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KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

Symbol of country's pride: PM Modi

On the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday saluted the brave sons of the country who achieve the height of valour in the defence of the motherland.

On July 26, 1999, the Indian Army had announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay", declaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh.

The day is observed as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in the war.

"Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of pride and glory of 'Maa Bharati'. On this occasion, my



salute to all the brave sons of the country who achieve the height of valour in the defence of the motherland. Jai Hind," Prime Minister Modi said in a tweet in Hindi.

J&K L-G pays homage to Kargil War heroes

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday paid homage to the martyrs and heroes of Kargil war on the eve of Vijay Diwas. I salute the valour and courage of our immortal heroes who fought till their last breath to protect the sovereignty and integrity of our great Nation, and recaptured territory of our motherland in Kargil from the enemy," he said. On July 26, 1999, the whole world witnessed the unparalleled courage of our brave soldiers who overcame the challenges of impossible peaks and displayed the might of the country, he said. "I pay homage to those self-sacrificing and devoted sons of Maa Bharti. I also salute the undeterred courage of the families of our bravehearts," the Lt Governor said.



Forex reserves fall USD 1.15 bln to USD 571.56 bln



India's foreign exchange reserves declined USD 1.152 billion to USD 571.56 billion for the week ended July 22, according to RBI data.

The reserves have been declining amid continuing volatility in the rupee which has also significantly depreciated against the US dollar.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined by USD 7.541 billion to USD 572.712 billion.

Defending the rupee amid pressures due to rising interest rates in the developed world, high commodity prices and foreign portfolio investment outflows has resulted in heavy decline in the forex assets, which had touched an all-time high of USD 642 billion in September 2021.

For the reporting week ended July 22, the foreign

currency assets declined USD 1.426 billion to USD 510.136 billion, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its weekly report released on Friday.

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

The value of the gold reserves increased USD 145 million to USD 38.502 billion, the apex bank said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) went up by USD 106 million to USD 17,963 billion.

The country's reserve position with IMF increased by USD 23 million to USD 4.96 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

Core sector output expands by 12.7 per cent in June

The output of eight core infrastructure sectors expanded by 12.7 per cent in June against 9.4 per cent in the year-ago period, according to official data released on Friday.

The production growth of eight infrastructure sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- was 19.3 per cent in May 2022, the data showed. In June, the output of coal, refinery products, fertiliser, cement and electricity rose by 31.1 per cent, 15.1 per cent, 8.2 per cent, 19.4 per cent, and 15.5 per cent, respectively.

Crude oil production contracted by 1.7 per cent. Growth rate in the output of natural gas and steel slowed down to 1.2 per cent and 3.3 per cent during the month under review.

Cumulatively, during April-June 2022-23, the output of the eight sectors rose by 13.7 per cent, lower than 26 per cent during April-June 2021-22.

Commenting on numbers, Iera chief economist Aditi Nayar said that coal, cement, refinery products and electricity generation demonstrated double digit growth in June, whereas the rise in steel and natural gas was quite muted.

Droupadi Murmu takes oath as India's 15th President



Droupadi Murmu on Monday took oath as the 15th President of India. Chief Justice of India N V Ramana administered her oath at a ceremony held at Parliament's Central Hall in the presence of former president Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi amongst others. She took the oath in the name of god in Hindi.

President-elect Murmu pays floral tributes at Raj Ghat



President-elect Droupadi Murmu paid floral tributes at the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi in Raj Ghat on Monday morning, ahead of her swearing in ceremony. She was escorted by military and other officials. Chief Justice of India N V Ramana will administer her oath at the 15th President of India at the historic Central Hall of Parliament House.

Rahul slams govt over GST hike on scientific equipment



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday attacked the government over the increase in GST rate on scientific equipment, saying "don't let science suffer because of Gabbar Singh Tax". In a Facebook post, Gandhi said scientific advancement is the cornerstone for the development of any nation. The pattern of reduction in the allocation of funds for scientific research by the BJP government is a "worrisome" sign for the research ecosystem in India, he said.

