

REGION **2**



BJP MINORITY MORCHA PRESENTS TRICOLOUR TO DARUL ULOOM FOR 'HAR GHAR TIRANGA' CAMPAIGN

PM Modi is getting restless due to the increasing popularity of AAP : Kejriwal

CHANDIGARH: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday took on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his 'revadi culture' remark about free services offered by the political parties including AAP. Quoting AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal he said that the AAP has ushered a new political era to uplift the standard of living of common man rather than giving favours to a few corporate families in the country.

Addressing a press conference, party's chief spokesperson Malvinder Singh Kang along with advocate Ravinder Singh said that the country is celebrating 75th year of independence and rather than providing free



education and better health facilities free of cost, PM Modi is creating an atmosphere against free government welfare services by terming them freebies.

Kang said that BJP is unnerved by the clean and pro-

people governance of AAP party led by Arvind Kejriwal and it has exposed their double standards as well. "Before the UP elections, the BJP had launched its manifesto 'Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra 2022' and the Modi

government promised to give free good education, health-care, 300 units of electricity to every household and offer an unemployment allowance to youths. Are these not 'revadi' or 'freebies'. The BJP is baffled by the rapidly growing popularity of AAP in the country and is therefore issuing baseless statements," Kang said. He further said that about 9 developed countries, including Canada and the USA, provide free health services and education to their children than why children of India are deprived of it. The AAP is working for the welfare of common people while BJP and Congress have been working for their corporate friends.

BANKING & FINANCE **6**



LOWER BAD LOANS PUSH PSU BANKS' PROFITABILITY IN JUNE QUARTER

Rising Covid cases : Delhi CM Kejriwal says 'No need to panic'

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said that the Covid-19 cases are rising in the city but there is no need to panic as most new cases were mild in nature.

"Covid cases are rising in the city. We are keeping a watch on it and whatever steps needed will be taken. But most cases are mild and there is no need for panic," Kejriwal said during a programme ahead of Independence Day.

To commemorate the completion of 75 years of Independence, 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is being celebrated all over the country. Chief Minister Kejriwal on Tuesday unfurled the 115-ft high 500th Tri-colour flag.

On AAP's application

POTPOURRI **8**



SAMRAT PRITHVIRAJ' SPECIAL FILM, WISH IT COULD HAVE DONE WELL: SONU SOOD

Priyanka Gandhi tests positive for Covid

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said she has tested positive for Covid again and would be isolating at home while following all protocols.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has cancelled his visit to Rajasthan as a precautionary measure after Priyanka Gandhi and some other party leaders tested positive for Covid, sources said. Rahul Gandhi was to address a training programme of Congress workers at Tijara in Rajasthan's Alwar district on Wednesday. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi had also tested positive for COVID-19 in June last year. "Tested positive for

covid (again!) today. Will be isolating at home and following all protocols," she said in a tweet.

Several Congress leaders have contracted Covid such as communications department head Pawan Khera and party MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi. Party chief Sonia Gandhi had also tested positive for Covid in early June this year. On Tuesday evening, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and senior

Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge also said he has tested positive for Covid. "I have tested positive for #COVID19. I request those who came in contact with me recently to take care," Kharge tweeted.

LIC Q1 profit jumps multifold to Rs 682.89 crore



Life Insurance Corporation of India on Friday reported a multifold jump in its June quarter net profit at Rs 682.89 crore. The state-run life insurance behemoth, which went public recently, had a net profit of Rs 2.94 crore in the year-ago period. The first-year premium for the reporting quarter came at Rs 7,429 crore as against Rs 5,088 crore in the year-ago period, it said in an exchange filing after its board meeting. The total income came at Rs 1,68,881 crore for the June quarter as against Rs 1,54,153 crore in the year-ago period, it said. When compared with the preceding March quarter, the performance was down across parameters, the filings showed.

Nitish takes oath as Bihar CM, Tejashwi as his deputy



JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar on Wednesday took oath as Bihar chief minister for the eighth time in a ceremony at Raj Bhawan. RJD's Tejashwi Yadav was administered the oath of office as deputy chief minister. The no-frills ceremony comes a day after Kumar snapped ties with the BJP-led NDA and joined hands with the RJD to form a Mahagathbandhan' government.

Nitish takes oath as Bihar CM for record eight time leader Nitish Kumar on Wednesday took oath as Bihar chief minister for a record eighth time in a no-frills ceremony at Raj Bhawan, a day after snapping

ties with the BJP-led NDA and joining hands with the RJD to form a Mahagathbandhan' government. Kumar is likely to retain the all-important Home portfolio, while the RJD may get most of the departments that were previously with the BJP, a highly-placed source said. He said an in-principle agreement has been reached about the composition of the new cabinet, which is likely to have 35 members or more, drawn from Kumar's JD(U), the RJD and the Congress.

Euphoric scenes were witnessed outside the Raj Bhawan and residences of Kumar and Yadav, as hundreds of sup-

Pawar accuses BJP of finishing off regional allies, backs Nitish for snapping ties with saffron party

NCP Chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of finishing off its regional allies gradually, and supported Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's decision to snap ties with the BJP. Speaking to reporters in Baramati town of Maharashtra's Pune district, Pawar claimed the BJP was planning how to weaken the Shiv Sena and create a division in the party. Pawar's party was a constituent of the previous Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra government, which collapsed in June this year following a revolt by Sena MLA Eknath Shinde and 39 other legislators. Nitish Kumar had on Tuesday pulled the plug on his party JD(U)'s alliance with the BJP and resigned, and followed it up by staking claim to form a new government in Bihar with support of the opposition Grand Alliance.

porters of JD(U) and RJD celebrated beating drums, bursting crackers and distributing 'laddus' (sweetmeats). Nitish to prove majority in Bihar Assembly on Aug 24 After taking the oath as Bihar Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar called for first cabinet meeting on Wednesday. In the meeting with Deputy

Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, Nitish Kumar passed a proposal to call a special session of the Assembly on August 24 - for him to prove his majority - and the Legislative Council on August 25. Bihar Governor Phagu Chauhan has been intimated of the proposal and his approval is awaited.

China to provide Rs 15 billion assistance to Nepal to invest in various projects



China has pledged Rs 15 billion in grant assistance to Nepal to invest in various projects this year in the landlocked Himalayan nation after visiting foreign minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu held wide-ranging talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi to further cement the bilateral ties.

Khadka, who is on an official visit to China at the invitation of Wang, met Wang in the eastern Chinese city of Qingdao on Wednesday.

"The two foreign ministers took stock of overall aspects of Nepal-China relations and agreed to promote further cooperation in various sectors,

including trade, connectivity, investment, health, tourism, poverty alleviation, agriculture, disaster management, education, culture, and people-to-people exchanges, among others," the Nepalese foreign ministry said in a statement here. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the progress made in a range of matters of bilateral cooperation since the official visit of Wang to Nepal in March this year.

Wang, also a State Councilor, announced that China will provide a Rs 15 billion (800 million RMB) grant to Nepal to invest in projects selected by Nepal for the year 2022.

Rajouri attack : Govt can't go in hiding after such assaults, has to answer says Kharge

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday hit out at the Centre over the terrorist attack on an army camp in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, saying the government can't go in hiding after such assaults and will have to answer.

Two terrorists carried out a 'fidayeen' attack on an Army camp in Jammu's

Rajouri district in the early hours of Thursday, killing three soldiers. Both attackers were gunned down in the four-hour firefight that followed. "Sadened to learn about another dastardly terrorist attack in Rajouri, J&K claiming the lives of our brave soldiers," Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Kharge said. "My humble tributes to the martyrs who gave up their life protecting our country. The GOI can't go in hiding after such assaults on our people.

Cong to hit the streets against Agnipath scheme after Aug 15



NEWDELHI: The Congress is going to hit the streets demanding rollback of the Agnipath scheme of short-term recruitment into the armed forces and unemployment after August 15. Addressing a press conference here, Congress MP Deepender Singh Hooda said that while the party extended full support to the 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' campaign launched by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and to the united front of ex-servicemen, who fought for 'One rank, one pension', the Congress will extend full support to the campaign against the Agnipath scheme. "After August 15, we will take to the streets, just like we did in our fight against inflation, to protest against unemployment and demand rollback of the Agnipath scheme," Hooda said.

Akal Takht to hold prayers for Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims killed during Partition in 1947

AMRITSAR: On 75th anniversary of the Partition, Akal Takht will hold common prayers on August 16 for the peace of souls perished during the division of Punjab between India and Pakistan.

The Akhand Path will be started at Sri Akal Takht Sahib on August 16. In memory of those killed during the partition in August 1947.

"Around 10 lakh Punjabi men, women and children were killed during the Partition of Punjab between India and Pakistan.

Giani Harpreet Singh Jathe-dar Akal Takht highest seat of



Sikh religion said that Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were also included among those innocent Punjabis who sacrificed

lives. Therefore, followers of every religion should hold religious ceremonies in their religious places on August 16

in memory of the Punjabis who were killed according to their own religious beliefs.

He said that Punjabis paid the price for the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 with their lives. From August 10 to August 16, 1947, millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims had to suffer the pain of partition. Millions of daughters and sisters jumped into wells to save their rights. Rivers of blood and gore flowed everywhere. Jhelum and Jhanab were drenched in blood. Along with Nankana Sahib and Panja Sahib, the Khalsa Raj had to leave Lahore.

Income Tax Department seizes cash & valuables worth Rs. 390 Cr in Maha

FW DESK

In week long raid the Income Tax Department has seized cash and valuables worth Rs 390 crore following a raid on the premises of Maharashtra's Jalna businessman, who deals in garments, real estate and in steel.

I-T department's 260 officials divided into five teams carried out a week-long raid. The agency used 120 vehicles to carry out this raid.

Sources said that they seized around Rs 58 crore in cash, 32 kg gold and valuable stones.

The source also said that it took 13 hours to count the cash. "It was a week-long raid that started from August 1. Our Nasik Branch team got the tip off following which the raids were conducted. Seeing the gravity of the matter we formed teams of 260 officials divided into five teams. We also used 120 of our vehicles in the raid," the source said.



The source said that the cash recovered from the premises of garments and steel businessman was taken to Nasik Branch of State Bank of India, where it was counted for hours. The bank employees started counting the cash at around 11 a.m., which went on till 1 a.m.

The I-T department got the tip off that there were irregularities in the accounts of four steel companies after which the teams swung into action.

The team of 260 officials raided the factories but they didn't recover anything. Later they raided a farm house where they found the huge cash and valuables.

Delhi to strictly enforce mask fines in view of COVID spike

With COVID cases and the positivity rate rising in Delhi, the district officials have started forming teams to strictly enforce the mask mandate and issue a fine of Rs 500 to violators, officials said.

The district magistrates have been instructed to ensure that the laxity that had set in due to reduction in cases is corrected and wearing masks in public places is strictly enforced, a senior Revenue department officer said. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has noted that the positivity rate of COVID-19 infection has increased in Delhi over the past fortnight, according to an order issued by the South Delhi district.

"The DDMA after examining all the relevant facts related to the issue of penal provisions for not adhering to covid protocol of



wearing of mask at public places, decided that, in relation to the clause 3(h)(c) whereby not wearing of face mask/cover in all public places has been made an offence, a fine of Rs 500 for not wearing of face mask/cover in all public places in Delhi will be imposed," the order said.

The fine will not be applicable to persons travelling together in private four-wheelers, it said. The South Delhi district mag-

istrates the district officials to visit public places such as markets.

Strict compliance of COVID protocol will be enforced in view of the spike in infections, said South East district magistrate Isha Khosla. We will ensure that Covid-appropriate behaviour is followed at crowded places such as markets, which are attracting more crowds due to festivals, she said.

Enforcement teams are being formed and their number will be increased if needed. The number of teams in the sub divisions depends on need at the ground, it is 4-5 at present, she added.

Delhi on Wednesday reported eight deaths due to coronavirus the highest in nearly 180 days, according to data shared by the health department here. The city on Wednesday reported 2,146 new COVID cases with a positivity rate of 17.83 per cent.

Justice U U Lalit appointed 49th CJ

Justice Uday Umesh Lalit was on Wednesday appointed as the 49th Chief Justice of India after President Droupadi Murmu signed his warrant of appointment.

He will assume charge on August 27 after incumbent N V Ramana demits office the day before. "In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, judge of the Supreme Court, to be the Chief Justice of India with effect from 27 August, 2022," a law ministry notification said. Justice Lalit will have a brief tenure of less than three months. He will turn 65 on November 8 when he demits office.



Digital media is facing credibility issue, says Fadnavis

The digital media is facing a credibility problem, Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister

Devendra Fadnavis said here on Wednesday. He was speaking after inaugurating the

new Thane office of the Marathi daily Lokmat. News media are undergoing a transformation with changing technology, the BJP leader said, adding that media outlets must adopt a "360 degrees approach" if they want to survive. The digital media is losing its trustworthiness as content is sometimes published without proper vetting, the deputy CM said.

Jagdeep Dhankhar sworn in as 14th VP of India



Former West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was on Thursday sworn in as the 14th Vice President of India. President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath to Dhankhar (71) in a brief ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Jagdeep Dhankhar took the oath in Hindi in the name of god. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dhankhar's predecessor M Venkaiah Naidu were among the dignitaries present at the ceremony.

Delhi Police issues traffic advisory ahead of I-Day

Ahead of Independence Day, the Delhi Police on Thursday issued a traffic advisory to ensure smooth vehicular movement across the capital.

According to the advisory, traffic for general public around Red Fort, from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on I-Day, will remain closed from 4 am to 10 am.

It will be open to only authorised vehicles, it said.

Eight roads -- Netaji Subhash Marg, Lothian Road, SP Mukherjee Marg, Chandni Chowk Road, Nishad Raj Marg, Esplanade Road and its link road to Netaji Subhash Marg, Ring Road from Rajghat to ISBT and Outer Ring Road from ISBT to IP Flyover -- will remain closed for general traf-



fic, the advisory stated.

Noida, Loni, Singhu, Ghazipur, Badarpur, Safia, Maharaipur, Aya Nagar, Auchandi, Surya Nagar, Rajokri, Dhansa, Apsara, Kalandi Kunj, Jharoda, Bhopura, Lal Kuan Pul

Prahlad Pur and Tikri borders will be closed for the movement of commercial and transport vehicles on Friday from 10 pm to 11 am on Saturday, and similarly on Sunday and Monday, it said.

