governments and other institutions to also onboard their schemes on this platform in the future. To provide comfort to borrowers, the government in 2018 had launched a portal http://psloansin59minutes.com for various kinds of credit products, including MSME, home, auto and personal loans. The portal facilitates in-principle approval of loans for MSMEs and other borrowers in 59 minutes by various state-owned banks compared to the earlier turnaround time of 20-25 days.

After receiving an in-principle approval letter, the loan is expected to be disbursed in 7-8 working days. The portal processes loan applications without human intervention till the sanction stage. Any MSME borrower does not need to submit any physical document for in-principle approval for a loan.

SKM demands judicial probe into attack on Rakesh Tikait

NEW DELHI: Condemning the attack on farmers leaders Rakesh Tikait and others in Bengaluru and terming it "sponsored by the BJP", the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Monday demanded punishment to the culprits, action against officers guilty for negligence, and a judicial inquiry into the incident.

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Tikait was attacked with black paint during a press conference at Bengaluru on 'Raita Chaluvali, Aatmavalokana haagu Spasteekarana Sabha (Farmer's Movement, Introspection and Clarification Meeting)' organised by Karnataka State Farmers Association, affiliated to the SKM, and Hasiru Sena. "Based on the information received so far, it is clear that farmers leaders Tikait, Yudhveer Singh and Kavitha Kuruganti were refuting the propaganda against the farmers' movement by TV channels in Karnataka during the past few days. During this, one person got up in a pre-planned manner and hit



the TV channel's boom mic on Tikait's face and another person came and threw ink at him. The attackers were raising slogans of 'Jai Modi' and 'Modi, Modi', "the SKM said in a statement. "Till now, the main accused Bharat Shetty has been identified and is in police custody. The photo of the prime accused along with former Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, (his son and) BJP's state Vice President Vijayendra, current Home Minister Araga Jnanendra and Irrigation Minister Govind Karjol has now made it clear that the attack was sponsored by the BJP, " the Morcha alleged.



independent of Police (ASP) Arun Kumar Singh told PTI that on the complaint of Dilbag Singh, an FIR under appropriate sections of IPC had been lodged. He said forensic teams had been sent to the spot to examine the vehicle and the crime scene and collect evidences. He further said police were investigating the case and efforts were on to identify the attackers. The ASP added that the BKU-Tikait district president sent his gunman on leave on his own without intimating the senior police authorities. "If the matter of leave to his gunman had been intimated to us, we would have provided him an alternative arrangement," he said.

I-T dept raids multiple business groups across 5 states

The Income Tax Department on Wednesday raided multiple business groups in at least five states as part of a tax evasion investigation against them, officials said. Premises of the business groups in Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are being searched as part of separate probes, they said. The business groups that are being searched include those involved in liquor manufacturing and sale, dairy and milk, real estate and logistics among others. Various investigation directorates of the department located in these states are undertaking the searches after "credible" tax evasion inputs were gathered, the officials said.

I am joining Narendrabhai's army as a sepoy: Hardik Patel

GANDHINAGAR: Hardik Patel, who once levelled a number of allegations against the BJP government and led the reservation movement for patidars, on Thursday joined the BJP after resigning from the Congress. He donned the saffron colour at a program held at Kamalam, the BJP headquarters in Gandhinagar. In the presence of religious leaders and BJP office bearers including Gujarat BJP state president C.R. Patil, former deputy chief minister Nitin Patel, Hardik Patel wore a saffron scarf. Before this, he took part in a roadshow on Gandhinagar Highway from Koba Circle to Kamalam amid the playing of DJ and dhols.



Addressing a press conference after joining the BJP, Hardik Patel said that Prime Minister Modi, CM Bhupendra Patel, party chief J.P. Nadda and state president C.R. Patil are working hard in the interest of the nation. "I joined the party as a sepoy in Narendrabhai's army, just as a squirrel contributed to the construction of Ramsetu.

I am ready to accept whatever responsibility party gives me. This is my home coming. My father used to help Anandiben, the former Chief Minister of Gujarat, as much as he could and serve the BJP," he said. "I had also asked the Congress for a role of a soldier in the party, but that did not happen. It may have been the first time that someone resigned to become a soldier," he added. During the Patidar movement as well as after joining the Congress, Hardik hurled insults at the BJP and also levelled many allegations against the party. "We were protesting against the government at that time," Hardik said in response to a question.

BKU leader Dilbag Singh attacked by bike-borne men in UP

BKU leader Dilbag Singh, a witness in the Lakhimpur Khairi violence case, was allegedly attacked by two unidentified men here, police said on Wednesday. The attack took place Tuesday night when the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Tikait) district president was returning home from Aliganj-Muda road in Gola kotwali area in his SUV when the bike-borne miscreants opened fire on him. Singh, however, sustained no injuries in the attack. Singh is among the witnesses in Tikunia violence of October 3, 2021 in which eight people, including four farmers and a journalist, died. Union minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra was arrested in connection with the



incident. Talking to PTI over phone, the BKU leader said the miscreants punctured a tyre of his SUV owing to which he had to stop the vehicle. "The assailants attempted to open the gates and windows of the SUV. When failed, they fired two shots at the window pane of the driver side," he said.

Singh said he was driving the SUV and was alone. He said sensing the intentions of the attackers, he folded the driver seat and bent down towards the floor. As the vehicle windows were covered with dark film, the attackers could not decide the BKU leader's status in the SUV and fled away on their bikes. Singh said he had sent his official gunman (provided to him by the district administration) on leave owing to his son's sudden sickness on the day. He lodged a complaint with Gola kotwali police soon after the attack. He added that he had also informed BKU-Tikait spokesperson Rakesh Tikait about the incident. Meanwhile, Additional Super-

intendent of Police (ASP) Arun Kumar Singh told PTI that on the complaint of Dilbag Singh, an FIR under appropriate sections of IPC had been lodged. He said forensic teams had been sent to the spot to examine the vehicle and the crime scene and collect evidences. He further said police were investigating the case and efforts were on to identify the attackers. The ASP added that the BKU-Tikait district president sent his gunman on leave on his own without intimating the senior police authorities. "If the matter of leave to his gunman had been intimated to us, we would have provided him an alternative arrangement," he said.

Delhi govt approves re-carpeting of Raja Garden flyover

The Delhi government on Wednesday approved re-carpeting of the Raja Garden flyover road in west Delhi at an estimated expenditure of Rs 1.87 crore, an official statement said.

The sanction was granted by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the PWD portfolio.

After granting the approval, Sisodia said ultra-modern technologies would be used to strengthen the flyover and improve commuting experience. "Strengthening of the flyover will benefit thousands of commuters every day and save their



time. The Arvind Kejriwal government is committed to reducing traffic congestion in Delhi. The focus is to improve city roads, increase their strength, and provide commuters a safe

travel experience," the statement quoted Sisodia as saying. The decision follows several complaints of bad condition of the road surface of the flyover in west Delhi. Sisodia also directed PWD

officials to get the road surface of the flyover fixed at the earliest, the statement said. The deputy chief minister has reviewed various road redevelopment projects across the city in the past few weeks and approved funds for them. "In the same series, he approved the re-carpeting project of Raja Garden flyover worth Rs 1.87 crores today (Wednesday)," the statement said.

The work will include removal of existing cracked pavements, re-carpeting with stone matrix asphalt, and road marking with thermoplastic paint, the statement said.

Monday's thunderstorm uprooted 77 trees in Delhi



Central Delhi lost at least 77 trees, some of them decades old, while 58 big branches broke off and fell in Monday's fierce thunderstorm and heavy rains in the national capital, NDMC officials said.

The civic body's horticulture department fears some of the uprooted trees might be among those tagged as 'heritage trees' by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), but the team is yet to compile a damage report and ascertain the facts.

"A total of 77 trees were uprooted last evening during the severe storm while 58 big branches fell, blocking several roads in NDMC areas. All roads have been cleared," a senior NDMC official said.

The uprooted trees include neem (seven), peepal (six), jamun (five), arjun (four), and seemal, pilkhan and bargad (two each).

One tree each of imli, kade-

lia, kusum, kekan, balam, bhedda and eucalyptus were also lost during the storm.

"Most of the uprooted trees were on Baba Kharak Singh Road (six), while Parliament Street lost five neem trees. Maximum tree branches fell on Moti Lal Nehru Marg (12), followed by Golf Link (eight)," the official added.

The horticulture department and the enforcement department of the NDMC are responsible for clearing uprooted trees and debris.

Other roads where trees were uprooted and traffic movement affected include Mother Teresa Crescent, Ashoka Road, Shankar Road, Firozshah Road, Jantar Mantar Marg, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Copernicus Marg, Tilak Marg, Purana Qila Road, Pandara Road, Subramanyam Bharti Marg, Janpath, Mansingh Road, Sardar Patel Marg, K Kamraj Marg, Krishna Menon

Delhi court sends Satyendar Jain to ED custody till June 9 in money laundering case



Delhi minister Satyendar Jain was sent to Enforcement Directorate's custody till June 9 by a court here on Tuesday for questioning in a money laundering case. Special Judge Geetanji Goel remanded Jain in ED's custody, noting that his custodial interrogation was required to unearth the larger conspiracy. The ED had on Monday arrested the Delhi health minister under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Delhi's air quality in May poorest for month in 3 yrs



Delhi's air quality in May this year was the poorest for the month in the last three years, according to the Central Pollution Control Board data.

Experts attributed the poor air quality to the lack of rainfall in the first half of the month. The city received just 1.4 mm of rainfall from May 1 to May 20, according to the India Meteorological Department. Delhi recorded an average air quality index (AQI) of 212 this year as against 144 in 2021 and 143 in 2020. It saw 21 days of 'poor' air quality in 2022 as compared to three in 2021 and just two in 2020. The capital had only one day of 'satisfactory' air quality this time as against six in 2021 and four in 2020. 'Moderate' air quality days also dipped to nine as compared to 22 such days last year. An AQI between 201 and 300 is considered 'poor', 301-400 'very poor' and 401-500 'severe', while the AQI above 500 falls in the 'severe plus' category.

President Kovind may address joint session of state legislature on June 6

Uttar Pradesh assembly will invite President Ram Nath Kovind to address a joint session of the state legislature on the occasion of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava' on June 6. A resolution in this regard was unanimously passed in the state assembly. As soon as the House met, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna tabled the special resolution to invite the President for his address to the House and guide members on June 6.

Three Delhi HC judges take oath of office



Three new Delhi High Court judges on Thursday took oath of office, taking the strength of the court to 47.

Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi administered the oath of office to Justices Purushandra Kumar Kaurav, Anish Dayal and Amit Sharma.

The Central government on Wednesday notified the transfer of Justice Kaurav from the Madhya Pradesh High Court to the Delhi High Court. The Supreme Court had recommended his transfer last month.

The Central government On May 31 also notified the appointment of the newly sworn-in-judges Justices Dayal and Sharma, who were practising lawyers.

The swearing-in ceremony took place in the court of the Chief Justice in the presence of other high court judges, lawyers and family members of the newly sworn-in judges.

The new appointments take the number of judges in the high court to 47, including 12 women judges. The sanctioned strength of the high court is 60.

Two boys drown in pond in UP's Jhansi



The bodies of two boys have been fished out from a pond Gursarai area of the district where they drowned while bathing, police said on Friday.

Sudesh Kumar Parihar (11) and his neighbour Arvind (9) had gone to take bath in the pond on Thursday evening, SHO of Gursarai police station Arun Kumar Tiwari said. When the boys did not return home even after a long time, their families started a search. The bodies were fished out of the pond late in the evening with the help of divers, the police officer said. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in a statement, expressed his condolences over the loss of lives.

Delhi HC quashes rape FIR against husband

The Delhi High Court has quashed an FIR registered against a man for the alleged rape of his wife before the solemnisation of marriage between them, saying that no useful purpose would be served by keeping the case alive as both the parties were now living happily as husband and wife.

Justice Talwant Singh stated that although the parties were and are in love with each other, certain disputes arose between them which led to the filing of the FIR and the man consequently remaining in jail for seven days immediately after the wedding.

No useful purpose will be served by keeping present FIR alive as both the parties are living happily as husband and wife and apart from a technical approach, this Court has also to take a humanitarian approach and to do complete justice, this Court exercises



its power under Section 482 Cr.P.C. and hereby orders for quashing of FIR.. under Sections 376/328 IPC registered at PS Ranjit Nagar, Central Delhi and the proceedings emanating therefrom including the charge-sheet dated 14.03.2022 filed in the concerned court, said the court in its order dated May 24.

In the present case, there was a love affair between the petitioner, a doctor, and his now-wife, a lawyer, for more than two years and the proposal of marriage was also acceptable to both the families.

However, certain differences arose between the parties and

the woman filed the present FIR against the petitioner in November 2021 on the allegation that he had made physical relations on the promise of marriage on a number of occasions.

The parties subsequently got married in December 2021.

The petitioner told the court that talks for marriage were already going on but in the meantime, the FIR was lodged against him due to certain reasons, and keeping the same alive would disturb the peaceful matrimonial life of the parties. This is not a case where the physical relations were made forcibly by the petitioner and promised to marry under the fear of being prosecuted, he said.

The court was informed that the dispute between the parties has already been amicably settled and the wife did not wish to pursue any proceedings.

