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KEJRIWAL SEEKS APPOINTMENT WITH SHAH OVER KILLING OF KASHMIRI PANDITS IN VALLEY



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MONETARY, FISCAL AUTHORITIES TAKING STEPS TO MODERATE INFLATION, PUSH GROWTH: DEA SECRETARY



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A R RAHMAN NAMED AMBASSADOR OF INDO-UK CULTURE PLATFORM



Govt mindful of inflation situation: RBI Governor

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said the government is "mindful" of the current inflation situation, and it is up to the Centre to take further supply-side measures to contain the price rise situation. "I am sure the government is mindful of the current inflation situation and it is for the government to decide on further supply-side measures which they consider as necessary," Das said addressing the customary post-policy press conference at the central bank headquarters. The remarks came after the RBI sharply increased its FY23 average consumer price inflation estimate to 6.7 per cent from the earlier 5.7 per cent, and at-



tributed a bulk of the increase to be coming from the supply side troubles, with food inflation alone accounting for three-fourths of the increase in the estimate. The government had last month cut excise duties on fuels by Rs 9.5 per litre, reducing the pressure on the common

man and input costs. It has also taken other measures like banning or containing exports of food products like wheat and sugar. Das said it is not for him to speculate or comment on what the exact measures can be. "It is for the government to decide and I am sure they will decide. If and when there is a requirement, they will take the steps," he said. It can be noted that in a televised statement before the press conference on Wednesday, Das also pitched for a reduction in value-added tax (VAT) levied by the state governments, saying there has been a significant moderation in urban households' inflation expectations after the Centre's

Das bats for cut in state taxes on fuel

Lending support to the Union government's pitch for states to reduce sales tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said a cut in VAT on fuel will help soften inflationary pressures as well as expectations. The central government had on May 21 cut excise duty on petrol by a record Rs 8 per litre and that on diesel by Rs 6 to give relief to consumers battered by high fuel prices that have also pushed inflation to an all-time high. At that time, it asked states to lower VAT to further provide relief. Almost no state reduced VAT. Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy, Das said a quick survey of urban households undertaken after the excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel on May 21 showed a significant moderation in their inflation expectations.

excise duty cuts. "...further reduction of State VATs on petrol and diesel across the country can certainly contribute to softening of the inflationary pressures as well as expectations," Das said.

FinMin releases third instalment of revenue deficit grant of Rs 7183 crore to 14 states

The finance ministry on Monday released the third monthly instalment of revenue deficit grant of Rs 7,183 crore to 14 states. The Fifteenth Finance Commission has recommended a total Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant of Rs 86,201 crore to 14 states for the financial year 2022-23. This is to be released in 12 equated

monthly instalments. The states receiving this grant are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. "The Department of Expenditure has on Monday released the 3rd monthly instalment of Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD) Grant of Rs.7,183.42crore to 14 States," the ministry said in a statement. With the release of the third instalment for the month of June 2022, the total amount of revenue deficit grants released to the states in 2022-23 stands at Rs 21,550.25 crore.

Remarks against Prophet: Even small countries challenging India under BJP says Manish Sisodia

AAP leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday alleged the BJP has led the country to such a situation that even "small countries are now challenging the great nation of India". He claimed that every Indian is pained by it and "the sorrow is endless". Sisodia's remarks came after the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) slammed India for comments by two BJP functionaries against Prophet Mohammad and even urged the UN to take necessary measures to ensure that the rights of Muslims are protected. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran and Kuwait expressed their condemnation of the controversial remarks against the Prophet and called for "respect for beliefs and religions". Pakistan summoned the Indian chargé d'affaires to convey its categorical rejection and condemnation of the controversial remarks by the two BJP leaders. As the row escalated both domestically and abroad, the BJP on Sunday suspended its national spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal.



India's economic slowdown pronounced, BJP has no answers: Rahul



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday lashed out at the BJP government over the state of the economy, saying the per capita income of Indians is dropping but the government is suffering from "policy bankruptcy" and has no answers. He feared that the economic situation will only get worse in the coming times. "Indian families are suffering from the onslaught of inflation and job loss and earning less per capita than they were two years ago," Gandhi said in a Facebook post. He said the per capita income at constant prices has dropped from Rs 94,270 to Rs 91,481. "India's economic slowdown is pronounced, and the BJP Government, which suffers from policy bankruptcy, has no answers," he also said. "The economic situation will only get worse," the Congress leader said in his post. The Congress has been attacking the government over rising prices of food items and petroleum products.

Moosewala killing: Bishnoi reveals names of arms suppliers

NEW DELHI: Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi has told Delhi Police Special Cell about the hideout and names of the arms suppliers, who are based in Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. Police suspect these suppliers could be the ones who helped the killer of Sidhu Moosewala -- one being headed by Ranjeet, resident of Faridkot, another Vijay, a resident of Haryana-Rajasthan Border and one more is Raka. On Sunday, Bishnoi was produced before Patiala House Court which remanded him to police custody for five more days. "The Delhi Police didn't mention the Sidhu Singh Moosewala case in their remand applica-



tion. But he was remanded to five more days police custody," said advocate Vishal Chopra, the counsel of Bishnoi. The sources have, however, claimed that the arms suppliers whose names have come up during the course of investigation, could be the same who supplied arms to the killer of Moosewala. "Mukesh alias Puneet and Om alias Shakti and Harvinder of Jitender Gogi gang were held by us in April. They have told us that one Raka supplied them illegal weapons. Rohit alias Moi and Dinesh Karala who are handling Gogi gang, had helped them in procuring arms."

Govt hikes paddy MSP by Rs 100/qtl for 2022-23

The government on Wednesday hiked the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy by Rs 100 to Rs 2,040 per quintal for the 2022-23 crop year. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the increase in MSP for all mandated Kharif (summer) crops for the 2022-23 crop year. "In today's cabinet meeting, MSP of 14 kharif crops was approved," Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters. The MSP of common grade variety of paddy has been increased to Rs 2,040 per quintal for the 2022-23 crop year from



Rs 1,940 in the previous year. The support price of 'A' grade variety of paddy has been hiked to Rs 2,060 per quintal from Rs 1,960. Paddy is the main kharif crop, the sowing of which has already begun. The Met department has projected nor-

Industrial production grows 7.1% in April



Industrial output grew by 7.1% in April on better performance by power and mining sectors, as per government data released on Friday. Manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 6.3 per cent in the first month of the current financial year, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). It further said growth rates over corresponding period of the previous year are to be interpreted considering the unusual circumstances on account of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020.

EMLs to rise as RBI hikes repo rate by 50 bps; 2nd increase in 5 weeks

Home, auto and other loan EMLs will rise after Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points, the second increase in five weeks, to rein in rise in prices that it saw continuing to hurt consumers in the near term. With inflation persistently hovering above the upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent, the RBI's six-member rate-setting panel voted unanimously to raise the lending rate of the repurchase (repo) rate by 50 basis points to 4.90 per cent, Governor Shaktikanta Das said. The Standing Deposit Facility rate and the Marginal Standing Facility Rate were accordingly adjusted higher by the same quantum to 4.65 per cent and 5.15 per cent, respectively. The increase follows a 40 bps rise in early May at an

Govt, opposition may differ on ideology, but there shouldn't be animosity: Kovind



LUCKNOW: President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday said there can be differences of ideology between the ruling party and the opposition but there should not be any animosity between both the sides. Addressing a joint sitting of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council and the Assembly, Kovind said the UP Legislature has a glorious history of dignified amicability between the ruling party and the opposition. "Sometimes, there have been undignified incidents which are contrary to this rich tradition. You have to make an effort to forget them by considering those as an exception. «You all have to further strengthen the rich political tradition of UP. In a democracy, there can be differences of ideology between the ruling

Nothing to hide from ED: Cong on summons to Sonia & Rahul Gandhi



and he is likely to appear before it. He was earlier summoned on June 2 but had sought time as he was abroad at the time. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera told reporters, "We are a law-abiding party. We follow rules. So, if they have been summoned, of course, they will go. We have nothing to hide". "We are not like them. We remember when Mr Amit Shah was running around in 2002 to 2013," he said. "They will learn some lessons from us on what kind of people who adhere to the path of truth are. They should learn from us," Khera said. The Congress is likely to make it a big event on Monday when Rahul Gandhi appears before the probe agency's headquarters in central Delhi. The case pertains to the probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the party-promoted Young Indian that owns the National Herald newspaper. The paper is published by Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and owned by Young Indian Pvt Limited.

Beautify, clean, declutter flyovers: Delhi LG to NDMC

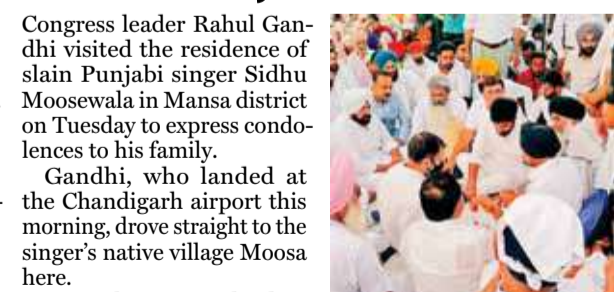


Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has directed the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) to come up with a plan to beautify, clean and declutter flyovers in its area. The Lt Governor, who visited the NDMC area on Thursday, also directed that the work of restoration of the iconic Gole Market be completed at the earliest. During his visit to the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), he asked the officials to explore the pos-

Drones may replace weather balloons soon

India is set to deploy drones to gather atmospheric data that is currently collated by sending sensors through weather balloons released from at least 55 locations across the country twice every day. The sensors embedded in a radiosonde, which is a telemetry instrument carried by a weather balloon, record atmospheric pressure, temperature, wind direction and speed as the hydrogen-filled weather balloon soars up to 12 km height and transmit data to the ground receiver through radio signals. However, weather balloons and radiosondes are unretrievable as they drift afar from weather stations that release them in the atmosphere. We are now exploring the possibility of using drones to gather this atmospheric data which is crucial for weather forecasting, M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences

Rahul Gandhi visits Moosewala's house in Punjab



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visited the residence of slain Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala in Mansa district on Tuesday to express condolences to his family. Gandhi, who landed at the Chandigarh airport this morning, drove straight to the singer's native village Moosa here. Several Congress leaders including Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, Leader of Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa, former deputy chief minister O P Soni and other party leaders accompanied him. Security has been tightened outside the residence of Moosewala in the wake of Gandhi's visit. Moosewala was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Mansa on May 29. Gandhi was abroad when the killing took place and returned over the weekend. Moosewala, who had joined the Congress December last year, had un-

12 more held in connection with Kanpur violence

Police here arrested 12 more people in connection with the Kanpur violence, taking the total number of those held to 50, a senior official said.

Around 10 more suspects have been detained for questioning. Besides, a 16-year-old boy walked into the Colonelganj police station and surrendered after his picture appeared on posters put up by police, DCP (East) Pramod Kumar said.

Violence had erupted in parts of Kanpur after Friday prayers as members of two communities indulged in brick-battling and hurled bombs over attempts to shut shops in protest against "insulting" comments on Prophet Mohammed by BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma during a TV debate. The Kotwali police on Tuesday lodged another FIR against people behind two Face-



book accounts and three Twitter handles for spreading "fake and inflammatory content" about the June 3 violence, pushing the number of such users booked so far to 13, Kumar said.

The FIR has been registered against the operators of the Twitter handles "Duggalsahab15", "shivaisrael" and "AkhandBharat", and two Facebook ac-

count holders Abu Zaid and Kaushal Patel, the DCP said.

The district administration has sealed a petrol pump situated nearby the Deputy Padav crossing after a CCTV footage showed people taking fuel in bottles from the filling station ahead of the Friday clashes, said another senior official.

Since the sale of petrol in

bottles is prohibited, the licence of the petrol pump has been suspended till further inquiry, he added. During investigation, it has emerged that the rioters came from various districts and localities from far away. The SIT has shifted its focus on those who could be key conspirators and behind the funding for the riots, the official added.

Besides, the police have also started probing the role of Zara Hayat, the wife of Zafar Hayat Hashmi, a key conspirator, whose arrest was made from Hazratganj of Lucknow on Saturday. The evidence collected by the SIT raised doubts on Zara Hayat who was the administrator of several WhatsApp groups, the official pointed out. On Monday, the Kanpur police had released posters with 40 images of people involved in the violence.

AAP MLAs meet Delhi LG Saxena



A group of Aam Aadmi Party MLAs called on Delhi LG Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday, a meeting that comes against the backdrop of the ruling party's mounting accusations of interference by him in the government's work.

The AAP had last week accused the LG of meddling in the affairs of the government and not focussing on the areas under his control.

"Members of the Delhi Legislative Assembly called on today. We discussed various issues pertaining to the City and their constituencies," Saxena said in a tweet.

The AAP on Sunday said it appeared that the Centre had sent Saxena to meddle with the Kejriwal government's work

and stay away from law and order.

AAP MLA Atishi had alleged that Saxena did not act proactively on some heinous crimes that took place in the city since he assumed office a few days ago, but he had been "interfering" in the Delhi government's business.

The issue started last Wednesday when the party accused him of intruding in the Delhi government's work.

On Saturday, the AAP had again accused Saxena of interference and "conspiring" to derail democracy as he visited two Delhi Jal Board facilities and a sewage treatment plant, an action the Arvind Kejriwal-led party described as "beyond the LG's jurisdiction".

CBI arrests Delhi police SI for taking bribe



The CBI has arrested a Delhi Police sub-inspector for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 15,000 for not arresting a person in a case probed by him, officials said Wednesday. Mayank Yadav posted as sub-inspector at Kishanagarh police station was nabbed after the CBI laid a trap based on a complaint that the officer had demanded money for not arresting complainant's son in a case probed by him, they said.

"The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused red-handed while demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 15,000 from the complainant. Searches were conducted at the premises of the accused at Delhi which led to recovery of incriminating documents," a CBI spokesperson said.

Minor fire in North Block; no one injured

Minor fire broke out in a room in North Block housing the Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday, officials said. No was injured in the blaze. The fire broke out early this morning in the room housing the ministry's private branch exchange (PBX). The blaze was controlled immediately with the help of fire extinguishers, the officials said.

Woman raped in Delhi hotel by man she met on dating app

A 28-year-old woman was allegedly raped at a hotel in south-west Delhi's Dwarka by a man she met on a dating app, police said on Friday. The accused, a resident of Hyderabad, is absconding, a senior police officer said. In her police complaint filed on June 3, the woman claimed that after meeting the accused on a dating app she went to the hotel with the man on May 30 where she was sexually assaulted. Since then, the accused has allegedly stopped picking up her calls, she said in her complaint.

