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**THREE MONTH GOVT OF AAP MARKED BY COMPLETE PARALYSIS IN GOVERNANCE: SUKHBIR BADAL**

## Punjab CM directs agriculture dept to take preventive steps to control damage due to pink worm attack in cotton belt

FW DESK  
Chandigarh

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann directed the Agriculture department to take necessary preventive measures for checking the spread of pink worm in the cotton belt of the state.

The Chief Minister, while taking cognizance of reports pertaining to attack of pink worm in certain areas, asked the agriculture department to permanently station its teams in the cotton belt to ensure



that the attack was checked at the initial stage. He said that the need of hour is to ensure that pink worm attack doesn't spread in the areas of cotton cultivation for which no

stone would be left unturned. Bhagwant Mann said that the agriculture department was duty bound to ensure that no loss is incurred to the farmers for which the attack needs to be averted by all means.

The Chief Minister said that the teams of agriculture department must undertake extensive visit in the Malwa region and assess the magnanimity of attack and subsequently take the necessary course of action. He said that the teams must consult the farmers and take necessary action.

**CORPORATES & INDUSTRY**

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**PM NARENDRA MODI INAUGURATES 'VANIJYA BHAWAN' AND LAUNCHES NIRYAT PORTAL**

## Punjab to bring White Paper on state's finances



**CHANDIGARH:** The Punjab Cabinet on Friday gave nod for tabling the White Paper on state's finances in the House during the current session of the legislative

assembly.

A spokesperson for the Chief Minister's Office said a decision to this effect was taken by the council of ministers during its meeting

**POTPOURRI**

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**AJAY DEVGN-STARRER 'DRISHYAM 2' BOOKS NOVEMBER RELEASE**

## ED issues fresh summons to Sonia Gandhi, asks her to join probe by mid-July



**NEW DELHI:** Congress President Sonia Gandhi on Thursday was served a fresh notice by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to join the probe by mid-July in the National Herald case.

On Wednesday, she wrote to the ED about her illness and requested them to defer the questioning, which was accepted by the probe agency. «She was suffering with Covid complications and was not fit for questioning, « said a source.

Sonia Gandhi, who was undergoing treatment at Delhi's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, was discharged on Monday. She was admitted to the hospital on June 12 after she developed bleeding from the nose on June 12. She was tested positive for Covid on June 2.

## Chidambaram targets govt over state of economy



Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Friday criticised the government over the state of the Indian economy, asking if it was in the "pink of health" after high fiscal deficit, inflation, and the depreciating value of the Rupee.

He also questioned the government for "backsliding on the fiscal deficit target for the current year. «Within months of setting the FD target at 6.4 per cent for 2022-23, government is backsliding. Now, Government is saying it will 'try to keep the FD at 6.7 per cent, same as the level in 2021-22, the former finance minister said on Twitter.

"High FD, high inflation, huge FPI outflows, depreciating rupee, depletion of forex reserves -- what do they point to? Is the Indian economy in the pink of health," he questioned.

## BJP names Draupadi Murmu as its Presidential candidate

**NEW DELHI:** The BJP on Tuesday announced the name of former Jharkhand Governor Draupadi Murmu as its Presidential candidate.

BJP chief J.P. Nadda announced Murmu's name during a press conference at the party headquarters here. The decision was taken by the BJP Parliamentary board, the party's top decision making body.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari, Nadda and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan were present at the meeting. Announcing



Murmu's name, Nadda said that the BJP is trying to build a consensus among all the parties. «After opposition parties announced their candidate, the BJP, after talking to all the NDA

allies, decided to field Murmu as its Presidential candidate. Detailed discussions were held on 20 names and a consensus was built that someone from the East and from the tribal community

must be made the President of India. After discussions, the Parliamentary board decided to name Draupadi Murmu as the Presidential candidate, « Nadda said.

Earlier on Tuesday, the opposition parties announced former Union minister Yashwant Sinha as their consensus candidate for the post of President. «We (opposition parties) have unanimously decided that Yashwant Sinha will be our common candidate for the Presidential election, « Congress leader Jairam Ramesh told mediapersons soon after the meeting of opposition parties held at the Parliament Annex.

## Oppn parties pick Yashwant Sinha as their joint candidate for president

Several major opposition parties, including the Congress, the NCP and the TMC, on Tuesday picked former Union minister Yashwant Sinha as their candidate for the July 18 presidential polls.

Opposition leaders, who gathered at the Parliament annex for the meeting convened by NCP chief Sharad Pawar to decide on a common candidate for the much discussed presidential election, unanimously agreed



on Sinha's name. The veteran politician, who has stepped aside from the Trinamool Congress and was

earlier with the BJP, will file his nomination papers on June 27. «We regret Modi government made no serious effort to have consensus on a presidential candidate,» Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who read out a joint statement after the meeting, said. He noted that the initiative to have a consensus candidate for the highest office of the Republic should have been taken by the government.

## Senior IPS officer Dinkar Gupta appointed NIA chief



Senior IPS officer Dinkar Gupta was Thursday appointed Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), a Personnel Ministry order said.

Gupta is a 1987-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Punjab cadre. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Gupta's appointment as the Director General, NIA till March 31, 2024, that is the date of his retirement, it said. In another order, Swagat Das was appointed Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Home Ministry. Das, a 1987-batch IPS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, is currently Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau. Das has been appointed to the post till November 30, 2024, that is the date of his superannuation, the order said.

## PM leads Yoga Day celebrations, says it is forming basis for int'l cooperation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed Yoga along with thousands of participants at a mass demonstration in the backdrop of the iconic Mysuru Palace here on Tuesday and said the physical fitness regime was forming a basis for cooperation among countries, and that it can become a problem-solver.

Leading the main event of the International Day of Yoga (IDY) here, Modi said Yoga brings peace to our universe and gave the hope of a healthy life to humanity.

"Yoga brings peace for us, the peace from Yoga is not only for individuals, Yoga brings peace to our society, nation, the world and the universe," Modi said, quoting rishis, maharshis and acharyas.

Speaking after inaugurating the grand event here, he said, "this might feel like an extreme thought to someone, but our sages have answered this in a simple mantra- that this whole universe starts from our own body and soul. The universe



starts from us and Yoga makes us conscious of everything within us and builds a sense of awareness."

Stating that things start with self-awareness and proceed to awareness of the world, he said, "when we become aware of ourselves and our world, we begin to spot the things that need to be changed both in ourselves and in the world. They may be individual problems or global problems like climate change and international conflicts."

Noting that spiritual centres like Mysuru have nurtured the energy of Yoga for centuries, Modi said, today that energy was giving direction for world health.

## PM Modi will have to withdraw 'Agnipath' scheme: Rahul

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday alleged that the Centre was "weakening" the army through the 'Agnipath' scheme, and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have to withdraw the military recruitment initiative just like the farm laws were rolled back.

The former Congress chief also thanked party workers for their support during his questioning by the Enforcement Directorate in the National Herald case, and said he was not alone during the questioning but all those fighting for democracy were with him.

The biggest issue in the country is of jobs and the gov-



ernment has broken the "spine of the country" by harming small and medium businesses, Gandhi said, addressing Congress parliamentarians and legislators from across the country who converged at the party headquarters here to express solidarity with him after he was questioned by the ED.

## Forex reserves dip by USD 5.87 bn to USD 590.588 bn

The country's foreign exchange reserves declined by USD 5.87 billion to USD 590.588 billion in the week ended on June 17, the RBI data showed.

In the previous week ended on June 10, the reserves had dropped by USD 4.599 billion to USD 596.458 billion.

In the reporting week, the forex reserves fell due to a dip in foreign current assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves, and also in gold reserves, the data showed.

FCA decreased by USD 5.362 billion to USD 526.882 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement, released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of



non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves fell by USD 258 million to USD 40.584 billion. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dropped by USD 233 million to USD 18.155 billion in the week ended June 17.

The country's reserve position with the IMF also dipped by USD 17 million to USD 4.968 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

## Agnipath scheme: Reform was long pending, no place for protesters in army: Lt Gen Anil Puri

**NEW DELHI:** Lt. General Anil Puri, Additional Secretary, Department of Military Affairs, on Sunday said that reform was long pending in the defence recruitment process, and vandalism and protesters have no place in the Army.

Before launching the new recruitment scheme, two years of study was undertaken to decide on the lowering of age, he said.

"We want to bring youthfulness and experience with this reform. Today, a large number of jawans are in their 30s and officers are getting command much later than in the past, « said Additional Secretary while addressing media here on the Agnipath scheme. He said, «We have been planning this since 1984 and now have come up with this idea. The reservation for retired army personnel was pre-planned.» Lt. Gen. Anil Puri said that the «Agniveers» would



get the same allowance in areas like Siachen and other places which are applicable to the regular soldiers serving at present. There will be no discrimination against them in the service conditions, he added. «Agniveers» will get a compensation for Rs 1 crore if he sacrifices his life in service of the nation, « he added further. Talking about the apprehension about the training for Agniveers, he said that all cadets trained in one year only. Youth will be skilled for multiple avenues after their exit, he added. Lt. General Puri also clarified that all recruitments will be through Agnipath scheme only.

## Uddhav ready to quit as CM, would like to see a Shiv Sainik as successor

Breaking his silence after his government was pushed to the brink of collapse by rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday said he was ready to quit his post if the rebel MLAs tell him that they don't want him to continue as



CM. In a 17-minute-long webcast, Thackeray who tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the day, said he was ready to give up the post of Shiv

Sena president as well if Shiv Sainiks feel that he isn't capable of heading the party.

Why make statements from Surat and other places? Come and tell me to my face that I am incompetent to handle the posts of chief minister and Shiv Sena president.

## 1984 anti-Sikh riots: Five more arrested in Kanpur

An SIT probing the 1984 anti-Sikh riots cases has arrested five more people who were part of a mob that had set a house ablaze during the violence, which had left 127 dead here.

Till now, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has arrested 11 people in connection with the violence that took place following the assassination of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. The fresh arrests were made on Wednesday. The SIT was formed by the Uttar Pradesh government three years ago to re-investigate the cases related to the riots.

## Seven militants including 4 Pakistanis killed in Kashmir

Security forces have killed seven militants, including four Pakistani nationals in three counterinsurgency operations in Kupwara, Kulgam and Pulwama districts of Kashmir in less than 24 hours, officials said on Monday.

"24 terrorists killed in 20 days, ahead of Yatra anti-terror operations intensified. Total 114 terrorists including 32 Pakistani terrorists killed in Kashmir valley this year so far," IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar said.

"Four Pakistani terrorists affiliated with Lashkar-i-Toiba have been killed in Kupwara Lolab Encounter, we are still searching the area, besides



in Kulgam 2 terrorist each of Lashkar and Jaish were killed and one unidentified terrorist was killed in Pulwama. All operations were carried jointly with the army on a specific input generated by Jammu Kashmir police," IGP added. Kumar further said that among seven killed militants, five were linked with Lashkar-i-Toiba, one with JeM and four have been identified as Pakistani and three local.

## Railways to promote sale of local products at 5328 railway stations

SATISH HANDA

Ministry of Railways has decided to launch 'One Station One Product' scheme to promote the sale of indigenously manufactured products at sales counter to be set up at nearly 5328 railway stations across the country aiming to wipe out imported products mainly from China flooded in domestic markets. According to Hari Mohan Senior DCM Ambala Rail Division, good response was seen during a trial at few railway stations in the division for sale of local products. He said, decision has been taken initially such counters will be set up at selected railway station in Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir and U.P under Ambala rail division in order to see the response and in case the



scheme proves successful such sales counters will be opened in 5328 railway stations across the country for which decision has been taken to charge Rs 1000 rent for each counter for period of 15 days. The proposal will not only boost sale of locally manufactured products but also have ban over sale of imported products especially from China in

the country.

Senior DCM Ambala rail division told that Ministry of Railways has already sent direction as regard this proposal to all 16 railway zones to identify railway stations where the scheme has to be launched in the beginning in which private organizations as well as co-operative societies may

contribute their services by opening their sale counters at railway stations all over in the country. He said, in case there is more than one proposal received from applicants willing to set up a stall at a railway station the allotment will be made on the basis of draw. He told that after allotment of counter at a railway station the party will have to submit an affidavit not to over charge or violate directions enabling to harm the image of railway department. He said, in a trial made in this regard at few prominent railway stations it was observed earning ranging between Rs 800 to Rs 1200 each counter daily was obtained at a small railway station, whereas earnings ranging worth thousands of rupees each stall every day were obtained at prominent railway stations.

## India sends earthquake relief assistance to Afghanistan

India on Thursday sent relief materials to the earthquake-hit people of Afghanistan.

The aid was sent a day after India said it is committed to provide assistance and support to Afghanistan in its "hour of need" after the war-torn country was hit by a powerful earthquake that killed around 1,000 people. "First consignment of India's earthquake relief assistance for the people of Afghanistan reaches Kabul. Being handed over by the Indian team there. Further consignment follows," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted. Afghanistan's Bakhtar News Agency reported that more than 1,000 people were killed and over 1500 others injured in the earthquake on Wednesday that majorly hit the eastern Paktika province.

# Punjab CM cracks the Whip on corruption

Exhibiting zero tolerance against corruption, the Punjab government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has so far in a short span of his tenure arrested 45 government officers/officials and others on charges of corruption. From the day one after assuming charge of his office, the Chief Minister had promised corruption free, transparent and clean administration to people for which a number of initiatives have been taken. He had released an anti-corruption helpline number to facilitate people for lodging their complaints against corruption through WhatsApp. This helpline has done miracles as people are using it as an effective tool in their war against corruption.



Based on such genuine complaints the Punjab Police has registered 28 FIRs against the corrupt officers/officials and other offenders. On directions of Chief Minister, the Vigilance Bureau has so far arrested One

Sub Inspector of Police, eight Assistant Sub Inspectors, three head constables, one constable, one Home Guard of Police, two Patwaris, one clerk and a Namardar, one data entry operator of Punjab School Education Board, One Principal of Government ITI SAS Nagar, one Medical officer, one Divisional Forest Officer and one member of summon server staff in Judicial department. Likewise, 17 civilians in a Mining case, four assistants to Patwaris and a Forest contractor has also been nabbed on charges of corrupt practices. In total 45 persons have been so far nabbed by the Police till June 21, 2022 on charges of corruption. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister said that this is just the begin-

ning and the entire system will be cleaned by weeding out the corrupt officers/employees from it. He said that no stone will be left unturned to wean away the menace of corruption from the system for providing clean, efficient and transparent government to the people. Bhagwant Mann said that people have bestowed a huge responsibility on him and he is duty bound to fulfil the aspirations of people by giving them clean, transparent and responsive administration. The Chief Minister said that this unprecedented action is a pointer towards the commitment of state government to provide clean and corruption free administration to the masses.

