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PUNJAB CM DIRECTS TOURISM DEPARTMENT TO INVITE GLOBAL TENDERS FOR PRESTIGIOUS PROJECT 'PIND BABE NANAK DA'



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PETROL UNDER-RECOVERY AT RS 13, DIESEL RS 24, RELIANCE-BP SAYS OPERATIONS UNSUSTAINABLE



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ALIA BHATT'S MAIDEN PRODUCTION 'DARLINGS' TO RELEASE ON NETFLIX



Punjab CM ousts Vijay Singla from his Cabinet on corruption charges

CHANDIGARH: Reiterating his government's firm commitment to make Punjab a corruption free state, the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann today dismissed Health Minister Dr Vijay Singla for seeking 1% commission in department headed by him. "My government is having zero tolerance towards corruption and no one, howsoever affluent he may be, will be allowed to continue such malpractices", said the Chief Minister.



The Chief Minister categorically said that he had dismissed Dr Singla from his Cabinet and asked the Police to register case against him. He said that since the case was only in his knowledge so he could have easily buried it or ignored it. However, Bhagwant Mann said that after taking oath at sacred soil of Khatkar Kalan he had vowed to make Punjab corruption free and this is a historic step towards this cause.

people had chosen them for transparent and corruption free system and he is duty bound to fulfil the aspirations of every Punjabi. He said that since 75 years of Indian Independence there is no such parallel in the state whereas Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had taken such a bold step 2015 when he had dismissed his Food and Supply Minister on charges of corruption. Bhagwant Mann said that the message is loud and clear that corrupt practices will not be allowed in the state. The Chief Minister unequivocally said that his predecessors had been shielding the corrupt and then saying that they knew about corruption being done by their ministers. However, Bhagwant Mann said that such practices would not be tolerated in Punjab now. He said that Dr Singla has admitted his crime and now the law will take its own course.

Vijay Singla sent to 14-days of Judicial Custody

After being arrested over corruption charges, former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Punjab Health Minister, Vijay Singla was sent to 14-day judicial custody by the Mohali court on Friday. The court earlier sent him for three days of judicial custody till Friday which has now been extended to another 14 days. Speaking on the same, Singla's lawyer HS Dhanoa said that there will be a trial court for the matter and a bail application will be soon filed after discussing it with the panel, reported Vijay Singla who was elected as the Health Minister of Punjab was earlier arrested on Tuesday by the Anti-Corruption Branch for demanding bribes regarding the allotment of projects.

Taking a dig at the opposition, the Chief Minister said that they will fire political salvos regarding corruption on his government. But, Bhagwant Mann said that he has taken action against the corrupt whereas the opposition had always sheltered and promoted the corrupt leaders. He said that the intention and vision of his government is clear that corrupt practices will not be allowed and anyone indulging in this will have to face serious repercussions.

Punjab CM rolls red carpet welcome to German investors in the state

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann rolled on Red Carpet Welcome to the German investors in the state by projecting Punjab as land of opportunities.

During a meeting with Minister Economic and Global Affairs German Embassy Dr. Stefan Koch and Head of Energy India Dr Winfried Damm, who called on the Chief Minister here at his official residence on Thursday morning, Bhagwant Mann said that expertise of Germans in engineering, energy and bio-mass besides others is acclaimed world over. He said that Punjab will be happy to tie up with the Germans in these fields along with other sectors of investment. Bhagwant Mann said that the state government is committed for emerging Punjab as front runner state in industrial growth.

The Chief Minister said that Punjab has already emerged a mechanism wherein the state government provides single window clearances to the industry in the state along with a special nodal officer to speed up these clearances. He said that the investors desirous of investing in the state can apply for the clearances online which will be given in an expedite manner. Bhagwant Mann said that besides being a peaceful state with good weather conditions Punjab has zero tolerance against cor-



ruption due to which the investors can be facilitated largely. The Chief Minister said that Punjab is ready for forming a cluster for setting up of especially German industry in the state. He said that the state government is committed for putting state in high growth trajectory for which they are ready for hand holding of investors in the early stage.

Former Haryana CM OP Chautala gets 4-year jail term in Disproportionate assets case



Special Judge Vikas Dhull also imposed a fine of Rs.50 lakh on former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala in the case of acquiring disproportionate assets from 1993 to 2006. New Delhi: A Delhi court on Friday awarded a four-year jail term to former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala in a disproportionate assets case.

Special Judge Vikas Dhull also imposed a fine of Rs. 50 lakh on the convict in the case of acquiring disproportionate assets from 1993 to 2006. The judge also directed the authorities concerned to confiscate four of his properties.

The court had last week convicted Chautala and said the accused had failed to satisfactorily account for such dis-proportionality by proving his source of income or means by way of which, he acquired assets during this period.

Geetanjali Shree wins Booker Prize for first Hindi novel 'Tomb of Sand'



Author Geetanjali Shree's Hindi novel 'Tomb of Sand' has become the first book in any Indian language to win the prestigious International Booker Prize.

At a ceremony in London on Thursday, the New Delhi-based writer said she was "completely overwhelmed" with the "bolt from the blue" as she accepted her prize, worth GBP 50,000 and shared with the book's English translator, Daisy Rockwell. "Tomb of Sand", originally 'Ret Samadhi', is set in northern India and follows an 80-year-old woman in a tale the Booker judges dubbed a "joyous cacophony" and an "irresistible novel". "I never dreamt of the Booker, I never thought I could. What a huge recognition, I'm amazed, delighted, honoured and humbled," said Ms. Shree, in her acceptance speech.

Punjab CM wants more international flights at Mohali airport



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann directed the state Civil Aviation Department to tie up with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airport Authority of India (AAI) for starting direct international flights from the Mohali International Airport to Canada, the US and Britain. At present, only two international flights are operational from the Mohali International Airport to Dubai and Sharjah.

Chairing a meeting here, Mann said since the major chunk of Punjabi population is settled in various countries, including Canada, the US, Britain, New Zealand and Australia, this initiative would facilitate

the Punjabi diaspora settled abroad to visit their native places in Punjab in a seamless manner.

To give impetus to the agro and food processing industry in the state, the Chief Minister also asked the department to immediately start cargo flights from the Mohali International Airport so as to make Punjab as open market.

The Chief Minister said this step would go a long way in giving much needed boost to the export of food products across the globe in general and especially in supplementing income of state farmers manifold through this farmer-friendly initiative.

Adani Defence & Aerospace acquires strategic stake in digital led leading agri-drone solution provider General Aeronautics

AHMEDABAD: Adani Defence & Aerospace has entered into definitive agreements for acquiring 50% equity stake in agricultural drone start up - General Aeronautics.

General Aeronautics, a Bangalore based start-up specializes in developing robotic drones to offer tech enabled crop protection services, crop health monitoring, precision farming and yield monitoring using artificial intelligence and data analytics while working very closely with the farmers and agricultural chemical companies. General Aeronautics also has the presence of some reputed venture capital firms like Mela Ventures, founded by former Mindtree founders.

"The cross-industry application of drones is nearly limitless and continues to make great strides. It offers countries like ours the opportunity to leapfrog generations of infrastructure,



healthcare, logistics, agriculture and defence advancements and break several process barriers. When combined with next generation imaging technologies, longer battery life, edge based artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities, the possibilities are endless. The partnership between General Aeronautics and Adani Defence & Aerospace fuses our military and civilian objectives by integrating several capabilities Adani Group's military UAV capabilities with the capabilities of General Aeronautics thereby providing us with a platform with far reaching possibilities" said Ashish Rajvanshi, CEO of Adani

Govt imposes restrictions on sugar exports from June 1 says DGFT

Union government on Tuesday imposed restrictions on sugar exports from June 1, a move aimed at increasing availability of the commodity in the domestic market and curbing price rise. "Export of sugar (raw, refined and white sugar) is placed under restricted category from June 1, 2022 onwards," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification. However, it said that these restrictions would not be applicable on sugar being exported to the EU and the US under CXL and TRQ. A specified amount of sugar is exported to these regions under CXL and TRQ. In a statement, the government said that with a view to maintain domestic availability and price stability of sugar in the country during sugar season 2021-22 (October-September), it has decided to regulate the sugar exports with effect from June 1. "The government has decided to allow export of sugar up to 100 LMT (Lakh Metric Tonnes) with a view to maintain the domestic availability and price stability during the sugar season 2021-22 (October-September)," it said. "As per the order issued by DGFT, with effect from 1st June, 2022 till 31st October, 2022, or till further order, whichever is earlier, the export of the sugar will be allowed with specific permission of the Directorate of Sugar, Department of Food and Public Distribution," it said.



7 soldiers dead after Army vehicle carrying 26 falls into River in Ladakh

Seven soldiers were killed when a vehicle carrying them skidded off the road and rolled down into a gorge near Shyok river in Ladakh on Friday, officials said.

A party of 26 soldiers was moving from Partapur transit camp to a forward location in Turtuk in Leh district, they said.

The vehicle carrying them skidded off the road and fell into a gorge, resulting in injuries to all of them, the officials said.

The rescue operation was carried out swiftly and all the soldiers were evacuated to a field hospital in Partapur, they said. Seven of them succumbed to injuries, the officials said, adding much other personnel had also suffered grievous injuries and are undergoing treatment.



Efforts are being taken to ensure the best medical care for the injured, including the requisition of air effort from IAF to shift more serious ones to Western Command.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the loss and hoped for speedy recovery of the injured.

"Anguished by the bus accident in Ladakh in which we have lost our brave army per-

Mamata mourns deaths of soldiers in Ladakh

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee mourned the deaths of seven soldiers in a road accident in Ladakh on Friday. Extending her condolences to their families, Banerjee said she was deeply distressed by the deaths. "Deeply distressed by the traumatic road accident death of our 7 brave soldiers in Ladakh today (Friday) afternoon. Some more seriously injured in the case. Sincere condolences for the bereaved, solidarity for all," she tweeted.

sonnel. My thoughts are with the bereaved families.

Top Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik given life in jail

A court has sentenced senior Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik to life imprisonment after convicting him of funding terrorism.

He was found guilty of participating in and funding terrorist acts and involvement in criminal conspiracy.

Malik told the court he gave up arms in the 1990s. He was convicted last week. Tens of thousands of people have been killed in Muslim-majority Kashmir since an armed revolt against rule by India, which is mostly Hindu, erupted in 1989.

The court in the capital Delhi gave Malik, 56, two life sentences and five 10-year jail terms, all to be served concurrently.



Shops in some areas of Srinagar, the main city in Indian-administered Kashmir, were shut and police fired tear gas to disperse stone-throwing protesters outside Malik's residence. Mobile internet has been suspended in the region as a security precaution.

J&K tunnel collapse: Bodies of 10 labourers recovered

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif of Pakistan, which disputes India's claim to Kashmir, called it "a black day for Indian democracy".

"India can imprison Yasin Malik physically but it can never imprison idea of freedom he symbolises," he tweeted. India's National Investigating Agency (NIA), which deals with anti-terror crimes, had demanded the death penalty for Malik, the leader of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmiri Liberation Front (JKLF). The defence had asked for life imprisonment.

Malik was arrested shortly after the JKLF was banned in 2019.



After two-day long rescue operation, the bodies of ten trapped labourers have been recovered from the debris of the collapsed tunnel at Ramban on Jammu and Srinagar highway. Three labourers were rescued at the time the tunnel caved in.

Texas Killings: US President Biden Leads 5 days Mourning on Killings of the Innocents



The People of America are mourning on the killings of innocent children in a Texas schools. Their national flag is half-mast. It would remain half-mast till Saturday. The world is shocked and shares the agony of the tragedy with the people. It, however, hopes that the law makers at the Capitol would adhere to the saner voice of their President, Joe Biden, who has asked the law makers to stand up and

support limits on powerful weapons.

President Biden while addressing to Nation, who has already lost a young daughter, Naomi, in a car crash and an adult son, Beau, to a brain tumour, shared the sad news with the parents of the 19 school children with his appeal to regulate the free sales of weapons to the buyers with ill intent. The tragedy has taken place following the trigger-happy action of a teen aged boy, who obtains assault rifles, indulges in indiscriminate firings ending the lives of "beautiful, innocent second, third, fourth graders," he tells the people and says that "he knows the pain of the parents in Uvalde whose children will never return home."

Day will come when Pakistan will be able to engage with India diplomatically & economically: Zardari

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday said he is hopeful that a day will come when his country will be able to engage with India diplomatically as well as economically.

"Aaj nahin to kal, that day will have to come. That day we will unlock our full economic potential, and all will share the fruit of prosperity," Zardari said while talking about various steps required to unlock Pakistan's economic and trade opportunities, including with its various neighbours.

"I hope that day will come in my lifetime, when we are able to resolve the conflicts in our region and that day we will be able to unlock our full growth



potential," he said while talking about numerous conflicts in the neighbourhood of his country.

Zardari, however, asserted that Pakistan will never compromise on its national interest whenever it engages with any other country diplomatically or economically.

He also said that the only way to resolve the Ukraine crisis is through dialogue and diplomacy.

He was speaking at the annual Pakistan Breakfast session in Davos, organised by Pathfinder Group and Martin Dow Group on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2022.

"This is a time when humanity is facing not one but many existential crises, be it Covid-19 pandemic, climate change or numerous conflicts," he said.

"Do we want to be known in history as someone who resolved existential crises and conflicts through dialogue or someone who created more conflicts?"

"Resolving conflicts is in the interest of not smaller countries like ours, but also of larger nations and everyone," he added.

He said that while Pakistan empathises and sympathises with people in Ukraine, "we strongly believe this conflict has to be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue".

Punjab CM directs tourism department to invite global tenders for prestigious project 'Pind Babe Nanak Da'

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday directed the Tourism and Cultural Affairs department to invite global tenders for the prestigious project 'Pind Babe Nanak Da' dedicated to the 550th Prakash Purb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Sultanpur Lodhi, the Chief Minister's Office said.

Chairing a meeting to review the progress of this project here at his official residence, Mann asked the department to engage the world-acclaimed architects for the construction of this iconic project to come up over an area of 40 acres at cost of Rs 500 crore.

