

NATION

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ALLIANCE GOVT PARTNERS IN HARYANA MAY CONTEST 2024 POLLS INDEPENDENTLY

Punjab chooses environment over Industry, cancels ambitious Mattewara Textile Park.

AAYUSH GOEL
In what has left greens across the state elated and hopeful of revival of environment on state's priority list, Bhagwant Mann led AAP government has gone ahead cancelling ambitious Textile park in Koom Kalan, Ludhiana. Sukhmeet is not a lone case but thousands of villagers, environmentalists and even a section of political leaders are up against the forthcoming Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Park in Koom Kalan, Ludhiana. The park proposed and conceived by Captain Amarinder Singh



lead Congress Government has been facing strong opposition from all quarters. Approved as part of PM-MITRA scheme, the project

flood plains of Sutlej river and bordering one amongst few surviving forest patches of state, the Mattewara forest. Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann had in Vidhan Sabha supported the project. However, it took a u turn and scrapped it when more than 10,000 people - including politicians, members of farmers' unions, student leaders, and NGO workers - assembled at the project site in Mattewara, vowing to start a permanent movement against the project. "It was all politically and capitolly profit driven. The project would have not only disturbed the biodiversity of the protected forest, but will

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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GOVERNMENT FORMULATES STRATEGY TO PROMOTE NER AS AGRICULTURE EXPORT HUB

Capt Amarinder rues scrapping of Mattewara Industrial Park project



CHANDIGARH: Former Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh today rued the scrapping of the Mattewara Textile Park project, terming it as the most regressive and short sighted decision. "You don't throw away the baby with the bath water", he remarked in a statement while reacting to the government decision. Questioning the diatribe launched against the project he clarified that the textile park was not to come up within the Mattewara forest area as was being said, but outside it. He disclosed that all environmental concerns had been addressed according to the United Nations guidelines and only then the park was approved. Capt Amarinder regretted that the Aam Aadmi Party government, after initially deciding to go ahead with the project had scrapped it, just because some people opposed it

POTPOURRI

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GIPPY GREWAL DROPS HIS LATEST TRACK 'MUTIYARE NI', VIDEO FEATURES UKRAINIAN MODEL

Three more arrested by SIT probing 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Kanpur



A special investigation team probing the 1984 anti-Sikh riots on Thursday arrested three more people who were allegedly part of a mob that had set houses ablaze here killing several people, an official said. As many as 127 people were killed in the riots in Kanpur. The special investigation team (SIT) was formed by the Uttar Pradesh government three years ago on the orders of the Supreme Court to reinvestigate the cases. The SIT has so far arrested 22 people in connection with the violence that occurred following the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in Delhi on the morning of October 31, 1984. The fresh arrests were made in two cases, one of which was lodged with the Naubasta police and the other with the Govind Nagar police. The three arrested have been identified as Chandra Pratap Singh (67), Anil Nigam (61) and Ram Chandra Pal (61), the younger brother of Kailash Pal who was arrested on Tuesday. They were produced before a court, which remanded them in judicial custody for 14 days, said Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Balendu Bhushan Singh, who is heading the SIT.

Modi Govt is directionless, Rupee almost touches 80-mark against US dollar: Congress

Rupee almost touching the Rs 80-mark against the US dollar, the Congress on Friday launched a fierce attack on the government alleging that it is directionless and silent on the free fall of the currency as it will affect every Indian. The party also targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying he is "harmful for the rupee" and recalled his own words as Gujarat chief minister, when he attacked the UPA government saying "the prestige of the PM is attached to the falling rupee and the lower it falls, the more credibility and dignity of the prime minister is eroded". Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete wondered what the prime minister would say on his own statements now when the Indian currency is falling to new lows. "The government, as always, seems directionless. Modi is toxic and harmful for the rupee. What is the government doing to address high inflation and it is a vicious cycle," she alleged at a press conference. "Before 2014 Mr Modi falsely claimed that a 'strong PM' is necessary for the strengthening of the rupee has proven to be most toxic and harmful for the currency.

PM unveils national emblem on Parliament building

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday unveiled the national emblem cast on the roof of the new Parliament building here. The inauguration of the emblem, which is made up of bronze with a total weight of 9,500 kg and is 6.5 metre in height, marks the first major milestone ahead of the new building's scheduled opening for later this year. Authorities have maintained that Parliament's Winter session will be held there. Officials said the emblem has been cast at the top of the central foyer of the new Parliament building, and a supporting structure of steel weighing around 6,500 kg has been constructed to support it. The concept sketch and process of casting of the national emblem on the roof of the new Parliament building has gone through eight different stages of preparation from clay modelling and computer graphics to bronze casting and polishing, they said. Modi was joined by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajya Sabha



Deputy Chairman Harivansh and Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh at the inauguration. He also attended a religious ceremony at the site. The prime minister also interacted with workers involved in the building's construction and told them that they should feel proud of their work. They are making a very big contribution to the nation's pride, he said. "I had a wonderful interaction with the Shramjeevis who have been involved in the making of Parliament. We are proud of their efforts and will always remember their contribution to our nation," he tweeted. When a worker expressed joy at his visit to the site and likened it to Lord Ram's arrival at Shabri's hut, a reference to epic Ramayana, Modi said light-heartedly, "Wah, wah, this is your hut!" He then added that every poor person of the country should also feel that this is his hut. "You have said a very good thing," the prime minister said.

PM Modi to visit UP and inaugurate Bundelkhand Expressway on July 16

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Uttar Pradesh on 16th July, 2022 and inaugurate Bundelkhand Expressway at Kaitheri village in Orai tehsil of Jalaun district at around 11:30 AM. The government has been committed to enhancing connectivity across the country, a key feature of which has been the work towards improvement in road infrastructure. A significant endeavour towards this was the laying of foundation stone for the construction of Bundelkhand Expressway by the Prime Minister on 29 February, 2020. The work on the Expressway has been completed within 28 months and it will now be inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

Industrial production grows 19.6 pc in May

India's industrial production rose 19.6 per cent in May 2022, according to the official data released on Tuesday. As per the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output grew 20.6 per cent in May 2022. In May 2022, the mining output climbed 10.9 %, and power generation increased 23.5 per cent. The IIP had grown by 27.6 per cent in May 2021. Industrial production has been hit due to



the coronavirus pandemic since March 2020, when it had contracted 18.7 per cent. It shrank 57.3 per cent in April 2020 due to a decline in economic activities in the wake of the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus infections.

WPI inflation eases to 3-month low of 15.18 per cent in June

The wholesale price-based inflation (WPI) eased to a three-month low of 15.18 % in June on a sharp decline in the prices of minerals, but food articles continued to remain costly. June is the 15th consecutive month when the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation remained in double-digit. Last month, it touched a record high of 15.88 per cent. In June 2021, it was 12.07 per cent. Inflation in food articles in June was 14.39 per cent, as prices of vegetables, fruits and potato witnessed a sharp spike over the year-ago period. In May, the wholesale price inflation in food articles was 12.34 %. The rate of price rise in vegetables was 56.75 per cent, while in potato and fruits, it was 39.38 and 20.33 per cent, respectively. The WPI inflation in minerals dropped sharply to 8.55 per cent in June from 33.94 per cent in May. In the fuel and power basket, inflation was 40.38 per cent, while in manufactured products and oil seeds, it was



9.19 per cent and 2.74 per cent, respectively. Inflation in crude petroleum and natural gas was 77.29 per cent in June. Iera Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said minerals and basic metals displayed a sharp month-on-month correction in June 2022, as fears of an impending global recession unfolded, dampening commodity prices. "We expect the WPI inflation to ease to 13 per cent in July 2022, reflecting the ongoing correction in global commodity and fuel prices as well as domestic food prices," Nayar said. She said that the RBI could hike interest rates by 60 bps over the next two reviews, taking the repo rate to 5.5 per cent by September 2022, followed by a pause to ascertain the momentum of economic growth.

Emblem row: Actor Prakash Raj takes a jibe at depiction

Multi-lingual actor Prakash Raj on Thursday waded into the row over the national emblem atop the new Parliament building in New Delhi, using his "#justasking" series to take an apparent jibe at the ruling BJP. An outspoken critic of the saffron party, the actor-producer took to Twitter, asking "Where are we heading #justasking." Raj, who has acted in Tamil, Hindi and Telugu movies among others uses the "#justasking" hashtag on the micro-blogging site to pose questions on various issues at the BJP-led Centre.

I'm in a happy place, surrounded by love: Sushmita Sen

Not married and unconditionaly surrounded by love, Sushmita Sen said in a cryptic Instagram post on Friday, a day after former Indian Premier League chairperson Lalit Modi set social media abuzz with a tweet on his relationship with the Bollywood star. The "Aarya" star, who did not comment on Thursday night when Lalit Modi made his revelation, took no names in her post in which she shared a photograph with her daughters, Renee and Alisha.

Parameswaran Iyer takes charge as NITI Aayog CEO

Parameswaran Iyer, who had spearheaded the implementation of the flagship USD 20 billion Swachh Bharat Mission, on Monday took charge as the CEO of NITI Aayog. A 1981-batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, Iyer has worked with both the public and private sectors, according to an official statement. He was secretary in the Ministry of Drinking Water



and Sanitation during 2016-20. "With over 25 years of experience in the water and sanitation sector, Iyer spearheaded the implementation of the India's flagship USD 20 billion Swachh Bharat Mission, which successfully delivered access to safe sanitation to 550 million people," the statement said. In the statement, Iyer said he was honoured and humbled to have been given the incredible opportunity to serve the country again, this time as NITI Aayog CEO.

2 soldiers killed in fratricidal firing in J&K's Poonch

Two soldiers were killed and two others injured on Friday in a fratricidal firing in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, official sources said. One of the deceased has been identified as Sepoy Ibrar Ahmed. The injured were airlifted to army hospital in Udhampur. The incident took place inside an army camp in the Surankote area of Poonch district. Police have launched investigation into the incident and the reasons behind the firing incident are being ascertained.

India projected to surpass China as world's most populous country during 2023 : UN

China and India accounted for the largest populations in these regions, with more than 1.4 billion each in 2022. More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania. "Disparate population growth rates among the world's largest countries will change their ranking by size: for example, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023, the report said. According to the report, India's population stands at 1.412 billion in 2022, compared to China's 1.426 billion. India, which will surpass China as the world's most populous nation by 2023, is projected to have a population of 1.668 billion in 2050, way ahead of China's 1.317 billion people by the middle of the century. The report added that it is estimated that ten countries experienced a net outflow of more than 1 million migrants between 2010 and 2021. In many of these countries, these outflows were due to temporary labour movements, such as for Pakistan (net outflow of -16.5 million during 2010-2021), India (-3.5 million), Bangladesh (-2.9 million), Nepal (-1.6 million) and Sri Lanka (-1 million). In other countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic (-4.6 million), Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (-4.8 million), and Myanmar (-1 million), insecurity and conflicts have driven the net outflow of migrants over the decade. Global life expectancy at birth reached 72.8 years in 2019, an improvement of almost 9 years since 1990. Further reductions in mortality are projected to result in an average global longevity of around 77.2 years in 2050.

India projected to surpass China as world's most populous country during 2023 : UN

India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country next year, according to a report by the United Nations on Monday which said that the world population is forecast to reach eight billion by mid-November 2022. The World Population Prospects 2022 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, said that the global population is projected to reach eight billion on November 15, 2022. The global population is growing at its slowest rate since 1950, having fallen under one per cent in 2020. The latest projections by the United Nations suggest that the world's population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050. It is projected to reach a peak of around 10.4 billion people during the 2080s and to remain at that level until 2100. This year's World Popula-

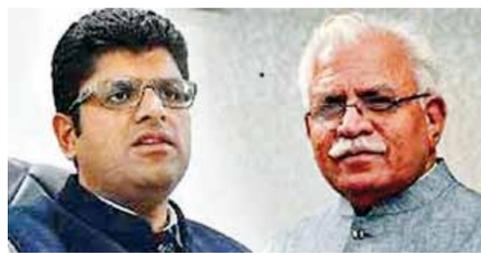


tion Day (July 11) falls during a milestone year, when we anticipate the birth of the Earth's eight billionth inhabitant. This is an occasion to celebrate our diversity, recognise our common humanity, and marvel at advancements in health that have extended lifespans and dramatically reduced maternal and child mortality rates, UN Secretary-General Ant nio Guterres said. At the same time, it is a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for our planet and

Alliance govt partners in Haryana may contest 2024 polls independently

SATISH HANDA

Alliance between BJP and JJP to form government in Haryana state was finalized after 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls when none of the political party in the state was able to have majority to form government independently and newly launched political party JJP (Janhit Janta Party) by Dushyant Chautala grandson of former Haryana chief minister Om Parkash Chautala became kingmaker getting 10 seats in Haryana Vidhan Sabha during its first attempt to form government in the state in alliance with BJP.



well as Vidhan Sabha polls independently since both political parties has now started preparations for coming elections. However, during a recent two days party meeting organised by JJP at Gurugram many of the senior party leaders expressed desire to contest 2024 Lok Sabha as well as Vidhan Sabha polls indepen-

dently. Similarly, BJP leaders too during a recent party meeting at Panchkula had given indication to contest coming 2024 polls independently. Even, during last civic polls held in Haryana state BJP had declared to contest these polls in the state alone, however the decision was changed to contest these polls jointly with

Congress left poll battle.

According to political experts in Haryana state, a rift has developed between the relationship of alliance partners after the incident when senior JJP leaders desired to strengthen party network in the state enabling to be in a position to contest 2024 Vidhan Sabha as well as Lok Sabha polls independently. Looking at the present situation, there is no guarantee that both alliance partners will contest next polls jointly or independently against each other because during recent party meeting held at Gurugram in which both JJP National President Ajay Singh Chautala and Deputy Prime Minister Dushyant Chautala were present took feed back

from JJP senior leaders for over six hours when most of them expressing themselves neglected were of view that party should contest next Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls alone.

According to information, the situation at present is not similar to that after 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls when Dushyant Chautala after separated from INLD launched his independent party and was able to win 10 Vidhan Sabha seats in first attempt and became a kingmaker to form government in Haryana state. But the situation is not similar at present since out of 10 JJP MLAs in Haryana Vidhan Sabha five MLAs are unhappy with the party and a few of them are under the influence of BJP.

Rs.55000 Cr NHs and other road projects to push Punjab's development: Harbhajan Singh



In order to further strengthen and improve the road network in the state, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann led state government is working strenuously and the construction of 32 major road projects of 1288 Km length at a cost of Rs.55,000 crore are being implemented. It was disclosed by the Punjab Public Works Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO, while presiding over a review meeting with the officials of Public Works and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) here at Punjab Bhawan. Divulging further, the Cabinet Minister said, the state government was committed to the overall development of the state, adding that government is working in the public interest with utmost sincerity.

505 kms Brownfield roads and works for 32 projects of 1288 kms have been awarded to the tune of around Rs.55,000 crores. Of these, 8 projects are under implementation in the state and the Appointed Dates of the remaining projects is expected to be fixed shortly.