Buses bound for Kauria Pul/Red Fort/Old Delhi Railway Station will operate via ISBT bridge (Yudhistir Setu) and terminate at Boulevard Road near Mori Gate U-Turn, it said.

All the buses otherwise terminating at Old Delhi Railway Station, Red Fort, Bhai Mati Dass Chowk, Mori Gate, ISBT, Pragati Maidan and Ambedkar Stadium Terminal shall terminate opposite Turkman Gate Asaf Ali Road, it said.

Buses bound for Red Fort, Old Delhi Railway Station, Bhai Mati Dass Chowk (Fountain) from South Delhi will be diverted via Ring Road - NH-24, Marginal Bandh (Pushta) Road and new ISBT Bridge, and will terminate on Boulevard Road, the advisory added.

PM Modi to dedicate to nation 2G ethanol plant in Panipat

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday will dedicate to the nation a second generation (2G) ethanol plant built at an estimated cost of Rs 900 crore in Haryana's Panipat via video conferencing.

The 2G ethanol plant has been built at an estimated cost of over Rs 900 crore by the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) and is located close to the Panipat Refinery, said an official statement. Based on indigenous technology, the project will utilise about two lakh tonnes of rice straw annually to generate around three crore litres of ethanol annually, it said. Creating an end-use for the agri-crop residue would empower farmers and provide an additional income generation opportunity for them, it said.

The project will provide direct employment to people involved in the plant operation and indirect employment will be generated in the supply chain for rice straw cutting, handling, storage, etc. Through reduction in burning of rice straw, the project will contribute to a reduction of greenhouse gases equivalent to about 3 lakh tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per annum, which can be understood as equivalent to replacing nearly 63,000 cars annually on the country's roads, the statement said.

The dedication of the plant is part of a long series of steps taken by the government over the years to boost the production and usage of biofuels in the country, said the statement.

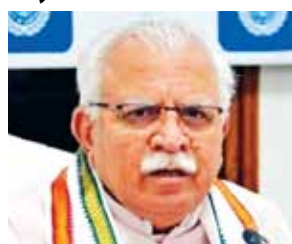
No one can force ration card holders to buy national flag: Haryana CM Khattar

FW DESK
Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday said no one can force the ration card holders to buy the national flag along with the ration.

No person will be denied of any services even if he does not wish to buy the national flag. Under the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan, people can voluntarily buy the national flag, < said the Chief Minister in a statement.

Taking cognizance of the complaint regarding a ration depot holder in Karnal forcing people to buy the Tricolour, the Chief Minister directed the officials concerned to spread mass awareness about this



campaign. If any organisation wants to help the state government in this campaign, then they can contact the Deputy Commissioner in their respective district.

Meanwhile, the District Food and Supplies Controller has initiated an action against erring depot holder Dinesh Kumar in Hemda village. The monthly supply of ration of the depot holder has also been suspended.

Stern action against defaulters, industry spreading pollution in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

As a result of fast increasing pollution in majority of nearly 18000 ponds in rural as well as urban areas and rivers mainly Ghaggar river and Yamuna canal passing through several districts across the state in which people residing in the area throw sewerage water, garbage and industry release wastes thus spreading pollution.

Chief Minister Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar has directed all concerned officers in the state to take immediate action against those violating directions and spreading pollution and installation of sewerage treatment plant (STP) there in and common efficient treatment plants (CETP) where required and intimate him in person within two weeks. Chief Minister told that in order to control pollution as many as 25 STP of 441 MLD capacity are being developed on Ghaggar and Yamuna canal, besides at Manesar and Mahrspur. Similarly, Haryana Development Authority I reviewing devel-



opment of CETP at Kundli in Sonapat district disposing of maximum pollution in the area.

Information reveals, to stop pollution in Ghaggar river eight STP of 61MLD capacity and 17 STP of 381 MLD capacity are being installed on Yamuna canal in different areas across the state in 589 km area for which 549 km line out of total 589 km line installed. According to information, out of total 1652 km line in Yamuna canal in the state work has already been completed in 1472 km line., whereas proposal for three CETP of 19 MLD capacity and six CEPT of 131 MLD capacity is under process at present in Yamuna canal. On the other hand there is proposal for installation of two CEPT of 3 MLD on Ghaggar river likely to benefit residents of 277 villages around Yamuna canal and 450 villages around Ghaggar river.

75 years old shopkeeper sexually abused 12 yrs minor sentenced 10 years imprisonment, fine

SATISH HANDA

Additional District Session Judge of Fast Track Court Ambala sentenced 10 years imprisonment and Rs 40000 fine to a general merchandise shop dealer Harbans Lal allegedly sexually abused a 12 years old minor girl a class seven students at a rural area near Mullana in Ambala district while she was returning home late evening after visiting teacher who took her inside the store behind the shop luring her to offer sweets. He threatened minor girl to kill her in case she told to anyone and the minor did not disclosed to anyone about the incident but after having repeated cases of attempt to sexually exploit her the girl disclosed the same writing on a piece of paper to her mother that uncle is doing shameful act with her body while she is on way to home.

A complaint was lodged with Women Police Station Naraingarh by the mother of victim girl, which registered a case forwarded to fast track court Ambala after medical examination of the girl twice at Civil Hospital on 25th July 2019. The court recorded statement of victim minor under section 164.

Dirty water from Budhanala will be disposed off soon, Pb CM tells Ashok Gehlot

FW DESK

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday spoke to Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann regarding the disposal of sewage coming from Budhanala in Punjab and relining of the Indira Gandhi Canal Project and the Sirhind Feeder under the Canal Project. Ashok Gehlot said that Mann assured him that the work of disposal of the dirty water would be done on priority and the work of relining would be completed during the next canal closure.

The Rajasthan government has installed a real time water quality monitoring system on RD 555 (Rajasthan-Haryana border) of the Indira Gandhi feeder and RD 368 (Rajasthan-Punjab border) of the Bikaner canal. This will enable real time monitoring of water quality. The work of relining about 106 km of the Indira Gandhi Canal has been done by the Rajasthan government during the canal closure in the last 3 years. This has improved the quality and quantity of water and has ensured that water reaches the last mile.

Minor raped, murdered in Faridabad

A 12-year-old girl who had gone out to defecate was raped and later murdered, police said here on Friday. The body of the minor was found near a railway track. According to the police, the girl along with her two other siblings was staying at her aunt's place, who lived nearby her house. At around 9 pm, the minor went out to defecate. When she did not return after an hour, her family started searching for her, they said, adding that the girl was found dead near the track. DSP Sudhir Taneja of Government Railway Police, Faridabad, said the victim's body was handed over to the family after postmortem and the viscera report has been sent to PGI Rohtak for investigation. "The search for the accused is on and the accused will be nabbed soon," he added.

SVB in Haryana to function now similar to CBI to stop corruption, FIR against six employees

SATISH HANDA

In view of increasing cases of corruption in government offices in the state including senior officers, Chief Minister Haryana has taken decision that State Vigilance Bureau (SVB) in Haryana will work now similar to CBI having powers to conduct raids and arrest alleged accuse including senior officers involved in corrupt practices, it was disclosed to media persons by Shatruijit Kapoor Chief of Vigilance Bureau in the state. He said, at present while conducting a raid or an investigation in a case SVB investigation team have to accompany a duty magistrate and before arresting a senior officer of a rank of HCS, HPS, IAS and IPS have to take permission from the higher government authorities prior to taking action which not



only delays investigation but also cause leakage of important information.

Shatruijit Kapoor SVB chief said that according to the present decision corrupt officer as well as staff in government offices may be pushed behind bars by SVB framing a case with the directions by Additional Chief Secretary for which Chief Secretary Haryana Sanjiv Kaushal has already sent information to all Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners in the state to assist SVB team. According to rule constituted in



2008 SVB was authorized to undertake raids along with a duty magistrate which has now been modified by Haryana state government in order to wipe out fast increasing corruption in government offices since past few years.

After a recent scam exposed at Ambala in which land mafias started developing unauthorized colonies illegally on Panchayat land where number of residential as well as commercial building have been constructed on the basis of fake documents by Tehsil offices. Supreme Court

of India has ordered to cancel all such property registrations and demolish unauthorized constructions thereon as such those involved in corrupt and illegal practices are in the state of panic and concerned officers and employees involved in corrupt practices are in the state of terror.

In case of illegal registration of properties over 108 acre Panchayat land at village Kardhan adjoining Ambala Cantt state revenue department has started checking records of all illegal cases of registrations, where 17 illegal registrations has been detected illegal on this prime Panchayat land which included 11 registrations cases finalized in a day by then Tehsildar Mewa Singh and Patwari Anil Kumar violating rules causing revenue loss to the government for amount worth Rs 23 crore.

BJP Minority Morcha presents Tricolour to Darul Uloom for 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign

As part of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, the BJP Minority Morcha has presented the national flag to Darul Uloom Deoband in Uttar Pradesh.

The BJP minority wing has planned to hoist the national flag at religious places and institutions across the country as part of the campaign.

BJP minority morcha national president Jamal Siddiqui told media that they presented Tiranga to Maulana Salman Binjori and Maulana Munir Nazim of Darul Uloom Deoband in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. "While preparing for 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign at the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', we went to Darul Uloom Deoband in Saharanpur and presented the national flag to Maulana Salman Binjori and Maulana Muneer Nazim and appealed them to join the campaign, a Siddiqui said. BJP minority morcha leaders and work-



ers are requesting the minority religious places and institutions to hoist the Tricolour at their premises. "The workers of BJP minority morcha are requesting community and religious leader to hoist the Tricolour at Mosques, Gurudwara, Churches and institutions to become part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and to remember and pay tribute to great freedom fighters," Siddiqui said.

The BJP Minority Morcha

Noida Authority hikes land rates after a gap of 3 years

After a gap of three years, the Noida Authority has revised land rates across all categories, including residential and group housing, effecting a hike of up to 30 per cent, according to officials.

The decision was taken during the 205th board meeting of the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA) on Thursday. The meeting was chaired by Uttar Pradesh industrial development commissioner Arvind Kumar and attended by Noida Authority CEO Ritu Maheshwari, among others.

On determination of land rates for the financial year 2022-23, the Noida Authority said, The land rate of 'E' category sectors of residential plots is Rs 41,250 per square metre, there has been a hike of 20 per cent in 'A' to 'D' category sectors, while those in 'A+' category remained unchanged at Rs 1.75 lakh per sq metre.

Delhi Art Week goes hybrid in second edition



The Delhi Art Week (DAW), in its second edition, is set to return in a hybrid avatar on August 24, the organisers announced on Thursday.

To be organised in location-based four 'art zones' spread across New Delhi -- including areas such as India Gate, Defence Colony, Greater Kailash, and Vasant Vihar -- the DAW 2022 will feature a variety of art programs from 37 galleries, two museums and over four art institutions.

Besides showcasing the programming physically in their own spaces till August 31, it will

be made available online on the internationally recognised platform, Artsy, till September 14.

"This edition of DAW takes into account the accepted reality of a pandemic world and the monumental changes and shifts that have taken place in the global arts business that physical events must be complemented by a presence online."

"Therefore, for this edition, in addition to the galleries having physical shows, works will also be showcased on the global arts platform Artsy", Reena Lath, director (Akar Prakar) and co-organiser of the event, said in a statement.

Man dupes Delhi Gurudwara priest of Rs 1.25 lakh, held

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has arrested a man for allegedly duping a Gurudwara Granthi (priest) on the pretext of providing him Kirtan opportunity in the United States, an official said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as Sanjay Yadav, was arrested from Indore.

Dy. Commissioner of Police (North Delhi) S.S. Kalsi said a complaint on MHA Cyber Crime Portal from the complainant Baldev Singh (a head Granthi in a Gurudwara in Delhi) was received alleging that he was contacted by a person in name of providing Kirtan opportunity in marriages and other cultural occasions in various cities of United States. Following this offer, the complainant transferred Rs. 1.25 lakh in bank accounts provided by the accused person. Accordingly, based on this complaint, the police registered an FIR under section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code and began probing the matter.

24 children rescued in the train on human trafficking information



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Teams of different departments including Anti-human Trafficking, Special Crime Branch, Railway Protection Force, GRP comprising of 50 persons on a information jointly conducted raid at Ambala Cantt railway station on August 4, 2022. In train number 12907, Karambhum Express train running between Jalpaiguri and Amritsar having stoppage four five minutes at Ambala Cantt

railway station which remained stranded at the railway station for more than 90 minutes. The aiding staff started checking in all compartment at a time immediately as soon as train reached at the platform. And during search campaign took into possession as many as 24 children between the age 12 and 16 being taken to Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur in Punjab to work as bonded labourer in spinning and rubrrr mills.

Preliminary investigation revealed that a gang of nearly

20 persons is very active in human trafficking of children procuring children from Bihar and West Bengal since a long time and selling as bonded labourer to industries. A information further revealed that he gang is also active in human trafficking of teen girls from poor families in these states. Information further revealed that as many as 14 children were brought down from this train at Delhi railway station. All children were kept in different train coaches in the train but raiding team could rescue 24 children at Ambala Cantt railway station in different coaches, which included 13 children in last coach in the train and remaining from other coaches. However, the raiding team could not find any clue about the members of gang involved in human trafficking. The rescued children were brought to GRP police station Ambala Cantt and a zero FIR was registered.

Politician who abused, assaulted Noida woman arrested

Absconding politician Shrikant Tyagi was arrested Tuesday from Meerut, officials said, days after he was seen in a social media video abusing and assaulting a woman for objecting to his alleged illegal constructions at a housing society here.

Tyagi was at large since Friday evening, and the Noida Police had announced a reward of Rs 25,000 on his arrest.

Additional Director General of Uttar Pradesh Police (law and order) Prashant Kumar said in Lucknow Tyagi has been arrested. On the controversy surrounding security given to Tyagi by the Uttar Pradesh police, Kumar said he had no such protection after February 2020. A senior Noida police officer told to media, "Tyagi's three associates were also held along with him."

Before the arrests, Tyagi's wife was once again detained for questioning Tuesday morning in the case lodged at the Phase 2 police station here, according to officials. Tyagi, who was at large since Friday



evening, had Monday moved a court in the Gautam Buddha Nagar district with a plea for surrender-related procedures. The hearing in the matter has been listed for August 10. He moved the court plea soon after the Noida police declared him "absconding" and announced the reward on his arrest.