On the occasion, the Chief

Minister also directed the Tourism department to complete the upcoming Bhai Jaita Ji Memorial at Sri Anandpur Sahib positively by December 2022, while chairing another meeting of the Anandpur Sahib Foundation.

He also asked the department to ensure quality construction of this prestigious project as per the stipulated specifications approved by the competent authority, which is coming up in the complex of Virasat-e-Khalsa at a cost of Rs 13 crore over an area of five acres. Notably, valiant Sikh General Baba Jiwan Singh (Bhai Jaita Ji) was a devout Sikh of Dasmesh Pita Sri Guru



Gobind Singh Ji, who brought the severed head (Sis) of the Ninth Sikh Guru Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib from Chandni Chowk, Delhi to Sri Kiratpur Sahib.

Likewise, the Chief Minister

centre of attraction for people visiting here in general and especially for nature lovers.

The Chief Minister while presiding over the first meeting of the Amritsar Cultural and Tourism Development Authority reviewed the progress of various heritage and tourism cultural sites including Golden Temple Plaza in the holy city of Amritsar.

Emphasizing the religious and historical importance of the holy city of Amritsar, the Chief Minister asked the department to complete all the ongoing works under the authority at the earliest so as to showcase Amritsar as a global tourism hub

Anil Vij assures every help to Haryana entrepreneurs to do Business in Dubai

SATISH HANDA
Ambala



Anil Vij Haryana Home Minister as well as Health Minister and remained legislator most of the time of Ambala Vidhan Sabha constituency since late nineties not only has impressed people of constituency but also people of entire country and now his name and fame spreading fast ahead all over in the world. Vij holding Public Durbars almost on every Saturday at Ambala Cantt to solve visitors grievances in the state few of them also at the spot. Surprisingly, in past three Public Durbars Vij attended more than 12500 visitors arrived from every district across the state.

Talking to media persons here Anil Vij said that Sheikh Majid Al Moula, a member of the royal family of Dubai, to whom he has also met during his recent visit to Dubai to attend Business Summit on March 28, 2022 has now sent a proposal to the Haryana government that any person from Haryana state wants to do business in Dubai will be welcomed and all possible help will be provided to him. Vij said that he will put this proposal to the government and concerned officials immediately to expedite matter promptly.

Punjabi language test mandatory for candidates applying for Group C, D posts: CM Mann

The Punjab government on Tuesday made it mandatory for candidates applying for its Group C and D posts to clear a Punjabi language test with at least 50 per cent marks. The move is aimed at promotion of the language, according to an official statement. The decision was taken by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann at a meeting with officials here. Mann said it will now be mandatory for all candidates applying for Group C and D posts to clear the Punjabi language eligibility test with a minimum of 50 per cent marks prior to competing for the recruitment exam.

Six killed in road accident in Haryana's Jind

A vehicle collided head-on with a truck near Kandela village in Haryana's Jind district on Tuesday morning, leaving six dead and 17 injured, police said.

The victims, all residents of Hisar district, were returning from Haridwar after performing rituals following the death of an elderly family member.

The injured have been referred to nearby hospitals, police said, adding that two of them were in a serious condition. The truck driver fled from the accident spot.

Punjab and UK agree for further tie up different sectors including agriculture, IT and food processing

CHANDIGARH: Punjab and United Kingdom on Thursday agreed for further tie up in agriculture, Information and Technology, food processing, higher education, sports, public transport (Electric buses) and biomass sectors.

A decision to this effect was taken during a meeting of the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann With British High Commissioner Alex Ellis, who called on the former here at his official residence on Thursday morning. During the meeting it was agreed that there is a huge potential of collaboration between Punjab and UK in these sectors. The Chief Minister said that hard working and resilient Punjabis have already made a mark in these sectors. However,



he said that the advanced technology by UK will be helpful in further harnessing the hidden potential in these sectors.

Extending a red carpet welcome to British Investors in the state, the Chief Minister said that the state government will

ensure single window online clearances to all the desirous investors in the state. He said that Punjab government will ensure that the investors will get smooth and hassle free mechanism to invest in the state. Bhagwant Mann said that he is already in touch with a large number of perspective investors from UK who are interested in investing the state.

Flagging the issue of direct flight from Chandigarh to London Heathrow Airport, the Chief Minister said that it will facilitate the passengers from five states in general and that of Punjab in particular. He said that this flight will act as a window for Punjabis to western world. Bhagwant Mann said that a number of airlines are already in touch with him for starting their flights once it gets approval. British High Commissioner assured the Chief Minister of all possible help in this regard. He said that UK is very keen in firming up investment with the state in these key sectors.

Navjot Singh Sidhu brought to Rajindra hospital in Patiala for medical examination

Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, lodged in Patiala central prison to serve a one-year jail term in a 1988 road rage death case, was taken to Rajindra Hospital in Patiala under heavy security on Monday morning for medical examination, official sources said.

The cricketer-turned-politician's counsel HPS Verma said Sidhu has sought a special diet in jail. He said a board of doctors will carry out a detailed medical examination of Sidhu at the hospital.

«The board of doctors will see what special diet is required and then it will submit its report in a

local court (in Patiala),» Verma said over the phone.

According to the counsel, Sidhu cannot consume wheat, sugar, «maida» and some other food items. «He can have berries, papaya, guava, double-toned milk and food items which do not have fibre and carbohydrates,» Verma said.

After the board of doctors carry out a medical examination, a report will be submitted in the court of chief judicial magistrate, he said.

The 58-year-old Congress leader suffers from medical conditions like embolism and has a liver ailment.

Modi government's wrong policies responsible for rising inflation: Kang

CHANDIGARH: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) criticised the central government for inflation, blaming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies for the rise in prices. Malwinder Singh Kang, AAP Punjab chief spokesperson, slammed the Modi government, saying that the BJP government at centre has made life difficult for common people by constantly adding to the financial woes of the people for the last eight years.

Malwinder Singh Kang, speaking to the media at the party headquarters on Monday, said that before coming to power, Narendra Modi used to say that if the BJP came to power, he would deposit Rs 15 lakh in

every citizen's account, but after his government was formed, instead of Rs. 15 lakhs in everyone's account, India now has a 15% inflation rate. In the last eight years, pulses have become costlier by 50%, Vegetable prices have also increased by 25 to 30 per cent. The prices of edible oil have increased by 90% and petrol, diesel and cooking gas have become 40% more expensive.

According to WHO Report 80-90% milk available in Haryana & Punjab adulterated

SATISH HANDA

Punjab and Haryana states famous for production of milk and milk products in the country in past few years, now losing ground due to fast increasing cases of adulteration since past many years. A recent World Health Organization (WHO) report revealed that between 80 to 90% milk as well as milk products being sold in the market in both states as well as Chandigarh UT at present were found adulterated. The information by Ministry of Health too supporting the issue confirmed that during a survey adulteration in 89.2% cases was detected by them in milk and milk products sold in market in these states found injurious to consumers health due to adulteration as such Punjab and Haryana High Court against a Public Interest Litigation writ moved in the court has directed state governments as well as Legal Initiative Society to investigate and take immediate stern action against those involved in adulteration in milk and milk products causing harm to public health for their self-vested financial interest.

According to Society information, more than 70% milk products sold in the country were found not matching with the National Food Safety norms. According to WHO Report, in case strict action against those responsible for adulteration in



milk and playing with the life of others will not be taken nearly 87% people in the country may suffer from serious diseases by the year 2025. According to information, our country comes in the category of excessive milk producing countries but adulteration in case of milk and milk products in those countries is much lesser than in our country.

Information reveals, nearly 14 crore litre milk is produced daily in India as against consumption of 65 crore litre milk which clearly indicates large scale adulteration going on in milk and milk products in our country to meet the requirement. Punjab and Haryana High Court has ordered stern action against those involved in adulteration of milk and milk products directing Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh administration to conduct maximum raids by the officers of Food & Supply Department and take strict action against culprits strictly punished by the courts, besides bringing awareness among people about ill effects by consuming adulterated milk and milk products as well as check their quality.

Action demanded against torture, exploitation & sexual abuse of minors at 'Gurukul'

SATISH HANDA

Matter related to alleged torture, exploitation and sexual abuse of minors in famous 'Gurukul' at Jhajjer in Haryana state has reached to Governor, Haryana state at Chandigarh in which several social welfare organizations in the area has demanded stern action and registration of criminal cases against accused responsible for the same and also to those trying to shelter them. According to complainants, minors in this 'Gurukul' are forcibly involved not only in child labour



but also sexually abuse and the worst part is that alleged accused are being saved by a handful of influential persons thus severely harming the reputation of this 'Gurukul' against whom cases should be registered and an administrator should be appointed by the

government with immediate effect to avoid harassment to inmates in 'Gurukul' also demanded a thorough investigation in this serious matter by a retired High Court judge.

Chairman and President of Sunghursh Samiti Mange RamTundwal, Dr Ambedkar and President Students Association Vikram Singh Damodia demanded immediate action against such type of antisocial elements to push them behind bars. They further alleged, a class IX students from a backward class family was mercilessly beaten and his both arms

were badly injured, not only this abusive language against his caste was also used by Mahabir Shastri which is liable to registration of a criminal case against him as per law but the management of 'Gurukul' took no action against him, rather saved him for the reasons best known to them.

Information reveals, the management of this 'Gurukul' being influential persons misusing their power taking no action against excesses reported in 'Gurukul' quite often which need immediate government attention.

Milkfed raises milk procurement prices by Rs 55 per kg fat from May 21: Harpal Singh Cheema

CHANDIGARH: Considering the dire financial straits of dairy farmers in Punjab due to increase in feed and fodder prices, Punjab Co-operation Minister Mr. Harpal Singh Cheema has announced to increase the procurement price of milk by Rs 55 per kg fat. Earlier on May 21, this price was hiked by Rs 20. Now, the purchase price of milk for dairy farmers has been increased from May 21 at the rate of Rs. 55 per kg fat. However, the dairy farmers will get desired benefits but the burden will not converted on the common man at all and they will get milk at the old prices.

The decision would increase the price of cow's milk by about Rs 2.60 per kg fat and buffalo's milk by Rs 3.85 per kg fat.

Akali Dal Sanyukt strongly demands expulsion of Sukhbir Badal from 11 member committee



CHANDIGARH: An important meeting of the key leaders of Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt) was held here today. The meeting was chaired by Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa at the party headquarters. Dhindsa extended wishes on the Gurta Gaddi day of Miri Piri owner Shri Guru Hargobind Sahib. After this in detail discussions were held by the leaders over the issue of the problems being faced by the Panth. Meanwhile, senior party leader and Former Finance Minister S. Parminder Singh Dhindsa was also ap-

pointed as the party's Chief Spokesperson.

Harjinder Singh Dhama, President of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) formed an 11-member committee on May 16 for the release of jailed sikh prisoners.

While, through media, Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa had strongly protested citing that the SGPC should not involve politicians in religious activities.

In the Punjab Assembly elections, the Badal Dal has completely disintegrated politically and to re-establish their political ground, Sukhbir Badal has now suddenly started thinking of the Panth, said S. Dhindsa. Earlier, Sukhbir Badal had never bothered about the Panth's principles and had made no attempt to release jailed sikh prisoners when they were remained power in Punjab.

Gang collecting road tax on highways in Haryana through fake receipts busted

SATISH HANDA

On getting complaint from State Home Minister Anil Vij in which state road tax was collected from a tourist bus (Registration No. AP31TV1657) carrying 41 passengers visiting different religious places near Karnal by a fake racket functioning in the state as members of RTA Haryana collected Rs 62500 towards fine (which was later reduced to Rs 50000) from bus driver identified as Shaukat Ali resident of Nizamabad in Telgana when his bus carrying pilgrims entered Haryana after visiting Mathura in U.P was stopped by RTA (Regional Transport Authority) team checking all commercial vehicles arriving from other states near Ambala found that road tax receipt produced by the driver of tourist bus was fake and impounded the vehicle leav-



ing travelling bus passengers at Ambala Cantt bus stand remain stranded at the bus stand whole night.

Ramit Kumar RTA Ambala told media persons that police arrived from Parao police station Ambala Cantt started investigation immediately as per directions by Home Minister and arrested a member of the gang identified as Amit issued fake receipt and a case was registered against him. During preliminary investigation police recovered names four other members of the gang from Amit's mobile phone identified as Amit Khatri, Rahul Chauhan, Ajay Kumar and Manoj Sarot and started their search.

Human Trafficking - Challenges & Cure' at the Chandigarh Judicial Academy



KULBIR SINGH KALSI

The Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association, in association with the Cross Horizon NGO, organised a seminar on 'Human Trafficking - Challenges and Cure' at the Chandigarh Judicial Academy, Sector - 43 today. The list of dignitaries who graced the occasion includes learned academicians and jurists, namely, the Advocate General of Punjab, Dr. Anmol Rattan Sidhu, the Joint Director of the Rajya Sabha, Dr. Anuj, the Director of the Educational Multimedia Research Centre, Daljit Ami, the Hon'ble Minister of Punjab for Revenue and Water Resources Pt. Brahm Shankar(Jimpa), the Director of Sahaita NGO and eminent eye surgeon, Dr. Rajinder Raji and the President of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association, Dr. Santokhinder Singh Grewal.



39000 bottles illicit liquor seized in 18 cases destroyed

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Committee comprising of ASP Ambala, Mayank Singh in-charge Shahzadpur police station in Ambala district, Sanjay Taak Block Handa & Panchayat Officer Naraingarh, Dr Dinesh Kajal Excise & Taxation officer, Anil Kumar DSP Naraingarh destroyed 39000 bottles illicit liquor which included 34839 bottles English wine and 4025 bottles illicit country made liquor seized by the police and excise department in as many as 18 raids by excise & taxation department and police from year 2017 to 2021.

Jashandeep Singh Randhawa SP Ambala told media persons that. such stocks of

illicit liquor recovered during 18 raids from time to time in the area while being smuggled were lying dumped in the stores of police stations in the area and their cartons were badly damaged when decision was taken to destroy the same in the presence of members of a committee constituted by district administration. He told that 39000 bottles illicit liquor were crushed under the wheels of dumper in the presence of all members of committee.