Kejriwal seeks appointment with Shah over killing of Kashmiri Pandits in valley

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said he has sought an appointment with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the killings of Kashmiri Pandits in the valley.

The development comes two days after Kejriwal, at the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) "Jan Aakrosh Rally" here, had criticised the BJP-led Union government and said he would meet Shah to know about the Centre's plan to stop the "massacre of Kashmiri Pandits" in the valley.

"I have sought time from the Union home minister to discuss the continuing massacre of Kashmiri Pandits," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi. The AAP has been criticising the killing of Kashmiri Pandits in the valley and has blamed the Centre for the situation.

At the rally on Sunday, Ke-



riwal had claimed that Kashmiri Pandits are being forced to leave the valley due to the targeted killings of minorities and demanded that the Centre put forth an action plan to stop such incidents.

The spate of targeted killings in Kashmir started in May, which included that of Rahul Bhat, a clerk, who was shot dead inside the tehsildar's office in Budgam district's Chadoora.

Three of the victims in eight such incidents in Kashmir since May 1 were off-duty policemen while five were civilians.

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Human remains found stuffed in bag in Delhi's Kalyanpuri

A bag containing human body parts was found at the Ram-lila Ground in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area, police said on Monday.

Police personnel from the patrolling team got suspicious due to the stench emanating from the bushes in front of Block 20 in Kalyanpuri on Sunday. When they came nearer the bushes, they spotted the bag, police said.

C r i m e and forensic teams were called after the bag was found containing severed human body parts, said Priyanka Kashyap, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East).

A case has been registered under sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence and giving false information) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Pandav Nagar police station, she said.

The body parts have been sent to Lal Bahadur Shastri mortuary for autopsy, they said.

All CCTV cameras in or around the area are being scanned to identify the suspects and ascertain the sequence of events, police said.

NCB : 40% increase in NDPS cases recorded in Haryana in a year

SATISH HANDA

Looking at drastic increase in drug addiction among youths of Haryana state in past few years Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij started a separate Narcotic Control Bureau (NCB) in the state led by a senior IPS officer Shrikant-Jadhav also holding the charge of Additional Director General Police Ambala division to wipe out fast increasing drug smug-

ATFI National President submitted Memorandum to State Home Minister Ajay Mishra Teni to take action against Anti-nationals

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

National President of Anti-Terrorist Front India Viresh Shandilya on Wednesday met State Minister of Home affairs Ajay Kumar Mishra and submitted a memorandum to regarding the alarming law and order situation in Punjab. He made an appeal, Ministry of Home Affairs to take stern action against Anti-Nationalist who raised Khalistan Jindabad slogans in Amritsar and showcased photographs of Jarnail Singh Bhindrawala and other terrorists also displayed as well as shouted slogans in favour of Jarnail Singh Bhindrawala by separatist leader in Punjab. In the memorandum Shandilya

mentioned that in the presence of Punjab Police so called organisation Dal Khalsa and Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) held a march and issued a warning to Government of India and also demanded independence in the name of New State Khalistan.

Viresh Shandilya requested State Home Minister Ajay Mishra Teni to take strict action against all the culprits and further appealed that National Investigation Agency should

Boy kills mother as she stops him from playing PUBG

A 16-year-old boy allegedly shot dead his mother as she stopped him from playing the online game PUBG, police said on Wednesday.

The boy was addicted to the online game and could not take his mother preventing him to play it, so he shot her dead, they said.

Police said they recovered the partially decomposed body of the woman on Tuesday night and sent it for post-mortem. The boy was apprehended.

The minor fatally shot her mother on Saturday and kept the body locked inside a room of their house here for two days before informing his father, an Army personnel posted in West Bengal, about the incident, they said.

His nine-year-old sister was also at home when the incident took place. He allegedly threatened her not to reveal the incident to anyone and used a room freshener to hide the smell of the decomposed body, police said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Qasim Abidi said, "The incident took place in Yamunapuram Colony under PGI police station area. The deceased used to live with her two children at the house. Her husband, who is a JCO



(Junior Commissioned Officer), is currently posted in West Bengal."

"The 16-year-old boy was addicted to online game PUBG. He told us that his mother used to stop him from playing the game, this is why he killed her. The minor used the registered firearm of his father to kill the mother," he said.

Police said they have recovered the weapon.

According to the police, the minor shot dead the mother on Saturday night and took her younger sister to another room. He locked the room where the body was lying.

"On Tuesday evening when the smell of the decomposed body became severe, he informed his father about the incident. The father called the neighbours and they informed the police," Abidi said.

"The boy initially tried to weave a false story around the incident but finally revealed the truth," he said.

Eight of family killed in road crash in Barmer

A speeding SUV collided with a trailer in Rajasthan's Barmer district, leaving eight members of a family dead and another injured, police said on Tuesday.

The accident took place on Monday night when the SUV was carrying a marriage party from Jalore to Barmer. "Merely eight km ahead of



the wedding destination, the speeding Bolero collided with the trailer. In the accident, six people died on the spot while

two succumbed to injuries at a hospital," police said.

Nine people were travelling in the SUV. The deceased were identified as Punma Ram (45), Prakash Bishnoi (28), Manish Bishnoi (12), Prince Bishnoi (5), Bhagirath Ram (38), Punma Ram (48), Mangil Bishnoi (38) and Budharam Bishnoi (40).

Five booked for casteist remarks against doctor in UP

A case was registered against five people, including two doctors, on the basis of a colleague's complaint alleging that casteist remarks were made against him here, police said on Monday.

Circle Officer (City) Abhay Ram Pandey said Dr Sachin Pasi, head of the orthopaedic department at the Pratapgarh Medical College, in his police complaint alleged that Dr Jai Prakash Verma of the same department takes the patients to his private clinic for treatment, and when he opposed it, casteist remarks were hurled at him.

Pasi also claimed that Verma's remarks were supported by Emergency Medical Officer (EMO) Dr Anuj Chaurasia, electrician Ajay Kumar Sharma, Abhishek Dubey and an unidentified person. Police said the case has been registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Two juveniles apprehended for killing man in south Delhi

Two juveniles were apprehended for allegedly stabbing a man to death in south Delhi's Central Market, police said on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as 27-year-old Manish, a resident of Deoli. He worked at a footwear shop in Central Market, they said.

The incident took place on Tuesday night, police said. According to the police, over a month ago, one of the two minor boys was slapped by Manish. To take revenge, the juvenile along with two other minors went to the market where Manish worked, lured him out and attacked him with knives. The third minor, however, stayed away from the spot when Manish was attacked, they said.

A senior police officer said a call regarding the stabbing incident was received at 9.47 pm at Ambedkar Nagar police station. Manish was taken to Max Hospital in Saket where



he was declared brought dead, he said.

"We have apprehended two juveniles from Punjabi park near Central Market. The two minors are residents of Madangir and are aged 17 years," the officer said.

During interrogation, one of the juveniles said that Manish and his friend slapped him during an argument so he wanted to take revenge for that, he added.

A case has been registered under sections 302 (murder), 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and the Arms act, police said, adding further investigation is underway.

Delhi govt to open 100 more mohalla clinics across city

The Delhi government will open 100 more mohalla clinics across the national capital to provide "world-class" primary healthcare services to all residents, an official statement said on Monday.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia took stock of the mohalla clinic project and said the government is working to completely digitise the clinics and doctors will be able to track medical history of patients to provide better treatment, it said.

The capital currently has 519 mohalla clinics that offer free primary health care services to patients, including 212 different types of tests. Every day, over 60,000 people are treated in these mohalla clinics.

The preparations for these upcoming clinics are well underway and will be completed soon, said the statement.

On Monday, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia met officials from the Public Works Department and the Health



Department to review the project.

"The Kejriwal government's Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics are known around the world, and people have been visiting Delhi to learn about this public healthcare model," he said.

The Delhi government's goal is to provide primary healthcare to every resident of Delhi, and expanding the

number of mohalla clinics is a landmark step in that direction, he added.

The statement also said work on digitising all mohalla clinics in Delhi is progressing quickly.

Many mohalla clinics have been fully digitised, with information about patients and their medical histories collected using tablets available

at clinics.

According to the minister, the mohalla clinic is the very first point of detection for any disease that strikes the city.

"After digitisation, the data from here will be used to assess any disease before it affects the people of Delhi. Furthermore, such data will be crucial in the development of health-related policies," he said.

Racket involved in illegal kidney transplant business busted with 11 arrests

SATISH HANDA

With the arrest of a surgeon Priyansh Sharma alias Dr Sameer (34) a resident of Rohini at Delhi did MBBS from Shiram Moorty Samarak Institute of Medical Sciences Bareilly, did master in surgery and presently working in a private hospital at Delhi as surgeon arrested by Hauz Khas New Delhi police allegedly involved in a racket illegal kidney transplant business, with this the total number of arrests in the case reached 11 including junior doctors, operation theatre (OT) technicians, OT helpers and few agents working in marketing concept services for Ram Chander Hospital at Gohana in Sonapat district involved in this illegal business for search of kidney donors, buyers and transplanting kidneys.



The mastermind of racket Kuldeep studied up to high school was having nearly 20 years experience in conducting large number of kidney transplants under the guidance of surgeons as well as independently at different hospitals after doing diploma course in OT technician. On a clue that hospital at Gohana was involved in illegal sale, purchase and kidney transplants business Delhi police constituted an investigation team led by Veer Singh ACP Hauz Khas police station New Delhi who collected important evidences and conducted a surprise raid at Ram Chander

Hospital Gohana last Thursday and arrested four persons including Kuldeep having no degree but expert in doing urology surgeries with his about 20 years experience and actively involved in this illegal business. After preliminary investigation police arrested another doctor Saurabh Mittal working at BLK Hospital Delhi assisting the racket during involved in illegal surgeries when removing or planting a kidney.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Ram Chander Hospital was having handsome business when started about two years ago attracting large number of patients at general OPD every day, but gradually lost interest in the treatment of routine patients when started illegal kidney transplant business earned amount worth Rs six to seven crores in a short period.

Desilting of drains to be complete by Jun 15: MCD



FW DESK

Work on desilting of drains is underway on "war-footing" ahead of the onset of monsoon and it is expected to be completed by June 15, officials said on Friday.

So far, workers have removed more than 87,000 metric tonnes of silt from 688 drains, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi said in a statement. "The MCD has been working on a war-footing to meet the target of cleaning all the drains under its jurisdiction before the onset of monsoon."

"Taking forward the steps, the corporation has successfully completed more than 96 per cent work of desilting and all set to complete the work of desilting before June 15," the civic body said in the statement. Silt taken out from drains is being sent to the landfill site, and its monitoring is being done through RFID tags, it added. The MCD has also requested PWD, DSIDD and Irrigation and Flood Control Department of the Delhi government to complete cleaning of drains falling under their jurisdictions before the monsoon, officials said.

Modi Govt brought number of LWE-affected districts down by 70 per cent: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the Narendra Modi government has brought the number of districts affected by Left-wing extremism in the country down by 70%.

The government also lifted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from more than 66 per cent area in the Northeast, he said after inaugurating the National Tribal Research Institute in Delhi.

The Union Home Minister said the northeast and Left-wing extremism-affected areas of the country are tribal-dominated regions and security is a precursor to development there. "Secured Northeast and secured central India pave the way for the development of tribals," he said.

Shah also said that 8,700 untoward incidents took place in the Northeast under the



Congress rule. This number has reduced to 1,700 under the Modi government, he said.

Only 87 security personnel have lost their lives in the Northeast under the Modi government as against 304 during the Congress rule, he said.

There are many institutions in the country such as the Planning Commission, now NitiAayog, Life Insur-

ance Corporation of India and the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited which have contributed immensely to the country's progress, the Union home minister said.

Similarly, this NTRI will play a pivotal role in the development of tribals in the country. This is a milestone, he said.

The institute will become

the backbone of tribal development in the run-up to 100 years of India's Independence, Shah said.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accorded top priority to research and education since he came to power.

"Under the Congress government, in 2014, Rs 7 crore had been set aside for this purpose. In 2022, we have kept Rs 150 crore for it," Shah said.

The minister added that the Modi government has increased the budget for Eklavya residential schools from Rs 278 crore to Rs 1,418 crore this financial year.

"I believe that only a tribal child can bring the 'best medal' in the Olympics as sports is a part of tribal traditions. They only need guidance, coaching, practice and a platform to showcase their talent," Shah said.

Fire breaks out at Howrah paint factory, 7 injured

Seven people were injured as a major fire broke out at a factory in West Bengal's Howrah district on Wednesday afternoon, officials said. The blaze was first spotted at the paint manufacturing unit in Shibpur around 1.40 pm, they said. "Workers were inside the factory at that time. While some managed to flee, a few got injured in the blaze," a police officer said. "Some were rushed to a nearby hospital, while a few were taken to Kolkata for better treatment," he said.

BSF troops gun down smuggler near Indo-Bangla border

An alleged smuggler was shot dead by BSF troops in West Bengal's Murshidabad district during an encounter at the Indo-Bangla border, officials said. The incident happened on Sunday, when BSF personnel observed the movement of smugglers in the area, they said. "When the jawans tried to stop the smugglers, they were attacked with sharp weapons. The troopers initially tried to stop them by using non lethal weapons."

Former Congress spokesman shoots his wife dead

GWALIOR: A former Congress spokesman allegedly shot his wife dead in the wee hours on Monday at their residence here in Madhya Pradesh, police said. The accused, Rishabh Bhadoria, is on the run. "The incident occurred in Ram Nagar locality under the Thatipur police station limits in Gwalior city. Former Congress spokesman (Gwalior unit) Rishabh Bhadoria allegedly fatally shot his wife Bhavna Bhadoria, aged around 30-31 years, using a firearm and fled," said sub-inspector Brahmanand Sharma. Rishabh's father Krishnakant Bhadoria called the police control room around 2.30 AM, he said. The exact cause behind the killing is not clear yet. Rishabh's father is also clueless about it, Sharma said.

Jailed Maha minister Nawab Malik seeks 1-day bail to cast vote in RS polls

Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik, currently in jail following arrest in a money laundering case, on Monday approached a special court here seeking bail for one day to cast vote in the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections to six seats from the state.