Until he went underground Friday night, Tyagi claimed to be the national executive member of the BJP's Kisan Morcha and the national co-coordinator of its Yuva Samiti, even as the ruling party denied any links

with him. The Opposition has also mounted an attack on the BJP over the issue, sharing purported pictures of Tyagi with senior saffron party leaders, including its national president J P Nadda. Meanwhile, police personnel remained deployed at the Grand Omaxe society in Sector 93B where Tyagi had allegedly abused and assaulted the woman.

"We have got to know through media that Shrikant Tyagi has been arrested. His arrest was our main demand since the incident," a mem-

ber of the society residents, association told PTI. Tyagi had allegedly hurled expletives and assaulted the woman co-resident of Grand Omaxe who had objected to him planting trees in the common area of the society in Noida Sector 93B last Friday. Tyagi had claimed he was well within his rights to do so. As videos of the episode went viral on social media and drew condemnation, an FIR was lodged and Tyagi booked under Indian Penal Code section 354 (assault or use of criminal force on any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty).

Later, charges under IPC sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (intentional insult to provoke breach of public peace), 506 (criminal intimidation), 447 (criminal trespass) were also added in the case, officials said. During the probe, the police also impounded two vehicles of Tyagi which were found in violation of the Motor Vehicles Act.

India reports minor surge in Covid cases



India on Friday reported a marginal rise in Covid cases with 16,561 fresh infections reported in the past 24 hours against previous day's 16,299 count, as per Union Health Ministry data.

In the same period, 49 more Covid deaths took the nationwide death toll to 5,26,928. Meanwhile, the active case-load has marginally declined to 1,23,535 cases, accounting for 0.28% of the total positive cases.

The recovery of 18,053 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,35,73,094. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.53%. Meanwhile, the Daily Positivity rate has also risen to 5.44%, while the Weekly Positivity Rate currently stands at 4.88%.

Also in the same period, a total of 3,04,189 tests were conducted across the country, increasing the overall tally to over 87.95 crore.

As of this morning, the Covid-19 vaccination coverage exceeded 207.47 crore, achieved via 2,75,59,030 sessions.

Over 3.96 crore adolescents have been administered with a first dose of Covid-19 jab since the beginning of vaccination drive for this age bracket.

CJI Ramana asks lawyers to wear masks in courtrooms



Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana on Thursday advised lawyers to wear masks in courtrooms, saying staffers and judges were contracting COVID-19 infection.

"Please wear a mask. The majority of our staff and colleagues are getting it (COVID-19). Judges are also getting it," the CJI told the lawyers at the start of court proceedings.

While hearing a PIL on freebies, the bench, which also comprised Justice Krishna Murari, asked the lawyers to wear masks.

"I tested negative," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, adding that senior advocate A M Singhvi has tested positive. "Oh! I wish you a speedy recovery," the CJI said.

BJP President JP Nadda to visit Tripura on Aug 27



BJP national president J P Nadda is scheduled to arrive in Agartala on August 27 on a two-day visit to Tripura to oversee organisational activities, a senior party leader said on Wednesday.

The visit assumes significance in view of next year's assembly elections.

Nadda ji will be in Tripura to oversee the party's preparedness for the 2023 assembly elections, BJP state vice-president and MP Rebati Tripura said.

The BJP chief will likely preside over an officer bearers' meeting and a core committee meeting during his Tripura tour.

We are also trying to organise a rally, which will be addressed by Nadda ji, Rebati said.

Chief Minister Manik Saha, on a recent visit to New Delhi, had met Nadda and briefed him about the state's present political scenario and organisational activities.

Earlier, Nadda had cancelled visits to the state twice due to the Covid pandemic.

India to be fastest growing economy this year: Govt source

Rising inflation rates notwithstanding, India will be the fastest growing economy in the world this year, a top government source said on Thursday.

While inflation continues to be above the comfort zone, the economy has continued on its recovery path, supported by pent-up demand for services and higher industrial output.

The government, the source said, is taking continuous steps and engaging with the RBI to bring down inflation. Inflation has stayed above the upper



tolerance limit of 6 per cent for six straight months. There is no chance of growth slowing

and India will be the fastest growing economy this year and the next, the source added.

On swelling trade deficit, the source said the current account deficit (CAD) should steady going forward.

The government is continuously monitoring borrowing cost, the source said. Regarding cryptocurrency, the source said caution is necessary and the recent WazirX episode has exposed many darker sides of crypto transactions. On GST, the source said a group of ministers from the states is likely to submit to the Finance Minister its report on taxing casinos.

AGENCIES

NIF fellowships for books on post-Independence India

Here's some good news for authors. The New India Foundation (NIF) has announced the 11th edition of its fellowships that support books documenting various aspects of the dynamic and rich landscape of India post-Independence era.

About 20-25 proposals will be shortlisted to meet with a jury consisting of eminent people from the world of scholarship, business, and social service and 5-10 fellowships will be awarded. With an annual stipend of Rs 18 lakh to each recipient, the NIF Book Fellowships will also offer editorial and administrative guidance through its course, from proposal to publication.

The fellowships are open

to Indian nationals, including those currently living abroad, and will be awarded for a period of one year. The jury this year includes social scientist and author Niraja Jajal, historian Srinath Raghavan, and entrepreneurs Nandan Nilekani and Manish Sabharwal.

"Fellowship-holders are expected to write original books in English. Proposals should be oriented towards publication, and outline a road map towards that destination. The foundation is agnostic as regards genre, theme, and ideology; the only requirement is that the proposed works contribute to a fuller understanding of independent India," a statement by

the Bengaluru-based NIF said.

"Thus, fellowship holders may choose to write a memoir, or a work of reportage, or a thickly footnoted academic study. Their books could be oriented towards economics, or politics, or culture. They could be highly specific - an account of a single decade or a single region - or wide-ranging, such as a countrywide overview," it added. According to NIF trustee Raghavan, "In a very real sense, the New India Foundation believes that India today is such a fascinating yet complex phenomenon that in order to be able to get a grip on where we are - and where we might be going - we need to approach

through many windows and vantage points." The last date for applying is December 31.

Since its inception, the NIF Book Fellowships have resulted in the publication of several critically acclaimed books that have recorded various aspects of contemporary Indian history.

These include Swati Ganguly's "Tagore's University: A History of Visva-Bharati (1921-1961)"; Nazia Akhtar's "Bibi's Room: Hyderabad Women and Twentieth-Century Urdu Prose"; Rahul Ramagundam's "The Life and Times of George Fernandes"; and "Not Just Cricket: A Reporter's Journey Through Modern India" by Pradeep Magazine.

Hundreds participate in 'Tiranga Yatra' in Delhi

Hundreds of people with national flags gathered at the Red Fort on Tuesday to take part in the 'Tiranga Yatra' which will pass through eight locations that were visited by Mahatma Gandhi here during the freedom struggle.

The yatra was flagged off by Union minister Jitendra Singh, MP Prakash Javadekar and senior BJP leader Vijay Goel.

The eight locations include Katra Kushal Rai, Marwadi Sarvajanic Pustakalaya, Gandhi Maidan, Sangam theatre and Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, where Mahatma Gandhi visited and held meetings during the freedom movement, Goel said.

Heavy security arrangements were put in place at Chandni Chowk area which was decked up with tricolours and flower on the occasion.



A cultural programme was organised at the Town Hall there where children from various schools performed.

"I'm glad that a large number of students turned up for this cultural programme. I congratulate all the schools who participated in the event," Goel said while addressing the students.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "ignited a new spirit of nationalism" among the citizens by launching the "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign, he said.

This event is an opportunity to revisit the memory of Mahatma Gandhi's struggles during the freedom movement," he said.

Soldier shoots himself dead in Jammu

An Army personnel allegedly shot himself dead with his service rifle inside a camp here, officials said on Wednesday.

Rifleman Yogesh Kumar was on guard duty at Kullian camp in Miran Sahib area on the outskirts of the city when he shot himself in the head, the officials said.

Kumar, a resident of Himachal Pradesh, died on the spot and later his body was taken to hospital by police for postmortem. Police have started inquest proceedings.



Next Vice President: EC issues certificate of election to Dhankar



The Election Commission on Aug 7 issued a certificate announcing the election of NDA candidate Jagdeep Dhankar as the 14th vice president of India.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey signed the "Certification of the Election" of Dhankar.

A signed copy of the certificate was handed over to the Union Home Secretary by senior Deputy Election Commissioner Dharmendra Sharma and Narendra N Butolia, senior Principal Commissioner in the EC, the poll panel said.

The term of incumbent M Venkaiah Naidu ends on August 10. Dhankar won with a huge vote share of 74.36 per cent, the highest in the last six vice-presidential elections, with 528 votes against Alva's 182 votes.

Three soldiers, two militants killed in Rajouri fideyeen attack



FW DESK

Security forces on Thursday morning killed two militants after they mounted an attack on an army camp in the border district of Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir. Three Army personnel also lost their lives and two others were injured.

"Someone tried to cross the fence of the Army camp at Pargal in Darhal area of Rajouri". Following an exchange of fire, the two militants were killed, he added. Additional Director General of Police, Jammu, Mukesh Singh told media.

The Nagrota-based White Knight Corps tweeted that "2 terrorists trying to sneak into a post in the dark at Pargal

#Rajouri were detected and engaged by alert troops. The terrorists, they said, have been neutralised."

The attack comes ahead of Independence Day celebrations.

The attack has been condemned by political parties in J&K. Former J&K Chief Minister and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah tweeted: "Very sorry to hear about the death in the line of duty of three soldiers following a militant attack in Rajouri. While condemning the attack I send my condolences to the families & my prayers for the swift recovery of those officers & jawans injured in the attack #Rajouri."

Rajiv Gandhi assassination convict Nalini moves SC seeking premature release

NEW DELHI: Nalini, a convict in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, has moved the apex court challenging the Madras High Court order, which dismissed her plea saying that it cannot exercise powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to pass a similar order, which was passed by the apex court to release another accused, A.G. Perarivalan, in the case. "The directions sought by the petitioner cannot be given by the court, as it otherwise does not have power similar to what the apex court has under Article 142 of the Constitution of India. For the foregoing reasons,



the writ petition is dismissed as not maintainable", said the high court in an order passed on June 17.

On May 18, the Supreme Court invoked its extraordi-

nary powers to do complete justice under Article 142 of the Constitution, as it ordered the release of A.G. Perarivalan, sentenced to life in the assassination of former Prime

Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

A bench comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao (retired now), B. R. Gavai, and A. S. Bopanna said: "in the exceptional facts and circumstances of this case, in exercise of our power under Article 142 of the Constitution, we direct that the Appellant is deemed to have served the sentence in connection with crime.. The Appellant, who is on bail, is set at liberty forthwith". Perarivalan is currently on bail. His death sentence was commuted to life sentence and terrorism charges were withdrawn.

Heavy rains trigger flash floods, landslides in Uttarakhand

Heavy rains in Uttarakhand caused a surge in streams that damaged buildings and shops while landslides in the hills blocked national highways and a number of rural motor roads on Thursday.

A swirling stream in Khablisera village washed away eight shops in Uttarkashi district in the early hours on Thursday, the state emergency operation centre (SEOC) here said. Overnight excessive rains completely damaged three houses at Agarchatti village near Gairsain in Chamoli district. Mud and slush also gushed into eight houses in



Agarchatti, it said. However, no casualties were reported from anywhere. Badkot and Purola in Uttarkashi district received 88 mm and 84 mm of

rain, respectively while the district headquarters received 70 mm of rain. Chamoli gauged 62 mm of rain. National highways leading

to the Himalayan shrines of Badrinath, Yamunotri and Gangotri were blocked by debris following landslides at different points, the SEOC said. The Rishikesh-Badrinath national highway (NH) was blocked at Narkota, Rishikesh-Yamunotri NH at Kharadi and Dabarkot and the Rishikesh-Gangotri NH at Ratudi-Sera, Badarkot and Naitala, it said.

Tanakapur-Champawat-Ghaat national highway in Champawat district and Tyuni-Chakrata-Tehri-Maletha national highway in Dehradun district were also blocked by rubble at several places.

Road accidents in J-K's Kathua leave three dead

Three people were killed and a woman injured in two separate road accidents in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Wednesday.

Hari Kishore (50) and his wife Madhuri (45), residents of Hamidpur in Bihar, were killed while Kishore's sister Babita (25) was critically injured when their scooter was hit by a truck near Government Medical College Kathua on the Jammu-Pathankot highway on Tuesday night, a police official said.

The three were on way to their rented accommodation in CTM colony in Kathua when the accident took place.

The injured woman has been hospitalised while the driver of the truck was arrested, the official said.

In another accident, a resident of Kathua was killed after an unidentified vehicle hit his cycle at Barnoti on Tuesday night.

On a mission to produce 5,000 Khadi national flags for free distribution this I-Day

At least five village panchayats in Tamil Nadu would fly the Khadi national flags exclusively produced by the Avvai Ashram of the Gandhigram Trust in Sivasailam, this Independence Day.

Apparently inspired by the Centre's 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, the Gandhigram Trust, situated in Tamil Nadu's southern district of Tirunelveli, has embarked on a mission to churn out 5,000 Khadi flags.

The flags would be distributed to the village panchayats for free to help the villagers fly the national tricolour atop their houses or on their premises.

"We have trained 10 persons to stitch the national flag and print the Ashoka chakra on them. They are working ceaselessly along with 5 others at our tailoring unit in Sivasailam," says K Shivakumar, managing trustee of Gandhigram Trust.

They were trained about a fortnight ago and have been told to confine to the specifications stipulated by the Central government and also use only Khadi material, he said.

On an average about 500 to 600 flags are made daily and the Gandhigram Trust hopes to complete the production by



August 12 to facilitate the distribution of the flags to village panchayats, he told to media.

The workers, mostly women, have been trained under a livelihood programme of the trust. They would be provided employment all through the year. "Through this and many other initiatives we hope to ensure lasting income to the members of the Annapurna self help group (SHG) which we have formed," he said.

"Gandhigram is proud that our unit in Sivasailam is actively involved in making the national flags to help the people celebrate the Independence Day, Shi-

vakumar said. Responding to a question, he said this is the first time the Sivasailam unit is producing the national flags. Our government is encouraging people to hoist the flags in their houses, so we decided to participate in the campaign to help the people celebrate the 75th year of India's Independence in a grand manner. Incidentally, this is also the 75th year of our Gandhigram, the managing trustee said.