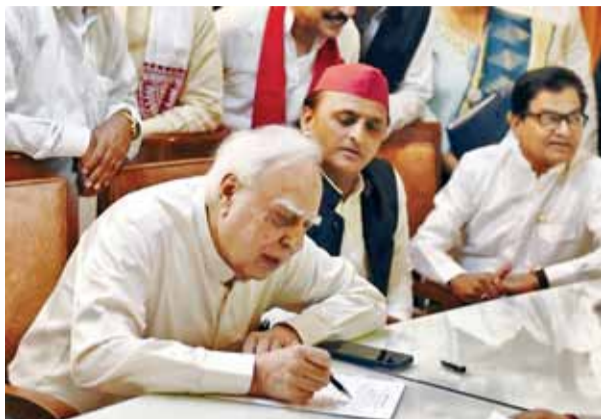
Kapil Sibal files RS nomination as SP-backed Independent, says he quit Cong on May 16

LUCKNOW: Saying that he had resigned from the Congress last week, Kapil Sibal on Wednesday filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha as an Independent candidate from Uttar Pradesh supported by the Samajwadi Party.

Sibal, whose exit from the Congress is another jolt for the electorally battered party, went to the Uttar Pradesh assembly premises to file his papers with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, Ram Gopal Yadav and other senior leaders.

A prominent member of the G23, which had sought an organisational overhaul in the Congress, Sibal's tenure as Congress' Rajya Sabha MP ends in July.

"I have filed the nomination as an Independent candidate. I thank Akhileshji for support-



ing me," Sibal told reporters in Lucknow.

"I resigned from the Congress on May 16 and am no longer a senior Congress leader," he said.

Sibal, who has been vocal in his criticism of the Con-

gress leadership, had called for a non-Gandhi as the new party chief.

"We are all constrained by the fact that we are members of parties and have to abide by the discipline of that party but it is important to have an independent voice," the former Union minister told reporters.

"We want to make a coalition and oppose the Modi government. We want to create an atmosphere in which we can oppose the BJP. I will personally work towards that," he said.

Referring to the 2024 elections, he said there should be an atmosphere where the shortcomings of the Modi government can reach people.

Yadav said Sibal is being supported by the Samajwadi Party. "Kapil Sibal is a senior leader and a known lawyer. He had been in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and put his point across well everywhere. I hope he will put his views on big questions of rising inflation and China, the SP president, who is also leader of opposi-

tion, added.

Sibal's resignation comes close on the heels of Sunil Jakhar and Hardik Patel resigning from the Congress, which recently held a 'Chintan Shivir' in Udaipur.

Elections for 11 Rajya Sabha seats of Uttar Pradesh are underway.

There had been speculation that the SP could field Sibal as a Rajya Sabha candidate. He was the lawyer who secured senior SP leader Azam Khan's bail. Khan had been in Sitapur jail for over 27 months in various cases lodged against him in Rampur.

The SP has a strength of 111 in the 403-member assembly and can send three members to the Upper House of Parliament. The BJP with 255 members can send eight.

Being between 'devil & deep sea': Chidambaram on states' situation after govt's excise cut on fuel



NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday wondered whether the states can afford to give up revenue from VAT on petrol and diesel unless the Centre devolves more funds or gives them more grants, likening their situation to being between the devil and the deep sea.

The former finance minister's remarks come a day after the government announced Rs 8 per litre cut in excise duty on petrol and Rs 6 reduction on diesel.

"The notification on reduction of duty on Petrol and Diesel is now available. FM used the words 'Excise Duty', but the reduction is in Additional Excise Duty which is not shared with the states. Hence, contrary to what I said yesterday, the entire burden of the reduction falls on the Centre. To that extent, I stand corrected," Chidambaram said.

The states are getting very little by way of share of duties on petrol and diesel, he said, noting that their revenue is from VAT on petrol and diesel. "I wonder if they can afford to give up that revenue unless the Centre devolved more funds or gave them more grants," Chidambaram said.

The situation is like being between the devil and the deep sea, he said in a series of tweets. Petrol price on Sunday was slashed by Rs 8.69 a litre and that of diesel by Rs 7.05 per litre following the government's decision to cut excise duty on auto fuels, giving relief to consumers battered by high fuel prices that had pushed inflation to a record high.

Speaking to reporters outside the CBI headquarters, Karti said the case against him was "bogus", and claimed that he had not facilitated the issuance of visa to any Chinese national.

The case pertains to allegations of Rs 50 lakh being paid as bribe to Karti and his close associate S Bhaskararaman by a top executive of Vedanta group company Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd. (TSP), which was setting up a power plant in Punjab, for re-issuance of project visas for 263 Chinese workers employed there, the CBI FIR said.

The agency has already taken Bhaskararaman in custody in connection with the case.

ASHA workers at forefront of ensuring healthy India: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed ASHA workers after they were conferred with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General's Global Health Leaders' Award, and said they are at the forefront of ensuring a healthy India.

India's ten lakh all-women ASHA volunteers were honoured by the WHO on Sunday for their crucial role in providing direct access to healthcare facilities in rural areas and their indefatigable efforts to rein in the coronavirus pandemic in the country.

Accredited Social Health Activists or ASHA volunteers -- are Indian government's affiliated health-care workers who are the first point of contact in rural India.

"Delighted that the entire team of ASHA workers here are conferred the @WHO Director-General's Global Health Leaders' Award," Prime Minister Modi tweeted. "Congratulations to all ASHA workers. They are at the forefront of ensuring a healthy India. Their dedication and determination is admirable," he said.

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Gold, foreign currency seized at airport

Nearly 3 kg of gold and various foreign currencies were seized from international passengers at the airport here in different incidents, the Customs said on Monday.

In one case, 1.4 kg of gold in paste form concealed in the shoes by a passenger who arrived from Dubai was seized on information, a Customs release here said. "On extraction, one gold ingot totally weighing 1.402 kg, valued at Rs 64.98 lakh, was confiscated under the Customs Act, 1962. The passenger was arrested," it said.

In another incident, six passengers who arrived from Sharjah and Colombo were in-



announced six awards on Sunday to recognise outstanding contributions to advancing global health, demonstrated leadership and commitment to regional health issues.

"The Accredited Social Health Activist Workers (ASHA) are more than 1 million female volunteers in #India, honored for their crucial role in linking the community with the health system and ensuring that those living in rural poverty can access primary health care services," the WHO said in a tweet.

"ASHA - means 'hope' in Hindi. These health workers provide maternal care & immunization for children against vaccine-preventable diseases; community health care; treatment for hypertension & tuberculosis & core areas of health promotion for nutrition, sanitation & healthy living," it said.



cepted by Air Intelligence officers and 1.5 kg of gold valued at Rs 69.50 lakh "ingeniously concealed in various places" was detected.

One passenger was arrested in connection with the seizure. Further, Rs 10.70 lakh worth of foreign currencies of different denominations was confiscated from two passengers, the release added.

Amid Gyanvapi row, MNS claims 2 dargahs in Pune built on temple land



Amid the Gyanvapi mosque row, the MNS has claimed that two dargahs had been built on the Punyeshwar temple land in Maharashtra's Pune city.

MNS general secretary Ajay Shinde on Sunday said they have launched the 'Punyeshwar Mukti' (free the temple land) campaign, and appealed to people to support the Raj Thackeray-led party's fight in restoring the temple land.

Citing a recent survey of the Gyanvapi mosque, Shinde said government has started waking up in the wake of Raj Thackeray's stand on Hindutva.

"Like Gyanvapi, we are also fighting for the Punyeshwar temple in Pune," he said. Shinde claimed that a commander of Khilji dynasty ruler Alauddin Khilji had demolished the Punyeshwar and Narayaneswar temples in Pune and later dargahs were built on the land.

Case against cop for raping woman colleague in Palghar



Police have registered a case against a constable for allegedly raping and cheating a woman colleague here in Maharashtra, an official said on Wednesday. The accused and the woman constable, both aged 28, were posted at the same police station in Palghar district. The woman in her police complaint alleged that the accused raped her on several occasions under the pretext of marrying her, but did not fulfil the promise, the official from Mira Bhayander-Vasai Virar police commissionerate said.

PM to lead main International Day of Yoga event at Mysuru

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the mass Yoga demonstration event in Mysuru on June 21 on the International Day of Yoga.

The programme is being held in the physical mode after a gap of two years due to the coronavirus pandemic.

As the country is celebrating the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Day will be observed at 75 iconic locations across the country and will focus on branding India on a global scale, Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said.

A series of mega events are being planned in the run up to Day with a 25-day countdown



to observed in Hyderabad on May 27, wherein around 10,000 Yoga enthusiasts will participate in the Yoga demonstration.

The earlier mega countdown events were organised at Shivdoli (50-day countdown on May 2) and at the Red Fort

here (75-day countdown on April 7).

Apart from the main event at Mysuru, another attraction on June 21 this year will be the Guardian Ring -- a relay Yoga streaming event -- which will capture and weave together digital feed of International Day of Yoga programmes organised by Indian Missions abroad.

The proposed plan is to initiate the streaming from Japan, the land of the rising sun, at 6 am local time, and it will culminate in New Zealand, Sonowal stated. Around 70 countries are likely to participate in the relay event.

Karti Chidambaram appears before CBI in visa scam case



Congress MP Karti Chidambaram reached the CBI headquarters on Thursday to join the investigation into an alleged scam pertaining to the issuance of visas to 263 Chinese nationals in 2011 when his father P Chidambaram was the home minister, officials said.

A special court had ordered him to join the CBI investigation within 16 hours of his arrival from the UK and Europe, where he had gone with the permission of the Supreme Court and the special court itself. The MP returned from his trip on Wednesday. He arrived at the CBI office on Thursday morning to answer questions related to the case.

Speaking to reporters outside the CBI headquarters, Karti said the case against him was "bogus", and claimed that he had not facilitated the issuance of visa to any Chinese national.

The case pertains to allegations of Rs 50 lakh being paid as bribe to Karti and his close associate S Bhaskararaman by a top executive of Vedanta group company Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd. (TSP), which was setting up a power plant in Punjab, for re-issuance of project visas for 263 Chinese workers employed there, the CBI FIR said.

The agency has already taken Bhaskararaman in custody in connection with the case.

Over 18 lakh candidates register for NEET-2022



The number of registrations for medical entrance exam NEET has crossed 18 lakh this year, recording a significant jump of over 2.5 lakh since 2021.

Over 18.72 lakh candidates have registered for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) out of which over 10.64 lakh are women and 8.07 lakh are men, according to official data.

The pan-India exam is scheduled to be held in 13 languages on July 17. Last year, the NEET-undergraduate exam was held on September

12, with over 95 % of the registered candidates appearing for it.

Over 15.44 lakh candidates had appeared for the exam, which was conducted at 3,858 centres. Of these, at least 8.70 lakh students had qualified.

Among the candidates registered this year, 771 are foreigners, 910 Non Resident Indians and 647 Overseas Citizen of India card holders. The highest number of candidates have opted English as the medium of exam, followed by Hindi and Tamil.

India set to continue radical reforms: Kant

India is in the midst of a major transformation in the digital space, and a strong political leadership and the commitment to continue with radical reforms would play a key role in taking the country to a leadership role in the global economy, Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said on May 23.



Addressing a breakfast season on unleashing the power of the Indian diaspora on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023, Kant said, "A slew of radical reforms has been carried out by India in the recent years that have put India on a growth trajectory for many decades to come".

KCR, Kejriwal discuss national politics at luncheon meeting

NEW DELHI: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on 22nd May had a luncheon meeting with his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal at the latter's residence in New Delhi. The meeting between the two chief ministers lasted around an hour. According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) in Hyderabad, they discussed issues related to the country's federal structure, states' contribution in



national growth and other national political issues. The Telangana

Rashtra Samithi (TRS), who is eyeing a key role in national poli-

tics, is believed to have discussed his plans to evolve an alternative national agenda with Kejriwal, who is national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

KCR, as Rao is popularly known, is on a week-long visit to various parts of the country to meet leaders of various political parties and attend different programmes. Samajwadi Party leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

Akhilesh Yadav had called on KCR at the latter's residence in the national capital on Saturday. After Sunday's meeting with Kejriwal, both the chief ministers left for Chandigarh where they along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will meet the families of farmers, who lost their lives during the year long agitation by the farmers against controversial farm laws made by the Centre.

Hindu petitioner seeks permission for 'purification' ritual in Mathura's Shahi Idgah



A petitioner in the Shri Krishna Janmasthan-Shahi Idgah Masjid dispute has sought permission from a local court to perform a Hindu ritual inside the mosque, claiming that the sanctum sanctorum of the temple was located there.

The petitioner submitted an application in the court of the Civil Judge on Monday seeking permission for purification of the sanctum sanctorum of the Keshav Dev temple, which he claimed was inside the mosque, his counsel said.

The petitioner, Dinesh Chandra Sharma, wants to revive the sanctity of sanctum sanctorum inside Shahi Masjid Idgah by purifying the divine place with holy water of Ganga and Yamuna, Deepak Sharma, the counsel for petitioner said. Dinesh Chandra Sharma, the National Treasurer of Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, on May 19 had submitted a similar application in the court of Civil Judge senior division Mathura, he said.

Through the application,

Sharma had sought the permission for performing abhishek' (anointment) of Laddu Gopal in the Katra Keshav Dev temple claiming it to be inside the mosque, he said. Both his applications are pending in the court here for disposal, the counsel said. According to him, his client has submitted these applications seeking early disposal of the suit.

Sharma had filed a suit on February 26, 2021 in the court of Civil Judge Senior division Mathura seeking shifting of Shahi Masjid Idgah constructed on a part of the 13.37 acre land of Katra Keshav Dev temple.

UP Sunni Central Waqf board, Intezamia committee Shahi Masjid Idgah, Sri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sansthan, and Sri Krishna Janmabhumi trust, are the defendants in the lawsuit. Several suits have been filed so far in the matter with a common prayer of shifting of Shahi Masjid Idgah, which has been claimed to have been constructed in the temple premise.

After split in BKU, Tikait brothers face more trouble

After facing a split in the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), the Tikait brothers are now facing a probe on allegations of grabbing government land.