Besides this, the issues relating to direct link from Jalandhar-Amritsar NH to Tam Taran bypassing Jandiala Guru, State road network development as part of overall road network, possibility of linking Sultanpur Lodhi to Beas so as to provide easy access to the religious places related to Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, lack of repair on Amritsar-Mehta-Sri Hargobindpur, Baba Bakala-Mehta-Batala and Amritsar-Ramdas-Dera Baba Nanak National Highways, bad condition of service roads in Ludhiana/Rajpura, Jandiala Guru, Daburji and other roads besides waterlogging on service roads at various location, construction of Vehicular Underpasses and flyovers on Jalandhar-Amritsar National Highway, inadequate maintenance of diversion routes adjoining NH where work is in process and road safety works, were discussed threadbare.

AAP govt committed to make Punjab drug-free state : Kang



Aam Aadmi Party's Punjab chief spokesperson Malvinder Singh Kang on Wednesday said the Bhagwant Mann-led government is committed to free the state from the drug menace, for which he held previous governments responsible.

He accused previous regimes of "just playing politics over the issue" and never showing real intent to eradicate it. "Earlier, only drug addicts or those who consume drugs were arrested and were put behind the bars," he told reporters here.

Now, 676 drug peddlers have been arrested in one week, he added, stressing that 559 FIRs were lodged and search operations are being conducted in each district. "We will fulfil the promise of making Punjab a drug-free state," said Kang.

Lathi charge on farmers will prove costly to Haryana govt: Rajwinder Kaur Raju



President of Mahila Kisan Union Biba Rajwinder Kaur Raju has held Haryana Government accountable for killing a farmer during lathi-charging by Barwala Police on farmers who were struggling for the last 84 days in front of Rajiv Gandhi Thermal Power Plant Khedar, Barwala and warned that the BJP dispensation would have to pay the price as it has continuously been committing atrocities on the farmers of the state.

Punjab CM Mann, wife offer prayers at Harmandir Sahib

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his wife on Monday visited the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) here and offered prayers at the shrine.

It was Mann's first visit to Amritsar after he got married to Dr Gurpreet Kaur.

Mann along with his wife, mother and sister paid obeisance at the sanctum sanctorum of the Golden Temple amid tight security arrangements.

Two Sikh priests gave "parsiad" to the newlywed couple who offered "Rumala Sahib", a Punjabi term for a square or rectangular piece of silk used to cover the Guru Granth Sahib.



Mann (48), the first chief minister of the state to get married while in office, had tied the knot with Kaur from Pehowa in Kurukshetra in Haryana on July 7.

This was Mann's second marriage. He separated from his first wife in 2015. From his first marriage, Mann has two children, daughter Seerat Kaur (21) and son Dilshan (17).

Drugs of value worth Rs 3 crore seized at Ambala railway station

Joint teams of CIA and GRP during search campaign in trains seized a bag lying under a seat containing 3 kg 80 gm heroine of value worth Rs 3 crore in the general coach of Jannagar-Shri Mata Veishnu Devi Katra Express train no. 12477 running between Jannagar and Katra (Jammu-Kashmir) on Thursday. Policemen while searching passengers luggage saw a suspicious bag lying under the seat when the train reached Panipat railway station at 7 AM which remained lying at the same place when train reached platform no. 7 at Ambala Cantt railway station at around 9AM and when asked no one claimed the bag, which was removed from the train by Dharamvir Singh SHO and taken to GRP police station Ambala Cantt in which drug was recovered and a case was registered against unidentified person on the complaint of Joginder Singh CIA Inspector.

Sangeeta Kalia SP Railways Ambala told that a campaign against drug smuggling has been started by the railway police under the supervision of Dheeraj Kumar DSP which solved four cases of drug smuggling in past three days in which drugs of value worth about Rs 2 lakh has been recovered. She told that in recent case of recovery of heroine of value worth Rs 3 crore in Jannagar-Katra Express train is a big achievement.

Information and Public Relations Minister presides over meeting with officers of department

CHANDIGARH: The Information and Public Relations Minister Mr. Aman Arora today presided over his first meeting with the officers of the department in order to have a grasp on its functioning and carrying out further refinements in tune with the changing times.

The Minister was apprised by the Secretary Gurkirat Kirpal Singh about various sections of the department such as Press Section, Advertisement and Punmedia Society



etc. The Secretary further said that the diligent and dedicated team of the officers is engaged headlong in disseminating the Government policies and programmes at the ground level besides devoting special attention to the social media

aspect to move in sync with the newly emerging trends now a days.

The Minister exhorted the officers to work in unison as a team and keep on making coordinated efforts so as to act as a bridge between the Government and the people who must be kept abreast of the progress centric policies of the State Government. «There would be zero tolerance towards laxity in the discharge of duties», added the Minister.

Over 16000 women identified falsely getting 'Vidhwa Pension' in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

It was only due to Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) scheme introduced by Haryana state government more than 16000 women were detected falsely claiming Vidhwa Pension due to husband's death or got married again after the death of their husband.

PPP scheme have proved beneficial to stop corruption in these frauds but also in various other sectors in the state. According to data available on PPP portal more than 16000 women in the state were found

falsely getting Vidhwa Pension from Social Justice and Rights department making claim after the death of their husband, whereas according to PPP data as well as verification conducted there after it was observed that after the death of husband they got married again and enjoying married life thus falsely claiming pension as such it was immediately stopped.

According to Vidhwa Pension scheme by social welfare department in the state, amount worth Rs 2500 each is being provided by the government towards Vidhwa Pension to widows whereas many of these were found falsely claiming the same or got married again and according to data available on PPP portal the name of their husband as well as other family members was there and during survey in large number of cases most the women were found married again and leading a happy life but falsely getting pension amount from the government.



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Daler Mehndi arrested in 2003 human trafficking case, sent to jail

A court in Punjab's Patiala on Thursday dismissed the plea of leading bhangra-pop singer Daler Mehndi against his two-year jail in a 19-year-old human trafficking case. He was subsequently arrested and sent to a local jail.

He was convicted along with his brother in March 2018 and later released on bail. As his bail plea was dismissed by the court of Additional Sessions Judge H.S. Grewal, Daler Mehndi was taken into custody. Police had registered a case against the singer, his brother Shamsher Singh -- who died in October 2017 -- and two others, after it was alleged that the accused took money from people to the tune of Rs 1 crore on the pretext of taking them abroad.

Complainant, Bakshish Singh, alleged that the deal never matured and the accused failed to return the money. The case was registered in 2003 in Patiala. Daler Mehndi was subsequently arrested but released on bail after a few days.

Five dead as car hits tree in Haryana's Narnaul



Five people died when the car in which they were travelling hit a tree near the Raghunathpura bypass in Haryana's Narnaul, police said on Thursday. The crash took place a little after midnight, Narnaul City police station SHO Inspector Santosh Kumar said. "The car hit a tree along the road, and the five occupants were killed in the incident," he said over the phone. Kumar said the victims were in the mid-30 to mid-50 age group.

NCW launches a series of awareness programmes on NRI marriages in Punjab



National Commission for Women (NCW) launched a series of 'Awareness Programmes on NRI Marriages: Do's and Don'ts, A Way Forward' across different districts of Punjab to disseminate information on the possible risks involved in NRI marriages, and to create awareness around preventive measures and legal remedies available for victims. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, NCW, Kuldeep Singh Dhalival, Minister of NRI Affairs, Government of Punjab, Prof Arvind, Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University and Meeta Rajiv Lochan, Member Secretary, NCW graced the occasion.

The awareness programs are being held in collaboration with Department of Law, Panjab

University and in association with SGPC, Punjab State Legal Service Authority, Punjabi University, Guru Nanak Dev University, Panchayats, NGOs and the local police.

These programmes aims to familiarize victims of NRI marriages of their rights, deliberate upon the challenges faced by aggrieved women in getting substantial relief through remedies available under Indian legal system and to seek possible solutions to effectively reduce them. The Commission invited eminent experts from the judiciary, administration and the academia as resource persons to inform and educate the participants on the role played by different machineries to provide relief to aggrieved women.

EVs dealership Shriji Enterprises launched in Chandigarh



KULBIR SINGH KALSI

Chandigarh's biggest electric vehicle showroom, Shriji Enterprises was launched here today. The showroom was inaugurated with pomp and show by Sanjiv Verma, National Head, and Pranesh, Sales Head, of Ampere.

Shriji Enterprises is an authorised dealership of Ampere Electric Vehicles (EVs), an electric two-wheeler subsidiary of 162-years old renewed brand, Greaves Cotton Pvt Ltd.

Puneet Mangla, Managing Director, Shriji Enterprises,

stated that to overcome the swelling fuel cost and environmental pollution, adoption of electric vehicles was the need of the hour. We got associated with Ampere (By Greaves) with a motive to address these issues for the residents of Tricity.

Enayat Mittal of Shriji Enterprises said that Ampere (By Greaves) is providing very reliable and high performing electric scooters. Its model - Magnus Ex is the high speed, and Reo Plus is the slow speed version of the EVs.

Union Minister for Textiles & Haryana CM inaugurates NIFT's Panchkula Campus

FW DESK

New campus of National Institute of Fashion Technology in Panchkula was inaugurated today by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles and Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister, Haryana.

During his address after the inauguration, Piyush Goyal applauded the efforts of various teams, Architecture Department, NIFT, Haryana Technical Education and other departments, which had worked on planning and construction of this campus. Talking about his roots in Haryana, the minister applauded the



efforts of Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana which made the establishment of this campus possible. Goyal revised the mantra of 5 F's for the fashion industry that are Farms to Fibre to Fabric to Fashion to Foreign

export to make the Textile industry of India a strong name in the world.

Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal thanked the former textile minister Smriti Irani and Prime Minister Narendra

Modi for their guidance and support through the planning and establishment of the centre. He said that the centre's building was exceptional and requested the central government to grant further funds to construct amphitheatre and auditorium for the centre. He also welcomed students from all over the country to Haryana.

Gian Chand Gupta, Hon'ble Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha, Rattan Lal Kataria, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Ambala and Kanwar Pal Gujjar, Haryana Education Minister were also present on the occasion.

The event began with inauguration of the campus with unveiling of plaque and ribbon cutting by

dignitaries. This was followed by a tour of the campus and plantation of saplings in the campus lawns.

NIFT Panchkula, established in 2019 with CE (Continuing Education) programmes, is the youngest one and is growing rapidly at its pace. Its first batch of degree students (Masters of Fashion Management) joined the campus in the year 2020. The centre has been ranked at 13th position in fashion education in the country in a study conducted by the Outlook India in 2022. NIFT Panchkula offers four Undergraduate Programmes in Fashion Design, Textile Design, Fashion Communication & Fashion technology and two Post-graduate Programmes in Design Space and Fashion Management.

Many Himachal BJP leaders eager to join Congress: Pratibha Singh



Himachal Pradesh Congress president Pratibha Singh Wednesday said that many BJP leaders are eager to join the Congress as they feel suffocated within their own party.

She made the comment in a statement, a day after former Himachal Pradesh BJP president Khimi Ram joined the Congress. In the statement, Pratibha Singh said that many BJP leaders are eager to join Congress as they feel suffocated due to infighting in the BJP. A former minister

and deputy speaker in the hill state, Khimi Ram had joined Congress on Tuesday in the presence of Rajiv Shukla, AICC in-charge for Himachal, and AICC secretaries Sudhir Sharma and Tejinder Bittu in New Delhi. Welcoming Khimi Ram into the party, Pratibha Singh said that Congress would be further strengthened with his joining the party. People are fed up with the policies and decisions of BJP and Congress is going ahead with full strength, she added.

Cabinet approves Taranga Hill-Ambaji-Abu Road new rail line to provide connectivity and improve mobility

FW DECK

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the construction of Taranga Hill-Ambaji-Abu Road new rail line to be constructed by Ministry of Railways at an estimated cost of Rs.2798.16 crore.

The total length of the new rail line will be 116.65 kms. The project will be completed by 2026-27. The project will gener-

ate direct employment during construction for about 40 lakh mandays. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a New India, the project is going to enhance connectivity and improve mobility leading to overall socio economic development of the region.

Ambaji is a famous important pilgrimage destination and is one of the 51 Shaktipeeths in India and attracts millions of devotees from Gujarat as well



as other parts of the country and abroad every year. The construction of this line will facilitate easy travel for these millions of devotees. Further, the devotees visiting the Ajitnath Jain

temple (one of the 24 holy Jain Tirthankaras) at Taranga Hill would also be greatly benefitted by this connectivity. This railway new line between Taranga Hill-Ambaji- Abu Road will connect these two important religious spots with railway's main network.

This line will facilitate faster movement of agricultural and local products and also provide improved mobility of the people in the region within the state of

Gujarat and Rajasthan and also to other parts of the country. This project will also provide alternative route for existing Ahmedabad-Abu Road railway line.

The alignment of the proposed doubling will traverse through Sirohi district of Rajasthan and Banaskantha and Mahesana districts of Gujarat. The construction of new rail line will attract investment and lead to overall socio-economic development of the region.

ED seizes assets of Mangaluru resident

Enforcement Directorate has seized assets worth Rs 17.34 crore of a Karnataka resident, who allegedly acquired property abroad and made overseas transactions in violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act.

The federal agency said in a statement that two houses and an industrial plot of Mangaluru resident K Mohammed Haris have been seized.

Haris, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleged, "ac-



quired" a flat in Ajman UAE, held foreign bank accounts and investments and shareholdings in a foreign business entity in UAE valued at AED 92,69,025.78 (equivalent to Rs 17,34,80,746), in violation of section 4 of FEMA, 1999."

Govt appoints 29 members in Board of Trade



The government has nominated 29 non-official members from large and small enterprises and different sectors in the Board of Trade, chaired by the commerce and industry minister.

The board, which includes participants from states, union territories, senior officials from public and private sectors, provides a platform to discuss ways on boosting manufacturing and exports. In 2019, the government had merged the Council of Trade Development and Promotion with the Board of Trade to bring greater coherence in the consultation process with all stakeholders for promoting exports and imports, according to a notification of the commerce ministry.

The new non-official members include Tata Consultancy Services Chief Executive officer and Managing Director Rajesh Gopinathan, KKR India Chairman Sanjay Nayyar, Laghu Udyog Bharati Executive Member Om Prakash Mittal.

India Cellular and Electronics Association Chairman Pankaj Mahindroo, GCMMF (Amul) Managing Director RS Sodhi, and Arun Mandal, Chief Executive Officer, Bidhannagar Pineapple Development Trust, West Bengal, are some of the other non-official members, it said.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind president greets people on the occasion of Bakrid

NEW DELHI: The President of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Syed Sadatullah Husaini greeted Muslims and fellow citizens on the occasion of Eid ul Adha. In a message sent to the media, the JIH President said: "I greet Muslims and our fellow countrymen on the occasion of Eid ul Adha. The day of Eid ul Adha is celebrated by Muslims all over the world to commemorate and remember the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be on him) and Prophet Ismael's (peace be on him) love for God and willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for gaining His pleasure and blessings. Complete surrender and dedication to the Lord of the universe, a strong commitment to principles and readiness to sacrifice everything for those principles formulate the core message of Eid ul Adha. This firmness and dedication are the epitome of human character and this character is a basic prerequisite for success. Muslims try to imbibe and emulate these noble values.