Besides Gandhigram and Sivasailam, Chettiapatti, Thoppampatti and Alamarathupatti panchayats will receive the flags and in turn they would distrib-

ute the flags to the villagers.

The relaxation in the flag code rules by the Central government permitting the public to hoist national flags as part of the Har Ghar Tiranga is an opportunity for every citizen to carry home the national tricolour, says Lt Col N Thiagarajan, veteran, who had participated in the Kargil war.

He hopes to distribute flags for free to the poor people and tribals and help them express their patriotism. I have planned to plant 750 saplings at the CRPF training centre, Avadi, as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Thiagarajan said.

Tributes paid to Karunanidhi on death anniversary

DMK President and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Sunday led a procession of party leaders in remembrance of his late father and former CM M Karunanidhi on the veteran political leader's death anniversary on Sunday.

The Chief Minister led a procession to Karunanidhi's memorial on Kamaraj Salai here, with senior DMK leaders Dayanidhi Maran, K Kanimozhi and state minis-

ters in tow. Stalin also paid floral tributes to a portrait of Karunanidhi near the latter's statue, which was inaugurated in May this year, at the Omandurar Government Estate in the state capital.

Karunanidhi, a Dravidian stalwart and former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, passed away on August 7, 2018. A marathon was also held in connection with the late leader's death anniversary.

India's industrial production grows 12.3 per cent in June

India's industrial production rose 12.3% in June 2022, according to the official data released on Friday.

As per the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output grew 12.5 per cent in June 2022.

The mining output climbed 7.5 per cent, and power generation increased 16.4 per cent in June 2022.

The IIP had grown by 13.8 per cent in June 2021.

The index grew 12.7 per



cent April-June 2022 compared to a growth of 44.4 per cent in the same period a year ago.

Industrial production has been hit due to the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, when it had contracted 18.7 per cent.

It shrank 57.3 per cent in April 2020 due to a decline in economic activities in the wake of the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus infections

CWG success will hold Indian athletes in good stead

The Commonwealth Games (CWG), alluding to a happily ever-after between England and its former colonies, may have its legacy issues. And in terms of the competitive yardstick, with the obvious absence of the United States of America, Russia and China, the CWG is considered a notch below the Olympics and the Asian Games. Yet, the CWG has a certain value in being a multi-nation quadrennial event that pits a disparate group of countries split by continents and fused by a shared past linked to the British Empire. It offers athletes one more shot at glory besides inspiring their fans to pursue sport with added vigour. In the latest edition that concluded at Birmingham on Monday, India with a medal haul of 61, inclusive of 22 golds, was placed fourth while Australia, host England and Canada led the charts. With shooting excluded from the CWG, India lost out on an additional yield. Most Indian medals told a tale etched by hope, diligence and hard work. If Sharath Kamal's table tennis exploits, even at 40, proved that sportspersons can fight the dimming light, weightlifter Sanket Sargar's silver in the men's 55kg segment, showed that financial difficulties cannot derail a focused athlete. Four years ago, Sanket used to sell paan from a tiny shop at Sangli in Maharashtra, and his is a story that needs to be cherished. Similar is the personal history linked to weightlifter Achinta Sheuli, who won gold in the 73kg division. Achinta, his brother Alok and mother did embroidery. The siblings also worked in the fields, fighting poverty and coping with the demise of their father. Like Sanket, Achinta's too is a story of hope and redemption. That sport is not always war minus the shooting was evident when Neeraj Chopra effusively praised Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who won gold in the men's javelin. The latest success in the CWG, should hold the Indian athletes in good stead as they prepare for next year's Asian Games in China.

LETTERBOX

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

"Don't worry about being successful, but work toward being significant and the success will naturally follow."
Oprah Winfrey

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MUKUL SANWAL EXPLAINS WHY A SHIFT IS REQUIRED TO COLLABORATION AROUND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

A new global vision for G20



While India has taken a clear view of the role of the G20, there is concern that the agenda, themes and focus areas which India will set for 2023 lack vision.

The G20 plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues. It recognises that global prosperity is interdependent and economic opportunities and challenges are interlinked. The challenge is to craft new approaches to overcome the acute global discord.

However, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, in 190 meetings, India will strengthen international support for priorities of vital importance to developing countries in diverse social and economic sectors, ranging from energy, agriculture, trade, digital economy, health and environment to employment, tourism, anti-corruption and women empowerment, including in focus areas that impact the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Without specificity, India has lost a chance to nudge the G20 and regional organisations towards its focus areas.

The fractured world makes trade-offs, the essence of current multilateralism, difficult and suggests a new model of international cooperation.

First, multilateral commitments on aid and trade are faltering. Governance in a world that is steadily becoming more equal needs institutional innovation. This is because the role of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization in securing cooperation between donor and recipient country groups is losing centrality. There are now three socio-economic systems — the G7, China-Russia, and India and the others — and they will jointly set the global agenda.

Second, Ukraine's long shadow, rival finance, the expanding influence of the trade and value chains dominated by the U.S. and China, and the reluctance of developing countries to take sides in the strategic competition as they have a real choice requires fresh thinking on the nature and form of collaboration from the G20.

Third, the primary role of the G20, which

accounts for 95% of the world's patents, 85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade and 65% of the world population, needs to be reoriented to prevent a clash of ideas to the detriment of the global good. The solution lies in a new conceptual model seeking agreement on an agenda limited to principles rather than long negotiated ad-hoc text. The Rio Declaration of 1992 is an appropriate model. For example, incorporating the three major priorities of each of the groups as part of a global agenda will inform smaller groupings of countries which have issue-based linkages and overlaps between them instead of struggling for meaningful agreement on single concerns of groups which are not even talking to each other.

India should seek collaboration on limited focus areas around science and technology, building on resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and other multilateral bodies.

A new conceptual frame is needed. First, the presumed equality that we are all in the same boat, recognised in the case of climate change, needs to be expanded to other areas with a global impact redefining 'common concerns'. Second, emerging economies are no longer to be considered the source of problems needing external solutions but source of solutions to shared problems. Third, the BRICS provides an appropriate

model for governance institutions suitable for the 21st century where a narrow group of states dominated by one power will not shape the agenda.

The starting point should be building on the global consensus in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights 1993 reaffirming the indivisibility of all human rights. There is a growing recognition of economic and social rights — for example, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ensuring adequate food, housing, education, health, water and sanitation and work for all should guide international cooperation. Principles of common but differentiated responsibilities for improving the quality of life of all households can guide deliberations in other fora on problems that seem intractable in multilateralism based on trade and aid.

Second, the global agenda has been tilted towards investment, whereas science and technology are the driving force for economic diversification, sustainably urbanising the world, and ushering the hydrogen economy and new crop varieties as the answer to both human well-being and global climate change. Innovation supports dematerialising production and consumption and moving towards renewable sources of energy. The shift in lifestyles in the post-war period created urban jobs in services and retail that made up for the losses to high productivity

manufacturing, and climate change. A forum to exchange experiences on societal benefits and growth as complementary goals would lead to fresh thinking on employment and environment.

Third, harnessing the potential of the digital-information-technology revolution requires redefining digital access as a "universal service" that goes beyond physical connectivity to sharing specific opportunities available. For global society to reap the fruits of the new set of network technologies, open access software should be offered for more cost-effective service delivery options, good governance and sustainable development.

Fourth, space is the next frontier for finding solutions to problems of natural resource management ranging from climate change-related natural disasters, supporting agricultural innovation to urban and infrastructure planning. Analysing Earth observation data will require regional and international collaboration through existing centres which have massive computing capacities, machine learning and artificial intelligence. Open access to geospatial data, data products and services and lower costs of geospatial information technology facilities do not require huge financial resources.

Fifth, public health has to learn from the COVID-19 fiasco with infectious diseases representing a market failure. A major global challenge is the rapidly growing antimicrobial resistance which needs new antibiotics and collaboration between existing biotechnology facilities.

Sixth, overriding priority to development suggests avoiding strategic competition. Countries in the region will support building on the 1971 UNGA Declaration designating for all time the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and non-extension into the region of rivalries and conflicts that are foreign to it.

Lastly, a Global Financial Transaction Tax, considered by the G20 in 2011, needs to be revived to be paid to a Green Technology Fund for Least Developed Countries.

Mukul Sanwal is a former UN diplomat. Views are personal



RAHUL MUKHERJI ON WHY THE PARTY MUST SELF-REFLECT CRITICALLY TO FATHOM ITS PREDICAMENT

Words of wisdom for the Congress's 'last Mughals'

On the eve of India's 75th year of Independence, we the people of India are groaning under the poison of Hindutva and a rudderless Opposition. Collectively, these two factors are overseeing the destruction of India's political liberalism. There is little hope for constitutional values such as sarva dharma sama bhava (equal respect for all religions under the law), and the same treatment for all citizens. Quite tragically, we are in a situation where India could morph into a Hindu Pakistan, as was willed by the assassins of Mohandas Gandhi.

India's foundational figures had understood the importance of religious diversity. Swami Vivekananda, the patron saint of the Indian youth, had argued for the necessity of religious diversity. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army had consistently worked with all the faiths to defeat the British. Bose's closest associates were Muslims. The experience of the struggle for freedom was enshrined in the constitutional idea of India, that was created by Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, among numerous other stalwarts.

The legacy of the freedom struggle was the fundamental reason India shocked the world by turning into a resilient democracy with abundant poverty, where civilian control over the military was established. The Congress Party, led by Sonia Gandhi, largely built on those foundations. It not only engendered a rapidly growing and globalising India but even consolidated citizenship rights and welfare. India's growth even surpassed China's during the first decade of the new millennium, while historic financial and human investments were made to redistribute



that wealth. These remarkable achievements are forgotten today.

Today, we find only paper champions defending that idea of India. The once mighty Congress Party, the bulwark of the Indian nationalist movement, is in a state of such disarray that even Opposition parties consider it to be a liability. How is it that a party that governed India for nearly 60 years has been reduced to a sideshow? To comprehend this predicament and evolve, the Party must self-reflect critically on four salient factors.

First, the Congress Party has a leadership problem. It has much to do with those who control the reins of the party in the name of the Gandhis. Sonia Gandhi's managers such as Ahmed Patel, Motilal Vora, Janardan Dwivedi, Oscar Fernandes and Ambika Soni were politically grounded, and well versed with realpolitik.

Second, while experimentation with political tactics is healthy, ideological confusion

is not. Today's Congress high command swings between the extreme right (flirting with soft Hindutva) and the extreme left (flirting with radical anti-establishment ideas). The right-wing leadership matches Hindutva by visiting temples, flaunting the sacred thread, and soft peddling on issues such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the dilution of Article 370, and numerous attacks on minorities. Such a disposition of the three Gandhis would have saddened Jawaharlal Nehru.

Third, successful political leadership demands a combination of charisma and astute political management. The charismatic leader can draw the crowds while the political manager strategises elections, makes the machinery of government work, and ensures adherence to the party's ideological agenda.

Nehru had a Sardar Patel to work with. While Nehru articulated the idea of India, Patel ran the party. This model was replicated

under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, which Dr. Manmohan Singh ran, while Ahmed Patel managed the party. The same can be said regarding the political success of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah.

And, finally, the Congress's enviable connections within the state and society have collapsed. The party once commanded an enormous network within the administration, media, civil society, and even with foreign governments. It could raise substantial funds. This infrastructure was a resource that the party could leverage to support less well-endowed parties in a coalition. If it cannot deliver on all these, why should Opposition parties work with the Congress? Yet, the team led by Rahul Gandhi has failed in strengthening old bonds and creating new ties. This is why the Congress's sphere of influence is shrinking rapidly.

The million-dollar question is: where will the Congress go? Will the party gerrymander its internal polls due in September 2022 till a Gandhi is reappointed as president? Or, will it once again delay the election hoping that Rahul Gandhi changes his mind after the Bharat Jodo Yatra (now from September)? In that case, the Gandhis, like Bahadur Shah Zafar and his sons, might well be the Congress's last Mughals. However, they still have the time to invest in the right persons, so that the Congress Party can move forward. This is the best service that the Gandhi can perform for the party, and for preserving much that is precious in India's civilisational journey.

Rahul Mukherji is Professor and Chair, Modern Politics of South Asia, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany

BOOKS: REVIEW

Tracing journey of Article 370 from cradle to grave

A new book on Article 370 chronicles its journey from the cradle to the grave through a contested birth, lawyerly machinations in its early years, endemic political skulduggery, episodic displays of judicial statesmanship, and a sudden and swift demise.

"Hamin Ast: A Biography of Article 370" by Arghya Sengupta, Jinaly Dani, Kevin James and Pranay Modi tells the story of how Jammu and Kashmir became part of India in 1947, achieved special status in 1950, shared a fractious relationship with New Delhi for the next seven decades, only to be reduced to a Union territory on August 5, 2019.

According to authors, the nullification of Article 370, like its genesis and much of its operation,

was vexed. "Its formulation was an afterthought to capture the temporary compromise between Srinagar and New Delhi. As relations between the two soured, it became a source of deep mistrust for political forces in Kashmir," the book says.

"The twists and turns of Jammu and Kashmir politics, however, meant that after a tumultuous first decade, Article 370 surprisingly became the mainstay of constitutional relations between India and Jammu and Kashmir; over the next few decades, it was a vehicle of greater integration.

"In the words of (the then) home minister Gulzarilal Nanda, it was 'a tunnel (through which) a good deal of traffic has already passed and more will'. This long journey

'In the words of (the then) home minister Gulzarilal Nanda, it was 'a tunnel (through which) a good deal of traffic has already passed and more will'

of seven decades came to an abrupt halt when the tunnel was razed in 2019," it says.

Historical events and political actors are covered in this book only to the extent that they have a bearing on the drafting, interpretation, operation, and nullification of Article 370.

The authors argue that the emphasis of Article 370 has always been on collective decision-making by



Hamin Ast: A Biography of Article 370
By Arghya Sengupta, Jinaly Dani, Kevin James and Pranay Modi
Navi Books

the representatives of Jammu and Kashmir on the one hand, and the Indian government on the other hand.