Rahul Mukhiya, one of the residents of Sisauli village in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, has alleged that BKU chief Naresh and his brother Rakesh Tikait have

"illegally occupied" government land. "The land parcel was allotted by the government to build a pond in Sisauli a decade ago. However, Tikait brothers have filled the pond with soil and illegally constructed residential properties on it. I had informed the district level officers about the issue in writing and the Union Minister of State Dr Sanjeev Baliyan was also apprised

of the situation but no action was taken," he said. Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Budhana area, Arun Kumar said: "The investigation will be conducted accordingly in case as complaint has been filed. We will investigate the matter and take action accordingly."

Rahul Mukhiya also warned that if no action is taken by the district administration in this matter, he will go to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to plead for justice. Meanwhile, Naresh Tikait said that the allegations were "baseless" and he was "ready for any inquiry". "I don't know why these people are accusing us. We didn't capture any government land, all allegations are baseless," he said.

First mini defence expo in city from July 6

A mini defence expo will be held for the first time in Kolkata from July 6 to July 9, GOC-in-C, Eastern Command, Lt Gen R P Kalita said here Tuesday.

The event will give opportunity to start ups and MSMEs to showcase their products, he said. Kalita who was speaking at a conclave on 'Atmanirbhar Defence - Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward' organised by a chamber of commerce, asked members of the industry to join the expo.

He said the Armed Forces are in touch with premier educational institutions for research and development of new products and he had recently visited IIT Guwahati for the purpose.

The nature of warfare is constantly changing and militaries across the world have to evolve and keep pace with technological developments and "Unless we try and infuse the technology into the method of warfighting, we will be left fighting to-



morrow's war with yesterday's weapons," the Eastern Army commander said.

India's national security paradigm, he said, is based on strategic autonomy and it can only be ensured with a strong military possessing adequate hard power. "For this we need to constantly strengthen our

military capabilities while at the same time meet the social development aspirations of the nation. There has to be a fine balance between the two".

He emphasised the requirement for indigenous development of niche technologies which are the emerging areas of defence research, that include

nano technology, robotics and artificial intelligence among others.

"That is where the future warfare lies and unless we indigenise and develop these technologies we will be left out of battle. "These are areas where we have to focus on indigenous development in industry and academia," he said.

The Army Design Bureau projects the requirements of the field army for long term research, development of indigenous weapons and equipment and identification and induction of niche technologies.

The Directorate of Indigenisation has identified items worth Rs 12,300 crore as current and future indigenous requirement of the Indian Army and has already completed projects worth Rs 1,500 crores.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for MSMEs and defence manufacturing sector," the Eastern Army commander said.

India should lift restrictions on wheat exports

India, which surprised the world with its decision to bar wheat export with immediate effect, appears to be on the defensive now after its May 13 announcement. Initially, the Centre had amended the order by allowing export consignments registered in the Customs Department's systems and handed over for examination on or prior to May 13. Addressing a UN "Global Food Security Call to Action" ministerial meeting a few days ago in New York, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan emphasised that the restrictions made allowance for countries that had food security needs, a position articulated earlier by Commerce Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyan. But, more than farmers, it is traders who stand to benefit from the limited easing of restrictions. From the start, indications of a mismatch in demand and supply were evident. Rising levels of wholesale and retail inflation, the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war and a lower opening balance of wheat (on April 1, 2022) in the Central pool for the public distribution system than a year ago were well known. By May 4, the Centre clarified that there was no move to curb wheat export, the reasoning being that this was the opportune moment for exporters to sell in the international market. India's decision has faced criticism from the G-7's Agriculture Ministers. After its U-turn, the government should not persist for too long with its current position of "restrictions" on the export of wheat, as the move seems to have hit the farmers, if reports of a fall in the price are any indication. Lessons must be gleaned from the experience 15 years ago when India took about two years to lift its ban on the export of non-basmati rice, by which time Thailand and Vietnam had moved in to take full advantage. Apprehensions of a food shortage are misplaced, and the government would do well to lift the "restrictions" sooner rather than later.

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COMMUNICATION - THE HUMAN CONNECTION - IS THE KEY TO PERSONAL AND CAREER SUCCESS.

PAUL J. MYER

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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POORNIMA VARMA EXPLAINS HOW GROWING CONSUMPTION IN RICH COUNTRIES AFFECTS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Be wary of growing exports



The uncertainties in the global economic environment, significantly driven by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resultant sanctions on Russia by the West, along with Sri Lanka's ongoing struggles to stay afloat amidst a deepening crisis, have all been believed to have created export opportunities for countries such as India. However, this well-celebrated export spike needs to be viewed with a pinch of salt.

The 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen witnessed a vociferous argument from countries such as India and China that developed countries who are consuming polluted goods produced elsewhere also have an obligation to clean up the mess. The data available from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that India is one of the leading exporters of carbon emissions-embodied products, and that there is a steady increase in the total carbon emissions embodied in exports. China is the largest exporter of carbon emissions-embodied products, followed by the U.S., Russia and India. India's total carbon emission exports increased from 80.3 million tonnes at the time of it joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 to 426.1 million tonnes in 2018. The sharp increase in carbon-embodied exports brought India closer to that of the U.S.'s carbon emission exports. In the case of the U.S., carbon emission exports were more or less stagnant between 1995 and 2018.

Net CO₂ exports can be calculated by taking the difference between carbon emissions-embodied exports and carbon emissions-embodied imports. The striking difference between China and India is that while China's net exports began to decline from 2007-08, net exports in India started to steadily increase in that period. While India's net exports of carbon emissions were observed to be the lowest in 2007 (-11.6 million tonnes), at present the net exports are 55.4 million tonnes. Another way of calculating the net export of carbon emissions is by taking the difference between

domestic carbon emissions embodied in gross exports and foreign carbon emissions embodied in gross exports. By using this definition also, there is a steady increase in net exports of carbon emissions from India. In 1995, net exports were 75.8 million tonnes; it increased to 372 million tonnes in 2018.

India's recent export performance has been attributed to petroleum products, electronics and chemicals. Although net carbon emission exports have been declining in the case of chemicals and electronics as imports have been rising at a greater rate, the carbon emissions-embodied exports of all these products have been steadily increasing over the years. For example, the domestic carbon emissions-embodied exports of chemicals was only 2.1 million tonnes in 1995, which increased to around 9.8 million tonnes in 2018. Similarly, carbon emissions exports of electronics increased from 1.3 million tonnes to 8 million tonnes, and exports of petroleum carbon increased from 6.6 to 25.5 million tonnes during this period. The net exports of carbon emissions have also been increasing in the case of petroleum products.

Most developed countries are the net importers of polluted goods produced elsewhere, especially in the developing coun-

tries. The largest net importers of carbon emission-intensive goods are the U.S., Japan and Germany. The U.S. net carbon imports increased from 262.3 million tonnes in 1995 to 834.1 million tonnes in 2018. The OECD member countries which are developed are net importers. Due to the stringent environmental measures adopted by developed countries, pollution-intensive industries show a tendency to relocate from developed countries to developing countries with the lowest environmental standards/weak enforcement of environmental standards in order to cut resource and labour costs — a phenomenon researchers term as 'pollution haven hypothesis'. Thus, developing countries that are lax in enforcing environmental policies eventually become pollution havens.

One could possibly argue that an increased GDP as a result of expansion in export revenue can be utilised for improving the environmental quality. As per the environmental Kuznets curve, there is an inverted U-shape relationship between the income of a country and its environmental degradation. This implies that as income increases, environmental quality begins to deteriorate, but improves after some time. However, there is no consensus across studies with respect to this possibility.

Coming to the exports of agricultural and

food products, India is virtually exporting some of its depleting natural resources such as water through exports. India is the leading exporter of rice in the world market. Given that rice is a water-intensive crop, India is indirectly exporting water to other countries. This virtual water trade will have an adverse impact on long-term sustainability and food security of the country although there has been an overall improvement in water-use efficiency. (As per the water use efficiency index developed as part of the sustainable development goals, water efficiency has risen from 0.95 (\$/m³) during the period 1993-97 to 3 (\$/m³) during the period 2018-22.) The agricultural water withdrawal as a percentage of total available renewable water resources has increased from 26.7% in 1993 to 36% in 2022. The total per capita renewable water resources have also declined from 1909 cubic metres to 1412 cubic metres during this period.

The growing consumption in rich countries has come at a cost for developing countries such as India. Countries have begun imposing an environmental tax to address a broad spectrum of environmental issues. For example, in OECD countries, the tax roughly constitutes 2% of the GDP. While the environmental tax in India is around 1%, the tax as a percentage of GDP has marginally come down from 1.38% in 2005 to 1.07% in 2019. In order to ensure long-term sustainability, strict environmental measures need to be explored, such as revisiting the possibilities of increasing the environmental tax, even though the short-run implications, especially on the trade front, may not be pleasant. Similarly, water-saving policies that seek to improve the water use efficiency are also the need of the hour, in order to promote sustainable production of rice and also safeguard food security in the country.

Poornima Varma is faculty and chairperson at the Centre for Management in Agriculture, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. The views expressed are personal



TRIDIVESH SINGH MAINI EXPLORES HOW THE GULF COUNTRY MANAGED TO PERFORM BETTER THAN ITS REGIONAL PEERS

UAE woos more visitors as tourism returns to pre-Covid levels



In spite of the continued uncertainty with regard to the trajectory of the Covid-19 pandemic, globally, countries are trying to return to normalcy. Significantly, the performance of United Arab Emirates (UAE's) tourism sector in the first quarter of 2022 was not just back to pre-Covid levels, but actually managed to do better.

Dr. Ahmad Belhoual Al Falasi, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises and Chairman of the UAE Tourism Council highlighted these points while providing tourism figures for Q1 2022. Hotels received an estimated six million visitors in the first quarter of the year — a rise of 10 percent from 2019. Revenues for the first quarter of 2022, were AED 11 billion or USD 3 billion (2.9 billion) which was a jump of 20 percent from the first quarter of 2019. The stellar performance of UAE's tourism sector in the first quarter of 2022 is being attributed to a number of factors including two major events — the Dubai Expo 2020 and the World's Coolest winter campaign.

In order to attract more visitors to the Dubai Expo 2020, UAE had also relaxed conditions for international travellers. The Emirate has also introduced new visitor visa categories with an eye on giving a boost to tourism. What is remarkable is that during the first quarter of 2022, average occupancy increased 25 percent from 3 nights to 4 nights and witnessed an 80 percent growth (no other country

had such high occupancy rates)

The total number of tourists received was 4 million, and not surprisingly, Indian nationals along with tourists from UK, US and Russia accounted for a significant percentage of tourists to UAE. While other countries like Singapore have also opened their borders to international tourists, including Indians, and removed restrictions, the biggest advantage the UAE has is its geographical location — especially for tourists from the South Asian region. Given that the travelling time is less, even short breaks are possible.

Apart from this, getting a UAE visa is relatively easier than one for the west and even ASEAN countries. UAE also has enough to offer for families in terms of shopping, recreation etc. There is also a wide variety of options, as far as hotels are concerned. Since a significant number of Indians have business links or even offices in Dubai, in many cases holidays

are coupled up with business trips. The fact that UAE hosts important cricketing events — in 2021 it hosted the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 and T20 world cup — will help it in attracting more Indian tourists in the future.

UAE is not only likely to continue to remain as a favoured tourist destination, but in the near future, it is also likely to attract more international students, especially from India. Apart from its geographical location, and the fact that it is home to a substantial population of South Asian expats, it is also home to a number of campuses of UK and US universities.

Most importantly with an eye on attracting qualified professionals and researchers, UAE has introduced a long term residency visa, dubbed as Golden Visa for researchers, medical professionals and those within the scientific and knowledge fields, and remarkable students. Here it would be pertinent to point out that UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which came into effect earlier this month permits easier access for Indian engineers, IT professionals, accountancy professionals and nurses. The introduction of short term work visas will also help in attracting professionals from India.

In the past, one of the reasons why UAE lost out to other countries, in attracting professionals and students from South Asia (though the number of Indian professionals in UAE has been increasing in recent years), who preferred the West, Australia or Singapore, was the fact that UAE did

not provide long term residency.

With the introduction of long-term visas, it is not only professionals, but even students who otherwise may have sought to pursue education in the west who will now look towards the UAE. One of the options, which students from India could go for is the dual degree program, which has been introduced by many UK universities, where they spend some time in UAE and the rest in UK. Here it would be pertinent to point out, that UAE universities are also offering scholarships with an eye on attracting international students. One of the provisions of the India-UAE Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) which both countries signed earlier this year is that India will set up an IIT in Abu Dhabi.

The UAE has been seeking to re-invent for some years. A good example of this is the UAE Vision 2021, Dubai Vision 2030 and Abu Dhabi Vision 2030. The Gulf nation has been able not only to handle Covid-19 successfully, but with its innovative and visionary thinking it has been able to do remarkably well in attracting tourists. Its ability to think out of the box will enable it to emerge as an important economic hub. UAE is likely to not just remain a favoured tourist destination, but also could emerge as a top preference for Indian nationals to study and work.

Tridivesh Singh Maini is a policy analyst, commentator and writer. He is also a visiting faculty, Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat.

BOOKS: REVIEW

Time to draws lessons from the past global challenges

Renowned political scientist Ian Bremmer draws lessons from global challenges of the past 100 years—including the pandemic—to show how we can respond to three great crises unfolding over the next decade.

In this revelatory, unnerving, and ultimately hopeful book, Bremmer details how domestic and international conflicts leave us unprepared for a trio of looming crises—global health emergencies, transformative climate change, and the AI revolution. Today, Americans cannot reach consensus on any significant political issue, and US and Chinese leaders behave as if they're locked in a new Cold War. We are squandering opportunities

to meet the challenges that will soon confront us all.

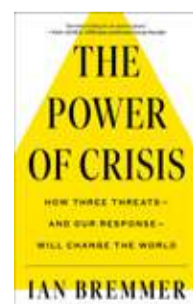
In coming years, humanity will face viruses deadlier and more infectious than Covid. Intensifying climate change will put tens of millions of refugees in flight and require us to reimagine how we live our daily lives. Most dangerous of all, new technologies will reshape the geopolitical order, disrupting our livelihoods and destabilizing our societies faster than we can grasp and address their implications.

