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Droupadi Murmu is India's new Prez

BJP-led NDA candidate Droupadi Murmu on Thursday secured victory in Presidential election 2022. She defeated joint Opposition nominee Yashwant Sinha. Murmu will take oath as the 15th President of India on July 25, thus becoming the first tribal and second woman to hold the top constitutional job.



acres of garden area. It was constructed in 1929.

The President of India is the Head of the State. The constitution provides for all the executive action or the conduct of the business of the Government of India to be taken in the name of the President.

All the shareholdings of the Government of India are in the

name of the President or his nominees in the establishment.

The President of India is known as the first citizen of India because he/she is the constitutional head of the country. All executive decisions are taken in his name.

The President of India has the power to appoint the Prime Minister of India.

The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces.

The President of India travels in Air India One-B777 aircraft. The highly advanced aircraft has its own missile defence system. It is capable of countering missile threats. It has also an advanced communication system.

The aircraft is also used by the Vice President of India and Prime Minister of India for foreign trips.

The President of India travels in Mercedes-Maybach S600 Pullman Guard. It is considered the safest car in India. The car's doors are armoured-plated and form a 100% seal when closed. This protects the occupants in the event of a bomb, explosives or other chemical attacks.

The primary role of the President's Bodyguard (PBG) is to provide security to the President

of India. Raised in 1773, PBG is the oldest and senior most Regiment of the Indian Army. The PBG personnel are excellent horsemen, capable tank men and paratroopers.

Besides the Rashtrapati Bhavan, there are two other residences of the President of India. They are in Shimla and Hyderabad. These retreats are managed by the President of India's office.

The Retreat Building in Shimla is located at the hill top of the Mashobra. The building is purely a wooden structure with dajji wall construction. It was constructed in 1850 and has a plinth area of 10,628 sq. ft.

Rashtrapati Nilayam is located at Bolarum in the Hyderabad Metropolitan Region. It was constructed in 1860. The building has a total land area of 90 acres.

National Herald case: ED summons Sonia Gandhi again on July 25



Enforcement Directorate (ED) has again summoned Congress leader Sonia Gandhi on July 25 after questioning her for three hours in connection with the National Herald case on Thursday.

After the first round of interrogation, the Congress interim president left for lunch break with her daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, when the ED sent her fresh

summons calling her again. Earlier in the day, Sonia reached the ED's headquarters at around 12.10 p.m and was questioned by a team of additional director Monika Sharma. Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi accompanied their mother to the ED Office. While Rahul left the office after a few minutes, Priyanka stayed back with her mother's medicines.

Running away from discussion in Parliament on price rise, GST hike 'unparliamentary': Rahul

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday attacked the government over the issues of price rise, hike in GST rates and depreciating value of Rupee and alleged that it is "unparliamentary" on the part of the prime minister to not answer questions and run away from a discussion in Parliament.

He also alleged that no matter how much the prime minister tries to silence the opposition by declaring many words as "unparliamentary", he will have to answer on these issues.

The senior Congress leader was Gandhi referring to a recent booklet brought by Lok Sabha Secretariat listing out certain words as unparliamentary for use in Parliament.

The government, however, has said the practice of listing unparliamentary words has been done since 1954.

"The Rupee crossed Rs 80. The gas cylinder man is asking for Rs 1,000. There are 1.3 crore unemployed people in June. Now GST burden on food grains too. No one can stop us from raising public issues, the government will have to answer," Gandhi tweeted.

"Running away from discussion and questions in Parliament is most 'unparliamentary', Prime Minister ji," he said in a tweet in Hindi

747 websites, 94 YouTube channels working against India brought down in 2021-22: Anurag Thakur

Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur today said that in 2021-22 the Ministry has taken strong action against YouTube channels working against the interest of the country. Responding to a question in Rajya Sabha, Thakur said the Ministry has acted against 94 YouTube channels, 19 social media accounts and 747 URLs and got them blocked. These actions have been taken under the Section 69A Information Technology Act 2000. Minister further said that the Government has strongly acted against agencies working against the sovereignty of the country by spreading fake news and spreading propaganda on internet.

Cruel to raise taxes when CPI inflation is over 7 per cent: Jairam Ramesh

Congress party on Wednesday denounced Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for defending the hike in GST rates and questioned the timing saying its "cruel" to hike the rates when CPI is over 7 per cent.

Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secretary said: "It is cruel to raise tax rates when CPI inflation is over 7 per cent, WPI inflation is over 15 per cent, unemployment is high, the rupee is depreciating, the current account deficit is widening and inflation is expected to rise world-wide."

He said: "Branded & labelled is very different from pre-packaged & labelled. The former affects only products of big companies priced higher and bought by middle and upper middle classes. The latter affects small businesses whose products are bought by the lower middle class and the poor.



West Bengal Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya minister who attended the meeting said that it was virtual. The finance ministers did not meet face to face and did not consult each other. She also contradicted the finance minister and said that she (and some others) opposed the report of the Fitment Committee that recommended the increases, the veteran leader said.

Ready for debate once FM recovers, Rahul should not try curbing Parliament's productivity: BJP



The government is ready for a debate in Parliament on price rise once Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recovers from COVID-19, the BJP asserted on Wednesday and targeted Rahul Gandhi, saying he may be "unproductive politically" but should not hurt the legislature's productivity.

Union ministers Piyush Goyal, Pralhad Joshi and Smriti Irani hit out at opposition parties as both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha saw little transactions for the third straight day due to their protests on the issues of price rise and the imposition of GST on many pre-packaged and labelled food items.

Both Goyal and Joshi noted that it is Sitharaman who

will reply to a debate on the matter and asserted that the government is willing for the discussion as demanded by the opposition once she recovers and is back in Parliament.

They refuted the opposition's charge that the government is running away from a debate and attacked the Congress, the largest opposition party.

"The Congress has a destructive attitude towards democracy. It was exposed from Jairam Ramesh's tweet that the Congress was successful in not allowing the House to function," Goyal, who is the Leader of House in Rajya Sabha, told reporters outside parliament.

The government is not running away from any debate, he said.

Joshi said the Congress is not interested in a constructive debate but in "destructive damage".

Retail inflation for farm, rural workers rise in June

Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers rose to 6.43 per cent and 6.76 per cent, respectively, in June due to higher prices of certain food items. In June last year, the retail inflation for farm workers stood at 3.83 per cent and that for rural labourers was at 4 per cent.

The All India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) was at 1,125 points while the Consumer Price Index for Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) stood at 1,137 points in June



2022. On an annual basis, both are marginally higher. In May, CPI-AL was at 1,119 points while CPI-RL stood at 1,131 points.

"Point to point rate of inflation based on the CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index-Agricultural Labourers) and CPI-RL (Rural Labourers) stood at 6.43 per

cent and 6.76 per cent in June 2022 compared to 6.67 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively in May 2022," the labour ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

As per the latest official data, food inflation for agricultural labourers and rural labourers was at 5.09 per cent and 5.16 per cent, respectively, in June this year. This is higher compared to the readings of 2.67 per cent and 2.86 per cent, respectively, recorded in a year-ago period.

ANTI-SIKH RIOTS CASE

SIT arrests 5 more in UP

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the killings during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, has arrested five more people accused of setting a building afire in which three persons were burnt to death.

The arrested have been identified as Anil Kumar Pandey, 61, Sriram Baggad, 65, Mustaqem, 70, Abdul Wahaed, 61, and Irshad Khan, 60. All are residents of the Kidwai Nagar. Police officials said that the five had allegedly accompanied dozens of others to reach Nirala Nagar for setting the property of one Gurudyal Singh on fire in 1984.

Twelve families were residing at Gurudyal's property as tenants, and during the attack, three people were burnt alive. A rioter, identified as Rajesh Gupta, was also shot dead



during cross-firing, he added.

With these fresh arrests from Nirala Nagar in Kidwai Nagar, the SIT head, DIG Balendu Bhushan Singh, said so far 27 people had been arrested in connection with the violence following the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The DIG said that the SIT, constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government on May 27, 2019, on the orders of the Supreme Court, had been probing the anti-Sikh riots' cases for the last three years.

Start construction of Delhi-Katra highway on fast-track: Mann

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday issued a directive for starting the construction of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra National Highway on a fast-track mode.

Chairing a review meeting of the Public Works Department (PWD) here, the Chief Minister asked the officials to accord top priority to all approved and sanctioned works for their timely completion.

He issued directions to ensure the department strictly adheres to the prescribed specifications for ensuring quality construction, maintenance and repair of the upcoming projects.

He said Delhi-Amritsar-Katra National Highway is an ambitious project, which



once completed will save time, money and energy of commuters travelling from Delhi to Jammu and Kashmir via Punjab. It will be beneficial for those desirous of paying obeisance at Mata Vaishno Devi shrine.

Mann said the 254-km long Delhi-Katra highway will be constructed at a cost Rs 11,510 crore and will pass through nine districts of the state -- Ja-

landhar, Sangrur, Malerkotla, Patiala, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Gurdaspur.

The Chief Minister also asked the department to complete the work on construction of Aam Aadmi Clinics as per the fixed deadline of August 15. Mann envisioned that the clinics will act as catalyst for providing quality healthcare services to people.

Jammu-Kashmir highway closed due to landslide



The 270 Jammu-Srinagar national highway, the only road that connects Kashmir Valley to the rest of the country, was closed for traffic due to landslides triggered by heavy rains at several places in Ramban district on Thursday, officials said.

The highway was blocked by shooting stones, landslides at four places. One such place is Cafeteria Moore Ramban. Hundreds of vehicles including those carrying Amarnath yatis, are stranded. The convoy carrying Amarnath yatis to Kashmir has been stopped at Chanderkoot and Nashri for now, officials said. Restoration work is in progress.

Amarnath yatra: Over 2 lakh pilgrims perform pilgrimage in 3 weeks

FW DESK

More than two lakh pilgrims have performed the Amarnath Yatra since the yatra began on June 30.

On Wednesday, another batch of 4,355 pilgrims left Jammu for the Valley on Wednesday.

"Another batch of 4,355

pilgrims left Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu in two escorted convoys for the Valley today (Wednesday). Of these, 1,846 Yatis are going to Baltal and 2,509 are going to Pahalgam base camp," officials of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) that manages the affairs of the annual pilgrimage to Himalayan cave shrine situ-



ated 3,888 metres above the sea level said.

Since this year's pilgrimage

started on June 30, 2,07,679 pilgrims have performed the yatra while 13,226 had paid obeisance at the cave shrine on Tuesday.

Those using the Baltal route have to trek 14 km to reach the cave shrine while those using the traditional Pahalgam route have to trek 48 km for 4 days.

Opposition continues protest for discussion on GST



NEWDELHI: Opposition members continued to protest demanding discussion on GST, price rise, Agnipath and other issues. The Rajya Sabha witnessed strong protests by opposition benches demanding discussions on GST, price rise, Agnipath and other issues. Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge and other opposition members had given suspension of business notices under rule 267 to discuss Agnipath, hike in GST rates, price rise besides other issues which were rejected. As members continued to press for it, Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu. Opposition members continued their protest demanding discussion on GST, price rise, Agnipath and other issues. Rajya Sabha deputy chairman said that only listed business will be taken up in the House. Amid the din, Union Minister for External Affairs Dr S. Jaishankar moved the Bill to amend the existing Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005, passed by Lok Sabha, for consideration, and passed the Bill.

Govt. steps in to promote use of electric vehicles, Over 13 lakh EVs in India

India has a total of 13,34,385 Electric Vehicles and 27,81,69,631 non-Electric Vehicle in use. The e-vahan portal the detailed list of electric vehicles and total vehicles on roads of India.

Various steps have been taken by the Government to promote the use of electric vehicles in India including Maharashtra, Dardar and Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep States The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid & Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India) Scheme in 2015 with an aim to reduce dependency on fossil fuel and to address issues of vehicular emissions. At present, Phase-II of FAME India Scheme is being implemented for a period of 5 years w.e.f. 01st April, 2019 with a total budgetary support of Rs. 10,000 crores. The Government on 12th May, 2021 approved a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for manufacturing of Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) in the country in order to bring down prices of battery in the country. Drop in battery price will result in cost reduction of electric vehicles. Electric Vehicles are covered under Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Automobile and Auto Components, which was approved on 15th September 2021 with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 25,938 crore for a period of five years. GST on electric vehicles has been reduced from 12% to 5%; GST on chargers/ charging stations for electric vehicles has been reduced from 18% to 5%.

India assures continue support to Sri Lankan people

As the new Sri Lankan president looks at pulling the country out of its economic crisis, India on Thursday said it will continue to assist the island nation and support its people in their quest for stability and prosperity through democratic means.

The comments by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came a day after Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Sri Lanka's new president, amid hopes for recovery from the unprecedented economic crisis that triggered a massive political turmoil.

"We have been at the forefront of extending economic assistance to Sri Lanka as per what they require," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a weekly media briefing. He said India extended a sig-



nificant amount of assistance to Sri Lanka at its "time of need" adding "we will continue to stand by the people of Sri Lanka in whatever manner we can".

"We will stand with the people of Sri Lanka in their quest for stability and economic recovery

through democratic means and values, established democratic institutions and constitutional framework," Bagchi said.

"I think this transition happened through the constitutional framework is a clear positive indicator of that," he said.

Wickremesinghe, 73, won a parliamentary ballot on Wednesday, days after his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country amid escalating protests against his government over the economic crisis.

"As they now have a new president, they will probably take more steps ahead to set up a government. They also have discussions with the IMF (International Monetary Fund). Let's see what is required," Bagchi said when asked whether India was considering extending further economic assistance to the island nation.

"We have extended assistance in various ways and some of it is not fully utilised while some of it has been utilised. We will continue to stand with the people of Sri Lanka in whatever way

we can and that would sum up how we look at it (situation)," the MEA spokesperson said.

Separately, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said in Rajya Sabha that India continues to assist Sri Lanka in its economic development as also support to overcome its economic challenges.

"In January 2022, India extended a USD 400 million currency swap to Sri Lanka under the SAARC Framework and deferred successive Asian Clearing Union settlements till July 6, 2022. A line of credit of USD 500 million was extended to Sri Lanka for importing fuel from India," he said. "In addition, India has extended a credit facility of USD 1 billion for the procurement of food, medicines and other essential items from India.