# Three month govt of AAP marked by complete paralysis in governance – Sukhbir Badal



**SANGRUR:** Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal today said the three month period of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government was marked by a complete paralysis in governance coupled with the breakdown of the law and order as well as communal harmony. The SAD president, who was addressing public gatherings at Pharwahi and Khudi Kalaan besides others places in favour of joint panthic and SAD-BSP candidate Biba Kamaldeep Kaur Rajoana, said the AAP government was destroying Punjab and that chief minister Bhagwant Mann was squarely responsible for this. "First Bhagwant Mann sub-let governance of the State to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal by allowing the latter to not only summon all officers to Delhi but also do their postings and transfers". He said this was not all. "Bhagwant

Mann has allowed the State's resources to be used to conduct AAP's election campaign in poll bound States like Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat by spending Rs 24 crore on this purpose in month only. Similarly he is indebting the State further by borrowing Rs 9, 000 crore in the last three months but has not spent a single rupee on any infrastructure development". Asserting that everyone was living in a state of fear due to collapse of the law and order situation, Sukhbir Badal said businessmen were facing extortion calls. "Buses are being looted in broad day light even as targeted killings and attacks on State institutions like the Punjab Police Intelligence headquarter are on the rise". He said despite this, the chief minister seemed unconcerned and was happy indulging in cheap publicity like trumpeting the

withdrawal of security of Sidhu Moosewala which led to the latter's brutal murder. Badal also asserted how the AAP government was failing in providing even essential facilities to the people. "Punjab is facing massive power cuts at a time when the paddy transplantation season has started. Cities are without power for hours at a time. The government has failed abysmally in making arrangements for adequate power during the paddy transplantation season", he added.

Meanwhile while campaigning for Biba Kamaldeep Kaur Rajoana, Badal said the Sangrur by-poll would not affect the fortunes of any party or the State government. "However the victory of Biba Rajoana will reunite the families of Sikh detainees who are still in jail even after completion of their jail sentences". He gave the instance of Bhai Bagwan Singh Rajoana who has been jailed since the last 28 years without parole. He also cited how Sikh detainee like Prof Dewinderpal Singh Bhullar was not being released despite official clearance given for his release because Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had not signed the release orders since the last seven months. Badal also castigated SAD (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann for foiling panthic unity by deciding to contest the Sangrur parliamentary by poll unilaterally.

# Punjab : Sangrur LS bypoll sees 44.41 % voter turnout

A low turnout of 44.41 per cent was recorded in the bypoll to Punjab's Sangrur Lok Sabha constituency, according to official figures released on Friday morning. Voting was held on Thursday from 8 am to 6 pm, and until late evening, the provisional figures stood at 37.01 per cent. Polling officials had earlier said that the numbers might increase once the data was compiled. The Sangrur Lok Sabha seat had recorded 72.44 per cent polling in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Most of the nine assembly segments of the constituency recorded poor turnout throughout the day. Earlier in a tweet, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had demanded that the Election Commission should extend the voting time till 7 pm. He said many people were working in the fields until late due to the paddy-sowing season.

# Cong appoints Kumari Selja as Member CWC

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Kumari Selja has been appointed as the Member of the Congress Working Committee. She expressed gratitude towards the Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for her appointment. She said that she will handle with full devotion the responsibility entrusted to her by the party high command and will continue to work to strengthen the party. Kumari Selja said that today every section was suffering due to the anti-people attitude of the present central government. This government was conspiratorially making policies to harass the countrymen. Earlier a conspiracy was hatched to ruin the farmers by introducing the anti-agriculture black laws.



# Haryana offers guaranteed govt jobs to Agniveers



**CHANDIGARH:** In a first in the country, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday announced guaranteed government jobs to Agniveers. The Chief Minister said Haryana is the first state to ensure such jobs for the youth. «The state government is always working for the betterment of the people by taking decisions in public interest.» He said the youth who would come out after joining the army under the Agnipath scheme would be given Group C or Haryana Police jobs. The Chief Minister was addressing a function organised in Bhiwani on the eighth International Day of Yoga. He also dedicated 337 wellness centres to the state. The Chief Minister said it is a matter of pride to get a job in the army. Therefore, 75 per cent of the youth who will retire under the Agnipath scheme will be guaranteed jobs in Haryana.

# Bishnoi accepts Hooda's challenge to contest bi-poll at Adampur against father or son

**SATISH HANDA**

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha strongly condemned Kuldeep Bishnoi Congress MLA from Adampur Vidhan Sabha constituency for cross voting against Congress contestant as a result senior Congress leader Ajay Makan was defeated in recent Rajya Sabha polls. Prior to polls, Bishnoi said that he will use his vote in favour of candidate

according to his conscious as such he was expelled from the party by Congress high command allegedly coo voting Congress candidate in recent Rajya Sabha polls. Comments were started between Bhupinder Singh Hooda, HPCP president Udai Bhan and Kuldeep Bishnoi when Hooda challenged Bishnoi to resign and contest bi-polls against Congress candidate

from Adampur constituency making allegations on him for ditching the party gave him name and fame. However, Kuldeep Bishnoi accepting Hooda's challenge said that he is ready to submit his resignation from Adampur Vidhan Sabha seat and contest bi-polls from this seat again in case he (Hooda) himself or his son Deepender Hooda contest poll against him after submitting their resignation when they will come to know their popularity in Haryana state.

# BJP-JJP combine sweeps Haryana municipal polls



**CHANDIGARH:** The ruling BJP-Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) combine in Haryana swept the municipal polls, winning seats of 25 presidents out of 46. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), in its maiden fray in the municipal polls, saw first victory by winning the president's post in the Ismailabad municipal committee in Kurukshetra district. Nineteen Independents also elected presidents. One seat went to the Indian National Lok Dal. The main opposition Congress did not contest the elections on party symbol. The polls were held on Sunday for the 18 municipal councils and 28 municipal committees in the state. Of the 28 municipal committees, the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 12, the JJP two, the AAP one while Independents have won 13. In Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's home turf, the BJP faced humiliation by winning won one of the four municipal committee president posts in Karnal district. It lost three seats to Independent candidates. The BJP-JJP alliance fielded candidates for Assandh, Gharuanda and Taraori municipal committees, while the fourth Nissing committee was contested by a BJP rebel who contested as an Independent. BJP's Happy Luck Gupta won the Gharuanda municipal committee president's post by a slender margin of 31 votes over AAP's Surinder Singla.

# BJP in Haryana assures 27 development schemes in MC poll manifesto

**SATISH HANDA**

In view of municipal polls held on June 19 in Haryana state ruling BJP government has assured as many as 27 welfare schemes to be implemented in every municipal area across the state in its poll manifesto released at BJP office Chandigarh, especially in rural areas attached to municipal committees in urban areas all over in he state in recent past to keep Haryana neat, clean and green as-



constituted a scheme to open Night Food Streets in every town in the state to make available nutrient, hygienic food at most reasonable rates to the people round the clock including during night hours all over in the state. Among other few welfare schemes in BJP poll manifesto include regularization of all illegally developed residential colonies located in municipal areas, besides developing new sectors on the basis of land pooling policy in every town across the state. Ruling state government has

# Sex trade flourishing at Yamunanagar, over 2 dozen couples arrested

On several complaints by the residents of area, Yamunanagar police took into possession over two dozen young couples in a hotel & Cafe, most of them in highly objectionable condition during raid and found large number of females lying in the arms of their male partner in broad daylight in cabins at The Times Hotel & Cafe situated on Santapura Road in the town on Monday afternoon. Police also recovered liquor bottles, glasses and other objectionable material during raid. Police arrested manager of hotel and cafe along with three females staying in the hotel since past few days suspected involved in prostitution. Police also arrested a female suspected supervising flesh business in the hotel. Police investigation continued till late evening.



**SATISH HANDA Yamunanagar**

# Moosewala Murder: Shooters planned to use grenades had guns not worked



In a startling revelation in the Sidhu Moosewala murder case, Delhi Police said on Monday that the assailants would have used grenades to kill the singer in case the guns didn't work. "The shooters had kept grenades as a back-up plan in case the guns didn't work," Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), H.S. Dhaliwal, said in a media briefing. The disclosure by the Special Cell came after it arrested two main shooters and their facilitator, who were involved in the May 29 killing of Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala. The two accused shooters, identified as Priyavrat Fauji (26), a resident of Sonapat in Haryana, and Kashish alias Kuldeep (24), were arrested from Kutch district in Gujarat on Sunday. Meanwhile, on the instance of module head Priyavrat, the police found a huge cache of arms and ammunition hidden in a village in Haryana. "We recovered eight grenades along with an under barrel grenade launcher. The high explosive grenades are designed for use with grenade launchers. The grenade launcher can be mounted on AK-47 assault rifles," Dhaliwal said.

# 478 cases illicit liquor, drugs smuggling registered at Ambala in 6 months

**SATISH HANDA**

Since past few years the cases of illicit liquor as well as drugs smuggling has witnessed fast increase in Ambala district known as 'Gateway of Haryana' turning as hub for smuggling and supply of illicit liquor, drugs and other intoxicating products including tablets, capsules and injections all over in the state. Residents of Ambala district hope relief in this regard due to appointment of a senior IPS officer Shrikant Jadhav in-charge Narcotics department Haryana based at Ambala, also holding the charge of Additional Director General Police Ambala division has already started action against smugglers, campaigns against drugs smuggling as well as drugs addiction fast increasing among male, female youths as well as residents of rural areas in the district. Information reveals, drugs is being smuggled from adjoining states Punjab, U.P, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi for onward supply all over in the state. State police record reveals that more than 478 illicit liquor and drugs smuggling cases were registered under NDPS act only at Ambala in past six months this year.

# 52 Haryana players get with Bhim Award

Haryana Governor, Bandaru Dattatraya conferred Bhim Awards to 52 players of Haryana for their outstanding achievements in sports. Each Awardee was given Rs. 5 lakh as cash award along with Bhim Statue, tie, blazer and citations. They will also be given Rs. 5000 per month as honorarium. The Bhim Award Felicitation ceremony was organised on the occasion of International Olympic Day at Indradhanush Auditorium, Panchkula. During the occasion, Haryana Vidhan Sabha Speaker, Gian Chand Gupta, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Sandeep Singh, Haryana Chief Secretary, Sanjeev Kaushal, Ad-



ditional Chief Secretary, Mahavir Singh, Director, Sports, Pankaj Nain and other officers including a jam packed audience belonging to the sports fraternity, players and their families and sportspersons from various states participated in the programme. While addressing the gathering, Bandaru Dattatraya said that today Haryana has made an indelible mark in the field of sports. He added that due to outstanding Sports Policy of Haryana and international standard of sports infrastructure, players of Haryana are bringing glory to the country at International and National Sports Events. He added that other governments are also looking forward to replicating our sports policy in their state.

# Rice miller involved in Rs 12.44 crore fraud arrested

**SATISH HANDA**

Karnal police station on the complaint of Economic Crime Cell Haryana arrested a rice miller Surinder Parkash Narang on 16th June 2022 from Solan in Himachal Pradesh having rice mill in the name of Evergreen Overseas Company at Niloksheri in Karnal district allegedly involved in fraud for amount worth Rs 12.44 crore towards non-supply of about 29112 quintal stocks of rice of value worth Rs 12.44 crore after milling to Food Corporation of India (FCI). The rice was not returned by the rice miller after milling 8197 Metric Ton paddy crop allotted to rice miller during year 2020-21 and the rice miller avoided to return rice stocks to FCI after milling for



one reason or the other delaying delivery of rice stocks for a long period caused financial loss to FCI for amount worth Rs 12.44 crore since the rice mill delivered only 25810 quintal rice after milling in stead of 54922 quintal rice after deduction of 33% loss incurred during milling as per agreed terms and assured to complete supply remaining quantity of rice stocks within a month or so but to no result.

# Gian Jyoti Institute Of Management & Technology celebrates 'INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY'

**FW DESK**

Gian Jyoti Institute of Management & Technology celebrated "INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY" at its Campus on 21st June 2022 with great zeal and fervor. All the students and faculty members participated in ancient spiritual discipline. This whole event was organized through the audio-visual clips of a renowned Yoga Guru under the supervision of YOGA Professionals. All the participants were fully dressed up in cotton-blend white t-shirts and pants. The activity started at 10:00 am followed by Yoga Asana such as Surya Namaskar, Chakrasana, Tadasana etc. The morning was continued with Yoga - Pranayama. Respected Chairman, J.S. Bedi addressed and encouraged the students and staff for promoting such events. He said that YOGA is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with ourselves, the world and Nature.



# Kartikeya to adopt Ambala, promises to develop IMT as desired by residents

**SATISH HANDA Ambala**

Talking to media persons here, newly elected Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Kartikeya Sharma said, he has decided to legally adopt Ambala on a priority basis admitting that he has reached Rajya Sabha with the help of many MLAs. He assured to work wholeheartedly for youth's welfare as well as for education sector and fight for all issues of people related to Haryana, be it SYL canal water or any other issue related to



said that he has reached Rajya Sabha as an independent candidate and in such a situation he can only remain independent as per the legal provisions. At the same time, he said that as BJP has supported him, he will also support BJP. He said that he is influenced by the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has come into politics only after being influenced by his policies. Kartikeya Sharma said, as regard employment opportunities for youths, there is more scope for jobs in private sector than in government.

# Chandigarh Institute of Drone introduced new innovations in the field of agriculture and law

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI**

Chandigarh Institute of Drones has prepared drones that can be used in the agriculture sector and law and order. These drones will help the farmers to do farming with ease and the police will get help in enforcing law & order. Representing Chandigarh in the recently held Drone Expo-2022, Chandigarh Institute of Drones gave a demo of Drone to Rajasthan Police to control law and order in the state. Sunny Kumar, Founder, Chandigarh Institute of



Drones said that in Drone Expo 2022-Jaipur, more than 50 drone manufacturers from across the country participated to give their drone demos in which he got a chance to represent Chandigarh. Sunny was accompanied by Manish Pandit (CTO), Usam

Siddiqui (Technical Head), Manal Pathania (Drone Pilot) and Karan Choudhary (ACIC, RISE) representing Chandigarh. Sunny said that due to the new guidelines of the Government of India, there has been a lot of growth in the drone sector.

# Cyber security integral to national security: Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said cyber security is integral to national security and the Narendra Modi government is committed to making it robust.

Addressing a conference on 'cyber safety and national security', Shah said technology is being taken to the grassroot level in India and if cyber security is not ensured, it will be a big challenge for the country.

"We all know how important is cyber security and how it can contribute for the development of India. India's progress is not possible without cyber security. Cyber security is integral to the national security and the Modi government is committed to making it robust,"



he said.

The home minister said everyone knows that the misuse of cyber space is not new and various kinds of cyber crimes are seen very often that include malware attacks, phishing, attacks on critical infrastructure,

in the country.

"In 2012, a total of 3,377 cyber crimes were reported and it has gone up to 50,000 in 2020. The number of cyber crimes which were not reported could be in lakhs. We are resolved to create the most secured cyber atmosphere in the world," he said.

The home minister said the Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a cyber crimes reporting portal about three years ago and so far, 11 lakh different kinds of cyber crimes have been reported there.

Besides, he said, there were over two lakh social media complaints which were registered on the portal.

data theft, online economic frauds, child pornography among others.

Such crimes are expected to increase in the coming days, he said. Shah also cited the data on the increasing number of cyber crimes being reported

## Gopalkrishna Gandhi declines Oppn request to contest Prez polls



Former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi on Monday declined the opposition leaders' request to contest the upcoming presidential election and said the candidate for the polls should be one who will generate a national consensus and ensure opposition unity.

In a statement, Gandhi said several esteemed leaders of the Opposition have done him the honour of thinking of him for the opposition's candidature in the upcoming elections for the presidency. "I am most grateful to them. But having considered the matter deeply I see that the Opposition's candidate should be one who will generate a national consensus and a national atmosphere besides Opposition unity. I feel there will be others who will do this far better than I," he said.

"And so I have requested the leaders to give the opportunity to such a person. May India get a President worthy of the office presaged by Rajaji as the last Governor General and inaugurated by Dr Rajendra Prasad as our first President," Gandhi said.