The fundamentality of this mutually cooperative decision-making was the cornerstone of the early stages of drafting Article 370, and had remained a central feature of the text of the Article in subsequent iterations of the draft. Ironically, even the erosion of the special status of the state was facilitated by such cooperation, they say.

"In the actions of August 2019, the absolute negation of any participation from Jammu and Kashmir is

squarely antithetical to the original constitutional compact. While that compact, like every other constitutional article, can change, it can change only in the manner that is envisaged. Literal gymnastics may go some way in sidestepping legal difficulties, but if allowed to carry the day, will only do so by extinguishing the spirit of that agreement," they write.

They are of the view that while the nullification of Article 370 was indeed the culmination of a long-standing party-political promise, the nature of a constitutional democracy is such that it requires that party-political promises must also be fulfilled in a constitutional manner.

"Laxity on this front — allowing the adoption of unconstitutional means to fulfil political promises — puts the polity on a slippery slope, where all constitutional norms are destined to become dispensable. This usually does not bode well for the long-term health of democracy and democratic norms of governance," they say.

Cipla betting big on digitisation and emerging segments

Drug major Cipla is betting big on digitisation and emerging segments like biosimilars and mRNA aided medications to drive its next phase of growth.

The Mumbai-based drug maker is also bullish on maximising value opportunity in the complex generics in the US market.

It is also looking to scale up its US core formulations sales on the back of respiratory and peptide franchises while monitoring upcoming complex product launches in the second half of the current fiscal.

"Digitalisation in healthcare found its rightful place during the pandemic, and there is a need to expand and support the essential backup services to enable digital healthcare to function efficiently in all primary and secondary healthcare centres," Cipla Executive Vice-Chairperson Samina Hamied said in the company's Annual Report for 2021-22.

The drug firm has embarked on the digital transformation of the value chain across functions, including finance, R&D, manufacturing, supply chain, HR, customer outreach and stakeholder



engagement, she added.

Over the past few years, the company has set up several foundational elements to drive the digitisation and automation plans right from adopting latest trends to transform patient reach and customer care via digitalisation, Hamied stated.

"We have also been reimagining field force engagements with health care professionals (HCPs) in global markets

through virtual knowledge sharing platforms. Our aspiration is to create plants of the future in a digitally native organisation, that will transform the lives of our people and all our stakeholders," she noted.

It is time for the industry to take note of advanced tools and emerging technologies powered by advanced analytics, robotics and automation that have the potential to revolutionise every element of pharma

manufacturing within the next few years, Hamied said.

"Going forward all our growth engines will be fueled by our digital transformation initiatives," Cipla Managing Director and Global CEO Umang Vohra noted.

Elaborating further, he said that it would be important to watch out for the innovative trends in healthcare that are bringing about a paradigm shift be it mRNA technology,

vaccines with DNA sub-units or the technology around some of the antibodies and cancer reversal.

Besides, the company would also ensure that within respiratory therapy, it has a robust range of offerings comprising innovative drug-device combinations and even bio-drugs that are gaining steam in the US, Vohra said.

"We will ensure steadfast rigour in our respiratory filings and new launches and maintain market beating growth," he added.

He noted that the company is passionate about building a strong global wellness franchise and are working towards identifying more brands with high consumer potential across India and South Africa.

"We will continue our execution on branded market portfolio including peptides, brand building and improvement in manpower productivity across markets," Vohra stated.

Cipla, the country's third largest drug maker, has 47 manufacturing sites around the world which cater to around 86 markets across the globe.

Maruti Suzuki aims to produce 20 lakh units this fiscal says Chairman RC Bhargava



Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) data, domestic passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market stood at 30,69,499 units in 2021-22, as compared to 27,11,457 units in 2020-21.

On the outlook for the current year, he said, "The vehicle production would increase as the situation regarding the availability of semiconductors has improved. Your company has also made further provisions to enhance production. I am exhorting our team to reach 2 million units, though doing that remains a challenge."

Bhargava further said the launch of Grand Vitara, which will be manufactured by Toyota at its Karnataka factory,

"is one of the reasons why we are expecting to increase production and challenge 2 million units". The new SUV will also come with Toyota's strong hybrid technology, which "is the first-time cars with this technology would be manufactured in India", he claimed. Enhancement of Maruti Suzuki's SUV portfolio is necessary to offset the decline in sales of the non-premium hatchbacks, the core segment of the company, which declined by 5 per cent in FY22 due to rising costs as compared to 2020-2021, and were lower by 29 per cent as against 2018-19, he added.

"On the other hand, the SUV sector continued to grow. We did not have enough models in this segment to compete effectively, though the situation has now become much better with the launch of the remodelled Brezza and the global launch of Grand Vitara," Bhargava said. More models are to follow, he said adding, "We are hopeful that MSIL's market share will rapidly increase in the SUV segment."

Maruti Suzuki India will increase its production and aims to produce 20 lakh units in the ongoing fiscal with improving availability of semiconductors, according to company Chairman RC Bhargava.

In his address to shareholders in the company's annual report for 2021-22, he said the upcoming mid-sized SUV Grand Vitara will play a key role in the challenge to touch 20 lakh units.

In 2021-22, total sales of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) increased by 13.4 per cent to 16.52 lakh units. It had lost out on sales in the first quarter of the fiscal due to the pandemic and production being affected by the shortage of semiconductors, mainly for domestic models, Bhargava wrote. "The number of unmet bookings with the company at the end of the year rose to about 2.7 lakhs," he said, adding MSIL's market share declined to 43.4 per cent from nearly 50 per cent as it lost some opportunity in the domestic market.

As per Society of Indian

Skoda reopens bookings for Kodiaq, deliveries in Jan-Mar 2023



Skoda Auto India on Wednesday said it has again commenced the bookings of its SUV Kodiaq, with deliveries scheduled in January-March 2023.

The company had earlier opened the bookings for the model in January this year.

Prices start at Rs 37.49 lakh and will be applicable for the January-March quarter of 2023, the Czech automaker said in a statement.

The booking amount is Rs

50,000, and the SUV can only be booked across the company's dealerships across the country, it added.

The three Kodiaq trims are tagged at Rs 37.49 lakh, Rs 38.49 lakh and Rs 39.99 lakh, respectively.

"We are opening bookings for Q1 2023 and will announce phase-wise booking windows for the rest of the 2023 volumes," Skoda Auto India Brand Director Zac Hollis stated.

Ohmium and Spirare Energy collaborate with NTPC NETRA for India's green hydrogen grid project

FW DESK

Ohmium International, Inc., a green hydrogen company that designs, manufactures, and deploys PEM Electrolyzers, is collaborating with Spirare Energy, a leading provider of on-site energy generation systems, to generate green hydrogen at

customized electrolyzers. The project will supply up to 52 tons of green hydrogen annually for the power generation and energy storage application. "Green hydrogen offers India the opportunity to become a global energy leader—and with Spirare and NTPC we're delivering on that potential.



NTPC is pioneering the green hydrogen sector in India and we're thrilled that they are utilizing our Made in India electrolyzers," said Arne Ballantine, CEO of Ohmium International. "We look forward to showing how our modular, high-volume, low-cost PEM electrolyzers can scale rapidly and efficiently to reach megawatt to gigawatt applications."

Trident announces broad base of its Board of Directors to empower Professional Management

FW DESK

Trident Limited announces that its Founder and Chairman has expressed his intention to the Board to step down as Director & Non-Executive Chairman of the Company due to his persistent health issues and family commitments. Respecting the request received from Rajinder Gupta to relieve him from the duties of the Chairman of the Trident Limited, the board commended the unparalleled contribution of the founder in building the company and graced the decision of prioritizing health care and family commitments.

Rajinder Gupta while expressing his desire to step down

from the position said, "After devoting over three decades at Trident Limited, I requested the Board of Directors to relieve me and support to prioritize my overall health and wellbeing. My family will also be with me to rebuild my physical and emotional wellbeing." The outgoing Chairman expressed his gratitude to the board and shareholders for supporting him over the past three decades and trusting him to build Trident Limited. He said, I am hopeful that I would be able to serve once I regain my physical and emotional fitness.



India should set up small modular reactors to meet energy demands: Niti member V K Saraswat

Niti Aayog member and scientist V K Saraswat on Sunday suggested that the government should focus on setting up small modular reactors as it would help meet the country's energy needs and also in replacing aging thermal power plants.

Saraswat also said nuclear power plant projects which have been set up under the fleet mode production, should be accelerated, so that India is able to meet base load requirements at the earliest.

"We are suggesting that in future we should go for small modular reactors which will be able to meet this (energy) requirements in a distributed manner.

Small modular reactors (SMRs) are advanced nuclear reactors that have a power capacity of up to 300 MW(e) per unit, which is about one-third of the generating capacity of traditional nuclear power reactors.

Under the fleet mode, a nuclear power plant is expected to be built over a period of five years from the first pour of concrete. According to Saraswat, the advantage of an advanced modular reactor is that it is factory fabricated and can be operated by any agency and there could also be a larger participation of the private sector in that. Currently, India operates 22 reactors with a total capacity of 6,780 MW in operation.

Last year in December, Minister of State in the Department of Space and Department of Atomic Energy Jitendra Singh had said the share of nuclear power in the total electricity generation in the country was about 3.1 per cent in 2020-21.

Motorola launches moto g32 with a brilliant 90Hz 6.5" FHD display

KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

display, the device allows clearer and sharper views and transitions. Along with this brilliant display, the moto g32 features stereo speakers with Dolby Atmos® enabling the user to immerse in fuller sound, better clarity, and improved bass on every beat.

Moreover, to boost performance and extend a seamless experience, all while keeping the device cool, the moto g32 is powered by Snapdragon® 680

Octa-core processor.

Despite being an affordable smartphone, the moto g32 comes with a near-stock Android 12 and focuses on security and privacy with its remarkable ThinkShield for mobile protection feature that ensures enhanced protection from threats to the device. The phone also comes with an assured update to Android 13 and guarantees 3 years of security updates.



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Kerala woman bags international entrepreneurs' award

Kerala-based entrepreneur Sangeetha Abhayan has won the World Women Entrepreneurs' Award instituted by the Junior Chamber International Hong Kong (JCIHK) for her handloom and handicrafts startup's performance in tune with the United Nations sustainable development goals.

JCIHK, which provides development opportunities for youngsters, chose Sangeetha, who is CEO of eweworld.com from more than 225 female entrepreneurs from across the world, the organisers said.

Based out of Kasaragod, eweworld.com, won international



recognition for creating social changes and financial stability among women entrepreneurs.

"The online platform, whose name eWe is an abbreviation of Empowering Women Entre-

World's Largest Fintech Conference is Back

MUMBAI: The largest fintech conference in the world Global Fintech Fest (GFF) is back with its third edition. Organized by the Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India, Fintech Convergence Council (FCC), the Payments Council of India (PCI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), GFF 2022 will be held September 20-22, 2022 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai. Pre-event festivities will begin virtually on September 19, 2022.



GFF 2022 is being supported by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), National Investment Promotion & Facilitation Agency (Invest India), Startup India, Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) and ONDC. Special Partners of GFF 2022 are World

Bank Group, KNOMAD, Better Than Cash Alliance and International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Elaborating on the theme of the conference, Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chair - GFF 2022, Chairman, Axiol Venture and Co-founder, Infosys, said, "Our Financial institutions play a fundamental role in achieving sustainable goals by reorienting investments towards more sustainable technologies and businesses and contributing to the creation of a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and circular economy.

Ohmium and Spirare Energy collaborate with NTPC NETRA for India's green hydrogen grid project

FW DESK

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Tiger Shroff collaborates with BUILD. to enter Protein Supplements Market

KULBIR SINGH KALSI

Tiger Shroff has collaborated with BUILD., a promising start-up offering high quality sports nutrition supplements, to launch a customised new series of health supplements. Through this strategic partnership, Tiger's brand PROWL forays into the health and nutrition category.

This partnership is focused on democratising fitness and active lifestyle for all and focuses on Shroff's philosophy of staying fit. Catering to the



idea that 'fitness is for all', the brand aims to bridge the protein deficit amongst the Indian population.

Talking about the association, Tiger Shroff said, "I be-



lieve that the BUILD. team have the expertise and capabilities to develop and market an international quality "India-manufactured product", which is quite evident from their

recently launched BUILD. range. The BUILD. products truly offer an international, high-quality protein supplement range, which tastes great and stands as a true testament that Indian brands can offer a product that is at par with international brands. I love sports and fitness; I celebrate movement and activity. BUILD. believes in that too. That's how there exist strong synergies between my brand PROWL and BUILD. Through this partnership, I am looking forward to developing a

custom created Prowl range of supplements from BUILD., which will be launched soon!"

On the association, Soumava Sengupta, CEO BUILD. said, "Tiger is one of the most popular stars and the undisputed fitness icon in India today. His regime and dedication to fitness is of the level of an elite athlete. We at BUILD. share his philosophy on fitness and strongly believe that fitness is for everyone and not restricted only to gyms and weight training."

Steel players expect govt to withdraw export duty; to go ahead with capex plans

Export duty imposed on certain steel products recently will not force steel makers to review their capital expenditure plans as top producers expect it to be a "short-term" move to stabilise inflation.

On May 21, the government hiked the duty on exports of iron ore by up to 50 per cent and for a few steel intermediaries to 15 per cent. It also waived customs duty on the import of some raw materials, including coking coal and ferronickel, used by the steel industry.



Quest Global Becomes Arm Approved Design Partner

Quest Global, one of the world's fastest growing engineering services firms, announced it has joined the Arm Approved Design Partner program. This recognition further enables Quest Global to better support the organizations, by combining its expertise in designing ASICs (Application Specific Integrated Circuit) and Custom SoCs (Systems on Chip) with Arm's powerful IP catalog.

As an Arm Approved Design Partner, Quest Global will have select access to Arm's vast library of IP, tools and models, as well as roadmap updates. This partnership will further strengthen Quest Global's reputation as a partner of choice by providing access to its team of extraordinary silicon engineers and offering Arm customers with design support to deliver Arm-based SoCs specifically augmented for target markets.

Speaking on the occasion, Satish Bagalkotkar, CTO, Semiconductor at Quest Global, said, "It is a very proud moment for all of us. This association will allow

us to support our customers with ASIC development, helping them fast track their projects to market. Our international presence, wide range of expertise, brilliant team of engineers and our ability to deliver on our commitments no matter how challenging, will further enhance our capabilities to solve challenges faced across industries."