Last week, Maharashtra's former home minister Anil Deshmukh, who is also in jail on money laundering charges, had filed a similar application.

On Monday, a special court in Mumbai, designated to hear cases related to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to file its affidavit to both the applications (Malik and Deshmukh) and posted them for further hearing on June 8.

The Rajya Sabha polls are scheduled on June 10.

Malik was arrested by the ED on February 23 this year in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the activities of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and his aides.



The NCP leader in his application sought to be released on bail for a day on June 10.

Malik in his plea claimed that he is an elected MLA and hence, is duty bound to represent the residents of his constituency in electing a representative to the Rajya Sabha, and is also desirous to cast his vote in the aforesaid biennial elections.

The 288-member Maharashtra Assembly forms the electoral college for the Rajya Sabha polls. While the two NCP MLAS

- Deshmukh and Malik- are currently in jail, one seat is lying vacant.

Apart from the four main parties Shiv Sena, NCP, Congress and BJP, the Assembly has 25 MLAs from smaller parties and Independents.

The effective election quota per candidate is 42.

The BJP, which has 106 members in the House, has nominated Union minister Piyush Goyal, Anil Bonde and Dhananjay Mahadik.

No plan to shift MPEDA headquarters from Kochi: Goyal

Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday said there was no plan to shift the headquarters of the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) from Kerala to Andhra Pradesh. Rejecting the reports, Goyal said the statutory body under the Union Commerce and Industries Ministry will continue to operate from this southern coastal city.

"There is absolutely no plan to shift MPEDA from this beautiful city of Cochin and we have a very large set up here and it will continue to grow from strength to strength," the Minister told reporters reacting to a query after holding separate stakeholder consultations with leaders of fishermen and marine exporters here.

Recently, MPs from Kerala, Hibi Eden and T N Prathapan had met Goyal in New Delhi



to impress upon him the requirement for maintaining the MPEDA headquarters in Kochi.

Goyal said he had extensive discussions with fishermen from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karnataka on the good work being done by them on sustainable traditional fishing.

He said the fishermen also submitted several memo-

Modi dispensation is 'No Dissonance Allowed' govt: Chidambaram

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Thursday dubbed the NDA dispensation at the Centre as a "No Dissonance Allowed" government after it rejected the Environmental Performance Index.

He said the Modi government should realise that the world will not dance to the tunes of the BJP and the RSS.

"NDA Government is well known as the 'No Data Avail-



able' Government. Now it is the 'No Dissonance Allowed' Government," Chidambaram said on Twitter.

That is why it rejected the Environmental Performance Index that placed India at the last place among 180 countries, the former union minister added.

He recalled that earlier the government rejected the WHO report on excess Covid deaths as well as the Global Hunger Index. "Modi Government should realise that the world will not dance to tunes of the BJP/RSS," the Congress leader said.

Nalini's plea on parole for husband dismissed as withdrawn



The Madras High Court on Monday dismissed as withdrawn, a writ petition from Nalini Sriharan seeking six days parole for her husband Murugan. Both are among those convicted in former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

When the writ petition from Nalini came up for hearing today, a division bench of Justices S Vaidyanathan and A D Jagadish Chandra was told the application seeking parole for Murugan on medical grounds was rejected, as he (Murugan) had violated certain provisions of the Prison Rules in the recent past and thereby rendered himself ineligible for the same.

At this juncture, the counsel representing Nalini opted to withdraw the petition. And the bench dismissed it as withdrawn. Nalini's mother Padma had on May 21 had sent a representation to the authorities concerned to grant six days emergency leave to her son-in-law Murugan on medical grounds. As there was no progress, Nalini filed the present writ petition, which was dismissed as withdrawn. Murugan, Santhan, Jayakumar, Robert Payas, Ravichandran and Nalini—all convicted in the assassination of the former PM, are serving life sentences.

Modi has weakened environmental laws in India, posing as eco-champion on world stage: Ramesh

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of hypocrisy and alleged that while he has weakened all environmental and forest laws in India, he is posing as an eco-champion on the world stage.

Ramesh said this as the prime minister is set to launch the "LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment)" initiative on World Environment Day.

"Today is World Environment Day, celebrated since 1973. Vishguru is launching LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment). This is maximum hypocrisy, since he's weakening all environmental and forest laws, regulations and institutions at home, while posing to be an eco-champion on world stage!" the former Union minister wrote on Twitter.

Congress spokesperson



Pawan Khera also hit out at the prime minister, saying "his understanding of climate change came out clearly when he loudly proclaimed, 'There is no climate change but only 'our tolerance and habits' have changed'."

In a tweet on Saturday, Modi said, "Tomorrow, 5th June is marked as #WorldEnvironmentDay. At 6 PM, the LiFE global movement will be launched.

Nitish turns nostalgic over JP movement

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday took a trip down the memory lane, recounting his days as a student activist when he bore witness to history being made by freedom fighter and socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan with his evocative call for "total revolution".

He was responding to queries by journalists as to whether there were any plans to celebrate the "golden jubilee" of 'Sampoorn Kranti Diwas', due in a couple of years.

"That is a very good idea", exclaimed the 70-year-old CM



with perceptible excitement. Kumar said he owes his political life to the 'JP movement' which began in 1974 and culminated in the defeat of Indira Gandhi-led Congress after the Emergency.

"Whatever political activists like us have learnt, we have

CBIC to destroy 42,000 kg narcotics on Wednesday



The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) would destroy around 42,000 kilogram narcotics at 14 locations, including Guwahati, Mumbai and Siliguri, as part of 'Drug Destruction Day' to be observed on Wednesday, the finance ministry said.

The Drug Destruction Day would be observed as a part of an iconic week of 'AzadiKaAmritMahotsav' celebrations of the ministry to mark the 75th year of India's independence.

A total of around 42,000 kg narcotics would be destroyed at 14 locations across the country, the ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman would be virtually witnessing the destruction process to be held at Guwahati, Lucknow, Mumbai, Mundra/Kandla, Patna and Siliguri and address the officers.

Road in Karkala named after Godse removed by authorities



Authorities along with police have removed a signage that was installed by the roadside in Bola gram panchayat of Karkalatak here, bearing the name of Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse.

The incident came to light on Monday following a photograph of the new road signage being circulated on social media, police sources said. Gram Panchayat officials, expressing surprise over the signage bearing Godse's name, said no such decision on naming the road was taken by the panchayat.

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"There is absolutely no plan to shift MPEDA from this beautiful city of Cochin and we have a very large set up here and it will continue to grow from strength to strength," the Minister told reporters reacting to a query after holding separate stakeholder consultations with leaders of fishermen and marine exporters here.

Recently, MPs from Kerala, Hibi Eden and T N Prathapan had met Goyal in New Delhi

Police arrests 4 ultras, associates for IED blast



The Jammu and Kashmir Police has claimed to have arrested four militants and their associates in connection with an IED blast, that left a soldier dead in the region's Shopian district last week.

"All the four terrorist/associates have been arrested. Congratulations to team Shopian," inspector general of police Vijay Kumar tweeted.

Naik Praveen, a soldier was killed in the attack. The explosion took place inside the private vehicle hired for the operation.

Earlier, a defence spokesperson had said that the blast was very likely from either an IED or a grenade, or a battery malfunctioning in the

Police arrests 4 ultras, associates for IED blast

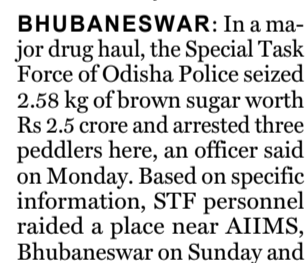
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Odisha STF seizes brown sugar worth Rs 2.5 crore, Three held



BHUBANESWAR: In a major drug haul, the Special Task Force of Odisha Police seized 2.58 kg of brown sugar worth Rs 2.5 crore and arrested three peddlers here, an officer said on Monday. Based on specific information, STF personnel raided a place near AIIMS, Bhubaneswar on Sunday and seized the brown sugar from the possession of three drug peddlers. All the three peddlers belonged to Khurda district, police said.

PM to inaugurate Sant Tukaram temple in Dehu on June 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation ShilaMandir, a temple in honour of Sant Tukaram, the 17th century saint at his birthplace Dehu, about 30 km from Pune, on June 14. Modi will interact with warkaris, devotees of Sant Tukaram who undertake the biannual pilgrimage on foot to Vithoba temple at Pandharpur in Maharashtra. The Prime Minister will dedicate to the nation the Shila Temple of Sant Tukaram on June 14. The ShilaMandir is a temple dedicated to a slab of stone (shila) on which Sant Tukaram had meditated for 13 days. A new idol of Sant Tukaram has been installed in the temple near the shila, a temple official said.

Legend has it that Sant Tukaram was made to drown the books of his verses in the river Indrayani by scholar Rameshwar Bhat. Sant Tukaram's pleas that the verses, elucidating the essence of Vedas in Prakrit, were not his writing, but the words of God who was speaking through him, found no favour with Bhat. According to the legend, Bhat asked Sant Tukaram to drown the books of the verses in the river and declared that if it was indeed God's doing, he would return them unscathed.

Akal Takhat Jathedar Awards PANTH BHUSHAN to Padam Shri Awardee Sardar Jagjit Singh Dardi

FW DESK
New Delhi

Singh Sahib Harpreet Singh, Jathedar Sri Akal Takhat Sahib & Singh Sahib G Ranjit Singh Jathedar Takhat Shri Harmandar Ji Patna Sahib awarded Panth Bhushan title to Sardar Jagjit Singh Dardi, Vetarn Journalist, Padam Shri awardee at an impressive function especially organised by Delhi Sikh Gurudwara management Committee at Speaker Hall, Constitution Club of India. Shri Mohit Jain, President Indian Newspaper Society (INS) appreciated the role of Chardikala Media Group for communal harmony, National Integration and spread of education especially Punjabi Language, culture & Indian Heritage. He also mentioned the role of Sardar Dardi for the welfare of Newspaper Industry as he is Member of the Executive Committee of INS since 1988. Sardar Harmeet Singh Kalka, Presi-



dent DSGMC appreciated the sacrifices and services Sardar Dardi has rendered during last six years for the betterment of the Sikhs, Punjabies, the state of Punjab, Punjabi language around the globe. Sardar Vikram Jeet Singh Sahni, designated Member of Rajya Sabha said that Sardar Dardi started sacrificing at the teen age of 12 years for the creation of present Punjabi speaking State and is still working through his media both Print and Electronic to serve the Indian Community worldwide. India is proud of him and appreciates the deci-

sion of Govt. Of India to honour him with Padam Shri Award which has been presented by the President of India to him. Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa, former President DSGMC said that he is telecasting live performance for 8 hours daily from the sanctum sanctorum of Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, New Delhi for the last 15 years free of cost. He is also telecasting live performance from one of the highest temporal seat of the Khalsa Panth Takhat Shri Hari-mandir Ji Patna Sahib and Sach Khand Shri Hemkunt Sahib.

Both the Jathedars of Sri

India-Iran ties set for a reset with Abdollahian's visit

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian's first visit to India this week has many implications for bilateral relations, but it is the multilateral context and timing that stand out. This is the first visit by a member of the 57-member Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, which took offence to comments made in India on the Prophet. The controversy has overshadowed India's other diplomatic engagements. As a result, his visit was an opportunity for New Delhi to project that it has successfully assuaged the Islamic world with the actions of the ruling BJP against its spokespersons. For New Delhi, which always seeks to run a balance in ties between the two rivals, the Iranian visit comes a week after that of Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz. It also coincides with the meeting of the Board of Governors of the IAEA in Vienna, which has passed strictures against Iran for its nuclear programme. On the bilateral front too, India and Iran have catching up to do, with many promises of the last summit in Delhi left unrealised. Instead of increasing Indian oil imports, investments in developing reserves, building up the Chabahar rail project and scaling up trade, India has drastically cut its Iranian engagement due to sanctions, while Iran has looked to China for more infrastructure investment. Bilateral trade dropped to just over \$2 billion (2020-21) from \$17 billion (2017-18). Ties also appeared to have been hit by New Delhi's surprise decision to join the Israel-India-UAE-U.S. group, portrayed as an "anti-Iran" coalition, and by perceptions of Iranian support to Yemeni Houthis behind the drone attack on a UAE oil facility where an Indian was among those killed. Abdollahian's visit, and a possible visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, may be the start of a reset of traditionally strong ties even if it is one that is buffeted by developments in other parts of the world.

LETTERBOX

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Work Until You No longer have to INTRODUCE Yourself

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MUKESH KUMAR SRIVASTAVA ON WHY INDUS WATERS TREATY IS AN EFFECTIVE EXAMPLE OF WATER MANAGEMENT

Bridging India-Pakistan water ties



The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is an established water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan to use water in the Indus and its tributaries. In the words of former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower, the treaty has since its existence in 1960, served as "one bright spot ... in a very depressing world picture that we see so often", resolving the long-standing differences between India and Pakistan since Partition.

Following the 118th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) comprising the Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan held on May 30-31, 2022 in New Delhi, it is important to reflect on the struggles and the high stakes that the two countries have experienced to ensure a long-lasting treaty on the one hand and the lessons that can be drawn to address multiple concerns pending in the region on the other.

After years of arduous negotiations, the Indus Waters Treaty was signed in Karachi on September 19, 1960, by then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and then Pakistani President Ayub Khan, negotiated by the World Bank. The treaty establishes a cooperative mechanism for exchanging information between the two countries regarding the use of the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) allocated to Pakistan and the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) allocated to India. However, the treaty also underlines provisions allowing each country to use the rivers allocated to the other for certain purposes such as irrigation and hydroelectricity. The Permanent Indus Commission, which has a commissioner from each country, oversees the cooperative mechanism and ensures that the two countries meet annually (alternately in India and Pakistan) to discuss myriad issues emerging from the treaty. This year, the commission met twice, in March in Islamabad, Pakistan, and then in New Delhi, in May.

Some differences

India-Pakistan relations have most often been embroiled in the high politics of the region's history resulting in a political stalemate

between the two countries. It is a rare feat that despite the many lows in India-Pakistan relations, talks under the treaty have been held on a regular basis.

Nonetheless, throughout its existence, there have been many occasions during which differences between the two countries were discernible. For instance, both countries held different positions when Pakistan raised objections regarding the technical design features of the Kishanganga (330 megawatts) and Ratle (850 megawatts) hydroelectric power plants located on the tributaries of the Jhelum and the Chenab, respectively, designated as "Western Rivers". However, under Articles III and VII of the treaty, India is permitted to construct hydroelectric power facilities on these rivers (subject to constraints specified in Annexures to the Treaty).