## EPFO Payroll data: EPFO adds 17.08 lakh net subscribers in the month of April, 2022

FW DESK

The provisional payroll data of EPFO released today highlights that EPFO has added 17.08 lakh net subscribers in the month of April, 2022. A year-on-year comparison of payroll data shows an increase of 4.32 lakh net subscribers in April, 2022 as compared to the net subscription in the month of April, 2021 last year.

Out of the total 17.08 lakh subscribers added during the month, around 9.23 lakh new members have come under the social security cover of EPF & MP Act, 1952 for the first time. Approximately 7.85 lakh net subscribers exited & re-joined the establishments covered under EPFO by changing their jobs within the establishments covered by EPFO and opted to retain membership under the Scheme, through transfer of funds rather than coming for final withdrawal of their PF accumulations.

## India re-establishes diplomatic presence in Kabul

India on Thursday resumed its diplomatic presence in Kabul by deploying a team in its embassy in the Afghan capital, over 10 months after it pulled out its officials from the mission following the Taliban's capture of power. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in a statement, said an Indian technical team has reached Kabul on Thursday and has been deployed in the embassy there. The reopening of the embassy came three weeks after an Indian team led by JP Singh, the MEA's point person for Afghanistan, visited Kabul and met acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and some other members of the Taliban dispensation.

## No purchase of coal from Russia after April 20: Tata Steel

Tata Steel has not made any purchase of PCI coal from Russia post its April announcement of severing business ties with Russia amid the ongoing conflict with Ukraine, a company spokesperson said on Wednesday.

On April 20, Tata Steel had said it would stop doing business with Russia. To ensure business continuity, all its steel manufacturing sites in India, the UK and the Netherlands have sourced alternative supplies of raw materials to end its dependence on Russia.

"Tata Steel would like to issue a clarification in view of the incorrect information floating around in some sections of the media with respect to the buying/ importing of coal from Russia," the spokesperson said. A deal for supply of 75,000



tonne of PCI coal was finalised in March 2022 and the contract became effective weeks before Tata Steel's April announcement. The shipment was received in May 2022 to honour the business commitment made before the announcement.

"Post the announcement, Tata Steel has not made any fresh purchase of PCI coal from Russia. As a responsible corporate, we have and will continue to remain committed to our stated stance and resulting obligations," the spokesperson said.

## Shah dials Himanta; enquires about flood situation, says central team will visit Assam to assess damage

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday called up Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma twice, first to enquire about the flood situation and later to inform him that a central team will soon visit the state to assess the damage caused by the deluge.

The northeastern state is reeling under devastating floods in the last one week, affecting nearly 43 lakh people in 33 of the 36 districts. A total of 73 people have died in this year's floods and landslides in Assam so far.

"Hon HM Shri @AmitShah ji called twice since morning to enquire about the flood situation in Assam. He informed that a team of officials shall soon be sent by Ministry of Home



Affairs to assess the damages caused by the natural calamity. Grateful to HM for his help," Sarma tweeted.

CMO sources said that Shah's first call was to enquire about the flood situation and the second to inform the chief minister that a central team will soon be sent to the state for damage assessment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also called up the Assam chief minister on Saturday to enquire about the situation and assured him of all possible

help from the Centre.

Meanwhile, Sarma held a virtual meeting with state ministers, senior officials and deputy commissioners in the districts to review the flood situation.

He directed them to accord top priority to rescue and relief operations. Sarma asked the DCs to take the help of Indian Air Force (IAF) to airdrop relief materials in areas where NDRF or SDRF boats have not been able to reach so far.

He said IAF has assured the state government of offloading petroleum and diesel in severely-affected areas. Sarma said relief and rescue operations in Barak Valley will be bolstered by roping in additional NDRF teams from the neighbouring states of Manipur and Tripura.

## Prophet case: Thane Police summons Naveen Jindal

NEW DELHI: Fresh trouble seems to be brewing for former BJP leader Naveen Kumar Jindal as the Thane police on Tuesday served a notice to him in connection with a new case over the controversial remarks he made against Prophet Muhammad.

Jindal has been asked to join the probe on June 25. The case has been lodged against him by



Mumbai Police Station on the complaint of one Mohammed

Gufran Akmal Khan. The case has been filed under sections 153(A) (B), 295 (A), 298 and 505 of the Indian Penal Code.

"This is to inform you that, Mumbai Police Station Crime registered Vide CR No. 528/2022 Section 153 (A) (B), 295(A), 298, 505 of IPC against you on the reasonable Complaint of Mohd Gufran Akmal Khan. Therefore,

## Flood fears in Kashmir due to incessant rain

Heavy rains over the past four days have led to a rise in the level of most water bodies in Kashmir with the Jhelum river crossing the flood alarm mark at Sangam in Anantnag district on Wednesday, officials said here.

The authorities have started moving people from low-lying areas to safer locations, they said.

Heavy rainfall across Kashmir has triggered flood concerns among the residents of the Valley even as snowfall in higher reaches including the cave shrine of Amarnath has brought down the day temperature substantially, the officials said. The water level at Sangam in Anantnag district was measured at 18.18 feet, marginally above the 18-foot mark for flood alarm, they said.

Vaishov stream, which flows mainly through Kulgam district, was flowing dangerously above the flood alert mark.

However, the water level started receding since 10.00



am, the officials said.

A breach in a temporary diversion along the banks of Vaishov stream as Chamgund in Kulgam was reported, they said.

The Doodhganga stream was also flowing close to the flood alarm level at Barzulla in the heart of the city's civil lines area. The weatherman has forecast improvement in weather later in the day.

The snowfall in upper reaches and rains in plains have sent the mercury nose-diving as Srinagar

recorded the coldest June day in almost 50 years for which the data is available.

Srinagar on Tuesday had recorded a maximum temperature of 15.0 degrees Celsius, 14.2 notches lower than the normal for this time of the year.

According to data available with the India Meteorological Department Srinagar, the coldest recorded June day was in 2015 when the mercury was settled at a high of 15.2 degrees Celsius.

## Cong MPs, MLAs from across country gather at party hqs to show support for Rahul



Congress MPs and legislators from across the country have gathered at the party headquarters here to express solidarity with Rahul Gandhi, who has been questioned by the Enforcement Directorate for five days, party leaders said on Wednesday.

The former party president and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were welcomed with slogans when they reached the AICC headquarters. Rahul Gandhi is expected to address the gathering. Among those present were Chattisgarh Chief Minister and his Rajasthan counterpart Ashok Gehlot.

"MLAs and MPs have come to express their solidarity with Rahul Gandhi," Gehlot told reporters. "Our MPs and MLAs are raising our voice against this conspiracy. All institutions of the government are busy in this endeavour," his colleague Jairam Ramesh added.

He said some MLAs and MPs had been stopped from coming here and the party would go ahead with the planning of its "Bharat Jodo yatra" from Kanyakumari to Kashmir starting October 2. "The Congress will continue to plan for Bharat jodo, but we will not let this Sonia Gandhitodo, Rahul Gandhi-todo happen," he said.

He said they are raising their voice against the Modi government's politics of revenge and vendetta politics. "This is a government of maximum vendetta and minimum governance," Ramesh said.

Rahul Gandhi was questioned by the ED for 50 hours over five days in a money laundering case related to the National Herald newspaper.

## National Monuments Authority to observe martyrdom day of great warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur on 25th June



National Monuments Authority is observing the great warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's martyrdom on 25th June, 2022.

On 25th June 2022 inspirational sermons by special and distinguished dignitaries will be organised from 10.30 AM to 11.30 AM at Red Fort Lawns.

Also in the evening from 7.30 PM to 9.30 PM at Shahidi Sthal of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Sahib - Guru Singh Sabha Gurudwara, Mehrauli, New Delhi, Samagam will be organised where tributes will be offered the monument of martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur.

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was a great Sikh warrior and a commander of Khalsa army who defeated the Mughals and freed a large part of North India. He established the Khalsa rule in Punjab. Banda Singh Bahadur abolished the Zamindari system, and granted property rights to the tillers of the land. He was a Noble ruler who introduced the Nanak Shahi coins. He was captured by Mughal ruler Farrukhsiyar and brought to Delhi and put to death in a most inhuman manner.

## Yoga, Beaches, Marina, Marine Sanctuary to be Goa's Tourist-Pullers: Union Mos Shripad Naik

BY DOMINICK RODRIGUES Panjim

"Yoga is like self-physiotherapy and people can freely learn and practice its various forms of exercises - like doctors often teach their patients - as a way of life for their good health in their own homes while saving both time and money in running around, according to Shripad Naik, Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping, Waterways and Tourism.

The Minister was talking to the Financial World correspondent in Goa on the eve of World Yoga Day observed on June 21 this year. He said that ever since Yoga Day was declared by the United Nations on June 21 in 2014 with as many as 170 nations seconding this resolution, many countries around the globe have participated in this exercise from 2015 on that day where people flex their bodies to the rhythm of yoga. Meanwhile, the Minister



said that as part of India's 75th anniversary, the areas of around 75 of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)-protected +iconic+ monuments were chosen to become the sites for holding yoga sessions on that day, besides a common yoga protocol being held that morning at the same time.

He said that these included Goa's iconic +Se Cathedral+ area in the heritage Old Goa and the +Fort Aguada+, and all yoga associations and clubs like Rotary, Giants and others in the State have been invited to participate in the event, besides the BJP asking all panchayats in Goa to join in the yoga programme, that would witness around 800 participants in the Old Goa site itself.

## Don't allow anyone to disrupt public life

BY NARVIJAY YADAV

As the ongoing protest of the youth against the Agnipath scheme for 4-years recruitment in the Indian armed forces has spread to 19 states, large-scale damage has been done to the national property including railway stations, trains, buses, and other government vehicles at different places in the country. There are incidents of sabotage and arson. Rail- way tracks and roads are also being blocked due to which the general public is facing a lot of trouble. Violent agitations started after the Central Government announced the Agnipath scheme on June 14. The agitations began in Bihar and spread to Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and many other states. Surprisingly, news related to sabotage, violence and road blocking, and agitation is being given in detail in the newspapers, but nowhere in these reports is mentioned which organization or political party is spearheading or fuelling the movement.

One thing is very clear unorganized youth cannot run such a large-scale movement on their own. Surely there will be such political parties behind this stir, who do not like peace and prosperity in India and who intend to run their shops by burning the country. Such incidents have been happening again and again in the country for the last few years, when there is a large-scale ruckus and protest as soon as a new scheme of the central government is implemented. The surprising thing is that when big schemes are implemented, why are the schemes not publicized widely in advance? Why is public opinion not taken on schemes which have a large-scale impact? Why don't the schemes properly explained to the stakeholders? What's the point of suddenly forcing a plan on the public? Due to the communication gap, the country has to suffer heavy losses time and again. The same shortcoming was noticed during the time of the controversial Farm Laws. In June 2020, the three agricultural laws were approved by the parliament in a hurry,



when the country was under lockdown and the distribution of newspapers had come to a standstill. Now the Agnipath scheme has been announced in the same manner for the recruitment of short-service Agniveers in the armed forces.

The scale at which the Agnipath programme is being opposed, raises the question that why not those people are not informed in advance for whom the plans are made? Why their opinion is not taken into account at the beginning itself? Why not such plans are reconsidered even after their stiff opposition. So much sabotage, violence, loss, and trouble caused to the general public, and loss of government property can be avoided if the communication gap is not maintained. At the same time, youth are also expected to behave responsibly. On the one hand, they want to join the army, and on the other side, they are involved in the sabotage of public property. This is not done. Even peacefully you can register your protest. Why do you resort to violence? Why are you damaging government property, which is basically a public asset?

The youth involved in violent protests should understand one thing very well the records of agitators are kept with the police. Due to this reason, the youth involved in such criminal acts may face a lot of difficulty in getting government jobs in the future. Youth have the right to protest against the Agnipath scheme of the government, but they do not have the right to damage national property. It is also a crime to cause inconvenience to the citizens of the nation. Violence should never happen in the name of protest. Sabotage cannot be accepted

under any circumstances.

People are also being harassed by the new-age digital loan providers. Many digital companies on social media give enticing advertisements for easy loan lending. The reactions of the borrowers show that they got the loan easily, but have been facing many problems later. These companies may charge interest arbitrarily and harass the borrowers in various ways if the money is not returned. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Shakti Kant Das is worried about this pattern. He has said that the banking sector is passing through a major transformation and the Reserve Bank of India is looking to issue guidelines to strengthen the digital lending ecosystem soon. The rules will be tightened on the digital companies giving loans because it has become necessary to do so in the interest of the common people. With the entry of technology-based giants such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook (Meta) into the financial sector, the threat to ordinary consumers will increase further. The entry of such giant companies into the financial business will not only increase competition but will also raise questions about the privacy of data. It is necessary to assess such risks and put in place mechanisms to deal with them. Thanks to the RBI for smelling the trouble and taking measures.

In the front of the development, the construction work of the expressway between Delhi and Dehradun is going on in full swing. On completion, it will take only two and a half hours to reach Dehradun from Delhi, whereas it takes 6 to 7 hours currently. The target is to have the expressway ready by 2024.

## Digital media such as WhatsApp and e-mail can be used for speedy consumer complaint redressal: Piyush Goyal

FW DESK

Emphasising on speedy and affordable justice by Consumer Commissions across the country, Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Textiles and Commerce & Industry at a national workshop here today urged that all Commissions to see how digital media such as WhatsApp and e-mail can be generously used to issue notices, replies and other documents.

Goyal inaugurated the National Workshop on 'Effective and Speedy Consumer Disputes Redressal' with President and Members of National Commission, President and Members of State Commissions and Presidents of selected District Commissions along with Principal Secretaries of the State organized by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

He said that the Consumer Commissions should religiously follow the timelines as per the Consumer Protection Act, 2019



for expediting disposal of cases. He said that the commissions should be able to dispose cases within 3-5 months of filing which will provide speedy justice to consumers.

Shri Goyal said that to provide a faster and amicable mode of settlement of consumer disputes, the new Act (Consumer Protection Act 2019 that came in to effect from July 2020) also introduces reference of consumer disputes to Mediation, with the consent of both parties. This will not only save time and money involved

in litigating the dispute, it will also help in reducing the pendency of cases. The Government is also taking proactive steps in encouraging the use of electronic mediation (e-mediation). This will help in ensuring that location and distance do not act as barriers whenever parties wish to opt for mediation for the settlement of cases. So far 153 District Commissions, 11 State Commissions along with National Commission have established mediation centres. I would like to request all States / UTs to expedite setting up me-

diation centres and appointing mediators.

He further highlighted the importance of digitization of all documents that are required to be submitted and urged all the Commissions to implement e-communication and facilitate all documents and process to be online mode to enable hassle free procedure for consumers. He emphasized that simplification of process leads to more effective and affordable justice system.

He added that delayed disposal and huge pendency remains a major challenge towards redressal of Consumer Grievances. Pointing out, he mentioned that as per the data on 14th June 2022, the pendency in the National Commission was 22,608; State Commission was 1,49,608 and District Commission was 4,66,034. He said that those seeking repeated adjournments should also be dealt with. He suggested that pendency can be reduced by bunching of similar cases and disposing it together.