"Now, by increasing the GST rates from 5% to 18% on scientific instruments, the government is displaying its thoughtless approach and further reducing funds and resources available for labs involved in scientific work across the country," he said.

Arpita Mukherjee confesses to ED, flats used as storehouses of illegal cash

KOLKATA: In the wake of the two consecutive recoveries of massive amounts of cash and gold from two of her residences in Kolkata's Tollygunge and Belgharia, Arpita Mukherjee on Thursday confessed to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that she was forced by West Bengal Minister Partha Chatterjee to allow her houses to be used to store the illegal cash.

According to ED sources, Mukherjee also admitted that the cash recovered from her residences was parked there by Chatterjee with the help of one of his close associates unknown to her.



«She has confessed that Chatterjee used to come to both her Tollygunge and Belgharia residences once or even twice a week, and during his visits, he

was accompanied by a person unknown to her. Mukherjee has also confessed that she did not even have access to the keys of the cupboards from where the cash recoveries were made. There were strict instructions from Chatterjee not to fiddle with the cupboards and also avoid frequenting the rooms where these cupboards were, « an ED official confirmed.

It is learnt that whenever Chatterjee visited Mukherjee's residences, the Minister had closed-door meetings with the unknown person which she was not allowed to participate in.

Outgoing President fulfilled BJP agenda at cost of constitution: Mehbooba



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Outgoing President fulfilled BJP agenda at cost of constitution: Mehbooba Mufti Former J&K chief minister Mehbooba Mufti on Monday accused the outgoing President Ram Nath Kovind of "fulfilling BJP's political agenda at the cost of the India Constitution."

"The outgoing President leaves behind a legacy where the Indian Constitution was trampled upon unthinkingly. Be it scrapping of Article 370, CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) or the unabashed targeting of minorities and Dalits, he fulfilled BJP's political agenda all at the cost of the Indian Constitution," Mufti tweeted. She also slammed the government for forcing the people to hoist the national flag. She tweeted a circular by the Chief Education Officer in central Kashmir's Budgam, which called on students to pay for the Tricolour for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign.

Cabinet nod to Rs 1.64 lakh cr BSNL revival package

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Rs 1.64 lakh crore package for the revival of state-owned telecom firm BSNL, Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

The revival measures approved by the Cabinet focus on fresh capital for upgrading services, allocating spectrum, de-stressing its balance sheet and augmenting its fiber network by merging Bharat Broadband Nigam Ltd (BBNL) with BSNL.

Briefing reporters on the decision taken by the Union Cabinet, he said the package has a cash component of Rs 43,964 crore and a non-cash component of Rs 1.2 lakh crore spread over four years.

Reliance Jio has submitted an earnest money deposit (EMD) of Rs 14,000 crore, the highest amongst the four players in fray for spectrum bidding. The EMD amount of Adani Data Networks stood at Rs 100 crore, indicating a muted and limited spectrum demand from its side.

5G spectrum auction underway; 4 cos in fray for airwaves worth Rs 4.3 lakh cr

India's first auction of 5G spectrum, that powers ultra-high data speeds, is currently underway with a total of 72 GHz (gigahertz) of radiowaves worth at least Rs 4.3 lakh crore up for bidding.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio, Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and a unit of billionaire Gautam Adani's flagship Adani Enterprises are in the race to bid for 5G spectrum, that offers speeds about 10 times faster than 4G, lag-free connectivity, and can enable billions of connected devices to share data in real-time.

In addition to powering ultra-low latency connections, which allow downloading full-length high-quality video or movie to a mobile device in a matter of seconds (even in crowded areas), Fifth Generation or 5G would enable solutions such as e-health, connected vehicles, more-immersive augmented reality and metaverse experiences, life-saving use cases, and advanced mobile cloud gaming among others.

The auction is being held for spectrum in various low (600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz), mid (3300 MHz) and high (26 GHz) frequency bands.

The bidding which started



at 1000 hrs will continue till 1800 hrs and will carry over into the next day, if there exists a demand for spectrum and bidders are putting in bids.