Giriraj makes fresh pitch for stringent population law

Union minister Giriraj Singh on Monday made a fresh pitch for a stringent law to control the population of the country, which he compared to the ever-expanding mouth of mythical female demon "Sursa".

The fire-brand BJP leader came out with a video statement on the occasion of World Population Day and shared it on Twitter.

Singh, who represents the Begusarai Lok Sabha seat in Bihar, rued that in the past three decades, India lost out to China in the pace of economic progress but surpassed its neighbour in the growth of population.

"We have limited resources. Our population is expanding like the mouth of Sursa. The perverse mindset (vikrit mansikta) out of which one person sires 10 children can not be allowed," Singh fumed.

He added that the need of the hour was a stringent law ("kada kanoon") for population control, "applicable across the country and to people of all religious affiliations". "The demand for such a law must be raised, from Parliament to the streets (sansad se sadak tak)," said the BJP leader.

Auction of 15 mineral blocks quashed

Auction of 15 mineral blocks has been quashed in the ongoing financial year, while 32 mines have been put on sale successfully. Of the mines whose auction is annulled, five each are limestone and manganese blocks, two each are bauxite and phosphorite blocks and one is a gold mine.

On the status of auction of mineral blocks in FY23 as on June 7, 2022, the mines ministry said 11 are in Madhya Pradesh and two each are in Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh. However, no reasons were given for the annulment of the auction of the 15 blocks. Of the 32 blocks auctioned, 10 are manganese, eight are limestone, seven are iron ore, five are bauxite and one each is graphite and phosphorite. Total 10 mineral blocks were auctioned in Madhya Pradesh, eight in Andhra Pradesh, four each in Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, two each in Maharashtra and Odisha and one each in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

No function held to mark Martyrs' Day in Kashmir

For the third consecutive year, no function was held to commemorate the Martyrs' Day in Kashmir to pay homage to 22 Kashmiri people who were killed by the army of a Dogra ruler on this day in 1931, officials said on Wednesday.

July 13 was a public holiday in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and a grand official function was held every year on this day where the chief minister or the governor would be the chief guest. However, the administration dropped the day from the list of gazetted holidays in 2020, after the abrogation of Article 370 and splitting of the erstwhile state into two union territories by the Centre on August 5, 2019. No function was held at the Martyrs' graveyard in the city while no holiday was observed for the third time on Wednesday, the officials said.

Apart from the official function at the Martyrs' graveyard, mainstream political leaders also used to visit it to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiris who fell to the bullets of the Dogra army while protesting the autocratic rule of Maharaja Hari Singh.

Late Monsoon rains lash Goa causing heavy floods, Potholed roads

BY DOMINICK RODRIGUES

The erstwhile Portuguese state of Goa is facing the stormy wrath of the rain gods with a Red Alert situation in the 2022 monsoons, which had assured the sky-watchers of timely arrival, then played truant, and suddenly arrived with a burst of fury that created floods, smashed houses and vehicles, and uprooted trees in its stormy path, while humans and animals covered miserably within their shelters.

While early June witnesses the timely arrival of the monsoons, the month this year however saw the State recording a 47 percent deficit in rainfall due to absence of factors responsible for enhancing the monsoon system like: formation of low-pressure area, depressions, trough circulation etc, according to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

The IMD noted that while the State's normal average rainfall till June 21 was 572.8 mm, Goa had



received in June this year only 304 mm of rain. Even as they were wondering about the monsoons' playing truant, the IMD were caught unawares in gauging the might of the stormy forces as the monsoon rains unleashed their power in a manner that foretold still worse things to come.

While swimming on the beaches were declared out-of-bounds for all including the numerous tourists that flocked to Goa for sampling its monsoon

flavor, bridges, roads and low-lying areas in Goa's cities and even villages were hit badly with many inner roads being submerged. A case in point was an inner highway parallel road in Guirim in North Goa between the Guirim Panchayat and the Guirim Chapel on the Highway 17, where one could see the 15-foot broad road submerged to a depth of a foot, while scooterists hesitated on making the crossing of barely 50 feet length.

IIT Madras remains best educational institute in country



The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras bagged the top spot among educational institutions in the country for the fourth consecutive year while the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru is the best university, according to the Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework.

The 2022 rankings were released by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday.

In the overall category, IIT Madras is followed by IISc Bengaluru at second spot while IIT Bombay has been ranked third.

Among the universities, IISc Bengaluru is followed by JNU at second spot and Jamia Millia Islamia at the third position.

IIT Madras is the best engi-

neering college followed by IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay.

Among the pharmacy institutions, Jamia Hamdard has bagged the top rank. The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad is the second best in the category while Panjab University, Chandigarh has been ranked third.

Five out of ten best colleges in the category are from Delhi with Miranda House topping the chart. Hindu College has bagged the second rank while Presidency College in Chennai is at the third spot.

AIMS Delhi is the best medical college in the category followed by PGIMER, Chandigarh and CMC, Vellore.

IIM Ahmedabad is the best management institution in the country followed by IIM Bengaluru and IIM Calcutta.

Bombs hurled at RSS office in Kerala

Bombs were hurled at a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office in Payyannur area of this northern district of Kerala on Tuesday with the party accusing CPI(M) of carrying out the attack.

The incident occurred around 1.00 AM, police said. The number of attackers is not yet known and CCTV footage of the area was being examined to ascertain the same, they said.

An FIR under relevant provisions of the Explosives Act has been registered and the investigation was going on to trace the culprits, they added. The RSS has accused CPI(M) workers of carrying out the attack. According to CCTV visuals of the attack several explosions could be seen within the boundary wall of the RSS office with many of its windows damaged in the incident.

TMC in fix over Murmu's candidature, fears opposing her might alienate tribal voters

Trinamool Congress is walking a tightrope on the candidature of NDA presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu, as it fears that going all guns blazing against her might alienate the tribal voters in West Bengal ahead of the panchayat elections next year and the 2024

Irani inaugurates Sealdah Metro station

Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani on Monday inaugurated the underground Sealdah Metro Railway station of East West Metro corridor in the city through virtual mode from Howrah Maidan station.

The first Metro train from Sealdah, which is among the busiest railway stations in the country, rolled towards Sector V in Salt Lake, the IT hub of the city, after she pressed the button to unveil the plaque. The programme was held amidst controversy over delayed invitation to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and was not attended by the local Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay or local MLA Paresh Pal.

Irani visited Sealdah metro station earlier in the day. She inaugurated it through the virtual mode from Howrah



Maidan station, the terminal station of East West Metro corridor on the other side of Hooghly river. "The full length of the East West Metro corridor will be completed by 2023," she said at the function.

The extended service of the East West Metro up to Sealdah on its 9 km truncated route will start commercially from

Thursday, an official said.

The service is now available between Sector V and Phoolbagan in the city and will be extended by 2.33 km.

Irani said that the extension to Sealdah, a terminal railway station in the city, will help around 35,000 passengers in their daily commute from adjoining districts.

Lok Sabha polls.

Tribals constitute 7-8 per cent of the state's population, and are a deciding factor in 47 assembly seats and seven Lok Sabha constituencies spread across the Jharkhand districts of Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura and Jhargram in

southern Bengal and Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar in the north.

The dilemma in the TMC, which was instrumental in building a consensus among non-BJP parties in naming Yashwant Sinha as the joint Opposition candidate, was evident as Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee said that Murmu could have been a consensus nominee had the NDA discussed with the Opposition before fielding her.

Banerjee said Murmu also has better chances of winning with the NDA's numbers bolstered following the change of

guard in Maharashtra.

Although Banerjee's statement has stunned many in the Opposition camp, TMC insiders believe that the electoral arithmetic in tribal-dominated Jharkhand region might have prompted the party chief's remarks.

Don't allow terrorists on social media



BY NARVIJAY YADAV

The world population is currently touching the figure of 8 billion. Looking at the speed with which the human population is increasing in various countries of the world, it is estimated that by the year 2050, the total human population on the earth will reach 10 billion or more. This is a very huge number, which is posing a danger in terms of food supply and other day-to-day necessities of the people. The burden of the human population on the earth is increasing every passing year, while humans are destroying other creatures and trees for their greed and to make their life comfortable. The life of all living beings in nature is dependent on each other. This makes an ecosystem. The bio-balance of the earth is disturbed when the number of any of these organisms or vegetation increases or decreases out of proportion. As a result, all kinds of natural

calamities and problems arise. Man is increasing his population, and is bent on destroying trees, vegetation, insects, birds, animals, and wildlife in different ways. This is a matter of great concern. Problems are arising due to this reason not only in one country but in all the countries of the world. In terms of population, China ranks first in the world, India is second, and America is in third place.

As the population increases, facilities like education, health, and housing decline. The crisis of the availability of fuel to food arises in front of the world. Due to the increasing population, problems related to the environment, food supply, water shortage, energy crunch, unemployment, etc. arise in all the countries of the world. As the population increases, the standard of living falls and problems creep in. About 17 percent of the world's population lives in India, where illiteracy is the main reason for population growth.

About 50 percent of the world's population (8 billion) is present on various social me-



dia platforms. That is, about 4 billion people are constantly active on social media. Of these, 30 percent of social media users are those who are below 30 years of age. To attract most of these youth and make them join their gangs, terrorists from all over the world are super active on social media. The condition is that 90 percent of terrorist activities are being carried out through social media only. IS is considered the world's most dangerous terrorist organization, which has 70 million followers on

Twitter. Terrorist organizations such as the Taliban and IS use social media, including platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, to recruit new members to execute their terrorist operations. These people make videos of terrorist incidents and post them on social media and make them viral. They also earn huge income from the advertisements running on their social media accounts.

Apart from climate and natural disasters, other problems facing the world population

include wars, conflicts, and economic or political tensions between different countries. For example, in Sri Lanka at the moment the situation is very bad. Their people do not have food to eat, and there is no petrol and diesel available for transport or travel. The country remains politically unstable. The economies of south-east Asian nations like Sri Lanka and Pakistan have collapsed due to their dependence on China. A situation like Sri Lanka can get repeated in Pakistan any day, as is estimated by political experts. People in Sri Lanka are facing a severe shortage of food and fuel. There is an atmosphere of extreme anarchy in the country.

The main reason behind this crisis is being told that the government there suddenly turned the country towards organic farming, and completely banned the import of fertilizers from outside. The people of Sri Lanka were not ready for such a big change. This created a crisis in agricultural production. Today the situation there is such that essential food items

like tomato, potato, and rice are being sold at the rate ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 1000 per kg. The situation in Pakistan is also similar. The Pakistan government has to take new loans to pay the interest on its debt. The people there are also very upset. China gave huge loans to these two countries to implement many of its projects. Now China is not coming forward to help them.

The way floods create havoc in the northeast, particularly in Assam during the rainy season, almost the same devastation occurs every year in hill states like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh as well. Due to excessive rainfall in these hilly regions, there is a lot of destruction to infrastructure and property. In many other states also accidents happen due to floods in rivers. Recently, a cloudburst near the Amarnath cave killed over 15 pilgrims, while many more are missing. Stones are falling on Kedarnath's all-weather road in Uttarakhand. Recently a car was badly damaged due to heavy stone falling in the Kasauli area

of Himachal Pradesh. Those traveling towards the mountains during the rainy season should be very careful. Traveling on dangerous routes should be avoided as far as possible. It is not free from danger to visit places of tourist importance even on rainy days.

Almost every person in India has a mobile phone, while a large population owns a smartphone. According to a recent report by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), 60 percent of the people in the country use the Internet. In urban areas, this number is 70 percent, while in rural areas about 40 percent of people use the Internet. In the last year, the number of telephone and internet subscribers in the country has increased, while the income of telecom companies has gone down. Mobile phones have the largest number of internet users in the country, and this figure is about 97 percent.

The writer is a senior journalist & columnist, view are personal

Fretting about current account deficit justified

India's Finance Ministry is sanguine about India's economic recovery and has asserted that major macro-economic risks have subsided over the past six weeks. The Government's cautious optimism is tinged with impending concerns of a speedier tightening of monetary policies by the U.S. Federal Reserve and the resultant dip in asset markets, which can mar sentiment and consumption, on top of persistent geopolitical strife. But for now, interest rate hikes and measures to curtail the outflow of dollars announced by the central bank, with several steps from the government such as the imposition of windfall taxes and higher import duties on forex-drainers like gold, have been credited for lifting some of the dark clouds over the economy. Despite excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel, the Ministry believes India's fiscal math for the year will not unravel thanks to the recent tax levies, and healthy Goods and Services Tax collections (that could get healthier as some GST rate hikes kick in from Monday). Industrial metal prices slipping to 16-month lows, prices for some food items falling off their peaks and crude oil prices descending in the face of fears of a recession in many developed nations, have helped. However, if these fears do not translate into 'a sustained and meaningful' drop in food and energy prices, India's current account deficit will deteriorate in 2022-23 on account of costlier imports and tepid exports on the merchandise account, the Ministry has cautioned. India's high import dependence for fuel means oil price trajectories affect most macro parameters, including inflation, growth, current account balances, fiscal management and the rupee. And economic policymakers are rightfully concerned about the current account deficit (CAD) widening sharply from the 1.2% of GDP last year. There is a vicious circle at work here that may take a while to break.

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COLIN GONSALVES DELVES INTO A SUSTAINED AND ORGANISED CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION VIA ONLINE TROLLING

Dealing with online hate factory

The recent ferocious attack on a judge of the Supreme Court of India by the IT cell of a prominent national political party has given the impression that there are a significant number of people opposed to the scathing judicial criticism of the former national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Nupur Sharma, for her remarks on the Prophet. Rather, it may well be that an overwhelming part of all religious communities would feel a sense of pride that a person of his standing would stand up to the tyranny of groups engaging in hate speech.

Pertinent questions

The criticism delivered from the Bench for the first time showed that some judges indeed have a spine and are capable of speaking the truth to power. Particularly at this time when Government interference with the judiciary is at its height (with transfers and supersessions of independent-minded judges), the pungent and fully justified remarks of the judge were like a fresh wind blowing through the country and the judiciary, and boosted the confidence of judges to stand up to executive excesses.

Equally important, the events of the past few days and the uncouth trolling of the judge raise very important questions relating to the ever-growing tendency by the Government to intimidate the judiciary. The questions that arise are: Who are these groups that attack democratic-minded individuals who speak out against injustice? Does the Government have an underground network which operates as an arm of the Government? And, are they financially supported and ideologically encouraged to engage in hate speech? Finally, what should the judiciary do to stamp out organised hate speech of this kind, whether it be against journalists, political opponents of the Government or the judiciary?