## Decks get cleared for the first auction of radio spectrum

The Union Cabinet last week cleared the decks for the first auction of radio spectrum to facilitate the roll-out of 5G telecommunication services. The Department of Telecommunications promptly issued a 159-page 'Notice Inviting Applications', detailing the specifics of the auction including the frequencies that would be up for bidding starting on July 26, and their reserve prices. The speed with which the Government has moved — from the initial announcement in the Union Budget to the telecom regulator's recommendations, and finally notification of the auction — has been commendable and shows its keenness to ensure India is at the relative vanguard in the adoption of the potentially 'transformative' technology. The Government has underscored that its primary motivation is to boost digital connectivity, a laudable objective given that the rapid growth of wireless telephony has perceptibly helped improve the delivery of services such as mobile banking, online education and telemedicine. The rub, however, is in the details. The relatively small size of the market for just faster downloads of videos and games, especially at a higher cost, makes it near certain that service providers will take an ultra-cautious approach both to bidding for spectrum and in rolling out services. The Cabinet's decision to allow bids for starting Captive Non-Public Networks that would enable individual companies to run private networks within the isolated confines of the enterprise has also roiled the pitch. It is hard to imagine the urgency to open up 5G for this niche application, particularly as it further undermines the economics for traditional telcos. India must be conscious of the challenges and opportunities of 5G services, and ensure that the technology caters to the largest sections of the population and not remain a deliverer for a high-value but limited, premium segment.

### LETTERBOX

Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to [fwletters@gmail.com](mailto:fwletters@gmail.com). We will publish them on this page.

"SUCCESS IS STUMBLING FROM FAILURE TO FAILURE WITH NO LOSS OF ENTHUSIASM."  
- WINSTON CHURCHILL

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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G.R. GOPINATH EXPLAINS WHY GOVT SHOULD DO AWAY WITH ALL THE CONFUSING TAX SLABS

## Towards a single low tax regime

In December 2018, the late Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, announced that the 28% GST slab, which he called the "dying slab", would be phased out, except for luxury items. India, he said, would eventually have just two slabs: 5% and a standard rate between 12% and 18% (apart from exempt items). Tragically, he passed away less than a year before fulfilling his assurances.

Simplicity is not easy to achieve. Great sages, artists and designers have preached simplicity. It was the mantra of Henry David Thoreau, who influenced Mahatma Gandhi.

The introduction of a uniform GST was a watershed moment in India since the country's earlier regime of taxes and cesses, both at the Centre and the States, was a big barrier to free trade and economic growth and was a cesspool of corruption.

However, GST is still a complicated tax regime with different slabs. It is not easy to comprehend or comply with, and is open to interpretation, harassment and avoidable litigation. To simplify it, Finance Ministry officials must be reminded of KISS.

KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid) is a well-known acronym and an accepted credo in business. Attributed to Lockheed aircraft engineer Kelly Johnson, it was meant to urge engineers to keep aircraft design so simple that even a stupid person would be able to repair the aircraft with ordinary tools on the combat field.

Bureaucracy, the world over, is usually oblivious to the KISS principle. An Amazon ad boasts that it sells more than a crore of different products, besides myriad services. More categories are added every day. In this context, asking bureaucrats to identify and categorise all products and services for differential tax slabs in the GST regime is the surest way to get into a muddle.

Empirical data from across the world on the benefits of a unified single tax is incontrovertible. So, an unambiguous directive to the bureaucracy is necessary from the ruling dispensation to come up with just two categories: goods eligible for zero tax and goods that will fall under a single rate, say 10% or 12%. That means everything except those specifically exempt, is taxed.

This needs bold and clear reformist think-



ing at the political level. Imposing a high GST in some areas does not make sense. 'Sin' taxes, for instance, are at cross purposes with the government's policy of generating growth and creating jobs under 'Make in India'. A typical 300-room five-star hotel generates direct employment for around 500 people of whom 90% are waiters, housekeeping staff, front desk staff, security and concierge staff, besides cooks, financial and clerical staff. There are a host of others employed in associated services such as the spa, gift shops and swimming pool. The hotel also generates indirect employment in ancillary areas: it buys bed linen, furnishings, rugs and carpets, air conditioners, cutlery, electrical fittings and furniture, and consumes enormous quantities of food produce. All these generate jobs and income for farmers, construction contractors, artisans and other manufacturers. Five-star hotels also generate foreign exchange by attracting rich tourists and visitors. So, it's unwise to tax these hotels to death.

Similarly, high taxes on air-conditioners, air conditioned restaurants, chocolates and luxury cars create an economic ripple effect downstream, in a complex web of businesses that have symbiotic relationships. The effect finally reaches down to the bottom of the employment pyramid.

The plan must be to figure out how to rev up the economy by making the rich and upper middle class spend and move more people up the value chain in order that more chocolates and ACs and automobiles are

bought by them, instead of designing a tax system that keeps these products out of the new consumer class's reach.

Instead, the current regime is plain confusing. At an Iyengar Bakery, GST on bread is zero, but the vegetable sandwich is in the 5% tax slab, hitting the vegetable grower directly. The GST on buns is zero, but buns with a few raisins fall in the 5% slab. The GST on masala peanuts, murukku and namkeen is 12%. And the GST on cakes and chocolates is 18%. The same lack of logic applies to taxes on wine, rum and beer, which generate large-scale employment and are the backbone of grape and sugarcane farming and the cocoa industry. The ancient art of toddy tapping in villages, a large employment generator and income booster in rural areas, was killed by unthinking politicians and bureaucrats and replaced with Indian-made foreign liquor. Imagine killing the wine industry in France? It would be sacrilege.

In the automobile sector, the GST on electric cars, tractors, cycles, bikes, low-end and luxury cars ranges anywhere from 5% to 50%. The sale of automobiles is the barometer of an economy.

The confusion has given rise to several disputes. ID Fresh Food, for instance, which makes ready-to-eat foods like chapatis, rotis, parotas and sells various types of idli and dosa batter, appealed against a GST ruling of the Authority for Advance Rulings (Karnataka bench). The ruling had called for a distinction between rotis and parotas and had subjected parotas to a higher GST

rate of 18% since the food item did not fall under the category of 'khakhra, plain chapati, or roti' (which fall under the 5% slab) and needed to be processed or heated for further consumption. Can a country aspire to be a \$5 trillion economy if its taxmen turn gourmet chefs and get bogged down by researching the differences between various kinds of food items prepared with dough?

Then there are items that are exempt from GST. Petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel are not under the purview of GST, but come under Central excise and State taxes. Central excise duties and varying State taxes contribute over 50% of the retail price of petrol and diesel, probably the highest in the world barring banana republics. There is distrust between the States and the Centre on revenue sharing. There is also anger at the Centre for riding roughshod over the States' autonomy and disregarding the federal structure of the Constitution. Opposition-led States point fingers at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who ironically accused the United Progressive Alliance regime of trampling on the rights of the States while he was Gujarat Chief Minister.

### Use the KISS principle

The low-cost airline model is successful because of the KISS principle. All the frills such as food, freebies and assigned seats are dispensed with. Single class seating, point-to-point travel with no code sharing, direct Internet booking, no middlemen, etc. have sustained this model. It's an Udipi self-service hotel in the sky.

The Finance Minister should take a cue from the Prime Minister, who hinted at major reforms in the aftermath of COVID-19, and do away with all the confusing tax slabs in one fell swoop. She can then usher in a truly single low tax regime along with a list of exempt items. That will ensure compliance, widen the tax net, improve ease of doing business, boost the economy, create jobs, increase tax collections and reduce corruption as witnessed in many countries — a move that will be both populist and well-regarded by economists.

G.R. Gopinath is the founder of Air Deccan. Views are personal



DR. SOHAM D. BHADURI WARNS OF POLITICAL OR GEOPOLITICAL EXPEDIENCY OR CULTURAL CHAUVINISM

## Heal the nation before healing the rest of the world

Bolstering health human resources has been a prime focus of many of the Union government's recent initiatives and policy pronouncements. The Union health Budget 2022 made handsome appropriations for the same, much in line with the Fifteenth Finance Commission's recommendations which laid a conspicuous emphasis on utilising existing capacities at the district and sub-district levels to train different cadres of health-care personnel. Much to the ecstasy of public health advocates, the Health Ministry recently released a set of implementation guidelines for a long over-due Indian public health cadre.

A more recent announcement, however, raises concerns over the coherence of India's vision with respect to health human resources. The Centre under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and the "Heal by India" initiative is reportedly developing an exhaustive online repository of all categories of health-care professionals in the country. Though such an innovation is much needed because of the currently fragmented nature of such data, one of its proposed primary purposes is to aid external stakeholders, viz. foreign employers and patients in finding a right Indian match for their respective needs. It is an atavistic return to the widely shunned principles of liberalisation in health care, which is not only gratuitous today but also menacing.

The concerns are legitimised by the current estimates and future projections of health manpower in the country, which paint a



not-so-salutary picture. A World Health Organization (WHO) 2020 report projected a requirement of nearly two million more doctors and nursing professionals for India in order to attain the minimum threshold ratio of health-care professionals to the population.

As per a study by WHO and the Public Health Foundation of India, over and above a veritable shortage of health-care personnel and their skewed skill-mix across a number of States, their current pace of growth is unlikely to result in any significant improvement in the density or skill-mix of health-care professionals by 2030. Such inadequacies are further compounded by the legions of health-care professionals who remain inactive and outside the labour force. In the face of these colossal challenges, the current measure which aims to subtly reinforce medical tourism and worsen the out-migration of health-care professionals

from the country is utterly counter-intuitive.

In the mid-1990s, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) aimed to create an unprecedented scope for cross-border trade in medical and health-care services. While the health equity implications of this neoliberal offshoot are well known and its central tenets have been widely criticised, health care particularly in the post-COVID-19 era has been a fertile ground for countries to project soft power — at times even at the expense of the nation's own health interests. A crucial distinction must always be drawn between exporting products such as vaccines and that of health-care professionals.

While the first is characterised by a much simpler transactional math, training health-care manpower entails large subsidies (even a fraction of which is hardly recovered through remittances and skill transfers), thus entailing a net drain of resources from the native country.

A similar draw on scarce national health-care resources is laid through medical tourism which is almost always to the detriment of health equity, particularly in developing settings such as India. The magnitude of these could be somewhat attenuated by the use of telemedicine and virtual platforms, though the larger concerns shall persist. While neither medical tourism nor out-migration can or need to be dispensed with in their entirety, to pursue them actively when the country is reeling under acute shortages in an aspirational decade for health care is least warranted.

It is also hard to justify an immediate need for this measure. While an online health-care

professionals repository will certainly aid foreign stakeholders in finding their right choices, there is neither a strong demand-side desperation nor a significant supply-side scarcity preventing a market to function well in its absence. For instance, a recruiter from a developed country willing to hire Indian nurses and remunerate them handsomely will not be hard pressed to find suitable candidates regardless of the assistance rendered by an online repository, and the latter would only be marginally helpful.

Rather, it is at the national and sub-national levels that such an exhaustive and updated registry of health-care professionals is the need of the hour, for addressing the many challenges and disparities in health manpower availability, distribution, and skill mix. This would also come to strongly complement measures such as an integrated public health cadre and the initiatives to train, deploy and retain more local manpower.

In health care, which is characterised by perennially scarce resources and a surfeit of challenges, everything revolves around identifying the priorities right. And no amount of political or geopolitical expediency or cultural chauvinism should be allowed to undercut national health interests. It is time to go all out to address national health-care workforce challenges and heal the nation before embarking on a healing cruise of the world.

Dr. Soham D. Bhaduri is a physician, health policy expert, and chief editor of 'The Indian Practitioner'. Views are personal

### BOOKS: REVIEW

## When peasants speak, the earth rumbles, says book

A book capturing the voice of peasants of the 'Champanan Satyagraha' through their statements was launched here on Monday by Union Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal.

The 'Thumb Print-Champanan Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi, Volume-1' introduces testimonies of peasants and provides rich insights into the condition of the indigo peasants and the making of Gandhi's Champanan Satyagraha.

It has been printed by the Ahmedabad-based Navajivan Press, with archival documents for the volume being provided by the National Archives of India.

The minister also launched a handbook titled 'Repair and Preservation of Records', which provides solutions to problems of

preservation and longevity, as well mobile app 'Abhilekh Patal' and its web portal covering advanced search for online access to 3.3 million pages of digitised records.

Addressing the launch event, Meghwal said Champanan became the first laboratory of Mahatma Gandhi after his return from South Africa.

It was at Champanan that Gandhi took up the task of cleanliness, he said, adding that the Mahatma tapped the body, mind, intellect and soul of farmers to bring them together to oppose indigo farming imposed by the British.

"National Archives of India and Navajivan Trust launched a book and an Abhilekh Patal mobile app. The book is important for those who are interested in archives,

**'Seven thousand documents entrusted to scholars with the hope that we will not misuse it, that we will be ethical about its uses, that's something National Archives has been doing for 125 years'**

research fellows who are interested in history," he said.

Tridip Suhrudd, one of the editors of the book, said, if all eight volumes of the book are published, then this will become the biggest peasant archive document.

"It contains the story of torture of 7,000 farmers. Because I have



*'Thumb Print-Champanan Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi, Volume-1'*  
By, Megha Todi Shahid Amin, Tridip Suhrudd Navajivan Trust and National Archives of India; 360 pages; RRS00

been associated with historical writing, I know if we are able to establish these eight volumes, then this will become the biggest peasant archive document. The Navajivan Trust and National Archives are much more committed to publish it," Suhrudd said.

"Nowhere else has the statement of 7,000 farmers on an issue appeared through their own testimony, neither in Europe, India, Latin America, nor Africa," he said, adding the volume could not have been possible but for an institution like the National Archives.

"Seven thousand documents

entrusted to scholars with the hope that we will not misuse it, that we will be ethical about its uses, that's something National Archives has been doing for 125 years," he said.

Chandan Sinha, National Archives Director General, said the institution has undertaken digitisation on a massive scale, and the portal Abhilekh Patal contains half of all catalogues so far.

"The National Archives has also undertaken digitisation of its documents, and 4.5 crore documents have been digitised so far out of 18 crore," he said. Shahid Amin and Megha Todi are two other editors of the volume.

How these volumes running into several thousand pages reached the safe coffers of our national repository is a story worth telling. Shridhar Vasudev Sohoni, the Commissioner of Tirhut Division in the mid-1950s, has narrated his discovery of these folios in the record room of his office in a somewhat dramatic manner.

# PM inaugurates 'Vanijya Bhawan' and launches NIRYAT portal

FW DESK

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Vanijya Bhawan' and launched the NIRYAT portal in Delhi. Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Som Prakash and Anupriya Patel were among those present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said today another important step has been taken in the direction of the journey of Citizen-Centric Governance in New India on which the country has been moving for the last 8 years. The country has got the gift of a new and modern commercial building as well as an export portal, one physical and other digital infrastructure, he said.

Referring to many examples of the recent past, the Prime Minister said that in the new work culture of the New India,



completion date is part of SoP and is strictly adhered to. He remarked that only when the government's projects do not hang for years and are completed on time, similarly, the government's schemes reach their goals, then only, the taxpayer of the country is respected. Now we also have a modern platform in the form of the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan. He said that this Vanijya Bhawan will give a push to the nations 'Gati Shakti'.