Differences were also discernible when Pakistan approached the World Bank to facilitate the setting up of a court of arbitration to address the concerns related to these two projects referred to in Article IX Clause 5 of the treaty, and when India requested the appointment of a Neutral Expert referent to Clause 2.1 of Article IX on the settlement of differences and dispute of the treaty, respectively. Disagreements continued on the issue with many meetings brokered by the World Bank to resolve their disagreements. But it

was without any success. Eventually, on March 31, 2022, the World Bank, in view of the differences, decided to resume two separate processes by appointing a neutral expert and a chairman for the court of arbitration. However, the two parties have not been able to find an acceptable solution. The appointment of a neutral expert will find precedence to address the differences since under Article IX Clause 6 of the treaty provisions, Arbitration 'shall not apply to any difference while it is being dealt with by a Neutral Expert'. Therefore, the two separate processes are more likely to generate technical and legal repercussions.

Similarly, Pakistan, invoking Article VII Clause 2 on future cooperation, raised objections on the construction and technical designs of the Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai hydropower plants located on Marusudar river, a tributary of the Chenab, in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir. The 117th and the 118th meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission held this year deliberated this issue. Here, India has assured Pakistan that all the concerned projects are treaty compliant.

Similarly, India has raised concerns on issues such as Pakistan's blockade of the Fazilka drain, which resulted in water contamination in the border areas, referent to Article II Clause 3 and Article IV Clause 4 and 6 of the treaty. During the 117th bilateral meeting in

March, Pakistan assured India of all possible actions to ensure the free flow of the Fazilka drain into the Sutlej.

Notwithstanding the differences, both countries have so far endeavoured to amicably address all such issues with both sides assuring to implement the treaty in letter and spirit.

Although there are many outstanding issues, the treaty is important and many lessons can be drawn. The treaty is an illustration of a long-standing engagement between the conflicting nations that has stood the vagaries of time. It has withstood tensions, including conflict, providing a framework for cooperation. The treaty, therefore, is considered one of the oldest and the most effective examples of water management cooperation in the region and the world. The 118th bilateral meeting corroborates its effectiveness.

With the exception of differences on a few pending issues, both countries have avoided any actions resulting in the aggravation of the conflict or acted in a manner causing conflict to resurface. The recent bilateral meeting points to mutual respect, communication and a sharing of information, despite differences.

Potential for cooperation

The treaty can serve as an edifice to address the challenges of climate change. Recognising common interests and mutual benefits, India and Pakistan can undertake joint research on the rivers to study the impact of climate change for 'future cooperation' (underlined in Article VII).

The Indus Waters Treaty also offers great potential for cooperation and development in the subcontinent which can go a long way in ensuring peace and stability. Given that both India and Pakistan have been committed to manage the rivers in a responsible manner, the Treaty can be a reference point to resolve other water-related issues in the region through regular dialogue and interaction.

Mukesh Kumar Srivastava is Senior Consultant, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi. The views expressed are personal



ANWAR SADAT EXPLAINS WHY CHINA'S CONSTRUCTION OF A BRIDGE ON PANGONG TSO IS PEACEFUL, BUT NOT LAWFUL

Decoding China's occupation and related legalities

There are three reasons why India should be particularly concerned about China's construction activities on Pangong Tso. One, India's war with China in 1962 revealed its diplomatic miscalculations and inadequacies in defence preparedness. China surprised India with an announcement in 1957 that it had built a road through Aksai Chin linking Tibet and Xinjiang. India protested this move formally in 1958. There is still trauma in India surrounding that war. Two, China does not seem to favour the idea of entering into treaties for resolving territorial disputes and maritime disputes with its neighbours. Recently, China began constructing a bridge on a portion of Pangong Tso which India claims is its international boundary and is within its territory. A portion of the area has been under Chinese control since 1958. The Pangong Tso saw military action between the Indian and Chinese forces in 1962. There were confrontations between the forces of the two countries in 2017, and in 2020, violent clashes resulted in casualties. Three, what is most worrying is that China does not adhere to the general rules of international law; rather, it tries to derive its claims on the basis of historic rights to the detriment of the rights of its neighbours, as is the case with its claims in the South China Sea.

China's belligerent action and military strategy to acquire territory place Pangong Tso in the category of occupied and disputed territory. In the eyes of international law, occupation is a temporary phenomenon. The Permanent Court of Arbitration's Award in the Island of Palmas case noted that only the continuous and peaceful display of territorial sovereignty (peaceful in relation to



other States) is as good as a title; the title based on contiguity has no standing in international law. India has neither accepted China's unjustified claims on that portion nor its construction activities. Therefore, China cannot take the plea that India has acquiesced; that there is an expression of consent by conduct or inaction by India. In contemporary international law, the most realistic approach to settling a border agreement is to create in each other shared expectations of mutual obligation. What is important is an indication to the other party that a final commitment has been made.

Perhaps the best provisions in contemporary international law for understanding territorial questions are Article 2(3) and Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. All the members are required under Article

2(4) to refrain in their relations with one another from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the UN. All the members have to settle their disputes by peaceful means.

ICJ judgments

China could take the plea that it is building a bridge peacefully; that it not causing damage to human beings or property. There are several judgments by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) relating to a state's non-violent construction of activities in disputed and occupied territory to clarify the situation in Pangong Tso. In 'Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory', the

ICJ examined the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force. The court took the position that the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory case strongly indicated a breach of Article 2(4). The court observed that the construction of the wall created a "fait accompli" on the ground that could well become permanent, and hence tantamount to a de facto annexation. Therefore, the ICJ seems to have decided in the case that the construction of the wall amounted to the acquisition of territory by force.

The ICJ judgment in 'Certain Activities Carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area' is also important in understanding China's moves. The court described the construction of caños (pipeline) and deployment of troops in Costa Rica by Nicaragua as a violation of the territorial sovereignty of Costa Rica. It added that Nicaragua's consideration that its activities are within its own territory does not exclude the possibility of characterising the activities as unlawful.

Thus, the fact that China is constructing a bridge on the lake without using armed force or without using fire or causing injury to humans does not make the activity lawful. In the Certain Activities Case, Judge Robinson described Nicaragua's construction activities in Costa Rica as "non-violent use of force". The message from these ICJ judgments is that if a state with the help of its military presence tries to change the status quo peacefully in a disputed and occupied territory, such a move stands to be unlawful.

Anwar Sadat is Senior Assistant Professor in International Law at the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. Views are personal

BOOKS: REVIEW

Decade has just begun, PM Modi far from done, says book

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the template for what it means and what it takes to be a "national leader," Union home minister Amit Shah has said.

While national leaders were identified in the immediate aftermath of the independence movement by their "name recall," the expression came to be abused, notably at the height of the coalition era, Amit Shah said. He alleged that the "Delhi media" had "generously distributed" the status to its "friends and favourites."

Writing in the book "Modi@20 Dreams Meet Delivery", brought out by Rupa Publications and to be launched on May 11, Shah said such "facile and insincere manufacturing of

national leaders" was shown up for what it was after Modi led the BJP to its biggest Lok Sabha win till then in 2014, before repeating the feat with a bigger margin in 2019.

The home minister concluded his chapter, 'Democracy, Delivery and the Politics of Hope' in the book with a warning to his rivals that Modi was far from done. "The decade has just begun. Watch for where it takes Narendra Modi, where Modi takes the BJP, and where the BJP and Modi take India."

A confidant of the Prime Minister for over three decades, Shah wrote that the best teacher for a leader was travelling to ordinary places, meeting ordinary families, sharing ordinary

"This is very different from the supposed national leaders of other parties. They are fly-in, fly-out visitors with no sense of the ground reality"

experiences and doing all this by ordinary means.

"Modi has done so with greater frequency and perseverance than any politician in the past 75 years," Shah wrote. He said that before the 2014 and the 2019 polls, "there had been no mandate for hope; and no mandate that was simply a reward for tested performance."

He said that no party had won



MODI@20: Dreams Meet Delivery By Sudha Murty, Sadhguru, Nandan Nilekani, Amish Tripathi, Amit Shah & 19 others Rupa Publications India 458 pages; Rs686

a majority in the Lok Sabha between 1984 and 2014; between 1952 and 1984 parties had won on the basis of the goodwill of the freedom movement, family legacy, anger against the incumbent (1977), a mix of fear and sympathy (1984) with appeasement, sectional prejudice, vote bank mobilisation and "empty sloganeering like 'Garibi Hatao' of 1971."

"Everybody now recognises that the 2014 polls marked the most decisive shift in the history of Indian politics," Shah wrote. Shah explained that the Prime

Minister embraced state campaigns, issues and idioms. "He is not just an add-on, or a mascot flown in for a few events and rallies. He complements the deep understanding of local politics and concerns that state BJP units and leaders bring to the table. This is very different from the supposed national leaders of other parties. They are fly-in, fly-out visitors with no sense of the ground reality," Shah said.

He said Modi had the precious gift of personal connection with every state and region, noting that one must go back to his years before 2001 and his Bharat Yatra of that period to understand this. "That tapasya was his real-life university."

Modi's measures as Prime Minister for distributing cooking gas cylinders among households and building toilets as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission stemmed from this understanding, he added.

Housing sales may dip on likely rise in home loan interest rate

The RBI's decision to hike the benchmark interest rate will make home loans costlier and affect housing sales, especially in affordable and mid-income segments, according to property consultants.

The RBI on Wednesday hiked the key benchmark rate by 50 basis points.

Property consultancy firms Anarock, Knight Frank India, JLL India, Colliers India, India Sotheby's International Realty and Investors Clinic said that the RBI's move was on the expected line to control inflation and this would result in an increase in interest rates on home loans.

Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said: "The rate hike will push up home loan interest rates, which had already begun creeping upward after the surprise monetary policy announcement last month".

Interest rates will remain



lower than during the global financial crisis of 2008 when they went as high as 12 per cent and above, he said.

"Nevertheless, the current hike will reflect in residential sales volumes in the months to come, more so in the affordable and mid-segments," Puri pointed out.

He noted that the housing market is still largely end-user

he added.

Colliers India CEO Ramesh Nair is expecting banks to gradually pass on this rise in repo rate in the form of higher home loan rates in the coming months.

He advised homebuyers to take advantage of the prevailing home loan rates, with housing prices expected to rise.

Dhruv Agarwal, CEO of Housing.com and PropTiger.com said: "The twin rate hikes by the apex bank would ultimately result in home loan interest rates going up, thereby impacting buyer sentiment".

Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Bajjal said home loans are set to get costlier.

"Rising interest rate along with elevated property construction cost and product price pressures could adversely impact the real estate buyer's sentiment," Bajjal felt.

India Sotheby's International

Realty CEO Amit Goyal said he doesn't see any major impact on the demand side in the housing market, which continues to remain strong.

Goyal hoped inflation to cool down by the year-end, enabling the central bank to revert to a lower interest rate regime.

Samantak Das, chief economist, and head of research and REIS, India, JLL, said, "The rise in policy rate is expected to act more as a sentiment disruptor for the home buyers, given that mortgage rates are likely to inch up".

"Affordability remains high and buying momentum is expected to remain largely intact," Das added.

Investors Clinic founder Honey Katiyal said that hike in interest rates will hurt the real estate sector the most. He hoped for a stable interest rate regime.

WCF CyberSmart Empowers Over One Million Learners

WNS Cares Foundation (WCF), the CSR arm of WNS Global Services, today announced that CyberSmart, its cybersafety education portal, has empowered over one million learners since its launch in May 2020.

WCF conducts extensive training for cybersafety awareness through the portal for teachers and principals, who then train children to ensure their safety in cyberspace. Awareness is also created among parents. Schools that complete 85 per cent certifications are awarded a CyberSmart School certificate. University students are engaged through youth social responsibility internship programs to reach out to students and certify them as CyberSmart. WCF volunteers train the teachers in schools, and conduct CyberSmart sessions and portal walkthroughs for students. WCF has collaborated with NGOs and other foundations to spread awareness among their beneficiaries.

Our mission is to empower every child with the knowledge and



confidence required to navigate the online space safely. We are delighted with the wholehearted support that CyberSmart has received in achieving the milestone of certifying one million learners across India. We look forward to pursuing our mission to equip children with the fundamentals of cybersafety, said Keshav R. Muruges, Group CEO, WNS.

I would like to thank all our stakeholders and the partner organizations we have collaborated with over the past two years to

amplify CyberSmart's reach. We will continue to take the cybersafety agenda forward through similar strategic partnerships in the future, said Shamini Muruges, Honorary Chief Mentor, WCF and Creator, CyberSmart.

India's first holistic cybersafety education portal, CyberSmart (cybersmart.wnscaresfoundation.org), enables gamified learning using thematic quiz-based modules based on curriculum advisory and challenges that children encounter in cyberspace.

Infosys Foundation launches four mobile labs in Karnataka



Infosys Foundation, the philanthropic and CSR arm of IT major Infosys, on Monday announced the launch of four mobile laboratories also called 'Lab Built on Wheels' to provide cost-effective diagnostic solutions.

The Foundation had signed an MoU with Rotary Bangalore Southwest Charitable Trust (Rotary Trust), to support with a grant of Rs four crore to make these laboratories. Together with Rotary Trust, it handed the mobile laboratories to the Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

BJPs Vishwajit Rane suspends Congress Michael Lobo's Resorts



BY DOMINICK RODRIGUES Panjim

The gloves are off and the knives are out in the open. Goa Town and Country Planning (TCP) Minister Vishwajit Rane launched a drive against illegal constructions and sanads in the State on June 9.

Prominent among those affected by Rane's initiative included the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Calangute MLA and Congress leader Michael Lobo, who has been issued showcause notices of illegalities in regard to two of his hotel resorts in the popular Baga area of Calangute in Goa.

Talking to media in Panjim on June 9, the TCP Minister warned that if no correct answers were received in this regard, then Lobo's two resorts would be demolished as both are fit cases for demolition.

Each species has its role in the ecosystem

BY NARVIJAY YADAV

Have you ever noticed that there are very few species of birds that are seen now around us? The number of avian species that we used to witness three-four decades ago has decreased to an alarming level. Many species of birds have disappeared from the urban surroundings completely. One of the major reasons behind this change is the declining number of insects and moths, as a heavy amount of chemical fertilizers and insecticides are used in farming. This trend is seen as a global phenomenon. It is estimated that 75 per cent of insect species have been wiped out from the agriculture fields. These insects and moths used to be the basic food of most birds.