Nine injured as bus crashes into 3 vehicles in Delhi

Nine people were injured after a bus allegedly jumped a road divider and crashed into three vehicles in northeast Delhi's Shastri Park on Tuesday, police said.

The incident took place around 4.45 pm on Pusta Road and the cluster bus, plying on route no. 214, was coming from ISBT side, police said. The injured were shifted to a nearby hospital, a senior police officer said, adding that their condition is stable.

"We have registered an FIR under sections 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) of Indian Penal Code against the driver of the offending vehicle," an officer



said. "An investigation has been taken up to nab the accused driver who fled the spot," the officer said. All the CCTV cam-

eras along the route are being scanned to identify the driver and ascertain the sequence of accident, police said.

7 dead as ambulance collides with truck in UP



BAREILLY: Seven people died on Tuesday when an ambulance coming from Delhi

collided with a truck here, police said. The incident took place in the Fatehganj Paschim area when the driver of the ambulance lost control of the vehicle, which rammmed a divider and came onto the other side of the road before hitting the truck, the Bareilly Police said on Twitter.

Seven people died on the spot. It is suspected that the ambulance driver may have dozed off which led to the crash.

A probe is on in the matter, and the victims are yet to be identified, the police said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has condoled the loss of lives.

BJP-JJP rift in alliance widens in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

BJP working committee in Haryana during a recent meeting held at Hisar to have a review on approaching civic polls for 46 seats in the state which include 18 Zila Parishad and 28 Municipal committee seats in Haryana to be held in month June 2022 raising a question mark over BJP-JJP (Janhit Janta Party) alliance government in Haryana now took decision to contest these polls on all 46 seats independently on BJP party symbol. Alliance between BJP and JJP came into existence after Vidhan Sabha polls in 2019 when BJP claiming to have victory over nearly 70 seats was able to win only 40 seats and BJP had to join hands with JJP led by Dushyant Chautala launched JJP after saying good-bye to INLD and during its first attempt in 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls was able to win 10 seats when BJP formed a government in the state having alliance with JJP and Dushyant Chautala became Deputy Chief Minister in the state.

Both alliance parties have been claiming in past about 2 years and 7 months the alliance between both will continue for ever. According to political experts the



gap between both alliance parties has started widening after BJP announcement to contest coming civic polls independently on party symbol likely to widen gradually in future and there is a possibility of both political parties may contest 2014 Vidhan Sabha as well as Lok Sabha polls independently without having alliance. The question also arises if a candidate from JJP will be considered for Rajya Sabha seat for which elections are to be held on June 10 this year. Information also reveals that BJP working committee in the state holding meetings in every district across the state on May 30 and May 31 to have a review as regard winning candidates to contest coming polls in all 46 seats in which BJP district president, poll observer appointed by the party, BJP MLA of constituency and MP of area will be present, followed by a final meeting to be held at Panchkula on June 1, 2022 in which both State BJP

president Om.Parkash Dhankad and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khatter will be present to finalize the final list of contestants.

Sources reveals, BJP decision to contest present Zila Parishad and Municipal polls in the state independently on BJP symbol was taken in a hope to win maximum number seats since BJP leaders feel that JJP is a rural based party having limited number of voters in majority of seats in urban areas as such JJP candidates may be unsuccessful in most of the seats located in rural areas. However, decision by BJP to contest present polls independently have severely shocked both Dushyant Chautala as well as JJP president Ajay Chautala likely to increase differences in alliance between both parties. However, talking to media persons recently at Chandigarh Dushyant Chautala said that alliance between BJP and JJP will continue till last.

Moosewala's killing: Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi withdraws plea in Delhi HC

Jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who is suspected to be involved in Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala's killing, on Wednesday withdrew from the Delhi High Court his plea in which he had sought necessary safeguards as he apprehended a "fake encounter" by the Punjab Police.

At the outset, his counsel submitted before Justice Swarana Kanta



Sharma that he wishes to withdraw the petition and wants to file it before the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The court said, "the petition

is dismissed as withdrawn". Delhi Government Standing Counsel (criminal) Sanjay Lau said the petition was not maintainable in Delhi.

The plea, in the Delhi High Court, had sought direction to the Tihar Jail authority and the Delhi Police to ensure that necessary safeguards, including videography, are taken for his safety before giving his custody to any other state police, includ-

ing the Punjab Police. Bishnoi had earlier approached a district court here which refused to entertain his plea. He was lodged in Tihar Jail in connection with a case lodged under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes Act (MCOCA) and was on Tuesday remanded in three-day custody of the Delhi Police Special Cell after it arrested him in an Arms Act case.

Woman alleges sexual harassment at Delhi Metro station

A woman has alleged that she was sexually harassed by a man at a station on Delhi Metro's yellow line, officials said on Friday.

The woman also alleged that the policeman standing on the platform did not take any action after she approached him for help.

The woman took to Twitter to narrate her ordeal following which the Delhi Police asked her to provide her contact details so that they can reach her. The DMRC also issued a statement on Friday, saying it takes the issue of safety of its women commuters "very seriously" and that all possible cooperation is being extended to the law and order agencies so that necessary action can be taken.

In a series of tweets, the woman claimed that on Thursday afternoon when she got



off at the Jor Bagh metro station, a man approached her on the pretext of confirming an address.

"While travelling on the yellow line today, I faced sexual harassment at the Jor Bagh Station. The man had asked for my help w an address during the metro ride.

"I helped him, then got off at my station and sat on the platform to book a cab. The

man approached me again at the station under the garb of confirming the address. Believing that he needed help.."

The man flashed his genitals while trying to to show me a file containing the address, the woman alleged in a tweet.

The woman also alleged that the policeman standing on the platform did not help her. "I approached a policeman

he flatly refused to help me and asked me to go upstairs to talk about it.

"I was still scared but I somehow managed to go upstairs and found other policemen. I asked dem to take me to the CCTV room so dat I could recognise him," she said in another tweet.

The entire incident was captured on camera but then we saw him get into a different metro and leave.

The woman alleged that when she asked the authorities to do something, they instead blamed her for creating a scene.

"I asked them to do something about it but instead they started blaming me and said dat I should've created a scene & tht theres nothing they can do now since he managed to leave," the woman said in her tweets.

NCRB Report: Drug addiction, HIV +ve cases rising in 8 Haryana districts

SATISH HANDA

Earlier, Punjab state was leading for increasing cases of drug addiction among youths in the country in both rural as well as urban areas, but now youths in Haryana state especially in about eight districts Sirsa neighbouring Punjab state has left youths in Punjab state far behind, followed by other districts in Haryana state Fatehabad, Jind, Hisar, Kaithal, Rohtak, Gurugram and Ambala where situation is turning bad to worst since past few years.

According to recent National Crime Bureau (NCB) report, a survey was conducted in worst affected Sirsa district in Haryana state where consumption of heroine was found maximum in youths, followed by use of other drugs: charas, sulphad and opium. There were many cases in which



youths from both sexes were found injecting drugs in their body using a common syringe giving rise to dreaded infectious diseases like HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B in youths including teenagers between age 13 to 16. Survey report also revealed that more than 50% females residing in girl hostels and PG houses were found taking drugs. NCB survey in worst affected Sirsa district revealed that out of 58 persons found suffering from HIV diseases included three youths of age between 13 and 16. Among these 23 persons were

found suffering from Hepatitis C and two persons suffering from hepatitis B.

NCB survey report further revealed that 898 patients suffering from HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis were having treatment in OST centre at the Civil Hospital Sirsa, of them 35 patients suffering from drug addiction reported died due to having excessive dose of drugs and 59 patients had already left town. Information further reveals that in past five months with effect from month January this year as many as 23 Hepatitis C and two Hepatitis B positive new patients were admitted in Civil Hospital Sirsa which included seven patients in month January, 9 patients in month February, 4 patients in month March, 5 patients in month April and two patients in month May this year.

After Ram temple in Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura appear to be waking up: CM Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW: After the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the temple town of Kashi appears to be waking up, as are Mathura, Vrindavan, Vindhyaavasi Dham and Naimish Dham, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday. There has been no communal riot in the state, he told the BJP's one-day state executive meeting in Lucknow and mentioned recent festivals to say that for the first time in the state the namaz on the last Friday before Eid was not held on roads. Adityanath referred to the inauguration of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor, to say one lakh devotees visit Kashi every day and the place is proving the significance of its name in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision. «Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti were held peacefully. This was the first time that the last Friday namaz before Eid



was not held on the streets. For namaz there is a place of worship, the mosques where their religious programmes can be held.» he said. Mentioning the removal of loudspeakers from religious places, he said, «You must have seen how the unnecessary noise was got rid of.» At the first state

executive meeting of the BJP after the assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, he asked the party workers to start preparing for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and move forward with the target of winning 75 out of the state's 80 seats. In 2019, the BJP had won 62 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh while its ally Apana

Dal(S) registered victory in two seats. Referring to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor, he said, «After the beginning of the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya, the waking up (angadai) of Kashi is before us.» «All pilgrimages centres like Mathura Vrindavan, Vindhyaavasi Dham, Naimish Dham are once again waking up (angadai li). In this situation we all have to move forward once again.» the chief minister said. His remarks came amid legal proceedings over the temple-mosque disputes in Mathura and Varanasi, also known as Kashi. At the meeting, Adityanath said, «We have to prepare the ground for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from now only. We should move ahead with the target of winning 75 seats.» «With people's help and by dint of our hard work during

Covid, we got better results in the assembly polls. In the 2024 general elections, under the leadership of PM Modi, we have to march ahead with the target of winning 75 seats in Uttar Pradesh.» Congratulating Modi for completing eight years as prime minister, Adityanath said with the 2024 roadmap, the BJP will succeed in its achieving its target. Adityanath said the perception about the state changed after 2017 while asserting that Uttar Pradesh is leading the country in over four dozen schemes. Earlier, addressing the meeting, BJP state chief Swatantra Dev Singh congratulated PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda and senior party leaders and people of the state for the party's victory in the assembly polls.

Black ink thrown on farmer leader Rakesh Tikait in Bengaluru



BENGALURU: Miscreants on Monday threw ink on farmer leader Rakesh Tikait during an event organised by a farmers' organisation at the Gandhi Bhavan here. Soon after the incident, clashes took place between the organisers and the miscreants leading to both sides attacking each other with plastic chairs.

Reacting to the incident, Tikait alleged that the ink attack on him was in connivance with the state government. «The local police is responsible for it and it happened due to the connivance of the government.» Tikait told reporters. Black ink was seen on his turban, face, Kurta, and green shawl around his neck.

Rajesh Gera appointed DG, National Informatics Centre

NEW DELHI: Senior scientist Rajesh Gera has been appointed as the Director General, National Informatics Centre (NIC), a Personnel Ministry order issued on Tuesday said. Gera is currently Deputy Director General in the NIC. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved appointment of Gera, Scientist G, to the post of Director General, NIC, it said. The NIC, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), was established in 1976 with the objective to provide technology-driven solutions to central and state governments. In another order, Kimbiong Kipgen has been appointed as Secretary, Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) post-retirement on contractual basis for one year.



BJP makes Union ministers in-charge for Rajya Sabha polls



The BJP on Wednesday appointed Union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat its in-charge for Rajya Sabha polls in Rajasthan and Haryana respectively, two states which are headed for a keen contest with the entry of party-backed independents.

The party also appointed Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in-charge for Rajya Sabha elections in Maharashtra, another state headed for a contest. Union minister G Kishan Reddy has been appointed in-charge for the polls in Karnataka.

Shah to inaugurate 'Khelo India Youth Games' in Panchkula on June 4

CHANDIGARH: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the fourth edition of Khelo India Youth Games at 7.30 p.m. on June 4 in Panchkula, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on Thursday. Khattar said that 8,500 athletes from 36 states and Union Territories will participate in the games that will conclude on June 13. «As many as 25 sporting events will be organised across five venues -- Panchkula, Ambala, Shahabad, Chandigarh and Delhi,» the Chief Minister told the media here. The Khelo India Youth Games is being jointly organised by the state government and the Sports Authority of India (SAI). Khattar said the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula with a seating arrangement for 7,000 spectators would be the main venue.

Jharkhand to get WHO award for tobacco control

Recognising its efforts in controlling tobacco consumption, the World Health Organization (WHO) has selected Jharkhand for the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award-2022, an official said on Sunday. Stata Tobacco Control Cell of the Health Department will receive the award on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day in New Delhi on May 31. Jharkhand's nodal officer of National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) Lalit Ranjan Pathak told PTI. «It's a great achievement for Jharkhand, which could be possible only due to political and administrative supports that tobacco control cell has got in implementing the programme,» Pathak said.

Farooq appears before ED in money laundering case

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate for questioning in connection with a money laundering case linked to alleged financial irregularities in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association. Abdullah, the Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar, arrived at the ED office at Rajbagh at 11 am. Before going in, the former chief minister spoke to reporters and linked his questioning with the forthcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.



I won't say much (about the summons) there are elections to be held and they will trouble us till then, he said. On May 27, the ED summoned Abdullah to its Srinagar

office in connection with the money laundering case. Abdullah, 84, a three-time chief minister of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state, had recorded his statement in the same case in 2019, officials said. Political parties in the Valley said the summons were «common to all opposition» leaders in the country. Reacting to the development, the National Conference said the veteran leader would continue to cooperate with the authorities like he has done in the past.