The organization currently supports designs up to 3nm and 60% of its silicon engineers work on 7/6/5/4/3 nm technology nodes. The semiconductor team at Quest Global has already supported 300+ custom SoC tape-outs in the last five years delivering organization specific requirements, achieving desired design frequency and low power performance targets at the target technology nodes.

Tata Chemicals gains nearly 9 pc on strong Q1 results



Shares of Tata Chemicals gained nearly 9% in morning trade on Wednesday after the company posted strong first-quarter earnings. Shares of Tata Chemicals opened on a bullish note at Rs 999.95, then gained further ground to touch Rs 1,043, registering a jump of 8.96% over its previous close. On the NSE, the stock opened at Rs 1,015, then climbed to Rs 1,038.05, higher by 8.47 per cent over its last close.

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Lower bad loans push PSU banks' profitability in June quarter

Public sector banks have raked in more profits in the three months ended June on the back of a persistent decline in bad loans and the trend may have a positive bearing on their balance sheets in the coming quarters.

In the June quarter, Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and State Bank of India (SBI) were in the lowest quartile as far as Gross Non Performing Assets (NPAs) and net NPAs were concerned, according to an analysis of the quarterly financial numbers published by the public sector lenders. Cumulatively, all the 12 public sector banks reported a profit of about Rs 15,306 crore in the three months ended June, registering an annual growth of 9.2 per cent. However, leading public sector lenders — SBI and PNB — posted lower profits in the June quarter.

During the April-June period of the previous fiscal, state-owned



banks recorded a total profit of Rs 14,013 crore. As per the analysis, the gross NPAs reported by BoM and SBI were 3.74 per cent and 3.91 per cent of their total advances, respectively, in the first quarter of the current fiscal. The net NPAs for these banks came down to 0.88 per cent and 1 per cent respectively, at the end of June. Gross NPAs of other public sector lenders varied from 6.26 per cent to 14.90 per cent. In the

June quarter, Bank of Baroda's gross NPAs stood at 6.26 per cent and it was 14.90 per cent for Central Bank of India, which is still under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework of the Reserve Bank of India. Most of the banks' net NPAs were below 3 per cent of their respective total advances. Only three lenders — Union Bank of India (3.31 per cent), Central Bank of India (3.93 per cent) and Punjab National

Bank (4.28 per cent) — reported net NPAs of more than 3% in the June quarter.

Narendra Solanki, head of equity research at Anand Rathi Shares & Stock Brokers, said NPAs have broadly reduced, resulting in lower provisions and better profitability. However, due to rising yields, Mark-to-Market (MTM) losses were also reported in treasuries which should get incrementally lower once the rate hike pace slows and finally ends, he noted. MTM losses occur when the financial assets held are valued by the market at a price lower than the purchase price. "Largely, with declining provisioning and improving quality of books, the public sector banks space is in a sweet spot to target growth in the coming quarters. Also, the ability to gather low cost deposits at scale is positive in current scenario," Solanki said.

To improve the financial

health of public sector banks, the government has implemented a comprehensive 4Rs strategy — Recognition of NPAs transparently, Resolution and recovery of value from stressed accounts, Recapitalisation of the banks, and reforms in the banks and the wider financial ecosystem. As part of the strategy, the government has infused Rs 3,10,997 crore to recapitalise banks during the last five financial years — from 2016-17 to 2020-21. Out of the total amount, Rs 34,997 crore was sourced through budgetary allocations and Rs 2,76,000 crore through issuance of recapitalisation bonds.

Scheduled commercial banks recovered Rs 8,60,369 crore over the last eight financial years by way of resolution of the NPAs, as per official data. The gross NPAs of scheduled commercial banks hit a six-year low of 5.9 per cent in FY22.

ED raid at houses of Karuvannur bank fraud accused



Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday carried out raids at locations linked to the accused in the Rs 300 crore Karuvannur Cooperative bank scam, which triggered a political row in Kerala recently.

Sources in the ED told to media that searches were conducted simultaneously at the residences of all the five accused in this district. "The officials from the ED unit in Kochi conducted the searches and other details cannot be divulged right now," they said.

The action comes at a time when the agitated depositors are on a warpath against the management of the ruling CPI(M)-controlled Karuvannur Cooperative bank, located at Irinjalakuda, demanding return of their investment.

The Opposition Congress had recently urged Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to hand

over the investigation into the Cooperative bank scam to CBI, alleging that there was not much progress in the ongoing probe by the state agencies.

After a brief interval, the bank again sparked a controversy last month over the death of a woman depositor, whose family had alleged that she was denied money for advanced treatment by the management despite having lakhs of rupees as deposit in the bank. They also staged a protest sit-in in front of the bank with the woman's body, following which opposition parties came out against the ruling CPI(M) which controls the bank.

The loan scam was reported in the bank, located in Thrissur district, in July 2021, following which a case was registered against six bank officials and an inquiry launched.

ATM fraud investigation cells established in Haryana



Haryana Police on Thursday said it has set up 22 investigation cells in all districts to effectively deal with increasing cases of ATM fraud.

A Haryana Police spokesperson said the state crime branch has handed over 132 untraced cases from different districts to the ATM Fraud Investigation Cells (AFICs).

The AFICs have been established under the Crime Branch of the state police and started functioning last month, he said.

In the present era, fraudsters cheat people, replace their ATM cards with another, and withdraw money instantly from that account," he said.

Though constant efforts are being made by police to deal with such crimes in a coordinated and effective manner, many times untraced reports are given by the district police in such cases, and the accused escape, said the spokesperson.

Additional Director General of Police, State Crime Branch, O P Singh has given stern instructions to crack such cases and work on untraced cases again, said the spokesperson.

Interest rate hike unlikely to impact tractor demand, says Escorts Kubota Group CFO Bharat Madan

The interest rate hike by RBI is unlikely to have a significant impact on tractor demand but high inflation is a concern that can affect sales, says Escorts Kubota Ltd Group CFO Bharat Madan. With the second and third quarters of ongoing fiscal year likely to witness flattish or even decline in sales due to off-season and high base of last year, and pick-up happening again in the fourth quarter, the tractor industry is likely to clock low to mid single-digit growth.

"There is a marginal impact on demand...We don't see any significant impact on the demand side because of interest rate hikes," He was responding to a query on how the interest rate hike by the RBI could impact tractor sales. Escorts Kubota is a farm equipment manufacturer. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points. This was the third consecutive increase since May, effectively bringing interest rate to the pre-pandemic level.

"If you look at the industry in retail finance in tractors, the interest rate charges as it is very high. Those rates do not move with the happenings in the RBI side. They're not really floating rate," he explained. At present, interest rates on tractor loans could range from 9 per cent to over 20 per cent per annum, depending on tenure and banks. On what could impact tractor demand, he said, "I think it'll be more because of the inflation where the impact is coming, but the RBI increasing interest rates has a marginal impact only."

There have been some pressures on the rubber side and tyre prices are moving up, he said, adding, however prices of other commodities like steel have gone down. As for the outlook of the industry, Madan said, "We are still expecting low to mid single-digit growth for the industry this year. We have seen that in the first quarter, the industry has grown 16 per cent because of the low base effect of COVID. Last year was the second wave of COVID and the industry got impacted." The next two to three months will not be really good, he added.

"Normally, monsoon is not a season month for the industry but from September onward, we see the pick-up should happen. If the monsoon distribution is really good we should see some positives coming in the second half of this year," Madan said.

The expectation is that the industry will do well in the last quarter, he said adding, "Q2 and Q3 may see flattish growth or marginal degrowth. In Q3 the base (of last year) is high but in Q4 we can see a good growth number coming in."

Madan said Q2 is normally a softer quarter due to the off-season, while in Q3 normally the peak season comes up.

However, he said, "This time, festive season is starting early. So the stocking will start happening from September onwards and October, they're all expecting to be the big month. The three months really play between two quarters and that's why overall for the six-month period, you may not see a major impact coming in."

The Q4, which is a standalone quarter, normally sees a good growth, especially in the northern pockets if the rainfall is good, Madan said.

As per industry estimates, domestic tractor sales grew 13 per cent at over 9 lakh units in 2021 compared to more than 8 lakh units in 2020.

Bombay HC grants bail to former VP of Gitanjali Group in PNB scam case

The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to Vipul Chitalia, former vice-president of Mehul Choksi-promoted Gitanjali Group, more than four years after he was arrested in the multi-crore rupees Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested Chitalia in March 2018 alleging that he was responsible for handling unauthorised Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and foreign Letters of Credit (FLCs) and maintaining contact with the bank officials. Justice Bharati Dangre granted bail to Chitalia on Friday. A detailed order with bail conditions was not available immediately. Chitalia has been booked under the Indian Penal Code sections related to criminal conspiracy, cheating and fraud and also under the Prevention



of Corruption Act. He approached the HC through advocate Vijay Aggarwal after a special CBI court refused him bail in December 2020.

Chitalia had been in prison for four years and the charges in the case were yet to be framed, so he should be granted bail, advocate Aggarwal argued. Special public prosecutor Hiten Venegaokar, appearing for the CBI, opposed the plea, contending that Chitalia, alongwith Choksi, was instrumental in arranging fraudulent transactions and knew about the fraud from the very beginning. He was one of the two authorised signatories of Gitanjali Group when it filed applications for LoUs from banks, Venegaokar said. The CBI's case is that Choksi, Chitalia and several others in connivance with some officials of PNB duped the public sector lender of Rs 12,000 crore by obtaining LoUs fraudulently. An LoU is a repayment guarantee given by a bank in India when a firm wants to avail of credit from overseas branches of other banks.

Domestic airfare caps to be removed from Aug 31 : Jyotiraditya Scindia

Limits imposed on domestic airfares will be removed from August 31, after a span of approximately 27 months, the Union Aviation Ministry said on Wednesday.

"The decision to remove air fare caps has been taken after careful analysis of daily demand and prices of air turbine fuel (ATF). Stabilisation has set in and we are certain that the sector is poised for growth in domestic traffic in the near future," Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Twitter.

ATF prices have been coming down during the last few weeks after jumping to record levels, primarily due to the Russia-Ukraine war that began on February 24. On August 1, the price of ATF in Delhi was Rs 1.21 lakh per kilo-litre, which was around 14 per cent lower than last month. The ministry had imposed lower and upper limits on domestic airfares based on flight durations when services were resumed on May 25, 2020 after a two-month lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, airlines currently cannot charge a passenger less than Rs 2,900 (excluding



Air India to operate 24 additional domestic flights from Aug 20

Air India on Thursday said it will operate 24 additional domestic flights from August 20 onwards. "The additional 24 flights include two new frequencies from Delhi to Mumbai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad, and from Mumbai to Chennai and Hyderabad, as well as one new frequency on the Mumbai-Bengaluru route and Ahmedabad-Pune route," the airline said in a statement. Air India MD and CEO Campbell Wilson said, "Over the past six months, Air India has been working closely with our partners to return aircraft to service, and we are delighted that this effort is now bearing fruit." Air India's narrowbody aircraft fleet stands at 70, of which 54 are currently serviceable. The remaining 16 aircraft will progressively return to service by early 2023.

GST) and more than Rs 8,800 (excluding GST) for domestic flights of less than 40 minutes. The lower caps were there to

protect the financially weaker airlines and the upper caps to protect passengers from high fares.

Oil India net profit triples on oil, gas price boost

Oil India Ltd (OIL), the nation's second-largest state explorer, reported a tripling of its net profit in the June quarter on record oil and gas price realisation.

Its net profit was Rs 1,555.46 crore, or Rs 14.34 per share, in April-June compared to Rs 507.94 crore, or Rs 4.68 a share, in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement.

The earnings rose as the company got USD 112.72 per barrel price for crude oil it sold in the quarter as opposed to USD 67.15 a barrel rate realised in the same period last year. Gas price realisation more than doubled to USD 6.1 per million British thermal

unit from USD 1.79. Higher crude oil and natural gas prices stem from the rally in international oil prices that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Turnover nearly doubled to Rs 6,029.86 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal year that began on April 1.

The earnings were also aided by a 4 per cent rise in crude oil production at 0.78 million tonnes and an 8 per cent rise in gas output at 771 million standard cubic metres.



Himachal Pradesh is currently facing a debt of Rs 64,904 crore, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur informed the state assembly on Thursday.

He gave the information during a debate on a no-confidence motion against his government on the second day of the ongoing monsoon session.

The CM rose from his seat and gave the figure, correcting Congress legislator Jagat Singh Negi, who during the debate claimed that the hill state owes

Himachal facing debt burden of Rs 64,904 cr: CM Jai Ram Thakur

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The CM rose from his seat and gave the figure, correcting Congress legislator Jagat Singh Negi, who during the debate claimed that the hill state owes

Rs 80,000 crore. Thakur said that one Congress legislator says the state is facing a debt burden of Rs 70,000 crore, the other says Rs 75,000 and yet another says Rs 80,000 crore, none of which was true. The CM said that the growth

Eicher Motors stock jumps nearly 1 pc after June quarter earnings

Shares of Eicher Motors on Thursday gained nearly 1 per cent after the company posted strong earnings for the quarter ended June.

The stock went up by 0.65 per cent to settle at Rs 3,175 apiece on the BSE. During the day, the stock opened strong at Rs 3,249 and gained further ground to touch its 52-week high level of Rs 3,260.85. On the NSE, it gained 0.71 per cent to settle at Rs 3,177 apiece. In volume terms, 60,000 shares were traded on BSE and over 21 lakh shares on NSE during the day. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 515.31 points higher at 59,332.60 on Thursday.

On Wednesday, Eicher Motors reported an over two-fold increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 611 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, driven



by robust sales in the international markets. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 237 crore in the June quarter of the last fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 3,397 crore in the April-June period compared to Rs 1,974 crore in the year-ago period, Eicher Motors had said in a regulatory filing.

"Our international volumes continued to record consistent growth with more than 60 per cent increase as compared to the previous year. We have registered the highest ever quarterly revenues and EBITDA on the back of record international sales volumes," Eicher Managing Director Siddhartha Lal noted.