Haryana CM announces Rs 1 cr compensation for DSP killed by mining mafia



CHANDIGARH: Expressing condolences on the unfortunate death of Deputy Superintendent of Police Surender Singh, who had gone to investigate an illegal mining case in Nuh, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday announced a relief of Rs 1 crore and job to one of the family members of the victim. The state government is standing with the bereaved family in this hour of grief and strict action would surely be

taken against those found guilty. Surender Singh was a brave officer and his bravery will always be remembered, he said, as per an official statement. The Chief Minister made this announcement in a programme held in Gurugram. During this, he along with all dignitaries who attended the programme observed a two-minute silence for the departed soul. Khattar assured the family that the culprits involved in this

Police will take strict action against those behind DSP's murder in Nuh: Anil Vij

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij said on Tuesday that the police will take strict action against those responsible for the murder of DSP Surender Singh Bishnoi, who was run over allegedly by the mining mafia in Nuh district on Tuesday.



The officer, who was investigating illegal mining in the region, was mowed down when he went to a village under the Tawdu police station in connection with a case. "I have ordered the police to take strict action against the

dumper truck to stop. As the DSP alighted from the police vehicle to inspect the truck, the truck driver suddenly ran over him."

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar expressed grief over the incident and said that strict action will be taken against the culprits. "In the case of murder of DSP Tawadu (Nuh) Surender Singh Ji, orders have been given to take strict action, not a single culprit will be spared. My deepest condolences to the bereaved family members.

will be given. The DSP had gone to Nuh to investigate an incident of illegal mining. During the investigation, Surender Singh was allegedly crushed to death

by a dumper driver. After the incident, the search operation is on to nab the accused. Police officers are present at the spot and are investigating the matter.

Kejriwal defends Dy CM Sisodia after Delhi LG orders CBI probe into Excise policy



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday rubbished the allegations made against Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia for violating the new excise policy terming it to be a false case and alleged that the central government could not bear to see the expansion of the Aam-Aadmi Party (AAP).

Kejriwal-led government's new contentious excise policy including "deliberate and gross procedural lapses" made by deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia to "provide post tender undue benefits to liquor licensees."

A report on July 8 by the Chief Secretary established prima facie violations of GNCTD Act 1991, Transaction of Business Rules (ToBR) 1993, Delhi Excise Act 2009, and Delhi Excise Rules 2010.

The report indicates substantially financial quid pro quo at the top political level and that the Delhi excise policy was implemented with the sole aim of benefitting private liquor barons for financial benefits to individuals at the highest rungs of the government leading up to Manish Sisodia.

The Minister in charge of the Excise Department, Manish Sisodia took and got executed, major decisions/actions in violation of the statutory provisions and the notified Excise Policy that had huge financial implications, officials at the LG office said.

The LG office said that Sisodia also extended "undue financial favours" to the liquor licensees much after the tenders had been awarded and thus caused huge losses to the exchequer.

Kejriwal promises free electricity up to 300 units in Gujarat



Aam Aadmi Party's national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday promised that his party will provide free electricity up to 300 units per month if voted to power in Gujarat.

"If AAP comes to power in the state within three months of the formation of government, it will give free electricity up to 300 units per billing cycle, but if the consumer is using even one unit more than 300 units, one has to pay full bill. The idea is to encourage consumers to reduce power consumption. 24 X 7 power supply without disruption or power cut."

Kejriwal arrived here on Wednesday late evening for a day's trip. While addressing mediapersons, he said this is the first guarantee to the people of Gujarat and the party will roll out other guarantees in phases.

Kejriwal has also promised that if any consumer's old bill is pending, it will be exempted. "So far agriculture electricity charges are concerned," Kejriwal said, "the farmers' issue is highly technical and they are right now discussing the issue internally and are working to find a solution." He said if the AAP can give free power in Delhi and Punjab, it can give in Gujarat too, "the problem is that the national party either doesn't know and or doesn't intend to give free power to the common man," he said.

ASSOCHAM congratulates Draupadi Murmu on being elected as Rashtrapati



ASSOCHAM today congratulated Draupadi Murmu on being elected as the 15th President of India and stated her election epitomized empowerment of the common people right up to the highest Constitutional position in our Republic and was an inspirational moment for our great democracy.

"Smt Draupadi Murmu truly epitomizes the power of people at the grassroots, who aspire and reach the top through their well-grounded lifestyle, national service, and simplicity. This shows hundreds of millions of people in India that nothing is impossible. Murmu's election as the President of our Republic is a matter of pride for Indian democracy and I congratulate her heartily for reaching the highest post of the land and look forward to her sage advice in the coming days," said ASSOCHAM President Sumant Sinha.

In his congratulatory message, the Chamber Secretary General Deepak Sood said, "The election of Murmu to the highest Constitutional office demonstrates strength of India's democracy with a vibrant participation at the grassroots level. Her election to the Rashtrapati Bhavan has inspired millions of Indians for exalted national goals."

He said ASSOCHAM would always look forward to seeking guidance of Murmu and join the endeavour of meeting aspirations of citizens of our Republic.

Two feared dead after being swept in river in Rajasthan



Two men are feared dead after they were swept away by the strong currents in the Mahi Erav river amid heavy rainfall in Rajasthan's Pratapgarh district, police said Tuesday.

Rescue teams are searching for the missing persons, they said. The incident happened in Bawdi village of the district when four people were crossing the river last night, police said.

Due to sudden strong current of the river amid heavy rainfall, two of them were swept away, while the remaining two swam to safety, Station House Officer, Ghanthali, Sohan Lal said. He said rescue teams are carrying out operation to find the missing persons. Those missing were identified as Jeta Delia (25) and Rajeng Singh (22).

Haryana MLAs getting threaten, ransom demand from criminals

SATISH HANDA

A delegation of nearly two dozen Congress MLAs led by former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha and HPC president Ch. Udaibhan submitted memorandum to Haryana Governor at Rajya Bhawan demanding immediate action against threatening calls as well as ransom demand received by MLAs in the state demanding ruling state government to provide them security. Expressing deep concern Hooda said, law and order situation in Haryana state worsening day by day since past few



years even MLAs are not being spared by the criminals.

On the other hand, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar called immediate meeting to have a thorough feed back on this issue in which Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij, Home Secretary Rajiv

Arora, Director General Police P.K. Aggarwal were also present. Chief Minister directed DGP to take immediate action for the arrest of accused making threatening calls to MLA and demanding ransom from them. Information reveals, among

those MLAs received threatening calls in recent past include Renu Bala MLA from Sadhaura, Subhash Gangoli MLA from Safidon, Surinder Panwar MLA from Sonapat, Sanjay Singh BJP MLA from Sohna received international threatening calls whereas on the other hand Maman Khan MLA from Ferozpur Jhirka and Kuldeep Vats MLA from Badli received threatening calls from local hard core criminals. Later talking to media persons, State Home Minister Anil Vij said a Special Task Force has been constituted by the state government to trap such criminals in police net immediately expecting satisfactory results.

Political parties start preparations for Adampur bi-polls in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

After Baroda and Ellanabad Vidhan Sabha bi-polls in Haryana, the state is likely to have another bi-poll this year for Adampur Vidhan Sabha constituency for which all political parties in the state have started preparations. This seat occupied by Congress candidate Kuldeep Bishnoi son of former Haryana chief minister Ch. Bhajan Lal recently expelled by Congress high command due to cross voting against Congress candidate Ajay Makan in recent Rajya Sabha polls. Kuldeep Bishnoi recently had a detailed meeting with BJP president J.P. Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and may submit resignation from Vihan Sabha membership any time after joining BJP. There is a possibility of bi-polls at Adampur Vidhan Sabha seat getting vacant after Bishnoi's resignation since there is yet long time for next Vidhan Sabha polls in Haryana state to be held in October 2024.

According to present political scenario, Bishnoi will be contesting such bi-polls from his present Adampur constituency on behalf of ruling BJP-JJP alliance whereas Sonali Faugat earlier contested on behalf of BJP has indicated that no body can separate her from this Vidhan Sabha constituency. Moreover Bishnoi and Dushyant Chautala have been contesting against each other in Hisar Lok Sabha polls and question arises if Dushyant Chautala will support whole heartedly Bishnoi being alliance partner in state govern-



ment. Question also arises if Ch. Virender Singh whose son Brijender Singh won last Hisar Lok Sabha polls on behalf of BJP defeating Kuldeep Bishnoi's son Bhavya will extend support to Bishnoi in Adampur bi-polls.

Former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha will try his best to give tough fight to Kuldeep Bishnoi in order to prove and give message to Congress high command that he has power to defeat Bishnoi in Bhajan Lal's territory. Similarly, Kuldeep Bishnoi will try his best to win Adampur bi-polls again and prove that no one can dare to look at his constituency as well as his father's territory. Sources reveal, Congress may contest former Union Minister Jai Parkash (JP) to have tough fight against Kuldeep Bishnoi likely to be BJP-JJP candidate in Adampur bi-polls. There is possibility of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to participate in Adampur bi-polls and in case Kuldeep Bishnoi contest this bi-poll on behalf of BJP-JJP, Satinder Singh or Sonali Faugat may contest Adampur bi-polls on behalf of AAP or INLD.

Haryana becomes No-1 in crimes, corruption, unemployment & drugs smuggling: Naveen Jaihind

SATISH HANDA

On way back from Haridwar along with group of Kawad pilgrims Haryana state Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Naveen Jaihind was warmly welcomed at Ambala cantt railway station on Wednesday night by AAP workers. Addressing a press conference here Jaihind said that law and order condition in Haryana state have be-



come worst since past few years due to ruling government in the state with increasing cases of theft and robberies, corruption in government offices, mur-

ders and threats for ransom demand in which even MLAs are not being spared by the criminals. He expressed deep concern over recent case of a DSP Surinder Kumar crushed under the wheels of a dumper by mining mafias since ruling government has failed to control illegal mining in the state.

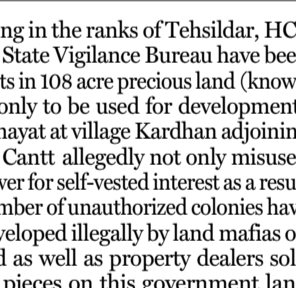
Jaihind said, while praying before holy Ganga at Haridwar he has demanded relief for people

in Haryana state by the ruling government on five different issues which include control over increasing crimes and bad law and order in the state, fast increasing unemployment among youths in Haryana state where nearly 25 lakh youths are without jobs in-spite of five lakh vacancies in different government departments ruling state government exist and not being filled up by the government.

Senior revenue officers trapped in 108 acre land scam likely to face legal action

SATISH HANDA

Several revenue officers including in the ranks of Tehsildar, HCS and IAS facing investigation by State Vigilance Bureau have been alleged involved in embezzlements in 108 acre precious land (known as Shamlat land) in 'Lal-dora' only to be used for developments by Panchayat at village Kardhan adjoining Ambala Cantt allegedly not only misused their power for self-vested interest as a result large number of unauthorized colonies have been developed illegally by land mafias on this land as well as property dealers sold plots in pieces on this government land



changing land records unethically. Not only this large numbers of registrations were finalised by Tehsildar and their staff members who so ever was posted at Ambala Cantt in past years.

Fire breaks out at three-story building in Delhi, 12 rescued

Twelve people were rescued after a fire broke out at a three-story building in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar on Tuesday, officials said.



A call about blaze was received at 3:34 pm, fire department officials said.

Delhi Fire Service director Atul Garg said, "Five fire tenders were rushed to the spot and so far 12 people have been rescued."

The fire broke out on the first floor of the building, he

said, adding the cause of blaze is being ascertained.

No casualties have been reported so far, officials said, adding that the fire has been brought under control.

Haryana govt focusing at attracting investments & create more jobs: Dushyant Chautala

SATISH HANDA

While addressing Xelerate Haryana-2nd Edition MSME Samvaad Haryana 'Accelerating the Growth Momentum for Holistic Development' conference organized by ASSOCHAM, Deputy Chief Minister Haryana, Dushyant Chautala said that Haryana Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy 2022, State Startup Policy 2022 and



Data Centre Policy 2022 were the three major policies approved by the state government that will boost state economy. Speaking at the conference in Gurugram, Chautala stated that the state is a preferred destination for auto majors and auto-component manufacturers to host many large automotive players. He said, the state produces two-thirds of passenger cars, 50% of tractors, 60%

of motorcycles attracting stake holders and MNCs.

Chautala told the industrialists that there is a need of strong connection between the government and the industry to have the vision of growth. "MSME has created a separate web with strong growth rate," he added. He further said, primary focus should be on more consumption rate in the state.

Haryana Government assigns Daulatabad Stadium to Special Olympics for next 20 years

GURUGRAM: The Haryana Government has assigned the Daulatabad Stadium in Gurugram to Special Olympics Bharat at an event held in the stadium with approximately 300 persons in attendance.

The facility will be utilised for regular sports practises and inclusive engagements on and off the field. With this monumental development, the state has once again reiterated its belief in sports as a universal catalyst to change and progress.

Supporting the State Government's decision, different communities like the panchayat (village council), and gaushala association (Animal Protection organisation)

present at the event on Friday, readily confirmed (enthusiastically & aloud in unison) their support to the cause, awarding additional space for sports, thereby increasing the allotted area from 8 to 15 acres (6.07 hectares). They even offered to provide free milk to the Athletes during their training sessions.

The Stadium which will be utilised for regular sports practice sessions and national tournaments is likely to get functional in the next six months. The layout will accommodate 10 indoor and outdoor sports including, cycling, football, handball, roller skating, lawn tennis, basketball and Table Tennis, Powerlifting, Badminton & Judo. The facility is likely to benefit over 1500 athletes residing in the district.



Sandeep Singh, the Sports Minister of Haryana, graced the occasion with many more distinguished guests including

OP Dhankar- BJP President Haryana, Sudhir Singla, MLA Gurugram, Rakesh MLA Badshapur along with eshav Malik, the first Bhim awardee in the Special Category, Dr Mallika Nadda, Chairperson and Dr

DG Chaudhari, the General Secretary of SO Bharat. All five Special Olympics Bhim awardees graced the event as well.

The various representatives of the State Govt addressed their future plans of making Inclusive sports part of the State Disability Sports policy. Along with state Govt jobs to the World Games medallists, they announced their intentions of paying pensions to those who are unemployable.

"I express my heartfelt gratitude to the State Govt of Haryana who have assigned a stadium specifically accessible to the Special Olympics Athletes. Haryana is taking giant development strides in

multiple directions. These are the Athletes who represent India at the World Games and many other international events, making their states proud as well. It is the responsibility of all communities and individuals, for mainstreaming & providing the special Athletes with a life of dignity and respect," said Dr Mallika.

The event had begun with the symbolic tree plantation, wherein 15 trees (guava, mango, amla) were planted within the premises by the distinguished guests. Keshav Malik, a Special Olympics World Games Medallist (Athens 2011) and a member of the State Chapter Committee, planted the first tree.