The Prime Minister noted that last year, despite the historic global disruptions, India's exports stood at a total of \$ 670 billion i.e. Rs 50 lakh crore. Last year, the country had decided that despite every challenge, it has to cross the threshold of \$ 400 billion i.e. 30 lakh crore merchandise export. We crossed this and created a new record of export of \$ 418 billion i.e. 31 lakh crore rupees. "Encouraged by this success of the past years, we have

now increased our export targets and have doubled our efforts to achieve them. Collective effort of everyone is very necessary to achieve these new goals", he said, further adding that not only short term but long-term targets should be set.

The Prime Minister cited the new Vanijya Bhawan as also the symbol of his Government's achievements in the field of commerce during this period. He recalled that at the time of foundation stone laying, he had stressed the need for innovation and improvement in the Global Innovation Index. Today, India is ranked 46th in the Global Innovation Index and is continuously improving. He had also talked about improving ease of doing business at that time, today, more than 32000 unnecessary compliances have

been removed. Similarly, GST was new at the time of foundation stone laying of the building, today, 1 lakh crore GST collection per month has become commonplace. In terms of GeM, 9 thousand crore rupees worth orders were discussed then, today, more than 45 lakh small entrepreneurs are registered on the portal and orders worth more than 2.25 lakh crore have been placed. The Prime Minister had talked about 120 Mobile units at that time up from just 2 in 2014, today this number has crossed 200. Today India has 2300 registered Fin-tech startups, up from 500, 4 years ago. At the time of the foundation stone laying of the Vanijya Bhawan India used to recognize 8000 startups every year, today, this number is more than 15000, the Prime Minister informed.

## Maruti Suzuki new Brezza bookings open; to be launched at month-end



The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India on Monday announced opening of bookings for the upcoming new version of its compact SUV Brezza.

The new Brezza, to be launched at the end of the month, will come with features such as electric sunroof along with an array of sophisticated new-age tech, comfort, convenience and connected features, the company said in a statement. It will also have a next generation powertrain with 6-speed automatic transmission option, it added without disclosing details.

Customers can pre-book the new Brezza with an initial payment of Rs 11,000 at any of the

company's Arena showroom or from its website, it said.

Since its launch in 2016, Brezza started a new trend of compact SUVs in the country, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Shrivastava said. "With over 7.5 lakh units sold in just 6 years, Brezza commands a strong market share in the compact SUV segment in the country. Today we are happy to share that we will be introducing the most-awaited compact SUV in an all-new avatar," he added.

Matching the changing aspirations of young Indians, who want a vehicle that reflects their personalities, the new Brezza is a stylishly tech-enabled compact SUV that will surpass the expectations of customers, Shrivastava said. MSIL Chief Technical Officer (Engineering) CV Raman said the new Brezza comes with an enhanced design, performance, technology and safety features.

## TECNO is all-set to disrupt smartphone market yet again; launches POVA-3 with India's first 7000mAh battery & 33W fast charger

MUMBAI: TECNO Mobile, the global premium smartphone brand today launched yet another futuristic device POVA-3, under its performance-oriented POVA series that mirrors the ethos of speed, power and performance. Designed for gaming enthusiasts and Gen Z consumers, POVA 3 is equipped with India's first 7000mAh battery with a 33W fast charge. This powerful combination could transform the smartphone's power back-up to address concerns of consumer, who spend maximum time on their mobiles and have an increasing need for all-day battery performance.



## Gaurav Gill returns to WRC 2 Safari Rally Kenya

World Rally Championship (WRC) Safari Rally Kenya, one of the most challenging rallies in the world has kick-started with the legends of WRC fighting it out for the top titles. Representing India in the grid is Arjuna Awardee Gaurav Gill who is making his powerful comeback in the World Rally Championship after a hiatus of two years since Rally

Turkey & Australia 2019. Gill returns to WRC 2 driving a Skoda Fabia Rally2 car for the first time with Brazilian co-driver Gabriel.

While the WRC grid will see some serious face-off between nine-time world champion Sebastien Loeb of M-Sport Ford Puma Rally1 and eight-time world champion Sebastien Ogier of Toyota Gazoo Racing who won



last year's Safari Rally Kenya, our Indian driver Gill has competition from highest-placed champion-

ship contenders Polish driver Kajetan Kajetanowicz driving Skoda Fabia Rally 2 and Martin Prokop from Czech who is fielding his trusty Ford Fiesta Rally2.

Gill kicked-off his Safari Rally camping with style by clocking the fastest time in the Shakedown that is basically part of official itinerary for setting up the pace for the rally in the WRC 2 grid

which comprises of eight world class drivers.

Considered as one of the most dreaded events of the season, Gill showcased his driving prowess and control on the machine in SSI-Super Special Kasarani by clocking the fastest timings of 3:32.9 in WRC2 grid, just 14.1 seconds off the leader Ogier driving a works Toyota in WRC1.

## JK Organisation organizes Blood Donation Camps

MUMBAI: Commemorating the 89th birth anniversary of Late Hari Shankar Singhania, former President of the J K Organisation, the eminent industrial group organized 'Blood Donation Camps' across its various plants and offices.

While, the group is involved in various social services, the blood donations camps were specially organized on this day as a tribute to Late Hari Shankar Singhania who was always keen to do something extra for the society. A 'Padma Bhushan' awardee, Late Hari Shankar Singhania played an active role in the growth and consolidation of the JK Organisation by setting up several new ventures and acquiring and inducting several companies into the group in the country and abroad.

Over 5500 employees of JK Organization registered for the humanitarian cause and came forward to support the blood



donation drive through their participation. All the donors were tested for blood pressure, hemoglobin, weight check, etc. in the camps organized by JK Organisation before donation. Every donor was given a certificate of appreciation for their contribution.

Speaking on the occasion, Bharat Hari Singhania, Chairman, JK Organisation mentioned that, "With the belief of giving back to the society engrained in the ethos by the founders, JK Organisation has stood strong for over 100 years now

committed to enhance the quality of life for all. This blood donation drive across JKO Group companies is an initiative towards ensuring the wellbeing of the larger population needing the lifesaving blood, on this auspicious occasion of Birth Anniversary of Late Hari Shankar Singhania."

All the group companies of JK Organisation participated in the drive, including JK Tyre, JK Paper, JK Lakshmi Cement, JK Agri Genies, JK Fenner, Umang Dairies Limited, Global Strategic Technologies Ltd, ClinixR Tangent Research Ltd, JK Insurance, Indica Travels, PSRI Hospital & JK Lakshmiapat University.

JK Organisation is a multinational group head-quartered in India with a heritage of more than 125 years. The group has multi-business, multi-product and multi-location operations, with its foot prints in various countries across the globe.

## India ranks 4th in global gold recycling; recycled 75 tonnes in 2021: WGC



India has emerged as the fourth largest recycler in the world and the country has recycled 75 tonnes in 2021, according to a World Gold Council (WGC) report.

According to the WGC report titled 'Gold refining and recycling', China topped the global gold recycling chart as it recycled 168 tonnes of the yellow metal, followed by Italy in the second position with 80 tonnes and the US at the third rank with 78 tonnes in 2021.

India was ranked fourth in the list as the country recycled 75 tonnes in 2021. According to the WGC report titled 'Gold refining and recycling' from 300 tonnes in 2013, India's gold refining capacity increased by 1,500 tonnes (500 per cent) in 2021. The report further noted that the gold refining landscape in the country has changed over the last decade, with the number of formal operations increasing from less than five in 2013 to 33 in 2021.

## GEECL gets nod for shale gas exploration in Bengal



The West Bengal government on Thursday said it has executed a lease agreement for exploration and mining of shale gas with Great Eastern Energy Corporation Ltd (GEECL).

The agreement, which was signed on Wednesday, will enable mining of shale gas in GEECL's existing coal block at Raniganj area in Paschim Burdwan, the state government said in an official release. It is expected that up to 6.63 TCF (trillion cubic feet) shale gas will be excavated in GEECL's Raniganj block. It will bring in an investment of Rs 15,000 crore, and create further ancillary industries and generate thousands of new jobs for the local youth, the release said.

GEECL MD & CEO Prashant Modi said the company has executed an amendment to its Petroleum Mining Lease (PML), and it will now go ahead with its shale exploration programme.

## AirAsia India retains leadership position in on Time Performance : DGCA Report

MUMBAI: AirAsia India continued its dominance as the most punctual airline in India, as per the On Time Performance data reported by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). In May 2022, the airline topped the charts with 90.8% On Time Performance for four metro airports reported by the DGCA- Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

The airline recently announced the expansion of its network to



Lucknow with direct flights connecting Lucknow to Bengaluru, Delhi, Goa, Kolkata and Mumbai. AirAsia India is also connecting Lucknow to other stations on its network with convenient one-stop itineraries, including Srinagar, Cochin, Hyderabad,

and Guwahati. Speaking about the achievement, Sunil Bhaskaran, MD & CEO, AirAsia India said "Showing best-in-class performance on key parameters like On Time

Performance is an affirmation of the commitment and dedication with which we strive to ensure consistency, efficiency and exemplary service in our operations."

India, AirAsia (India) Private Limited is a joint venture between Tata Sons Private Limited and AirAsia Aviation Group Limited. AirAsia India commenced operations on 12th June 2014 and flies over 50 direct and 100 connecting routes across India.

## Akasa Air takes delivery of first aircraft Boeing 737 MAX



Ace investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-promoted Akasa Air's first aircraft Boeing 737 MAX arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday, bringing it closer to securing the mandatory Air Operator Permit to start operations.

The airline had received the ceremonial keys for the aircraft in Seattle, the US, on June 15, Akasa Air said in a statement.

This is the first delivery out of the 72 Boeing 737 Max planes that Akasa Air placed an order with Boeing last November.

"Akasa Air today, welcomed the arrival of the first of its 72 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, at

the Indira Gandhi International Airport, in the presence of its leadership team," the airline said in the statement.

"The arrival of our first aircraft is a very happy moment for all of us and marks an important milestone, bringing us closer to our vision of building India's greenest, most dependable, and most affordable airline," said Vinay Dube, founder, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Akasa Air.

Akasa Air is a prime example of the progress made by Indian aviation in recent years, he said, adding "this is not just a significant milestone for us and Indian aviation, but it's the story of a new India".

Boeing is proud to partner with Akasa Air as they embark on their journey towards making air travel inclusive and affordable for all, said Boeing India president Salil Gupte.

## India Tourism Development Corporation in collaboration with Ministry of Tourism launches Tourism Awareness Programme

FW DESK  
Mumbai

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, launched Tourism Awareness Programme (T.A.P) for taxi, cab, and coach drivers to offer behavioural & soft skill training. The programme has been



launched under the 'Capac-

The programme aims at drivers' behavioural & soft skills training, with basic knowledge of foreign language

Hotel, New Delhi in the presence of over 200 participants representing the transportation sector. On the occasion, Dr Patra also released the training manual, jointly with Sh. Piyush Tiwari, Director, Commercial & Marketing, and Harsh Bhutani, GM, Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management (AIHTM).

## Main accused in NSE Co-location case arrested

The CBI has arrested Sanjay Gupta, owner and promoter of Delhi based OPG Securities Pvt. Ltd, in connection with the NSE Co-location scam in which brokers allegedly abused the facility to make gains by getting early access to the stock market, officials said on Wednesday.

The agency has already arrested Chitra Ramkrishna,

former CEO and Managing Director of NSE and Anand Subramanian, former Group Operating Officer of the market, they said.

Gupta was arrested here on Tuesday night, four years after the agency had registered the FIR in the Co-location scam case against him and his company.

The recent CBI probe



showed that he allegedly tried to destroy evidence and also bribe SEBI officials investigating the NSE Co-location scam

case, they said.

It is alleged Gupta approached a "syndicate" through which he tried to influence SEBI officials, they said.

The agency was also probing unidentified officials of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Mumbai and other unknown persons.

## Biography of Gautam Adani to release in October

The biography of billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani, Adani Group chairman and founder, will hit the stands in October, announced Penguin Random House (PRH) on Monday.

Written by journalist-author RN Bhaskar, "Gautam Adani: The Man Who Changed India", claims to bring to light, for the first time, the unknown aspects of one of the richest men in the world. It will be released under PRH's 'Hamish' imprint.

At the helm of a business empire that is now India's largest player in ports and renewable energy, the Ahmedabad-based industrialist is currently also leading the country's largest private sector player in sectors such as airports, city gas distribution, power transmission, thermal power, edible oil, and railway lines.

"I met Gautam Adani almost 18 years ago, while the Mundra Port was being built. What I saw then, and what I learnt from my discussions with key Adani group people, was that this port could change the transshipment landscape for the Middle East and India. It



data, storytelling, and hard numbers, giving readers "the story of Gautam Adani that made him the Gautam Adani we know today, making it a one of kind insightful and inspirational read for industry experts, enthusiasts, and even young students and professionals".

What fuels Adani's motivations and vision? What are those episodes, minor and major, that propelled him to make the choices he did that in turn shaped the world we live in today? Or, were there challenges in his life and how did he deal with those? are among the several questions that the book claims to answer.

"Gautam Adani is one of India's most successful first generation business leaders, and I believe there is no book that captures his story and phenomenal rise over the past decades in detail. I am delighted that RN Bhaskar has taken up the task to fill the gap, and use years of research, insight and analysis to tell the story of one of the most intriguing business leaders in the country today," said Milee Ashwarya, publisher, Ebury Publishing and Vintage, PRH.

## Amul MD injured in road accident in Gujarat, stable



R S Sodhi, Managing Director of India's leading dairy cooperative GCMF, which markets its products under Amul brand, sustained minor injuries in a road accident near Anand town in Gujarat on Wednesday night and was admitted to a hospital, police said.

The car in which he was travelling turned turtle after hitting a divider on Anand-Bakrol road at around 9 pm, said Deputy Superintendent of Police B D Jada.

"Due to some unknown reasons, the car driver lost control over the vehicle, which led to the accident. The driver as well as Sodhi were immediately taken to a nearby hospital by the locals. Both are out of danger as they sustained minor injuries," he said.

## ASSOCHAM to organise B2B Meetings with High Level Delegation from SAIF Zone, UAE

KULBIR SINGH KALSI  
Amritsar

The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industries of India (ASSOCHAM), one of the oldest apex chambers in India, is organizing B2B Meetings with a visiting delegation from Sharjah Airport International Free (SAIF) Zone on 21 and 22 June at Hotel Taj Swarna, Amritsar. The agenda of these meetings is to explain the benefits of Free Trade Zones to businesses in Amritsar region and explore newly emerged business and investment opportunities in the UAE.

Amritsar Sagar Mittal, Chairman, ASSOCHAM North Region Development Council & Vice Chairman, International Tractors Ltd, said, "The India-UAE CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) is the first comprehensive bilateral trade agreement in a decade and it will increase the flow of goods, services,



investments, technology & work opportunities for Indian Businesses, bringing strong multiplier benefits across sectors. Agri and Food Products along with textiles is one of the major export items from India to UAE. However, with the CEPA in place, there is a huge scope for other Punjab industries like Readymade Garments, Auto Components, Sports Goods and Equipments etc. also to export to UAE. The aim of these meetings is to apprise the participants on trade and investment opportunities in the UAE, especially in Sharjah Airport International Free (SAIF) Zone."

There is no participation fee to attend these meetings, however pre-registration is mandatory..