Married daughters also entitled for compensation: Karnatka High Court



The Karnataka High Court has held that married daughters are entitled for compensation by insurance companies on the loss of their parents in accidents. The HC said the Supreme Court has held that married sons are also entitled for compensation in such cases. "This Court also cannot make any discrimination whether they are married sons or married daughters and hence, the very contention that married daughters of deceased are not entitled for compensation cannot be accepted," it said. The HC single judge bench of Justice H P Sandesh heard an appeal filed by an insurance company challenging the award of compensation to married daughters of one Renuka (aged 57) who was killed in an accident on April 12, 2012 near Yamalur, Hubballi, in north Karnataka.

The CM said that the growth

Assam hikes daily wages of tea garden workers by Rs 27

The daily wages of tea garden workers in Assam were hiked by Rs 27, the second increase in such payments since the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government came to power in the state in May last year, an official said on Tuesday.

The upward revision of wages will be effective from August 1, he said.

The decision to revise the wages was taken in a meeting among Sarma, representatives of tea associations and workers' unions.

"Happy to share that in a meeting with tea associations, it was decided to hike the workers' wage by Rs 27, thus raising their daily wage to Rs 232 and Rs 210 in Brahmaputra Valley & Barak Valley respectively," the chief minister wrote on Twitter.

Sarma said welfare of tea garden workers has always been his government's top priority.

He said the cash hike in dai-



ly wages of tea garden workers is "over and above the ration and other benefits".

"All garden workers will get ration cards and we urged the gardens to take Fair Price Shop licenses. Representatives of Indian Tea Association, NE Tea Association, Tea Association of India, Bharatiya Chah Parishad, Assam Tea Planters'

Association & Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha were present," he said on the microblogging site.

Traditionally, tea workers' wages are largely paid in two components — cash and other benefits such as ration, health services and education.

The previous wage revision was done in May last year soon

after Sarma became the chief minister, and it was made effective from February 22, 2021.

During Wednesday's meeting, Sarma also assured the planters of raising the government subsidy for orthodox tea from Rs 7 to Rs 10 per kg.

State Industry and Commerce Minister Bimal Borah

had on Tuesday held a meeting with small tea growers and workers for the fixation of wages.

"representatives from the various tea workers' unions have been requesting that the worker's wages be fixed."

"Hence, chaired a meeting, today with the Hon'ble Minister of Tea Tribes Welfare & Labour Welfare @sanjoykishan1 dangoriya & other associated officials to finalise the wages of Small Tea Garden Workers as per direction by the Hon'ble CM in the meeting on May 24, 2022," Borah said on the microblogging site.

No announcement on the wages of small tea garden workers has been made yet.

Assam produced 667.73 million kg of tea in 2021, of which small gardens accounted for 311.12 million kg, as per Tea Board India data. The overall tea production in the country was 1,343.06 million kg.

INTERNATIONAL

US, Australia, Japan urge China to immediately cease military exercises

United States, Australia and Japan have urged China to immediately cease its military exercises and reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. They appreciated ASEAN's statement about the importance of deescalating tension in the Taiwan Strait, according to the statement.

A joint statement was issued by US Secretary of State Tony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa after their in-person meeting in Phnom Penh on the margins of the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

The Secretary and the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their

commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. They appreciated ASEAN's statement about the importance of deescalating tension in the Taiwan Strait, according to the statement.

Sharing the region's desire for diplomacy to avoid the risks of miscalculation, the secretary of state and foreign ministers expressed their concern about the People's Republic of China's (PRC) recent actions that gravely affect international peace and stability, including the use of large-scale military exercises.

They condemned the PRC's



launch of ballistic missiles, five of which the Japanese government reported landed in its exclusive economic zones, raising tension and destabilising the region. The Secretary and the Foreign Ministers urged the PRC to immediately cease the military exercises,

said the joint statement. There is no change in the respective one China policies, where applicable, and basic positions on Taiwan of Australia, Japan, or the United States, they said.

Expressing their commitment to deepening the trilateral partnership among Australia, Japan, and the United States to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific region, the three diplomats highlighted that this partnership rests on the unshakable foundation of shared interests and values, including a commitment to freedom, rule of law, human rights, sovereignty

and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes without resorting to threat or use of force, and freedom of navigation and overflight.

The secretary and the foreign ministers reaffirmed their resolve in supporting ASEAN centrality, and the importance of the Pacific Islands countries as partners in the region, said the statement. Maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is vital, not just for Taiwan but for the Philippines and many other countries, Blinken told reporters during a joint press availability with Philippine Sec-

retary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Manalo. What happens in the Taiwan Strait affects the entire region. In many ways, it affects the entire world because the strait, like the South China Sea, is a critical waterway. Almost half the global container fleet, nearly 90 per cent of the world's largest ships, pass through the Taiwan Strait this year, he said.

Since their missile launches, Beijing has taken an irresponsible step of a different kind: They've shut down eight different areas where our two countries have been able to work together, Blinken said.

Trump says he's testifying on Wednesday in New York investigation



Former President Donald Trump will be questioned under oath on Wednesday in the New York attorney general's long-running civil investigation into his dealings as a real estate mogul, he confirmed in a post on his Truth Social account.

Trump's testimony comes amid a flurry of legal activity surrounding him, taking place just days after FBI agents searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida as part of an unrelated federal probe into whether he took classified records when he left the White House.

The New York civil investigation, led by Attorney General Letitia James, involves allegations that Trump's company, the Trump Organisation, mis-stated the value of prized assets like golf courses and skyscrapers, misleading lenders and tax authorities.

In New York City tonight. Seeing racist NYS Attorney General tomorrow, for a continuation of the greatest Witch Hunt in US history! Trump wrote on Truth Social, invoking his oft-repeated claims about James, who is Black, and the investigation.

My great country, and myself, are being attacked from all sides," Trump added. "Banana Republic! Messages seeking comment were left with James' office and with Trump's lawyer.

Ukraine says 9 Russian warplanes destroyed in Crimea blasts



Ukraine has said that nine Russian warplanes were destroyed in a deadly string of explosions at an air base in Crimea that appeared to be the result of a Ukrainian attack, which would represent a significant escalation in the war.

Russia on Wednesday denied any aircraft were damaged in Tuesday's blasts or that any attack took place. But satellite photos clearly showed at least seven fighter planes at the base had been blown up and others probably damaged.

Ukrainian officials stopped short of publicly claiming responsibility for the explosions, while mocking Russia's explanation that a careless smoker might have caused ammunition at the Saki air base to catch fire and blow up. Analysts also said that explanation doesn't make sense and that the Ukrainians could have used anti-ship missiles to strike the base.

I would rather lose than win on a false promise: Rishi Sunak

Britain's prime ministerial candidate Rishi Sunak has insisted that he would rather lose the Conservative Party leadership race to replace Boris Johnson than win on a false promise on how he plans to tackle the economic crisis.

In an interview with the BBC, the British Indian former Chancellor said he was committed to helping the most vulnerable families with the cost-of-living crisis and felt a "moral responsibility to go further" and provide "extra help" over the winter.

The issue has become the key dividing line between him and his rival, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, who has pledged tax cuts which the former finance minister insists will benefit wealthier households rather than those who need it most.



I would rather lose than win on a false promise, Sunak, 42, said. "What I'm determined to do is help people across this country through what will be a very difficult winter. My first preference is always not to take money off people in the first place," he said. As the candidates

continue to be grilled by Conservative Party members who will be voting in the election in hustings up and down the UK, the issue of soaring inflation and prices has dominated the agenda.

"People can judge me on my record, reiterated Sunak in his

BBC interview on Wednesday night, referring to his work as Chancellor through the COVID lockdown. "People can judge me on their record - when bills were going up by around 1,200 pounds earlier this year, I made sure the most vulnerable received around 1,200 pounds," he pointed out. Sunak also promised to "go further" than what he has already announced if elected Prime Minister.

I know millions of people are worried about inflation, particularly the cost of their energy bills. What I've said if I'm Prime Minister I will go further in supporting those families who most need support because the situation is worse than when I announced those measures earlier this year," he said.

Large explosions rock Russian military air base in Crimea



Powerful explosions rocked a Russian air base in Crimea and sent towering clouds of smoke over the landscape Tuesday in what may mark an escalation of the war in Ukraine.

At least one person was killed and several others were wounded, authorities said. Russia's Defense Ministry denied the Saki base on the Black Sea had been shelled and said instead that munitions had blown up there. But Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that it was hit by Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles.

Videos posted on social networks showed sunbathers on nearby beaches fleeing as huge flames and pillars of smoke rose over the horizon from multiple points, accompanied by loud booms. Crimea Today News said on Telegram that witnesses reported fire on a runway and damage to nearby homes as a result of what it said were dozens of blasts. Russia's state news agency Tass quoted an unidentified ministry source as saying the explosions' primary cause appeared to be a violation of fire safety requirements.

The ministry said no warplanes were damaged. Ukraine's Defense Ministry said sarcastically on Facebook: The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine cannot establish the cause of the fire, but

Dutch man accused in online harassment case found guilty

A Canadian jury found a Dutch man guilty of extortion, harassment and other charges related to a case of a Canadian teenager who was blackmailed to expose herself in front of a webcam.

The 15-year-old later committed suicide after detailing her harassment in a YouTube video watched by millions around the world. The jury in the British Columbia Supreme Court trial of Aydin Coban has found him guilty on all charges he faced, including sexual communication with a young person to commit a sexual offence and possession and distribution of child pornography in relation to the Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, teen Amanda Todd. She was 15 years old when she died by suicide in 2012 after posting a video that described being tormented by an online harasser. The jury's unanimous verdict comes a day after deliberations got underway. Coban was extradited from the Netherlands to Canada in 2020 after being convicted in Amsterdam of similar charges involving dozens of young girls and gay men. Amanda Todd brought the problem of cyber bullying to mainstream attention in Canada after she posted the video on YouTube in which she told her story with handwritten signs, describing how she was lured by a stranger to expose her breasts on a webcam.

Cabinet approves signing of Audio Visual Co-Production Treaty between India, Australia



NEWDELHI: With a view to promote co-production of films, the Union Cabinet has approved signing of 'Audio Visual Co-Production Treaty' between India and Australia.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of an 'Audio Visual Co-Production Treaty'. Audio Visual co-production treaties are enabling documents which facilitate co-production of films between two countries. Such agreements are Umbrella Agreements under which private, quasi-government or governmental agencies enter into contracts to produce films together. India has, so far, signed 15 Audio Visual Co-Production Treaties with foreign countries. Australia has emerged as a preferred destination for shooting Indian films.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind condemns Israeli barbarism in Gaza

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) President, Syed Sadatullah Husaini has condemned the latest Israeli attack on Gaza. In a statement to the media, the JIH President said: "We condemn the latest Israeli barbarism in Gaza. Taking the excuse of carrying out a targeted killing, the Israeli Defence Forces attacked Gaza's Rafah refugee camp in which 43 civilians were killed including 15 children and four women. More than 300 Palestinians have been wounded. We endorse the statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories who said that: 'Israel cannot claim that it's defending itself in this conflict. Israel's air raids



in Gaza are not only illegal but irresponsible." In fact, we feel that these attacks on innocent civilians amount to war crimes, and Israel must be held accountable and punished by the international community for

this unforgivable brutality." Husaini averred: "Is it not hypocrisy and professing double standards for Western nations to condone the latest Israeli barbarism and stark abuse of human rights by saying that 'they stand by Israel and its right to defend itself'. This not only exposes the complete bias of the West in the Israel-Palestine conflict but also puts a question mark on the integrity and sincerity of the West in desiring an early resolution to the Palestinian problem. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind appeals to the international community as well as the Government of India to pressurize Israel to desist from such open aggression on Palestinians and spare the world of further conflict and violence."

New Survey Elevates Site Reliability Engineering as the force Multiplier for Digital Experiences

Sumo Logic the SaaS analytics platform to enable reliable and secure cloud-native applications, today unveiled the results of the Global SRE Pulse 2022, a survey of insights from the global IT community, which highlights the growing adoption of SRE as a central operating model to deliver digital services and applications. The survey was conducted by DevOps Institute to establish a baseline on the current state of SRE in practice. "With the explosion of digital services, SRE has rapidly evolved to become an essential collaboration center across development and operations teams to deliver digital experiences," said Bruno Kurtic, Founding VP of Product & Strategy, Sumo Logic.

Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference: Special Emphasis on Africa, Asia Pacific Region & Reconciliation between North and South Korea

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) is hosting "Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference," a five-day international summit with related peace events at the Jamsil Lotte Hotel in Seoul, South Korea, beginning this week.

World leaders from dozens of countries are gathering from August 11-15, 2022, to address paths to global peace, with a special emphasis on Africa, the Asia Pacific Region and reconciliation between North and South Korea.

A highlight of the August 12 opening ceremony is a presentation of a resolution to propose the development of a Peace Charter, which follows on the foundation of the Seoul Resolution signed at World Summit 2022 (February 2022) in Seoul

by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Prominent international speakers will include: Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Canadian Prime Minister (2006-2015); Hon. Newt Gingrich, US House Speaker (1995-1999); Hon. Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of State (2018-2021); Hon. Dan Burton, US Congressman (1983-2013); and H.E. Brigi Rafini, Executive General, Community of Sahel-Saharan States and Prime Minister (2011-2021), Niger.

NKorea claims disputed victory over virus, blames Seoul



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has declared victory over COVID-19 and ordered preventive measures eased just three months after acknowledging an outbreak, claiming the country's widely disputed success would be recognised as a global health miracle.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency also reported on Thursday that Kim's sister said her brother had suffered a fever and blamed the North Korean outbreak on leaflets flown from across the border from South Korea, while warning of deadly retaliation. Some experts believe North Korea has manipulated the scale of the outbreak to help Kim maintain absolute control of the country amid mounting economic difficulties.

In race to win, UK Conservatives accused of ignoring crises

As Britain swelters through a roaring summer, and braces for a cold financial reckoning in the fall, calls for the Conservative government to act are getting louder.

But the Conservatives are busy choosing a new leader, through a prolonged party election whose priorities often seem remote from the country's growing turmoil.

Britons' energy bills have soared and further hikes are coming as the war in Ukraine squeezes global oil and gas supplies. The Bank of England is predicting a long, deep recession later this year alongside 13% inflation. Meanwhile, temperatures in Britain hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in July for the first time ever, and millions are facing limits on water use as England's green and pleasant land dries to a desiccated brown.

There is little sense of crisis among Conservatives as Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak



crisscross the country wooing the 180,000 party members who will choose a successor to departing Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Under Britain's parliamentary system, the winner of the Tory leadership race to be announced Sept 5 will also become prime minister, without the need for a national election.