The number of days the auction ultimately stretches to will depend on the actual demand for radiowaves and the strategy of individual bidders, although the broad industry consensus is that it may last up to two days.

While a total 72 GHz (gigahertz) of spectrum worth at least Rs 4.3 lakh crore has been put on the block for the auction, market watchers do not expect an intense bidding given that plenty of spectrum is on the block, and there are four participants in the race.

Department of Telecom's own internal estimates put the 5G auction mop up at Rs 70,000 crore to Rs 1,00,000 crore.

Jio, it is expected, will lead the spends, followed by Bharti Airtel, while analysts see limited participation from Vodafone Idea and Adani Group.

India's Q2 gold demand rises 43 pc to 170.7 tonnes : WGC

India's gold demand went up by 43 per cent during April-June quarter, but going ahead factors like inflation, Rupee-USD rates and policy measures among others are likely to influence consumer sentiments, says a report.

According to a World Gold Council (WGC) report, India's April-June quarter gold demand stood at 170.7 tonnes, higher from 119.6 tonnes during the corresponding quarter in 2021.

In terms of value, India's gold demand increased by 54 per cent during the second quarter to Rs 79,270 crore, compared to Rs 51,540 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2021, the WGC Gold Demand Trends Q2



2022 report said on Thursday. "Akshaya Tritiya coupled with traditional wedding buying spurred jewellery demand by 49 per cent to 140.3 tonne, though on a low base, as the second quarter of last year was impacted by a devastating second wave of COVID," WGC Regional CEO, India, Soma-sundaram PR told to media.

Going forward, he said, for

the full 2022 WGC has kept the demand outlook at 800-850 tonnes, but at the lower end of the range as factors like inflation, gold price, Rupee-USD rates and policy measures among others influence consumer sentiments.

The total demand in 2021 was 797 tonnes, he said. "The second half of this year jewellery demand in India faces downside risks, due to uncertainty over the economic outlook, a higher import duty and the possibility of additional curbs on gold buying, even if for temporary and tactical reasons with an eye on Indian Rupee and USD exchange rate," he noted.

Congress pays tribute to Kargil martyrs on Vijay Diwas



The Congress on Tuesday paid tributes to soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the Kargil war, with Rahul Gandhi saying that the brave soldiers had shown indomitable courage to raise the flag of India's victory. On July 26, 1999, the Indian Army had announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay", declaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh.

The day is observed as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in the war. "Showing indomitable courage, our brave soldiers raised the flag of India's victory in the Kargil war. The army with its valour and bravery never allowed the tricolour to be harmed," Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. "Tributes to every fighter who laid down his life for the country," the former Congress chief said. Paying tributes, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "Salute to all the soldiers who protected the pride and glory of the tricolour with their valour and bravery in the Kargil war." "My heartfelt tribute to all the soldiers and army officers who died in the war. The nation will always be indebted to your sacrifice," she said in a tweet in Hindi.

Punjab Govt runs into fresh row over arm-twisting by AAP bosses in Delhi

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On sudden resignation of Anmol Rattan Singh Sidhu as Advocate General (AG) of the Punjab government and the appointing of a controversial lawyer Vinodh Ghai as the new AG has landed the Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government in a major controversy.

Sources close to Sidhu reveal that the former AG was being pressured to appoint a majority of Additional Advocate Generals (AAGs), Deputy Advocate Generals (DAGs), and Assistant Advocate Generals (ADAGs) as per the recommendations of MP Raghav Chadda who is also the chairman of the advisory committee formed to

help Chief Minister Mann run the government on day-to-day basis. There is a team of about 150 lawyers with these designations who represent the state government in the Punjab and Haryana High Court besides appearing in the Supreme Court.

Sidhu is learned to have been insisting that he should be allowed to recruit lawyers in his team as per merit and his choice to produce desired results. Though he was amenable to adjusting some candidates recommended by Chadda at the instance of AAP's Delhi headquarters. As the two could not come to an agreement on the issue, Sidhu decided to quit.