Terrorists gun down Kashmiri Hindu teacher in Kulgam

Terrorists on Tuesday shot dead a Kashmiri Hindu teacher in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, police official said. Rajni Bala (36) of Samba in Jammu region sustained injuries when terrorists fired at her in Gopalpora area of Kulgam where she was posted as a teacher, they said. An injured Rajni Bala was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her dead on arrival, the officials said. They said the area has been cordoned off and a manhunt launched to track down the assailants. This is the second killing of a Kashmiri Pandit in the month



Singer KK dies after concert in Kolkata

KOLKATA: Well-known Bollywood singer Krishnakumar Kunthar, popularly known as KK, died in Kolkata on Tuesday night, officials said. He was 53, and survived by wife and two children. KK performed at a concert organised by Gurdas College at Nazrul Mancha in south Kolkata for almost an hour in the evening. He was «feeling heavy» after reaching his hotel, and soon collapsed, officials said. He was taken to a nearby private hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, they said. «KK was brought to the hospital around 10 pm. It's unfortunate that we could not treat him,» a senior official of the hospital said. Doctors at the hospital said they suspected «cardiac arrest» to be the cause of the death. A senior officer of the Kolkata Police told PTI that a post-mortem would be conducted on Wednesday to ascertain the exact reason for the death.

Panthers Party founder Bhim Singh passes away in Jammu

Founder of Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party Prof Bhim Singh passed away in Jammu on Tuesday after being unwell for about a month. He was 81. The former legislator hailed from Udhampur district's Bhugterian village. He has left behind his wife Jai Mala and son Ankit Love, who lives in London. Singh breathed his last at GMC Hospital here. Expressing his condolences, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, «Prof Bhim Singh Ji will be remembered as a grassroots leader who devoted his life for the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir. He was very well read and scholarly. I will always recall my interactions with him. Saddened by his demise. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti.»

POSOCO signs MoU with IMD for better electricity grid management

National grid operator POSOCO signed a memorandum of understanding with India Meteorological Department (IMD) today where both the parties agreed that weather information provided by IMD will be used by the Power System Operators across the India for better management of Indian Power System and for the purpose of analysis. The MoU was signed by S. R. Narasimhan, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), POSOCO and Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General (DG), IMD at NRLDC, POSOCO office. The meeting was attended by other senior officials from both sides. IMD will make available current weather information every hour or at lesser intervals. It will provide weather forecasts of temperature, humidity, wind speed, wind direction, rainfall up to next 36 hours for the identified stations. It will also provide the snowfall forecast of hilly States and also along the route of important transmission lines passing through hilly terrains. It will provide weather parameters forecast at Renewable Energy plant locations. The last MoU between POSOCO and IMD was signed on 18 May 2015.



Pro-Right Wing YouTuber held in cheating case

CHENNAI: A YouTuber has been arrested for cheating people by collecting money using an online crowdfunding platform for renovating a state-administered temple, police said. S Karthick Gopinath was arrested on Monday as he had not taken the prior approval of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department for the purpose and he had used the money for his «personal» purposes, they said. Later, he was remanded to judicial custody after he was produced in a court, Avadi Police Commissioner said. IPC sections including cheating and a provision of the Information Technology Act has been invoked against him, they said. Seen as pro-Right wing, his arrest has led to a war of words in the social media. BJP Tamil Nadu unit chief K Annamalai condemned the arrest and said it was done on «completely trumped charges». On his twitter handle, Annamalai promised his party's legal support to him and



described Gopinath as a nationalist. Gopinath runs a YouTube channel, «Ilaya Bharatham» and he had campaigned for renovation and rebuilding of damaged statues in and around the famed Siruvachur Madhurakali Amman Temple in Perambalur district. He had pointed out in a video post on the repeated incidents that had led to damage of statues. He had raised funds through an online crowdfunding platform, reportedly to the tune of about Rs 36 lakh for the repair and renovation purpose. Recently, the YouTuber had dubbed a news report of a news channel on this matter as derogatory and fake news. Gopinath had also posted a video on the progress related to the temple statues' renovation initiative.

of May. On May 12, Rahul Bhat was shot dead inside the tehsildar's office in Chadoora tehsil of Budgam district. This is the seventh targeted killing in Kashmir in the month. While three of the victims were off-duty policeman, four were civilians.

RS polls: Nirmala Sitharaman, Jaggesh file nominations

BENGALURU: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and actor-politician Jaggesh of the BJP, were among the prominent faces to file their nominations for the June 10 Rajya Sabha polls from Karnataka on Tuesday, as the contest heats up for the fourth seat. While Sitharaman is seeking re-election from Karnataka, for Jaggesh, a former MLA and MLC, this is his first election to the Upper House of the Parliament. Among the others who filed papers today, the last day to do so, are BJP's third candidate

and outgoing MLC Lehar Singh Siroya, and former MP D Kuppandra Reddy from the JD(S). Congress candidates -- former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh and state general secretary Mansoor Ali Khan -- filed their nominations on Monday itself. Announcement of Khan's name as party's second candidate was a surprise move by the Congress, as it has adequate number of votes to win just one seat. Following this move, the ruling BJP too on Monday night announced the candidature of Siroya, despite having numbers

to comfortably win just two seats. The election to four Rajya Sabha seats is necessitated as the term of office of members Nirmala Sitharaman and K C Ramamurthy of BJP, and Jairam Ramesh -- is due to expire on June 30. The fourth member Oscar Fernandes of the Congress passed away last year. A candidate needs 45 votes to win, and based on their strength in the Legislative Assembly, the BJP can win two seats and the Congress one. However, despite



not having an adequate number of votes to win the fourth seat from the State Assembly, all the three political parties in the state -- BJP, Congress and JD(S) -- have fielded candidates for the seat, forcing an election. After electing two Rajya Sabha candidates (Sitharaman and Jag-

gesh) on its own strength in the Assembly, the BJP will be left with an additional 29 votes. The Congress will be left with 24 extra votes after electing Jairam Ramesh, while the JD(S) has only 32 votes, which is not sufficient to win a seat. So, Sitharaman, Jaggesh, and Jairam Ramesh are likely to get elected unopposed, while the contest is likely to take place between Siroya, Khan and Reddy for the fourth seat, if their nominations are accepted and there are no withdrawals.

Meanwhile, JD(S) on Tuesday claimed that its patriarch H D Deve Gowda had spoken to Congress national President Sonia Gandhi, and she and other party leaders had consented to support its candidate. Expressing surprise over Congress fielding a second candidate «all of a sudden», senior JD(S) leader and former Minister H D Revanna requested the national party for support to keep the «communal forces» out of the race. «...there are a couple of days' time (for withdrawal of candidature), lets wait and see.»

NIA court rejects bail plea of accused in Bajrang Dal activist murder

The Special Court for National Investigation Agency (NIA) cases here has dismissed the bail petition of an accused in the Bajrang Dal activist murder case. Jafer Sadiq is accused number 10 in the murder of Harsha in Shivamogga on February 20 this year. He had approached the court for bail. Rejecting his petition, the court said, «It is submitted that the matter is still under investigation and the final report against the petitioner is yet to be filed. As such the continuance of the petitioner in judicial custody is necessary for the same.

Goa statehood day sees new bridge across Mapuca river

BY DOMINICK RODRIGUES Panjim
Goa's 31st Statehood day was observed here recently with a river bridge project being inaugurated on the occasion -- disclosing futuristic development plans by the Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. Reiterating his famous words «Hanv Asthana Bhivpachi Garaz Na» (No Need For Fear While I am Here) that had been echoed even by his critics during the COVID-19 epidemic, Sawant said cost overruns on projects needed to be avoided since this was people's money. Sawant was speaking at the

Inauguration here recently of the newly-built «Mapuca Bridge» after demolishing the tiny Portuguese era-built bridge that had been witnessing traffic jams. Noting that the four-lane bridge on the Mapuca River MDR-14 had been built with required permissions in barely five months by the GSIDC of which he is Chairman, Chief Minister Sawant said the Goa Government is «environmentally sensitive» and highlighted the country's «One-of-its-kind» biomedical waste plant set up in Goa. Describing Mapuca city as the «Arthik Capital» and also famed for its Friday Farmers



Market of Goa, he said the Government has appointed a consultant in its plans for developing the city in a «holistic» manner that included also the «beautification» of the Mapuca River for which a sur-

vey of 11-kms Mapuca-Aldona stretch had been carried out. The Mapuca River is presently witnessing a massive spread of «water hyacinth» plants choking the flowing water. The Goa Government is

planning the desilting of the strategic Mapuca River which witnessed floods caused by careless dumping of waste into the water, the Chief Minister said while requesting the public to stop dumping of waste. While mentioning that required permissions had been applied for and that all future projects would be carried out only after people's concerns addressed, Sawant noted that the Government plans to create a new Human Resources effort focusing on employment, education and basic needs, necessary infrastructure and new reforms. Mapuca BJP MLA Joshua Dsouza, while highlighting

the cooperation and efforts in making this bridge a reality, said that other positive efforts included the «+River Rejuvenation Project+» and Holistic Plan for Mapuca city. Aldona Congress MLA Carlos Ferreira praised the Chief Minister for completing the bridge in record time, and also narrated an incident of Sawant helping out people in their times of need. Ranjit Usgaonkar, Sarpanch, Bastora Village, noted that the bridge's early completion resulted from excellent cooperation between the Mapuca MLA Joshua Dsouza and the earlier Aldona MLA Glen Ticlo, who was also present on the occasion.

Dhami set for comfortable win in Champawat bypoll

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami was leading by 54,121 votes over his nearest rival from Congress Nirmala Gahtori in Champawat bypoll, according to latest trends available on Friday. At the end of the 13th round of counting, D h a m i had polled 57,268 votes and Gahtori 3,147. Dhami's comfortable margin shows he is headed for a big win. By-election to the assembly seat was held on May 31 with over 64% of the electorate casting their votes.



Inflation's impact on GST revenues should be focus

The Centre recently said that it has released States' outstanding GST compensation dues of almost Rs 87,000 crore. The move marks a shift in stance as just a month earlier, the Finance Ministry had signalled that States' dues worth over Rs 78,000 crore, pending for the last four months of 2021-22, will be released 'as and when' adequate GST compensation cess collections accrue. By May 31, the Centre said there was about Rs 25,000 crore in the GST compensation fund and forked out the balance from its own coffers to be adjusted from future GST cess levies on sin goods, such as cars. The stated intent for this changed strategy makes eminent sense — to help States manage their resources and ensure spending, particularly of the capital variety to pump-prime the economy, happens smoothly through 2022-23. States have been anxious about revenue inflows once the five-year GST compensation window expires this month. The gesture to remit dues without waiting for cess accruals will also help cool the temperature of the Centre-States' fiscal parleys, that flared up afresh after some tangential remarks from the apex court on the nature of the GST Council's recommendations. For consumers, this could mean a further extension in the levy of GST compensation cess beyond March 2026 — by when borrowings made over the past two years to bridge shortfalls in cess collections, were to be repaid. The elephant in the room remains ignored — high inflation. Once that is acknowledged and the level of economic activity assessed minus inflation effects, the GST Council can take a more nuanced call on the next steps to reform the still-young tax system and sustain revenues. This must begin by assessing whether the GST rate restructuring should be deferred because of fears of higher inflation, or reoriented to lower inflation while broadening the tax net and easing compliance.

LETTERBOX

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Quality is the best business plan.

— John Lasseter, Pixar

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YASH VINOD EXPLORES WHY THE WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY NEEDS TO BE TAKEN MORE SERIOUSLY

Mark each day as Environment Day

Earth — the third planet in a set of eight, it somehow happened to be located within the Goldilocks Zone—the distance away from a parent star where the physical conditions are just right for organic life to exist in a planet—for our solar system. None of the other planets, as we know, can sustain life on their own; only one (Mars) can even be a colonization hope, and it looks like we're headed that way.

Scaled up to the seemingly endless Universe, the chances of this 'happy accident' happening are significantly lower than, say, the odds of Leicester City winning that fabled 2016 English Premier League season! (Most bookies had given them odds of a bleak 5000-to-1 before the season began, and they did go on a fairytales run to win it. A true Cinderella team!)

I hope you can digest what I've just written. If you can't, that's okay. Let me put it down for you in layman's terms: it is very very unlikely that we as a species are here, thriving on this blue planet we call home.

This can be affirmed by the mere fact that till date, scientists have discovered only about 30 exoplanets that exist in the Goldilocks zone of their parent stars: and this, despite our search methods getting more and more prolific with every passing generation. Moreover, despite probability dictating that there must surely be some other intelligent civilizations around there, we are yet to find any evidence of it.

Now, you might wonder why I am driving on about probabilities and Premier Leagues and... aliens. We were here to talk about our environment, aren't we? Well, I really felt that giving some context beforehand would be helpful in some way. I digress. Looking at the task at hand—the question in the title of my piece: "Why does the World Environment Day need to be taken seriously?"

Take a deep breath and ponder on this a



bit. Maybe use my introduction as a guiding compass to help you navigate this rather oft touched-upon subject. To sum it up in a single phrase, humanity is a miracle—one sustained purely by the life support system that is Earth. We really should be grateful for such a boon, shouldn't we? Such selfless service deserves an eternal tribute, or at the very least, a way to coexist sustainably.