Senco Gold & Diamonds rolls out 'Bangle Utsav 2022'

Senco Gold & Diamonds the largest organized jewellery retailer in Eastern India (based on number of stores), announced the commencement of 'Bangle Utsav 2022'. As part of this offer, customers can choose from exclusive handcrafted jewellery of more than 100 designs in Gold, Diamond and Platinum starting from Rs 19,000. These latest collection of bangles are exquisitely crafted by the skilled karigars, who have been working with Senco Gold & Diamonds for several years.

From traditional heavy gold bangles, to lighter pieces for everyday wear, bangles play an important role in a woman's life. They signify good fortune and prosperity. Bangles, over time have become trendier to suit a more contemporary look, but they are still as significant as they were a millennia ago.

The new offer also brings exquisite contemporary filigree and texture work, handcrafted as well as machine made casting jewellery for its customers. Announcing the launch of



the 'Bangle Utsav 2022', Joita Sen, Director, Senco Gold & Diamonds said, "We are happy to announce Bangle Utsav 2022 for our esteemed customers across India. Bangle Utsav for us is a celebration of womanhood. It's a tribute to the women of today who straddle multiple responsibilities and play a crucial role in shaping our society. We are bringing more than 100 exquisitely handcrafted designs in gold, diamond and platinum. Our endeavor is to adorn their beautiful hands and help them express their personality since these are the hands that care, indulge, decide and believe." Company is also offering discounts on bangles in Gold, Diamond and Platinum till 19th June

Amazon Launches #FightTheFraud Initiative

Amazon India has collaborated with the CyberPeace Foundation and Knowledge Partner Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) to launch the #FightTheFraud initiative to rally against the increasing cases of online scams.

Aimed to drive awareness to better equip consumers, brands and small businesses on online safety? To dial-up awareness around online scams, Amazon India today announced a one-of-its-kind consumer awareness initiative #FightTheFraud, in collaboration with the CyberPeace Foundation and Rashtriya Raksha University, an Institute of National Importance under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India as a knowledge partner. The initiative intends to develop a collective response against the growing cybercrime and online scams in India through a range of activities such as webinars, social media awareness campaigns, capacity-building workshops, and others.

Maruti Suzuki sets up 20 MWp solar power plant at Manesar plant

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said it has set up a 20 MWp solar power plant at its Manesar-based manufacturing facility.

The initiative will contribute 28,000 MW per annum, which is equivalent to the energy required for the production of over 67,000 cars annually.

"Harnessing renewable energy is the need of the hour. We are committed to the Government's vision of making India rich in the use of renewable energy sources," MSI Managing Director and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said in a statement.

The company's efforts are aligned towards encouraging decarbonisation in a bid to bring down emissions, he added.

"Our company has been committed to the cause of expanding the use of sustainable energy options to optimise our operations. The power generation from this initiative will constitute over 11.5 per cent of the power requirement of the facility at Manesar," Takeuchi noted.

MSI said it has been har-



nessing solar energy since 2014 when it installed the first solar power plant of 1 MWp capacity at its Manesar facility, which was later expanded to 1.3 MWp. Taking this initiative ahead, Maruti Suzuki commissioned a 5 MWp carport style photovoltaic solar power plant at its Gurugram facility in 2020.

With the new 20 MWp solar plant at Manesar, the company's combined solar power genera-

tion capacity, across its plants, now stands at 26.3 MWp.

The latest expansion will lead to the avoidance of 20,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

The 20 MWp car-port style solar power plant is designed with the lowest area per unit of power generation, using the East-West direction concept, maximising generation using minimum land.

The facility has space to park about 9,000 finished vehicles. A solar carport is an overhead shade designed as a parking area shelter with solar panels mounted on them.

MSI's parent company, Suzuki Motor Corporation, in its mid-term management plan, has prioritised carbon reduction in its products and manufacturing processes.

Aligned to this plan, the country's largest carmaker is also committed to implementing environmentally friendly initiatives for carbon reduction, it stated.

Adani and GMR buy teams in Ultimate Kho Kho



Corporate giants Adani Group and GMR group have acquired the Gujarat and Telangana franchises respectively in the 'Ultimate Kho Kho' league, which is set to start this year with an aim to promote indigenous sport.

The franchise based kho kho league is promoted by Dabur Group chairman Amit Burman in collaboration with Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI).

"Our experience with the Kabaddi and Boxing League gives us confidence that the Ultimate Kho Kho League will do wonders for this much-loved traditional sport," Pranav Adani, Director-Adani Enterprises was quoted as saying in a press release. "Our decision to partner with this league is an extension of our aim to build a world-class ecosystem that nurtures sporting talent, accelerates the sports economy and plays the role of an enabler in India's journey to become a leading sporting nation."

Tata BlueScope Steel launches Durashine Galleria in Ner Chowk (Mandi) Himachal Pradesh

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Mandi

In continuation to our efforts for enhancing customer experience, Tata BlueScope Steel launched DURASHINE Galleria – a unique concept store for all your roofing needs, in the heart of Nerchowk, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh on 8 June 2022. DURASHINE is the retail arm of Tata BlueScope Steel, that manufactures and markets premium roof and wall cladding products including accessories, and solutions. DURASHINE Galleria is a full range dealership under the aegis of the company's



authorised dealer – M/s Naina Industries.

During the launch of the store, Anoop Kumar Trivedi, Managing Director Tata Blue-

Scope Steel said, "Increasing our footprints while getting closer to our customers, is the ultimate objective of setting up these experiential centres across India.

Enabling greater customer centrality through DURASHINE touch points not only reiterates our agility but also brings in novelty for in-store experience."

While speaking on this occasion, CR Kulkarni, Vice President - Solution Business, Tata BlueScope Steel said, "This flagship store offers integrated communication for the brand, displaying complete range of key products in vibrant colour durability. With great weatherability, structural strength and ambient interiors through its innovative solutions, DURASHINE is all set to spread its value within the HP market.

DURASHINE Galleria will fulfil the need for anyone looking for amazing aesthetics, excellent thermal efficiency, and exemplary colour durability. With great weatherability, structural strength and ambient interiors through its innovative solutions, DURASHINE is all set to spread its value within the HP market.

interactive zones in engaging formats for overall customer involvement. Today customers are more discerning and demand product experience before purchase decision, and this is a great avenue for ensuring they make the right choice."

NCLAT stays insolvency proceedings against RHC Holding

NEW DELHI: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has stayed the insolvency proceedings against RHC Holding, an entity promoted by former promoters of erstwhile Ranbaxy and Fortis Healthcare.

RHC Holding is promoted by brothers -- Shivinder Singh and Malvinder Singh.

A two-member NCLAT bench had admitted an appeal filed by Daiichi Sankyo against an order passed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) directing initiating the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against RHC Holding.

The New Delhi bench of NCLT, on May 13, had passed the order against RHC Holding over a plea filed by its financial creditor Religare Comtrade Ltd.

The NCLAT said submissions raised by counsel for the parties "need consideration" and issued notices, directing them to file their replies within three weeks.

The appellate tribunal has directed to list Daiichi Sankyo's appeal on July 20 for the next hearing.



"In the meantime, the impugned order dated May 13, 2022 (by NCLT) shall remain stayed," the NCLAT said in its interim order on June 3.

Daiichi Sankyo in its appeal said there was an award passed by a tribunal in Singapore on April 29, 2016. As per the award, RHC Holding as well as other companies had to make payments to the Japanese company.

On January 31, 2018, the Delhi High Court upheld the Rs 3,500 crore arbitral award passed in the favour of Daiichi Sankyo and paved the way for enforcement of the 2016 tribu-

claim and that the Supreme Court of India had passed an interim order on April 5, 2019, in the matter.

The Supreme Court had stayed all proceedings before the NCLT filed under Section 7, whereby all 23 proceedings, including the proceedings initiated by the Religare Comtrade Ltd, were also stayed, as per Daiichi Sankyo.

"It is submitted that the Section 7 application filed in March 2022 was another attempt to bail out the corporate debtor (RHC Holding) from its liability and it is submitted that in the proceedings under Section 7, the corporate debtor neither appeared nor contested the proceedings whereas the adjudicating authority has admitted the application," Daiichi Sankyo told the NCLAT.

Moreover, the copy of the Supreme Court order dated April 5, 2019 "has not been referred in the application under Section 7, rather in one of the paragraphs, it was mentioned that Section 7 application was filed by the applicant but no further details were given," the Japanese drug

major said. "From the perusal of the impugned order it does not indicate that adjudicating authority (NCLT) was made aware of the order of the Supreme Court dated April 5, 2019," Daiichi Sankyo said.

Senior Counsel Amit Sibal appearing on behalf of Religare Comtrade Ltd submitted that since a loan of Rs 99 crore was given to RHC Holding and the limitation was to runout, hence, it had no option except to file the application to save the limitation. Further, he submitted that the "applicant (Daiichi) has itself taken action against the RHC holding and the application under Section 7 has been filed for recovering its dues".

The NCLAT, while passing the interim order, said it has considered the submissions of the counsels from both sides and perused the record. Referring to the order passed by the Supreme Court on April 5, 2019, the NCLAT said, "perusal of the order indicates the Religare Comtrade Limited also had filed an application under Section 7 and was one of the parties whose Section 7 application stayed."

Exprto raises Rs 5 crores in seed funding from GSF, Angel List USA, Agility Ventures and others

NEW DELHI: Exprto, India's largest experience-sharing and mentorship network for students, has raised Rs 5 crores in a seed round led by GSF and Angel List USA; it also had Agility Ventures, Lets Venture, and Supermorpheus participating in it. Agility Ventures is a start-up investing platform that shares a passion for nurturing and investing in early-stage businesses and technology that are transforming the supply chain. The funding-round also saw unicorn founders and angel investors participating in it, which included Rishabh Karwa (GoMechanic), Rahul Jaini (Swiggy), Sanka Aravind (Rapido), Rajesh Yabaji (Blackbuck), Vikas Bagaria (Pee Safe), Rahul Maroli (Zee5), Nitish MitterSain (Nazara Technologies), Dinesh Gulati (India Mart), Deep Gupta, Sahil Mahaldar and Archana Priyadarshini among others.

Varun Richharia, co-founder of Exprto, stated that the edtech start-up is going after the big whitespace opportunity which is untapped in India.

He added, "The total market opportunity for 'Mentorship as a Service' (MAAS) in India alone is \$11 billion, with \$6 billion in the test prep segment only. That's where we will create coalescence and a massive success network within the Indian student community. The evolution of Exprto continues to build on the belief that every mentor's voice can transform and accelerate people's career immensely, and our platform provides them with an entirely new, accessible and engaging way to do so".

The company offers mentorship services that vary in duration between 1 to 12 months range. Currently the platform offers 1-on-1 as well as cohort-based group mentorship sessions. Based on the stage of preparation that the aspirants are at, each service is personalised using their proprietary AI/ML profile-matching tech.

Rajan Chaudhary, co-founder of Exprto, feels that the company's business model fills the gap of mentorship issues in the student community. He explained, "The Indian edtech market is primarily focused on opportunities for better teaching methodology and academic content. Despite the real advantages that such platforms have brought to students, they still struggle to achieve their exam-related objectives. These include strategies for preparation, revision, and guidance that they mostly get from senior students or from online platforms like Quora/YouTube. There is no structured approach to address the mentorship issue, but there is a clear evidence of a large market gap and the stakes are very real."

Exprto, in the last eight months, has seen a staggering increase in gross merchandise value (GMV) of more than 23X, as well as over 18X growth in sessions of over 1 million+ minutes of mentorship. It now plans to refine the overall product and accelerate its growth by building a stronger team and technology with the newly-acquired funds. Product offerings will also be launched for the new market segments.



RBI retains growth projection at 7.2 per cent for FY23

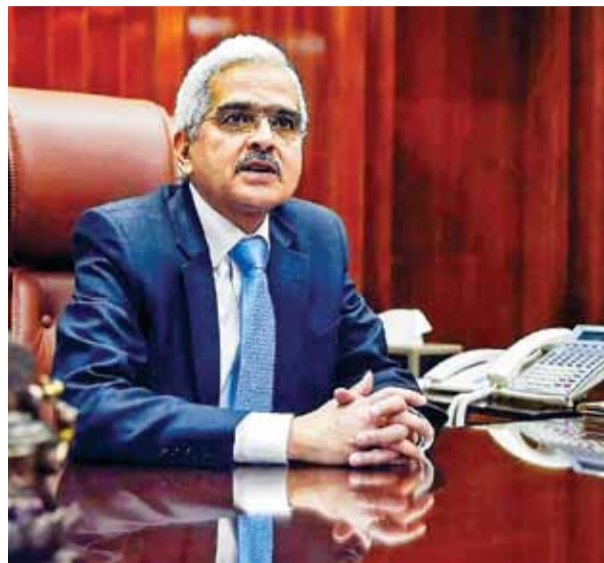
MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday retained its growth projection at 7.2 % for the current fiscal on the back of improvement in urban demand and gradual recovery in rural India.

Unveiling the third monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Indian economy remained resilient, and the central bank will continue to support growth.

The RBI expects growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal at 16.2 %, which will taper to 4 per cent by the fourth quarter. He, however, cautioned that there are risks from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

The central bank earlier in April slashed the GDP growth projection for 2022-23 to 7.2 per cent from its earlier forecast of 7.8 per cent.

On Tuesday, the World Bank cut India's economic growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7.5 per cent as rising inflation, supply chain disruptions,



and geopolitical tensions taper recovery. It was the second time that the World Bank has revised its GDP growth forecast for India in the current fiscal 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023). In April, it trimmed the forecast from 8.7 per cent to 8

per cent and now it is projected at 7.5 per cent.

The GDP growth compares to an 8.7 per cent expansion in the previous 2021-22 fiscal.

India's economy grew by 4.1 per cent in the January-March quarter of 2021-22.

RBI hikes interest rate by 50 bps to tame inflation

FW DESK

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday raised the interest rate by 50 basis points to a two-year high of 4.9 % as it doubled down to tame inflation that has surged in the last couple of months.