However, AAP sympathisers in the legal fraternity accuse



former AG Sidhu of hobnobbing with his close friends from the Congress and trying to recruit lawyers as per their liking at the cost of the AAP government's list. Although Sidhu resigned on July 19 citing personal reasons, the government kept the

development under wraps and accepted his resignation on July 26 and appointed Ghai as the new AG.

What has added to the controversy is the selection of Ghai as the new AG, as he is the counsel of several tainted ministers of

the erstwhile Congress regime and has been taking a position in the High Court against the present Punjab government.

It is being argued in legal circles that appointing an AG who has been assisting those who are now in the dock after the AAP formed the government may not prove to be a wise decision. It is understood that after being appointed as AG, Ghai would not be able to appear personally in all the mentioned cases but will be and his team of lawyers be able to be unbiased in their arguments before judges to serve the interests of the state after once having charged huge fees from his private clients?

Ghai is the counsel for for-

mer food and supplies minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu, seeking anticipatory bail. Ashu has been accused in an FIR of the embezzlement of Rs 20, 000 crore. The Vigilance Bureau is in hot pursuit to arrest him under the Punjab government's policy of zero tolerance toward corruption.

He is also the counsel for former health and medical education minister O.P. Soni accused of purchasing hand sanitisers during the coronavirus pandemic at exorbitant rates putting the exchequer at a loss of several thousand crores of rupees. An inquiry ordered by the AAP government is on and the Vigilance Bureau is looking into it. Soni too has

sought anticipatory bail from the High Court. Next comes the name of Sangat Singh Gilzian, who remained forest minister for 3 months in the Congress' Charanjit Singh Channi government. Gilzian is accused of accepting a bribe to the tune of Rs 8 crore in a tree plantation drive. New AG being Gilzian's counsel argued against the state and managed to get his client anticipatory bail.

Ghai also argued against the state for being counsel of health minister Vijay Singla who was sacked from the Mann cabinet and arrested for demanding a 2 per cent commission from the contractors engaged in constructing buildings for government hospitals and dispensaries.

Haryana to promote textile through MSMEs says Dushyant Chautala
FW DESK
Chandigarh

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala said the state government will also promote the textile industry through MSMEs so that more and more youth can get employment. For this, Haryana Atmanirbhar Textile Policy 2022 will be implemented soon. The Deputy Chief Minister gave this information after a meeting held in New Delhi to discuss the draft prepared for the policy. Earlier, Chautala presided over a meeting of the Cabinet Sub-Committee regarding the draft of Haryana's proposed policy in New Delhi. Haryana Agriculture Minister Jai Prakash Dalal and Labour and Employment Minister Anoop Dhanak were also present at the meeting. The Deputy Chief Minister said the policy draft has been thoroughly discussed by the Cabinet Sub-Committee. «Now this policy will be placed before the Cabinet for approval. This policy, prepared for the time period till 2025, is expected to invest about Rs 4,000 crore and provide employment to 20,000 youth,» he said. In the meeting various goals of Haryana Atmanirbhar Textile Policy such as entrepreneurship expansion, investment, employment generation, grants, textile parks and other relevant topics were discussed. The meeting also discussed the National Technical Textiles Mission. He said under this policy, technical textiles will be specially encouraged and expanded.

4 members of Lawrence & Goldi Brar gang, a sharp shooter of Bishnoi gang arrested



Mahesh Nagar police station area Ambala Cantt late Saturday night. They were produced before duty magistrate on Sunday and remanded to police custody for six days. Police recovered three 7.65 bore pistols, 22 cartridges and three Smart mobile phones from them. The arrested accused were identified as Shashank Pandey the mastermind in the gang a resident of Gorakhpur in U.P, Sahil alias Jagga, Ashwani alias Manjeet and Bunty all three residents of Ambala. During police remand it

other members of gang. Information reveals, a case was registered against Shashank Pandey by police at Parao police station Ambala Cantt in a robbery case against him for robbing Rs 8 lakh in 2020 and another case registered allegedly robbed Rs 12 lakh cash and half kilogram gold ornaments in 2021 and he was presently released on bail. Similarly, a case was registered against both Jagga and Sahil allegedly robbed a 70 years old woman on July 9, 2018 and arrested by Detective