But instead, look at what we have served ourselves here: on our plate is a main course of global warming accompanied with generous servings of pollution done three ways, drizzled with some acid rain and covered by a leaky layer of ozone. I can veritably confirm that this doesn't look like a very appetizing meal by any means!

Trees are being felled by the hundreds of thousands just to make way for egregious capitalistic endeavors. Water bodies worldwide are seeing toxic effluents being released into their waters. Oceans are being dumped with tons of garbage. Mountains are being defaced. Rivers are being rerouted. Our fossil fuel reserves are being burned through faster than ever, leading to pollutant levels rising steadily globally. Cities like New Delhi routinely see an air

pollution index of over 200 with no action being taken by the stakeholders. Much of our nation's electricity is still generated through non-renewable sources; sustainable power generation is still a long way from seeing widespread accessibility.

(I hope I'm wrong on this last bit; I just have a bunch of numbers with me, and they paint a different story.)

Looking at all this, it is no wonder that certain billionaires want to simply run away and colonize another planet. I implore you, look around and tell me this isn't complacency at the highest level. It's sheer injustice towards Mother Nature. Period.

How many more degrees of temperature must rise for us as a collective to remove our blindfolds? How much more damage must be done to our beautiful forests, mountains, rivers and oceans before crossing the point of no return? How much more pollutants must be released into the environment before people finally raise a serious alarm instead of just giving shallow, periodic attention to it? I say: NO MORE. It's high time we wake up.

My dear reader: as one of the over 7.8 billion humans who call this planet their

home, you play an important role in solving the puzzle of a fast-approaching environment crisis. There are many little ways we could all pitch in to initiate a change for the better. Here are a few to start with:

Actively ensure the waste you dispose is properly dealt with. The 3Rs might sound like a concept taught to schoolchildren, but it's important that all of us drill it into our minds. Plastic usage must be cut down on. They must be recycled when possible, and if not, must be disposed appropriately. Waste as little water as you can; a 10-minute shower isn't required daily!

Reduce your reliance (pun intended?) on non-renewable fuel sources as much as you can. Use public modes of transport unless unavoidable. Carpooling is an amazing alternative too.

Conserve electricity! Only consume it when needed. Switch off your appliances when not in use. Keep your lights turned off when natural light is available and try to change to longer-lasting devices like LED lamps.

Plant some saplings and adopt them. Take care of them and nurture them. The more people participate in this activity, the more we reclaim our lost greenery. And a bonus: we get extra carbon dioxide removal and fresh air to breathe!

The World Environment Day may only be celebrated on one day each year—the 5th of June. But it must be humanity's mission to ensure that every single day is treated like a World Environment Day. No other species has harmed the surroundings like we have, and it is on us to fix the situation before it turns out to be too late. It's the least we can do for what is arguably the most important entity in our lives. Remember: a one-way ticket to Mars ISN'T as easy or exciting an escape route as it sounds!

The writer is a student of Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi. Views are personal



R.K. RAGHAVAN EXPLAINS WHY THE NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU MUST REVIEW ITS PROCEDURES

Aryan Khan case: A flip-flop with several messages

The Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) decision to leave out Aryan Khan, son of actor Shah Rukh Khan, from the chargesheet last week in the so-called drugs-on-cruise ship case in Maharashtra has raised eyebrows in many circles. It is unfortunate that a fabled and civilised city like Mumbai has been the subject of contentious discussion so frequently in the past few years for the crimes reported from there and the inept handling by enforcement agencies. The war between the Centre and the Maharashtra government has only added fuel to fire, each trying to outwit the other through vicious propaganda.

There are again scores of controversies surrounding top appointments in the Maharashtra Police, an index of the malaise that afflicts the police force in the State, which, decades ago, was known for its clean administration. A former Commissioner of Police was recently on the run for several weeks to evade arrest on charges of extortion. The investigation is still going on against him and a former Home Minister of the State. Can anything be more shameful and demoralising to the entire bureaucracy, and not merely the Police?

In the Aryan Khan case that erupted in October last year, he was arrested by the NCB along with 19 others following a raid on a cruise ship off the Mumbai coast. This received huge publicity because a celebrity's son was being held on drug charges. Many speculations started doing the rounds, including one which said that Aryan was being framed. The media was also charged with encashing the controversy. All speculations about inadequacies in the investigation, initially disbelieved, have now been proved right



with the Director General of NCB, Satya Narayan Pradhan, admitting that the investigation against Aryan Khan was motivated. This was an unusual action but one that has to be welcomed because no investigating agency ever admits its mistakes. One early report had said that Aryan had consumed drugs, and according to another, some prohibited substance was found in his possession. The latest NCB report to the court that the evidence against Aryan Khan was not sufficient to prosecute him is therefore bound to generate controversy.

The NCB head in Mumbai, Sameer Wankhade, has been transferred and an inquiry has been ordered against him. This bizarre episode should raise several issues, chief of which is the integrity of investigating agencies in the country. The NCB may have to set its house in order by undertaking a

clinical review of its procedures and personnel policies. The quantum of discretion of officers in the middle and lower levels may have to be reduced substantially.

Political interventions

The flip flop in the Aryan case is in tune with the manner in which investigations in many other cases involving well-known public figures charged with crime are conducted all over the country, both by the State police and other agencies.. No State government is a saint in the matter. Total emasculation of the police is a tragedy that will continue to characterise the force indefinitely. Excessive media attention and the tendency of the lower political spectrum belonging to the establishment to intrude into what should be the sole preserve of government agencies are facts which are undeniable in every State. The unfortunate

victims of this unwholesome exchange of fire are the accused, who are indicted even before the arrival of a judicial decision.

Another arrest by the NCB that hit the headlines in 2020 was that of Rhea Chakraborty who was in a relationship with actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The latter was found dead under mysterious circumstances. While the case was initially investigated by the Enforcement Directorate and later by the CBI on the Supreme Court's direction, the NCB subsequently stepped in to investigate the rumour that Rhea and her brother were instrumental in supplying marijuana to Sushant. This led to Rhea's arrest in September 2020 and she was released a month later. Nothing further has been heard in this case.

The message that emanates from the two cases is that drug law enforcement agencies are often caught in a serious dilemma. If they do not detain the suspects involved at the earliest stage of an investigation, they can be accused of going slow just to favour the accused. If the detainees are subsequently let off for want of evidence, agency officials are accused of either human rights violations or dishonesty. It will not be incorrect to say that many enforcement decisions are a knee-jerk response induced mainly by the fear of loss of reputation and vilification by the media, which is fond of sensationalism. Ultimately, honesty in controversial investigations rests on an officer's own reputation and his ability to withstand pressure from various quarters including the ruling political party.

R.K. Raghavan is a former CBI Director and currently teaches criminal justice and policing at the Jindal Global University, Sonapat



BOOKS: REVIEW

Amish Tripathi to pen fourth book in 'Ram Chandra Series'

HarperCollins has acquired author Amish Tripathi's new book "War of Lanka", the fourth book in the "Ram Chandra Series".

In a statement, the publishers said the date of release for "War of Lanka" will be announced soon.

The first book in the "Ram Chandra Series" explores the tale of Ram ("Scion of Ikshvaku"), the second the story of Sita ("Warrior of Mithila"), and the third burrows deep into the life of Raavan ("Enemy of Aryavarta"). The three stories now merge from the fourth book onwards into a single narrative.

HarperCollins has also acquired world English-language rights to Tripathi's backlist, including the "Shiva Trilogy", the "Ram Chandra Series" and "Legend of Suheldev-

The King Who Saved India"; and his non-fiction titles "Immortal India: Young India, Timeless Civilisation" and "Dharma: Decoding the Epics for a Meaningful Life".

The books will be published between July and August. Tripathi says he is delighted to sign up with HarperCollins as his new publisher.

"I'm sure that they will take my books to the next level. They will be publishing my entire backlist, and also my upcoming book, 'War of Lanka'," he said.

HarperCollins India Ananth Padmanabhan said, "Twelve years ago, when 'The Immortals of Meluha' was first published, it created a revolution and announced the arrival of a significant new voice in Indian fiction.

"Since that first book, Amish,

'I'm sure that they will take my books to the next level. They will be publishing my entire backlist, and also my upcoming book, War of Lanka'

with his fantastical storytelling, has created multiple parallel universes and has entertained millions of readers." According to executive publisher Udayan Mitra, HarperCollins India is "delighted beyond measure" to become a part of the adventure, as it "brings 'War of Lanka', along with Amish's entire backlist, to the many, many readers who, like me, have been waiting with bated breath".



War of Lanka By Amish Tripathi HarperCollins

Author Amish Tripathi says, "I am delighted to sign up with HarperCollins as my new publisher. Ananth and his team have created magic in India over the last few years, and I have been an admirer from a distance. Harper is one of the global Big 5 publishers, and I'm sure that they will take my books to the next level. They will be publishing my entire backlist, and also my upcoming book, 'War of Lanka!'"

Udayan Mitra, Executive Publisher, HarperCollins India says, "As a reader, I'm tremendously excited that War of Lanka, the

new book in Amish's fabulous Ram Chandra Series, will be out soon. I still remember the thrill of reading the very first line of Ram-Scion of Ikshvaku on the day it was published, seven years ago; I knew then that this was the beginning of a great adventure and read on spellbound as the magic of Amish's narrative unfolded over the first three books in the series. As publishers, we're delighted beyond measure to now become a part of that adventure ourselves, as we bring War of Lanka, along with Amish's entire backlist, to the many, many readers who, like me, have been waiting with bated breath.

The first three books of the second-fastest-selling book series in Indian publishing history — the Ram Chandra Series — explore the journeys of Ram, Sita and Raavan. In this, the epic fourth book of the series, all narrative strands crash into each other. And explode into the slaughterous war.

NCLT allows insolvency proceedings against National Textiles Corp

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has ordered to initiate insolvency proceedings against state-run National Textile Corporation (NTC) after admitting a plea by one of its operational creditors claiming default of around Rs 14 lakh.

The New Delhi bench of the NCLT has also appointed Amit Talwar as an interim resolution professional (IRP), suspending the board of NTC and has also declared a moratorium against the PSU as per the provisions of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

A two-member NCLT bench also rejected the claims of NTC and said the dispute it raised over the due amount claimed by its operational creditor is merely a "moonshine dispute and said default has occurred for the payment.

This is probably for the first time since the code has come into effect that insolvency proceedings against a central government-owned public sector unit (PSU) has been initiated.

NTC is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Textile, Government of India. It is engaged in the production of yarn and fabric through its 23 mills in operation, located all over India.

The NCLT direction came



over a petition filed by Hero Solar Energy Private Ltd (HSEPL) through its counsel Pallav Mongia, claiming a default of Rs 13.84 lakh for two contracts for installing solar rooftop power projects.

The matter relates to an almost six-year-old contract. NTC had awarded a work order in May 2016 in Tamil Nadu for a total 780 kWp grid-connected rooftop solar power PV system.

As per the contract of both the projects, the amount of Rs 2.21 crore towards Project 1 and Rs 1.86 crore towards Project 2 become due upon the completion of work on December, 2016 and April, 2017, respectively.

However, NTC failed to release the complete payment due to HSEPL and retained an amount of Rs 13.84 lakh against

the terms of the agreement.

It was informed by the operational creditor that as per the clauses of the agreement, there was no provision for levying any penalty and sent a demand notice to NTC under section 8 of the IBC. However, NTC in its reply had said HSEPL has committed a delay of 117 days in the execution of the work order and it has suffered losses and hence it has deducted penalties from the amount due.

This was denied by HSEPL and said no notice of dispute was ever given by NTC to HSEPL and in fact in its several letters written to the PSU, demanding the pending dues, no dispute over delay in execution was raised.

The insolvency tribunal also agreed with the submissions of

the operational creditor and said: "Considering the documents on record admittedly the respondent has never raised any dispute over the quantum of claim or delay of the applicant. The corporate debtor has failed to place any document on record to show that said imposition of penalty was ever communicated to the applicant before issuance of demand notice."

No debit note in this regard was ever issued by the respondent, NCLT observed adding "No penalty or liquidated damages were levied by corporate debtor". "Admittedly, in terms of the agreement, the corporate debtor is not entitled to impose any penalty to the applicant. The respondent even reconciled the accounts of the applicant and failed to raise any dispute over the claim of the applicant during reconciliation, said NCLT in its 10-page long order passed on May 27.

The tribunal further said even the Indian Contract Act provided that in case of the promisor failed to perform the contract at the time agreed and the promisee still accepts the performance of such promise any time other than agreed, the promisee cannot claim compensation for any loss.

Fake Reviews on Amazon a threat to e-commerce



BY NARVIJAY YADAV

Translation dominated the literary domain in the previous week. The importance of translation is increasing rapidly in a closely connected world that is turning into a global village in a real sense. It is because of the translation, for the first time, that a Hindi novel has won the International Booker Prize bringing laurels to Bharat. The English translation of author Gitanjali Shree's novel 'Ret Samadhi' (Tomb of Sand) has received the International Booker Prize, which has once again proved the importance of translation. Something similar is happening with South Indian films also. Some of the recent films like SVP, KGF, and RRR have been well received by audiences across

India, while Bollywood movies released in the same period - Jersey, Jayesh Bhai Jordaar, Heropanti, and Runway 34 were box office failures. Literature of different regional languages of India should also be translated into Hindi and English. Similarly, Hindi literature needs to be translated into regional languages. This literary exchange will strengthen the unity and integrity of the nation, and the citizens of India will be able to know about the culture, art, and ideas of different regions. Apart from this, Hindi and English translations of international languages should also be promoted.