In her book, I am a Troll, Swati Chaturvedi describes Internet trolls as persons who sow discord through inflammatory comments on the



Internet. She traces the growth of this network from the early 2000s and attributes its steep upward curve to the support it received from a senior political leader in Government. 'Right-wing propaganda websites constantly peddle hate tweets and slander journalists. They are backed up by coordinated hashtag campaigns where anonymous Twitter handles retweet the same tweet continuously until trending begins'.

She gives instances of tweets of 'gory cow slaughter and imaginary instances of love jihad'. Some of them 'mock women who face sexual abuse and harassment'. They did not spare their own party leader, Maneka Gandhi, when she set up a helpline called '#IAMTrolledHelp'.

A Twitter handle from this group engaged in sustained abuse of a well-known female broadcast journalist. Another hosted a photoshopped picture of a female actor when she joined the Aam Aadmi Party. One of this network asked for 'execution of undertrials without due process saying that the State should not bother to arrest suspects but kill in cold blood'. An extreme episode was when a Congress spokesperson 'was threatened with Nirbhaya-style rape by trolls'. In the context of pellet blinding in Kashmir, there were trolls who called for 'mass murder of Kashmiris, and the dropping of a bomb on

a funeral procession'. When journalist Gauri Lankesh was killed in Bengaluru in 2017, a Twitter handle followed by leaders of the party in power tweeted a message that had much profanity. Other journalists were also threatened that they were 'going the Gauri Lankesh way'.

The Wire reported that a network of 757 Twitter accounts was used to mount attacks against Mohammed Zubair (co-founder of fact-checking website Alt News) and the website, and that the recovery email id for the anonymous Twitter handle was that of a youth leader of the party in power. These accounts revealed sub-accounts 'which exhibited multiple characteristics associated with bot-like and inauthentic behaviour posting more than 500 times a day at all hours of the day'. The purpose was to manipulate public perception about the arrest of Mr. Zubair.

Similar targeting processes were managed by 'Tek Fog' (a 'sophisticated app used by online operatives to hijack major social media and encrypted messaging platforms'); over eight lakh hostile replies were sent out to tweets by women journalists, of which over five lakh were classified as 'offensive'. The Wire commented that the handlers of 'Tek Fog' are politically aligned and that is why 'India's political elite are

silent'. One of the hashtags amplified by these operatives 'reached an audience of around eight crore users'. Newslandry has reported that this 'well-oiled propaganda machine churned out fake videos and mass tweet links to gear up for Twitter storms'.

Online abuse has often led to actual violence as in the case of the attack on a prominent lawyer by persons who barged into his office. This is not surprising because, as reported by Ms. Chaturvedi, 'office bearers of the party in power have publicly supported these trolls'.

The IT cell of the Government has seen its activity expand with the induction of many volunteers and paid workers. Ms. Chaturvedi has reported that the party in power has 'created a bank of thousands of dormant Twitter accounts' to be used for 'synchronized tweeting' and 'storms'. The party also has 'bots created by the central IT Cell which tweets out identical messages simultaneously' so that they 'look like a real user'. These volunteers and employees 'were given a hit list of mainstream journalists who needed to be constantly attacked'. One of the India's most prominent and respected female journalists was attacked in 'filthy terms' and given 'rape threats'. These volunteers and employees use virtual private networks (VPNs) to 'hide the actual location of the user'.

Going back to the incident of Nupur Sharma in the Supreme Court, it is imperative that the Court understands that the country stands with the judiciary. The hate speech tweets are manufactured by a factory of a political party that produces millions of hate speeches. A criminal investigation by an independent special investigation team of the police is called for. Prosecution must follow. This hate speech manufacturing network must be crushed. This is vital for democracy to survive and for the judiciary not to be intimidated.

Colin Gonsalves is a senior advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India. Views are personal.



SHASHANK PANDEY EXPLORES WHY THE GOAL OF INCLUSIVENESS AND EMPOWERMENT CONTINUES TO BE ELUSIVE

The great omission in the draft disability policy

The Department of Empowerment of Person with Disabilities (DoEPwD) recently released the draft of the national policy for persons with disabilities ('Policy') — public comments have been invited till July 15, 2022 (at: panda.dk@nic.in). The necessity for a new policy which replaces the 2006 policy was felt because of multiple factors such as India's signing of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities; enactment of a new disability legislation (Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016) which increased the number of disabilities from seven conditions to 21 and being a party to the Incheon Strategy for Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 ('Incheon commitment'). The last was prepared under the aegis of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) which identifies 10 goals for Asia-Pacific countries to ensure the inclusion and the empowerment of persons with disabilities and conformity with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

These commitments have changed the discourse around disability by shifting the focus from the individual to society, i.e., from a medical model of disability to a social or human rights model of disability.

The principle of the draft policy is to showcase the Government's commitment to the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities by providing a mechanism that ensures their full participation in society.

In furtherance of this commitment, the policy document highlights a detailed commitment to education, health, skill development and employment, sports and culture, social security, accessibility and other institutional mechanisms. However, a glaring omission is the absence of any commitment to the political uplift of persons with disabilities.

Article 29 of the Convention on Rights of



Persons with Disabilities mandates that state parties should 'ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives....' The Incheon goals also promote participation in political processes and in decision making. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 embodies these principles within its fold. The anti-discrimination commitment under this Act recognises the political domain wherein disabled people should be allowed to realise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The documents fail to take cognisance of such mandates.

Political empowerment and the inclusion of the disabled are an issue that has not found traction in India's democratic discussion. India does not have any policy commitment that is aimed at enhancing the political participation of disabled people.

The exclusion of disabled people from the political space happens at all levels of the political process in the country, and in different ways. For instance, the inaccessibility of the voting process, barriers to participation in party politics or a lack of representation at

the local, State or national levels have all aggravated the marginalisation of the disabled.

Section 11 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act prescribes that 'The Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissions shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable by and accessible to them'. Although this mandate has been in existence for a few years, the disabled people still report accessibility issues before and on election day. There is often a lack of accessible polling booths in many locations. There is still no widespread adaptation of braille electronic voting machines and even wheelchair services at all polling centres. The Election Commission of India has developed its own procedures for handling PwDs during the electoral process. Political parties in India still do not find the disabled as the large electorate to specifically address their needs.

The lack of live aggregate data on the exact number of the disabled people in every constituency only furthers their marginalisation. The lack of accessible space for party meetings, inaccessible transport for campaigning or an attitudinal barrier among voters and party leaders can be termed as contributing factors. Thus, we seldom see disability being highlighted in the manifestos of parties.

Inadequate representation

Representation plays an imperative role in furthering the interests of the marginalised community. Our Constitution makers recognised this when they provided for reservation for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes in the legislature. Disabled people are not represented enough at all three levels of governance. The response to a right to information filing by this writer to the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry showed that the Government does

not maintain data on the disability aspect of members. The first visually disabled Member of Parliament in independent India, Sadhan Gupta, hardly finds mention in our political or disability discourse. We have often failed to acknowledge disabled political personalities who have overcome the myriad barriers in India's political space.

However, few States have begun the initiative at local levels to increase participation. For instance, Chhattisgarh started the initiative of nominating at least one disabled person in each panchayat. If a disabled person is not elected then they are nominated as a panchayat member as per changes in the law concerned. This is a step that has increased the participation of the disabled in the political space at local level.

The goal of the policy document — of inclusiveness and empowerment — cannot be achieved without political inclusion. The policy can follow a four-pronged approach: building the capacity of disabled people's organisations and 'empowering their members through training in the electoral system, government structure, and basic organisational and advocacy skills'; the creation, amendment or removal of legal and regulatory frameworks by lawmakers and election bodies to encourage the political participation of the disabled; inclusion of civil societies to 'conduct domestic election observation or voter education campaigns'; and a framework for political parties to 'conduct a meaningful outreach to persons with disabilities when creating election campaign strategies and developing policy positions'.

Shashank Pandey is a Javed Abidi Fellow at the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP). He was a Legislative Assistant to Members of Parliament (LAMP) Fellow. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book focuses on PM Modi's organizational skills

Be it his experiments with traditional methods of party-building, keen eye for detail or application of various innovative methodologies to expand the party, a new book offers a deep insight into the organizational skills of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that it claims laid the foundation of the new BJP. 'The Architect of the New BJP: How Narendra Modi Transformed the Party', slated for release on Monday, is written by senior journalist Ajay Singh — currently serving as the press secretary to President Ram Nath Kovind. Published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI), the book tells how PM Modi and his 'unmatched organizational skills' paved the way for his rise in the party and transformed

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) into 'the election-winning machine it is today'.

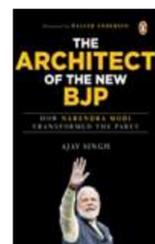
'It is naively assumed that his (Modi's) rise has solely to do with Hindutva plus economic development -- often called 'Moditva'. But this view ignores the methods he deployed to broaden the base of his organization, the BJP, and helped to connect it with more and more people,' writes the author in the book. 'His ways are often old textbook methods, applied with more tenacity and conviction, and even his rivals have started imitating his innovations, albeit unwittingly,' he added.

It reveals the lesser-known contributions of Modi, including his relief work as RSS pracharak during the Gujarat's Machchhu dam

It is naively assumed that his (Modi's) rise has solely to do with Hindutva plus economic development -- often called 'Moditva'

crisis in 1979 -- which brought a welcome change in people's perception towards the organisation -- and his instrumental role behind the BJP's win of the crucial Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) polls in 1987, the very year he joined the saffron party.

Based on extensive interviews with many party workers, leaders and observers, according to the publishers, the book uses in-depth



The Architect of the New BJP: How Narendra Modi Transformed the Party By Ajay Singh; Vintage/PRH; 288 pages Rs 599.

research and concrete examples to explain how the BJP has transformed over the decades.

The foreword of the book is written by American academician Walter Andersen, the co-author of 'The RSS: A View to the Inside' (2018) and 'The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism' (1987).

'... Unlike so many studies of Modi, this is not a book that relies almost exclusively on news reports and quotes that appear in the press. Nor does it have an agenda aimed primarily at condemning or praising,' he wrote in his description of the book.

Singh's book is an excellent guide to anyone wanting to know how Prime Minister Modi oversaw both the strategic and tactical aspects of the BJP's growth. Singh points out three basic tactics: one, with the help of full-time workers loaned from the RSS, Modi helped build a superstructure of the BJP organisation. Second, he urged 'notables' from outside the Sangh fold to join the party so that they could appeal to a wider audience. Third, once Modi realised people were responding to him, he used his ability to move voters like none other, distilling ideas he had picked up on various assignments for the RSS.

The first two tactics had their detractors. Leaders with a conservative bent of mind, like former BJP president Kushabhau Thakre insisted on roping in only those fully immersed in the RSS organisational culture and not outsiders. Prime Minister Modi, however, persisted with this strategy, says Singh.

Government formulates strategy to promote NER as Agri export hub

To give boost to the export of horticulture products grown in North-Eastern (NE) states, the Government is now up with a robust strategy to promote locally produced agricultural products to the international markets. The NE region is geopolitically important as it shares international boundaries with China and Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh making it the potential hub for the export of agricultural produce to neighbouring countries as well as other foreign destinations.

As a result, there has been a significant increase in the export of agricultural produce from NE states like Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya in the last few

years. The NE region witnessed an 85.34 percent growth in the export of agricultural products in the last six years as it increased from USD 2.52 million in 2016-17 to USD 17.2 million in 2021-22. The major destination of export has been Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Middle East, the UK and Europe.

To provide potential market linkages, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development and Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, organised field visits of importers to have first-hand information about the qualitative cultivation practices being followed by farmers. Importers were mostly the Middle East, far Eastern countries, and European nations and Australia, etc.

In the last three years, APEDA



organised 136 capacity building programmes on export awareness across the different parts of NER. Highest, 62 capacity building programmes were held in NER in 2019-20, while 21 in 2020-21 and 53 such programmes were organised by APEDA in the year 2021-22. Apart from capacity building initiatives, APEDA facilitated 22

International Buyer-Seller Meets as well as trade fairs in NER in the last three years.

APEDA also organised organised conference on the Export Potential of Natural, Organic and Geographical Indications (GI) Agro Products in Guwahati on June 24, 2022 to tap the abundant export potential of organic agricultural products from Assam

and neighbouring states of NER.

APEDA aims at creating a platform in Assam for the exporters to get the products directly from the producer group and the processors. The platform will link the producers and processors of Assam and exporters from other parts of the country that would expand the base of the export pockets in the North-Eastern states, including Assam and increase the employment opportunities among the people of the state.

APEDA signs MoU with Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat to conduct various training programmes on pre-harvest and post-harvest management and other research activities for the promotion of export from the region.

Adani Data Networks, Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea to bid for spectrum

Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Data Networks, Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have applied to participate in the upcoming 5G auction, according to a list issued by the Department of Telecom on Tuesday.

The spectrum auction, scheduled to start on July 26, may see aggressive bids for some frequency bands, with the entry of Adani Data Networks and established players Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel looking to strengthen their hold in the industry. "...applications have been received from the...applicants for participation in the 2022 Auction for rights to use Spectrum in 600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz and 26 GHz Bands," the Department of Telecom (DoT) said.

Applicants have time till July 19 to withdraw their applications. Adani Group on Saturday said it is in the race to acquire spectrum, which it said will be used to create a private network to support its businesses from airports to power as well as data centres. A total of 72,097.85 MHz of spectrum worth at least Rs 4.3 lakh crore will be put on the block during the auction, set to commence on July 26, 2022. The auction will be held for spectrum in various low (600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz,



1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz), mid (3300 MHz) and high (26 GHz) frequency bands. On Monday, BofA Securities in a note on the Adani Group's plans to bid in 5G auctions said: "We consider this news flow negative for incumbent telcos as it increases competition in upcoming auction bidding as well as in the long-term opportunity to target the enterprise space". Brokerage CLSA wondered why would Adani bid in auction versus awaiting a direct spectrum assignment.

"The question is why would Adanis bid in auction versus awaiting a direct spectrum assignment? Adani's entry will create uncertainty over spectrum pricing in the 5G auctions, which was expected to see bidding competition primarily between Bharti Airtel and R.Jio," it said in a report.

Goldman Sachs said that while the group has stated it does not intend to be in the consumer mobility space, "we believe if the Adani Group does end up buying spectrum in the upcoming auction, it could potentially increase competition in enterprise 5G, in addition to opening the doors for the Adani Group to expand into consumer mobile services over time".

Globally, 5G services have been launched in three bands -- 700MHz (coverage), 3.5GHz (5G coverage and capacity) and 26GHz (capacity and low latency). "However, with Adani group ruling out offering consumer mobility services, we believe that its participation in 5G spectrum auctions will be limited to 3.5 GHz and 26 GHz bands for provision of private enterprise 5G network services," said Credit Suisse.

FMCG makers expect recovery in volume growth, margin in Q2FY23

With commodity prices peaking out, major FMCG players, including Parle Products, Godrej Consumer Products and Dabur expect a recovery in demand in both rural and urban markets going forward aided by price stability.