## WallMantra aims to become a 100-cr brand by 2025

NEW DELHI: Innovative home decor start-up, WallMantra has seen its turnover go up from Rs 2 crores to Rs 20 crores since lockdown. It now aims to reach the Rs 100-crore mark by 2025. Jitesh Agarwal, CEO of WallMantra, says, "When we started WallMantra in 2017, our goal was to give a trendy decor option - wall decal - at an affordable cost. Last year, our revenue touched Rs 18 crore, which is 10-times more than what we normally make. This has encouraged us to aim higher and reset our goals - we are now aiming to become a 100-crore brand in the next three years." The plan also includes opening two stores in the NCR region and increasing the number of online sellers on their website. WallMantra, founded by Jitesh Agarwal, Shivam Agarwal, and Kundan Lal, manufactures and sells an elegant collection of wall decals, wall paintings, mirrors, smart furniture, curtains, bedsheets, and other home decor items. Mr Agarwal, said, "We are currently looking for funding and we require around US \$2-million dollar (which is around Rs 15-crore)."

# HDFC Life Declares Bonus of Rs. 2465 cr

HDFC Life has declared its highest ever bonus on its participating plans. The bonus of Rs. 2465 cr. was announced in the Company's Board meeting held in April 2022. 5.87 lakh policyholders are eligible for this bonus.

Out of the total amount of Rs. 2465 cr., Rs. 1,803 cr. will be payable in this financial year, as bonus on maturing policies or as cash bonuses. The remaining bonus amount would be payable in the future as and when policies cease to exist on account of maturity, death or surrender.

Vibha Padalkar, MD & CEO, HDFC Life, said, "We are pleased to announce market competitive bonus payouts year after year. It is our way of exceeding the expectations of our policyholders who strongly believe in financially securing themselves and their loved ones and have entrusted us with their hard-earned money. We stay committed to uphold the trust they have placed in us. It is our promise to keep delivering value to all."



pany Limited ('HDFC Life' / Company) is a joint venture between HDFC Ltd., India's leading housing finance institution and abrdn (Mauritius Holdings) 2006 Limited, a global investment company.

Established in 2000, HDFC Life is a leading listed, long-term life insurance solutions provider in India, offering a range of individual and group insurance solutions that meet various customer needs such as Protection, Pension, Savings, Investment, Annuity and Health. As on March 31, 2022, the Company

had 39 individual and 13 group products in its portfolio, along with 7 optional rider benefits, catering to a diverse range of customer needs.

HDFC Life continues to benefit from its increased presence across the country having a wide reach with 372 branches and additional distribution touchpoints through several new tie-ups and partnerships. HDFC Life has nearly 300 partnerships, comprising traditional partners such as NBFCs, MFIs and SFBs, and including new-ecosystem partners.

# DBS Bank India acquires 9.9% stake in Svakarma Finance

DBS Bank India Limited today announced that it has acquired a 9.9% stake in Svakarma Finance, a non-banking finance company, for delivering relevant financial solutions to micro enterprises through a combination of direct lending and co-lending.

DBS Bank India's strategy for its expanded franchise across 300+ locations and 500+ branches envisages significant growth in SME and consumer businesses. DBS will continue to identify opportunities to support lending to micro enterprises in a cost-efficient manner through its own expanded franchise as well as through partners.

Svakarma is a non-deposit taking NBFC, set up by seasoned ex-bankers to target micro-enterprises using an industry segment and cluster focused delivery model leveraging smart technology and data. Currently present across Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu, Svakarma is looking to expand its network across the country. Svakarma's vision is to democratise access to capital



and knowledge to empower entrepreneurs by giving them access to credit, while building a high impact and profitable lending platform for MSMEs.

BS is a leading financial services group in Asia with 18 markets. Recognised for its global leadership, DBS has been named 'World's Best Bank' by Euromoney, 'Global Banks of the Year' by The Banker and 'Best Bank in the World' by Global Finance. The bank is at the forefront of leveraging digital technology to shape the future of banking, having been named 'World's Best Digital Bank' by Euromoney and the

world's 'Most Innovative in Digital Banking' by The Banker. In addition, DBS has been accorded the 'Safest Bank in Asia' award by Global Finance for 13 consecutive years from 2009 to 2021. DBS was also ranked No. 1 on Forbes' list of the World's Best Banks in India for two consecutive years.

DBS Bank has been present in India for 28 years, opening its first office in Mumbai in 1994. DBS Bank India Limited is among the first foreign banks in India to start operating as a wholly owned, locally incorporated subsidiary of a leading global bank. DBS provides an entire

range of banking services for large, medium and small enterprises and individual consumers in India. In 2016, DBS launched India's first mobile-only bank, digibank, with -1 million savings accounts. In November 2020, Lakshmi Vilas Bank was amalgamated with DBS Bank India Limited. The bank now has a network of over 500 branches across 19 states in India.

DBS provides a full range of consumer, SME, and corporate banking services. As a bank born and bred in Asia, DBS understands the intricacies of doing business in the region's most dynamic markets. DBS is committed to building lasting relationships with customers, as it banks the Asian way. Through the DBS Foundation, the bank creates impact beyond banking by supporting social enterprises: businesses with a double bottom-line of profit and social and/or environmental impact. DBS Foundation also gives back to society in various ways, including equipping communities with future-ready skills and building food resilience.

## Mutual funds can resume investing in international stocks: SEBI



Capital markets regulator Sebi has permitted mutual funds to again invest in foreign stocks within the aggregate mandated limit of USD 7 billion for the industry.

This came in the wake of a major correction in global markets that brought down the valuation of international stocks. In January, Sebi had asked mutual fund houses to stop taking fresh subscriptions in schemes investing in overseas stocks. The directive to stop subscription was mainly on account of the mutual fund industry crossing the mandated limit of USD 7 billion for overseas investments.

The recent meltdown in global stocks reduced the cumulative value of investments made by all the mutual fund houses together.

"Mutual fund schemes may resume subscriptions and make investments in overseas funds/securities up to the headroom available without breaching the overseas investment limits as of end-of-day of February 1, 2022, at the mutual fund level," Sebi said in a communication sent to Amfi on Friday.

Also, the regulator has asked Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) to ensure that the total utilisation of the overseas limit by each AMC or mutual fund remains capped at the February level. The regulator's approval came after Amfi made a request to Sebi for reviewing investment in overseas securities by mutual funds.

Meanwhile, Edelweiss Mutual Fund announced that it will be accepting inflows in its international schemes from Tuesday.

## Dalai Lama donates Rs 10 lakh for flood relief in Assam



Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has donated Rs 10 lakh to support flood relief work in Assam and expressed grief over the hardship caused to people due to the calamity.

In a letter to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, he said he appreciates that the agencies concerned are doing everything to rescue those affected and provide them with relief.

"As a mark of my solidarity with the people of Assam, I am donating Rs 10,00,000 from the Gaden Phodrang Trust of the Dalai Lama to support these agencies," the letter read.

The flooding has led to extensive loss of life and property, and displacement of millions of people over the last week, the Tibetan spiritual guru said adding that it is most unfortunate that monsoon rains in Assam and other parts of the country wreak havoc year after year.

"I would like to express my sadness about the hardship caused to so many people in your state due to the recent floods. I offer my deep condolences to you, to the families who have lost loved ones, and to everyone affected by the flooding," he said in the letter to the chief minister.

Thanking him, Sarma tweeted: "Assam is humbly feeling blessed at His Holiness @DalaiLama expressing concerns at ravaging floods in Assam and hardships it is causing. He has graciously sent his blessings."

## India needs \$223 bn to meet 2030 renewable capacity goals: Report

India will need USD 223 billion of investment to meet its goal of wind and solar capacity installations by 2030, according to a new report by research company BloombergNEF (BNEF).

The government has set a target of increasing non-fossil power capacity to 500 GW by 2030. It wants non-fossil fuel power sources to provide half of its electricity supply by 2030.

"To achieve this target, India needs to massively scale up funding for renewables," the report said, adding that USD 223 billion is required over the next eight years just to meet the solar and wind capacity targets.

At COP26 in November 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India plans to reduce emission intensity by more



than 45 per cent by 2030 to below 2005 levels. He also announced a net-zero by 2070 target.

The report 'Financing India's 2030 Renewables Ambition', published in association with the Power Foundation of India, found that corporate commitments from Indian companies could help India achieve 86 per cent of its 2030 goals of building

500GW of cumulative non-fossil power generation capacity, a statement issued by BNEF said.

By 2021, 165 GW of zero-carbon generation had already been installed in the country. Central Electricity Authority forecasts that the country's reliance on coal to drop from 53 per cent of installed capacity in 2021 to 33 per cent in 2030, whereas solar and wind

together make up 51 per cent by then, up from 23 per cent in 2021.

Shantanu Jaiswal, lead author of the report and head of India research at BloombergNEF, said: "To date, the growth of renewable energy in India has been funded by a diverse set of financiers. Debt and equity structures have evolved as the market grew and new risks emerged. India's ambitious renewable energy targets now require further scaling up of financing with new instruments and learnings from other global markets". Yet, the scaling up of renewables in India faces regulatory, project and financing risks, with PPA renegotiation, land acquisition and payment delays cited as key risks by industry stakeholders surveyed by BloombergNEF.

## IMF team holds talks with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Monday held talks with a visiting IMF team on an economic programme that could be supported by the global lender's lending arrangement for the cash-starved government which is seeking to find USD 6 billion to keep the country afloat for the next six months.

Earlier this month, Wickremesinghe, who is also the finance minister, held talks virtually with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva as Sri Lanka has decided to seek the assistance of the Washington-based global lender to combat the worst economic crisis since its independence from Britain in 1948. The talks between Sri Lanka and the IMF commenced on April



18. The Prime Minister's Office said the IMF team is in Sri Lanka to continue in-person discussions with the Sri Lankan authorities to reach a staff-level agreement. The future course of the action on borrowing will depend on the conclusion of agreements between Sri Lanka and the IMF staff level, and the delegation will stay in Sri Lanka for about a week to hold discussions, the Prime Minister's Office said.

## Rupee settles at all-time low of 78.33 against US dollar

The rupee on Friday slipped 1 paisa to close at its all-time low of 78.33 (provisional) against the US dollar.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 78.20 and finally settled at its all-time low of 78.33, down 1 paisa from its previous close. During the day, the local unit witnessed an intra-day high of 78.19 and a low of 78.35 against the American currency. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 78.32 against the US dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.25 % to 104.17.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.13 per cent to USD 111.29 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 462.26 points or 0.88 per cent higher



at 52,727.98, while the broader NSE Nifty gained 142.60 points or 0.92 per cent to 15,699.25. Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers in the capital market on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,319.06 crore, as per stock exchange data.

Meanwhile, Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael D Patra on Friday said the Central Bank will not allow "jerky movements" of the rupee and stressed that the Indian currency has witnessed the least depreciation in recent times.

## Adani commits Rs 60,000 cr to charity

Asia's richest man Gautam Adani and his family have pledged to donate Rs 60,000 crore to charity to mark his 60th birthday.

Donations to be utilized in healthcare, education, and skill development, his logistics-to-energy conglomerate said in a statement. The donation will be managed by the Adani Foundation. Adani, a first-generation entrepreneur who turned a small agri-trading firm into a conglomerate spanning coal trading and mining, ports and airports, power generation, gas distribution, green energy, data centre and cement, turns 60 on Friday.

The money pledged for charity is just over 8 per cent of Adani's USD 92 billion wealth. "On the year of the centenary birth anniversary of Gautam Adani's father Shantilal Adani, and Gautam Adani's own 60th birthday, the Adani Family has committed a donation of Rs 60,000 crore to a range of social causes," the statement said. This is one of the largest charitable donations in Indian



corporate history and joins the ranks of global billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg and Warren Buffett. Wipro's Azim Premji and mining mogul Anil Agarwal have committed a large part of their wealth to philanthropy.

"To utilize the potential of India's demographic advantage, there is an ever-growing need to focus on the areas of healthcare, education, and skill development," the statement said. "The Adani Foundation has gained rich experience in working with communities focused on integrated development efforts across all these areas."

Addressing these challenges can significantly enhance the competence and competitiveness of our future workforce.

"In addition to being the 100th birth anniversary of my inspiring father, this year also happens to be the year of my 60th birthday and therefore the family decided to contribute Rs 60,000 crores towards charitable activities related to healthcare, education, and skill development, especially in the rural regions of our nation," Adani said. "At a very fundamental level, programs related to all these three areas should be seen holistically and they collectively form the drivers to build an equitable and future-ready India. Our experience in large project planning and execution and the learnings from the work done by the Adani Foundation will help us uniquely accelerate these programs."

## Fixed Deposits: Several Private Banks hike interest rates

Several Banks have over the past two weeks increased their fixed deposit interest rates across tenures and on different amounts of deposits. This is a contagion effect of the Reserve Bank of India raising its repo rates by 50 basis points during their bi monthly monetary policy committee meet earlier this month, to tame rising inflation across the country. Several public and private sector bank fixed deposit interest rates have been hiked following this. For example, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Bank of India FD rates have been increased over the past two weeks. HDFC Bank FD interest rates have been increased twice within a week. Some of them are mentioned here.



## Tube Investments soars as Motilal Oswal Financial slaps 'buy' tag on company after starting coverage

Shares of Tube Investment rose sharply on June 24 after Motilal Oswal Financial Services initiated coverage on the stock with a 'buy' rating and set a price target of Rs 1,900, implying an upside of 25 per cent over the next 12 months.

"Tube Investments offers diversified revenue streams, with strong growth in the core business, ramp-up in CG Power and optionality of new businesses incubated under TI-2 strategy," the brokerage said in a note on June 24. It believes that the new strategy of the company could be a trigger for rerating in the future as the company looks to reinvest its cash flows to seed new platforms for long term growth and acquire stressed assets. At the same time, the company's existing business in engineering, metal formed products, cycles and others will continue to be the bedrock of the new strategy. Tube Investments wants to drive 25 percent annualised growth in net profit over the coming years. Overall, Motilal Oswal Financial Services expects revenues to grow 15 % on an annual basis for the next three years. Further, the brokerage sees net profit growing at an annual rate of 20 % over the coming three years.



## J&K govt orders premature retirement of nine employees

Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday ordered premature retirement of nine government employees, including five officers, in "public interest", an official said. They have been sacked under 226(2) Article of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations which allows the administration to retire government employees at any time after completing 22 years of service or attaining the age of 48 years, the official said. All the employees belong to the housing and urban development department. The article is essentially invoked to remove dead wood from the government services under which the employees can be retired after being given three months' notice or three months of pay and allowance in lieu of the notice, the official added.

## Gold declines by Rs 70, silver falls Rs 621



Gold prices declined by Rs 70 to Rs 50,557 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 50,627 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also declined by Rs 621 to Rs 59,077 per kg from Rs 59,698 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi fell by Rs 70 reflecting overnight fall in COMEX gold prices," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,828 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 20.97 per ounce. Spot gold prices were up 0.33 per cent at COMEX, Patel added.

## Union Bank Completes Integration of All Branches of Corporation Bank with Itself



Union Bank of India has completed the IT integration after which all the branches of erstwhile Corporation Bank have come fully under its fold as part of the amalgamation exercise, the bank said on Wednesday. With this IT integration, all of erstwhile Corporation Bank, including service and specialised branches, have been fully integrated with Union Bank of India (UBI), it said in a release.

All customers of erstwhile Corporation Bank have been successfully migrated to core banking solution (CBS) of

Union Bank of India in a record time, it said. Along with this feat, the bank has successfully rolled out internet banking, mobile banking, UPI, IMPS, FI gateway, treasury and Swift for erstwhile Corporation Bank customers thereby enabling them to transact seamlessly across branches and delivery channels of UBI.