The trend of shopping from e-commerce websites has increased. In the Corona era, it became a necessity and then a habit. People often decide to

buy goods or services on these websites after reading the reviews of others. But it has also been seen that many reviews are fake or are misleading. When such complaints reached the government, the central government called all the stakeholders and held discussions with them. Several e-commerce companies participated in the meeting, including Flipkart, Amazon, Tata Sons, and Reliance Retail. Apart from this, lawyers, FICCI, CII, representatives of universities, and consumer rights activists also participated in this. The government has prepared a strategy based on the inputs received from them so that fake or misleading reviews can be stopped. It was informed in the meeting that fake reviews and misleading information are a violation of the Consumer Protection Act 2019.

As Uttar Pradesh is the largest state in the country in terms of population, then obviously it will be a big challenge to handle the law and order of the state. In order to reduce crimes against women, the state government has made a new rule for women employees. The Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh has issued instructions not to assign duties to women from 7 pm to 6 am.

Bitget Appoints Gracy Chen as Managing Director



SINGAPORE: Bitget, today announced the appointment of Gracy Chen as Managing Director, who will lead Bitget's growth strategies as the platform accelerates its global expansion plan. She will also be elevating Bitget's voice and presence in the broader crypto ecosystem and assisting the brand to further flourish under her leadership.

With presence in over 50 countries around the world, Bitget has been growing at an unprecedented pace. Earlier this year, Bitget announced its derivatives trading volume reached an all-time high of 8.69 billion, representing a 300% growth when compared to the previous year.

Redington announces strategic partnership with Infoblox

CHENNAI: The network security solutions demand has expanded on a larger scale in this digital transformation Era. Redington, the largest IT Infrastructure & Solutions Distributor has entered a strategic partnership with Infoblox, the leader in cloud-first DNS management and security services.

"We are excited to announce our partnership with Infoblox, providing secure Cloud-Managed Network Services and protect business from every threat with seamless communication and threat prevention. As the landscape of networks evolve, Infoblox helps organizations in their challenging environment by integrating network components, managing core network services and by connecting the hybrid and multi-cloud networks. This will help our channel partners meet the increased security needs of their customers as their business changes," R. Venkatesh President, Enterprise Business Group, Redington India Limited.

Kia India sales rise 69% in May at 18718 units



Automaker Kia India on Wednesday said its sales increased 69 per cent year-on-year to 18,718 units in May. The company had dispatched 11,050 units to dealers amid second wave of COVID-19 in May 2021. The Sonet became the highest contributor to the company's overall sales with 7,899 units, followed by Seltos (5,953 units), Carens (4,612 units) and Carnival (239 units), Kia India said in a statement. The company also dispatched 15 EV6 units last month to dealerships as display cars, it added. With the gradual recovery in the semiconductor shortage, the company said its sales stood at 97,796 units in the first five months of 2022.

GreenZo Energy Scales Up Its Green Investment



1st Edition of The CII Indian Commercial Vehicle Conclave Organised

Kulbir Singh Kalsi
Chandigarh

India is the 7th largest Commercial Vehicle manufacturer in the world, accounting for around 3.5% of the global CV production, and is one of the largest exporters of commercial vehicles. During the last two years, the pandemic offered an opportunity for the Indian Commercial Vehicle Industry to reimagine business processes by leaning on new emerging technologies and business opportunities.

The 1st Edition of the CII Indian Commercial Vehicle Conclave sought to create a platform for deliberations on future strategies for the commercial vehicle industry; ongoing regulations; expectations from the Government; supply chain and logistics; emerging technologies; comprehensive electrification, alternate fuels; and future of mobility.

"Collaborations and partnerships will form the key to future success of Indian CV Industry", said Kamal Bali,



President & MD, Volvo Group India. Elaborating further, Bali emphasised that competitors must join hands and take advantage of the growth of demand created on account of sustainability imperatives and arising opportunities from mega trends in automation.

Speaking on the occasion, Abhimanyu Sharaff, Chairman, CII Faridabad Zone & ED, Vikas Group said that to capitalize on the emerging opportunities and to overcome associated challenges, Indian CV industry needed to develop or acquire new technologies and capabilities to produce

vehicles that meet future market needs.

In his remarks, P Kaniappan, MD, ZF Commercial Vehicle Control Systems said that agility and speed fundamentals were the need of the hour to be at par with the new products in the Indian CV Industry.

Anjali Pandey, VP - Engine & Component Business, Cummins India Ltd, shared that it had become important to come up with sustainable creative solutions which are fit for Indian CV Industry that take care of the energy security agenda of our country.

Godrej & Boyce celebrates 125 yrs

MUMBAI: Celebrating its 125th anniversary of the Godrej Group (1897-2022), Godrej & Boyce, the flagship company of the Godrej Group, today announced an organisation-wide initiative with a focus on bringing new innovative solutions to market that are not only sustainable but also boost growth across its key B2B and B2C businesses. Godrej & Boyce plans to double its revenue in the next 5 years. Some of the cornerstones of this growth will be exports and its consumer businesses.

To increase the positive impact of this vision across its businesses, G&B teams will focus on driving customer centricity and the spirit of entrepreneurship across the businesses. The Company marked this milestone with the launch of a new 125 year commemorative logo that captures its efforts to not only be 'forward-thinking' in business but also to be at the 'cutting edge' of innovation and sustainability. Godrej & Boyce collaborated with graphic designer, Anirudh Mehta from Studio Bigfat, to launch an identity that honours



the history of Godrej & Boyce while focusing on its future.

"The new commemorative logo is an effort to showcase G&B's pioneering role over the last 125 years in shaping India as a nation, introducing innovative products and nurturing the trusted relationships it has built with billions of Indian consumers. As a company, we are reinvigorating ourselves to build products and services that are not only relevant but that also positively impact the planet through technology that is clean," said Nyrika Holkar, Executive Director, G&B.

She added: "As we celebrate our 125th anniversary, this year,

we would like to become an even more customer centric organization by unlocking new experiences that build greater engagement and loyalty."

The logo was first unveiled to its employees on the 6th of May at its headquarters in Vikhroli, Mumbai and will prominently feature on all collaterals and product packaging through the year.

On this occasion, Godrej & Boyce, also launched a book on its founders, Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, with leading graphic novel experts, Amar Chitra Katha to showcase stories from its history to help inspire future generations with stories of courage, perseverance, nation building, agility, innovation and more. Godrej & Boyce also launched a virtual tour of the Godrej Archives that uses AR and VR to provide visitors with a unique experience of Godrej's 125 years rich legacy.

Godrej & Boyce ('G&B'), a Godrej Group company, was founded in 1897, and has contributed to India's journey of self-reliance through manufacturing.

JK Tyre lines up Rs 1100 cr capex for 2 years

JK Tyre and Industries has planned a capital expenditure of Rs 1,100 crore till next financial year, company's CFO Sanjeev Aggarwal said.

The tyre maker plans to invest in capacity expansion as well as regular maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

"Total spend over the next two years, ie, FY23 and FY24 would be Rs 1,100 crore, including maintenance capex of around Rs 300 crore," Aggarwal said in an analyst call.

The majority of the capex - Rs 530 crore - will go into the passenger car radial (PCR) capacity expansion.



The company has also lined up capacity expansion of truck bus radial (TBR) at its unit Cavendish Industries.

"The debottlenecking programme which we had announced earlier has already

been commissioned and completed. Now the projects in hand are TBR capacity expansion for Rs 236 crore and the PCR capacity expansion for Rs 530 crore.

"So, these are the two main

expansion projects at this moment. Apart from this, there is the maintenance capex of about Rs 150 crore on annual basis, which is Rs 300 crore for the 2-year period," Aggarwal noted.

There is a very good demand for PCR tyres in the domestic and export markets, he added. Aggarwal said the PCR capacity expansion at its Banmore plant in Madhya Pradesh would be funded through a mix of debt and internal accrual.

"We have been in touch with our lenders and they are quite positive that they will be able to provide sufficient amounts of loans to finance this," he noted.

ZentrumHub Announces Changes in Leadership

PUNE: ZentrumHub, established with a vision to be one of the world's first smartest and fastest hotel API, today announced the appointment of Abhinav Sinha as chief executive officer and Bhushan Tamhankar as Chief Operations Officer, effective immediately.

ZentrumHub has been at the forefront of growth in US and Middle East markets, achieving consistent results and firmly staking the claim that its API as a product has been widely accepted and celebrated by its customers. This leadership change will bring a razor-sharp focus on commercial outcomes and the continued innovation of the product to achieve its ambitious aspirations of being one of the world's fastest and smartest hotel API by creating a strong C-suite.

"Making these changes now ensures that we will have lead-

ership continuity throughout this cycle of major business investment from start-up to full-blown bespoke hotel API product," said Sachin Singh, now EVP, ZentrumHub.

Before ZentrumHub, Abhinav had successfully led product teams that developed an advanced solutions for the travel industry involving artificial intelligence and machine learning projects. He comes from predominant organizations like TomTom and Tavisca and brings his global experience of over 15 years in product development, sales operations, and business strategy to the table. With the newly expanded remit, he will work with the product teams to research, develop and prototype new features and technologies.

"Abhinav is a natural leader and the right person to take ZentrumHub to its next growth

phase," said Sachin Singh. "Travel businesses worldwide are turning to start-ups like ZentrumHub to anticipate changes and confront challenges like finding reliable API solutions, managing business logic and processes smartly through technology, shifting supply and demand, and other uncertainties. Leveraging Abhinav's leadership and experience, ZentrumHub can meet customers' critical needs at an even larger scale."

Edtech Solution from Punjab now popular in 19 Countries

LUDHIANA: EdTech Solution company from Punjab, is breaking all barriers in helping English learners across 19 countries. Interestingly, many of these learners belong to countries where the native language itself is English. Operating from Ludhiana, the company touches base in places like Auckland, Sydney, Dubai.

They say necessity is the mother of invention. Countries like Israel, saddled with seemingly insurmountable constraints of land and water resources, have delivered miracles in agriculture, using technologies like drip irrigation, and have made all realize the infinite capacity of human enterprise. TCY's story is no different. It started operations from Punjab, the land of highly enterprising & resourceful people, who can be and are



very successful wherever they go in any corner of the world, but who feel handicapped in learning English language, particularly in fluency of spoken or written English.

TCY team took up the challenge with a missionary zeal and steadily solved one problem after the other. Innovative technologies like Smart Books, Remedial Testing, AI Evaluations, AI-Assisted Fluency training, etc. came out of this innovative think-

ing and set benchmarks for language learning in the sector. Although there already were around 1,500 coaching centres across India running on TCY platform, persistent approaches from such centres in other countries to train their students was a pleasant surprise. There are now over 125 overseas centres running on this platform, and the number keeps growing.

For any coaching centre, training students for English

language tests can be a highly resource-intensive job. This usually requires a team of expert teachers, armed with and assisted by standardized assessments, artificial intelligence evaluators, and personalization algorithms to enhance language skills, all within the confines of an institute often working against a time constraint. The institute may have some excellent teachers, but their full potential remains untapped in the absence of such critical inputs.

This is the problem that entrepreneurs, Kamal Wadhwa and Rajesh Wadhwa, wanted to solve for the institutes. The company they set up takes care of such critical inputs as smart-books, practice and mock tests on simulated test interface, student app, AI evaluation, personalized remedial practice, and teacher reports.

Macro data, global cues to dictate market trend this week: Analysts

Trading activity in the equity markets will be guided by a host of macroeconomic data announcements scheduled during the week, apart from global trends amid ongoing concerns over high inflation, analysts said.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs), a key driver for the Indian markets, would also be tracked for cues, they added.

"Market will remain busy with macro numbers this week where GDP, auto sales and PMI numbers will be factors on the domestic front, whereas PMI numbers of various countries and unemployment data of the US will be important global macro numbers.

"Amid all this, movement of dollar index and crude oil prices will continue to have an impact on market volatility. FIIs are still in selling mode where it will be interesting to see whether they start some buying in the Indian



market amid improved sentiments," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd. In the last batch of earnings, companies like Aurubindo Pharma, Jindal Steel and Sun Pharma will announce their numbers.

"This week marks the beginning of the new month also and participants will be closely eyeing important high-frequency

data like auto sales, manufacturing and services PMI data.

"Before that, GDP data, which is scheduled on May 31, will be in focus. Apart from these, updates on monsoon progress will also remain on radar," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Last week, the Sensex jumped 558.27 points or 1.02 per cent and the Nifty

gained 86.30 points or 0.53%. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Towards the end of the last week, the market was able to recoup its losses following favourable retail earnings in the US and reduced FII selling. For this to sustain, the actions undertaken by the Fed and RBI in June will be an important factor."

Moreover, movement of Brent crude oil and rupee against the US dollar would also be monitored by investors.

Yesha Shah, Head of Equity Research, Samco Securities, said, "In India, amidst global recessionary worries, data on Indian GDP growth is eagerly awaited. Apart from the GDP print, the monthly sales of auto companies will also be in the limelight. Given the series of data releases, this week will undoubtedly be eventful.

LIC shares decline over 3 per cent after earnings



Shares of LIC on Tuesday declined over 3 per cent after the company posted a 17 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the fourth quarter ended in March 2022.