Moreover, FMCG makers can look forward to better gross margins by the last month of Q2FY23 on a year-on-year basis, as there is a lag of around two months in their inventory coupled with forward contracts, experts say. Prices of commodities have now peaked out and there has been a 15-20 per cent decline from peak prices in most commodities, according to Parle Products Senior Category Head Mayank Shah.

IIT-M develops indigenous management system for ONGC

Premier research institute Indian Institute of Technology-Madras on Thursday said it has developed a large database management software system that would collect structural and design related data for Oil and Natural Gas Corporation to reduce their cost of maintenance and rehabilitation of offshore oil platforms.

The software 'Structural Integrity Management System' (SIMS) was developed by the Offshore Structures Group by the department of ocean engineering at IIT Madras. "It has a large database management system housing crucial information about structural and other design related data, which can be extracted by a click of button, saving considerable time and effort for ONGC," a press release said.

Spinny's Q2 report reveals continued demand for used cars

FW DESK

As demand for personal mobility increases, Spinny, India's full-stack used car marketplace, witnessed a significant growth in its used car inventory in the second quarter of 2022. In Spinny's Q2 trend report 2022, over 57% of buyers were first-time buyers. This report reveals several interesting insights about buying and selling pre-owned cars in India.

As a result of the high demand for contactless buying & selling in the used-car industry, Spinny reported 44% digital transactions. Interestingly, Spinny has witnessed 32% women buyers in Q2. The majority of Spinny's car buyers are between 30 and 40 years old. The boost in demand for used cars is due to a number of factors, including personal mobility needs, economic factors, and the acceptance of used cars. The key goal of the brand is to create an efficient, credible and reliable ecosystem for used-car owners. Among favourite brands, Maruti, Hyundai, and Honda cars reign supreme. Hatchbacks are the most popular model type, followed by sedans and SUVs. Three of the most preferred car models are the Hyundai elite i20, grand i10 and Maruti Suzuki Baleno. Colours like white, grey, and silver, specifically in that order, are among Spinny buyers' favourites.

After UP, Uttarakhand to build film city

Uttarakhand, a popular shooting destination among filmmakers, could soon have a film city of its own with state government officials being tasked with identifying a suitable piece of land in the hill state for the project.

Special Principal Secretary Abhinav Kumar held a meeting with officials of the information department at Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami camp office here on Tuesday. He also asked officials to prepare an action plan for building film industry-related infrastructure and creating basic shooting and production facilities, according to a press release.

Besides, Kumar directed officials to consult a national-level film training institute and work towards establishing its branch in Uttarakhand.

A plan should also be worked out for providing subsidies for mobile theatres in hilly and border areas and for films based on the dialects and languages of Uttarakhand selected for screening at national and international



film festivals, the release said.

Courses related to films and filmmaking should be introduced in universities of Uttarakhand, it added.

Hindi cinema's love affair with the picturesque locales of Uttarakhand goes back to Bimal Roy's 1958 paranoal romance "Madhumati", starring Dilip Kumar and Vyjayanthimala, which was shot in the hills of Almora.

Following a string of conces-

sions under the single-window clearance system, developed by the state government, Uttarakhand has gained popularity as a shooting spot in recent years.

Other Hindi films shot in the state include Karan Johar's "Student of the Year" series, Abhishek Kapoor's "Kedarnath", Shree Narayan Singh's "Batti Gul Metre Chalu" and Tigmanshu Dhulia's "Paan Singh Tomar".

IIM Udaipur to gamify Management Education through a fun learning elective course: Management Games

FW DESK

Taking a stride in innovation in management teaching, the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur (IIM Udaipur) has strengthened its MBA program with a new fun learning course - Management Games, which promotes decision making through application of management theories to real time situations. It is a carefully curated course where students first play board games which is followed by debriefing sessions, where the faculty connects these games to management learnings.

Speaking about the course, Prof Shobhit Aggarwal, who teaches the 'Management Games' course said, "I believe that gamification of management education would revolutionize the way we think about learning. The board-game-based pedagogy already has acceptance in the corporate world and the reviews received from both corporates and students alike are exceptionally good. I am confident that this experiential learning pedagogy is the future of high-impact management education - both in business school courses and in corporate training requirements."

Sharing more insights about the evolving pedagogy, Prof. Janat Shah, Director, IIM Udaipur, said, "This course will equip students with advanced education that will enable them to manage real-world situations in the chosen field. It will also help them to enhance their problem-solving abilities required in industry practices."



Ola unveils lithium-ion cell built in-house

Electric vehicles company Ola has unveiled a lithium-ion cell, NMC 2170, built in-house.

Ola said in a statement on Tuesday it will begin the mass production of its cell from its upcoming Gigafactory by 2023.

"The use of specific chemistry & materials enables the cell to pack more energy in a given space and also improves the overall life cycle of the cell," it said. "The cell has been developed keeping the indigenous conditions at the core".

Founder and CEO, Ola Electric, Bhavish Aggarwal noted that a cell is the heart of the EV revolution.

"Ola is building the world's most advanced cell research

TECNO CAMON 19 series redefines lowlight smartphone photography with pioneering 64 MP Triple Rear camera with RGBW Sensor

TECNO Mobile the premium smartphone brand of TRANSION India announces the launch of a pioneering and premium, TECNO CAMON 19 series in India, under its camera-focused CAMON product line. The initial phase of the launch will witness two products viz. TECNO CAMON 19 & TECNO CAMON 19 Neo under the series. Keeping up with its segment-first approach the highly anticipated TECNO CAMON 19 features the industry-first 64MP triple rear, with the next-generation RGBW camera sensor and 16MP HDR Selfie Camera, enabling one to click clear and impressive pictures with detailed out delineation.



Cosmo Films Limited re-brands as Cosmo First Limited

FW DESK

Cosmo Films Ltd, a global leader in Films for packaging, labelling, lamination and synthetic paper and an emerging player in Specialty Chemicals, Polymers & Pet Care today announced its new brand identity, Cosmo First Limited - Ahead always!

The strategic decision comes considering the company's business activities have expanded beyond films into specialty chemicals (master-batches, coatings, and textile chemicals) and D2C Pet care. The rebranding reiterates the value of Cosmo and strengthens its focus to create a better life for the people, the world, and the community we live in; built on Trust, Empathy, and Compassion. Cosmo First Limited stands for four-decade young Indian business conglomerate that thrives on innovation to unlock value in diverse sunrise sectors such as Polymer, Specialty Chemicals and D2C Pet Care.

Talking about the rebranding, Ashok Jaipuria, Chairman and Managing Director, Cosmo First said, "Cosmo at its core has always been pioneering revolutionary innovations to create a better life. All through our

Secretary, Agriculture addresses Conference on 'Scope of Public-Private Partnership in Agriculture'



Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Government of India in association with Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a conference on 'Scope of Public Private Partnership in Agriculture' in New Delhi today.

Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India delivered the Keynote address on Government's expectations from Industry, focussing on incorporation of the private sector expectation in the formulation of architectural framework for sector development, shared understanding, knowledge & resources for overall development. In her address N. Vijayalakshmi, JS (Marketing) laid emphasis on strengthening the four I's namely Inputs, Infrastructure, Investments and Institutions for developing a conducive ecosystem for PPP projects in Agriculture.

Samuel Praveen Kumar, Joint Secretary (Extension, AIF and I&PS), Dept. of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare mentioned about de-risking of agriculture and stressed the need for developing scalable, viable and replicable business models while leveraging the strengths of public and private sectors to have a "win-win" situation.

journey, we have prided ourselves in our ability to provide industry-first niche solutions in the areas of packaging, lamination, industrial and labelling applications. We have made inspiring diversifications into specialty chemicals, consumer care, and D2C retail, aiming to be a pioneer in these previously fragmented industries."

"We would like to be the first choice for all our stakeholders and will strive hard to always stay ahead of the curve to provide industry first solutions," he added. Cosmo First with its continued aspiration aims to steer high growth businesses in India that are sustainable, scalable, and profitable, and deliver lasting value for all the stakeholders through innovation, excellence, collaboration, integrity and customer centricity.

FPIs take out over Rs 4,000 Cr from equities in July so far, pace of selling slows

Foreign investors continue to desert Indian equity markets and have pulled out over Rs 4,000 crore this month so far amid steady appreciation of the dollar and rising interest rates in the US. However, the pace of selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) has been declining over the last few weeks.

"With oil prices breaching the

USD 100 a barrel mark, and refining margins cracking across markets, hopes for lower inflation helped improve market sentiments. RBI's measure to help stem the sliding rupee added to the building bullish momentum," said Vijay Singhania, Chairman at TradeSmart. Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India,

however, believes that the decline in the pace of net withdrawal by FPIs does not signify a change in trend as there has not been any significant improvement in the underlying drivers.

FPIs have been on selling mode for the last nine months. FPI inflows will resume once there are clear indications of inflation peaking out, likely to be

manifested in global CPI readings around August-September, said Hitesh Jain, Lead Analyst - Institutional Equities, YES Securities.

"If the high inflation narrative takes a back seat, there will also be a possibility of central banks turning soft on the projected rate hikes, which again will bring the risk assets back in the reckoning," he added.

India is One of the Fastest Growing Economies in the World: Amit Shah

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah said that with 8.2% growth, India is at present one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the coal and mines sector of the country is contributing considerably to the present economic growth.

Addressing the 6th National Conclave on Mines and Minerals organized as part of AKAM Iconic week celebrations by the Mines ministry here today, Amit Shah said that the reforms undertaken by the present government has resulted in eliminating deep rooted corruption existed in coal block allotments. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always given utmost priority to ensure reforms in the mining sector so that it can further contribute to the overall economic growth of the country. These reforms have resulted in noteworthy improvement in coal production



domestically and the imports have reduced considerably, the minister said. Mining sector is of paramount importance in generating income to States and multiple employment avenues, the Home Minister added.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi said that the conclave is expected to provide very useful inputs / feedback for further reforms in the mining sector. He said that coal production has increased

considerably from 577 Million Ton in 2014 to 817 Million Ton at present and the overall production during this fiscal is likely to cross 920 Million Ton. The aim is to auction as many as 500 mineral blocks by the end of 2024, the Joshi added.

The Minister highlighted the use of drones and other latest technologies to give further fillip to the mining sector. Addressing the function, Minister of State for Coal, Mines & Railways Raosaheb Patil Danve touched upon the achievements of the govern-

ment during the last eight years. He also highlighted the importance of sustainable mining.

Conferring the first ever national level award Rashtriya Khanij Vikas Puraskar to the best performing States in mining, giving away of incentives to mineral rich states for auctioning of mineral blocks were some of the highlights of the one-day conclave. Rashtriya Khanij Vikas Puraskar was given away in three different categories. The States of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan bagged the coveted award for excellence in mining sector.

Awards for 5-Star Rated mines for the year 2020-21 to promote sustainable mining, National Geo Science Awards-2019 for contributions in the field of fundamental/applied geosciences, mining and allied areas were also given

away in the conclave.

59 fresh blocks were presented to the State Governments and 29 fresh coal blocks to the Ministry of Coal today.

Ministry of Mines also launched three modules of Mining Tenement System (MTS) developed by Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) which would facilitate the stake holders in submission of online application of registrations, monthly, annual statutory returns and mining plan.

Both the public and the private mining Companies actively took part in the conclave which was an effective platform for the various Government organizations of the mining sector, viz. Union Mines Ministry, State Mining Departments, regulators such as IBM and DGMS, exploration entities GSI and NMET to interact with the mining and allied industry stakeholders.

India ITME announced their 11th Edition to be held in Noida

KULBIR SINGH KALSI

India ITME Society has announced its 11th edition of the textile exhibition which will be held at the India Exposition Mart Ltd, Noida, from December 8th to the 13th, 2022. There will be 15 halls in a total area of 2,35,000 sqmtrs, making it the largest in this industry segment.

This event is expected to host more than 1800 exhibitors in 22 Chapters and is expected to have over 1,50,000 visitors over the 6 days period.

India ITME 2022 will offer unmatched business opportunities to the exhibitors as the Indian textiles industry is set for strong growth, buoyed by vast domestic consumption as well as export demand. It will open windows to various business verticals in the form of leads, contacts and enquiries on a huge-scale massive platform.

Participation from 91 countries and 22 chapters, has made Indian ITME a one stop platform for engineering and technical solutions, technology for the textile industry, servicing the whole of the Indian textile industry and building India brand.

India ITME (India International Textile Machinery Exhibitions) creates an avenue for students to explore placement opportunities with multinational companies functioning globally.



RBI approves appointment of Meena Hemchandra as part-time chairman of Karur Vysya Bank

Private sector lender Karur Vysya Bank on Tuesday said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of former RBI executive Meena Hemchandra as part-time chairman of the bank for three years.

In May, the bank had recommended Hemchandra's candidature for the position of non-executive independent (part-time) chairperson of the bank to the RBI for approval.

"We wish to inform...Reserve Bank of India vide their letter dated July 11, 2022, accorded their approval for the appointment of Meena Hemchandra as part-time chairman of the bank," Karur Vysya Bank said in a regulatory filing.



Term of Hemchandra (64) is approved for a period of 3 years with effect from the date of taking charge, it added. She is a career banker with over 35 years of banking experience in various departments of the RBI.

Hemchandra was the Executive Director of RBI from June 2015 to November 2017.

Shares of Karur Vysya Bank traded at Rs 47.40 apiece on BSE, down by 0.63 per cent from the previous close.

RBI sets up system to settle trade in rupee

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has put in place a mechanism to facilitate international trade in rupees (INR), with immediate effect. However, banks acting as authorised dealers for such transactions would have to take prior approval from the regulator to facilitate this. "In order to promote growth of global trade with emphasis on exports from India and to support the increasing interest of global trading community in INR, it has been decided to put in place an additional arrangement for invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports / imports in INR," the RBI said in a notification.

DRI unearths Customs duty evasion of Rs. 4389 crore by Oppo India

FW DESK

During an investigation pertaining to M/s Oppo Mobiles India Private Limited (hereinafter referred to as 'Oppo India'), a subsidiary company of "Guangdong Oppo Mobile Telecommunications Corporation Ltd", China (hereinafter referred to as 'Oppo China'), the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has detected Customs duty evasion of around Rs 4,389 crore. Oppo India is engaged in the business of manufacturing, assembling, wholesale trading, distribution of mobile handsets and accessories thereof, across India. Oppo India deals in various brands of mobile phones, including Oppo, OnePlus and Realme.

During the course of investigation, searches were conducted by DRI at the office premises of Oppo India and residences of its key management employees, which led to the recovery of incriminating evidence indicating wilful mis-declaration in



the description of certain items imported by Oppo India for use in the manufacture of mobile phones. This mis-declaration resulted in wrongful availing of ineligible duty exemption benefits by Oppo India amounting to Rs 2,981 crore. Among others, senior management employees and domestic suppliers of Oppo India were questioned, who in their voluntary statements accepted the submission of wrongful description before the Customs Authorities at the time of import.