The good news? Some far-sighted political leaders, business decision-makers, and individual citizens are already collaborating to tackle all these crises. The question that should keep us awake is whether they will work well

humanity will face viruses deadlier and more infectious than Covid. Intensifying climate change will put tens of millions of refugees in flight and require us to reimagine how we live our daily lives

and quickly enough to limit the fallout—and, most importantly, whether we can use these crises to innovate our way toward a better world.

Drawing on strategies both time-honored and cutting-edge, from the Marshall Plan to the Green New Deal, *The Power of Crisis* provides a



The Power of Crisis: How Three Threats—and Our Response—Will Change the World
By Ian Bremmer
Simon & Schuster
272 pages;
Rs2,122

roadmap for surviving—even thriving in—the 21st century. Bremmer shows governments, corporations, and every concerned citizen how we can use these coming crises to create the worldwide prosperity and opportunity that 20th-century globalism promised but failed to deliver.

In his eleventh book, *The Power of Crisis: How Three Threats—and Our Response—Will Change the World*, Bremmer is at it again. The question at the core of the book can be summed up like this: What if the shock doctrine, of good? The shock doctrine, of

course, refers to Naomi Klein's 2007 book about how powerful private interests exploited unexpected crises to impose neoliberal policies throughout the world beginning in the 1970s, treating "disasters as exciting market opportunities." Klein writes, for instance, of how in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, public schools in New Orleans underwent a frenzy of privatization, driven by lobbyists and libertarian true-believers. This type of predatory policymaking, she argues, had a long history, from Argentina and Chile in the 1970s to China in 1989 and Russia in 1993—where natural and manmade disasters hastened a dive into the vagaries of free markets.

By contrast, Bremmer wonders if crises can spur governments to positive collective action. "Today, the nations and peoples of the world don't face an alien menace; we confront common existential challenges we ourselves created.

Petrol under-recovery at Rs 13, diesel Rs 24, Reliance-BP says operations unsustainable

NEW DELHI: RBML - the joint venture of Reliance Industries Ltd and supermajor BP - has told the government that fuel retailing for the private sector in India has become unsustainable after market-controlling public sector firms frequently froze petrol and diesel prices at rates way below the cost, sources said.

Despite a surge in oil prices, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) first froze petrol and diesel rates for a record 137 days beginning early November 2021 when five states including Uttar Pradesh went to the polls, and last month again went into a hiatus that is now 47 days old. «They (Reliance BP Mobility Ltd) has written to the pe-



roleum ministry over the fuel pricing issue,» a highly placed source in the government, who didn't want to be quoted, told reporters here.

While RBML is scaling down its retail operations to cut some of the Rs 700 crore loss it is incurring every month, Russia's

Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy has raised prices of petrol and diesel by up to Rs 3 a litre over and above the PSU rates, to cover for some losses.

The government over the weekend cut excise duty on petrol by Rs 8 per litre and by Rs 6 a litre on diesel. This re-

duction was passed on to the consumers and not adjusted against the under-recovery or losses oil firms make on selling petrol and diesel.

Two sources aware of the matter said RBML contends that PSU oil marketing companies control over 90 per cent of the market and are the price-setters, leaving no room for private fuel retailers in fixation of the retail selling price of petrol and diesel. PSUs have not increased fuel prices in line with escalating international crude prices eventually leading to huge under-recoveries (losses) for all fuel retailers since February 2022. As of May 16, 2022, net under-recoveries in the industry were Rs 13.08 per litre for petrol and Rs 24.09 per litre for diesel. The top source, quoted in the

first instance, said the ministry is going to reply to RBML, but refused to say what it is going to say.

A top ministry official said petrol and diesel prices are decided by the PSU oil companies after considering not just the international oil prices but also gains from other businesses such as petrochemicals and oil refining. «Reliance is exporting diesel to Europe and other countries at highly lucrative prices but rationing supplies for its petrol pumps,» the official said. An industry official however said the inference ministry is drawing is incorrect. Reliance owns and operates two refineries, including one only meant for exports, at Jamnagar in Gujarat. BP has no equity shareholding in them.

Goyal meets global leaders, pitches India among best investment destinations

Pitching India as one of the best investment destinations globally, Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday asked global business leaders at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting to «come to India and grow with India».

Goyal, who has been meeting a host of global leaders here since Saturday, reiterated India's position as one of the world's most preferred investment destinations and told them about the massive scope and range of opportunities it presents to investors globally. The Commerce and Industry Minister, who addressed a breakfast session on Tuesday morning, said there was so much interest in India among those present here that he was finding it hard to adjust his calendar, but was trying to accommodate everyone as all of them are important and are keen to



make large investments. On Monday evening, he also met John Kerry and discussed future tracks for India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership.

In his meeting with Deutsche Bank chairman-elect Alexander R Wynaendts, he discussed how the financial institution can further complement the Indian government's sustainable growth agenda.

The two leaders also explored how digitisation can aid businesses pursue environment, social and governance-linked goals.

He also addressed a global investors roundtable here. His other meetings included those with Standard Chartered Bank Group CEO Bill Winters, Micron Technology CEO Sanjay Mehrotra and Brookfield Asset Management CEO Bruce Flatt.

India set to be leader in green hydrogen: Puri

DAVOS: India is more conscious of going for green energy than any other country in the world, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday. He said special emphasis is being given on green hydrogen, bio-fuel blending and exploration and production of biofuel from alternative sources. Puri asserted that India would eventually become a leader in the green hydrogen space. The target of 20 per cent of ethanol blending has been brought forward from 2030 to 2025 and it would be definitely achieved, he said. Puri, also Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, said India responded quickly and effectively when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world and one of the most important decisions was to fast-track vaccine development and manufacturing on a war footing.

Fox Star Studios rebrands to Star Studios

Fox Star Studios, one of India's leading movies studios, on Friday introduced a new visual identity and announced that the company has rebranded to Star Studios. With this brand refresh, Star Studios plans to present universal story themes with iconic characters and new-age cinematic spectacles backed by cutting-edge technology for theatrical releases as well as direct-to-digital, the company said in a release. The studio said the aim is to bring genre-agnostic stories to global audiences starting with «Brahmastra Part One: Shiva», «Babli Bouncer», «Gulmohar» and a remake of Malayalam film «Hridayam».

SpiceJet settles dispute with Credit Suisse

Domestic no-frills carrier SpiceJet said on Wednesday said it has signed and concluded the settlement and consent terms with Credit Suisse in a pending dispute with the latter. The settlement and consent terms, executed on May 23, have also been filed before the Supreme Court for final orders, the airline said in a statement. The settlement involves payment of a certain amount upfront and the balance amount over a mutually agreed timeline, SpiceJet said without giving specific details. The airline said it had already provided a bank guarantee of USD 5 million under the direction of the Madras High Court in the matter and there is no adverse financial liability on the company.

Delhivery makes muted market debut; lists nearly 2% higher

Shares of supply chain company Delhivery Ltd on Tuesday made a muted market debut listing with a nearly 2 per cent premium against its issue price of Rs 487. The stock was listed at Rs 493, a gain of 1.23 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. It later jumped 7.62 per cent to Rs 524.15. At the NSE, it made its debut at Rs 495.20, up 1.68 per cent. The initial share sale of Delhivery was subscribed 1.63 times earlier this month. The public offer had a price range of Rs 462-487 per share.

Hoonartek Appoints Peeyoosh Pandey as Global CEO

Peeyoosh Pandey has been appointed as the Global CEO of Hoonartek, a leader in enterprise transformation, lending & decisioning, cloud migration, and data engineering in partnership with Ab Initio, Snowflake, Aerospace & Experian. Hoonartek's new appointment is aimed at scaling its operations globally, driving deeper client and employee engagement while charting the roadmap for the next level of growth of the organisation. With a highly successful career of over 25 years, Peeyoosh will be leading

Hoonartek's growth through its next phase.

«I am delighted to welcome Peeyoosh as the new Global CEO of our company. We are looking for him to be the catalyst of the next phase of Hoonartek working with our knowledgeable team,» said Amit Raj on behalf of the Founder Directors. He further added, «Peeyoosh's proven leadership and extensive Global experience of building customer-centric businesses would provide the right ingredients for the organisation to



grow and strengthen its position in the IT world. He has demonstrated his prowess in technology, leading business growth & sales, new business

acquisitions, and building executive relationships. We believe his experience will help propel Hoonartek to emerge as the leading niche IT player globally.»

Hoonartek is on a mission to empower its clients in banking and telecom with solutions that liberate their data and empower their knowledge workers, provide pinpoint insights, lower costs, ensure compliance, protect revenues, and guarantee business continuity. They have a long list of Global and domestic cus-

tomers such as Abridn, STC, Experian Bharti Airtel, IDFC First Bank, Axis Bank, and SBI Cards.

On the news of his appointment, Peeyoosh said, «I am extremely humbled and excited about my new role with Hoonartek. I believe Hoonartek has a supremely skilled leadership team and a robust business infrastructure. It has empowered enterprises globally through intelligent, creative, and insightful services for data integration, data analytics, and data visualization.

Union Minister Chandrasekhar shares PM's vision of New India with Startups, Entrepreneurs & Students in Ahmedabad

You don't need a famous last name anymore to succeed in India. Hardwork, Grit, Innovation are only determinants of success. This wasn't the case when I started my entrepreneurial journey. This is New India that Narendra Modi ji is building. Prior to 2014, Entrepreneurship was merely an exception rather than a rule or a norm. There has never been more opportune moment for young Indians to succeed than now. Thanks to the proactive policies of the Narendra Modi Government and the Government of Gujarat» said Union Minister of State, Ministry of Electronics and IT and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship speaking at Gujarat University on the topic 'New India for Young India : Techade of Opportunities.»

Union Minister gave a powerful presentation to a packed auditorium comprising of Young Startups, Entrepreneurs, Students and Faculty of University. The Minister highlighted how 8 years of Modi Government has shattered conventional Narratives about India. «Long back, Indian democracy was associated with corruption and major leakages in the system. There was a PM in the 80's that gave



an infamous statement that out of every 100 paise that are sent from delhi to a beneficiary, only 15 paise actually reaches. Such was the acceptability of the so called weak and leaky system. But now, thanks to the Digital India programme launched by PM Narendra Modi in 2015, every single rupee is directly transferred into the accounts of the beneficiary living in remotest corners of the country. We have turned this narrative of Democracy being weak and leaky on its head» said Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Sharing with young Startups who were inquisitive about Government's future policy initiatives for Startups, Rajeev Chandrasekhar informed, «Soon Digital India Startup Hub, an institutional framework, shall be established to further promote startup ecosystem & to centrally coordinate startup initiatives at National Level.

Musk wants to investigate bots before Twitter deal

BY NARVIJAY YADAV

The blue bird of Twitter is in trouble once again. The question has arisen whether Tesla CEO Elon Musk will confirm the deal or not. Twitter says it has hardly five percent of fake accounts or bots on its system, while Musk suspects that the number of such fake accounts could be something around 20 to 90 percent. Musk absolutely doesn't want a fake account on the microblogging platform. Because of this, his proposed \$44 billion deal with Twitter is stuck in the middle. Let me explain here that the bots or fake accounts are mechanical in nature and they copy humans in terms of following someone, liking, or retweeting a tweet. Bots are used to give the desired momentum to political and fraudulent activities. Such accounts spread instability in society and the world. Musk wants the fake accounts on Twitter to be thoroughly investigated and removed permanently. In the absence of this, he has made up his mind to back out of Twitter's deal. If all of these bots are removed after proper investigation, then the number of Twitter users will come down drastically. The income of social media companies is based on the number of their users.

The dilemma also abounds in



the electric vehicle (EV) industry, especially the battery-operated two-wheelers. In the struggle to save the environment and bring down the level of global warming, the government started a campaign to promote Electric Vehicles at a mass level. The governments (center and states) accelerated work towards setting up of battery replacement and charging stations at many places and highways across the country. But in the past, incidents of fire and blast in battery-operated two-wheelers have occurred in many places. These incidents have taken a toll on EV manufacturers. After the batteries caught fire one after the other, the government became vigilant and instructed the EV manufacturers to improve the quality of the batteries and recall all the faulty EVs. Till now, the batteries received from China were being used indiscriminately, which were made according to the cold climate, however, in India hot weather is the norm. These batteries started exploding in the

hot weather. Companies making electric two-wheelers will now have to spend more money to improve the quality, as well as improve the technology of the batteries. On the other hand, the supply of raw materials is already being disrupted due to the Ukraine war raged by Russia. As a result, the price of EVs is bound to increase in the coming months.

In order to protect the Himalayan environment, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has been taking various measures in the hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and elsewhere. As per the order of the NGT, only 1200 vehicles per day can be given permits for passing through the Rohtang pass. This high pass, located near Manali in Himachal Pradesh, was getting a lot of air pollution due to diesel and petrol operated motor vehicles. That's why the Tribunal had to impose such a ban. When the heat rises in the plains, people turn towards Manali, Rohtang, and Atal Tunnel. Advance booking is going on for the Rohtang permit. Electric buses are also being operated by the district administration to go to Rohtang, as the diesel-powered vehicles cause pollution which damages the delicate ecology of the Himalayas.

BenQ dominates the projector market in India with 30% share in Q1'22: Futuresource Consulting Report

MUMBAI: BenQ, the leading global innovator of display technologies, has been named the No. 1 brand in the overall projector category once again. Dominating the market BenQ in India has registered a 30% market share vis-à-vis all competition in Q1'22, also holding the first position in terms of market share for both B2C and B2B projector segments.

As more homeowners see the value of high-definition projectors, consumers are demanding large screens to watch movies and other entertainment at home. COVID-19 has also been a catalyst contributing to market growth in the home video segment. In consequence, sales volume in the 4K UHD resolution segment increased by 34% YoY in Q1'22, and BenQ was the industry leader with a market share of 53%. Moreover, in terms of sales volume, the portable projectors for home segment grew by 82% YoY in Q1'22, with BenQ leading the market with a 50% market share. Another form factor which has seen stupendous growth is the 4K Laser TV in



which BenQ has a formidable 51% market share. Q1'22 also saw the reopening of educational institutes and corporate offices. This led to the increase in demand for B2B projectors. In this sub-category, the WXGA segment grew the most in volume by 108% YOY and BenQ is the market leader with 50% share in Q1'22. BenQ is also the number one brand in the Full HD data projectors with 27% market share.