The stock declined 3.05 per cent to settle at Rs 811.50 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 3.23 per cent to Rs 810.

At the NSE, it fell by 3.21 per cent to end at Rs 810.85. In volume terms, 2.22 lakh

shares were traded at the BSE and over 43.73 lakh shares at the NSE during the day.

Insurance behemoth LIC on Monday posted a 17 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,409 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022. The insurer had earned a profit of Rs 2,917 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

This is the first-ever quarterly result of LIC after be-

The total income of the insurer during the March quarter increased to Rs 2,12,230.41 crore, from Rs 1,90,098 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal"

India's merchandise export rises 15.46% to USD 37.3 billion in May, records highest ever



India has achieved monthly value of merchandise export in May 2022 amounting USD 37.29 billion, an increase of 15.46% over USD 32.30 billion in May 2021. India's merchandise export in April-May 2022-23 was USD 77.08 billion with an increase of 22.26% over USD 63.05 billion in April-May 2021-22.

Value of non-petroleum exports in May 2022 was 29.18 USD billion, registering a positive growth of 8.13% over non-petroleum exports of USD 26.99 billion in May 2021. The cumulative value of non-petroleum exports in April-May 2022-23 was USD 61.09 billion, an increase of 12.9% over USD 54.11 billion in April-May 2021-22.

Value of non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports in May 2022 was USD 26.08 billion, registering a positive growth of 8.57% over non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports of USD 24.02 billion in May 2021. The cumulative value of non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports in April-May 2022-23 was USD 54.52 billion, an increase of 14.15% over cumulative value of non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports of USD 47.76 billion in April-May 2021-22.

Petroleum products (52.71%), Electronic goods (41.46%) and RMG of all Textiles (22.94%) led the way in high increase in exports during May 2022.

India's merchandise import in May 2022 was USD 60.62 billion, an increase of 56.14% over USD 38.83 billion in May 2021. India's merchandise imports in April-May 2022-23 was USD 120.81 billion with an increase of 42.35% over USD 84.87 billion in April-May 2021-22.

Value of non-petroleum imports was USD 42.48 billion in May 2022 with a positive growth of 44.7% over non-petroleum imports of USD 29.36 billion in May 2021. The cumulative value of non-petroleum imports in April-May 2022-23 was USD 82.55 billion, showing an increase of 27.72% compared to non-oil imports of USD 64.63 billion in April-May 2021-22.

Rupee surges 13 paise to 77.47 against US dollar in early trade

The rupee appreciated 13 paise to 77.47 against the US dollar in opening trade on Friday, supported by a fall in the dollar index and positive domestic equities. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 77.47 against the American dollar, registering a rise of 13 paise from the last close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 77.60 against the US dollar. According to Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, the Indian rupee opened stronger against the dollar on Friday tracking the overnight weakness of the dollar. Additionally, a possibility of weaker crude oil prices over the next few sessions and stronger Asian and emerging market peers could also aid sentiments on Friday.

Ashok Leyland sales jump four-fold in May

NEW DELHI: Hinduja flagship firm Ashok Leyland on Wednesday reported a four-fold jump in total commercial vehicle sales at 13,273 units in May. The company had sold 3,199 units in the COVID-hit May last year. Ashok Leyland said in a regulatory filing. Domestic sales stood at 12,458 units, as against 2,738 units in May 2021, it added. Medium and heavy commercial vehicle sales last month stood at 7,268 units, as compared to 1,513 units in the year-ago month. Sales of light commercial vehicles in the domestic market stood at 5,190 units in May, as against 1,225 units in May 2021, the company said.

Gold climbs Rs 294, silver jumps Rs 523

Gold prices rose by Rs 294 to Rs 51,236 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal finished at Rs 50,942 per 10 grams. Silver also zoomed by Rs 523 to Rs 62,577 per kg from Rs 62,054 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading flat at USD 1,866 per ounce and USD 22.35 per ounce, respectively. "Gold prices traded steady with spot gold prices at COMEX trading marginally down at USD 1,866 per ounce on Friday," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

Omega Seiki joins hands with Grip Invest, plans to lease 5,000 EVs by 2023

MUMBAI: EV maker Omega Seiki Mobility has formed a strategic partnership with Grip Invest for lease financing to retail investors, in a bid to cater to the growing demand of electric vehicles in the last-mile delivery segment.

Under the collaboration, Grip Invest, which is a digital platform for facilitating new-age investments, will finance 1,000 Rage+ Rapid e-three-wheelers of the company, with plans to expand to a minimum of 5,000 EVs by the end of the next year, Omega Seiki said.

The EV maker claims it has an existing order book of over 40,000 commercial electric vehicles.

The demand for leasing of commercial electric vehicles is very robust owing to the low-total cost of ownership, which is further fuelled by e-



commerce players augmenting their EV fleet, the company said.

According to Omega Seiki Mobility, the global commercial vehicle rental and leasing market, which was valued at USD 77.42-billion in 2021, is expected to grow multi-fold over the next five years.

The absence of affordable

financing options has proven to be a critical impediment for low-income patrons to change to EVs, said Uday Narang, Founder and Chairman, Omega Seiki Mobility.

"OSM scouts various ways to lease and supply electric three wheelers, adding to the current EV thrust in the country. The collaboration with

Grip Invest will work upon a stronger foothold of the EV in the existing market and accelerate the electrification drive," Narang added.

The company believes that the only way to be successful in the EV market is through association, he said, adding, "Therefore, Omega Seiki has been inking multiple partnerships to make these vehicles more accessible and affordable and further its green drive."

Electric three-wheelers are an emerging segment, where leasing out the vehicle appears to be a beneficial proposition for both ends, said Vivek Gulati, Co-Founder-COO, Grip, emphasising that the collaboration will be a significant step ahead in democratizing and organizing EV lease financing sector.

WallMantra sees 10x growth with rise in digital

NEW DELHI: WallMantra, an innovative home decor company, has seen a 10x rise in its revenue due to an increase in digital consumption since lockdown. The company's turnover has gone up from Rs 2 crores to Rs 20 crores as a result of the lockdown, where Tier-I and Tier-II cities account for 45 per cent of its total revenue.

Founded by Jitesh Agarwal, Kundan Lal and Shivam Agarwal, WallMantra manufactures and sells an elegant collection of Home Décor & Furnishing items like Paintings, Trendy Mirrors, Decorative Storages, smart DIY furniture, curtains, bedsheets etc. It has always focused on selling Made in India products for the past five years, unlike most e-commerce platforms that mostly sell products sources from out of India.

Given the traction that online retailing has gained in the aftermath of the pandemic, the decor brand hopes to increase its turnover from Rs 20 crore to Rs 35 crore this fiscal year. Sharing details about the company's revenue plan, Jitesh Agarwal,



Co-Founder of WallMantra, says, "The COVID-19 pandemic changed people's lives and businesses, causing significant shifts in consumer behaviour. They started exploring other options to meet their requirements and interests and our company received positive response from them. Despite numerous challenges brought on by logistical disruption during the initial stage of the lockdown, we completed all orders on time."

He added, "Our product's average ticket size is Rs 3,400, however, the range varies from Rs 1000 to over Rs 50,000. The majority of our orders come from places like Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi NCR, followed by Jaipur, Nashik, Vijayawada, Kochi to name a few. Currently, Coffee Tables are the most frequently ordered products."

Provisional Account reports of the Union Government for the Financial Year 2021-2022 ready



NEW DELHI: The Accounts of the Union Government of India (Provisional/Unaudited) for the Financial Year 2021-22 has been consolidated and reports published. The highlights are given below: -

The Government of India has received Rs 22,07,634 crore (101.3% of corresponding RE 21-22 of Total Receipts) during 2021-22 comprising Rs 18,20,382 crore Tax Revenue (Net to Centre), Rs 3,48,044 crore of Non-Tax Revenue and Rs 39,208 crore of Non-Debt Capital Receipts. Non-Debt Capital Receipts consists of Recovery of Loans (Rs 24,570 crore) and

Miscellaneous Capital Receipts (Rs 14,638 crore). Rs 8,81,779 crore has been transferred to State Governments as Devolution of Share of Taxes by Government of India upto this period which is Rs. 2,86,782 crore higher than the previous year.

Total Expenditure incurred by Government of India is Rs 37,94,171 crore (100.6% of corresponding RE 20-21), out of which Rs 32,01,373 crore is on Revenue Account and Rs 5,92,798 crore is on Capital Account. Out of the Total Revenue Expenditure, Rs 8,05,390 crore is on account of Interest Payments.

Price of EU Durram wheat in the international Market is 39.5% higher than Indian wheat

The Centre's timely intervention in regulating the mounting export of Wheat and Sugar through export regulations has insulated the prices of these commodities from increase in contrast to the prices prevailing in the global market.

The Government's priority is to ensure sufficient availability of sugar at reasonable rates. The prices of sugar in the domestic market in the last twelve months are under control. The wholesale prices of sugar in India are in the range of Rs. 3150 to 3500 per quintal while the retail prices are in the range of Rs. 40-43 per Kg in the country. Due to lower production in Brazil, there



may be shortage of sugar globally and therefore to safeguard the domestic availability and interest of Indian consumers, Government took timely measure to regulate sugar exports with effect from 01st June 2022

till further orders, with a maximum export of 100 LMT during the year.

The price of EU Durram wheat in the international market is around Rs. 43/kg whereas Indian wheat is selling at an average price of Rs. 26/kg in wholesale. There is a price difference of Rs. 17/kg i.e. about 39.5% discount to the international market. All other countries except India are selling wheat at around 450 to 480 USD/ton. This has resulted in a rush of export contracts and as a consequence the domestic retail prices rose by 16.08 % year on year.

Coffee Day Enterprises reports Q4 net profit at Rs 58.67 crore

NEW DELHI: Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd has reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 58.67 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022.

The company had posted a net loss of Rs 272.09 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd (CDEL) said in a BSE filing.

CDEL's revenue from operation rose 2.81 per cent to Rs 169.81 crore against Rs 165.16 crore in the year-ago period.

Its total expenses declined 55.75 per cent to Rs 167.47 crore in Q4 FY22 compared to Rs 378.52 crore in Q4 FY21. CDEL's revenue from coffee and related business increased 5.43 per cent to Rs 148.71 crore against Rs 141.05 crore. Revenue from hospitality



services slipped 4.21 per cent to Rs 10.23 crore compared to Rs 10.68 crore in Q4 FY21.

For the fiscal ended March 2022, CDEL's net loss stood at Rs 130.73 crore. It had reported a net loss of Rs 652.10 crore in the previous fiscal.

Its revenue from operations was Rs 581.58 crore in 2021-22. This is 31.85 per cent lower than Rs 853.42 crore in the year-ago period.

CDEL has not shared the revenue of Sical Logistics Ltd (SLL), which runs port terminals and container freight stations, as it is currently facing insolvency proceedings.

"The management of the relevant subsidiary is of view that the recoverability of the amount of SLL can be ascertained only after the receipt of the final report from the NCLT and accordingly no provision is made against them," it said.

Shares of Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd were trading at Rs 45 apiece on the BSE Tuesday afternoon, up 3.09 per cent from the previous close.

Religare Enterprises and Religare Finvest on Tuesday settled with markets regulator Sebi a case pertaining to alleged financial mismanagement and diversion of funds after collectively paying Rs 10.5 crore towards settlement fees.

Individually, Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) and Religare Finvest Ltd (RFL) paid Rs 5.42 crore and Rs 5.08 crore towards settlement amount respectively, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a settlement order.

The order came after the two companies filed an application with Sebi proposing to settle the regulatory violations "without admitting or denying the findings" through a settle-

Religare Enterprises: Religare Fininvest settle case with Sebi, pay Rs 10.5 crore



ment order.

"The pending enforcement proceedings for the alleged default ...are settled qua the applicants," Sebi said in its order, adding that it will not

initiate enforcement action against them for the default. Sebi had received complaints alleging financial mismanagement and diversion of funds primarily in RFL, a

subsidiary of REL which is a listed company, for the benefit of the promoters/promoter group companies.

Thereafter, the regulator conducted an investigation wherein it was observed that RFL was part of a fraudulent and deceptive scheme and acted in a fraudulent manner which led to diversion of funds to the tune of Rs 2,473.66 crore through a material subsidiary of REL for the ultimate benefit of promoters, the order noted.

Further, it was observed that the consolidated financials of REL were not true and fair and were misleading to the shareholders of the listed company. It was also observed that despite repeated adverse observations from Reserve Bank

of India (RBI) regarding RFL's corporate loan book, REL did not disclose the same to the stock exchange till 2017, it added.

Accordingly, the regulator initiated proceedings against the entities and issued show-cause notice in November 2020 to them for violating PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) and LODR (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirements) rules.

Pending enforcement proceedings, the two companies proposed to settle the matter upon payment of settlement amounts. Following this, Sebi's committee recommended the case for settlement on payment of fee.

INTERNATIONAL

India sends 1 more consignment of 40,000 MT of diesel to crisis-hit Sri Lanka

India on Tuesday said it has delivered one more consignment of 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Sri Lanka to help ease the acute fuel shortage in the debt-ridden island nation which is grappling with its worst economic crisis.