Investigation also revealed that Oppo India had remitted / made provisions for payment of 'Royalty' and 'Licence Fee' to various multinational companies, including those based in

China, in lieu of use of proprietary technology/brand/IPR license etc. The said 'Royalty' and 'Licence Fees' paid by Oppo India were not being added in the transaction value of the goods imported by them, in violation of Section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962, read with Rule 10 of the Customs Valuation (Determination of Value of Imported Goods) Rules 2007. The alleged duty evasion by M/s Oppo India on this account is Rs. 1,408 crore.

A sum of Rs 450 crore has been voluntarily deposited by Oppo India, as partial differential Customs duty short paid by them.

After completion of the investigation, a Show Cause Notice has been issued to Oppo India demanding Customs duty amounting to Rs. 4,389 crore. The said Notice also proposes relevant penalties on Oppo India, its employees and Oppo China, under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

Blockchain hackathon to be held in Bengaluru



A two-day blockchain hackathon, 'Building Future Cities', will be held here from August 5.

The hackathon is organised by Crypto investing app CoinSwitch, in association with 'Startup Karnataka', a Karnataka Government initiative, and Tejasvi Surya, Member of Parliament (Bengaluru South).

It is also supported by Sequoia India. The hackathon will challenge participants to envision a blockchain-powered India, with a focus on smart mobility, energy credits and trading, decentralized waste management, secure digital identity and certificate management, efficient and transparent vaccine distribution, among others, the organisers said in a statement on Thursday. The winners will be rewarded with a prize money of Rs three lakh, with the total prize pool of the hackathon set at Rs six lakh. Participants can enter the competition individually or in a team of up to four members, it said.

Income Tax Department conducts searches on two business groups in Tamil Nadu

FW DESK

Income Tax Department carried out search and seizure operations on 06.07.2022 on two business groups of Tamil Nadu engaged in the business of Civil Contracts, Real Estate, Advertising etc. The search operations were carried out at more than 40 premises located in Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai.

During the course of the search operations, various incriminating documentary and digital evidences have been seized. The preliminary examination of such evidences indicates that both these groups have been suppressing their taxable income by claiming bogus purchases and expenses in their books of account over the last few years. In the case of one of the groups, it has been found that the payments made for these bogus purchases etc. were being received back in cash by the group. In addition, evidences have been found indicating suppression of huge income on account of sharing of profits in joint ventures, which is not reflected in the regular books of account.

Sale of online space for advertisement to attract 18% GST: AAR

Sale of advertisement space on internet would be liable to 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax, the Karnataka bench of Authority for Advance Ruling has said. E-commerce portal Myntra Designs Pvt Ltd had approached the

AAR seeking a ruling on whether providing advertisement space on its portal to foreign entity Lenzing Singapore Pte Ltd was liable to GST.

The AAR said Myntra is only leasing the advertisement space to its customer and the advertiser (Lenzing) is providing advertisement services to its customer. The service provided by Myntra to Lenzing is that of rendering 'sale of internet advertising space (except on commission)' and is charging a fixed rate and not a commission for providing such space. Hence, the same will be classified under 'other professional, technical and business services' under GST law and is liable to GST at 18 per cent.

Income Tax Department conducts searches on a Pharmaceutical Group in Bengaluru

FW DESK

Income Tax Department carried out search and seizure operations on 06.07.2022 on a major Bengaluru-based pharmaceutical group, engaged in the business of manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceutical products and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API). The group has presence in over 50 countries. The search action covered around 36 premises spread across 9 States.

During the course of the search operations, substantial incriminating evidence, in the form of documents and digital data, has been found and seized. The initial gleaning of the evidence has revealed that the group has been debiting in



its books of account unallowable expenses on account of distribution of freebies to the medical professionals under the head "Sales and Promotion". These freebies included travel expenses, perquisites and gifts etc. to doctors and medical professionals for promoting the group's products under the heads "Promotion and Propaganda", "Seminars and Symposiums", "Medical Advisories" etc. The evidence indicates that the group has adopted unethical practices to

promote its products/ brands. The quantum of such freebies detected is estimated to be around Rs. 1000 crore.

The group is also found to have claimed artificially inflated deduction under special provisions in respect of certain incomes, by resorting to suppression of expenses and over-appropriation of revenue to the unit eligible for such deduction. Various other means of tax evasion, including inadequate allocation of research and development expenses to eligible units and inflated claim of weighted deduction under section 35 (2AB), have also been detected. The quantum of tax sought to be evaded through such means is estimated at over Rs. 300 crore.

DHFL scam case: CBI arrests businessman from Mumbai

CBI arrested businessman Ajay Ramesh Nawandar from Mumbai on Wednesday in connection with the Rs 34,615-crore bank fraud case involving Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL), officials said.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at Nawandar's premises last week and recovered a large collection of uber-luxury watches worth crores of rupees, including Rolex Oyster Perpetual, Cartier, Omega and Hublot Michael Kors, and two paintings worth Rs 33 crore, the officials said.

They said these valuable items belonged to former DHFL CMD Kapil Wadhawan and former director of the company Dheeraj Wadhawan, who allegedly defrauded banks to the tune of Rs 34,615 crore, making it the biggest such case probed by the agency.

These were allegedly purchased using the proceeds of the scam and kept at Nawandar's premises to evade recovery and seizure by enforcement agencies, the officials said.

It has surfaced during the probe that Nawandar was acting as a conspirator aiding and abetting the Dewans to hide the proceeds of the crime and was in the process to dispose these items of when he was arrested by the agency, they said.

The CBI is focusing on the money trail and people who acted in collusion with the Dewans to siphon off public money, the officials said.

"During investigation, it was



found that the (DHFL) promoters had allegedly diverted the funds and made investments in various entities. It was also alleged that the promoters had acquired expensive paintings and sculptures worth about Rs 55 crore (approximately) using the diverted funds," the agency had said in a statement.

Following the registration of the case on June 20, a team of over 50 CBI officials carried out searches on 12 premises in Mumbai belonging to the FIR-listed accused, including Sudhakar Shetty of Amaryllis Realtors and eight other builders, on June 22.

The agency conducted another round of searches on July 8 on the premises of Rebecca Dewan and Nawandar, from where it found a trove of costly paintings and sculptures worth Rs 40 crore, including two paintings by Tyeb Mehta and Manjit Bawa worth Rs 33 crore.

The CBI had acted on a complaint from the Union Bank of India (UBI), the leader of a 17-member lender consortium that had extended credit facilities to DHFL to the tune of Rs 42,871 crore between 2010 and 2018.

Forex reserves fall USD 8.062 bln to USD 580.252 bln

The country's foreign exchange reserves declined by a massive USD 8.062 billion to USD 580.252 billion in the week ended July 8, according to RBI data. In the previous week ended July 1, the reserves had dropped by USD 5.008 billion to USD 588.314 billion.

During the reporting week ended July 8, the decrease in the reserves was on account of a fall in the Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, and in the gold reserves, RBI said.

FCA was down by USD 6.656 billion to USD 518.089 billion in the reporting week, according to the Reserve Bank of India's Weekly Statistical Supplement released on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, FCA includes the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves fell by USD 1.236 billion to USD 39.186 billion.

In the reporting week ended July 8, the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dropped by USD 122 million to USD 18.012 billion.

The country's reserve position with IMF decreased by USD 49 million to USD 4.966 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

NFR records 28% growth in freight in Q1 FY23



Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) loaded 2.979 MT freight during the first quarter of the current financial year, registering an increase of 28 per cent against the corresponding period of last year.

NFR loaded 0,910 MT during the month of June, 2022. This is an increase of 7.9 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of last year, a spokesperson said on Monday.

In June, coal and other commodities such as stone chips and potatoes also increased by a good margin in comparison to the corresponding period last year, he said.

Cement loading increased by 68.3 per cent, Petrol Oil Lubricant (POL) loading rose by 17.3 per cent, container loading grew by 27.8 per cent and other commodities increased by 21.4 per cent, he added.

PNB Introduces Pre-Approved Personal Loan in 4 Clicks and single OTP via digital channels



KULBIR SINGH KALSI

Punjab National Bank (PNB), nation's leading public sector bank introduces 'Pre-Approved Personal Loan in 4 Clicks and Single OTP' on the mobile Banking App PNB One, that unifies multiple services of PNB on a single platform. Customers can now get personal loans with just four clicks and a single one-time password (OTP). The end-to-end digital journey takes less than a minute with instant disbursal in the account.

The 24*7*365 end-to-end digital service will offer customers a seamless and convenient experience. Customers no longer need to visit the branch as they can do it from the comfort of their home, office or anywhere anytime.

'Pre-Approved Personal Loan in 4 Clicks and Single OTP' was

launched by Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of PNB, at the Bank's head office in New Delhi, in the presence of Executive Directors - Sanjay Kumar, Vijay Dube, and Kalyan Kumar, CGMs, senior officials and other bank staff.

At the event, Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of PNB, said: "Having understood the opportunity due to the growing demand of digital loans due to busy schedules amongst the current generation, we are delighted to offer the Pre-Approved Personal Loans to our customers through our digital channels. In addition to providing access to instant credit, there is no hassle of documentation for loans up to Rs. 4-lakh. PNB hopes that this product will serve as an example of responsible digital lending for the banking industry and prove to be one of the best products in the retail sector."

Gold drops Rs 293, silver tumbles Rs 1,075

Gold prices in the national capital on Friday fell by Rs 293 to Rs 49,970 per 10 grams amid decline in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at Rs 50,263 per 10 grams. Silver also tumbled by Rs 1,075 to Rs 54,326 per kg



from Rs 55,401 per kg in the

previous trade. "Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi fell by Rs 293 reflecting overnight fall in COMEX gold prices," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,703 per ounce while silver was flat at USD 18.23 per ounce.

Nissan launches Magnite RED Edition tagged at Rs 7.86 lakh

Nissan Motor India on Wednesday said it has launched the Magnite RED Edition, with prices starting at Rs 7.86 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi).

The new edition is based on the car's XV variant and comes with various features like 8-inch touchscreen with Wifi connectivity, LED daytime running lamps and diamond cut alloy wheels.

Other features include push button start/stop, vehicle dynamics control, traction control system, brake assist, and hill



start assist.

"The new Nissan Magnite

RED Edition will accelerate the already-robust demand for the

Magnite with an evolved offering for a young, aspirational, and tech-savvy audience, the RED Edition's best-in-segment features will greatly enhance comfort and convenience for our valued customers," Nissan Motor India Managing Director Rakesh Srivastava said in a statement.

The RED Edition comes with 1-litre manual transmission, 1-litre turbo manual transmissions and 1-litre turbo CVT variants, priced between Rs 7.86-9.99 lakh.

Bankers & builders must work together to fulfill PM Modi's vision to provide a house for every citizen of the country: Kaushal Kishore

FW DESK

While addressing the national conference on 'Housing Finance in India - Issues and Solutions' today, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, Kaushal Kishore said that bankers, builders and all the stakeholders in finance should cooperate and work together in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to provide a home to every citizen in the country. He added that the stakeholders should participate in nation-building and treat it as a movement. The conference was organized by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), the apex

industry body.

Addressing the conference through video conferencing from Lucknow, the Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs said that it will be a matter of honour for India if every poor of the country has his own house and is provided with basic facilities like roti, kapada and makaan. However, he added, we have to simplify the processes to enable that.

Kishore told the bankers that steps should be taken to help people avail of the housing loan through easy paperwork. "According to an estimate, there are about 136,000 bank branches across the country. If the applicants are able to get housing loans easily from these banks,



then the work of providing a house to all will also be easy," he said.

The Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, who also released ASSOCHAM-Resurgent Joint report titled 'Housing Finance Industry in India-The Road'.

In his address at the same event, Pradeep Aggarwal, Chair-

man, National Council on Real Estate, Housing and Urban Development of ASSOCHAM and Chairman, Signature Global India Ltd said that affordable housing projects have become an important pillar of the real estate sector today. They are further strengthened by government schemes and initiatives.

In his theme address, D S Tripathi, Managing Director & CEO, Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. said home is the foundation of life and dignity and housing contributes to the 7% of GDP in the economy. The urban scheme model should be carried out by the government to create more awareness and to create an environment which will ensure the supply of houses

on demand side.

Kollegal V Raghavendra, Executive Director, Punjab & Sind Bank elaborated on the need to simplify the paperwork in various cases. He said, if we want to make India a \$5 trillion economy, then the housing industry has to play an important role in it. Those providing financial facilities for the housing sector also have an important role in nation-building.

He further continued by saying "Accessibility and affordability, are key drivers of the housing sector's expansion". He emphasised that the home loan structure has a lot of room for expansion in terms of beneficiaries, rate of interest, EMI, and collection of income documents.

Indian rupee edges closer to 80 per US dollar

Indian rupee hit a record low for a fourth straight session as the US dollar continued its relentless rise against other major currencies. Foreign institutional investors continued to dump Indian equities, putting further pressure on the Indian currency. The rupee today fell to new low of 79.90, breaching Wednesday's low 79.66. The domestic currency depreciated to close at a record low of 79.62 against the US currency on Wednesday.

The US dollar continued its rise today after hotter-than-expected US inflation numbers hardened expectations for faster Federal Reserve policy tightening. The safe-haven appeal of US dollar has also been boosted by growing fears of a recession. Data released on Wednesday showed consumer price index in the US rising to a 41-year high of 9.1% in June on the back of



the supply chain bottlenecks partly caused by the Ukraine war and rising demand. A top Fed official, Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic, will be speaking at an event on Friday.

After the release of US inflation data, some market observers speculate that the Fed could hike borrowing costs a full percentage point at its next meeting this month, re-easing slightly. On Friday, US jobs data showed robust numbers, suggesting the world's top economy was withstanding the rate hikes, giving the Fed more room for further increases.

SBI raises lending rates by 0.10 pc across tenors

Country's largest lender on Friday said it raised the marginal cost of fund based lending rates by 0.10 per cent across various tenors. The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR (Marginal Cost of Fund based Lending Rates), used for most of the consumer loans such as auto, home and personal, will now be 7.50 per cent, up from the 7.40 per cent previously, the bank said.

The tenor-wise MCLR rates are effective from July 15, 2022, it added. Among other tenor loans ranging from overnight to six-month, the MCLR rates have been raised in the range of 7.15-7.45 per cent, up by 0.10 per cent each. The two-year and three-year MCLR rates will now be priced at 7.70 per cent and 7.80 per cent, respectively.

INTERNATIONAL

Gotabaya Rajapaksa flees Sri Lanka UK PM race most diverse in history with 2 British Indians on shortlist

Sri Lanka's embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday fled to the Maldives on a military jet, hours before he was supposed to step down in the face of a public revolt against him and his family for mishandling the economy that has bankrupted the country.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has declared a state of emergency in the country and a curfew in the Western province has been imposed as protesters gathered near his office at Flower Road in Colombo. He has also ordered the security forces to arrest people acting in a riotous manner.