SC protects Nupur Sharma from arrest from FIRs over her remarks on Prophet



NEW DELHI: A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court, which slammed suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma over her remarks on Prophet Mohammad during a TV debate on July 1, on Tuesday said it never wanted her to go to every court and said no coercive action should be taken against her in FIRs registered so far and also cases, which could be registered in the future. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and J.B. Pardiwala said: "Meanwhile, as an interim measure, it is directed that no coercive shall be taken against Nupur Sharma pursuant to the impugned FIRs." Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Sharma, contended that new FIRs are being registered, and added that they will pick her up. The bench said: "No coercive action to be taken against present or future FIRs in relation to the same telecast..."

President Ram Nath Kovind delivers 4th Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial Lecture

President of India, Ram Nath Kovind delivered the 4th Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial Lecture in New Delhi on July 19.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that as much as Dr Kalam used to lay emphasis on science, he used to give equal importance to spirituality. Creating interest for science among the common people was one of his missions. He carried forward this mission through an organization. But it is also worth noting that he used to meet saints and mystics of all religions and tried to learn something from them. Among the books written by him is a small book called, 'Building a New India' in which one chapter is 'Learning from Saints and Seers'. In that chapter, Dr Kalam has mentioned his meetings with saints and dervishes and presented their views with respect. Dr Kalam gave equal importance to science and philosophy and development and ethics.

President said that two things are inextricably linked with Dr



Kalam - his goodness and his fame. Every Indian is proud of that great son of the country, who had an undying love for his country.

The President said that Dr Kalam used to say that there are three special things in any powerful country. The first thing is to take pride in what the country has achieved. The second thing is to maintain brotherhood. And the third thing is the capability to work together. Dr Kalam wanted people to remember the stories

of the great people of India and learn from them. He also used to say that every country that has moved forward has a sense of mission. Therefore, whatever work is to be done, there should be a passion to complete it like a mission. He wanted all of us to keep moving forward unitedly to strengthen the fabric of our country.

President said that every Indian, especially the youth, should read Dr Kalam's autobiography 'Wings of Fire'. He also said

that our youth should adopt the invaluable teachings of Dr Kalam in their lives. Respecting his teachers and maintaining affection for his family members is evident in Dr Kalam's story time and again. Everyone who worked with him felt an affinity with him. The simplicity of life and the height of thought have been Dr Kalam's hallmarks.

President appreciated the India Islamic Cultural Centre (IIC) for taking the ideals of Dr Kalam to the people through the memorial lectures. He was happy to note that IIC has been working continuously for the cause of national unity as per its mandate. He said that by working for national integration, the IIC is strengthening the legacy of a nation-builder like Dr Kalam. He urged IIC to organise events, as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, to increase awareness about Dr Kalam and about those scientists whom Dr Kalam has called 'five mighty souls', in the new generation.

Naidu calls upon Governors to act as a guide to States

Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu called upon the governors to act as a 'guide' to states and see to it that the programmes funded by Government of India are properly implemented by the states. He said that the Office of a Governor is "neither an ornamental position nor a political position" and that their conduct should 'set an example' for the state administration.

The Vice President was addressing the Governors, Lt. Governors and Administrators from various States and Union Territories, along with their spouses, at a lunch hosted by him at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas on Sunday.

Naidu urged the Governors to frequently visit as many universities as possible in their state, in the role of Chancellor to the Universities, and interact with the students and staff to motivate them. He also suggested that they oversee the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 in its letter and spirit.

Vice President Naidu suggested that Governors can also



become important partners in the eradication of tuberculosis and other health awareness initiatives in the states and UTs. Giving the instance of vaccination, Naidu pointed out how motivating people to get vaccinated has had positive outcomes and reduced mortalities in India. He suggested that Governors become partners in various vaccination campaigns and also stress the importance of healthy dietary habits in their interaction with people. Governors, Lt. Governors and Administrators from various States and Union Territories, their spouses, Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah, senior officials and other dignitaries were present.

JP Nadda makes key party appointments in few states units



BJP chief J.P. Nadda on Thursday made key appointments in a few state units. The appointment comes into immediate effect.

Ajay Jamwal, who was the regional general secretary (organisation) in-charge of Northeastern states, has been assigned the same position for Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Manthri Srinivasulu has been shifted to Punjab from Telangana as general secretary (organisation).

Rajesh G.V. has been appointed general secretary (organisation) in Karnataka. He will replace Arun Kumar, who has returned to the RSS.

Satish Dhond, general secretary (organisation) in-charge of Goa, has now been made the joint general secretary (organisation) of West Bengal.

General secretary (organisation) is drawn from the RSS and holds key in the overall functioning of the BJP's organisational structure.

PM Modi congratulates PV Sindhu on winning her first ever Singapore Open title



Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has congratulated P V Sindhu on winning her first ever Singapore Open title. Modi has also said that it is a proud moment for the country and will also give inspiration to upcoming players.

In a reply to a tweet by Union Sports Minister, Anurag Singh Thakur, the Prime Minister said;

«I congratulate @Pvsindhu1 on winning her first ever Singapore Open title. She has yet again demonstrated her exceptional sporting talent and achieved success. It is a proud moment for the country and will also give inspiration to upcoming players.»

Accidental grenade blast kills Army Captain, JCO in J&K



An Indian Army Captain and a Junior Commissioned Officer were killed in a grenade blast along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Sunday night. The blast is reported to be accidental. A defence spokesperson said that the deceased along with other troops were performing their duties along the LoC in the Mendhar sector when the grenade went off. The deceased soldiers have been identified as Captain Anand and Naib Subedar Bhagwan Singh.

They were evacuated to the Army's Command Hospital at Udhampur, but they succumbed to injuries, the spokesman added. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered into the matter.

NTA constitutes a Fact Finding Committee to visit Kollam

It has been brought to the notice of Ministry of Education through various media reports that an incident allegedly happened in one of the Centre's of NEET(UG)- 2022 near Kollam district in Kerala. NTA has already issued a clarification in this regard. Further, V. Muralidharan, MOS, Ministry of External Affairs & Parliamentary Affairs and other public representatives from Kerala have met the Union Education Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan. Dr. R. Bindu, Minister of Higher Education and Social Justice, Government. of Kerala has also written a letter to Union Education Minister.

Tikait says will launch big agitation in Bihar from Oct

PATNA: Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Monday said the farmers in Bihar should prepare for a 'big agitation' from October to demand their rights.

Tikait made this announcement while interacting with mediapersons here. He said the condition of farmers was extremely bad in the state. If necessary, he would meet the chief minister and ask him to address the situation, he added.

«It is not necessary for the farmers of Bihar to migrate to other states for jobs. If any farmer would get a genuine price for the crops, why would he go to other states? Similarly, if a labourer gets the job in the



home state why would he go to other states to earn for their livelihood, « Tikait said.

«The farmers of Bihar should come forward for their rights and raise their voices. We will interact with all small and large farmers' organisations in Bihar to make them united and make them aware of the need to fight for their rights against the gov-

ernment. I will start campaigning in Bihar from October this year, « Tikait said.

«At present, farmers' agitation is going on a small scale. They need to get united for a bigger fight against the government. The farmers of Bihar had a big contribution during agitation in Delhi. The farmers of Bihar are not getting adequate prices for their crops. This is the biggest worry for them. As they are protesting separately, their voice is not reaching the state government. I would appeal to the farmers of Bihar to prepare themselves for the struggle in the next few months, « Tikait said.

Centre discriminated with Punjab by keeping farmers out of MSP panel: Harsimrat Badal

Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal on Thursday said the NDA government had discriminated against Punjab by keeping its farmers, government and agricultural experts out of the committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP) and even changed the aim and intentions of the committee which would lead to further discontentment and strife.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, the Bathinda MP protested against the manner in which representatives of Punjab, including its farm and gov-



ernment representatives and agricultural experts, had been kept out of the committee even though Punjabis had been in the forefront of the farmers'

agitation, which had forced the government to withdraw the farm laws.

Harsimrat also questioned how the aim of the committee had been changed even though the Central government had given a written assurance while withdrawing the farm laws that a forthcoming committee would legalise farmers' right to the MSP.

«The committee formed on July 12, however, has removed this clause altogether and changed it to make MSP more effective and transparent.»

India achieves major landmark of '200 Cr' COVID-19 Vaccinations

In a historic achievement, India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination drive has surpassed the 200-Crore milestone. As per provisional reports till 1 pm Sunday, a total of 2,00,00,15,631 doses have been administered across the country. This has been achieved through 2,63,26,111 sessions.

In a tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the countrymen on bringing about this significant feat. He called India's vaccination drive "unparalleled in scale and speed". Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya also congratulated the country on achieving this landmark in only



18 months. He stated that "this extraordinary achievement will be etched in history".

Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare,

Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar also thanked the healthcare workers for their hard work, vision and innovation in setting a new record in the service of humanity.

PM interacts with Indian Contingent bound for Commonwealth Games 2022

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with the Indian contingent bound for the Commonwealth Games 2022 today via video conferencing. The interaction was attended by both athletes as well as their coaches. Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Information & Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur and Secretary for Sports were also present.

Prime Minister wished the Indian contingent for Commonwealth Games on International Chess day. The Chess Olympiad is also taking place from 28 July in Tamil Nadu. He wished them for making India proud, as their predecessors did before. He informed that more than 65 athletes are participating in Commonwealth for the first time and he wished them to make a tremendous impact. He advised them to "play with all your heart, play hard, play with full force and will play without any stress".

During the interaction, the Prime Minister enquired from Avinash Sable, an athlete from Maharashtra, about his life experience of coming from Maharashtra and working in the Indian Army in Siachen. He said that he got to learn a lot from his 4 years stint in the Indian Army. He said that discipline and training he received from the Indian Army would help him shine in whichever field he would go. The PM asked him why he chose the steeplechase field while working in Siachen. He said steeplechase is all about crossing obstacles and he received similar training in the Army. The PM asked about his experience of losing weight so fast. He said that the Army motivated him to join sports and he got extra time to train himself and this helped in losing weight.

The Prime Minister further went on to speak with Achinta Sheuli, a weightlifter in the 73 kg category who hails from West Bengal and asked him how he manages to strike a balance between his peaceful nature and the power of weightlifting in his sport. Achinta said that he has a regular yoga routine that helps him calm the mind. The PM asked him about his family to which Achinta replied that he has his mother and elder brother who support him through all the highs and lows.



Huge gathering for TMC's Martyrs' Day rally

A huge number of people from across West Bengal have congregated at Esplanade, the city's downtown area, for the mega Martyrs' Day rally by ruling Trinamool Congress being held amidst tight security on Thursday.

The annual rally is being held after a gap of two years due to the pandemic and enthusiastic party supporters started arriving at the venue from as early as 4 am in trains, buses and private vehicles. Many of them have arrived in the city two days ago for the rally, which will be addressed by the feisty TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

TMC workers were seen arriving at the two terminal sta-



tions of Howrah and Sealdah in overcrowded local trains holding party flags, cutouts of Banerjee playing the traditional «dhaaks» (double sided drums) and even blowing conches.

At least 4,500 police personnel have been deployed across the city to maintain law and order in the city during the day.

This year's rally is also special as it is the first after

the party's decisive victory in the state election in 2021 and TMC's return to power for the third consecutive term.

Banerjee had said on Wednesday said that the Martyrs' Day rally will be against the Centre's «authoritarian rule».

TMC observes Martyrs' Day on July 21 every year to commemorate the killing of 13 people in police firing on a Youth Congress rally against the then Left Front government in 1993 when Banerjee was the YC state president.

She continues to observe the day even after forming the Trinamool Congress in 1998 and coming to power in West Bengal in 2011.

Use of Drones in Agriculture & Improving Farmers Income

Use of Drones in the Crop-protection in India is new and the country is gaining experience. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) initiated a network program during September, 2021 where in Research on use of Drones and Artificial Intelligence for timely monitoring of crop growth, health and managing it with enhanced input use efficiency were taken up. Drone and AI technology are used to monitor near real-time crop health. Drone is also used for variable rate technology for pesticide and liquid fertilizer applications, mapping of water spread area, water sampling, mapping macrophyte infestation and aquaculture management

practices, etc. Drone and AI technology are also used for precision livestock farming, particularly its health monitoring.

For enhancing farmers' income, the emphasis is on adopting a multi-dimensional strategy, which includes increase in production through creation of resources for improving irrigation; effective use of inputs; reduction of post-harvest losses; value addition; reforms in agriculture marketing; minimizing risk and providing security and assistance, and promotion of allied activities. The Government has adopted several developmental programmes, schemes, reforms and policies that focus on higher incomes



for the farmers. All these policies & programmes are being supported by higher budgetary allocations, non-budgetary financial resources such as creating Corpus Funds like Micro Irrigation Fund

etc. There have been several reforms to unleash the potential, e.g. Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs along with necessary financial support under AtmaNirbhar Package (Agriculture). Under

AtmaNirbhar Bharat special attention is being paid for creation of infrastructure for which «Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF) has been created with a size of Rs.100,000 crore. Other special initiatives include Supplementary Income transfers under PM-KISAN; Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY); Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana (PMKSY); Increase in Minimum Support Price (MSPs) for all Kharif & Rabi Crops ensuring a minimum of 50 percent of profit margin on the cost of production, Bee-Keeping; Rashtriya Gokul Mission; Blue Revolution; Interest Subvention Scheme; Kisan Credit Card (KCC) that now offers production loan to

even dairy & fishery farmers besides agricultural crops etc. The adoption of Drone technologies in agriculture has a potential to revolutionize the Indian agriculture. In order to make Drone technology affordable to the farmers and other stakeholders of this sector, financial assistance @ 100% cost of drone together with the contingent expenditure is extended to ICAR/SAU/State Governments/State Government Institutions under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) for its demonstration on the farmer's field. Apart from this, farmers are getting timely information and advisory services through online and telecom mediums such as

Kisan Call Centre and Kisan Suvidha App so that farmers can make decision for increasing crop productivity. During last three years (2019-2021) a total of 946 field crop varieties have been released comprising of 379 of cereals, 146 of Oilseeds, 168 of Pulses, 55 of Forage Crops, 158 of Fibre Crops, 26 of Sugarcane and 14 of other crops (potential/minor crops). In addition, 288 varieties of Horticultural crops were also released. These improved varieties are helping farmers to increase their income. This information was given by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar in a written reply in Lok Sabha 19th July.