Analysing the market segment basis light source, there is a clear trend visible in terms of customer prefer-

ence. While the conventional Lamp segment experienced a growth of only 32%, the Laser Light Source segment grew by a whopping 150% in terms of sales volume in Q1'22 compared to Q1'21. Another significant shift has been towards the preference for LED Light Source segment which increased by 54% in terms of sales volume in Q1'22 indicating that the market is moving towards solid state light sources instead of traditional lamp source.

Rajeev Singh, Managing Director, BenQ India, said, «We are delighted and honoured to

be acknowledged as the No. 1 brand in projectors by Futuresource Consulting. With the reopening of educational institutes and offices and the continued booming demand from Home segment, the projector category has overall seen a growth of 38% and BenQ has experienced a growth of 62% as compared to Q1'21. Customer preference is moving towards high end projectors wherein 4K resolution, solid state light sources and accurate colors are the key drivers.»

Futuresource Consulting is a market research consulting company that provides a range of specialist intelligence reports and ongoing personal debriefs to support business decision-making. The current overall performance of BenQ amplifies its commitment to offering its consumers quality products with innovation and technology at its forefront. The company values an open, encouraging, experimental, and inventive culture that strives to keep pioneering and fostering display products across categories with high-end new-age advanced technologies.

Fake reviews on E-Commerce platforms under Centre's radar



To gauge the magnitude of fake reviews on E-Commerce platforms which mislead consumers into buying online services or products and to prepare a roadmap ahead, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) in association with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) will be holding a virtual meeting on Friday, 27th May, 2022 along with various stakeholders.

The discussions will be broadly based on the impact of fake and misleading reviews on consumers and possible measures to prevent such anomaly. In this regard, Secretary DoCA, Rohit Kumar Singh has written to all stakeholders: E-Commerce entities like Flipkart, Amazon, Tata Sons, Reliance Retail and others besides, Consumer Forums, Law Universities, Lawyers, FICCI, CII, Consumer Rights Activists etc. to participate in the meeting.

India exports a record 13.5 million tonnes of finished steel in 2021-22 says Faggan Singh Kulaste

«Logistics cost is a big challenge for industries. Our government has taken many important steps to reduce the logistic cost, such as National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), Sagarmala Project, Dedicated Freight Corridor, PM Gati Shakti Master Plan, etc. for the development of the mining sector,» said Faggan Kulaste, Union Minister of State for Steel & Rural Development at the ASSOCHAM conference on Indian Metal Industry at New Delhi.

The completion of these projects will save time in freight transportation, as well as reduce logistics cost,» he added. Giving details on the performance of the Indian metal industries, Kulaste informed, «India has exported a record 13.5 million tonnes of finished steel in the year 2021-22 with a record production of over 120 million tonnes of crude steel and 113.6 million tonnes of finished steel, said Shri Faggan Kulaste, Union Minister of State for Steel & Rural Development.

He added, «The focus of



our government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to lay major emphasis on the development of infrastructure across the country to achieve the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.»

The strengthening of domestic capability through technology development and innovation will not only enable the Indian metal and metallurgy sector to become a truly global but will also help make India a manufacturing hub for metals and metal products.

India's metal sector growth is consolidating due to continuous growth in the automotive and infrastructure sectors, resulting in higher demand for power, steel, cement in the country.

ASSOCHAM constitutes office bearers for Northern Region Development Council 2022-23



KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industries of India (ASSOCHAM) - One of the oldest industry bodies of the country has constituted office bearers of Northern states and Union Territories for the year 2022-23 under the Chairmanship of Anrrit Sagar Mittal, Chairman ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and Vice Chair, International Tractors Ltd (Sonalika).

While Anrrit Sagar Mittal continues to lead the NRDC as the Chair, Dr. S V Goyal, CEO of Reliance Model Economic Township, and Kulwin Seehra, Executive Director, GNA Axles has been appointed as Co-Chairs of the Northern Region Development Council.

In the Sectoral Northern Region Councils, Vivek Atray, Former Director Industries, Govt. of Haryana has been appointed as Chair for Regional Council on Policy Advocacy Initiatives, Keerti Hartek Singh, Chairperson, Hartek Foundation has been appointed as Chair of Regional Council for Women Entrepreneurship, Simarpreet Singh, Director Hartek Solar has been appointed as Chair and Meena Bisht, DGM, Indus Towers Ltd. has been appointed as Co-Chair of the Regional Council for MSME Finance Facilitation will be Jyoti Prakash Gadia, MD, Resurgent India Pvt. Ltd. and will work with industry and BFSI stakeholders for providing smooth financing

facilities to the MSMEs, and Raman Angra, Director, Capita Resources will be the Chair of the Regional Labour & Skill Development Council whose key work plan will be to help governments in northern states and UTs in building a robust skill development ecosystem.

Rikant Pitti, Co-Founder & Director of Ease My Trip has been appointed as Chair of the Regional Council for Tourism and Hospitality to work for the severely covid19 hit industry of tourism and hospitality, and Jitender Sodhi, Chair & Director Ayush Herbs has been appointed as Chair of the Regional Council for Health and Wellness.

In State/UT Councils, Simarpreet Singh has been appointed as Chair and Drismmeet Singh Buttar, Managing Partner, Healing Hospital & Institute of Paramedical Sciences has been appointed as Co-Chair for Chandigarh UT Development Council, Vijay Sharma, Director, Jindal Stainless has been appointed as Chair, and Jyoti Prakash Gadia and P K Jain, CEO, TCI Global Division & Group CHRO, TCI Ltd. have been appointed as Co-Chairs of Haryana State Development Council.

Suresh Garg, Founder & Managing Director, Zeon Lifesciences has been appointed as Chair for Himachal Pradesh State Development Council, Manik Batra, Director of Batra Group of Companies has been re-appointed as Chair for J&K UT Development Council, Tashi Gyaltson, Proprietor, Khachu Enterprises has been appointed as Chair for Ladakh UT Development Council and

APSEZ quarterly profit falls 22 pc to Rs 1,033 crore

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) has reported a 21.78 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,033 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022.



The country's largest integrated logistics player had clocked a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,321 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, according to a BSE filing late Tuesday.

Consolidated total income of the company increased to Rs 4,417.87 crore for the fourth quarter of the last fiscal as against Rs 4,072.42 crore in the year-ago period.

Total expenses also rose to Rs 3,309.18 crore in the latest quarter under review as against Rs 2,526.91 crore in the same period a year ago.

Chief Executive Officer and

ed growth registered by three key business segments -- ports, logistics and SEZ.

The statement said the growth in cargo volume in 2021-22 was led by dry cargo (42 per cent increase), followed by containers (14 per cent) and liquids (19 per cent). Adani Logistics Ltd (ALL), registered a 29 per cent growth in rail volume to 403,737 TEUs and a 19 per cent growth in terminal volume to 301,483 TEUs. As per the statement, the acquisitions in FY22 implied an investment of around Rs 11,400 crore for APSEZ and was successfully managed alongside an organic capex of around Rs 3,750 crore.

"We cruised on our journey of becoming India's largest transport utility with achievement of various milestones by our logistics business.

"These include investment in around 100 trains, eight operational MMLPs and total grain silo capacity of around 1.2 MMT, all by FY23," the statement said.

During 2021-22, APSEZ concluded two very strategic partnerships ensuring sustainable business growth.

"The first being a JV with John Keells Holdings & Sri Lanka Port Authority for construction of Colombo West International Terminal-II; and the second is a partnership with Flipkart for the construction of a 534,000 sq. ft. fulfilment centre in the upcoming logistics hub at Mumbai," the statement said. APSEZ through its subsidiary, The Adani Harbour Services Ltd (TAHSL), has acquired 100 per cent stake in Ocean Sparkle Ltd (OSL).

Investment Incentive Agreement between United States of America & the Government of India

The Government of India and the Government of the United States of America has signed an Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA) today at Tokyo, Japan. The IIA was signed by Vinay Kwatra, Foreign Secretary, Government of India, and Scott Nathan, Chief Executive Officer, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).



This IIA supersedes the Investment Incentive Agreement signed between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America in the year 1997. Significant developments have taken place since the signing of the earlier IIA in 1997 including the creation of a new agency called DFC, a development finance agency of Government of USA, as a successor agency of the erstwhile Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) after the enactment of a recent legislation of USA, the BUILD Act 2018. IIA has been signed, to keep pace with the additional invest-

ment support programmes, offered by the DFC, such as debt, equity investment, investment guaranty, investment insurance or reinsurance, feasibility studies for potential projects and grants.

The Agreement is the legal requirement for DFC, to continue providing investment support in India. DFC or their predecessor agencies are active in India since 1974 and have so far provided investment support worth \$5.8 billion of which \$2.9 billion is still outstanding. Proposals

Divi's Lab Q4 net up 78 pc at Rs 895 cr



Divi's Laboratories on Monday said its consolidated net profit increased by 78 per cent to Rs 895 crore in the quarter ended on March 31, 2022.

The drug maker had reported a net profit of Rs 502 crore in the January-March quarter of 2020-21 fiscal.

Revenue from operations rose to Rs 2,518 crore for the fourth quarter ended on March 31, 2022, as against Rs 1,788 crore in the year-ago period, Divi's Laboratories said in a regulatory filing.

For the year ended in March 2022, the company posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 2,960 crore as against Rs 1,984 crore in FY21.

Revenue from operations rose to Rs 8,960 crore as compared with Rs 6,969 crore in 2020-21.

The company said its board has recommended a dividend of Rs 30 per share of face value Rs 2 (1,500 per cent) for 2021-22, subject to approval of members at the ensuing annual general meeting.

Shares of the company were trading 6.37 per cent down at Rs 4,032.35 apiece on the BSE.

Phygital banks: RBI says leave cash go digital

BY NARVIJAY SINGH

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked all commercial banks to provide the facility of withdrawing money without debit or credit cards at ATMs. State Bank of India (SBI) is already giving this facility through its YONO app. RBI says that the absence of a card will reduce the incidents of fraud like card cloning and device tampering. In the new system, customers will be able to withdraw money using the UPI PIN. Banks will not be able to charge ATM fees for this service. This will be a great facility for all citizens and it will not be necessary to carry the cards with you. The trend of digital banking is increasing in India. More than 20 crore Indians are currently taking advantage of digital banking. RBI wants to increase the number. A large section of society has not yet gone digital. In order to make the benefits of digital banking services accessible to all, RBI has asked banks to open digital banking units. The Indian Banking Association says that digital banking units will start in 75 districts of the country in July.

In the digital banking units, all the work you do with internet banking i.e. net banking could be done. There will be no cash transaction here. Excluding cash



transactions, these branches will deal in all other services like savings accounts, current accounts, FD, RD, internet banking, debit card, credit card, bank loan, BHIM QR codes, etc. Digital banking units will be opened even in the towns. Commercial banks had already given the option of net banking, but now they will be running digital bank units, called Phygital, blending digital experiences with physical ones. By visiting these physical units, you will be able to understand your digital banking needs and also get help from the bank. Cashless payments have already been encouraged by UPI (Unified Payments Interface), which is making digital payments popular. In retail digital payments, the share of UPI has more than doubled in the last four years. In the financial year

2020-21, the share of UPI in digital payments made at shops and business establishments was 28 percent, which has increased to 42 percent this year i.e. 2021-22. Meanwhile, the digital rupee is also making news. It will be like a banknote, except it will not require any ATM. Its users will be able to transact in the form of tokens online from their savings accounts through smartphone wallets. The Reserve Bank of India will guarantee a digital rupee. Since the central bank is directly involved in this project, people will not be at risk of any loss like it had been done in the case of commercial banks. In the last few years, customers were barred from withdrawing their money from 21 banks due to their own banking malpractices. However, the digital rupee also has some risks.

proceedings under the provisions of NDPS Act, 1985 are in progress. Roles of various persons involved in the said import consignment are

Bank fraud cases rise in FY22, private banks report most incidents: RBI

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report 2021-22, which was released on Friday, pointed out that the private sector banks in India recorded the highest number of frauds in the financial year 2021-22. According to the latest data released by the RBI, private sector banks reported the highest number of cases at 5,334, followed by public sector banks at 3,078. On the other hand, foreign banks and small finance banks reported 494 and 155 cases of bank fraud in the financial year 2021-22.

The data showed that the number of bank fraud cases increased in FY21 than last year. However, the amount involved in the cases came down to half the amount involved a year ago.

"While the number of frauds reported by private sector banks were mainly on account of small value card/internet frauds, the fraud amount reported by public sector banks was mainly in the loan portfolio," RBI said in its annual report.

The total number of fraud cases in FY22 stood at 9,103. In comparison, the count stood at 7,359 last year. The total fraud amount stood at Rs 60,414 crore in FY22 while the amount was Rs 1,38,211 crore a year ago.

"An assessment of bank group-wise fraud cases over the last three

years indicates that while private sector banks reported a maximum number of frauds, public sector banks contributed maximum to the fraud amount. Frauds have been occurring predominantly in the loan portfolio (advances category), both in terms of number and value," the report said.

Bank customers should note that 90% of the money lost in a bank fraud case can be re-traced back in 10 days if they take the right steps at the right time. By sharing immediate information about any unauthorized transaction, bank customers can avoid losses in fraud cases.

AGENCIES

SAIL Q4 net profit falls 28 pc to Rs 2,479 crore



Steel giant SAIL has reported a 28% fall in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,478.82 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022, mainly on account of higher expenses.

The company had clocked Rs 3,469.88 crore net profit during the January-March quarter of 2020-21, Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) said in a regulatory filing on Monday. During the quarter under review, the company's total income rose to Rs 31,175.25 crore from Rs 23,533.19 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses were at Rs 28,005.28 crore against Rs

18,829.26 crore a year ago.

The company's board has also recommended a final dividend of Rs 2.25 per share for FY22. In a separate statement, SAIL said its "borrowings stood below Rs 13,400 crore as on March 31, 2022". In January-March 2022, the company produced 4.60 million tonnes (MT) steel compared to 4.56 MT in the year-ago quarter. Its sales in the March 2022 quarter rose to 4.71 MT from 4.34 MT a year ago. "The fourth quarter could not be fully insulated from the unprecedented rise in input costs, especially the price rise of imported coking coal on account of various reasons," SAIL said.