India extended an additional USD 500 million credit line to Sri Lanka last month to help the neighbouring country import fuel as it has been struggling to pay for imports after its foreign exchange reserves plummeted sharply in recent times, causing a devaluation of its currency and spiralling



inflation. India on May 23 delivered around 40,000 metric tonnes of petrol to Sri Lanka. "Powering #SriLanka !!!! A

shipment of 40,000 MT of diesel supplied under #Indian assistance reached #Colombo yesterday (Monday) evening," the Indian High Commission tweeted. India and Sri Lanka signed a USD 500 million Line of Credit Agreement for the purchase of petroleum products on February 2, 2022.

With the economic crisis and the shortage of forex, the Indian credit line of 500 million for fuel imports has provided a lifeline to the island nation, which is currently experiencing its worst economic crisis since gaining

independence in 1948.

With long lines for fuel, cooking gas, essentials in short supply and long hours of power cuts, the public has been suffering for months. A total of close to 400,000 MT of various types of fuel have been delivered with Indian assistance in March and April.

In keeping with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, New Delhi has extended this year alone support worth over USD 3.5 billion to the people of Sri Lanka for helping them overcome their current difficulties.

New Jalpaiguri-Dhaka Mitali Express flagged off



Passenger train connectivity between India and Bangladesh took a step forward with the inaugural run of the international service, said that the train connectivity will further strengthen cultural and social ties between the people of the two countries, apart from boosting tourism.

The general manager of NFR, Anshul Gupta, who was present at New Jalpaiguri station for the inaugural run of the international service, said that the train connectivity will provide more opportunities for tourism and trade between Bangladesh and northern West Bengal, blessed with several destinations in the Darjeeling Hills and forests and tea gardens in Dooars.

Local MP Jayanta Roy, who attended the programme, said that the service fulfils a long-standing demand of those associated with travel trade.

Passengers travelling on the inaugural service said that the train connectivity will further strengthen cultural and social ties between the people of the two countries, apart from boosting tourism.

The train will cover a distance of 595 km between NJP and Dhaka with 69 km of track length being in India and the rest in the neighbouring country.

Apart from two technical stops at Haldibari, the last station on the route on the Indian side, and at Chilahati, the first station on the Bangladesh side, Mitali Express will have no stoppages in between.

Renewed hopes but more delays for Cubans seeking US visas



Like many Cubans before him, Roberto De la Yglesia left most of his family behind when he made his way to the US with only his son in 2015, hoping that he could soon bring his wife and daughters to join him.

Years later, the mechanical engineer in New Jersey and his family back in Cienfuegos, Cuba, are still waiting with a mixture of renewed hope and scepticism now that the Biden administration has said it will reactivate the long-stalled Family Reunification Programme, which lets Cubans legally in the US bring close relatives.

"My life is on pause," said his wife, Danmara Triana, sitting on the sofa of her house in Cienfuegos while surrounded by aging photos of the couple's life together. A few feet away, her 21-year-old daughter Claudia was awaiting the return from school of seven-year-old Alice.

"My day to day life hangs on this, to see my son, to see my husband," Triana said. The 48-year-old accountant said she repeatedly checks the website of the US Embassy in Havana for news. I get up in the morning and look at the telephone. Will I have an interview (for a visa) or won't I have an interview?

The Biden administration says that roughly 20,000 applications for family reunification visas have built up since 2017.

That's when President Donald Trump effectively shut down the programme by withdrawing diplomatic personnel from Cuba in response to a spate of mysterious illnesses among diplomats that many suspected were the result of some sort of directed wave attack.

But many similar incidents happened elsewhere even in Washington and the CIA has now determined they were unlikely to be the result of attacks by Russia or other foreign adversaries.

While the administration said in April it would begin resuming the programme, it has not yet offered a timeline for ramping up the US diplomatic presence in Cuba.

So Triana and De la Yglesia wait. US officials told the couple in 2017, shortly before diplomats were withdrawn, that they qualified for the programme and in 2020 they believed they had finished all the paperwork and paid all the fees.

UK PM Boris Johnson forced to explain actions in fresh partygate row



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been forced to explain, by his own independent ethics adviser, why he believed that the partygate fine issued to him by Scotland Yard did not breach the country's Ministerial Code.

Lord Christopher Geidt, who reports directly to the Prime Minister in an advisory capacity, said in an annual report on ministerial interests released on Tuesday that a legitimate question has arisen as to the fixed penalty notice issued by the Metropolitan Police over a COVID lockdown-breaching birthday party at the Downing Street in June 2020.

The report notes that Johnson must set out his case in public. "I did not consider that the circumstances in which I received a fixed-penalty notice were contrary to the regulations," Johnson said in a letter of explanation to Geidt, which has been made public. "I have accepted the outcome and paid it in compliance with legal requirements. Paying a fixed-penalty notice is not a criminal conviction," he said. Geidt was also critical in his report about having repeatedly counselled the Prime Minister's advisers that he must offer a public comment on his obligations under his own Ministerial Code, a breach of which usually leads to a minister's resignation.

That advice has not been heeded and, in relation to the allegations about unlawful gatherings in the Downing Street, the Prime Minister has made not a single public reference to the Ministerial Code, said the ethics adviser, who, according to "The Times", was on the verge of resigning over the issue.

B'desh mulls importing train coaches from ICF

Bangladesh Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan on Thursday visited the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) here and said his country would explore the possibility of importing train coaches from the facility.

Sujan, accompanied by Bangladesh Railways Additional Director General (Operations) Sardar Shahadat Ali, on a brief visit, inspected the special coaches made by ICF, including the Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) Vistadome coaches, LHB AC tier II and III coaches among others.

During his interaction with ICF General Manager A K Agarwal, Sujan said Bangladesh has taken up the project of converting its metre gauge



tracks to broad gauge and the LHB coaches from ICF would be of great help in modernising Bangladesh Railways.

He said Bangladesh Railways

would explore the possibility of importing train sets for mass commutation such as DEMU (Diesel Electric Multiple Unit) similar to the ones exported to

Sri Lanka and Nepal by ICF recently, a press release said.

A team of officials from Bangladesh Railways would soon visit ICF to further the process of export of coaches from ICF, the release said. Sujan said the ICF played a vital role in the development of railways in Bangladesh and the ties between the railways of two countries has a 'long history'. He recalled the sacrifices of the Indian soldiers in getting freedom for Bangladesh and the neighbouring country would maintain the relationship forever. The Minister was also impressed by the Vande Bharat coaches and other coaches manufactured by the ICF, the release said.

Joe Biden called again to mourn with a city stricken by grief

US President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden are hoping to console a city stricken by grief and anger when they meet with families affected by the mass shooting at a Texas elementary school that killed 19 students and two teachers.

The visit to Uvalde on Sunday is Biden's second trip in as many weeks to comfort a community in mourning after staggering loss.



On May 17, he was in Buffalo, New York, to meet with victims' families and condemn white

supremacy after a shooter espousing the racist replacement theory killed 10 Black people at a supermarket. The shootings in Texas and New York and their aftermath have put a spotlight on the nation's entrenched divisions and its inability to forge consensus on actions to reduce gun violence.

Evil came to that elementary school classroom in Texas, to that grocery store in New York,

to far too many places where innocents have died. Biden said Saturday in a commencement address at the University of Delaware. We have to stand stronger. We must stand stronger. We cannot outlast tragedy, I know, but we can make America safer. Biden was to visit the makeshift memorial outside Robb Elementary School before attending Mass at a local Catholic church.

Shanghai moves toward ending 2-month COVID-19 lockdown

Shanghai authorities say they will take some major steps Wednesday toward reopening China's largest city after a two-month COVID-19 lockdown that has throttled the national economy and largely bottled up millions of people in their homes. Full bus and subway service will be restored as will basic rail connections with the rest of China, Vice Mayor Zong Ming said Tuesday at a daily news conference on the city's outbreak.

Schools will partially reopen on a voluntary basis for students and shopping malls,



supermarkets, convenience stores and drug stores will continue to reopen gradually with no more than 75% of their total capacity. Cinemas

and gyms will remain closed. Officials, who set June 1 as the target date for reopening earlier in May, appear ready to accelerate what has been a

gradual easing in recent days.

A few malls and markets have reopened, and some residents have been given passes allowing them out for a few hours at a time. In at least some chat groups, cynicism about the slow pace and stop-and-go nature of opening up gave way Tuesday to excitement about the prospect of being able to move about freely in the city for the first time since the end of March.

Shanghai recorded 29 new cases on Monday, continuing a steady decline from more than 20,000 a day in April.

Jaishankar speaks to Canadian foreign minister



NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday spoke about the "misuse" of freedom and the dangers of extremism during a telephonic conversation with his Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly.

The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on the Indo-Pacific and the global effects of the Ukraine conflict besides ways to expand bilateral cooperation. "An extensive conversation recently with Foreign Minister @melaniejoly of Canada. Discussed expanding our political and economic engagement, as also our cultural

and community connect. Spoke about misuse of freedoms and the dangers of extremism," Jaishankar tweeted. India has been concerned over some Khalistani elements operating from Canada and engaged in anti-India activities.

"Exchanged views on the Indo-Pacific and the global effects of the Ukraine conflict. Agreed to strengthen multilateral cooperation, including in the Commonwealth," Jaishankar said.

Separately, the External Affairs Minister held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Lesotho, Matsepo Molise-Ramakoa. "Glad to meet FM of Lesotho Matsepo Molise-Ramakoa during her visit to India. Discussed the many opportunities for our bilateral cooperation and prospects for strengthening our Development Partnership," Jaishankar tweeted. "Also exchanged views on our cooperation in the multilateral fora including in the Commonwealth," he added.

Nepal Plane Crash: 22 bodies recovered with Black Box of ill-fated Tara Air flight



The Nepali search and rescue teams recovered the flight's voice recorder today along with the bodies of all ill-fated 22 people onboard of a small Tara Air plane that crashed in the Himalayas two days earlier. Two Germans, four Indians and 16 Nepalis were on the De Havilland Canada DHC-6-300 Twin Otter aircraft that crashed 15 minutes after taking off from the tourist town of Pokhara, 125 km (80 miles) west of Kath-

Indian Family Of 4, Killed In Nepal Plane Crash, Cremated In Kathmandu

The bodies of four Indians, who were among 22 people killed in the Tara Air plane crash in Nepal's mountainous Mustang district, were cremated on Thursday at the sacred Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu, Nepal. Businessman Ashok Kumar Tripathi, 54, and his Thane-based estranged wife Vaibhavi Bhandekar Tripathi, 51, were on a reunion trip to the Himalayan country along with their son Dhanush, 22, and daughter Ritika, 15, when the tragedy struck. Tripathi's brother and wife were present when the last rites of the four members of the family were performed. The bodies were cremated at the electric crematorium near the temple. The Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, situated along the banks of the Bagmati River, is one of the most important Hindu temples in Nepal.

mandu, on Sunday (May 29) morning. The plane was bound for Jomsom, a popular tourist and pilgrimage site, 80 km (50 miles) northwest of Pokhara, on what should have been a

20-minute flight. A spokesperson for the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) said the plane had only the voice recorder to preserve ground to air and air to air conversations.

US state legislators praise abortion access in Mexico



A group of US state legislators from Texas, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and North Carolina toured Mexico and said this week they are impressed by efforts to expand abortion access south of the border.

The legislators visited the country's three largest cities, Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey to meet with activists and Mexican legislators. They praised the efforts of Mexican activists to guarantee access for women who want an abortion, even those from US states like Texas. "It is incredibly touching to see people opening their homes, opening their hearts, spending time and effort helping American women. Texas women predominantly for now, access care," said Texas state Rep. Erin Zwiener

There is anecdotal evidence that women from Texas are crossing into Mexico to obtain abortion pills, and some Mexican activists want to help them. Under a 2021 law, abortions in Texas are prohibited once medical professionals can detect cardiac activity, usually around six weeks and before some women know they're pregnant.

Pak-based terror group JeM, LeT maintain training camps in Afghanistan: UN report

Pakistan-based terror groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, led by 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks mastermind Hafiz Saeed, maintain their training camps in some provinces of Afghanistan and some of them are directly under the Taliban control, according to a UN report. The 13th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team cites a UN Member State as saying that Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), a Deobandi group ideologically closer to the Taliban, maintains eight training camps in Nangarhar, three of which are directly under Taliban control.



India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti, in his capacity as Chair of the Taliban Sanctions Committee, also known as the 1988 Sanctions Commit-

tee, transmitted the report to be "brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council."

The report said that Jaish-e-

Mohammed, a Deobandi group led by Masood Azhar, is ideologically closer to the Taliban. Qari Ramadan is the newly appointed head of JeM in Afghanistan.

It added that Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is described in the previous Monitoring Team reports as having provided finance and training expertise to Taliban operations? Within Afghanistan, according to one Member State, it is led by Mawlawi Yousuf, the report said, adding that in October 2021, according to one Member State, another LeT leader, Mawlawi Assadullah, met with Taliban Deputy Interior Minister Noor Jalil

Sanctioned Russian oligarch's mega yacht hides in a UAE creek

In the dusty, northern-most sheikhdom of the United Arab Emirates, where labourers cycle by rustic tea shops, one of the world's largest yachts sits in a quiet port so far avoiding the fate of other luxury vessels linked to sanctioned Russian oligarchs.