President Rajapaksa, 73, left the country along with his wife and two security officers on a military jet, a brief statement from the Sri Lanka Air Force said. "On government request and in terms of powers available to a President under the Constitution, with complete approval from the ministry of defence, the President, his wife and two security officials were provided a Sri Lanka Air Force plane to depart from the Katunayake international airport for the Maldives in the early hours of July 13," the statement said. The Prime Minister's Office



also confirmed that the President had left the country.

Rajapaksa, who enjoys immunity from prosecution while he is president, fled the country before resigning to avoid the possibility of arrest by the new government. On Saturday, Rajapaksa had announced to step down on Wednesday after thousands of protesters stormed his official residence, blaming him for the unprecedented economic crisis that has brought the country to its knees.

He arrived in the capital of the Maldives, Male, at around 03:00 local time (22:00 GMT), BBC reported. He was received by a Maldivian government representative at the Velana airport and taken to an undisclosed location under police escort, sources said, quoting Maldivian officials. Rajapaksa's escape to the Maldives was negotiated by the Maldivian Majlis (Parliament) Speaker and former president Mohamed Nasheed, sources in the Maldives capital Male said.

The Maldivian government's argument is that Rajapaksa is still the President of Sri Lanka, and that he hasn't resigned or handed over his powers to a successor. Therefore, if he wanted to travel to the Maldives, it could not have been denied, sources said. Thirteen people accompanied Rajapaksa to the Maldives. They arrived in an AN32 aircraft, according to TV news channels.

Reports say that initial requests to land a military aircraft in the Maldives were refused by the Civil Aviation Authority in Maldives, but later landing was authorised on the request of Speaker Nasheed.

Rajapaksa is expected to be in the Maldives on transit before flying to another destination which is yet to be known.

He is likely to send his resignation letter only after reaching his final destination on Wednesday evening, Sri Lanka's The Morning news portal reported, citing highly placed government sources. It is learnt that the Rajapaksa's resignation letter would be sent to Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena at around 8 pm Sri Lanka time, it added.

Meanwhile, the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka categorically denied "baseless and speculative" media reports that it facilitated the escape of Rajapaksa to the Maldives.

"It is reiterated that India will continue to support the people of Sri Lanka as they seek to realize their aspirations for prosperity and progress through democratic means and values, established democratic institutions and constitutional frame-

work, the India mission tweeted. As the news of Rajapaksa's departure spread, an enthusiastic crowd gathered in Galle Face Green chanting the popular phrase Aragalayata Jayawewa, or Victory to the struggle in Sinhalese and "Go home Gota".

The Police fired tear gas on protesters who had gathered near the PM office. The protesters broke through a barricade despite tear gas and stormed the prime minister's office, calling for his resignation. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe has already said he was willing to resign and make way for an all-party government to take over.

Citing sources, BBC also reported that Rajapaksa's younger brother and former finance minister Basil Rajapaksa has also left the country. Basil, the 71-year-old leader who is being widely held responsible for the country's worst economic crisis which has hooped misery on the people, is a US passport holder.

On Monday night, both Rajapaksa and his brother Basil were turned back at the Colombo airport as they attempted to leave the country amid mounting anger against the powerful family for mishandling the island's worst economic crisis.



The race to replace Boris Johnson as the Conservative Party leader and British Prime Minister may have just officially begun but it has already made history for its diverse line-up of candidates, including two British Indians.

Frontrunner former Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Attorney General Suella Braverman, both 42, have much in common as UK-born Indian-origin politicians who campaigned for Brexit in the 2016 referendum.

The others vying for the top job at Downing Street on the ballot paper as the nominations closed on Tuesday evening also reflect that diversity in London-born former minister Kemi Badenoch, 42, of Nigerian origin and Iraq-born Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi, 55, who came to the UK

as a refugee when he was 11 years old and his family fled Baghdad under Saddam Hussein.

Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt and Tory backbencher Tom Tugendhat, are both 49 and have a military background, with Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, 46, and former minister Jeremy Hunt, 55, completing the list of eight Conservative Party MPs nominated for the race.

Sunak made his pitch to become the first British Prime Minister of Indian-origin with a slick video that referenced the very personal migration story of his rural Africa based Indian maternal grandmother, Sraksha, boarding a flight from Tanzania to build a better life in the UK in the 1960s. "This young woman came to Britain where she managed to find a job, but it took her nearly a year to save enough money for her husband and children to follow her. One of those children was my mother aged 15, says Sunak, in the video which has been viewed nearly 50,000 since its release last week.

My mum studied hard to get the qualifications to become a pharmacist. She met my dad, an NHS [National Health Service] GP, and they settled in Southampton. Their story didn't end there, but that is where my story began, he says in the voiceover, alongside family pictures of his general practitioner father Yashvir and mother Usha with him as a young boy with his siblings.

The message to the Tory voters being that he represents the face of modern Britain where values of hard work and fairness override factors such as race and background. The former Goldman Sachs banker who studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University before getting an MBA from Stanford University in the US, may have had an easy ride in the early years of his political career as a member of Parliament for Richmond in Yorkshire, but not so in the Cabinet.

Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit Iran next week



Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit Iran next week, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Putin will travel to Tehran next Tuesday to attend a trilateral meeting with the leaders of Iran and Turkey, the so-called Astana format of meetings for Syria-related talks.

Peskov told reporters Tuesday that during the visit, Putin will also have a separate meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

China trade surplus surges to record as exports accelerate

China's monthly trade surplus soared to a record 97.9 billion in June as export growth accelerated following the easing of anti-virus controls that temporarily shut down Shanghai and disrupted trade.

Exports rose 17.9% to 331.2 billion, up from May's 16.9%, customs data showed Wednesday. Imports rose just 1% to 233.3 billion in a sign of weak domestic demand. With almost no growth in imports, China's global trade surplus swelled by 90% compared with a year ago.

Exports to the United States surged 19.3% over a year ago



to 56 billion despite lingering tariff hikes in a trade war over Beijing's technology ambitions. Imports of American goods edged up 1.7% to 14.6 billion.

China's politically volatile trade surplus with the United States widened by 26% from a year earlier to 41.4 billion. It was among irritants that prompted then-President Donald Trump

to launch the trade fight by hiking import taxes.

China's trade has been dampened by weak global demand and anti-virus curbs in Shanghai, site of the world's busiest port, and other cities. Consumer demand was crushed by rules that confined millions of families to their homes.

Forecasters have cut estimates for China's economic growth to as low as 2% this year, well below the ruling Communist Party's target of 5.5%. Some expect activity to shrink in the quarter ending in June before a gradual recovery begins.

Farmers from Farm to Road: Wave of Farmer Protests Spreads Across Europe



Worldwide rising inflation – which started with the effects of the pandemic and worsened by the global oil crisis fueled by the Russia-Ukraine war – Europe is taking the brunt of it all. As if energy security wasn't enough of a problem, it has now begotten another potential (but expected) crisis – food security.

Europe's agricultural sector is giving a different meaning to "farm-to-road" as a wave of protests has been spreading across the continent, demanding government policies to reflect the needs of the industry.

The Netherlands started the wave with Dutch farmers staging protests over their government's environmental regulations proposals to reduce pollutant emissions. The country's cabinet proposed a £22 billion program after it was instructed by the courts to slash nitrogen oxide and ammonia

emissions generated by livestock by 50% come 2030. As part of the government's measure to tackle this, The Hague is eyeing mandatory purchases of farms that would lead to closures. This could force 30% of the country's farms out of business, according to a Dutch farmers' union.

Dutch farmers took it to the streets to protest the upcoming regulations, blocking main roads and supermarket entrances. Soon after, German farmers joined the Dutch protesters in blocking the road on their shared border.

Germany itself has seen its farmers' associations contesting a recently passed renewable energy act amendment by the country's parliament. While it aims to accelerate Berlin's renewable energy expansion, the group is lamenting that the amendment does not provide enough support for biogas pro-

duction.

"It is completely incomprehensible that in the middle of this far-reaching energy crisis, a sustainable domestic energy source such as biogas is being curbed in the production of electricity, heat, and biomethane," said Bernhard Krüsken, secretary-general of the German Farmers' Association.

Polish farmers also protested in solidarity, themselves objecting to their own government's policies related to the agricultural industry, including the rising cost of fertilizers and allowing cheap food imports to compete—causing a spike in local production costs.

The farmers rallied along the streets of Warsaw shouting protest cries: "Enough is enough! We won't let ourselves be robbed!" and "We workers cannot pay for the crisis created by politicians!"

Adding to the drought Italy is currently facing, the heat of mounting farmers' protests is building up on roads in rural areas. The tractors holding up main roads are threatening to "come to Rome" should the government's inaction continues.

Italy declared earlier this week declared a state of emergency in five regions as the northern parts of the country face an economically-threatening drought.

New Australian govt supports trade pact with India: Goyal



The new Australian government supports the trade pact signed with India, and they are expected to soon approach their parliament for approval of the agreement, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) signed in April needs ratification by Australian parliament before its implementation. "I met minister Mr Don Farrell, who looks after trade in the new (Australian) government, and he has confirmed that they will be taking the Indus-ECTA to parliament very soon and they support the agreement and would like to further expand their engagement with India in the months and years to come," Goyal told to media

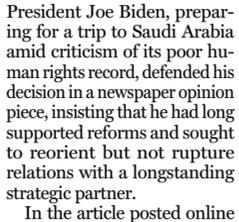
Rahul Gandhi leaves for abroad, to return by Sunday



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday left for a short personal visit abroad. Sources said the former Congress president left this morning and is likely to return by Sunday, ahead of the Presidential election and the Monsoon session of Parliament on July 18. The party did not disclose any details of his visit and termed it personal.

Gandhi will skip a crucial party meeting for preparations of the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' and internal elections of the Congress on Thursday, where all general secretaries, in-charges and PCC presidents have been invited. Rahul Gandhi has been often criticised by the BJP for his frequent visits abroad.

Biden defends pending visit to Saudi Arabia in opinion piece



President Joe Biden, preparing for a trip to Saudi Arabia amid criticism of its poor human rights record, defended his decision in a newspaper opinion piece, insisting that he had long supported reforms and sought to reorient but not rupture relations with a longstanding strategic partner.

In the article posted online Saturday night by The Washington Post, Biden pointed to developments in the Middle East that he contended had made the region more stable and secure than when the Trump administration ended, among them intense diplomacy as well as military action against state-sponsored attacks.

But his framing of the Saudi relationship in particular appeared defensive, especially with some in the U.S. demanding that he not lend legitimacy to the government with a visit.

Biden linked U.S. strength and security to countering Russian aggression and competition from China, then argued that engaging directly with countries like Saudi Arabia could help promote those efforts.

The president said he aimed to strengthen a U.S.-Saudi partnership going forward that's based on mutual interests and



responsibilities, while also holding true to fundamental American values.

I know that there are many who disagree with my decision to travel to Saudi Arabia, Biden wrote. My views on human rights are clear and long-standing, and fundamental freedoms are always on the agenda when I travel abroad, as they will be during this trip, just as they will be in Israel and the West Bank.

It was notable that Biden's op-ed appeared in the Sunday opinion section of the Post, whose writer Jamal Khashoggi was murdered by Saudi agents in 2018.

On that issue, Biden contended he had responded with sanctions against the Saudi forces involved in the killing and issued scores of visa bans for anyone found harassing dissidents abroad.

Abe's killing haunts Japan with questions on handmade guns



The shooting sent shudders through low-crime, orderly Japan: A high-profile politician gets killed by a man emerging from a crowd, wielding a handmade firearm so roughly made it's wrapped up in tape.

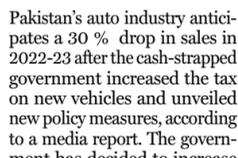
The 40-centimeter-long firearm that was used to kill former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Friday as he campaigned for his ruling party in Nara, western Japan, looked crude, more like a propellant made of pipes taped together and filled with explosives.

A raid of the suspect's home, a one-room apartment in Nara, turned up several such guns, police said. Unlike standard weapons, handmade guns are practically impossible to trace, making an investigation difficult.

Such weapons are rarely used in Japan, where most attacks involve stabbings or dousing a place with gasoline and setting it ablaze, or running haywire on the street in a vehicle.

Strict gun control laws likely made the suspect choose a handcrafted weapon. Tetsuya Yamagami, who was arrested on the spot, was a former member of Japan's navy, and knew how to handle and assemble weapons.

Pak's auto industry anticipates 30 per cent slump in sales



Pakistan's auto industry anticipates a 30% drop in sales in 2022-23 after the cash-strapped government increased the tax on new vehicles and unveiled new policy measures, according to a media report. The government has decided to increase withholding tax on filers and non-filers and imposed one per cent capital value tax (CVT) on vehicles exceeding 1,300 CC, tightened auto financing rules to compress demand, and jacked up the interest rates, Pakistan's Dawn newspaper reported on Monday.

Due to the weakening of the Rupee and rising cost of import of auto parts, car companies would have to increase the prices of their



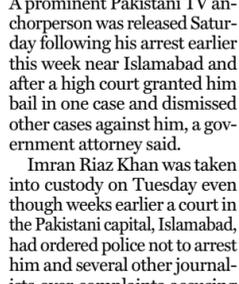
products, which would further slump the auto sales. Quoting market sources, the report said assemblers were also flexing their muscles to pass on the impact of the continuous rupee devaluation against the dollar and high sea freight rates in the form of price hikes in vehicles after Eidul Azha, with many stressing that the industry was going through a crisis.

Indus Motor Company (IMC) has already closed down the advance

booking of vehicles from May 18, followed by Lucky Motor Corporation Limited (LMCL) from May 20 on Picanto Automatic, and Sportage and Pak Suzuki Motor Company Limited (PSMCL) from July 1.

These decisions were taken by the assemblers owing to the looming exchange crisis and the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) decision to disallow the opening of letters of credit (LCs) for the import of parts and accessories from May 20, 2022. IMC CEO Ali Asghar Jamali anticipated at least a 30 per cent plunge in vehicle sales in FY23 due to rising fuel prices, SBP's restrictions on opening LCs for auto parts and new taxes imposed from July 1.

Pakistani TV anchor released, days after arrest in capital



A prominent Pakistani TV anchorperson was released Saturday following his arrest earlier this week near Islamabad and after a high court granted him bail in one case and dismissed other cases against him, a government attorney said.

Imran Riaz Khan was taken into custody on Tuesday even though weeks earlier a court in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, had ordered police not to arrest him and several other journalists over complaints accusing them of inciting hatred against the country's powerful military.

A total of 17 cases were registered against Khan in different cities in Punjab, the country's most populated province.

According to Pervez Shaukat, the Punjab advocate general, Khan was granted bail for a period of 10 days until his next hearing on the charge of inciting people for agitation and creating chaos. The other 16 cases were



dismissed.

Khan, an anchor who most recently hosted a show on Sama TV, is known for his blogs on social media and for publicly supporting former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The two are not related. The former premier has spoken out against the TV anchor's arrest.

Shaukat told the Lahore High Court at Saturday's hearing that the government, which had unsuccessfully tried to raise treason charges against the anchor, has no objections to bail being granted.

The court also sought assurance from Khan that he would not issue any controversial statements pending the next hearing, Shaukat said.