The rate hike comes on the back of a 40 bps increase effected by RBI at an unscheduled meeting on May 4. All the six members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, unanimously voted for the latest rate hike. Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation, which RBI factors in while arriving at its monetary policy, galloped for the seventh straight month to touch an 8-year high of 7.79 % in April.

Das said the new arrangement is expected to provide

RBI allows credit cards to be linked with UPI platform

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday allowed credit cards to be linked with the unified payments interface (UPI), which will enable more people to make payments using the popular platform.

At present, UPI facilitates transactions by linking savings or current accounts through users' debit cards. "It is proposed to allow linking of credit cards to UPI," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the regulatory moves, along with the bi-monthly policy review.

He said that to start with Rupay credit cards issued by the RBI-promoted National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) will be enabled with this facility, and the facility will be made available after system developments.

Das said the new arrangement is expected to provide



more avenues and convenience to the customers in making payments through the UPI platform. UPI has become the most inclusive mode of payment in India, with over 26 crore unique users and 5 crore merchants onboarded on the platform, he added.

In May, 594.63 crore transactions amounting to Rs 10.40 lakh crore were processed through UPI, Das said.

The interoperability of pre-paid payment instruments (PPIs) has also facilitated access of PPIs to the UPI payment system for undertaking transactions, Das said.

RBI's repo hike rate well-reasoned, says ASSOCHAM President

FW DESK

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) move to raise policy interest rates by another 50 bps within a short timeframe will help the Indian economy in the medium term, said ASSOCHAM President Sumant Sinha.

He said that a through a clearly well-coordinated approach between the RBI and Finance Ministry, Indian government and monetary policymakers have managed the challenging global environment with foresight and calmness.

Inflation, though a concern, is still within relatively manageable limits, especially when compared to many parts of the world.

"It is understandable that there is concern about the rate hikes resulting in higher EMIs, but, in the longer run, the resulting price stability will play a crucial role in supporting rising demand, which is key," Sinha said.

Sinha added the RBI will have to continue to work closely with the government and other stakeholders such as India Inc. to ensure the robust pace of the economic recovery coming out of the pandemic's third wave is sustained, in a higher interest rate environment.

"The tamping down of inflation is critical to sustain the economy's robust growth momentum, especially given continued global challenges including high energy and food costs," he pointed out. "All in all, the RBI's move is necessary and well-reasoned, given the current macro-economic currents," the Assocham president stated. On fintech, the ASSOCHAM President stated that the government's move to link credit card payments with UPI brings in greater "convergence" to banks, credit authorities, and in fact, the entire fintech ecosystem, building greater financial inclusion.

He also lauded the critical role that the RBI is playing in leveraging the benefits of UPI to medium and small-scale enterprises (MSMEs).



Monetary, fiscal authorities taking steps to moderate inflation, push growth: DEA Secretary

NEW DELHI: Monetary and fiscal authorities are taking steps to moderate inflation and push growth, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Secretary Ajay Seth said on Wednesday.

His comments came in the backdrop of Reserve Bank of

India (RBI) hiking key interest rate by 50 basis points to tame inflation. The central bank also upped inflation projection to 6.7 per cent while maintaining growth estimate at 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal.

"There are domestic chal-

enges and larger ones are

there in the global scenario. Whatever it takes for monetary and fiscal authorities, those actions are being taken. We (are working) to moderate the inflation (and) at the same time keep the growth efforts as earlier," Seth told reporters.

He was responding to questions on RBI decision on the interest rate front.

Seth said that apart from growth and inflation, the authorities are also working on management of rupee and keeping fiscal balance. Both monetary and fiscal authori-

ties are working towards that goal, he added.

"There cannot be any copy book solution. As new information emerge, they are analysed and whatever it takes to meet those challenges those measures will be taken," he added.

RBI monetary policy highlights

Following are the highlights of RBI's third monetary policy review of the current financial year announced by Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday

parts considerable uncertainty to domestic inflation outlook

□ GDP growth forecast retained at 7.2 pc for current financial year

□ Economic activity gathering strength; normal monsoon to boost rural consumption

□ Credit cards to be linked with UPI; RuPay credit cards to be linked first

□ Lending limits for housing loans by co-op banks doubled

□ Rural co-op banks permitted to lend to commercial Real Estate - Residential Housing (CRE-RH) sector

□ Urban Co-op banks allowed to offer door-step banking

□ e-mandates on cards for recurring payments enhanced to Rs 15,000 from Rs 5,000.

Modi launches new series of coins with AKAM design

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched a special series of coins that are also 'visually impaired friendly'.

The coins of Re 1, Rs 2, 5, 10 and 20 denominations will have the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) design are not commemorative coins and will be part of circulation. "These new series of coins will remind people of the goal of amrit kal and motivate people to work towards the development of the country," Modi said while addressing the iconic week celebration of the Ministry of Finance.

Modi also launched the 'Jan



Samarth portal' -- a credit-linked portal of 12 government schemes. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said each of these schemes will be displayed on the portal. "This portal is going to make it easy so that citizens does not have to ask the same questions every time to avail himself a government programme".

Need to make Indian banks, currency important part of int'l trade, supply chain, says PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday stressed the need to make India's banks and currency an important part of the international trade and supply chain.

The Prime Minister also exhorted financial institutions to continuously encourage good financial and corporate governance practices. Inaugurating the iconic week celebrations by the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Ma-



hatsav, Modi said India has developed various financial inclusion platforms and there is a need to create aware-

ness about them for their optimum utilisation.

"There should be an effort to extend these financial inclusion solutions globally."

Modi also launched the 'Jan Samarth portal', a credit-linked portal of 12 government schemes, to ensure ease in credit availability to youth, entrepreneurs and farmers.

The Jan Samarth portal will be an 'end-to-end delivery platform', and more people will come forward to avail loans, he said.

In his address, the Prime

Minister said: "It is necessary to focus on how to make our domestic banks, currency an important part of international supply chain and trade".

Modi said people-centric governance and continuous effort toward good governance have been the hallmark of the government in the past 8 years.

He also said that permanent dwelling, electricity, gas, water and free treatment have given poor respect they deserve.

Unavoidable rate hike by RBI to lend support to financial/macro stability: ASSOCHAM



NEW DELHI: The decision of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee to raise the benchmark REPO rate by 50 basis points to 4.9 per cent is largely on the expected lines and seemed unavoidable, given the challenging global economic and geo-political situation marked by ultra inflation and supply disruptions aggravated by the Ukraine-Russia war, said the apex industry chamber ASSOCHAM.

"While the MPC has decided to withdraw the accommodative stance to rein in inflation, it also remains cognizant of the growth imperatives of the economy, retaining the policy rate below the pre-pandemic level," said ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood.

He said the ASSOCHAM would support the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das' suggestion that further reduction in State VATs on petrol and diesel across the country can contribute to softening of the inflationary pressures as well as expectations. This would follow the supply side measures by the Centre by way of reduction in excise on petrol and diesel along with other duty rationalisation measures on different commodities. The chamber noted several positives highlighted by the RBI's policy statement including rising capacity utilisation in manufacturing, deleveraging of corporate balance sheets, improvement in invest activity helped by government's capex push and increasing growth in the bank credit.

HDFC Bank hikes lending rates by 0.35%, 2nd hike in two months

MUMBAI: The country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank on Tuesday announced a 0.35 per cent hike in lending rate.

The hike, which comes a day ahead of the RBI's scheduled policy review, is the second such move from the lender in as many months, taking the cumulative hike to up to 0.60 per cent.

The RBI had surprised all with a 0.40 per cent hike in key interest rates on May 4 to tame the inflation situation and is widely expected to follow up with further tightening of the policy on Wednesday.

HDFC Bank increased its Marginal Cost of funding based Lending Rate by 0.35 per cent from June 7, as per the new rate structure published on its website. The one-year MCLR, on which a bulk of consumer loans are pegged,



will be 7.85 per cent after the newest review as against 7.50 per cent earlier.

The overnight MCLR will be 7.50 per cent against 7.15 per cent, while the three-year MCLR will be 8.05 per cent compared to 7.70 per cent.

It can be noted that the rate hikes come at a time when credit growth is not very high and banks are keen to accelerate on the same. There have been hikes in deposit rates as well, which have preceded the lending rate hikes, along with the change in the policy environment.

Regulators should be well advanced to deal with digitisation: Sitharaman

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said regulators and other entities should be well advanced and ahead of the curve in understanding digitisation to ensure that there is no misuse of technologies.

Sitharaman, who is in charge of finance and corporate affairs ministries, also emphasised the need to have firewall mechanisms in the context of digitisation.

The decade from 2020 and upwards will be infused with digital methods, she added.

Sitharaman was speaking at the event to flag off Iconic Day celebrations of the corporate affairs ministry as part of the AzadiKaAmritMahotsav (AKAM).

According to her, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and National Financial



Reporting Authority (NFRA) should be ahead of the curve in the context of digitisation to ensure fair and accountable practices as well as there is no misuse of technologies.

Corporate Affairs Secretary Rajesh Verma said the ministry will be coming out with various tools, including for compliance management, and emphasised its focus on

technology-driven platforms to facilitate ease of doing business.

Various measures have been taken in the last eight years to ease the compliance burden, he noted. Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh also addressed the event.

At the event, the National CSR Exchange Portal was launched.

Automobile retail sales in slow lane in May: FADA

Retail sales of passenger vehicles grew last month but the sales of two-wheeler and commercial vehicles remained low compared to the pre-COVID month of May 2019, according to automobile dealers' body FADA.

On Monday, FADA said that overall auto retails stood at 16,46,773 units in May, down from 18,22,900 units in May 2019. "May 2022 retails when compared to May 2019 reveal that sales are still not on growth trajectory as overall retails were down by 10 per cent. While PV and tractors continued its positive run... two-wheeler, three-wheeler and CV sales are yet to show any signs of healthy run-rate," Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) President Vinkesh Gulati said in a statement.

While Year-on-Year (Y-o-



Y) comparison with May 2021 shows exceptionally healthy growth rate across all categories, it is important to note that both May 2021 and May 2020 were affected by nationwide lockdown due to the COVID pandemic, he stated.

According to him, a better comparison will be with May

2019 which was a normal pre-COVID month. Last month, the Passenger Vehicle (PV) retail sales stood at 2,63,152 units. This was 11 per cent higher compared to 2,36,215 units sold in May 2019. The retails in COVID-hit May 2021 and May 2020 stood at 86,479 units and 31,951 units, respectively.

"The PV segment which has already surpassed May 2019 numbers is witnessing huge demand. Dealers are not able to fulfil the same due to supply side issues," he said, adding that this has led to an increase in waiting period ranging from three months to two years.

"Healthy booking and single digit cancellation shows that demand may stay put even when normal supply resumes in months to come," Gulati noted. Last month, two-wheeler sales stood at 12,22,994 units. It was at 4,10,871 units in May last year. In May 2019, the two-wheeler retails stood at 14,20,563 units. "The two-wheeler segment has seen slight improvement in overall sales when compared with April this year," Gulati said. While the electric two-wheeler

sales were growing rapidly, the fire incidents across almost all brands, has created a fear in the mind of the customer, he stated. "This coupled with supply chain issues, has decreased two-wheeler EV sales drastically from last month," Gulati said.

The commercial vehicle sales stood at 66,632 units last month, up from 17,607 units in May last year. It, however, remained low as compared to 75,238 units in May 2019.

Similarly, three-wheeler sales remained muted last month at 41,508 compared with 51,446 units in May 2019. In May last year, the retail sales stood at 5,215 units. However, tractor sales were up last month at 52,487 units from 39,438 units in May 2019.

Markets recover after initial decline post RBI policy



MUMBAI: Benchmark indices pared early losses, with the Sensex jumping 317 points in morning trade on Wednesday, after the RBI retained its growth projection at 7.2 per cent for current fiscal year on the back of improvement in urban demand and gradual recovery in rural India.

The 30-share BSE benchmark rallied 316.63 points to 55,423.97 in morning trade. The broader NSE Nifty was trading with a gain of 97.95 points at 16,514.30.

Unveiling the third monetary policy for 2022-23, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Indian economy remained resilient, and the central bank will continue to support growth.

RBI on Wednesday raised the interest rate by 50 basis points to a two-year high of 4.9 per cent as it doubled down to tame inflation that has surged in the last couple of months. The rate hike comes on the back of a 40 basis points increase effected by RBI at an unscheduled meeting on May 4.

From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, NTPC, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major gainers.

In contrast, Reliance Industries, BhartiAirtel, Nestle, Asian Paints, HUL and ITC were among the laggards.

"RBI's projections of GDP growth rate of 7.2 per cent and inflation of 6.7 per cent for FY23 reflect a realistic monetary policy. The higher inflation projection indicates that the central bank recognises the seriousness of inflation and the 50 bps repo rate hike is a message that they are determined to anchor inflation expectations.

"The Governor's remark that the economy remains resilient and recovery has gathered momentum, is bullish from the market perspective," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong were trading in the green, while Shanghai quoted lower.

Stock markets in the US had ended with gains on Tuesday. "In line with the expectation, RBI has increased the repo rate by 50 basis points and is already discounted by the market," said Ravi Singh, Vice President and Head of Research, Share India.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.34 per cent to USD 120.97 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded shares worth Rs 2,293.98 crore on Tuesday, according to stock exchange data.

Sri Lankan Cabinet set to discuss 21st Amendment to the Constitution



Sri Lanka's Cabinet is set to discuss on Monday the 21st Amendment to the Constitution to empower Parliament over the executive president.

The 21st Amendment is expected to annul the 20A to the Constitution which gives unfettered powers to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa after abolishing the 19th Amendment.

The draft of the proposed amendment will be presented at Monday's Cabinet meeting, constitutional affairs minister Wijedasa Rajapaksa told reporters. It will be discussed today (on Monday) and if approved could be sent to the legal draftsman within 2-3 days for finalisation, he said.

He said most of the changes suggested by political parties in

the draft during a meeting held on Friday have been included.

The government announced on Friday that most of the concerns raised by parties had been addressed and agreed upon. However, the main Opposition party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), expressed disagreement, saying the government needed to wait until the Supreme Court's determination on the amendment. The SJB has accused the government of watering down the amendment to allow president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to continue enjoying full powers.

The SJB is pressing for the abolition of the presidential system. The powerful Rajapaksa family tightened their grip

on power after their massive victory in the general elections in August 2020, which allowed them to amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers and install close family members in key positions. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe last week battled for the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, saying it will curb the president's unlimited powers while enhancing the role of Parliament in governing the debt-ridden country which is also facing an unprecedented political turmoil.