Conservative members are largely middle-aged or older, mostly middle-class or affluent, and their views don't always reflect those of the country as a whole.

I'd like to see some true Conservative policies, said Helen Galley, a lawyer and local Con-

servative official attending a candidates' meeting in the English seaside town of Eastbourne. Low taxation, smaller state, less regulation, freeing industry and commerce from EU regulations...Some self-reliance and sense of responsibility for yourself.

Those priorities are mirrored in the campaign pitches of Truss and Sunak, who say they will tackle the cost-of-living crisis through long-term measures to boost the economy. Truss says she would cut individual and corporate taxes rather than give people handouts. Sunak says he'll tackle inflation before

lowering taxes, and will offer unspecified help to people struggling to pay their bills.

Critics say neither candidate is grasping the scale of the crisis. Millions of households face a financial squeeze in October, when a cap on household energy bills tied to wholesale prices is next raised. Consulting firm Cornwall Insight forecasts the average household will then be paying over 3,500 pounds (4,200) a year for gas and electricity, more than double the amount a year earlier with a further hike due in the new year.

Martin Lewis, a consumer champion who runs the popular Money Saving Expert website, has warned that we are facing a potential national financial cataclysm, with millions unable to heat their homes this winter.

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who led the UK during the global financial crisis of 2008, called for Johnson, Truss and Sunak to get together and draw up an emergency budget in preparation for a financial

Israeli airstrike kills 2nd top Islamic Jihad commander



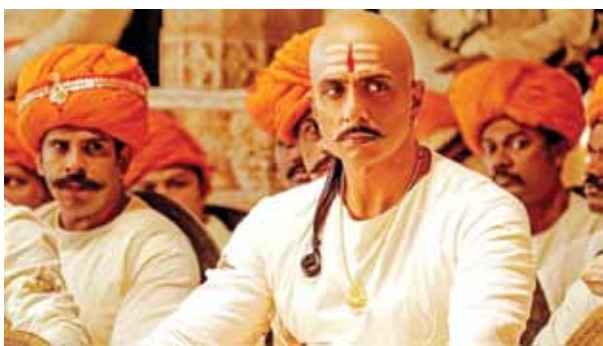
An Israeli airstrike killed a senior commander in the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad, the fighters said on Sunday, their second leader to be slain amid an escalating cross-border conflict.

The killing late Saturday of Khaled Mansour, who led the Iran-backed Islamic Jihad's operations in the southern Gaza Strip, came a day after another Israeli strike killed the militant's commander in the north. Already, the fighting has killed at least 29 Palestinians and seen rockets fired toward Israel in the worst violence between Israel and Palestinian militants since the end of an 11-day war in 2021.

Meanwhile, tensions could escalate as Jews mark a holy day that will see ultranationalist Israeli lawmakers visit a sensitive holy site in Jerusalem, known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. Such visits can be a frequent flashpoint for violence between Israel and the Palestinians. The Al-Quds Brigades of Islamic Jihad confirmed on Sunday that the airstrike in the southern Gaza city of Rafah killed Mansour and two fellow militants. The militants said the strike also killed civilians as it flattened several homes.

SAMRAT PRITHVIRAJ'

special film, wish it could have done well: Sonu Sood



Sonu Sood is disappointed with the reception to his last released film Samrat Prithviraj and the actor says one must accept failures and learn from them.

Fronted by Akshay Kumar, the historical drama was released in theatres on June 3 and did not receive favourable response from critics and audience.

The 49-year-old actor, who played the role of Prithviraj

you can deliver better. I, as an actor, do that. This time we failed but next time we will do well, Sood told to media.

Directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi and produced by Yash Raj Films, the movie was mounted on a budget of Rs 175 crore and reportedly raised around Rs 90 crore at the ticket window.

Irrespective of the box office fate of the film, Sood said Samrat Prithviraj will always remain one of the most special films of his career.

Prithviraj' was very special and the role of Chand Bardai was very special. Whatever role I will be offered, I will keep on working hard for it and try to entertain people, he added.

The Moga-born actor's next project is his debut podcast Commander Karan Saxena, based on author Amit Khan's novel series Hamladar Commander Saxena.

'If you make a good movie, trolls can't stop people from seeing it': Milind Soman

The Aamir Khan-starrer 'Laal Singh Chaddha' hit the theatres on Thursday. And the movie is evoking mixed reviews from the critics as well the audience.

Even before the release of the film, it faced a lot of 'hate' from netizens as the call for 'Boycott Laal Singh Chaddha' was trending on social media ever since the poster of the movie was made public. Several Bollywood stars came out in support of Aamir and even the actor himself requested people to watch the movie before making any decision. To this, supermodel and actor Milind Soman, too shared his views. Speaking exclusively to media, he said "trolls can't stop a good film".



POTPOURRI



Indian trellers dance and wave India's national flags during a motorbike rally as part of the celebrations ahead of the 75th anniversary of country's independence during 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign at the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah Border Post about 35kms from Amritsar on Thursday.

PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL

Raju Srivastava 'critical and on ventilator' following heart attack

Popular comedian-actor Raju Srivastava is "critical and on ventilator" in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the AIIMS, said hospital sources on Thursday.

Following a heart attack on Wednesday, the 58-year-old stand-up comic was admitted to the hospital where he underwent angioplasty.

"He is critical and on ventilator in the ICU," the source told.

Srivastava's cousin Ashok Srivastava had on Wednesday evening said the comic suffered a heart attack while exercising.

"He was doing his routine exercise and while he was on the treadmill, he suddenly



fell down. He suffered a heart attack and was immediately taken to the AIIMS hospital," he had told to media, adding that the actor-comedian's wife Shikha Srivastava had reached Delhi.

Taapsee reveals reason behind not appearing on 'Koffee With Karan'

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu, who is currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming film 'Dobaaraa', shared why she hasn't been on the Karan Johar-hosted popular chat show 'Koffee With Karan'.

During a promotional event, while Taapsee Pannu and Anurag Kashyap were promoting their film 'Dobaaraa', Karan Johar was in the adjacent room promoting his chat show. Taking note of that, the media probed Taapsee about the reason why she hasn't been invited to Karan's show.

Answering the question, the



actress said in jest that her sex life is not interesting enough to be invited on 'Koffee With Karan'. Taapsee is known for her quick-wit responses and this one seems



to be an on-point remark as the latest season of 'Koffee With Karan' has so far been circling sex talks of all topics discussed during the episodes. Talking

about 'Dobaaraa', which presents a unique concept in the form of time travel, has opened at prestigious film festivals such as the London Film Festival & Fantasia Film Festival 2022. 'Dobaaraa' which reunites filmmaker Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee after their 2018 release 'Manmarziyaan', also stars Pavaal Gulati. The film, produced by Shobha Kapoor and Ekta R Kapoor's Cult Movies, a new wing under Balaji Telefilms and Sunir Khetrapal & Gaurav Bose of Athena, is set to debut in theatres on August 19, 2022.

Ishwak Singh wraps shoot of movie 'Bas Karo Aunty!'

Actor Ishwak Singh on Monday completed shoot of his upcoming feature film Bas Karo Aunty!.

Backed by filmmaker couple Nitesh Tiwari and Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, the young-adult comedy drama is directed by debutant filmmaker Abhishek Sinha. Singh, best known for starring in shows such as "Pataal Lok" and "Rocket Boys", shared the news in a post on Instagram along with a short video clip from the sets. "Thank you all for letting me tap dance the happy feet way! he wrote in the caption.

Also starring Mahima Makwana of Antim: The Final Truth fame, the movie is based on Varun Agarwal's bestselling book How I Braved Anu Aunty and Co-Founded a Million Dollar Company.



Girls tie sacred threads or 'rakhi' onto the wrists of Border Security Force (BSF) personnel during a ceremony observing the festival of Raksha Bandhan at the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah Border Post about 35kms from Amritsar on Thursday.

PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL



Prime Video announces season 2 of 'Mind the Malhotras'

Streaming platform Prime Video on Wednesday announced that comedy-drama "Mind the Malhotras", starring Mini Mathur and Cyrus Sahukar, is set to return for a second run.

Prime members in India and across 240 countries and territories worldwide can stream the series starting August 12, according to a release. Directed by Sahil Sangha and Sangha and Karan Sharma, "Mind the Malhotras" is the Indian adaptation of the Israeli show "La Famiglia" distributed by Armoza formats.

The first season gave viewers a peep into Rishabh (Sahukar) and Shefali's (Mathur) midlife marital issues, which will continue in season two with more drama, fun and entertainment quotient as they prioritise individual professional goals. Playing Shefali Malhotra, said Mathur, has given her enormous love, appreciation, and admiration from the audience. I'm super-excited to get into the skin of my character again, give her some more shades and grow as an actor. I hope that Rishabh and Shefali's not-so-perfect life tugs at the heartstrings of viewers just like the previous season. Without divulging more, I can safely say that 'Mind the Malhotras' Season 2 will be messier, crazier, funnier, and a lot more relatable, the actor said in a statement.

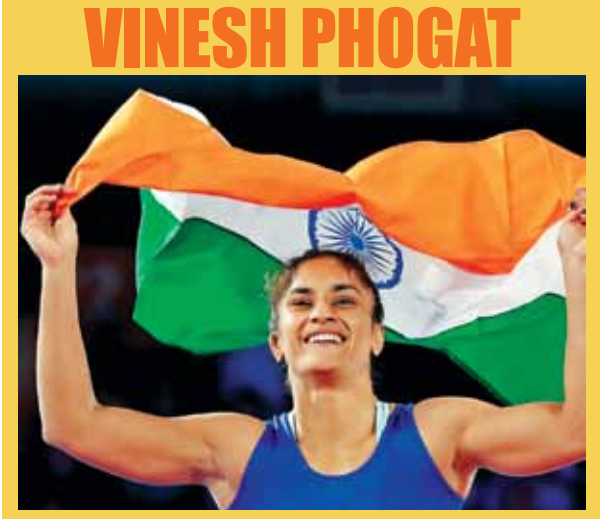
Dheeraj Dhoopar, Vinny Arora welcome first child

Actor couple Dheeraj Dhoopar and Vinny Arora on Wednesday became parents to their first child, a baby boy. Dhoopar shared the news with his fans and followers on Instagram, and with the hashtag 'baby Dhoopar'. "We are filled with joy as we announce the arrival of our Baby Boy! 10-8-2022. Proud parents, Vinny and Dheeraj," he wrote.

While Dhoopar is best known for "Kundali Bhagya", Arora's acting credits include TV shows such as "Kasturi". The couple, who got married in 2016, announced the pregnancy in April. On the work front, Dhoopar will next be seen as a contestant on the dance reality show "Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa".



If I am training right I become my own psychologist: VINESH PHOGAT



A drastic change in training regimen and the extra push that her family gave enabled Vinesh Phogat to turn the tide after a forgettable last 12 months during which she "hit rock bottom mentally".

A premature exit from the Tokyo Olympics, where she went in as the top seed, injury issues and run-ins with the wrestling federation pushed her into an abyss. The 27-year-old's existing training methods were not yielding results. She had to go back to the drawing board.

After undergoing an elbow surgery in September, Vinesh only wanted to get her training right. "If my training is going right, I feel fine mentally as well," she said after easing to a 53kg gold at the Commonwealth Games here on Saturday. "Only I know what I have done to win this medal. It feels a lot more special considering what I have gone through over the past 12 months," said Vinesh who is now a three-time CWG gold medalist.

Vinesh, who had to really dig deep to win the trials to make the CWG squad, was struggling for sparring partners in her category. The women were not strong enough so she decided to train with the U-15 boys.

"She was not getting the required training earlier, now she is. That is the difference according to me," said national coach Jitender Yadav on Vinesh's victorious comeback. The star wrestler herself got emotional while talking about her struggles since the Tokyo Olympics.

"I had lost my confidence, I feel I have found it now. It happens with all the athletes at some point. Only I know what pains I have taken to be here. I had hit rock bottom mentally, I was not able to digest what was going wrong with me."

Forward Rahim Ali extends stay at Chennaiyin FC



Indian team forward Rahim Ali has extended his stay at Chennaiyin FC till 2024, the two-time ISL champions announced on Tuesday. Ali is among the handful of members of the Chennaiyin squad that reached the ISL final in the 2019-20 season. He has made 40 appearances for the club spanning over three years. "I'm very happy to sign a new contract with Chennaiyin FC. There was never a doubt in my mind. I'm not going anywhere," Ali was quoted as saying in a release. The 22-year-old is also a current member of the national team, having made six appearances since his debut in September last year.

Virat Kohli has all tools to come out of batting slump: Jayawardene

Star India batter Virat Kohli is a quality player and has all the tools needed to come out of his prolonged dip in form, said former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene.

Kohli and a fit-again KL Rahul on Monday returned to a 15-member Indian squad for the Asia Cup scheduled to be held in Dubai and Sharjah from August 27 to September 11.



Kohli is enduring his worst slump in form and has not scored a century in international cricket since November 2019. His last assignment was the England tour where he could manage just 76 runs from six innings across formats, which included the rescheduled fifth Test, two ODIs and as many T20s in July. The former skipper was rested for limited over West Indies tour and the upcoming ODIs against Zimbabwe.

"It is unfortunate what Virat is going through right now at the moment, but he is a quality player," said Jayawardene in the latest episode of The ICC Review show. "I believe Virat has the tools to come out of it (the form slump). He has done that in the past as well and I'm sure he'll come through this. Class is permanent and form is temporary."

Rahul, who did not feature in the T20 series against the West Indies due to COVID-19 and then underwent a sports hernia surgery, will be back as vice-captain during the Asia Cup. Jayawardene feels lack of game time could be a problem for Rahul as he gears up for the tournament.

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Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel carry the national flag as part of the celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the country's independence during 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, in Amritsar. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

Anshuman Jha, Sierra Winters to tie the knot in October

Actor Anshuman Jha on Wednesday said he is set to get married to his partner Sierra Winters in October in the US.

Jha, best known for featuring in Dibakar Banerjee's acclaimed film "Love Sex Aur Dhoka", shared the news in a media statement.

The actor said the pair will exchange vows in twin ceremonies, one in the US in October, followed by traditional Hindu nuptials in March 2023. "I feel like she is my mom's blessing to me. We are excited to have our first ceremony in America, followed by the Indian leg.