Notwithstanding the challenges, the company has taken several proactive steps to contain costs. Going forward, the company has plans to meet the twin challenges of higher input costs and market price volatility by undertaking various measures for continual improvement in its processes and products basket.

3 arrested in Rs 25 cr GST fraud through 39 fake firms



SATISH HANDA

Crime Investigation Branch of Haryana police detected a GST fraud of value worth Rs 25 crore by a fake firm and on a clue arrested two persons Ashish Gupta and Anil Kumar both residing in Omax City Apartments at Bahadurgarh in Jhajjar district while they were sitting in a car near the housing complex, followed by the arrest of their another accomplice Hitender a resident of village Chhara also found involved in their alleged fraud having a fake firm in his name having its office in the shopping area near Omax City complex for which he was being paid Rs 75000 every month by Ashish Gupta and Anil Kumar.

Preliminary investigation revealed, both Ashish Gupta and Anil Kumar were having as many as 39 fake firms registered with GST in the state involved in GST frauds for amount worth Rs 25 crore having fake sale-purchase transactions in their firms. Both Ashish Gupta and Anil Kumar arrested by police were produced in the court and remanded to police custody for five days, whereas Hitender was sent to jail under judicial custody. According to police information, during search at their residences, more than six fake voter cards, two fake pan cards, a bank account card, a mobile phone and large number of documents having fake addresses were recovered from Ashish Gupta. Similarly, police recovered four voter cards, two blank cards, one pan card and a mobile phone from the residence of Anil Kumar during search by the police.

During police remand, investigating team also recovered data of as many as 39 fake registered firms from both mobile phones and Rs 9.13 lakh cash from them.

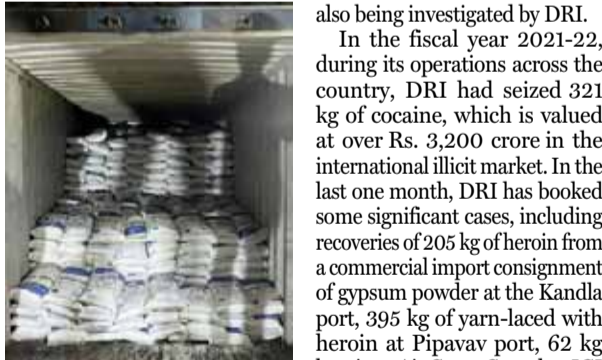
DRI seizes 52 kg Cocaine worth over Rs 500 cr under Operation Namkeen

Continuing its streak of significant seizures, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has recovered 52 kg of cocaine, estimated to be valued at over Rs 500 crore in the international illicit market, from an import consignment.

On the basis of extensive data analysis and field surveillance, intelligence was developed by DRI that certain consignments being imported from Iran were likely to contain narcotic drugs. In order to interdict the narcotic drugs, "Op Namkeen" was launched by DRI and a consignment, declared to contain 1,000 bags of common salt having gross weight of 25 MT, which had been imported

at Mundra port from Iran, was identified for detailed examination.

Acting on above intelligence, the said consignment was examined for three continuous days - from 24th to 26th May 2022. During examination, some bags were found to be suspicious, as a substance in powder form having distinct smell was found in these bags. Samples were drawn from those suspected bags and testing was conducted by officials of Directorate of Forensic Sciences, Government of Gujarat. The testing confirmed the presence of cocaine in these samples. Thus far, 52 kg of Cocaine has been recovered by DRI. Examination and seizure



also being investigated by DRI. In the fiscal year 2021-22, during its operations across the country, DRI had seized 321 kg of cocaine, which is valued at over Rs. 3,200 crore in the international illicit market. In the last one month, DRI has booked some significant cases, including recoveries of 205 kg of heroin from a commercial import consignment of gypsum powder at the Kandla port, 395 kg of yarn-laced with heroin at Pipavav port, 62 kg heroin at Air Cargo Complex, IGI New Delhi and 218 kg of heroin off the coast of Lakshadweep Islands (in a joint operation with Indian Coast Guard).

Bank of India net profit jumps over two-fold to Rs 606 cr in March qtr

State-owned Bank of India on Tuesday reported over two-fold jump in its standalone net profit to Rs 606 crore for the March 2022 quarter.

The lender had posted a net profit of Rs 250 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal. The total standalone income during the January-March quarter of 2021-22 rose to Rs 11,443.46 crore against Rs 11,155.53 crore a year ago, Bank of India said in a regulatory filing.

On the asset front, the bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) fell to 9.98 per cent of the gross advances as of March 2022 compared to 13.77 per cent in the year-ago period.

The net NPAs or bad loans too came down to 2.34 per cent from 3.35 per cent a year ago. For the full 2021-22, the bank's standalone net profit increased to Rs 3,404.70 crore from Rs 2,160.30 crore in 2020-21. Shares of Bank of India were trading at Rs 47.50 apiece on BSE, up 2.26 per cent from the previous close.

India will be pivotal to Nepal's GDP growth in 2022

FIA Global, one of India's leading online banking and financial services provider with over 50 million customers, has been the platform of choice for Nepali migrants to send money back home. In the last quarter, FIA has witnessed an increase in remittances to Nepal on its digital-remittance platform, iRemit. As the name suggests, iRemit is an online platform that helps customers remit money and has been the one-stop remittance platform for Nepalese workers in India to remit funds from 'sachet' amounts to maximum permissible back home to their families and friends.

FIA's digital-remittance platform does over 13,000 transactions every month, with a majority of Nepali users living and working in Delhi, Chandigarh, Mumbai and Himachal Pradesh. FIA also supports close to 2 Lakh recipients in Nepal for whom it is a point of loyalty and trust that they place on the channel. During the pandemic, migrant labourers were left stranded with no access to money or the option to relocate to their natives. The process of remitting money amid restrictions was likely observed to be a long haul. That was the foremost problem they had to be contended with. But a lot has changed in the post-world of pandemic. On slow emergence from the pandemic, the economy is now on the path of growth again. Businesses in India have started to gather momentum and are recruiting from the migrant pool, including Nepali workers. Understanding the dynamic nature of the jobs and economy, the workers are more aware this time and would prioritise money remission more than ever. Learning from past scenarios, they will remit frequently to ensure that their families need to have access to money in troubled times. One of the predominant challenges of remitting money is to find the nearest branch of one's respective banking partner amid the hassles of urgency. The second problem is the question of trust. Building trust is something FIA remitters work on. They work on digital re-

AGRICULTURE IS THE MOST CRITICAL ECONOMIC SECTOR, EMPLOYING OVER 70% OF THE PEOPLE AND ACCOUNTING FOR 33% OF GDP.



FIA Global, one of India's leading online banking and financial services platform and the go-to remittance solution for the Nepali migrant labour force, predicts rapid growth in Nepali remittances in 2022

allenges and has gained the trust and loyalty of the Nepali migrant labourers who are able to remit money home even from remote areas of India on a daily or weekly basis.

FIA has partnered with Prabhu Bank and Global IME Bank in Nepal for a seamless flow of remittances. FIA's platform also offers human intervention to support and address the queries of users in their native language.

Rahul Yajnik, Sales head, FIA Global Financial Inclusion commented, "Personal

remittances have contributed nearly 25% to Nepal's GDP in the last five years, according to the World Bank. FIA's digital-remittance model indicates the necessity of a reliable, easily accessible platform that enables and empowers people across borders to send and receive money with confidence. Our model ensures that the remitter and receiver are not disadvantaged in any way due to challenges related to literacy, awareness or language."

These workers also have a latent need for other financial services, such as health insurance, life insurance, accident insurance, and more. Financial institutions in both countries are leveraging this data to offer additional sachet financial services, such as insurance or small loans, which are customisable, based on the requirements of these workers.

INTERNATIONAL

US would intervene with military to defend Taiwan, if China invade

President Joe Biden said Monday that the US would intervene militarily if China were to invade Taiwan, saying the burden to protect Taiwan is "even stronger" after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It was one of the most forceful presidential statements in support of self-governing in decades.

Biden, at a news conference in Tokyo, said yes when asked if he was willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if China invaded. That's the commitment we made, he added.

The US traditionally has avoided making such an explicit security guarantee to Taiwan, with which it no longer has a mutual defense treaty. The 1979

Taiwan Relations Act, which has governed US relations with the island, does not require the US to step in militarily to defend Taiwan if China invades, but makes it American policy to ensure Taiwan has the resources to defend itself and to prevent any unilateral change of status in Taiwan by Beijing.

Biden's comments were likely to draw a sharp response from the mainland, which has claimed Taiwan to be a rogue province. A White House official said Biden's comments did not reflect a policy shift.

Speaking alongside Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Biden said any effort by China to use force against Taiwan would



just not be appropriate, adding that it will dislocate the entire region and be another action similar to what happened in Ukraine. China has stepped up its military provocations against democratic

Taiwan in recent years aimed at intimidating it into accepting Beijing's demands to unify with the communist mainland. They're already flirting with danger right now by flying so close

and all the maneuvers that are undertaken, Biden said of China.

Under the one China policy, the US recognises Beijing as the government of China and doesn't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, the US maintains unofficial contacts including a de facto embassy in Taipei, the capital, and supplies military equipment for the island's defence.

Biden said it is his expectation that China would not try to seize Taiwan by force, but he said that assessment depends upon just how strong the world makes clear that that kind of action is going to result in long-term disapprobation by the rest of the community.

Anurag Thakur gifts Himachali Thaal, Topi & Shawl to Ranjit Singh era French Army General's descendants in Saint Tropez

Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur gifted Himachali Thaal, Topi and Shawl to the descendants of General Jean Francois Allard and his spouse Princess Bannu Pan Dei of Chamba, during his visit to Allard Square in Saint Tropez in France. Princess was born in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.

On the occasion, the Minister said the Indian connect of Saint Tropez has not been lost even after four generations. He said the family of Princess is immensely respected in Saint Tropez and has preserved its Indian roots.



The Minister had led Indian delegation in just concluded Cannes Film Festival in France. Earlier, the Minister

paid floral tributes at the busts of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his Army General and his wife at Saint Tropez.

US calls for vote on new UN sanctions on N Korea



The United States called for a vote Thursday on a U.N. resolution that would impose tougher sanctions on North Korea for its recent launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles that can be used to deliver nuclear weapons.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations has been working on the draft Security Council resolution for several months. But the measure faces opposition from North Korea's neighbors China and Russia, which both said at a council meeting on May 11 that they wanted to see new talks and not more punishment for the North.

The United States, which holds the council presidency this month, announced plans for the vote Wednesday. Whether China and Russia will use their veto power to block the measure or abstain remains to be seen.

We don't think a resolution as proposed by the U.S. can solve any problem, China's U.N. Mission said in a statement Wednesday evening. China proposed in recent weeks that the U.S. consider a presidential statement instead of a resolution, which was supported by many delegations but fell on deaf ears of the U.S., the statement said. They know what is the best way for de-escalation but simply resist it.

America's new envoy to Pakistan Donald Blome takes office

America's new Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome has said that he was thrilled to be in Islamabad and pledged to build on the existing strong ties between the two countries.

He began his assignment on Monday at the United States Embassy here, the US mission said in a statement.

I am thrilled to be in Pakistan. I look forward to exploring this beautiful country and acquainting myself with its people and its culture, Blome was quoted as saying by the embassy on his arrival to take up the new responsibility. Most importantly, in this 75th year of US-Pakistan relations, I will continue to build on the strong relationship between our countries, he said.

He will lead the US mission in Pakistan in its ongoing efforts to deepen connections between the Pakistani and American people



and work with the government of Pakistan towards a more stable, secure and prosperous future for Pakistan.

Ambassador Blome brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this shared effort and to the US mission in Pakistan, the embassy said.

He started his day in the office in the backdrop of former prime minister Imran Khan telling CNN in an interview that the US should sack its Assistant Secretary of State for Central and South Asia Donald Lu for "sheer arrogance and bad manners".

India commits to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region

India on Monday expressed its commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and pitched for deepening of economic engagement among partners with a view to achieve the goal of continued growth, peace and prosperity, an official statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in an event here at the launch of discussions for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).

Speaking at the launch ceremony, he said the announcement of IPEF is a declaration of a collective desire to make the



Indo-Pacific region an engine of global economic growth.

India has historically been at the centre of trade flows in the Indo-Pacific region, having the

world's oldest commercial port in Lothal, Gujarat.

The prime minister underlined the need for finding a common and creative solutions to

tackle economic challenges of the Indo-Pacific region.

Modi also expressed India's commitment towards working with all countries of the region for an IPEF which is both inclusive and flexible.

He said that the foundation of resilient supply chains must be 3Ts: Trust, Transparency and Timeliness.

"India is committed to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and believes that deepening economic engagement among partners is crucial for continued growth, peace and prosperity," the statement said.

PM Modi meets Japanese business leaders, discusses investment opportunities in India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday courted top Japanese business leaders, including Masayoshi Son of SoftBank and Osamu Suzuki of Suzuki Motor Corp, to discuss investment opportunities India offers in sectors ranging from textiles to automobiles, emerging technologies and startups.

Modi, who arrived here on a two-day visit to attend a summit of the Quad leaders at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida, held separate bilateral meetings with Japanese business leaders. He first met electronic giant NEC Corporation's Chairman Nobuhiko Endo, followed by a meeting with Japanese clothing brand Uniqlo's CEO Tadashi Yanai.

This was followed by meetings with Son and Suzuki to discuss investment opportunities. In his meeting with Endo, Modi appreciated NEC's role in India's telecommunication sector, especially in undertaking Chennai-Andaman and Nicobar

Islands (CANI) and Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands (KLI) optical fibre cable projects, an official statement said.

He also highlighted investment opportunities under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. "They discussed various reforms being undertaken to enable ease of doing business in India, including in industrial development, taxation and labour. They also discussed opportunities in India in new and emerging technologies," the statement said.

On his part, Endo said the discussions ranged from ways to contribute to Smart Cities in India and NEC's plans to contribute to the country in the field of education and logistics, among others.