His proposal to introduce the 21st Amendment met with stiff resistance from some members of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party. They charged that Wickremesinghe was looking to garner more power for himself while weakening President Rajapaksa who appointed him. Wickremesinghe was the main sponsor of the 19th Amendment in 2015 which empowered Parliament over the executive president.

The constitutional reform was a major plank of the agreement between Rajapaksa and Wickremesinghe when he took over the job of prime minister on May 12.

Sri Lanka PM Wickremesinghe hints at opting for fuel rationing amid economic crisis

The next three weeks are going to be "tough" for Sri Lanka over fuel supplies, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe warned on Tuesday, indicating that the cash-strapped country, which needs some USD 3,300 million for fuel imports in the next six months, may opt for its rationing.

Addressing Parliament, Wickremesinghe said that India, China and Japan are leading the list of countries that provided Sri Lanka with loans and assistance during the worst financial crisis faced by the island nation.

Relations with these countries, which have always been strong, are now broken. Those relationships need to be rebuilt, he said. "The country spends USD 500 million per month on fuel. It should be kept in mind that the current global crisis risks raising oil prices. Some estimate that global oil prices will rise by as much as 40 per cent by the end of this year."

"In this context, the idea of introducing a coupon system for fuel cannot be ruled out. Somehow we have to find USD 3,300 million for fuel for the next six months," he said.

The next three weeks will be a tough time for us related



to fuel. It is time we all must use fuel and gas as carefully as possible. Unessential travel should be limited as much as possible. After these difficult three weeks, we are trying to ensure the shortage of fuel and gas will have ended. Let's face these difficult three weeks united and patiently, the prime minister said.

Wickremesinghe said although the primary focus was on achieving economic stability, the effort must be to revive the economy. This is not something that can be done in two or three days. This challenge cannot be faced by miracles, slogans, magic or emotions. Implementing intelligently thought-out projects requires hard work and dedication," he said.

On cooking gas queues, Wick-

remesinghe said it costs USD 40 million a month to import gas.

We are currently using multilateral assistance, local currency and Indian loans to import gas. We will require USD 250 million over the next six months for gas," he said. Wickremesinghe said the country's annual rice requirement is 2.5 million metric tonnes. But we have only 1.6 million metric tonnes of rice in stock, we need USD 5 billion to ensure our daily lives are not disrupted for the next six months," he said. "We need to strengthen the rupee in line with the daily requirements of the citizens. Another USD 1 billion is needed to strengthen the rupee. That means we need to find USD 6 billion to keep the country afloat for the next six months," he said.

US stresses allied cooperation in face of N Korea threats

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman met with her counterparts from South Korea and Japan on Wednesday, emphasising the US commitment to defend its allies and trilateral security cooperation to confront an accelerating nuclear threat from North Korea.

The latest top-level meetings between the countries came as North Korea apparently presses ahead with preparations for its first nuclear test explosion in nearly five years, which US officials say could occur in the coming days. After a meeting in Seoul, Sherman and the South Korean and Japanese vice foreign ministers issued a joint statement condemning North Korea's provocative streak in weapons demonstrations this year and pledging closer security cooperation to curb the growing threats. The statement said Sherman reaffirmed steadfast US commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan, including extended deterrence, referring to an assurance to defend its allies with its full military capabilities, including nuclear. The United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan are fully and closely aligned on the DPRK, Sherman said in a news conference, using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Sherman noted that North Korea since last September has significantly increased the pace and scale of its ballistic launches, posing a serious threat to security in the region and beyond, and urged Pyongyang to cease taking these provocative and destabilizing actions and to commit to the path of diplomacy. Jolting an old pattern of brinkmanship, North Korea has already set an annual record in ballistic launches through the first six months of 2022, firing 31 missiles over 18 test events, including its first demonstrations of intercontinental ballistic missiles since 2017.



capital, Tehran. Rescue teams with ambulances and helicopters had arrived in the remote area where communication is poor. Over a dozen people suffered critical injuries, with some transferred to local hospitals, officials said. Iranian media quoted the governor of Tabas, Ali Akbar Rahimi, as saying the crash killed at least 17 people and that the number of fatalities may rise as rescuers search the train cars.

Rajnath hands over 12 high-speed guard boats to Vietnam



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday handed over to Vietnam 12 high-speed guard boats built under a USD 100 million Line of Credit granted to the Southeast Asian country by India.

The boats were given by Singh at a ceremony in the Hong Ha shipyard amid increasing maritime security cooperation between the two sides to deal with Beijing's increasing military assertiveness in the South China Sea region. The defence

minister is on a three-day visit to Vietnam from June 8 to 10.

"It gives me great pleasure to join this historic ceremony marking the successful completion of the project to build 12 high-speed guard boats under the USD 100 million defence Line of Credit by India," he said at the event.

The initial five boats were manufactured at the L&T Shipyard in India and the remaining seven were built in the Hong Ha shipyard. "I am confident that this will be a precursor to many more cooperative defence projects between India and Vietnam," Singh said. "This project is a glowing example of our 'Make in India -- Make for the World' mission," he added.

The defence minister said India would be "greatly pleased" if "close friends like Vietnam" become part of the country's transformation in the defence manufacturing sector.

Putin blames West for food, energy crises



Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday blamed the West for emerging global food and energy crises and repeated his government's offers of safe passage for ships exporting grain from Ukraine if mines are removed from the waters.

Of course, we are now seeing attempts to shift the responsibility for what is happening on the world food market, the emerging problems in this market, onto Russia, he told Russian TV. I must say that this is an attempt, as our people say, to shift these problems from a sick to a healthy head.

As reported by the state-run Tass news agency, Putin also said Western sanctions against Russia would only worsen world markets reducing the harvest and driving up prices.

He said inflation stemmed from the unprecedented dollar printing press during the coronavirus pandemic and blamed short-sighted European policies for under-investment in alternatives to traditional energy supplies and price increases.

The Kremlin leader said Russia wasn't blocking grain shipments from Ukraine and that the West is using Russia as a scapegoat for its problems.

Putin pledged that if the waters were demined, Russia wouldn't attack grain shipments and suggested they could be made from the Ukrainian port of Berdyansk or other countries, such as Belarus. Berdyansk is under Russian occupation.

India, Vietnam decide to expand defence & security ties

India and Vietnam on Wednesday inked a vision document to further broad-base the scope and scale of bilateral defence cooperation after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held "fruitful" talks with his Vietnamese counterpart General Phan Van Giang.

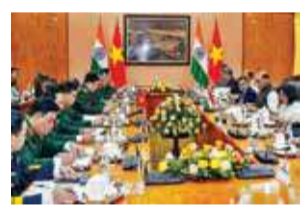
The defence minister arrived in Vietnam on Tuesday on a three-day visit.

"Had an excellent meeting with General Phan Van Giang, the Defence Minister of Vietnam. We renewed interactions on expanding bilateral cooperation. Our close Defence and Security cooperation is an important factor of stability in the Indo-Pacific region," Singh tweeted.

The joint vision document provides for significant expansion of defence ties in diverse areas by 2030, officials said.

"We had wide-ranging discussions on effective and practical initiatives to further expand bilateral Defence engagements and regional and global issues," Singh said.

"After our fruitful deliberations, we signed the Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards



2030, which will significantly enhance the scope and scale of our defence cooperation," he added.

The signing of the vision document to expand bilateral defence and security ties came amid growing congruence between the two countries in the maritime security domain amid China's increasing muscle-flexing in the region.

Singh is also scheduled to call on Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

Vietnam, an important country of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), has territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea region.

India has oil exploration projects in the Vietnamese waters in the South China Sea. India and Vietnam are boosting their maritime security cooperation in the last few years to protect common interests.

Train derailment in east Iran kills at least 17

A passenger train partially derailed in eastern Iran early Wednesday, killing at least 17 people and injuring 50 more, including some critically, authorities said.

The report said the number of casualties could rise, though initial details about the disaster involving a train reportedly carrying some 350 passengers remained unclear. Four of the seven cars in the train derailed



in the early morning darkness near the desert city of Tabas, Iranian state television reported. Tabas is some 550 kilometers (340 miles) southeast of the

capital, Tehran. Rescue teams with ambulances and helicopters had arrived in the remote area where communication is poor. Over a dozen people suffered critical injuries, with some transferred to local hospitals, officials said. Iranian media quoted the governor of Tabas, Ali Akbar Rahimi, as saying the crash killed at least 17 people and that the number of fatalities may rise as rescuers search the train cars.

Japan criticises Russia for suspending fishing pact

Japan on Wednesday criticised Russia's announcement suspending an agreement that allows Japanese to fish in waters near disputed islands, as relations between the countries deteriorate over the war in Ukraine.

The fishing deal has been in place since 1998, allowing Japanese fishing boats to operate around the Russian-held Kurils, which Japan also claims and calls the Northern Territories, in exchange for Japan's payment based on catch quota and other conditions negotiated annually.

Its suspension, apparently in response to Japan's sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine, raises concern about

NASA to launch 3 rockets from private Australian space port



NASA will launch a research rocket from remote northern Australia this month in the agency's first blast off from a commercial space port outside the United States. Three suborbital sounding rockets will be launched from the Arnhem Space Center on Indigenous-owned land near the mining town of Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory on June 26, July 4 and 12, said NASA and the launch pad's owner, Equatorial Launch Australia. The launch site was chosen because it is in the Southern Hemisphere and close to the equator. This commercial launch range in Australia opens up new access to the Southern Hemisphere's night sky, expanding the possibilities for future science missions, NASA associate administrator for the Science Mission Directorate Thomas Zurbuchen said in a statement.

the safety of Japanese fishing boats in the area. Prior to the agreement, Russian authorities had seized and shot at Japanese boats. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said it was "regrettable that Russia one-sidedly announced suspending the cooperation in this manner." He criticised Moscow for blaming Japan's failure to fund unrelated development projects on Sakhalin, the largest Russian island in the Pacific.

Putin warns West against sending arms, Kyiv hit by missiles

Russian President Vladimir Putin's new warning to the West against sending longer-range rocket systems to Ukraine came as his forces claimed to have destroyed Western military supplies in their first such airstrikes on Ukraine's capital in more than a month.

The attack showed that Russia still had the capability and willingness to hit at Ukraine's heart, despite refocusing its efforts to capture territory in the east. Putin's comments, in a TV interview that aired Sunday, came days after the U.S. announced plans to deliver 700 million of security assistance for Ukraine, including four precision-guided, medium-range rocket systems, as well as



helicopters, Javelin anti-tank systems, radars, tactical vehicles and more.

All this fuss around additional deliveries of weapons, in my opinion, has only one goal: to drag out the armed conflict as much as possible, Putin said. He insisted such supplies were unlikely to change the military situation for Ukraine's government, which he said was merely making up for losses of similar rockets.

Boris Johnson wins no-confidence' vote, but the margin will make him nervous

York, Jun 7 (The Conversation) Boris Johnson has survived a no-confidence vote by 211 votes to 148 votes against his leadership. But Johnson's margin of victory is smaller (as a percentage of all Conservative MPs) than that achieved by his predecessor Theresa May in 2019, six months before she resigned and he won the support of the majority of the Conservative Party and took office. Now, after weeks of speculation during the partygate scandal, 40% of his MPs have attempted to vote him out of power.

The no-confidence vote was triggered after 54 (or possibly more) MPs submitted letters to Sir Graham Brady, the chairman of the influential 1922 committee, saying they no longer believed Johnson is the right person to lead the party.

The 148 votes against Johnson means that for the first time the public, and the rebels, know the scale of the opposition Johnson now faces. This figure

Australian leader's visit affirms deeper ties to Indonesia

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday looked to move beyond regional issues that have been a key part of his trips abroad by promoting the importance of building stronger economic ties with neighboring Indonesia.

The visit was only Albanese's second overseas trip since his



inauguration two weeks ago and underscores the importance that Australia places on

its sometimes fractious relationship with Indonesia, its closest major neighbor.

Albanese talked about the importance of expanding the two countries' trade and investment relationship, highlighting their ambition to better utilize the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Russia draws closer to capture of Ukraine's Donbas region



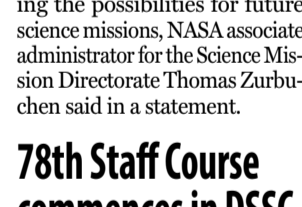
Russia drew closer to its goal of fully capturing Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of coal mines and factories as the Kremlin claimed to have taken control of 97 per cent of one of the two provinces that make up the Donbas region.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday that Moscow's forces hold nearly all of Luhansk province. And it appears that Russia now occupies roughly half of Donetsk province, according to Ukrainian officials and military analysts.

After abandoning its bungled attempt to storm Kyiv two months ago, Russia declared that taking the entire Donbas is its main objective. Moscow-backed separatists have been battling Ukrainian government forces in the Donbas since 2014, and the region has borne the brunt of the Russian onslaught in recent weeks.

Early in the war, Russian troops also took control of the entire Kherson region and a large part of the Zaporizhzhia region, both in the south. Russian officials and their local appointees have talked about plans for those regions to either declare their independence or be folded into Russia.

78th Staff Course commences in DSSC, Wellington



The Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) in nearby Wellington on Monday commenced the 78th Staff Course, which would train over 400 student officers from India and some foreign countries. The course consists of 439 officers of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as officers from the allied services of Ministry of Defence and 39 officers from friendly foreign countries.

Nestled in the verdant Nilgiris, DSSC is the premier tri-services institute of the country that functions under the HQ Integrated Defence Staff and trains middle-level officers of all three services on multifarious command and staff responsibilities over 11 months. On successful completion of the course, students are awarded an MSc degree in Defence and Strategic Studies by the University of Madras, an official release said.

US official vows 'forceful response' if North Korea tests nuke

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman on Tuesday warned of a forceful response if North Korea carries out its first nuclear test explosion in nearly five years as she travelled to Seoul to meet with South Korean and Japanese allies and discuss the escalating standoff.

US and South Korean officials have said North Korea is all but ready to conduct another detonation at its nuclear testing ground in the northeastern town of Punggye-ri, which last hosted a test in September 2017, when it claimed to have detonated a thermonuclear bomb designed for its intercontinental ballistic missiles. While the Biden administration has vowed to push for additional international sanctions if North Korea goes on with the nuclear test, the prospects for meaningful new punitive measures are unclear with the United Nations Security Council divided over Russia's war on Ukraine.