The display of lavish wealth is startling in one of the UAE's poorest emirates, a 90-minute drive from the illuminated high-rises of Dubai. But the 118-metre Motor Yacht A's presence in a Ras al-Khaimah creek also



shows the UAE's neutrality during Russia's war on Ukraine as the Gulf country remains a magnet for Russian money and its oil-rich capital sees Moscow as a crucial OPEC partner. Since Russian tanks rolled

into Ukraine, the seven sheikhdoms of the Emirates have offered a refuge for Russians, both those despairing of their country's future as well as the mega-wealthy concerned about Western sanctions.

While much of the world has piled sanctions on Russian institutions and allies of President Vladimir Putin, the Emirates has not. It also avoids overt criticism of the war, which government readouts still refer to as the Ukraine crisis.

US senator visits Taiwan as China ups military threat

On a visit to Taiwan, US Senator Tammy Duckworth reiterated support for the island amid rising Chinese threats.

Duckworth met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Tuesday and emphasized the close economic, political and security relations between Taipei and Washington.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by force, and sent 30 military aircraft into airspace close to the island Monday. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said it responded by scrambling jets, putting air defense missile



systems on alert and issuing radio warnings.

In her remarks to Tsai, Duckworth said she wanted to em-

phasise our support for Taiwan security."

I do want to say that it is more than just about military. It's also

about the economy, Duckworth, a former Army helicopter pilot and lieutenant colonel in the National Guard, told Tsai.

Duckworth also cited strong bipartisan backing for a bill she has put forward promoting cooperation between Taiwan's armed forces and the National Guard.

Tsai thanked the US government and Congress for the importance they place on peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," as well as Duckworth herself for keeping a close watch on Taiwan related security issues.

There's flavour in my tonic water

CHHAVI BHATIA

Considered boring and staid, tonic water, at best, is relegated in a corner like any other alcohol accompaniment. Its best friend gin has had a successful experimental run over the years, and now it is tonic water's moment in the sun. With multiple brands and flavours thronging the market dime a dozen, you have a laundry list to choose from. Good part? A lot of them, like PEER, are home-grown brands pushing to topple supremacy or popular names like Schweppes.



urban consumers.

We, at PEER, want to spearhead the premiumization of tonics in India. The more people know about the pros of premium tonics vs mass tonics (that have 2x the amount of sugar), the more the premium tonic category will grow.

We also want the tonic water category to compete with conventional soft drinks as an everyday beverage, and not just as a mixer. Our Bitter Lemon and Mint tonic variants were also curated keeping in mind a consumer segment that consumers tonic water by itself.

tonic is for diet-conscious consumers, and is the first and only one of its kind in India. It is naturally sweetened with stevia leaf extract and is safe for diabetics too.

We preferred it over having artificial sweeteners as an ingredient such as aspartame, which can fluctuate one's insulin levels. PEER was able to harness the sweetness of stevia, and balance with quinine and complimentary flavours to craft a tonic which is not overpowering to one's drink, and with extra fizz.

3. How are you achieving the various flavours in flavoured tonics? Botanicals or artificial?

AJ: PEER tonics are made with no artificial flavouring, sweeteners, or preservatives, and all-natural quinine.

4. Many indigenous brands are mushrooming fast. What makes PEER different?

AJ: PEER has a differentiated brand positioning. While other competitors are positioned as classic brands, PEER is positioned as a contemporary lifestyle brand. This is showcased in the way the product looks and in all its marketing communication.

It is also the lowest calorie tonic water brand in India, with one variant having zero calories and zero sugar. PEER is the only brand in India to offer a 0 Cal. Indian Tonic water. PEER offers Bitter Lemon Tonic Water, a variant that no other Indian-origin tonic water offers. Our products also contain 15 per cent more carbonation on average than the competition, which leads to more fizz and effervescence, possible via a thicker glass bottle.

5. Are your tonics specific only for gins or are they versatile to be used for other alcohol too?

We have kept our tonics versatile, although about 70 per cent of the time when tonic is consumed, it is with gin. Bitter lemon tonic water is a variant which is a known mixer for both vodka and gin. Mint and Bitter Lemon also mix well with certain Tequilas and Rums.

We will be launching two new SKUs per year over the next four years in tonic water and related categories. The next variant we are working on is a known mixer for whisky or to be enjoyed as it is.

1. In a market relying heavily on ubiquitous brands like Schweppes, how does PEER plan to make a splash?

AJ: Catch and Schweppes are the only primary mass tonic water brands in India. PEER operates in the premium tonic water category where boutique/craft brands operate, which is nascent. In fact, the premium category in India for tonics is merely three years old, and is fast growing owing to quality consciousness among

2. You have a "zero calorie and zero sugar" tonic water. Are you using artificial sweeteners instead? Please explain the product.

AJ: Our Zero Cal. Indian Tonic variant is turning out to be the top selling sku, followed by Bitter Lemon and Mint Tonic. PEER's Zero Cal. (zero-sugar and zero-calorie)

Drake condoles Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala's death



Canadian rapper-singer Drake has paid a tribute to popular Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, who was shot dead on Sunday by unidentified assailants in Punjab's Mansa district. The 27-year-old singer, also a Congress leader, was killed a day after the state government curtailed his security cover. Drake took to his Instagram Stories on Sunday night to remember Moosewala. "RIP

MOOSE @sidhu_moosewala," he captioned a picture of the "So High" hitmaker with his mother. In 2020, Drake made headlines when he started following Moosewala on Instagram.

Moosewala, who counted Drake as one of his music influences and followed him on social media, was a regular performer at live shows in Canada.

Indian stars such as Ranveer Singh, Vicky Kaushal, Diljit

Dosanjh, and composer Salim Merchant also paid homage to Moosewala.

Singh and Kaushal took to their Instagram accounts and quoted the refrain from the late singer's song "Dil Da Ni Mada". Singh, who performed at the Indian Premier League closing ceremony on Sunday in Ahmedabad, also shared Moosewala's picture on his Instagram Stories and captioned it: "IMMORTAL".

Calling Moosewala a talented artist, Dosanjh said he was heartbroken by the singer's death. "Heartbreaking news... He was a talented boy. I never met him but his hard work spoke a lot. No doubt. It's very hard for parents... A bad day for the music industry," the actor-singer wrote in Romanised Punjabi.

'Brahmastra' makers reveal first look of major characters



"Brahmastra" team on Tuesday released the first looks of megastar Amitabh Bachchan, Nagarjuna Akkineni and Mouni Roy from the much-anticipated fantasy adventure movie.

The special video, also starring Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, was shared by director of the film Ayan Mukerji and Dharma Productions on the ninth anniversary of the filmmaker's blockbuster hit "Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani". Set to a rousing background score and loaded with VFX, the 32-second-long clip teases the world of "Brahmastra Part One: Shiva".

The teaser features high-octane action sequences as well as emotional moments. While details of Bachchan and Akkineni's characters are under wraps, it is known that Roy, known for TV show "Naagin" and films like "Gold" and "Made in China", will be playing the antagonist in the movie.

"Brahmastra Part One: Shiva" will release theatrically in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada on September 9, 2022. It is a joint production of Star Studios, Dharma Productions, Prime Focus and Starlight Pictures. The first trailer of the film will come out on June 15.

"Samrat Prithviraj" declared tax-free in Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who attended a special screening of period action drama "Samrat Prithviraj" with his cabinet colleagues, on Thursday declared the movie tax-free in the state.

The screening of the movie was held at Lok Bhawan here, and Bollywood star Akshay Kumar, female lead Manushi Chhillar and director Chandra Prakash Dwivedi were in attendance.

"I announce that the movie will be tax-free in the state," the chief minister said.

Adityanath, who was on a visit to Kanpur Dehat to oversee the preparations of the visits of President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, reached late for the screening.

Praising "Samrat Prithviraj", he said, "The film talks about history and provides entertainment. It can be watched with the family. We have learnt from mistakes of the past and are trying to rectify the mistakes of the past 75 years. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi is moving forward with the vision of the next 25 years to take India ahead."

The priest-turned-politician also praised director Dwivedi

POTPOURRI

Antier Solutions: Providing forward thinking blockchain solutions

Antier Solutions, one of the leading blockchain technology companies, helps businesses across geographies and industries adopt the latest technologies to stay ahead of the change. The company, under the aegis of Vikram R. Singh, provides a host of offerings including DeFi 2.0 development, DAO development, Metaverse development, NFT development, and crypto-based end-to-end solutions. The company aims to assist enterprises navigate towards a decentralized world that is more transparent and enables secure internet of value. With this motto, their team employs a coherent roadmap to steer and expedite businesses' digital transformation journeys.



Antier is equipped with a team of seasoned blockchain

engineers and subject matter experts who are fully committed to fostering the next generation of tech entrepreneurs. Mr. Singh shares

that above all, his company promotes an environment of learning and innovation and each team member has an extensive focus on customer service and challenging the unknown.

Laal Singh Chaddha tested Aamir's patience as it was in the works for 14 years



MUMBAI: Aamir Khan's upcoming film "Laal Singh Chaddha", the trailer of which was released recently, is Aamir Khan's labour

of love and persistence as the actor invested 14 years of his life to make the film.

The production of the film was

never time-bound and the makers gave the film a free space to grow, thrive, press, and bend. At a media event, Aamir Khan spoke about the film's journey as he told the media that the idea for the film came to him from Delhi 6 actor Atul Kulkarni back in 2008 after the premiere of 'Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na'.

Atul Kulkarni had proposed an Indian adaptation of 'Forrest Gump' to Aamir Khan and that was when the first thought of the film was seeded. After that, Aamir approached the makers of 'Forrest Gump' to acquire the rights to the film, a process which took 10 years as Robert Zemeckis, the director of the 1994 Tom Hanks classic, was not ready to give up the rights of the film.

Aamir then approached legendary director Steven Spielberg who has been Zemeckis's mentor. Eventually, the makers secured the rights of the film but then the pandemic took a toll on the film and it got delayed. While time tested Aamir, his patience became his only pursuit which helped him complete the film despite the long-standing wait of 14 years.

"Laal Singh Chaddha", produced by Aamir Khan Productions, Kiran Rao, and Viacom18 Studios, also stars Kareena Kapoor Khan, Mona Singh, and Naga Chaitanya. The film is set to arrive in cinemas on August 11.

Journey of India's cultural revival will take it back to glory days: Amit Shah



Asserting that an era of cultural revival began in India in 2014, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP to power, Home Minister Amit Shah said this journey will take the country to heights of glory it enjoyed earlier.

In a brief speech after watching 'Samrat Prithviraj' at a special screening in the national capital on Wednesday night, Shah said after overcoming numerous adversities, India's pride, culture and innate faith is now on course to be where it was long back when it showed the way to the world.

Prithviraj Chauhan's war with Muhammad Ghori was a part of a long journey which began in 1025, an apparent reference to Mahmud Ghazni's attack on Gujarat and plunder of Somnath temple, and ended in 1947 with India becoming independent, the home minister said, adding that he has been a keen student of history.

Many invaders attacked India and its culture, and the fight against them never ended, he said, naming several kings from different regions who battled with them and worked to "preserve and conserve" Indian culture.

Praising the movie's depiction of Prithviraj, considered by many the last great Hindu king who reigned in Delhi before the Islamic conquest and Prithviraj Raso, the epic biographical poem on which it is based, Shah said "an epic can at times ignite pride and mass awareness that hundreds of books cannot".

Norway chess: No stopping Anand, remains on top after third straight win

Indian legend Viswanathan Anand continued his winning run in the Classical section of the Norway Chess tournament here as he defeated China's Wang Hao in the third round to remain on top of the standings.

The 52-year-old Anand won the Armageddon (sudden death game) early on Friday after the regular classical match was drawn after 39 moves. The Armageddon saw the former world champion pip Hao in 44 moves to take his points tally to 7.5. He is followed by American Wesley So, who is on 6 points, and world



No.1 Magnus Carlsen (5.5). This is the Indian ace's third straight win in the Classical section after having beaten Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria) in the first two rounds.

Carlsen bounced back to win against Teimour Radjabov after

having lost in the second round to So via the Armageddon.

In the other matches of the day, Vachier-Lagrave defeated Norwegian Aryan Tari and Anish Giri shared points with So, drawing the classical and Armageddon games while Shakhriyar Mamedyarov topped Topalov in the sudden death. In the ongoing Norway Chess tournament, the players take part in a Armageddon (sudden death) in case of a draw in the classical game. American star So had won the Blitz event which preceded the Classical section.



Sikh priests show the Guru Granth Sahib that was hit with a bullet fired by Indian Army during Operation Bluestar in 1984 was brought out on display for devotees at Shaheedee Asthan, Baba Gurbaksh Singh in the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) Complex on Thursday, ahead of the 38th anniversary of the Operation Blue Star. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL

Indian team to assemble in Delhi on June 5, SA squad arrives on June 2

The Indian cricket team will assemble here on June 5 ahead of the five-match T20 series against South Africa.

The first match of the series begins here on June 9 and South Africa will arrive here on June 2.

There will be no crowd restrictions and there will be no bio-bubble for the series though players will be tested regularly for COVID-19. The other venues are Cuttack (June 12), Visakhapatnam (June 14), Rajkot (June 17) and Bengaluru (June 19).



Delhi on June 2," DDCA joint secretary Rajan Manchanda said to media.

The Indian cricketers are in the middle of a much needed break post a two-month long IPL.

K L Rahul will lead the Indian team in the absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma who has been rested for the series alongside other all-format players, including Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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