Stating that Prime Minister Modi has a strong intention to build and enhance capabilities in India, Endo said, "We are very happy to contribute to those areas."

UK's Prince Charles visits Ukrainian refugees in Romania

Britain's Prince Charles traveled to Romania's capital Wednesday to visit refugees, mostly women and children, from Russia's war in Ukraine who have found safety in the neighbouring Eastern European country.

The Prince of Wales visited the Romexpo Donation Centre for Ukrainian refugees in Bucharest. There, he met some of the nearly 1 million Ukrainians who have reached Romania since the war began on Feb 24, and observed the relief effort being mounted by the government and volunteers.



Speaking to a group of Ukrainians through an interpreter,

Charles apologised for his lack of language skills, saying, I wish

States divided on gun controls, even as mass shootings rise

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee was quick to react to this week's carnage at a Texas elementary school, sending a tweet listing the gun control measures the Democratic-controlled state has taken. He finished with: Your turn Congress.

But gun control measures are likely going nowhere in Congress, and they also have become increasingly scarce in most states. Aside from several Democratic-controlled states, the majority have taken no action on gun control in recent years or have moved aggressively to expand gun rights.

That's because they are either controlled politically by Republicans who oppose gun restrictions or are politically divided, leading to stalemate. Here I am in a position where

I can do something, I can introduce legislation, and yet to know that it almost certainly is not going to go anywhere is a feeling of helplessness," said state Sen. Greg Leding, a Democrat in the GOP-controlled Arkansas Legislature.

He has pushed unsuccessfully for red flag laws that would al-

low authorities to remove firearms from those determined to be a danger to themselves or others.

After Tuesday's massacre at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, that left 19 students and two teachers dead, Democratic governors and lawmakers across the country

issued impassioned pleas for Congress and their own legislatures to pass gun restrictions. Republicans have mostly called for more efforts to address mental health and to shore up protections at schools, such as adding security guards.

Among them is Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who has repeatedly talked about mental health struggles among young people and said tougher gun laws in places like New York and California are ineffective. In Tennessee, GOP Rep. Jeremy Faison tweeted that the state needs to have security officers "in all of our schools, but stopped short of promising to introduce legislation during next year's legislative session: Evil exists and we must protect the innocent from it, Faison said.



Pak launches nationwide anti-polio drive to vaccinate over 43 million children

Pakistan launched a nationwide anti-polio drive to vaccinate more than 43 million children after the third case of the crippling virus surfaced in the country last week.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif inaugurated the second polio campaign of the year 2022 at the Prime Minister's house and assured that the government would take all measures to eradicate the crippling disease, according to a statement.

The vaccination campaign will be conducted from May 23-27 across Pakistan, it said, adding that the campaign aims to reach approximately 43.3 million children under the age of five with the life-saving polio vaccine.

Around 340,000 polio frontline workers will provide polio vaccines at the doorsteps across the country. During the planned campaign, a supplementary dose of Vitamin A drops will also be administered to children aged 6 to 59 months.

The prime minister kicked off the polio eradication campaign by administering vaccination drops to some children, expecting that polio vaccination will reach to all eligible children especially in polio high-risk districts of Pakistan. Addressing a gathering, he instructed

the federal and provincial governments and district management to address the challenges of persistently missed children, refusals and fake finger marking during the campaign.

He showed concern on three new polio cases in North Waziristan, fearing the spread of poliovirus in other parts of the country and across the border. I urge all parents and caregivers to get their children vaccinated instead of hiding them or refusing to take the necessary drops during all vaccination drives. It is important to realise that the polio virus still exists in our surroundings and no child is safe until all children are truly vaccinated, Sharif said.





Alia Bhatt's maiden production 'Darlings' to release on Netflix

Actor Alia Bhatt on Tuesday announced that "Darlings", her debut film as a producer, will premiere on streaming platform Netflix.

The 29-year-old actor is starring in and producing the film through her banner Eternal Sunshine Productions, in collaboration with superstar Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chillies Entertainment. Bhatt shared the news of the film's Netflix debut on her social media handles.

"Hey, darlings. I want to tell you something big but the network is not good here. Hello.. hello? #Darlings #DarlingsOnNetflix" the actor wrote alongside a promotional video, also featuring co-stars Shefali Shah, Vijay Verma and Roshan Mathew.

"Darlings", a dark comedy, marks the directorial debut of writer Jasmeet K



Reen. The Mumbai-set film is mounted against the backdrop of a conservative lower middle-class neighbourhood. It explores the lives of a mother-daughter duo trying to find their place in the city, seeking courage and love in exceptional circumstances while fighting against all odds.

Bhatt and streamer Netflix are yet to announce the official release date of the film. In a statement, the actor said "Darlings" holds a "special place in my heart". "It's my first film as a producer and that too with Red Chillies. We are very proud and happy how the film has shaped up and we hope it will entertain and engage audiences world over," she said.

'DHAK DHAK' team commences shoot, makers unveil first look



Actors Fatima Sana Shaikh, Ratna Pathak Shah, Dia Mirza and Sanjhana Sanghi have begun shoot for

their upcoming film Dhak Dhak, the makers have said.

Backed by Viacom18 Studios and Taapsee Pannu's

POTPOURRI

Outsiders Films, the road trip film is helmed by Tarun Dubeja from a script co-written by Dubeja and Parijat Joshi.

Pannu, who is producing the film, took to Instagram Stories late Friday night to share the update about the movie.

"We have begun this journey!" she captioned the post as she shared the look of Shaikh, followed by other actors.

According to a source close to the film, the team began shooting earlier this week. The "Dhak Dhak" team has created a special page on Instagram in order to keep the audiences and fans updated about their journey from the very beginning.

Clean Chit to Aryan in Drugs-on-Cruise Case



Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on 27 May, gave actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan a clean chit in the drugs-on-cruise case, seven months after he was granted bail.

All the accused persons were found in possession of narcotics except Khan and Mohak, said DDG (Operations), NCB Sanjay Kumar Singh in a statement.

Next edition of Amarrass Nights to be held on May 28

The May chapter of Amarrass Nights, a platform to promote and nurture folk artists, will be held on Saturday at the Sunder Nursery here.

The event is organised by Gurgaon-based label Amarrass Records and Amarrass Society for Performing Arts at iconic locations across Delhi since 2009. According to the organisers,

the musical evening promises to be an exhilarating night of ecstatic bhajans ballads and beat-boxing. The performing artists at the upcoming event are bhajan maestro Bagga Khan and the Barmer Boys, the global ambassadors of contemporary Indian folk music. Khan, a renowned Manganiyar bhajan singer from Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district,



is a master of the tumbura and sings bhajans and dohas by

Kabir, Meerabai, and Tulsidas. Barmer Boys is a Sufi-Gypsy beatbox trio, comprising Manga, Rais Khan, and Razak Khan. From soulful Sufi kalaams, Krishna bhajans, uplifting celebratory songs to boisterous jams with beat-boxing, the group is carrying forward the centuries-old musical traditions of the Manganiyars.

COVID seems thing of the past at full capacity French Open



sometimes, they gave up on those waits that could take 15 minutes or more.

In the stands, they wore their white hats and cried 'Allez!' and punctuated points with rhythmic clapping. They took etiquette-breaching strolls through the stadium aisles during play. Most of all, and most important of all, they were there.

The crowds at the French Open were back to their no-mask, no-distancing, full-capacity, pre-pandemic levels Sunday for the start of this year's edition, as much a part of the fabric of the event as the red clay that defines the Grand Slam tournament.

A really festive atmosphere, observed Alice Dufour, a 21-year-old who was part of a group trip from her Miramont tennis club near Bordeaux.

Climber Baljeet Kaur scales two 8,000m peaks in Nepal within two weeks



A 27-year-old Indian woman on Thursday set a record for conquering two mountain peaks in Nepal above 8,000 metres within two weeks.

Baljeet Kaur from Himachal Pradesh conquered Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,586m) on Thursday morning at 4:20 (local time), said Pasang Sherpa, director of Peak Promotion Pvt Ltd.

"After successfully scaling the mountain peak she has arrived at Camp III and is now

East Bengal in talks with Manchester United and others for ownership: Ganguly

In what could be a game-changing move for the struggling East Bengal, EPL giants Manchester United may end up taking the ownership of one of oldest football clubs in the country.

BCCI President and former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who is facilitating the deal, told media that negotiations are on with the 'Red Devils' and a few others and a clear picture will emerge in about two weeks.

East Bengal were also talking with Bangladesh-based conglomerate Bashund-



hara Group but it did not lead to any deal.

Breaking silence on the issue for the first time, Ganguly on Tuesday, said, "Yes we have spoken to them and others also.

World Cup victory of underprivileged kids deserves a mention: Abhay Deol on 'Jungle Cry'



Actor Abhay Deol says he came on board "Jungle Cry" as he believed the "underdog" story of tribal kids winning the Rugby World Cup was a tale worth telling.

"Jungle Cry", directed by Sagar Ballary of Bheja Fry fame, is based on the inspiring true story of 12 underprivileged and orphan children from Odisha's Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) who went on to win the prestigious U14 Rugby World Cup in England in 2007. Deol, known for critically-acclaimed performances in films like "Dev D", "Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!" and "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara", said he was unaware of the incredible feat achieved by these kids.

How Arshdeep Singh 'yorked' his way into the Indian team

Young-left arm pacer Arshdeep Singh says clarity of mind, attained through yoga and meditation, has helped him perfect the art of bowling yorkers, a rare ability that has pushed him into the Indian T20 side for the South Africa series.

The 23-year-old from Kharar humbly accepts the success that has come his way in the IPL but says he really had to "earn everything".

It may seem that landing yorkers, at will, comes naturally to the lanky fast bowler but he put in the extra work with his personal coach Jaswant Rai ahead of the IPL to hone his coveted skill. Yoga and meditation has also helped him stay calm in high-pressure scenarios.

Back at home after a grueling couple of months in the IPL, Arshdeep is getting some much-needed rest at home but it won't be long before he joins the Indian squad for the South



Africa series beginning in Delhi on June 9.

He bowled more with the old ball than new ball this IPL season with Punjab relying on him heavily in the slog overs. Only one of the two players to be retained by the franchise, Arshdeep repaid the faith by ending up with an economy rate of 7.31 in the death overs, the best among bowlers who bowled more than 10 overs in that critical phase.

"My role depended on team combination, match ups are a big thing in T20 cricket. I bowled with the new ball, in the middle as well as death.

New Tamil film sparks Cannes market excitement

Tamil actor-writer-director Radhakrishnan Parthiban was under the spotlight in the India Pavilion in the International Village of the 75th Cannes Film Festival on Sunday. His 16th directorial outing, "IravinNizhal" (Shadow of the Night), won him instant admirers.

"IravinNizhal" stands out among all the Indian titles unveiled in the Marche du Film Festival de Cannes. It is a phenomenal cinematic achievement a 100-minute, single-shot film with a non-linear narrative.

Parthiban's daring labour of love plays out on 50-plus sets erected across an area of 64 acres and follows a deeply flawed man over 50 years of his life. "IravinNizhal" has flashbacks and intense emotions held together by a powerful narrative about a film financier on the run from the media, the police and himself. A.R. Rahman, who has scored the music for "IravinNizhal", was at hand to express his excitement at the project.

I have composed music for countless movies in South and North India, but I have never worked on film quite like this one. 'IravinNizhal' has no precedent, he said.

Parthiban, who is in Cannes with his budding filmmaker-



daughter KeerthanaParthipan Akkineni and one of the producers of "IravinNizhal", Dallas-based Ranjith Dhandapani, admits that the film was a massive logistical challenge.

It took us 23 takes to get it right, he said. Despite numerous surprises and reverses, the team overcame the challenges through improvisation and creativity, he added.

On his decision to cast himself in the lead role in the films that he directs, Parthiban asserts that it eases matters for him.

It is difficult to find actors who can devote months at a stretch of unwavering commitment to a film of mine.

"IravinNizhal", he points out, was filmed over 90 days without a break and he needed an actor who would always be available.

Hansal Mehta marries Safeena Husain in 'impromptu and unplanned' ceremony

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta on Wednesday said he has tied the knot with longtime partner Safeena Husain in an intimate ceremony in San Francisco, US.

The 54-year-old filmmaker, known for films such as "Shahid", "Aligarh", "Omerta" (2018) and series Scam 1992, shared the news of his marriage to Husain on his social media handles.

"So after 17 years, two children, watching our sons growing up and chasing our respective dreams we decided to get hitched. As always in life this was also impromptu and unplanned. "Our vows however were truthful and but for this little ceremony they would never have been said. Ultimately love prevails over all else. And it has, Mehta wrote, alongside a series of pictures from the wedding ceremony, which was held at San Francisco's Taj Campton Place.

Safeena Husain, daughter of late actor Yusuf Husain, is a social worker and the founder of girl education organisation Educate Girls. The couple



are parents to two daughters — Kimaya and Rehana. Congratulatory messages poured in from Mehta's industry friends including filmmakers Vishal Bhardwaj, Anubhav Sinha, actors Rajkumar Rao, Manoj Bajpayee and Pratik Gandhi.

Mehta's frequent collaborator Rao congratulated the couple and commented on the director's post, "Congratulations my fav couple. You guys complete each other. I love you both." Bhardwaj simply wrote, "Lovely. Mubarakaan. "Best wishes & congratulations to both of you!! @mehtahansal," Bajpayee, who worked with Mehta on Aligarh, posted.

UK Chief Minister Dhani hrs shuttler Lakshya Sen

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhani on Tuesday honoured Thomas Cup winner Lakshya Sen by handing him a cheque of Rs 15 lakh.

He also gave Sen, a resident of Almora, another cheque of Rs 10 lakh for his spectacular performance in the All England Badminton Championship last year. Honouring the young shuttler, Dhani said he has emerged as an inspiration for young and upcoming players of the state.



Dhani also wished him all the best for the forthcoming Olympics. The chief minister also said Sen has turned Almora's famous delicacy "Bal Mithai" into a brand by gifting it to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after his historic win at the Thomas Cup.



Union Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad distributes the cheque among the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana at an event in Amritsar on Thursday. After event he speaks to media

PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL

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