Any nuclear test would be in complete violation of UN Security Council resolutions. There would be a swift and forceful response



to such a test, Sherman said, following a meeting with South Korea Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong.

We continue to urge Pyongyang to cease its destabilizing and provocative activities and choose the path of diplomacy, she said.

Sherman and Cho are planning a trilateral meeting with Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori Takeo on Wednesday over the North Korean nuclear issue. Sherman's trip to Asia came after North Korea fired a salvo of eight ballistic missiles into the sea Sunday, possibly setting a new high in single-day launches, extending a provocative streak in weapons tests this year that also included the country's first demonstrations of ICBMs since 2017.



for has this evening virtually trebled from the 54 needed to instigate a leadership contest to 148 who were willing to vote to change leader. Although not yet sufficient to topple Johnson, it is far from the decisive victory Johnson will wish to present this as and could yet galvanise more calls for him to resign.

The contest was a straightforward yes or no vote. To win the vote, Johnson needed a simple majority of the ballots to be returned in his favour. All of the 369 Conservative MPs took part

and Johnson has managed to hold on to the majority. Under the party's current rules, he will not face another such vote for 12 months.

Including Johnson, four of the five previous Conservative prime ministers have been publicly challenged over their position as party leader, going back to Edward Heath in 1974. And Iain Duncan Smith lost a no-confidence vote as leader of the opposition in 2003.

Their example tells us that winning the vote may not prove

to be enough to secure Johnson's position. May survived a vote of no confidence in January 2019, and both Thatcher and Major faced leadership challenges (although under different rules and after significantly longer in office than either Johnson or May). Remarkably, all three won their respective ballots but both Thatcher and May resigned shortly afterwards and Major went on to lose the 1997 general election by a landslide.

Johnson's team will hope to use a victory to draw a line under partygate and other scandals but this may be difficult to achieve in a party that is publicly as divided as the Conservatives currently are.



Aamir to attend the sports event on 12th June in Panchkula

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

Aamir Khan, who is also popularly known as one of the biggest Sports

aficionados is all set to leave for Panchkula, Haryana to attend Khelo India Youth Games 2022 on the 12th, Sunday. Aamir will be present there as a celebrity guest and will

be seen addressing the young athlete talent across schools and colleges of India. Aamir's presence will boost enthusiasm and help in recognition of the talent present there. This is the first time Aamir Khan is going back to Haryana after Dangal. This is not the first time that Aamir Khan has shown enthusiasm for grass root sports. From wrestling, and table tennis to cricket, the star is often seen indulging in different types of sports. Aamir, who is an avid viewer and a supporter of sports is also the unofficial brand ambassador of the grass root sports. Back in 2016, Aamir introduced the world to the never before told story of Geeta and Babita Phogat through Dangal. Dangal turned out to be one of the biggest films worldwide which put out the untold journey of Mahavir Singh Phogat and his daughters in limelight.

Recently, the star hosted the finale of T-20 and proved his zealot for sports. Meanwhile, on the work front, Aamir Khan's Laal Singh Chaddha is gearing up for its release on 11 August 2022.



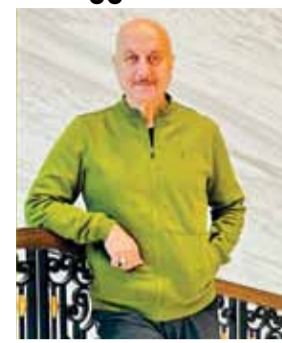
A R Rahman named ambassador of Indo-UK culture platform

Music great A R Rahman has been named the ambassador of British Council's 'India-UK Together Season of Culture', which aims to boost collaboration among emerging artists. The 'Season of Culture' that marks the 75th anniversary of India's independence was officially launched on Tuesday here by Britain's Deputy High Commissioner to India Jan Thomson and Director (India) of British Council Barbara Wickham. Rahman said as an artiste, it is a pleasure to be part of an innovative cultural programme which supports creative excellence and artistic appreciation; and brings diverse audiences together. «Today, creative expression and exchange can nurture young talent and create a global stage for fair and equitable access to arts,» he added. Wickham said Rahman has been a significant adviser to the 'Season of Culture' and

his work and professional journey truly embody what the 'Season of Culture' stands for - working together, and artistic output that captures the imagination of the world. Over 1,400 artistes will showcase their collaborations to millions of audiences across India, Britain, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, through a wide array of arts such as theatre, dance, visual arts, literature, music, architecture, design, fashion, tech-art, and new media art. The 'Season of Culture' aims to build on the British Council's work in India and strengthen India-UK collaboration in the areas of arts, English and education. Wickham said people in both the countries will have the chance to experience innovative and exciting creative work from some of the most promising UK and Indian artists pushing the envelope of creativity and the infusion of creative tech.

POTPOURRI

ANUPAM KHER announces 525th project, asks fans to suggest title



Veteran actor Anupam Kher on Sunday said he has started working on his 525th project, which he described as "a beautiful story of a common man".

The 67-year-old actor, who started his career with the 1984 movie "Saaransh", said the team has yet to finalise the name of the upcoming project and asked his fans to select one of the following options for the title -- "The Last Signature", "Sarthal", "Nirnay", and "Dastakhat".

"Today I start the landmark 525th project of my career. A beautiful story of a common man. We are yet to decide the title of the film."

"Our producer, director and I have different titles. So we thought the best way to finalise is to ask you all. Please help us! On another note, I have a come a long way. Thanks to your love, appreciation and blessings! Jai Ho!" Kher wrote on Instagram. In his almost four decade long career, Kher, a National School of Drama (NSD) graduate, has appeared in Hindi films such as "Ram Lakkhan", "Lamhe", "Khe", "Darr", "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge", "Daddy", "Maine Gandhi Ko Nahin Mara", "Vijay", "A Wednesday" and "M S Dhoni: The Untold Story".

Netflix sets premiere date for 'She' season 2

The second season of the Imtiaz Ali-created crime drama "She" will start streaming from June 17, Netflix announced Wednesday.



The series follows Bhumika, played by Aaditi Pohankar, a timid Mumbai constable who realises the potential of her dormant sexuality when she goes undercover to expose a drug ring.

Netflix India shared the release date of the new chapter on its official Twitter page.

"PSA: Mark your calendars! #SHE is back in 9 days! Catch S2 of #SHE on 17th June, only on Netflix," the tweet read.

Directed by Arif Ali and Avinash Das, the first season of the series premiered on the streamer in March 2020. It also starred Vijay Varma, Kishore Kumar G, and Vishwas Kini.

The upcoming season is directed by Arif Ali and backed by Window Seat Films, Viacom18 Studios and Tipping Point.

Jitendra Kumar-starrer sports comedy 'Jaadugar' to premiere on Netflix in July

Sports dramedy film "Jaadugar", featuring actors Jitendra Kumar, Arushi Sharma and Jaaved Jaferi, will premiere on Netflix on July 15.

Set in a football-loving town, "Jaadugar" is a story of a small-time magician, Meenu, with no athletic skill who must prove his worth in a prestigious inter-colony football tournament, in order to marry the love of his life. The film is produced by Posham Pa Pictures and directed by Sameer Saxena, known for his work on popular series like "Yeh Meri Family", "Permanent Roommates" and "TVF Tripling". Saxena said the team's attempt is to present a fresh take on sports and romance.

"With magic as another key element in the film, we have tried to tell a story that's high on entertainment and caters



to an extremely wide audience. With Netflix as our partner, we hope that the love with which we have made the film translates on screens across the globe," the director said in a statement.

Amit Golani and Saurabh Khanna of Posham Pa Pictures

called the film as a "light hearted tale" set in a small town.

"Association with a global platform like Netflix has enhanced the canvas of the film and Posham Pa is thrilled to see its debut work featured at the service," the duo added.

Mithali Raj retires from international cricket

Mithali Raj, one of the greatest female cricketers to have played the game, on Wednesday announced retirement from all forms of international cricket after a two-decade long illustrious career.

Mithali ended her glorious career with a record 7805 runs in 232 ODIs. She also represented India in 12 Tests and 89 T20 Internationals.

The 39-year-old had already retired from the T20 format and her decision to stop playing all formats was expected after India's ODI World Cup campaign ended in March.

"I set out as a little girl on the journey to wear the India blues as representing your country is the highest honour. The journey was full of



highs and some lows. Each event taught me something unique and the last 23 years have been the most fulfilling, challenging & enjoyable years of my life," Mithali wrote on social media, announcing her retirement.

"Like all journeys, this one too must come to an end. Today is the day I retire from all forms of International Cricket."

Rohit Shetty begins shoot for Khatron Ke Khiladi 12'



Filmmaker Rohit Shetty on Monday said he has started filming for his popular reality show Khatron Ke Khiladi in Cape Town, South Africa.

The 12th season of the adventure and stunt-based reality show features celebrity contestants facing their worst fears to win the coveted title.

Shetty, who returns as the host of Khatron Ke Khiladi

for the eighth time, shared the update via a short clip he posted on Instagram.

Time to go crazy, wild, raw and real once again! KHATRON KE KHLADI!! Shoot begins! #capetown #south-africa @colorstv, the 48-year-old director, known for blockbuster films like "Singham", "Simmba" and "Golmaal" series, wrote.

THE 12TH SEASON OF THE ADVENTURE AND STUNT-BASED REALITY SHOW FEATURES CELEBRITY CONTESTANTS FACING THEIR WORST FEARS TO WIN THE COVETED TITLE

The celebrities participating in the 12th season of Khatron Ke Khiladi are Rubina Dilaik, Pratik Sehajpal, Sriti Jha, Nishant Bhat, Faisal Sheikh, Shivangi Joshi, Jannat Zubair, Tushar Kalia, Mohit Malik, Erika Packard, Chetna Pande, Kanika Mann, Aneri Vajani, and Rajiv Adatia.

The show will premiere tentatively next month on Colors channel.

Madappa finishes tied 6th at USD two million International Series in England

Viraj Madappa continued his rich vein of form with a tied sixth finish at the USD 2million International Series in England.

The Indian youngster, who has one win on the Asian Tour, had for a good part of the week contended for the title, before a triple bogey on third day pushed him and he carded an even par 71 on Sunday.

His rounds of 68-70-70-71 saw him at 5-under for the week as Zimbabwean Scott Vincent won a title for the second year in a row.

A week after winning the Gate Way to the Open Mizuno Open in Japan to secure a place in the 150th Open, Vincent won the International Series after a battle with Travis Smyth (68), Sadom Kaewkanjana (69) and Justin Harding (69), who finished behind him in that order.

Last year's Asian Tour No.



1 Kim Joohyung (72) was fifth and Madappa alongside Sihwan Kim (67) and Turk Petit (70) was tied sixth.

Madappa was the highest placed Indian while Gaganjeet Bhullar (72) was T-23 and SSP Chawrasia (70) was T-30th.

Shiv Kapur (73), who had a great start in first two rounds, (73) was T-36 and Ajeetesh Sandhu (70) was T-44 and S Chikkarangappa (73) was T-49th. Karandeep Kochhar (77) finished 64th and Jeev Milkha Singh (75) was T-68th. Madappa, who at one stage

in the week even had the lead, had three birdies and three bogeys in his 71.

For the 30-year-old Vincent it was his maiden Asian Tour triumph. This is the tour I started on, so obviously it's nice to get the first win out here. It has felt like a long time but my game is trending in a good direction.

The International Series England also saw five golfers earning their spots at next week's USD 25 million LIV Invitational Series at Centurion Club.

Your belief, love helped make me who I am: Sanjay remembers Sunil Dutt on B'Day

Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt on Monday paid tribute to his father Sunil Dutt on his 93rd birth anniversary, crediting the veteran actor-politician for helping him become "who I am today".

The "K.G.F: Chapter 2" star shared stills from Rajkumar Hirani's "Munna Bhai MBBS", his last film with his father, and said the late actor will always be his hero.

"Your belief and love helped make me who I am today. You were, are and will always be my hero. Happy birthday, Dad," Sanjay Dutt wrote on Twitter.

Honoured with the Padma Shri in 1968 for his outstanding contribution to Arts, Sunil Dutt was one of the most popular stars of Hindi Cinema during 1950s and 1960s.

He acted in several films including the classic Mother India where he would meet his future wife, actor Nargis, which catapulted him to stardom. His other credits include Gumraah , Waqt , Humraaz , Khandaan , Milan , Reshma Aur Shera , Padosan .



The cinema icon's daughter, Congress leader Priya Dutt, shared a black-and-white photograph of her father on Instagram to mark the occasion.

"Happy birthday to the most handsome, loving, spirited gentleman I have known and I say it with pride, he is my father my hero. He raised the bar too high, they don't make them like him anymore. Love you dad and thank you for being that pillar in our lives," she captioned the photo.

Shabana Azmi wraps shoot of Abhishek Bachchan-led 'Ghoomer'



Veteran actor Shabana Azmi on Wednesday said she has completed the shoot of her upcoming movie "Ghoomer", starring Abhishek Bachchan.

Directed and produced by R Balki, the film is inspired by the achievement of Karoly Takacs, a Hungarian right hand shooter who won two Olympic Gold medals with his left hand after his right hand was seriously injured.

Balki, known for movies such as Cheeni Kum , Ki and Ka and Pad Man , also serves as the writer for the upcoming feature with writers Rahul Sengupta and Rishi Virman.

In an Instagram post, Azmi shared the update from the sets.

She also revealed megastar Amitabh Bachchan has a guest appearance in "Ghoomer",

with whom she will shoot a few scenes. "It's a wrap on Ghoomer except for a days shoot with Amitabh Bachchan in a guest appearance. RBalki ,Saiyami Kher ,Abhishek Bachchan ,Angad Bedi maza aaya (had lot of fun) it all went by so quickly," the 71-year-old actor wrote.

"Ghoomer" also features Saiyami Kher, Angad Bedi, Shivendra Singh Dungarpur and Ivanka Das.

In February this year, the makers had said that the film salutes the achievements of sportsmen, who have conquered their disabilities and achieved more than they did when they were so called normal.

"Ghoomer" is co-produced by Hope Productions and Saraswati Entertainment.



Sikh devotees pay respects on the occasion of the 38th Anniversary of Operation Blue Star at Akal Takht Sahib of the Harmandir Sahib (Golden temple) in Amritsar on Monday. Operation Blue Star was carried out by the Indian Army in June 1984

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