Earlier, the bank migrated ATM switch and ATM terminals smoothly into UBI network. Union Bank of India said the entire migration has been completed at a record time with least

inconvenience to customers, without effecting any change in their account numbers, debit cards or net banking credentials.

The entire migration has been executed in association with Infosys, EY, and BCG. The bank has already accomplished administrative amalgamation process with roll-out of new organisation structure, harmonised products and processes.

"We are delighted to achieve complete integration of all e-CB branches, and delivery channels. It opens huge opportunity for our customers and enhances our capability to offer innovative products and services," said Rajkiran Rai G, managing director and chief executive officer of Union Bank of India. According to the plan, in the next phase, all branches of e-Andhra Bank shall also migrate to Finacle 10 well within the current financial year, he added.

The amalgamation of Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank into Union Bank came into effect from April 1 this year.

## Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23 opens for subscription, issue price set at Rs 5,091 per gram for first tranche

The first tranche of Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) scheme for the current financial year opened for subscription today, June 20. The issue price of gold has been fixed at Rs 5,091 per gram.

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23 - Series I will be open till June 24, 2022. Investors applying online and paying online get a discount of Rs 50 per gram. The issue price for such investors would be Rs 5,041 per gram. The issue date will be 28 June 2022.

"The nominal value of the bond is based on the simple average closing price for gold of 999 purity of the last three business days of the week preceding the subscription period, works out to Rs 5,091 per gram of gold," the Reserve Bank of India said.

According to the official release, the tenure of the SGB will be for eight years, with an option for premature redemption after the 5th year, the date on which interest will be payable.



The minimum allowable investment would be 1 gram of gold. The investors will also be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 per cent per annum, payable half-yearly on the nominal value.

Interested buyers can pay either through cash (up to a maximum of Rs 20,000), demand draft, check or electronic banking. After issuance, a holding certificate will be issued for the same, which is eligible for conversion in Demat form.

Bonds will be sold through Nationalised Banks, Scheduled Private Banks, Post Offices, Scheduled Foreign Banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited and authorized Stock Exchanges either directly or through their agents.

# BRICS summit held in Beijing on June 23

The 14th summit of BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - held in Beijing on June 23 via video link, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Friday. China is this year's chair of the BRICS grouping.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will chair the summit. The theme of the summit is "Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Russian President Vladimir Putin and leaders of Brazil and South Africa will take part in the summit.

Also, BRICS leaders and countries will attend the High-level Dialogue on Global Development in Beijing on



June 24 to be hosted by Xi. Earlier this week, BRICS NSAs held an in-depth

exchange of views and reached a consensus on issues such as strengthening multilateralism

and global governance and responding to new threats and challenges to national security. The 12th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisers and High Representatives on National Security was held via video link.

**BRICS SUMMIT**  
The theme of this year's BRICS summit is 'Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development'

The 13th BRICS summit was held under India's chairship in September 2021. It was the third time that India hosted the BRICS summit after 2012 and 2016.

# Cash-strapped Pak secures deal with IMF to restore stalled USD 6 bn aid

Cash-strapped Pakistan has secured a deal with the International Monetary Fund to restore the stalled USD 6 billion assistance package and unlock doors for financing from other international sources, according to a media report on Wednesday.

The make or break deal was reached on Tuesday night following the IMF staff mission and the Pakistani team, led by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, agreeing on an understanding on the 2022-23 budget after the authorities committed to generate Rs 43,600 crore more taxes and increase petroleum levy gradually up to Rs 50 per litre, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The extended fund facility package of USD 6 billion was agreed in July 2019 for a period of 39 months. So far only half of the promised money has been reimbursed. The revival of the facility will immediately provide access to USD 1 billion, which Pakistan badly needs to buttress its dwindling foreign exchange reserves. The IMF mission will finalise monetary targets with the State Bank over the next couple of days and, in the meantime, share the draft of a Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policy (MEFP).

The MEFP would also contain certain prior actions that would be necessary for implementation before the IMF board takes up Pakistan's case for approval and the subsequent disbursement of



about USD 1 billion next month. We have now locked the budget in consultation with the IMF, Finance Minister Ismail told journalists, adding that all budget-related issues have been settled with the Fund. Citing top government sources, the report said that to win over the global lender, the Pakistani side agreed to start charging on all petroleum products a petroleum development levy which will be gradually increased by Rs 5 per month to reach a maximum of Rs 50.

In yet another retreat, the government also agreed to impose 1 per cent poverty tax on firms earning Rs 15 crore, 2 per cent on those earning Rs 20 crore, 3 per cent on over Rs 25 crore and 4 per cent on Rs 30 crore and above. In the original budget, the government had set a 2 per cent poverty tax only on those earning Rs 30 crore and above.

The sources said the IMF team will now finalise targets for net international reserves and net domestic assets, but everything on part of the agreement had been

settled. The IMF team would share its draft MEFP with the government on Friday.

The coalition government led by Shehbaz Sharif has agreed to revise upward the annual tax collection target by almost Rs 42,200 cr for the year 2022-23 by taking additional tax measures, in a bid to placate the technical team of the IMF. We have taken tangible additional tax measures without adding to the tax burden of the poor, the report quoted well-placed sources in the finance ministry. The additional tax measures will be announced in the final budget speech by the finance minister.

Although the government shied away from unpopular tax measures for fear of political backlash in its first budget and pinned its hopes on achieving maximum revenue from higher than expected inflation and economic growth, the low revenue target did not go down well with the IMF, which asked Islamabad to take additional measures to make the revenue collection target more realistic.

## China says midcourse missile interception test a success

China says it has successfully conducted a midcourse missile interception test, a move that could advance its ability to withstand foreign intervention as it presses its territorial claims.

A brief statement from the Defence Ministry late Sunday gave no details, but said the test was purely defensive in nature and was not aimed at any foreign nations. Missiles are a major component of China's defence and are the backbone of its space programme that has launched astronauts and components to the nation's orbiting space station. The interception test



comes as China has been escalating threats against the self-governing island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory to be annexed by military force if necessary.

## Iran hangs man convicted of killing clerics in April attack

Iran on Monday morning hanged a man convicted of killing two clerics in a stabbing attack in April at a revered Shiite shrine, the country's state television reported.

The report says the death penalty was carried out by hanging after the country's Supreme Court upheld a verdict issued earlier by a Revolutionary Court in northeastern city of Mashhad, the place of the attack.

The convicted man was identified as Abdollatif Moradi and authorities said he had stabbed three clerics. Two



died, one instantly, the other later in a hospital. No further details were available following the attack at the city's Imam Reza shrine, a rare act of violence at the major pilgrimage site for Shiite Muslims.

However, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency said Moradi was an Uzbek national who had entered Iran illegally through Pakistan a year ago.

The police have not offered a motive for the stabbing. The country's interior minister, Ahmad Vahidi, at the time described it as a terrorist attack and vowed Iran would pursue the perpetrators and all "takfiris, a term used for Sunni extremists who consider other Muslims infidels.

Four other suspects were arrested on charges of collaboration in the attack

## UK PM Boris Johnson calls for compromise to end major rail strike

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday called for a sensible compromise on the pay demands by workers' unions that have resulted in the UK's worst rail strike in 30 years, with a majority of the staff walking out to cripple the networks.

Just one in five trains are expected to run on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday when workers are on strike, with services across England, Wales and Scotland being affected from Monday evening. Passengers have been urged to travel by train only if necessary.

"Too high demands on pay will also make it incredibly difficult to bring to an end the current challenges facing families around the world with rising costs of living," said Johnson, ahead of a Cabinet meeting at Downing Street.

US Navy, Iran have tense encounter in Strait of Hormuz



The US Navy said Tuesday its forces had a tense encounter with Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet said three Guard vessels had an unsafe and unprofessional encounter as the USS Sirocco and USNS Chocoma County transited Monday through the strait, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf.

The Navy said one of three of the Guard fast crafts raced head-on at the Sirocco before changing course. The Navy said the Sirocco fired a warning flare during the encounter as well.

## No nukes? Ukraine-Russian war will shape world's arsenals



The headlines on the newsstands in Seoul blared fresh warnings of a possible nuclear test by North Korea.

Out on the sidewalks, 28-year-old office worker Lee Jae Sang already had an opinion about how to respond to North Korea's fast-growing capacity to lob nuclear bombs across borders and oceans.

Our country should also develop a nuclear programme. And prepare for a possible nuclear war," said Lee, voicing a desire that a February poll showed was shared by 3 out of 4 South Koreans.

It's a point that people and politicians of non-nuclear pow-

ers globally are raising more often, at what has become a destabilising moment in more than a half-century of global nuclear nonproliferation efforts, one aggravated by the daily example of nuclear Russia tearing apart non-nuclear Ukraine.

That reconsideration by non-nuclear states is playing out in Asia. The region is home to an ever-more assertive North Korea, China, Russia and Iran three nuclear powers and one near-nuclear power but is unprotected by the kind of nuclear umbrella and broad defense alliance that for decades has shielded NATO countries.

## Syrian plane lands in base after Damascus airport attack

A flight by private Syrian airline Cham Wings landed on Tuesday at an airport used by Russia's military in the coastal province of Latakia in western Syria, the country's state news agency reported.

The flight from the city of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates was the first to land in at the airbase since Damascus airport was damaged by an Israeli airstrike earlier this month.

It is also the first Syrian



international flight to land at the facility since Russia took it over after joining the war in Syria in September 2015, helping tip the balance of power in favor of Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

## World Sikh Organization of Canada raking up issues against India

FW DESK

The World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) which came into being in the 1980s on the plank of 'Khalistan', over the years set its footprint as a human-rights champion while following the agenda of yesteryears.

It started roping in educated and talented youth into its fold that has now penetrated into the entire system of the governance of Canada, sources said. Despite some decrease in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Cabinet, the organisation has increased its grip over various arms of the government. The Organization's primary agenda is raking issues against India.

## SGPC jatha departs for Pakistan to attend anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh amid resonance of Jaikaras

AMRITSAR: The Jatha (group) of Sikh pilgrims of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) today departed for Pakistan amid resonance of Khalsa's jaikaras (Bole So Nihal Sat Sri Akal), to attend congregations regarding death anniversary of Sher-E-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The leadership of this jatha going to Pakistan has been entrusted upon SGPC member Gurmeet Singh Booh while another member Mithu Singh Kahneke will be its deputy leader. Before departure of the Jatha from SGPC headquarters, following the tradition, the leaders were honoured with Siropaos (robes of honour) by SGPC secretary Partap Singh, assistant secretary media Kulwinder Singh Ramdas and other officials.

Speaking on this occasion, SGPC secretary Partap Singh said that the SGPC had sent applications of 277 pilgrims for visas, of which, the visas of 266 pilgrims were approved



and received. Meanwhile, Sikh jatha leader Gurmeet Singh Booh said that he got

the fortunate opportunity to lead the jatha with the Guru's blessing.

ligent and fully conversant in using advanced technology, the second layer is currently the brain behind innovative ideas. They make use of all available resources, in addition to creating additional resources, to achieve their agenda. Educated activists and elected representatives like Balpreet Bal, Balpreet Boparai, Jaspal Singh Bal aka Amanpreet Bal, Jas Sandhu, politicians and those who holding high positions in the government and corporations form the third layer. This layer is perhaps plays the most effective role by participating in debates, creating lobbies, indoctrinating, coordinating with groups/organisations/people of their interests.

## SGPC to manage airfare for Sikhs coming to India from Afghanistan



Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Advocate Harjinder Singh while announcing support for the Afghan Sikhs said on Tuesday that due to the present situation, the air tickets of those Sikhs who want to come to India from Afghanistan will be managed by the SGPC.

Harjinder Singh also appealed to the Government of India to immediately give permission to safely bring the Sikhs living in Afghanistan to India, so that they can come out of the atmosphere of fear. He said that the Sikhs living in Afghanistan do not need to be frightened and for those, who could not afford the transportation expense to come to India, the Sikh body SGPC will extend all possible support.

## PM to visit Germany, UAE from June 26-28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a three-day visit to Germany and the United Arab Emirates beginning Sunday.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Modi will visit Germany from June 26 to June 27 to attend the G7 summit.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Schloss Elmau, Germany at the invitation of Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz, for the G7 Summit under the German Presidency on June 26 and 27," the MEA said in a statement on Wednesday.

## Pak's Punjab province decides to impose 'emergency' due to rising rape cases



Authorities in Pakistan's Punjab province have decided to declare an "emergency" following a spike in cases of sexual abuse against women and children, the media reported on Monday.

Punjab Home Minister Atta Tarar on Sunday said the administration was forced to "declare an emergency to deal with rape cases".

The minister said the rapid increase in cases of sexual abuse against women and children in the province was a serious issue for the society and government officials.

"Four to five cases of rape are being reported daily in Punjab due to which the government is considering special measures to deal with cases of sexual harassment, abuse and coercion, the Dawn newspaper quoted the provincial minister as saying in a press conference at the Pakistan

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) headquarters.

The minister, in the presence of Law Minister Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, stressed that all cases will be reviewed by the Cabinet Committee on Rape and Law and Order, and that civil society, women rights organisations, teachers, and attorneys will also be consulted to keep a check on such incidents.

Tarar also urged parents to teach their children about the importance of safety and that youngsters should not be left alone in their homes without supervision.

Tarar stated that the accused in a number of cases had been detained, the government had launched an anti-rape campaign, and that students would be sensitised about sexual harassment in schools.

## ONGC Videsh announces new discovery in Colombia



ONGC Videsh Limited, the wholly owned subsidiary and overseas arm of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC), the National Oil Company of India, has made an oil discovery in the recently drilled well, Urraca-IX, in CPO-5 block, Llanos Basin, Colombia. Well, Urraca-IX was spudded on 20th April 2022 and drilled to target depth (TD) of 10956 ft, encountering 17 ft thick oil-bearing sands at a depth from 10201ft -10218 ft. During initial testing with Electrical Submersible Pump (ESP), fluid flowed @ approx. 600 bbl./day with around 40-50% W/C and oil of 16°API. Oil discovery in the Lower Mirador play in this well opens up new areas for further exploration in the northern part of the block.

ONGC Videsh has earlier discovered commercial oil in the Lower Sand pay in Mariposa and Indico fields in the block in 2017 and 2018 respectively, which are currently commercially producing @ 20,000 bbl oil per day. Block CPO-5 was awarded to ONGC Videsh Limited in the 2008 bid round of Colombia. ONGC Videsh holds 70% participating interest (PI) in the block along with operatorship, remaining 30% is held by partner Geopark. ONGC Videsh has a significant presence in oil & gas sector in Colombia, with three other exploratory blocks in the country and joint ownership of the oil producing company Mansarovar Energy Colombia Ltd (MECL). Oil discovery in a new play in the block with the well Urraca-IX, reiterates the technical and operational prowess of ONGC Videsh and adds one more feather in its cap towards the extensive Exploration and Drilling campaign in Colombia.

## 20 Indian fishermen jailed in Pakistan for five years released

Pakistan in a goodwill gesture on Sunday released 20 Indian fishermen who have been languishing in a jail here for the last five years for allegedly fishing illegally in the country's waters.

The twenty fishermen were lodged at Malir district jail in the Landhi area of Karachi. They were sent to Lahore on their way to the Wagah border where they will be handed over to the Indian authorities.

Jail superintendent Muhammad Irshad said the fishermen were released on the order of the federal government.

## Australian leader refuses to publicly intervene on Assange

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday rejected calls for him to publicly demand the US drop its prosecution of WikiLeaks founder and Australian citizen Julian Assange.