Rupee still has room to further depreciate

The Indian rupee is experiencing its worst slump in four years. Since the start of 2022, the currency has depreciated by more than 7% against the U.S. dollar, weakening past a historic low of 80 to a dollar mark earlier this week. While the Indian currency is not alone in faring poorly against the greenback, with even the historically strong euro and the British pound taking a hammering and weakening by more than the rupee has, the fact that other currencies too have appreciably lost value against the dollar can only offer cold comfort to India's real economy. Domestic manufacturers and services providers are now having to cope with not just higher dollar prices for the raw materials, equipment or other supplies they may need to procure from overseas, in the wake of the supply disruptions caused by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, but they also face mounting import bills — the slide means they have to fork out more rupees for the same dollar price from even just a few months ago. The Finance Minister and the RBI Governor have sought to explain the proximate causes for the pressure on the currency and allay apprehensions that the rupee may be in a 'free fall', a scenario that could ultimately prove rather damaging for macro-economic stability by spurring imported inflation at a time when both fiscal and monetary authorities are battling to tame runaway inflation. So far in 2022, FPIs have dumped \$29.6 billion in Indian equity and debt after three straight years of net investments, with the prospect of more, sharp interest rate increases by the Federal Reserve to tame four-decade-high U.S. inflation likely to do little to staunch the outflows. The rupee's real effective exchange rate (REER), which provides a weighted average value in relation to a basket of currencies of its major trading partners, is also signalling that the Indian currency is still overvalued and has room to depreciate further.

LETTERBOX

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“The golden rule for every business man is put yourself in your customer's place.”
— Orison Swett Marden

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P.D.T. ACHARY EXPLAINS HOW IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A PRESIDENT TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE CITIZENRY

The President is not a mere rubber stamp

India is going to elect its new President on July 18. The new President will be sworn in on July 25. Choosing the presidential candidate is an intensely political exercise. Deep political calculations go into it. It is for this reason that the country is often taken by surprise by the choice the ruling party makes. But once the President is elected, the excitement subsides and for the next five years not much attention is paid to the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Nevertheless, in the prevailing political atmosphere, the question 'what kind of President does India need?' assumes great significance. It is true that the nominee of the ruling alliance is going to be the next President. Still, the stature, the moral standing and the level of acceptability of the person are important considerations when the country chooses a new President.

Let us first take a closer look at the President who emerges from the Constitution. There was a great deal of debate in the Constituent Assembly on the President. The main question debated therein was whether India should have a directly elected President or an indirectly elected one. The Assembly opted for an indirectly elected President. There were members such as Professor K.T. Shah who strongly argued for a directly elected President. He asked a rhetorical question, which was whether the Assembly wanted the president to be a "sort of mere gramophone of the Prime Minister." Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said: "Our President is merely a nominal figurehead. He has no discretion; he has no powers of administration at all."

But is the President of India a mere figurehead? Article 53 of the Constitution says that "the executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance



with this Constitution." It means the President exercises these powers only on the aid and the advice of the Council of Ministers. So, it makes sense for the people to ask why we should have a President who signs on the dotted line. The way some of our Presidents have acted in the past reinforces that public perception. But we must not forget that some of our Presidents did live up to the implications of the office of the President of the Republic. So, we come back to the question of how crucial this office is to the governance of the country.

Poll method, people's role

To answer this question, we need to first take a closer look at the method of election of the President. It is an indirect election in the sense that the people do not directly elect the President. Under Article 54, the President is elected by an electoral college consisting of only the elected members of both Houses of Parliament and the elected members of the State and Union Territory Assemblies.

However, a matter of importance in this context is the vote value of Members of the Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) and the

formula for its computation. The vote of an MLA, though one, is assigned a certain higher value. This value is calculated by first dividing the total population of the State (as per the 1971 Census) by the total strength of the Assembly, and then the quotient is divided by one thousand. The result is the value of a vote. Calculated this way, the vote value of an MLA in the State of Uttar Pradesh, for example, is 208.

The point is that in the computation of the value, the population of the State figures in a significant way. In other words, the population of the country is a crucial factor in the election of the President, which means the people's presence in the process of electing the President is very much visible. This gives a wider base to the President than a mere vote by the legislators on the basis of one member, one vote. This also gives the President a greater moral authority. So, the Indian President is not and cannot be a mere rubber stamp. He does not directly exercise the executive authority of the Union, but he can disagree with the decision of the Council of Ministers, caution them, counsel them, and so on. The President can ask the Cabinet

to reconsider its decisions. It is another matter that if the Cabinet, after such reconsideration, sends the same proposal back without any change, the President will have to sign it. That is because under the Cabinet system of government, it is the Cabinet which is responsible for the government's decisions. The President is in no way personally responsible for those decisions which he or she approves.

But the point to note is that the President can disagree with the decisions of the Cabinet and ask the Cabinet to reconsider them. The Constitution of India wants the President to be vigilant and responsive, and gives the freedom to him or her to take a broader view of things uninfluenced by the narrow political view of the executive.

This point becomes clearer when we take a look at the oath the President takes before entering office. The oath contains two solemn promises. First, the President shall preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. Second, the President shall devote himself or herself to the service and the well-being of the people of India. A President who makes the above promises under oath to the people cannot act, in the words of Professor K.T. Shah, as a gramophone of the Prime Minister.

But how does a President preserve, protect and defend the Constitution? It is an extremely tricky area. Experience shows that our Presidents do not normally think about their oath when the executive moves to bulldoze the rights and the liberties of citizens. There are very few democratic countries in the world where the executive has concentrated so much power in itself as in India. This trend started in the 1970s, and over the years the executive has grown into a behemoth.

P.D.T. Achary is former Secretary General, Lok Sabha. Views are personal



VINOD THOMAS HIGHLIGHTS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER CLIMATE CATASTROPHES AS LARGELY MAN-MADE

Public pressure key to drive climate action

In the absence of COVID-19, climate change-induced disasters would have been India's biggest red alert in recent years. The heatwave that scorched Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and New Delhi this year; torrential downpours in south India in 2021; and the super cyclone Amphan that battered West Bengal and Odisha in 2020 are symbols of man-made climate change. But India, like elsewhere, still attributes these catastrophes to the wrath of mother nature rather than anthropogenic global warming.

Temperatures over the Indian Ocean have risen by over 1°C since the 1950s, increasing extreme weather events. India is the fourth worst-hit in climate migration. Heat waves in India have claimed an estimated 17,000 lives since the 1970s. Labour losses from rising heat, by one estimate, could reach Rs 1.6 lakh crore annually if global warming exceeds 2°C, with India among the hardest hit. India needs a two-part approach: one, to adapt to climate impacts by building resilience against weather extremes, and two, to mitigate environmental destruction to prevent climate change from becoming more lethal.

Climate resilience

Extreme heat waves hit swathes of India. Heatwaves are aggravated by deforestation and land degradation, which also exacerbate fires. Agriculture, being water-intensive, does not do well in heat wave-prone areas. A solution is to promote agricultural practices which are not water-intensive and to support afforestation that has a salutary effect on warming. Financial transfers can be targeted to help farmers plant trees and buy equipment — for example, for drip irrigation that reduces



heavy water usage. Insurance schemes can transfer some of the risks of extreme heat faced by industrial, construction and agricultural workers to insurers.

Climate-resilient agriculture calls for diversification — for example, the cultivation of multiple crops on the same farm. There will need to be more localised food production. Weather-based crop insurance would help.

Floods and storms are worsened by vast sea ingress and coastline erosion in the low-lying areas in the south. Southern States need stronger guidelines to avoid construction in locations with drainages. It is vital to map flood-risk zones to manage vulnerable regions. Environment Impact Assessments must be mandatory for commercial projects.

Kerala has some flood-resistant houses constructed on pillars. Communities can build round-shaped houses, consider-

ing optimum aerodynamic orientation to reduce the strength of the winds. Roofs with multiple slopes can stand well in strong winds, and central shafts reduce wind pressure on the roof by sucking in air from outside.

Arresting runaway climate change

Adaptation alone will not slow climate damages if the warming of the sea level temperatures is not confronted. Leading emitters, including India, must move away from fossil fuels. But climate mitigation everywhere is painfully slow, because of a lack of political will. India has made slow progress in choosing 2070 as its target for net zero emissions.

Meanwhile, a big part of climate action lies in protecting and expanding forest coverage. Regulation needs to be tightened and enforced to ensure forest protection

while acquiring land. India gains from being part of the Glasgow declaration on forest protection that 141 countries signed in 2021.

Management of dams can exacerbate glacier lake outbursts and floods. Nearly 295 dams in India are more than 100 years old and need repairs. In stemming landslides in Uttarakhand, regulations must stop the building of dams on steep slopes and eco-fragile areas, as well as the dynamiting of hills, sand mining, and quarrying. Dams in the southern States can moderate floods, but only if operated year-round to anticipate the need to control flows during floods.

India's share in disaster management should be raised to 2.5% of GDP. Climate finance is most suited for large-scale global funding from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank. But smaller-scale financing can also be vital: the World Food Programme's funding for Nepal and Bhutan for community-based adaptation and agricultural resilience for vulnerable communities provides an interesting model.

States can tap into the Union government's resources, financial and technological, from early warning meteorological systems to centrally sponsored climate schemes. MGNREGA funds can be used for climate adaptation in agriculture, waste management and livelihoods. States could make compensatory payment to local self-government resources being used for climate adaptation. For public pressure to drive climate action, we need to consider climate catastrophes as largely man-made.

Vinod Thomas is Visiting Professor, National University of Singapore. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

Michelle Obama's new book focuses on stressful world

Michelle Obama will have a book out this fall, 'The Light We Carry,' in which she reflects upon her experiences and shares insights on navigating an increasingly stressful world.

It is the former First Lady's first new work since the 2018 release of her acclaimed blockbuster 'Becoming,' which has sold more than 17 million copies worldwide, surpassing the sales of any memoir by a previous first lady or modern president, including her husband, former President Barack Obama.

"I've learned it's okay to recognize that self-worth comes wrapped in vulnerability, and that what we share as humans on this earth is the impulse to strive for better, always and no matter what," Michelle

Obama writes in the book's introduction, included in Thursday's announcement by the Random House Publishing Group and its imprint Crown.

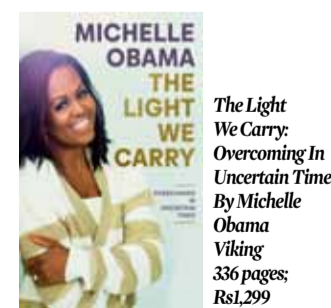
"We become bolder in brightness. If you know your light, you know yourself. You know your own story in an honest way. In my experience, this type of self-knowledge builds confidence, which in turn breeds calmness and an ability to maintain perspective, which leads, finally, to being able to connect meaningfully with others — and this to me is the bedrock of all things."

The new book is not part of the reported eight-figure deal the Obamas reached in 2017, shortly after he left office, with parent company Penguin Random House for their respective memoirs. A spokes-

I've learned it's okay to recognize that self-worth comes wrapped in vulnerability, and that what we share as humans on this earth is the impulse to strive for better, always and no matter what

person declined to discuss financial terms for 'The Light We Carry.'

Crown will publish the 336-page book November 15, almost exactly four years after the release of 'Becoming,' and has announced a first printing of 2.75 million copies for the U.S. and Canada. 'The Light We Carry: Overcoming in



The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times
By Michelle Obama
Viking
336 pages;
Rs1,299

Uncertain Times' will come out simultaneously in 14 languages and 27 countries, with additional rights deals expected.

"In 'The Light We Carry,' Ms. Obama offers readers a series of fresh stories and insightful reflections on change, challenge, and power, including her belief that when we light up for others, we can illuminate the richness and potential of the world around us, discovering deeper truths and new pathways for progress," the publisher's announcement reads in part.

"Drawing from her experiences as a mother, daughter, spouse,

friend, and First Lady, she shares the habits and principles she has developed to successfully adapt to change and overcome various obstacles — the earned wisdom that helps her continue to 'become.'" On Thursday, Penguin Random House announced it was renaming an annual writing prize in her honor, the \$10,000 Michelle Obama Award for Memoir, part of an awards program for public high school students the company launched in 1993.

Since completing 'Becoming,' Michelle Obama has written an edition for younger readers and launched a podcast. With Barack Obama and their production company Higher Ground she has worked on such projects as the Oscar-winning documentary 'American Factory' and a documentary about her tour for 'Becoming,' when she appeared at arenas nationwide with such guest interviewers as Oprah Winfrey and Sarah Jessica Parker. Promotional plans for 'The Light We Carry' will be announced later.

GreenZo Energy & API Power sign MoU to set up 50 MW green hydrogen plants across Nepal by 2025

FW DESK

GreenZo Energy, which is one of the leading companies in renewable energy (RE) in India, has added one more name to its numerous projects cumulating up to 1500-MW. The Indian company today has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with API Power, a Nepal-based renewable energy company, to develop 50-MW green hydrogen plants, within a span of 3 years, in Nepal. The event took place at the Everest Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Describing the energy landscape in Nepal, Sanjeev Neupane, Managing Director, API Power Company Ltd, said, "Our country is rich in hydropower with 20,000 MW of projects



under development and the seasonal nature of resources from our vast network of 6000 rivers necessitates hydrogen storage.

The areas of development under the MoU include API Power investing Rs 1,000 crore in green hydrogen projects of 50MW that can generate 4000-MT hydrogen annually. It has also proposed

sites of their existing hydro and solar projects to be used for the hydrogen initiative, which include Bardhega, Chanauta, Kawasoti, Dhalkebar, Parwanipur, Simara and Chandranigapur. The pilot hydro project of 1-MW, as agreed by both the companies, will take off at Naugarh Gad Hydroelectric Project (8.5 MW).

For GreenZo Energy, the MoU with API strengthens its mission to become a pioneer in electrolyser manufacturing and green hydrogen production. It has begun scaling up its operations for its planned 250 MW electrolyser manufacturing facility in India and has added multiple key hires to its credible R&D team, comprising of experienced members of ex-NTPC and ex-IIT Bombay, in New Delhi.

About GreenZo Energy

GreenZo Energy is a leading energy company aiming to provide integrated solutions for renewable energy projects in Asian countries. With 1500 MW of solar projects in its portfolio, the company now aims to play a

crucial role in the world's Green Hydrogen Initiatives.

About API Power

Established on 19 June 2003, API Power Company Pvt. Ltd. is one of the leading companies in Nepal's power sector with power generation and supply to national grid as its core business. The company, which is located in Kathmandu, is registered with Securities Board of Nepal and the Shares of the Company 'API' are listed in Nepal Stock Exchange and is freely traded in the market. The company is committed to operational excellence and believes in good governance, corporate citizenship and creating value for stakeholders. It also owns and has developed various hydroelectric and solar projects.