Staff Ambala police in 2020. There are also large number of criminal cases registered at various police stations in Ambala against Ashwani alias Maneesh. Meanwhile, STF arrested Parveen alias PK a resident of Bahadurgarh near Sector 15 Sonapat a sharp shooter of Lawrence Bishnoi gang during late Saturday night. During security checking while he was sitting on driver's seat in a car police recovered two foreign made pistols and a round of AK-47 gun in the car. During preliminary investigation Parveen admitted that he used to procure arms for Goldi Brar gang on his directions when sitting abroad. Information also reveals, Parveen alias PK was involved in recent case in which he threatened to kill demanding Rs 5 crore ransom amount from Sukhvinder Singh MLA and the case is being investigated by STF.

Delhi man tests positive for monkeypox



A 34-year-old man from the national capital with no history of foreign travel has tested positive for monkeypox virus, official sources said on Sunday. This is the fourth case of the disease being reported in India. The man had attended a stag party recently in Manali in Himachal Pradesh. A resident of West Delhi, the man was admitted to the Maulana Azad Medical College Hospital here around three days ago after he showed symptoms of monkeypox.

His samples were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune on Saturday which came out positive, the sources said. "Contact tracing process has been initiated," the sources said. Three cases of monkeypox had earlier been reported from Kerala. The WHO had on Saturday declared monkeypox as a global public health emergency of international concern. Monkeypox virus is transmitted from infected animals to humans via indirect or di-

Suspected monkeypox case in Noida

A suspected case of monkeypox has been reported in Uttar Pradesh's Noida, adjoining Delhi, health department officials said on Wednesday. According to them, the patient is a 47-year-old woman who approached the health department on Tuesday, after which her samples were taken. "The samples have been sent for a test to Lucknow, and the patient is in home isolation at the moment. Monkeypox can be confirmed only after the test results are out," a local health official said. The travel history of the patient was yet to be confirmed. Monkeypox is a viral zoonosis (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although it is clinically less severe. Monkeypox is usually a self-limited disease with the symptoms lasting two to four weeks. It typically presents itself with fever, headache, rashes, sore throat, cough and swollen lymph nodes. India has so far recorded four cases of monkeypox, three in Kerala and one in Delhi.



rect contact. Human-to-human transmission can occur through direct contact with infectious skin or lesions, including face-to-face, skin-to-skin, and respiratory droplets. Globally, over 16,000 cases of monkeypox have been reported from 75 countries and there have been five deaths so far due to the outbreak. In the WHO South-East Asia Region, besides India, one case has been detected from Thailand.

Priyanka accused of hypocrisy by Delhi anganwadi workers

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's support to sacked anganwadi workers on Monday was called into question by them, who said the leader's gesture was empty as Congress' own Abhishek Manu Singhvi was representing the Delhi government in the case against the terminated workers. Earlier in the day, Priyanka came out in support of the 884 anganwadi workers terminated by the Delhi government for staging a protest and going on strike. Priyanka termed the decision "unjust" and de-



manded the city government to immediately reinstate the sacked employees. She was later slammed for staging a farce by the workers' union, which said Congress' own leader was representing

the government in the Delhi High court against the sacked workers. Priyanka Gandhi is supporting the struggle of Delhi Anganwadi workers while Congress' own Rajya Sabha MP and party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi is advocating on behalf of the Delhi government against the Anganwadi workers, Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union (DSAWHU) said in a statement. The union said, though the Congress raised their issues through press conferences in

Punjab and Delhi, these were nothing but false consolations. DSAWHU said the sympathy of the Congress towards Anganwadi workers was only a farce and that the party was raising the issue only for electoral gains. If the Congress is so sympathetic to the demand for a respectable honorarium then why is it not increasing the honorariums of the scheme workers to Rs 25,000 in the states where it is the ruling government? asked DSAWHU.