Imran Khan was ousted as prime minister through a no-confidence vote in the parliament in April. He contends his removal was part of a U.S. plot, a charge Washington denies.

US destroyer patrol inflames South China Sea dispute



The U.S. Navy on Wednesday sailed a destroyer close to China-controlled islands in the South China Sea in what Washington said was a patrol aimed at asserting freedom of navigation through the strategic seaway.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold sailed past the Paracel Islands and continued thereafter with operations in the South China Sea.

The operation upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea, the 7th Fleet said in a news release.

Such operations are con-



sidered key to the U.S. Navy maintaining its presence in the Indo-Pacific, where China has

grown its presence through a massive ship building campaign.

Beijing has also alarmed the U.S., Australia and New Zealand with the signing of a mutual defense agreement with the Solomon Islands, under which it could receive Chinese troops in emergencies and possibly establish a permanent Chinese military presence.

In response to the Benfold's passage, China's Southern Theater Command tracked the vessel's movements and ordered it to leave the area, Air Force Col. Tian Junli was quoted as

saying on the Defense Ministry's website. Our troops in the military area are on high alert at all times to safeguard national sovereignty, security and peace and stability in the South China Sea," the ministry said.

China claims ownership over virtually the entire strategic waterway, through which passes around USD 5 trillion in global trade each year and which holds highly valuable fish stocks and undersea mineral resources. The Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan also lay competing claims to the region.

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy has fired 5 of his ambassadors including India



President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has fired five of Ukraine's senior envoys abroad, citing the "diplomatic process."

The Ukrainian president released a number of statements announcing that he had fired his country's ambassadors to Germany, India, the Czech Republic, Norway, and Hungary. No reason was given for these changes, but he said, "This rotation is a normal part of diplomatic practice," he said in a media statement. It is not clear if the diplomats will be given new roles. Envoys have been tasked with rallying international support for Ukraine's fight against Russia, particularly by supplying the country with arms to fight Putin's invasion.

Punjabi Film & TV Artistes Association elected Guggu Gill President, Nirmal Rishi Patron, Karamjit Anmol President, Malkit Roni General Secretary



KULBIR SINGH KALS

A general meeting of Punjabi Film and TV Artistes Association (Regd.) was convened today in which artists and technicians associated with Punjabi cinema participated. At the beginning of the session, a two-minute silence was observed under the chairmanship of the society's president Gurpreet Ghuggi, paying tribute to Shubhdeep Singh alias Sidhu Moosewala.

On this occasion, the organization's president Gurpreet Ghuggi said that our real family is associated with cinema. If

on the performance of the previous team which was agreed by all with a raised hand. The office-bearers of the committee were unanimously elected as Guggu Gill as Chairman, Nirmal Rishi as Patron, Karamjit Anmol as President, Malkit Roni as General Secretary, Bharat Bhushan Verma as Cashier, Shivinder Mahal and Dev Kharod as Vice Presidents. The rest of the executive members are Tarsem Jassar, Ranjit Bawa, Babal Rai, Gurpreet Kaur Bhangu, Rupinder Rupee, Seema Kaushal, Raj Dhaliwal, Nisha Bano, Tanvi Nagi, Dr. Ranjit Sharma, Paramjit Bhangu and Paramvir Singh. Sardar Sohi, Swaraj Sandhu, Karamjit Anmol, Gurpreet Bhangu, Pran Sabharwal, Pammi Bai, Jas Grewal and Deepak Chanarthal also addressed the program. Davinder Daman, Jagdarshan Samra, Bob Khaira, Naresh Kathuria, Pinky Sagu, Balkar Sidhu, directors Avtar Singh and Prabha Grewal and Sania Pannu were present on the occasion.

any of these members have any problem, then the pain goes down in our hearts. The artists wrote a letter to the Punjab government urging them to provide speedy justice to the parents of Shubhdeep Singh aka Sidhu Moosewala and create a conducive environment to eradicate the despair in Punjab. Patron actor Nirmal Rishi said that Sidhu Moosewala will always live on in our hearts. All the artists observed silence and paid tribute to Sidhu Moosewala.

In the second session of the program, General Secretary Malkit Roni read out a report

Gippy Grewal drops his latest track 'Mutiyare Ni', video features Ukrainian model

Punjabi singer and actor Gippy Grewal, who is known for a hit track like 'The Angrezi Beat', has released his latest single 'Mutiyare Ni'. The video features Gippy along with Ukrainian model Olya Kryvenda.

Gippy says: "The name 'Mutiyare Ni' (that means 'oh lover!') is an ode to a lover's beautiful girlfriend to let her know how much he loves her, appreciates her beauty, but hesitates in admitting the same."

The singer whose latest track 'Nach Punjaban' from Bollywood film 'Jug jugg Jeeyo' starring Varun Dhawan, Kiara Advani received a good response, shares further about his shooting experience with co-actor Olya.

"The song is shot amidst the beautiful shores with Olya who is an extremely talented artist who helped us portray the accurate thought behind this song. 'Mutiyare Ni' is a story of a young boy, who struggles to confess his feelings and admiration to the girl of his dreams and ultimately falls



short of words. But I feel after 'Mutiyare Ni' I have eased this struggle a little bit."

Services and Humble Music, 'Mutiyare Ni' is written by lyricist Happy Rajkoti and the music is produced by Avvy Sra.

POTPOURRI

Bobby Deol, Kajol celebrate silver jubilee of 'GUPT'

Bollywood actors Kajol and Bobby Deol celebrated the success of their cult film 'Gupt' which completes 25 years. Kajol recalls playing a 'badass woman' in the film.

The actors turned up along with the filmmaker Rajiv Rai at a special screening organised by Radio Nasha.

On the occasion of the silver jubilee of the film, Kajol said: "Gupt will always be a special film for me. For the first time, I didn't have to play a kind, sweet girl. My character Isha was a badass woman. She could do anything wrong and get away with it. Also, who doesn't enjoys playing a killer? It was delightful to meet Bobby and the cast."

Bobby said that "Gupt is an institution in itself. Rajiv bhai's vision even at that point of time was so huge, so grand, that we were all amazed by his techniques and finesse. Ashok Mehta, the cinematographer, his talent and Rajiv bhai's exemplary vision made an invincible duo. We didn't anticipate



the massive success of Gupt. I mean, I am standing here even after 25 years, it is a great feeling. Tonight we re-lived the 90s panache!"

Kajol continues: "Yes, no one expects that the film will create history. Honestly, deep down, all of us just pray for our films to be liked by the audiences and be declared as a hit film. I still remember doing my makeup in the car for a morning shoot. The reason behind our on-screen glamorous looks was none other than our cameraman Ashok Mehta. He was brilliant at his job. Gupt indeed will be a special film for me."

Lalit Modi dating Sushmita Sen, shares romantic pics on Twitter

Former IPL Chairman Lalit Modi on Thursday announced that he is dating Bollywood actress Sushmita Sen and intends to tie the knot with her soon.

Earlier, Lalit Modi had shared a series of pictures of the two on Twitter, calling the actress his better half and describing it as a new beginning.

"Just back in London after a whirlwind global tour #maldives #sardinia with the families - not to mention my #betterhalf @sushmitasen47 - a new beginning a new life finally. Over the



moon," he wrote. Calling Sen his better half, Lalit Modi sent their fans into

a frenzy with several discussing if the two were already married. However, he cleared the air

with another tweet, saying, "Just for clarity. Not married - just dating each other. That too it will happen one day. I JUST ANNOUNCED THAT WE ARE TOGETHER." Lalit Modi has been in London since 2010, when he left India amid investigation into his alleged role in tax evasion and money-laundering.

Sushmita Sen, who was crowned Miss Universe in 1994, made her Bollywood debut with the 1996 film 'Dastak'. The 46-year-old actress has two daughters, Alisah and Renee.

Monty Norman, composer of the James Bond theme, dies at 94



Monty Norman, a British composer who wrote the theme tune for the James Bond films, has died. He was 94.

A statement posted Monday on Norman's official website said: It is with sadness we share the news that Monty Norman died on 11th July 2022 after a short illness.

Born Monty Nosorovitch to Jewish parents in the East End of London in 1928, Norman got his first guitar when he was 16.

He performed with big bands and in a variety double act with comedian Benny Hill before writing songs for early British rockers Cliff Richard and Tommy Steele and composing for stage musicals including Make Me an Offer, Espresso Bongo, Songbook and Poppy.

Norman was hired by producer Albert Cubby Broccoli to compose a theme for the first James Bond film, Dr. No, released in 1962.

He drew on a piece he had written for a proposed musical adaptation of V.S. Naipaul's A House for Mr. Biswas, shifting the key riff from sitar to electric guitar. The result twangy, propulsive, menacing has been used in all 25 Bond thrillers.

Rajat Kapoor reveals 800 people crowdfunded his upcoming directorial 'Rk/Rkay'

The upcoming quirky behind-the-scenes drama, 'Rk/Rkay' came into being courtesy the crowdfunding, as shared by the film's director and actor Rajat Kapoor. For Rajat, the film wasn't an easy path to travel but given his determination, he adopted the idea of crowdfunding to materialise his labour of love.

While speaking about his journey of collecting funds for the film, he shared "It's always difficult to find funding for Indie films. So this time, I started out with the idea of crowdfunding and started reaching out to people. I put in some money of mine, and halfway through the crowdfunding process, Priyam Srivastava and Harshita Karkare stepped in as co-producers. Their faith in the film was amazing, and the film could get made, only because they joined hands".

The actor-director further revealed that about 800 people contributed towards financing the film with amounts ranging from 100 rupees to 50,000. 'Rk/Rkay' is one of the few Bollywood films to have been crowdfunded, the last big film being the Smita Patil-starrer 1976 release, 'Manthan' where 500,000 farmers donated Rs. 2 each to make the film.

Produced by Priyanshi Films (Priyam Srivastava and Harshita Karkare) and Nflicks Pvt. Ltd., 'Rk/Rkay' stars Mallika Sherawat, Kubbra Sait, Ranvir Shorey, Manu Rishi Chadha, Chandrachud Rai, Abhijeet Deshpande, Abhishek Sharma, Grace Girdhar, and Vaishali Malhar in key roles. The film will open in theatres on July 22, 2022.

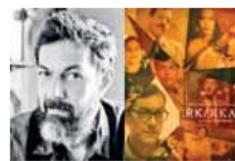


PHOTO: KULBIR SINGH KALS

Nayanthara teams up with Zee Studios for her next movie

South star Nayanthara is set to collaborate with Zee Studios for her 75th feature film, the producers announced on Tuesday.

Also starring "Baahubali" actor Sathyaraj, the untitled movie will be directed by Nilesch Krishnaa, best known for the 2019 movie "Shimmigga".

Zee Studios announced the project in a Twitter post and said the

film will start production soon.

"Announcing #LadySuperstar75 Zee Studios is excited to collaborate with #Nayanthara for her 75th film! The shoot will begin soon! #Jai #SathyaRaj @Nilesch_Krishnaa @dineshkrishnanb @tridentartsoffl @Naadstudios, the tweet read.

The details of the film's plot are yet to be shared by the makers.

The movie will be produced by Zee Studios in association with NAAD Studios and Trident Arts.

India look to carry T20 template into ODIs

India won't go ballistic from ball one but the batters are expected to carry their fearless approach from the shortest format to the ODIs when the three-match series against England begins here on Tuesday.

India's high-risk play helped them win the series against England and considering that the ODIs have become an extension of the shortest format, skipper Rohit Sharma sees no reason why his team should back down from that approach.

England redefined the way ODI cricket was played and their dominant run culminated with the World Cup trophy back in 2019. It won't be an exaggeration to say that India's fresh



outlook towards the shorter formats is inspired by the English template.

The three games will be the only 50-over contests India will feature in before the T20 World Cup but Rohit asserted they still hold a lot of importance.

"All matches are important for us. We can't play thinking ODIs are not a priority, but we have to keep in mind the workload of each player.

Kangana Ranaut starts shooting for 'EMERGENCY'

Actor Kangana Ranaut on Thursday commenced shooting for her next film Emergency, in which she plays the role of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The actor also shared the teaser of the film and her first look as Gandhi on Instagram.

She has written and directed "Emergency", billed as the story of a watershed moment in the political history of India.



Ranaut, who directed the 2019 movie Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi, said she was fascinated by the power dynamics that came

into play at the time. Emergency reflects one of the most important periods in Indian political history which changed the way we view power and that's why I decided to tell this story, the actor said in a statement.

The Emergency was imposed by Gandhi for a 21-month period from 1975 to 1977, when the fundamental rights of the people were put under strict curbs. Gan-

dhi lifted the Emergency in 1977 and called for Lok Sabha elections in which the Congress was handed a crushing defeat -- its first-ever since the country's independence in 1947 -- by the combined opposition of the Janata Party.

Ranaut, who essayed the role of the late actor-politician J Jayalalithaa in 2021's "Thalaivi", said it is always challenging to play a renowned personality. In

"Manikarnika", she starred as the freedom fighter Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi.

Playing a public figure on screen is always a challenge because one has to get the look, the characteristics and the persona right. I spent a significant amount of time researching the subject and once I felt I had enough ammunition, I commenced on the film's shoot, she added.

ODI cricket needs to find its relevance: Ashwin

Ace India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin believes that ODI cricket needs to find its relevance as the 50-over format is turning out to be an extended form of T20 cricket without "ebbs and flows".

Bilateral ODIs across the globe is fast losing relevance and some like former India head coach Ravi Shastri want more franchise-based T20 leagues than these kind of series.

"It's a question of relevance and I think ODI cricket needs to find its spot," Ashwin, who has 151 wickets in 113 ODIs, said on the upcoming show of the 'Vaughany and Tuffers Cricket club podcast'.

The podcast is hosted by former England captain Michael Vaughan and left-arm spinner Phil Tuffnell. "The greatest beauty of one day cricket is sorry was the ebbs and flows of the game. People used to bid their time and take the game deep. The one-day format used to be a format where bowlers had a say," added the 35-year-old.

Ashwin, himself a "cricket nut" admitted that he switched his TV off after a point while watching an ODI game.

"Even me as a cricket badger and a cricket nut, I switch off the TV after a point and that's frankly very scary for the format of the game. When those ebbs and flows go missing, it's not



cricket anymore. It is just an extended form of T20," he maintained. Currently, two new balls are used in an ODI innings but Ashwin pushed for returning to the old format where one was ball used, saying it would then be an even contest.

"I think one ball is something that would work and spinners would come into the game to bowl more at the back end. Reverse swing might come back in, which is crucial for the game," the tweaker, who has 442 Test wickets, added.

Ashwin's comments have come at a time when South Africa decided to withdraw from the ODI series in Australia, which was scheduled to be played in January because of crammed schedule and launch of its domestic T20 competition.



Border Security Force (BSF) Commandant Jasbir Singh presents sweets to Pakistani Rangers Wing Commander Aamir on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, at the India-Pakistan Wagah-Attari border, about 35 km from Amritsar. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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