Reliance Industries shares climb over 4%, ONGC jumps 7%



Shares of firms related to oil exploration and refineries were in heavy demand on Wednesday, with Reliance Industries and ONGC rallying after the government slashed windfall tax on petrol, diesel, jet fuel and crude oil. Reliance Industries shares jumped 4.25 per cent to Rs 2,545.05 on the BSE. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) rallied 7 per cent to Rs 136.40.

Among others, Chennai Petroleum Corporation jumped 11.38 per cent, Oil India climbed 8.82 per cent and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals advanced 4.95 per cent.

"The relief announced by the government for the petroleum sector through reduction in

windfall tax and cuts in duties on exports will be a major boost for the sector, particularly for RIL," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

In the equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex was trading 714.52 points or 1.30 per cent higher at 55,482.14. The government on Wednesday slashed the windfall tax on petrol, diesel, jet fuel and crude oil following a decline in international rates.

It scrapped a Rs 6 a litre tax on export of petrol and reduced the same on ATF from Rs 6 a litre to Rs 4. Besides, the tax on diesel has been reduced to Rs 11 from Rs 13 per litre, according to finance ministry notifications.

We will be bringing out a handbook that prescribes standards for warehousing soon: Amrit Lal Meena

NEWDELHI: While addressing a national conference that focused on 'Warehousing Leasing, Investment & Development', Amrit Lal Meena, Special Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said, "Unless there are policies framework in place, bringing in regulation and standardization is difficult. So, when the PM Gati Shakti was launched and a review of the logistics policies was carried out and we found that only three states had state warehousing and logistics policies in place.

However, through continuous coordination of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) with the state governments in the last 7 months, 12 states have their state logistics policies now."

Meena said that the government is planning to roll out a series of initiatives under the banner of Schemes for 'Strengthening Pharmaceuticals Industry' (SPI). Keeping in view the strategic role of MSMEs, who provide important forward and backward linkages to the industry, and also keeping in view that MSMEs tend to grow in clusters, these schemes shall address the issues of technology upgradation at both unit level and cluster level.

Govt to roll out Schemes for Strengthening Pharmaceuticals Industry with Focus on MSMEs & Clusters

With an objective to further enhance India's existing manufacturing prowess in the Pharmaceuticals Industry, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Govt of India is planning to roll out a series of initiatives under the banner of Schemes for 'Strengthening Pharmaceuticals Industry' (SPI). Keeping in view the strategic role of MSMEs, who provide important forward and backward linkages to the industry, and also keeping in view that MSMEs tend to grow in clusters, these schemes shall address the issues of technology upgradation at both unit level and cluster level.

In order to strengthen the supply chain of Pharmaceuticals industry where MSMEs are an integral part, Govt of India shall be incentivizing the intending MSME units going in for acquiring Schedule M certification or WHO GMP Certification through the sub-scheme Pharmaceuticals Industry Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme (PTUAS).

TECNO launches all-new SPARK 9

FW DESK

TECNO, the global premium smartphone brand announces the launch of yet another all-new smartphone, under its most popular 'SPARK series', the all-new TECNO SPARK 9.

Maintaining its streak of breaking the mould with segment-first features, TECNO SPARK 9 becomes the first in its segment to offer 11GB* RAM with Memory fusion feature at a disruptive price point of Rs. 9,499. The brand has been the 4th strongest smartphone player in the sub-10K segment as per Counterpoint Research.

Tata Pravesh Dealership of Doors & Windows launches in Rewari



KULBIR SINGH KALSI

Tata Pravesh, the new stalwart brand in Tata Steel's portfolio, launched its dealership at OM Sales part of Om cement traders, Rajesh Pilot Chowk, Opp SBI Bank, Rewari, here today, to offer the complete range of stunning and strong home solutions including steel doors to windows and ventilators.

Sandeep Gupta and Hemant Gupta Dealership Owner, Rewari, Tata Pravesh, said, "Each product of Tata Pravesh has the strength of steel and the beauty of wood. The cutting-edge products are long lasting and ensure ultimate security for a house.

India's First ever Public-Private Partnership for Large Scale Advanced Lithium-ion Cells Manufacturing between CSIR-CECRI & GODI India

FW DESK

For the first time in India CSIR-CECRI (Central Electrochemical Research Institute) and GODI India have entered into a public-private partnership through a MoA, to operate and maintain advanced Lithium-ion cells manufacturing facility in Taramani, Chennai. Dr Shekhar C Mande, Former Secretary DSIR and Former Director General, CSIR inaugurated the facility in the presence of Dr Kalaiselvi, Director, CECRI.

Dr Shekhar C Mande, Former Secretary DSIR and Former Director General, CSIR,



said, "CSIR is a treasure of knowledge covering all facets of science. CSIR is contributing a lot in the Space, Defence, Nuclear and other societal applications. Partnering with GODI India marks a new

chapter in the development of advanced Lithium-ion cells with regard to next generation of energy storage applications. We have taken a step further to provide fruitful contribution to the ultimate benefit of the country under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'."

Dr N Kalaiselvi, Director, CECRI, said, "It is a glorious occasion for India in the area of energy storage for manufacturing Lithium-ion cells initiated by CECRI in partnership with GODI India Private Limited in presence of Dr Shekhar Mande, Former Secretary DSIR and Former Director General- CSIR in a

function held at CSIR-CECRI's Chennai Centre at Taramani".

Commenting on this partnership, Mahesh Godi, Founder and CEO, GODI India, said, "This partnership is just a beginning of development of next generation cells for mobility, ESS applications and new R&D projects. GODI India will operate and maintain the facility to manufacture advanced Lithium-ion cells and cater to various applications ranging from e-mobility to large scale energy storage systems. This partnership signifies our credibility and testimony of technology strength in Lithium-ion cells manufacturing"

Delhi HC rejects plea to stop SpiceJet airline



The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking to stop the operation of SpiceJet airline for allegedly flying its aircraft in breach of professional and safety obligations.

The court cannot stay the operation of an airline on the basis of a PIL and press reports, a bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma said while dealing with the petition by lawyer Rahul Bhardwaj.

The bench, also comprising

Justice Subramonium Prasad, stated that the law provided a "robust mechanism" for the aviation industry and recorded the DGCA's stand that it has already initiated action and issued show cause notices in relation to incidents mentioned in the present case. In the recent past, the petitioner alleged, there have been instances concerning the "landing" of SpiceJet aircrafts, its aircraft taking off without passengers' baggage and employees not being paid.

UP dimbs to 7th rank in India Innovation Index 2021

Uttar Pradesh has improved its performance by two places, bagging seventh rank in India Innovation Index 2021 - a comprehensive tool for the evaluation and development of the country's innovation ecosystem.

The state has been ranked seventh amongst the major states category as compared to ninth rank in 2020. The India Innovation Index 2021 report was released by Niti Aayog in New Delhi on Thursday.

UP scored highest in business environment, high cluster strength and significant share of manu-

facturing and service sector as a percentage of gross state domestic product (GSDP), officials said.

The state has emerged in the top five states under the knowledge-output pillar. This high score is an outcome of a rise in startups and new businesses, they said. Innovation-led entrepreneurship is key to 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programmes and the state was determined to create an innovation-friendly environment to give further impetus to startups, manufacturing and services, Chief Executive Officer of Invest UP, Abhishek Prakash said.

Ministry of Ayush : Govt signs MOU for Research & Development of traditional medicines

Government of India has signed 25 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) for country to country cooperation in the field of medicine Nepal, Bangladesh, Hungary, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Myanmar, World Health Organization, Germany, Iran, Sao Tome & Principe, Equatorial Guinea, Cuba, Colombia, Japan, Bolivia, Gambia, Republic of Guinea, China, St Vincent and The Grenadines, Suriname, Brazil and Zimbabwe. 37 MoUs for undertaking collaborative research and development of Traditional Medicine has been signed with foreign Institutes/Universities/Organizations from USA, Germany, UK, Canada, Malaysia, Brazil, Australia, Austria, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador, Japan, Indonesia, Reunion Island, Korea and Hungary etc.. 15 MoUs have been signed for setting up of Ayush Academic Chairs in foreign Institutes/Universities in the areas including but not limited to traditional medicine (AYUSH)-guided by specific applications to disease/ health priorities.

Under the Central Sector Scheme for Promotion of International Co-operation in Ayush (IC Scheme), Ministry of Ayush supports Ayush drug manufacturers, entrepreneurs, Ayush institutions and Hospitals etc. for international propagation



pur has signed an MoU with National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan, to collaborate in the areas of mutual interest which included medicinal plants, bioactive molecules, herbal formulations etc.

CSIR and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have signed an MoU to identify the opportunities for scientific and technological research between researchers located within and outside of India, including collaborations with foundation-funded entities in the areas including but not limited to traditional medicine (AYUSH)-guided by specific applications to disease/ health priorities.

Under the Central Sector Scheme for Promotion of International Co-operation in Ayush (IC Scheme), Ministry of Ayush supports Ayush drug manufacturers, entrepreneurs, Ayush institutions and Hospitals etc. for international propagation

Significant potential for boosting exports of fruits & vegetables from Vidarbha region: Gadkari

There is a significant potential for boosting exports of fruits and vegetables from Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India.

"In order to achieve higher exports, farmers have to adopt latest technology in agriculture and they have to be open to new research findings and adopting innovative farming practices as has been done in the grape-growing areas of Nashik in Maharashtra," Gadkari



said at an outreach programme on "Export Potential for Agri Crops, Fruits & Vegetables" in Amravati, Maharashtra.

The programme for boosting exports of citrus fruits and vegetables was organized by APEDA (Agricultural and Pro-

cessed Food Products Export Development Authority) - an organization under Department of Commerce, in association with Agrovision.

Stating that GI tagged Nagpur orange is grown in more than 70,000 hectares in Amravati Region, Gadkari said there is huge potential for export of Nagpur Oranges and other citrus fruits from the Region. Since Nagpur Orange is a GI product, it can also be sold at a premium, he pointed out.

Indian Automobile Industry thanks the Govt for continuous expansion of CNG stations across the country

FW DESK

In line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Gas Based Economy as one of the pathways for carbon neutrality and fostering sustainable mobility, the Indian Automobile Industry is dedicated to manufacturing factory fitted CNG vehicles that would reduce air pollution and carbon emissions and support the economy by reducing the oil import burden.

Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on behalf of the automobile industry appreciates the Government for its rapid and continuous focus on the expansion and promotion of CNG as a transport fuel. To keep the momentum forward, today Hon'ble Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurated 166 CNG stations and appreciated the display of CNG

vehicles by auto manufacturers at Shastrri Bhawan. This is in addition to 1,332 CNG stations, the highest ever, in the single financial year 2021-22.

As part of India's decarbonization journey converging through the pathways of Panchamrit announced at the COP 26 at Glasgow to achieve carbon neutrality in the year 2070, gas-based mobility holds a significant role. Aligning with India's global commitments to reduce carbon emissions, the automobile industry continues to make significant investments, resource allocation towards R&D and localization of technology products. The concerted efforts of the Government, Industry, and R&D institutions will position gas-based mobility as a cornerstone as one of the technologies towards sustainable mobility.

Indian women seeking more entrepreneurship opportunities than men: LinkedIn data

FW DESK

Even as Indian women face low representation in leadership roles in the workforce approx 18%, they are now seeking more entrepreneurship opportunities as compared to men, according to new data released LinkedIn.

The data, published in the World Economic Forum's 2022 Global Gender Gap Report, showed that the share of female founders grew by 2.68 times compared to 1.79 times among men between 2016 to 2021. The growth rate of female entrepreneurship showed to be the highest during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

Besides being underrepresented in leadership roles, the data also revealed that women are also not being promoted internally to leadership in companies at the same rate as men. Men are 42 per cent more likely to be promoted into leadership positions than women.

This could explain why women in leadership roles also increasingly lag behind their male counterparts in the senior stages of their careers, with the proportion of women in the workforce decreasing along the

corporate ladder. In India, the representation of female leaders has dropped from 29 per cent at the senior level to a staggering 18 per cent at the managerial level.

"Our new data is indicative of one thing: working women in India are being held back by more barriers in the workplace when compared to men. But despite the adversity, many women remain undeterred and continue to chart their own path by pivoting to entrepreneurship and building careers that allow them to work on their own terms with greater flexibility," said Ruchee Anand, Senior Director, India Talent & Learning Solutions at LinkedIn, in a statement. "We saw this especially in the years of the pandemic (2020 and 2021), when women sheltered from a shrinking job market by starting their own businesses that also created opportunities for other women," Anand added.

However, the new data also reveals that there is progress being made. More women are being hired into leadership roles from eight years ago, shooting up to 24 per cent this year 1.36x since 2015. However, more needs to be done.

India's agricultural & processed food products exports up by 14 per cent to \$ 5987 Million

Continuing with the trend from the previous year, the exports of agricultural and processed food products rose by 14% in the first three months of the current Financial Year 2022-23 (April-June) compared to the corresponding period of FY 2021-22.

For the year 2022-23, the government had set an export target of USD 23.56 billion for the agricultural and processed food products basket under APEDA. The initiatives taken by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry have helped the country in achieving 25% of the total annual export target in the first three months of the current fiscal.

According to the Quick Estimates data released by the Di-

rectorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), the overall export of products under APEDA ambit (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) increased to USD 5987 million in April-June 2022 from USD 5256 million over the same period of the last fiscal. The export target for April-June 2022-23 was USD 5890 million. The APEDA basket excludes Tea, coffee, spices, cotton and marine exports.

The exports of fresh fruits & vegetables registered 8.6 per cent growth, while processed food products like cereals and miscellaneous processed items reported an impressive growth of 36.4 per cent (April-June 2022-23) compared to corresponding months of the previous year. In

April-June, 2021, fresh fruits and vegetables were exported to the tune of USD 642 million that increased to USD 697 million in the corresponding months of the current fiscal. Other cereals' export increased from USD 237 million in April-June 2021 to USD 306 million in April-June 2022 and the export of meat, dairy and poultry products increased from USD 1023 million in April-June 2021 to USD 1120 million in April-June 2022.

Rice exports witnessed a growth of 13 per cent in the first three months of FY 2022-23, while the export of meat, dairy & poultry products increased by 9.5% and export of other cereals increased by 29%. The export of rice increased from USD 2412 million in April-June 2021 to USD 2723 million in

April-June 2022. The dairy products were exported to the tune of USD 1120 million in the first three months of the current fiscal from million in the same period last year.

"We continue to provide technical and financial assistance to various stakeholders in the agricultural goods value chains for boosting exports of unique products from the country. Through creating a necessary eco-system of exports along with collaboration with key stakeholders in the agri-exports value chains, we are aiming to sustain the growth in India's agricultural and processed food exports in the current fiscal as well," M Angamuthu, Chairman, APEDA, said.