The Australian government has been under mounting pressure to intervene since the British government last week ordered Assange's extradition to the US on spying charges.

Assange's supporters and lawyers say his actions were protected by the US Constitution. Albanese, who came to power at elections a month ago, declined to say whether he had spoken to President Joe Biden about the case.

There are some people who think that if you put things



in capital letters on Twitter and put an exclamation mark, that somehow makes it more important. It doesn't, Albanese told reporters. I intend to lead a government that engages diplomatically and appropriately with our partners, Albanese added.

Attorney General Mark

Dreyfus and Foreign Minister Penny Wong responded to the British government's decision by saying Assange's case has dragged on for too long and ... should be brought to a close . They said they would continue to express that view to the UK and US governments, but their joint statement fell short of calling for the US to drop the case.

Assange supporters calling for Australian government intervention include his wife Stella Assange. The Australian government can and should be speaking to its closest ally to bring this matter to a close, she told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Bob Carr, who was foreign minister when Albanese's centre-left Labour Party was

last in power in 2012 and 2013, wrote in an opinion piece in The Sydney Morning Herald on Monday that an Australian request to drop Assange's prosecution was small change in Australia's defense alliance with the US.

American prosecutors say Assange helped US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk. Carr noted that Manning's sentence was commuted in 2017. It looks like one rule for Americans, another for citizens of its ally, Carr wrote.

Carr told ABC that Assange going on trial in the US would ignite anti-Americanism in Australia in a way we haven't seen .

# Ajay Devgn-starrer 'DRISHYAM 2' books November release

Actors Ajay Devgn, Akshaye Khanna and Tabu-starrer "Drishyam 2" is set to release theatrically on November 18, the makers announced on Tuesday.

Directed by Abhishek Pathak, the film is a sequel to the 2015 crime thriller "Drishyam", a Hindi remake of the Mohanlal-starrer Malayalam movie of the same name. The sequel to the Malayalam film released in February last year.

The story centres on a family of four whose lives turn upside down following an unfortunate incident that happens to their older daughter.

Devgn will be seen reprising his role of Vijay Salgaonkar in the sequel. "Indian cinema's much-celebrated character Vijay Salgaonkar is all set to take us on yet another thrilling journey this year on 18th November. Promising to take it notches higher in thrill, drama and excitement,



this sequel will take Vijay and his family's story beyond imagination," a note from the makers read.

The sequel also features Shriya Saran, Rajat Kapoor, and Ishita Dutta. The team will wrap the shoot in Hyderabad on Tuesday. "Drishyam 2" is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Kumar Mangat Pathak, Abhishek Pathak, Krishan Kumar and co-produced by Sanjeev Joshi, Aditya Chowksey and Shiv Chanana.

The film is presented by Viacom18 Studios, T-Series and Panorama Studios. The first part of Hindi "Drishyam" was directed by late filmmaker Nishikant Kamat.

## LISA STHALEKAR becomes first woman president of FICA



Legendary Australian cricketer Lisa Sthalekar has become the first woman president of the Federation of International Cricketers' Association (FICA).

The 42-year-old former Australia captain was confirmed in the role at the FICA Executive Committee meeting held in Nyon, Switzerland.

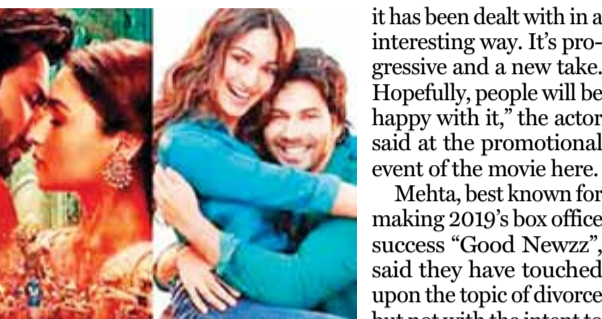
She will take up a position that has previously been held by former South Africa batter Barry Richards, former West Indies all-rounder Jimmy Adams, and most recently by former England batter Vikram Solanki.

"Lisa Sthalekar has been confirmed as FICA's President at the FICA Executive Committee meeting held in Nyon, Switzerland this week," the FICA said in a statement.

## 'Jugjugg Jeeyo' a progressive take on infidelity, divorce: Varun Dhawan

Actor Varun Dhawan says his upcoming family entertainer "Jugjugg Jeeyo" presents a fresh take on infidelity and divorce.

Backed by Dharma Productions, the comedy drama centres on a family where both father and son are planning to divorce their partners.



The film, directed by Raj Mehta, also features veteran actors Neetu Kapoor and Anil Kapoor as well as Kiara Advani, Manish Paul and Prajakta Koli.

Varun said the film may be loaded with all the tropes of a commercial potboiler, but at its core it is an emotional story about relationships.

"The end of this film is unpredictable. We are used to dealing with the theme of infidelity on a surface level and then brush it under the carpet. In this film, it has been dealt with in an interesting way. It's progressive and a new take. Hopefully, people will be happy with it," the actor said at the promotional event of the movie here.

Mehta, best known for making 2019's box office success "Good Newzz", said they have touched upon the topic of divorce but not with the intent to give any solutions.

"We haven't tried to give any answers but have presented it in an entertaining way. Hopefully, these characters will lead audiences to some answers," he added.

## Don't like idea of speaking in a language I'm not comfortable with: Pankaj Tripathi

Actor Pankaj Tripathi says he doesn't like the idea of working in a movie or a show made in a language he is not "comfortable with".

Tripathi, the versatile star of films such as "Stree", "Gurgaon", "Ludo" and web series "Mirzapur", said he is also not in favour of his voice being dubbed by another actor.

"I don't like the idea of speaking in a language I am not comfortable with in any film or web series. I'm not in favour of my dialogues being mouthed by someone else. My acting and expressions are complemented by my voice. Otherwise my role is incomplete," the 45-year-old told PTI. Asked whether he would ever star in a Bengali movie, Tripathi said he has an understanding of the Bengali language but that is not sufficient.

## Rishabh is very big and integral part of our plan in next few months: Dravid

India head coach Rahul Dravid has made it clear that the under-fire Rishabh Pant is a "big" and "integral" part of the set-up heading into the T20 World Cup in Australia.

Pant, who led the side in the five-match series against South Africa that ended in a 2-2 draw after the last game was called off due to rain, managed only 58 runs in the five innings that led to some questions being raised about his place in the shortest format.

However, Dravid was very clear that Pant is going nowhere.

He won't judge someone based on one series — whether it is batting form or captaincy.

"I just don't want to be critical. In the middle overs, you need people to play slightly attacking brand of cricket, to take the game on a little more. Sometimes it's very hard to judge it based on two or three games," the head coach said.

In fact, Dravid was impressed with Pant's strike-rate of 158 plus during the IPL where he managed an underwhelming 340 runs for the Delhi Capitals.

## Perrie Edwards, soccer star Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain are engaged

Little Mix singer Perrie Edwards and soccer player Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain are engaged and will soon tie the knot.

Edwards, 28, announced their engagement in an Instagram post over the weekend.

"Last night the love of my life got down on one knee and I said YES!" the singer captioned a series of photographs from the special moment.

The engagement comes almost a year after the couple welcomed their first child, son Axel.

Edwards and Oxlade-Chamberlain, 28, first began dating in 2016, but made their relationship public a year later.

## Karthik opens up lot of options going into World T20: Dravid

Dinesh Karthik as an "enforcer" opens up a lot of options going into the T20 World Cup, says India head coach Rahul Dravid, who wants to identify a core group of 18-20 players by the end of England series.

For Dravid, to be a part of the World T20 set-up, it won't be enough to just "knock the door". Anyone who wants to stake a claim in that squad of 15 will need to "bang it down".

"It was really nice to see Karthik come off and do what he has been picked to do. That was good and it opens up a lot more options for us, going forward," Dravid said after the five-match series against South Africa ended in a 2-2 draw.

The last game was abandoned due to rain. "He was picked for what he has been doing exceptionally well for the last two or three years (in IPL) and kind of indicated in the sense that it almost came together in the game at Rajkot," Dravid spoke about the Tamil Nadu dasher's 27-ball-55 that was crucial in India restoring parity in the series.

## Filmmaker Paul Haggis detained in Italy in sex assault case

Film director Paul Haggis was detained for investigation of allegations that he sexually assaulted a woman in southern Italy, Italian news media said, quoting local prosecutors.

The Canadian-born, Oscar-winning Haggis, 69, has been in Italy for a film festival that begins on Tuesday in Ostuni, a tourist town in Puglia, the region that forms the heel of the Italian peninsula.

The news agency LaPresse and several other Italian media carried a written statement from prosecutors in the nearby city of Brindisi that they were investigating allegations a young foreign woman was forced to have non-consensual sexual relations over two days.

Haggis's attorney, Priya Chaudhry, on Sunday said that although he could not discuss the evidence under Italian law, I am confident that all allegations will be dismissed against Haggis. He is totally innocent, and willing to fully cooperate with the authorities so the truth comes out quickly.

Prosecutors Antonio Negro and Livia Orlando, who are conducting the investigation, said in the statement that the woman was forced to seek medical care following the sexual relations.

After a couple of days of non-consensual relations, the woman was accompanied by the man to Brindisi airport on Sunday and was left there at dawn despite (her) precarious physical and psychological conditions.

The Brindisi prosecutors' office was closed on Sunday. The prosecutors said airport staff and police noticed her obvious confused state and "after lending initial treatment, took her to Brindisi's police headquarters, where officers accompanied her to a local hospital for examination".

Police at headquarters' operations room said they weren't authorised to give out information about the case, including whether Haggis was being held at the police station or at a hotel or other lodging.



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## Hate it when I am labelled as 'Bengali actress' outside state: Swastika Mukherjee



Actress Swastika Mukherjee, who is busy juggling film and OTT work between Kolkata and Mumbai, said that artists should never be identified by their place of origin.

Mukherjee contended that she hated it when anyone from the industry outside of Bengal referred to her as a "Bengali actress" as her skills had nothing to do with the tongue she speaks at home.

"Why such labels? Do we call an actor speaking in Hindi a Hindi actress? Are actors working in Mumbai film industry identified by their places of origin? I had spoken about this in the past too. Is there any problem in referring to us as Indian actors?" she told PTI.

The actress, who was well appreciated for her performances in web series Paatal Lok' and film Dil Bechara', also said that she had played multiple characters over the past two decades, but never got to essay the role of a differently abled woman, something that she had been longing to do.

## Samantha dismisses claims of planting fake stories about Naga Chaitanya

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu on Tuesday called out a publication for its report claiming she was behind "fake stories" regarding her former husband, actor Naga Chaitanya.

Samantha and Chaitanya, who tied the knot in October 2017, had announced their separation last year. Responding to an article released by an online entertainment portal, which claimed that the "Family Man" star is planting negative stories about Chaitanya, the actor said wrote people need to "grow up".

"Rumours on girl - Must be true! Rumours on boy - Planted by girl! Grow up guys... Parties involved have clearly moved on... You should move on too! Concentrate on your work... On your families... Move on!" she wrote on Twitter.

## Investigator warns boxing to change to save Olympic status

Fighting to keep their sport in the Olympics, boxing officials were warned to change its historical culture of breaking the rules.

Investigator Richard McLaren said corruption abounded in the world boxing body formerly known as AIBA as he delivered a final report commissioned by the new leadership trying to win over the IOC and get reinstated in the Olympics.

McLaren traced a legacy of financial and bout integrity issues to the 2006-17 presidency of C.K. Wu, though he also pointed to continued alleged misconduct at recent boxing tournaments.

The 114-page final investigation report highlighted ongoing concerns with unjustifiable judging scores and warnings by referees to boxers, plus secret signaling between officials in arenas. The people in the sport must change, McLaren said on Monday. They have ingrained learned behaviors in a culture that has historically not respected ethics or integrity.



## TXT to hold four shows in Asia in October



South Korean music group Tomorrow X Together will be performing four concerts in Asian cities — Jakarta, Manila, Taipei and Bangkok — following shows in Korea, Japan and the US as part of their upcoming debut world tour.

Popularly known as TXT, the band announced on Tuesday that TOMORROW X TOGETHER WORLD TOUR IN ASIA will be held in Jakarta on October 12, in Manila on October 15 and 16, in Taipei on October 19, and in Bangkok on October 22 and 23.

According to a press release from BigHit Music, TXT will kickstart the tour from their native Seoul on July 2 and 3. The quintet comprising Soobin, Yeonjun, Beomgyu, Taehyun and Huening-Kai will follow it up with concerts in seven cities across the US: Chicago on July 7, New York on July 9, Atlanta on July 12, Dallas on July 14, Houston on July 17, San Francisco on July 21, and finally Los Angeles on July 23 and 24.

## Prabhmeet sets up a 'Punjabi' language table at Offenburg University of Germany



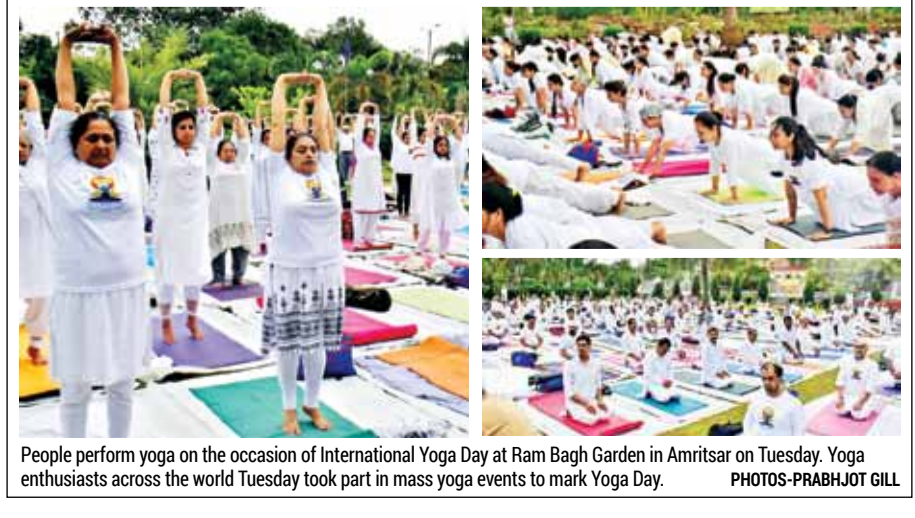
SAS Nagar (Mohali) based student Prabhmeet Singh Bhatti set up a Punjabi language table at Offenburg University in Germany. Prabhmeet's father Harjinder Singh Bhatti is a journalist told to media that he feels proud of his son, who represented his mother tongue at the international platform.

The basic idea of the University through this event was to connect people through language. It took place inside the campus in a relaxed atmosphere. Through this, students taught basic idioms in their native language to others. Other than Punjabi, some Indian students also set up tables in Hindi, Kannada, and Sanskrit.

The students were rewarded for their commitment with financial compensation (Tutorvertrag) or a certificate for international commitment (helpful for the Stibet scholarship).



Indian Army ex-serviceman hold placards and shout slogans as they take part during their protest amid 'Bharat Bandh', called to protest against the Centre's 'Agnipath' scheme, in Amritsar on 20<sup>th</sup> June-2022. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL



People perform yoga on the occasion of International Yoga Day at Ram Bagh Garden in Amritsar on Tuesday. Yoga enthusiasts across the world Tuesday took part in mass yoga events to mark Yoga Day. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL

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