India's agricultural products exports had grown by 19.92 per

cent during 2021-22 to touch USD 50.21 billion. The growth rate is remarkable as it is over and above the growth of 17.66 per cent at USD 41.87 billion achieved in 2020-21 and has been achieved in spite of unprecedented logistical challenges in the form of high freight rates and container shortages, etc.

The rise in the export of agricultural and processed food products is the outcome government's various initiatives taken for the export promotion of agricultural and processed food products such as organising B2B exhibitions in different countries, exploring new potential markets through product-specific and general marketing campaigns by the active involvement of Indian Embassies.

RBI wants government to prohibit cryptocurrencies: Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the RBI has expressed concerns over cryptocurrencies saying that they should be prohibited as they can have destabilising effect on the monetary and fiscal stability.

"In view of the concerns expressed by the RBI on the destabilising effect of cryptocurrencies on the monetary and fiscal stability of a country, the RBI has recommended for framing of legislation on this score. The RBI is of the view that cryptocurrencies should be prohibited," she said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

She said the RBI had registered its concern over the adverse effect of cryptocurrencies



on the Indian economy. The RBI mentioned that cryptocurrencies are not a currency because every modern currency needs to be issued by the central bank or the government, she said. Further, she said, the value of fiat currencies is anchored

by monetary policy and their status as legal tender, however the value of cryptocurrencies rests solely on the speculations and expectations of high returns that are not well anchored, so it will have a destabilising effect on the monetary and fiscal stability

of a country. Cryptocurrencies are by definition borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage.

Therefore, she said, any legislation for regulation or for banning such currencies can be effective only after significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been cautioning users, holders and traders of Virtual Currencies (VCs) since 2013 at regular intervals that dealing in VCs is associated with potential economic, financial, operational, legal, customer protection and security related risks.

It had also issued a circular on April 6, 2018 prohibiting its regulated entities to deal in VCs or provide services for facilitating any person or entity in dealing with or settling VCs. The circular was set aside by the Supreme Court on March 4, 2020.

Further, the RBI on May 31, 2021 also advised its regulated entities to continue to carry out customer due diligence processes for transactions in VCs, in line with regulations governing standards for Know Your Customer (KYC), Anti-Money Laundering (AML), Combating of Financing of Terrorism (CFT), obligations under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, etc.

Rupee depreciation against US dollar lower than other major currencies: CEA



Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Ananth Nageswaran on Wednesday said that the depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar has been lower than other major global currencies such as the Euro, the British pound and the Japanese yen.

He attributed depreciation in rupee and other currencies against the US dollar to the aggressive monetary tightening by the US Federal Reserve.

As a result, outflow of foreign capital is taking place from various emerging economies including India, putting pressure on their domestic currencies.

"Japanese yen, Euro, Swiss franc, British Pound have depreciated much more against dollar (than the rupee)," he said on the sidelines of an event here.

Both the government and RBI have taken measures to check the outflow of dollars and encourage inflow of foreign funds so that the depreciation of the domestic currency can be contained, he said.

4.33 kg smuggled gold seized at Hyderabad airport

Smuggled gold weighing a total of over 4 kg was seized at the airport here in two separate incidents, the Customs department said on Friday.

In one of the incidents, the Air Intelligence Unit officials on July 21 apprehended two male passengers who arrived here from Dubai, for attempting to smuggle 3.591 kg yellow metal by concealing it in undergarments and rectum. The value of the gold is estimated to be Rs 1.87 crore. In the other case, a male passenger was intercepted on Thursday while trying to smuggle gold by hiding it inside an exhaust fan and electric juicer. The net weight of the gold was 740 Gms, the Customs said.

Process of implementation of digital currency for wholesale & retail segments starts: RBI



Reserve Bank of India is in the process of implementing the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in a phased manner for the wholesale and retail segments, an official said on Wednesday.

The introduction of CBDC was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23, by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and necessary amendments to the relevant section of the RBI Act, 1934 has been made with the passage of the Finance Bill 2022, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Executive Director (Fintech), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. The passage of the bill has enabled the RBI to conduct a pilot and subsequent issuance of CBDC, he said.

"RBI is also working on phased implementation of a central bank digital currency (CBDC) in both wholesale and retail segment," Choudhary said while delivering a keynote address at the 'PICUP Fintech Conference & Awards' by FICCI.

CBDC is a digital or virtual currency but it is not comparable to the private virtual currencies or cryptocurrency that have mushroomed over the last decade. Private virtual currencies do not represent any person's debt or liabilities as there is no issuer.

India's official digital currency is likely to debut by early 2023, which will mirror any of the currently available private company-operated electronic wallets. The CBDC will be a sovereign-backed digital currency.



Police have arrested three persons for allegedly stealing Rs 12.20 crore from a private bank in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Tuesday.

The theft took place on July 9 at the bank's branch in Manpada area of Dombivli town here. Based on a tip-off, sleuths of the Thane crime branch's property cell laid a trap and nabbed three of the accused from Mumbai area here on Monday, senior police inspector Anil Honrao said in a release. The police recovered from them Rs 5.80 crore out of the stolen cash and property worth Rs 10 lakh, he said.

Efforts were on to recover the remaining amount from them. The police were also searching for the main accused and others involved in the crime, including an employee of the bank, the official said. Those arrested have been identified as Israr Abrar Hussain Qureshi (33), Shamshad Ahmed Riaz Ahmed Khan (33) and Anuj Premshankar Giri (30).

The Manpada police have registered a case against the accused under Indian Penal Code Sections 381 (theft) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention), the official said.

PFMS Performance Review Meeting: Emphasis on timely data exchange by States

Public Financial Management System (PFMS) Division, Ministry of Finance held a Bank Performance Review Meeting and a meeting with State Governments as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at Taj Santa Cruz, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, T1 in Mumbai today. Additional CGA, PFMS Division, Office of Controller General of Accounts, Department of Expenditure, Dharitri Panda chaired the meeting.

A detailed discussion with the State Governments was held on issues re-



lated to new procedure of release of funds under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Treasury Integration with PFMS. Emphasis was made on timely and correct data exchange by the States with PFMS to ensure accurate and reliable financial re-

porting and to ensure that there was no float in system. The Bank Review Meeting stressed on major Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Single Nodal Accounts (SNA) issues so as to make the banking systems more adaptive for new

changes. Jt.CGA, PFMS Division, New Delhi, Amitabh Tripathi, technical team of NIC-PFMS and State Finance Officials of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan also attended the meeting. 13 major Banks i.e. Bank of Maharashtra, State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, HDFC bank, ICICI Bank, RBL bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, Central Bank of India, Bank of India, Punjab & Sind Bank, Yes Bank and IndusInd Bank, participated in the banking review.

Govt looking at trade led growth to achieve \$5trillion economy: Joint Secretary, Ministry of MSME

NEW DELHI: There are several paths and ways to achieve the target of \$5 trillion economy and trade route will play a key role in achieving that. Much importance has been given to export part of trade but internal trade also plays an important part in the growth process. The government has undertaken big ticket reforms and expanding the scope of definition. Extension of priority lending status, inclusion

of criteria's like turn over and the expansion to include retail and MSME within the definition and the recent approval for international trade settlement in rupees will help boost international trade, says, Ateesh Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of MSME, Government of India at an ASSOCHAM Event.

"Digitisation and digitalization of trade financing is needed for the growth of the sector and

by 2025 the market for trade financing will touch \$200 billion. We will also need to further increase the scope and dimension of trade financing. As of now, MSME's are hesitant to fully adopt e-commerce and are looking at a hybrid model. The government is working to fortify and strengthen the trade system to make it more accessible and enhance availability" the Jt. Secretary said.

GST compensation to States for loss of revenue arising on account of implementation of GST for a period of five years

As per section 18 of the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, Parliament shall, by law, on the recommendation of the Goods and Services Tax Council, provide for compensation to the States for loss of revenue arising on account of implementation of the goods and services tax for a period of five years. This was stated by Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

Minister stated that the issue of compensation to States/UTs and augmenting resources under GST were discussed in detail in the 45th GST Council meeting held in Lucknow. Consequently to the decision of the Council, two Group of Ministers (GoMs), namely GoM on GST System Reforms and GoM on Rate Rationalization have been constituted. GoM on Rate Rationalization has submitted its interim report, recommending certain inverted duty corrections and pruning of exemptions, which was discussed and considered in the last GST Council meeting held at Chandigarh.

As a result, the Minister stated, the continued reforms in GST undertaken by Centre and States, on the recommendations of the GST Council, buoyancy in GST revenue has been achieved in the recent months. The average monthly gross GST collection for the first quarter of the FY 2022-23 has been 1.51 lakh crore against the average monthly collection of 1.10 lakh crore in the first quarter of the last Financial year showing an increase of 37%.

The Minister stated that a few States have requested for extension of payment of GST compensation beyond transition period of five years.

Minister further stated that as per Section 7 of the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017, the States are required to be compensated for loss of revenue due to implementation of GST (w.e.f. 01.07.2017) for 5 years' period. During transition period, the States' revenues are protected at 14% growth rate per annum over the base year revenue (2015-16). Accordingly, the States are being compensated for any shortfall against their protected revenue.

While the Rs 6 a litre export duty on petrol was scrapped, the tax on the export of diesel and jet fuel (ATF) was cut by Rs 2 per litre each to Rs 11 and Rs 4 respectively, government notifications showed.

The tax on domestically produced crude was also cut to Rs 17,000 per tonne from Rs 23,250, a move that will benefit producers like ONGC and Vedanta Ltd.

Also, overseas shipments from refineries located in export-focused ones were exempted from the levies that were imposed on July 1.

As per media reports the windfall tax review was expected following a sharp fall

in global oil prices. India imposed windfall taxes on July 1, joining a growing number of nations that taxes super normal profits of energy companies. But international oil prices have cooled since then, eroding profit margins at both oil producers and refiners.

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The July 1 export duties of Rs 6 per litre on petrol and ATF translated into USD 12 per barrel, while Rs 13 a litre tax on diesel was equivalent

Former Union Minister & founding Chancellor of Rishikood University insights financial reporting and its impact on business



NEW DELHI: While addressing an august gathering at the 2nd International Conference - Financial Reporting & Control, chief guest CA Suresh Prabhu, former Union Minister, founding Chancellor of Rishikood University and Visiting Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science said that Integrated Reporting is an emerging area as a new paradigm in financial reporting and implementation of IR improves the financial performance. The conference was organized by the apex industry body, Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

Prabhu, who addressed the conference virtually, said, India has witnessed continuous improvement in corporate disclosures in the past decade, which available to investors and public at large. "These efforts have nudged businesses to be accountable to stakeholders instead of just shareholders and align with global developments prompting organizations to be sustainable and responsible towards their environment and society", he stated.

RBI will ensure soft landing of economy: Governor

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said the central bank will ensure that the economy has a soft landing wherein inflation is closer to 4 per cent, with minimal impact on growth. Das said retail inflation appears to have peaked and the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its upcoming meeting in August will review the inflation projection of 6.7 per cent for the fiscal 2022-23.

"Our endeavour shall be to ensure a soft landing for our economy where inflation is brought down to closer to the target of 4 per cent over a period of time. At the same time, the growth sacrifice is also within manageable limits," the governor said at a banking conclave

organised by Bank of Baroda. Das said the country had reached a kind of soft landing till the war broke out in Europe. This has resulted in new challenges such as rise in commodity, crude prices and their impact on the country; monetary policy

tightening by other central banks and their spillovers; capital outflows and currency depreciation, which are beyond RBI's control. The governor said any decision of RBI with regard to liquidity and policy rates always takes into consideration the kind of



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India's Bioeconomy will touch 300 bn \$ by 2030 from 80 bn \$ in 2021

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today said, Bioeconomy will be key to India's future economy over the next 25 years.

Releasing India's Bioeconomy Report 2022, Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that India's Bioeconomy has reached over 80 billion US Dollars in 2021 recording 14.1% growth over \$70.2 billion in 2020. Noting the rapid growth in the sector, the Minister said, Bioeconomy is likely to touch 150 billion dollars by 2025 and over 300 billion dollars by 2030.

The Minister urged all the



stakeholders of Biotech sector, particularly Industry, Startup Ecosystem, Investors, Scientists, Scholars, Entrepreneurs and enablers like DBT, BIRAC to collectively work to achieve the ambitious target.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the number of Biotech Start-ups in the country have increased from 50 to over 5,300 in the last 10 years, because of the growing enabling ecosystem and pri-

oritization provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He hoped that Biotech Start-ups arising from strong talent pool is expected to further increase 2 times, to 10,000 plus by 2025.

The Minister recalled that Modi's presence in the 1st National Biotech Start-up Expo 2022 organized by DBT/ BIRAC in June this year is a testimony of growth potential in the biotech sector and innovation talent pool of our

Start-up ecosystem. Dr Jitendra Singh also launched special Biotech Ignition Grant call for North East Region (BIG-NER) and announced financial support of up to Rs 50 Lakhs each to 25 startups and entrepreneurs from North East Region to develop biotech solutions. He said, North East has huge potential and talent to take forward the Biotech sector and asked the Ministry to reach out to them.

The Minister said, due to special focus of PM Modi on the North Eastern region, the trend of mass exodus of youth from region has been reversed. He also informed that BIRAC/ DBT has established a strong network of 74 specialized bio-incubation centres in 21 states/ UTs including 7 bio-incubators in the north east region - an emerging cluster.

Govt slashes windfall tax on fuel export, domestic crude oil

The government on Wednesday scrapped a three-week-old tax on the export of petrol and cut windfall taxes on overseas shipment of diesel and ATF as well as the one imposed on domestically produced crude oil after global oil prices fell.

While the Rs 6 a litre export duty on petrol was scrapped, the tax on the export of diesel and jet fuel (ATF) was cut by Rs 2 per litre each to Rs 11 and Rs 4 respectively, government notifications showed.

The tax on domestically produced crude was also cut to Rs 17,000 per tonne from Rs 23,250, a move that will benefit producers like ONGC and Vedanta Ltd.

Also, overseas shipments from refineries located in export-focused ones were exempted from the levies that were imposed on July 1.

As per media reports the windfall tax review was expected following a sharp fall



in global oil prices. India imposed windfall taxes on July 1, joining a growing number of nations that taxes super normal profits of energy companies. But international oil prices have cooled since then, eroding profit margins at both oil producers and refiners.

While international crude prices slumped on concerns of a potential global recession, cracks or margins on diesel, petrol and ATF crashed.

The July 1 export duties of Rs 6 per litre on petrol and ATF translated into USD 12 per barrel, while Rs 13 a litre tax on diesel was equivalent

to USD 26 a barrel. The Rs 23,250 per tonne windfall tax on domestic crude production equalled USD 40 per barrel.

Post windfall tax, the realised spread on diesel and petrol fell to near loss-making levels while the realisation on aviation fuel (ATF) and crude had also gone below 15-year averages.

The realised spread on petrol after considering USD 12 per barrel windfall tax was near a loss-making level of just USD 2 per barrel. Similarly, the diesel spread too was a meagre sum after considering the USD 26 per barrel export tax.

The cut in windfall tax will benefit Reliance Industries Ltd, which operates two oil refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat with one focused only on exports.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), as well as Vedanta Ltd, would benefit

from the cut in the tax on domestic oil producers.

The refining spread for diesel almost halved from the USD 55-60 per barrel peak seen in June to USD 30 a barrel. Similarly, ATF spreads crashed from USD 50-55 per barrel to USD 25-30. Gasoline spreads have also been slashed from USD 30-35 per barrel last month to USD 10-15.

At the same time, the Brent crude price has also cooled off by USD 15-20 per barrel in the past 2-3 weeks to about USD 100 per barrel.

When the taxes were introduced, it was estimated that they would bring over Rs 1 lakh crore additional revenue in the full year.

The windfall tax on crude production alone was estimated to generate revenue of Rs 65,600 crore and tax on export products another Rs 52,700 crore if they were to be continued for the full year.

Gold jumps Rs 594 per 10 gms, silver rallies Rs 998 per kg

Gold in the national capital on Friday jumped by Rs 594 to Rs 50,341 per 10 grams, reflecting a rally in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at Rs 49,747 per 10 grams. Silver also surged by Rs 998 to Rs 55,164 per kg from Rs 54,166 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi climbed by Rs 594 per 10

grams in line with rising global gold prices and haven demand," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,718 per ounce, while silver was flat at USD 18.81 per ounce.

Gold prices witnessed buying in the previous session on the weak dollar and rally in equity indices, Parmar added.



INTERNATIONAL

Sri Lanka crisis: Security personnel dismantle protest camps in Colombo

A large number of protesters confronted armed security personnel as the latter set up barricades outside the premises of the Sri Lankan Presidential Secretariat in Colombo.

The armed soldiers were deployed in a bid to control the protesters who have been protesting against the new Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe outside the premises of the Sri Lankan Presidential Secretariat.

Protesters are alleging that security personnel raided the anti-government protest camp in the capital on early Friday.

"Ranil Wickremesinghe wants to destroy us, they are again doing this, but we will never give

up. We want to make our country free of such nasty politics," said a protestor amid an armed forces crackdown. Tents of protestors are being dismantled by the armed security personnel outside the premises of the Sri Lankan Presidential Secretariat.

As Sri Lanka scrambles to get back on track after the election of a new President, the people in the country -- who are facing severe economic hardship -- are still uncertain about the future.

Amid this uncertainty, Sri Lankans from across the country are lining up at the passport office in Colombo to get a new passport or get their old one renewed, desperate for a way out of



the crisis-marred country.

"There is no food, no fuel and no money in the country. What will we do and how we will survive? I'm here to get my passport and go to Qatar for a job. People

are here for this only," a person who is waiting in the queue told to media.

Wickremesinghe was sworn in as President of Sri Lanka on Thursday in Parliament before

Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya. He was elected as president in an election held in Parliament on Wednesday.

During Wednesday's vote, Wickremesinghe received 134 votes following the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa from the presidency last week amid severe economic turmoil in the country. Rajapaksa fled abroad after his palace was stormed by angry protesters amid the unprecedented economic crisis.

After his official residence in Colombo was stormed by tens of thousands of angry protesters last week, Sri Lanka's ex-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country to the Maldives

before flying out to Singapore. Rajapaksa had offered his resignation after fleeing the country.

Sri Lanka's economy is bracing for a sharp contraction due to the unavailability of basic inputs for production, an 80 per cent depreciation of the currency since March 2022, coupled with a lack of foreign reserves and the country's failure to meet its international debt obligations.

Hundreds of Sri Lankans continue to queue up at petrol pumps across the debt-ridden country every day amid fuel shortage, and a large number of people are ditching their cars and motorcycles for bicycles for their daily commute.

Cabinet nod to MoU with Maldives on judicial cooperation

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave its nod to an agreement with Maldives in the field of judicial cooperation which seeks to tap benefits of information technology for court digitisation.

According to an official statement, the proposed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Judicial Service Commission of Maldives is the eighth agreement signed between India and other countries in the field of judicial cooperation.

"This MoU will provide a platform to tap benefits of Information Technology for court digitisation and can be a potential growth area for the IT



companies and start-ups in both the countries," the statement said. The agreement will not only enable exchange of knowledge and technology in judicial and other legal areas between the two countries but also further the objectives of "Neighbourhood First" policy, the statement said.

France fights spreading wildfires as heat wave fries Europe



France scrambled more water-bombing planes and hundreds more firefighters to combat spreading wildfires that were being fed Monday by hot swirling winds from a searing heat wave broiling much of Europe.

With winds changing direction, authorities in southwestern France announced plans to evacuate more towns and move out 3,500 people at risk of finding themselves in the path of the raging flames.

Three additional water-bombing planes were joining six others already making repeated runs over the flames and dense clouds of smoke, the Interior Ministry said on Sunday. It said more than 200 reinforcements were also being added to the 1,500-strong force of firefighters battling night and day to contain the blazes through the Gironde region's tinder-dry pine forests and sending burning embers into the air, further spreading the flames.

Asia Cup will be held in UAE, says Ganguly



The Asia Cup, which was scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka, has been shifted to the UAE, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said here on Thursday.

"Asia Cup will be in UAE, as it is the only place where there won't be rains," Ganguly told reporters after the Board's Apex Council meeting here.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Wednesday had informed the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) that the board will not be in a position to host the upcoming edition of the Asia Cup T20 because of the economic and political crisis in the country.

The development comes after the SLC recently postponed the third edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) due to the ongoing crisis. Asia Cup is slated to be held from August 27 to September 11 and will be played in the T20 format.

Seven more persons from Sri Lanka arrive at Rameswaram

Seven families belonging to two families in Sri Lanka arrived here on Tuesday due to the worsening economic crisis in the island nation.

The two families, dropped at the shoals near Rameswaram island by boatmen, were rescued by the Indian Coast Guard's hovercraft and handed over to the police.

They have been identified as N Mary Augusta (44) of Jaffna and her teenaged sons N Nisharukhan and N Sevin, and G Mahesan (39), M Devi (38) of Trincomalee, besides two children Dinal and M Hamusan. They had decided to come to India in order to escape the ongoing crisis in the island nation.

Economics of war: Pain for Europe now, later for Russia

Across Europe, signs of distress are multiplying as Russia's war in Ukraine drags on. Food banks in Italy are feeding more people. German officials are turning down the air conditioning as they prepare plans to ration natural gas and restart coal plants.

A giant utility is asking for a taxpayer bailout, and more may be coming. Dairies wonder how they will pasteurize milk. The euro has sagged to a 20-year low against the dollar, and recession predictions are on the rise.

Those pressure points are signs of how the conflict and the Kremlin gradually choking off natural gas that keeps industry humming provoked an energy crisis in Europe and raised the likelihood of a plunge back into recession just as the economy was rebounding from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, high energy costs fuelled by the war are benefiting Russia, a major oil and natural



gas exporter whose agile central bank and years of experience living with sanctions have stabilised the ruble and inflation despite economic isolation.

In the long run, however, economists say Russia, while avoiding complete collapse, will pay a heavy price for the war: deepening economic stagnation through lost investment and lower incomes for its people.

Europe's most pressing challenge is shorter term: battle record inflation of 8.6% and

get through the winter without crippling energy shortages. The continent relies on Russian natural gas, and higher energy prices are flowing through to factories, food costs and fuel tanks. Uncertainty weighs on energy-intensive industries like steel and agriculture, which could face natural gas rationing to protect homes if the crisis worsens.

Molkerei Berchtesgadener Land, a large dairy cooperative in the German town of Piding outside Munich, has stockpiled

200,000 liters (44,000 gallons) of fuel oil so it can keep producing power and steam for pasteurizing milk and keeping it cold if electricity or natural gas is its turbine generator is cut off.

It's a critical safeguard for 1,800 member farmers whose 50,000 cows produce a million liters of milk a day. Dairy cows have to be milked daily, and a shutdown would leave that ocean of milk with nowhere to go.

If the dairy doesn't function, then the farmers can't either, managing director Bernhard Pointner said. Then the farmers would have to discard their milk.

In one hour, the dairy uses the equivalent of a year's worth of electricity for a home to keep up to 20,000 pallets of milk cold.

The dairy also has stockpiled packaging and other supplies to guard against suppliers being hit by an energy shortage: We have a lot stored ... but that will only last a few weeks.

India-Namibia sign an MoU on wildlife conservation and sustainable biodiversity utilization



Government of India and Government of the Republic of Namibia have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on wildlife conservation and sustainable biodiversity utilization, today, for establishing the cheetah into the historical range in India.

Signing of the MoU between Vice President of Namibia, Nangolo Mbumba and Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav MoU facilitates development of a mutually beneficial relationship to promote wildlife conservation and sustainable biodiversity utilization based on the principles of mutual respect, sovereignty, equality and the best interest of both India and Namibia.

Biodiversity conservation with specific focus on conservation and restoration of cheetah in their former range areas from which they went extinct, Sharing and exchange of expertise and capacities aimed at promoting cheetah conservation in two countries,

Wildlife conservation and sustainable biodiversity utilization by sharing good practices in Technological applications, mechanisms of livelihood generation for local communities living in wildlife habitats, and sustainable management of biodiversity.

Collaboration in areas of climate change, environmental governance, environmental impact assessments, pollution and waste management and other areas of mutual interest. Exchange of personnel for training and education in wildlife management, including sharing of technical expertise, wherever relevant. Cheetah has a very special significance for the national conservation ethic and ethos. Bringing the cheetah back to India would have equally important conservation ramifications. Cheetah restoration will be part of a prototype for restoration of original cheetah habitats and their biodiversity, helping to stem the degradation and rapid loss of biodiversity.

Govt briefs all-party meeting on Lankan crisis

The government briefed an all-party meeting on Tuesday on the unfolding situation in Sri Lanka, which has been facing its worst economic crisis in seven decades.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who made the initial remarks, and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi were among the senior members of the government at the briefing, which was also attended by P Chidambaram and Manickam Tagore of the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) Sharad Pawar and T R Baalu and M M Abdullah of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

M Thambidurai (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), Saugata Ray (Trinamool Congress), Farooq Abdullah



(National Conference), Sanjay Singh (Aam Aadmi Party), Keshava Rao (Telangana Rashtra Samithi), Ritesh Pandey (Bahujan Samaj Party), Vijayasai Reddy (YSR Congress) and Vaiko (Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) were among those who attended the meeting. Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis in seven decades, with a severe foreign exchange shortage hampering the import of essentials, including food, fuel and medicines.

Imran Khan demands fresh general elections in Pakistan after impressive show in Punjab by-polls



Imran Khan has demanded fresh general elections in Pakistan after his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party routed the ruling

Pakistan Muslim League party in the crucial Punjab assembly by-polls, dealing a major blow to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

whose son Hamza Shehbaz is all set to lose his post as chief minister.

The election for the chief minister will be held on July 22 on the Supreme Court's order and PTI-PMLQ joint candidate Chaudhary Parvez Elahi is likely to be the new chief minister of the politically crucial province Punjab.

According to unofficial results so far, the PTI has won 15 seats while the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of Sharif has just four. An independent candidate also won.

Russia defaults on LNG supplies to India

Russia has defaulted on the supply of at least 5 cargoes or shiploads of LNG to India after its retaliatory sanctions hit one of the companies that supply gas to India, sources said.

India's largest gas firm GAIL has a long-term deal to import 2.85 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per annum from a Singapore-based unit of Russian gas producer Gazprom.

The company has since June defaulted on the supply of 5 cargoes of LNG under that contract citing difficulty in sourcing gas due to sanctions, two sources briefed on the matter said.

While the contract provides for making up of the volumes not supplied later, the Russian firm has so far nor indicated how and when it will make up for the lost volumes.

Sources said Gazprom has told GAIL that it will from hereon supply LNG on a best



endeavour basis.

GAIL is now scouting for alternatives including tying up supplies from other sources in the US and the Middle East.

Moscow has in recent months imposed sanctions on 31 companies, including the owner of the Polish part of the Yamal pipeline that carries Russian gas to Europe, as well as the former German unit of Gazprom.

The move was aimed at cutting off Russian gas supplies to

the sanctioned entities, which were largely based in countries that have imposed sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine.

The companies sanctioned include Polish pipeline owner EuroPol Gaz, Gazprom Germania and the Gazprom subsidiaries in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, UK, as well as the US and Singapore.

GAIL has a contract with Gazprom Marketing & Trading Singapore. But the ownership of this company was reorganised and it was now under Gazprom Germania.

Since the sanctioned entities either do not have access or limited access to Russian gas, they are unable to fulfill their commitment to customers, sources said. GAIL, they said, is exploring legal options to enforce the contract.

Previously, Gazprom made minor adjustments such as splitting shipments and rescheduling one cargo that was supposed to be delivered in May. But now it has defaulted on supply of 5 cargoes, including two in July.

Under the deal, Gazprom is progressively increasing supplies to GAIL. It shipped 2 million tonnes of LNG in 2021 and is to supply 2.5 million tonnes in 2022. The full volume of 2.85

million tonnes is to be reached in 2023. GAIL expected Gazprom to supply about 40 LNG shipments in 2022, and a full contracted volume of 46 cargoes in 2023, under its term deal.

Sources said the Gazprom unit hasn't provided a firm schedule for the supply of gas during the rest of the year and the situation could possibly be salvaged through diplomatic channels.

The US and European nations have imposed heavy sanctions on Russia since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine on February 24. Some western oil firms have announced exit from Russian projects and Indian firms are being considered a natural candidate to join in. India has raised oil imports from Russia after the Ukraine war despite criticism from the west and continues to engage with Moscow for business.

Piyush Goyal emphasizes the need for India-Africa Trade and Investment Agreement

Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textile Piyush Goyal has emphasized upon the need for a trade and investment agreement between India and Africa. Addressing the Special Ministerial Session at the 17th CII Exim Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership today, Goyal said that going forward, the economic outlook, in the long run, is going to be promising for both India and Africa, because this is where the markets and opportunities are present.

Piyush Goyal said that this conclave will certainly have a huge impact on our engagements, both bilaterally and also strengthen investment interest. "Every single engagement today demonstrates the immense possibilities between India & Africa. We will be able to offer new technologies that we are working in India that will help expand trade, commerce, business, investment & opportunities for Africa's youth," the minister said.

Goyal said that we believe that the destiny of nearly 3 billion people is in our hands as India and Africa offer future opportunities that are unparalleled. "India has a decisive leadership today. India's development partnership with Africa will be on terms that



will be comfortable to Africa that will liberate its potential and not constrain its future. We want Africa to grow and prosper," he said.

Union Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated our government's commitment to the economic resurgence of Africa. He said India's experience with digital revolution to support Africa's growth, extend education, health, spread digital literacy and quality infrastructure could be harnessed. Goyal said India's Startups and our digital innovations like UPI, ONDC etc. can benefit Africa immensely.

Piyush Goyal said that India is pursuing deeper engagement with several developed countries and that India recently concluded a Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEPA) with UAE, and Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement with Australia. We are at an advanced stage of discussion with UK and are looking for an enhanced partnership with Canada, EU, Israel and other nations.

Italy's embattled PM Draghi visits Algeria for gas talks



With his government's fate in limbo, Italian Premier Mario Draghi is visiting Algeria's capital Monday to finalize deals boosting Algerian gas supplies to Italy as Europeans brace for a possible cutoff of Russian gas.

In a sign of the importance of the visit, the Italian delegation includes the foreign minister, interior minister, justice minister and ecological transition ministers. They'll hold a day of talks, meet with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and sign joint agreements.

Algeria is set to displace Russia as the main supplier of gas to Italy, after a major agreement was reached during a trip by Draghi to Algeria in April between Algerian energy giant Sonatrach and Italian company ENI to increase gas exports. EU countries have scrambled to diversify energy sources after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Monday's trip comes at a precarious time for Draghi, who had to cut it a day short because of political troubles at home. A main partner in his pandemic unity government, the populist 5-Star Movement, boycotted a confidence vote in the Senate last week on an

energy costs relief bill, jeopardizing the survival of the 17-month-old government.

The political turmoil forced Draghi to reduce his Algeria visit from two days to just one.

Amid concerns that payments for Russian gas and oil are funding President Vladimir Putin's war, Europe is trying to cut its reliance on Russian natural gas imports and prepare for a potential Russian cutoff in reprisal for EU sanctions.

Prior to the war, Russia provided Italy about 29 billion cubic meters of gas per year, compared with about 23 billion from Algeria. Already this year Algeria has delivered 13.9 billion cubic meters to Italy via the Trans-Mediterranean pipeline, a 113% rise over forecasts, according to Algerian energy giant Sonatrach. Algeria on Friday announced a 4 billion cubic-meter increase in planned supplies for the months ahead.

Italy is especially dependent on natural gas to generate electricity, heat and cool homes, and power its industry. Italy has also been reaching out to other energy-producing nations to secure alternate sources, including Azerbaijan, Qatar, Congo, Angola and Mozambique.

KIM KARDASHIAN 'tells Pete to stop eating junk food' after her weight loss



Reality star Kim Kardashian is reworking on her boyfriend Pete Davidson's diet, over fears his pizza and pasta guzzling habits could tempt her. She has lost 9 kilos since having to fit into Marilyn Monroe's iconic birthday dress for this year's Met Gala, reports mirror.co.uk.

The reality TV star reportedly wants Davidson, who she has been dating since October, to cut out his love of junk food as she is determined to be in the best shape for her swimwear line.

"Kim has told Pete he has to stop eating junk, it kills her because he is tall and skinny. He can eat whatever he wants thanks to his metabolism and it drives her mad," a source told Closer.

"She doesn't want that food around to tempt her away from her strict regime, he's made no secret of loving his late night pizza and pasta binges. Kim has told him he needs to curb them because she wants to be even trimmer to promote her metallic swimwear and the material is very unforgiving. She can't afford to look lumpy or dumpty."

Kim's workout regime is well documented, but the insider claims it drives the mother-of-four "insane" that Davidson can eat fast food and doesn't have to exercise.

Last month, Kim revealed she's lost 9 kilos in total due to the fact she has cut out all junk food and sugar.

Cameras start rolling for 'Minus One' Season 2



Web show 'Minus One' is set to make a comeback with its second season. The season, which recently went into production, will take the story of its two lead characters (Ria and Varun) forward as the two find themselves in a conflict between holding on and letting go of their relationship.

The six-episode series will encapsulate the relationship between two exes that spans several years, as Ria and Varun deal with the trials and tribulations of life, their careers, and their expectations from each other.

For Aisha Ahmed, playing Ria in the second season is special. "Minus One" is a special project for me. I have created memories and relationships that will stay with me forever. We shot season 1 as a family, and now Season 2 shoot has begun, and it's great to be back on the sets with the entire cast and crew. This season

is all about how Riya and Varun deal with a lot more relationship challenges, heartbreak, love and more."

She mentioned, "We have a lot of surprises in store for you, and we cannot wait for you to witness all the love we have poured into the series to make it bigger and better than ever before. Being Riya has been one of the greatest joys of my life, and I hope that people connect with her journey, as much as I have."

The series, produced by Writeous Studios, has been co-created by Sidhanta Mathur and Shubham Yogi and written with Gauri Pandit. The series is an honest look at humans and their relationships in a very nuanced and unflinching manner. But at the heart of it, 'Minus One' is about love.

Ayush Mehra, who plays the role of Varun, shared his thoughts. "It is an extremely special project for me. 'Minus One' got popular because it was made with a lot of heart and that's what people saw when they saw the show. We absolutely had a blast shooting it. Season 2 has been one of the most gruelling and rewarding experiences of my life as an actor and a person, and I couldn't have asked for a better support system than the team I work with every day."

POTPOURRI

ANNU KAPOOR-STARRER SERIES 'CRASH COURSE' TO PREMIERE ON PRIME VIDEO

Drama series "Crash Course", headlined by veteran actor Annu Kapoor, will stream on Prime Video from August 5. The 10-episode show is created by Manish Hariprasad and directed by Vijay Maurya, the streamer announced on Wednesday. "Crash Course" is a fictional account of two warring coaching institutes, and the effect it has on a group of young students who are preparing for their competitive exams, with dreams in their eyes and expectation of their families on their back.

"As the two drastically different worlds of the students and coaching institute owners collide, eight new students experience friendship, love, heartbreaks, peer pressure, and lose the innocence of youth as they are unwillingly pulled into the power-battle between the coaching institutes," the official synopsis read. Apama Purohit, head of India Originals, Amazon Prime Video, said the series will strike a chord with many students, who deal with competitive exams, negotiating with friendship, discovering love, etc.

Crash Course' is a bittersweet coming-of-age story that will resonate with all audiences across different geographies and age groups. Each one of us has been a student at some point in their life and Crash Course' is filled with moments that will take our customers back to their days of being a student, Purohit said in a statement.

Produced by Owlet Films, the show also stars Bhanu Uday, Udit Arora, Pranay Pachauri, Bidita Bag, besides newcomers including Mohit Solanki, Hridhu Haroon, Anushka Kaushik, Riddhi Kumar, Bhavesh Balchandani, Aryan Singh, Hetal Gada, and Anvesha Vij in pivotal roles.



Prominent German TV director who faced rape claim dies at 82



Dieter Wedel, one of Germany's best-known TV directors and scriptwriters, has died, a court that was considering a case in which he was accused of sexual assault said Wednesday. He was 82.

The Munich state court said that Wedel died in Hamburg on July 13, German news agency dpa reported. The court had been expected to announce Wednesday whether a case in which he was charged with raping an aspiring actress at a Munich hotel in 1996 would go to trial. Wedel was best known for a string of successful TV series in the 1990s and early 2000s. He later led an open-air theater festival in Bad Hersfeld, in central Germany. He was the first prominent figure in the country named when the #MeToo movement targeting alleged sexual abusers in the media and the arts gathered pace in Germany four years ago.

Chiranjeevi to present 'Laal Singh Chaddha' in Telugu

Bollywood cinema is attempting to extend its business in the south in unprecedented ways. In this context, Telugu megastar Chiranjeevi planning to present Aamir Khan's 'Laal Singh Chaddha' in Telugu comes as no surprise.

Chiranjeevi, on Saturday, took to his social media to make an announcement regarding the same. "Feel very privileged to present the Telugu version of my dear friend #AamirKhan's wonderful emotional roller coaster #LaalSinghChaddha.



Our Telugu audiences are surely going to love him," Chiranjeevi tweeted.

Actor Naga Chaitanya being a part of the movie is one thing, and Chiranjeevi's presentation of 'Laal Singh Chaddha' is the other thing that might attract

more attention to the movie in Telugu as well as other South languages.

Ranbir Kapoor's 'Bramhastra' is being promoted by S.S. Rajamouli and it's being aggressively promoted in Telugu, and now the same formula is being followed for 'Laal Singh Chaddha'. 'Laal Singh Chaddha' is slated for its huge release on August 12. Starring Aamir Khan and Kareena Kapoor in the lead roles, the movie is the official remake of Hollywood's famous movie 'Forrest Gump'.

Gulshan Devaiah-starrer series 'Shiksha Mandal' to highlight truth, corruption in education scam

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Gulshan Devaiah will soon be seen in the upcoming web-series titled 'Shiksha Mandal- Power Paise Ka... Scam Shiksha Ka' along with Gauahar Khan and Pavan Malhotra in lead roles. The series will present a hard-hitting narrative inspired by true events revolving around the biggest scam in the education system in India.

'Shiksha Mandal' will uncover the corruption, fraud, cheating and criminal conspiracy that affects vulnerable students in India. While Gauahar Khan will be seen as a no-nonsense cop, Gulshan will enact the role of a simple, hardworking young man running a coaching centre with aspirations for his family and Pavan Malhotra will portray



the role of a villain who is behind many illegal activities.

Confirming the same, Gautam Talwar, Chief Content Officer, MX Player, said "We are delighted to share the first look of our upcoming social thriller, Shiksha Mandal. At MX, we strive to tell the most authentic stories of India and bring relatable, raw and real content to our audiences. And Shiksha Mandal is another series that ticks against all these boxes." The release date of the series will be unveiled soon by the makers.

Ranbir explains his 4-year hiatus at 'Shamshera' promo in Delhi

The Capital's cinema buffs got to see both Sanjay Dutt and the man who played him on the big screen, Ranbir Kapoor, on Monday evening when the cast of Karan Malhotra's 'Shamshera' came on a promotional tour to the city.

Explaining his absence from the big screen since the Sanjay Dutt biopic 'Sanju' was released in 2018, Ranbir said: "After 'Sanju', I was working on 'Shamshera' and 'Bramhastra'. These two big-budget movies took time and then my dad was unwell and a pandemic happened."

Ranbir and his co-star Vaani



Kapoor also talked about shooting in mud and how tough it was to get rid of it.

And Malhotra mentioned shooting the movie in Ladakh: "There were about 200 to 300

people who were shooting at the outdoor location and about 60 horses that we brought in from outside as you don't get large horses in Ladakh. You only get mules."

Ranbir added that he had not done a movie on this scale and in this genre, so it needed a lot of conviction.

Vaani then talked about the most challenging part and said: "Certain emotional scenes were quite tough, but I remember more of the fun part."

Ranbir also recalled his father and late actor Rishi Kapoor's reaction when he signed the movie.

Filmmaker Mani Rathnam hospitalised

CHENNAI: Noted filmmaker Mani Rathnam was admitted to a private hospital here, on Tuesday, reportedly over symptoms of fever.

The corporate hospital where he has been admitted is yet to officially react.

Sources said the ace director was taken to the hospital with symptoms of fever today and he underwent a check-up. He had tested negative for COVID-19, and is likely to be discharged today, the source added. The Ponnaiyan Selvan director was working on the post-production of his historical drama, which is slated for release on September 30.

India to tour Zimbabwe for three-match ODI series in August

The Indian cricket team will travel to Zimbabwe for the first time in six years for a three-match ODI series, next month. The three ODIs will be played on August 18, 20 and 22 in Harare, the Zimbabwe Cricket announced. KL Rahul is expected to lead the Indian side.

The series is part of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League, a 13-team competition serving as the main route for direct qualification for the 50-over World Cup to be staged in India next year.

Zimbabwe are currently placed 12th in the 13-team pool, with just three wins in 15 matches.

The last time the 'Men in Blue' were in Zimbabwe



was when a Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side played three ODIs and as many T20Is in June-July 2016.

India recently finished their tour of England with series victories in T20Is and ODIs.

A young Indian team, under the leadership of Shikhar Dhawan, will next play a three-match ODI series against West Indies followed by five T20Is that finish on August 7.

Before the series against India, Zimbabwe will host Bangladesh for three T20s from July 30.

They will tour Australia ahead of the marquee-event for three ODIs from August 28.

Tanushree Dutta claims she is being harassed by 'B'wood mafia, old political circuit'

Bollywood Actor Tanushree Dutta has alleged she is being targeted and harassed by "Bollywood mafia and the old political circuit of Maharashtra" for taking a stand against injustice.

In 2018, Dutta triggered India's #MeToo Movement by reviving a decade-old case of alleged harassment against actor Nana Patekar.

"The Bollywood Mafia, the old political circuit of Maharashtra (which still has influence here) and nefarious anti-national criminal elements



being targeted in a systematic manner.

"The #metoo culprits & the NGO who I exposed" were responsible for her troubles, she said, without taking any names.

"I'm very sure the #metoo culprits & the NGO who I exposed are behind all this because why else would I be targeted & harassed like this?" "Shame on you all.... It's severe mental, physical & psychological harassment. What kind of place is this

where young boys and girls can just be harassed and killed for standing against injustice? (sic)" she added.

Known for films such as "Aashiq Banaya Aapne" and "Chocolate", Dutta said those who were trying to pull her down won't succeed.

"I'm not going to commit suicide for sure yeh kaan kholkar sun lo sab log!! Nor am I leaving & going anywhere. I'm here to stay & resurrect my public career to greater heights than ever before!"



Punjab Police personnel at the site of an encounter in which two gangsters Jagroop Singh Roopa and Manpreet Singh alias 'Mannu Kusa', suspected to be involved in the killing of singer Sidhu Moosewala, were killed, in Amritsar, Wednesday, July 20, 2022. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL



Balkaur Singh, father of late Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, at the Amritsar Civil Hospital after identification bodies of the two gangsters, in Amritsar on Thursday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL



Painter Jagjot Singh Rubal gives final touches to a painting of Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu, in Amritsar on Thursday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL



Famous kite maker Jagmohan Kanojia displays his new creation with a picture of the newly elected BJP presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu, pasted on a mini kite with best wishes for him, put inside a light bulb, in Amritsar on Thursday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

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