Former president Kovind moves to new home at 12 Janpath

Former president Ram Nath Kovind on Monday moved to his new residence at Janpath road, the bungalow once occupied by former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan. Kovind was driven down to his new home from Rashtrapati Bhavan after Droupadi Murmu took over as the President of India. As part of the convention, Murmu, the new President, was also present. Paswan had lived in 12 Janpath for three decades before his death in 2020. Following an eviction notice, his son Chirag Paswan had vacated the house in April.



panied by Rastrapati hon'ble Droupadi Murmu ji," Law Minister Kiren Rijiju tweeted. He also shared pictures in which BJP president J P Nadda, along with Union ministers Hardeep Puri and V K Singh too were seen receiving Kovind at 12 Janpath. Paswan, one of the country's most prominent Dalit leaders, died at the age of 74 in October 2020. He had been a minister in central governments headed by parties of contrasting ideologies, ranging from the Janata Dal to the Congress and the BJP, since 1989.

Nearly 12,000 posts lying vacant in Delhi Police: Govt



Nearly 12,000 posts are lying vacant in the Delhi Police, Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. The reply from Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai came in response to a question by Delhi BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma. Rai said as reported by the Delhi Police, as on July 15, the sanctioned strength of the is 94,255 posts in which 82,264 posts were filled. He said there are 11,991 vacant posts in Delhi Police as on July 15. The minister said the Delhi Police has reported that a number of welfare measures are undertaken for its personnel and their family members. These include loan for marriage for self and daughters, financial assistance for cremation of the deceased personnel, education loan for higher studies and others, he said replying to a written question.

Delhi Cong stages protest against excise policy



The Delhi Congress on Monday said it staged a protest outside Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's residence here, demanding his resignation over alleged violation of rules and procedural lapses in the city government's excise policy. Leaders and workers of the party gathered in Patparganj holding banners and raised slogans against Sisodia and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Earlier, the Delhi Congress had accused the ruling Aam Aadmi Party of being "knee-

deep in corruption" and submitted a written complaint to Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana, seeking a probe into the liquor policy. Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has recently recommended a CBI probe into the policy. According to officials, the inquiry was recommended on a basis of a report filed by the Delhi chief secretary, showing prima facie violations, including "deliberate and gross procedural lapses", to provide post-tender "undue benefits to liquor licensees". According to the Central Pol-

Consistent improvement in Delhi's air quality: Govt



There has been a "consistent improvement" in Delhi's air quality and the annual PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations in the capital have reduced by 22 and 27 per cent, respectively, between 2016 and 2021, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Monday. The number of 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'moderate' days in Delhi has increased to 197 in 2021 as against 108 in 2016. The number of 'poor', 'very poor' and 'severe' days have decreased to 168 in 2021 as against 246 in 2016, the minister told Lok Sabha. According to the Central Pol-

lution Control Board (CPCB), air quality index (AQI) between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe". "Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station (CAAQMS) data for Delhi reveals that annual concentration of particulate matter (PM) has declined since 2016. Concentration of PM10 and PM2.5 declined by 27 and 22 per cent between 2016 and 2021," the minister said. Yadav said, however, there is no conclusive data available

to establish a direct correlation between death and disease exclusively with air pollution. "Air pollution is one of the many factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. Health is impacted by a number of factors which include food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity, heredity, etc., of the individuals apart from the environment," he said. BJP MP Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria had earlier asked whether there has been an increase in the number of respiratory patients due to increasing pollution in the national capital.

Every hospital to have e-library says Health Minister Haryana

FW DESK Chandigarh

Haryana Health and Family Welfare Minister Anil Vij on Wednesday said an e-library will soon be started in every hospital and medical colleges will also be associated with this facility. Addressing a gathering during the DNB Orientation Programme in Panchkula near here, he said the state is moving towards digitisation.



«The hospitals are connected with e-Upchaar, but we want that every PHC (public health centre) and hospital in the state should be connected to e-Upchaar and the Health Department is moving forward towards this initiative.» Vij said mapping would be done soon in Haryana regarding health infrastructure facilities for which tenders had been invited. He said health facilities were being provided on the basis of demand, but after mapping. The minister said the mapping will be done by an agency which will reveal how much health facilities are required at which city, town or village level of the state. Haryana will be the first state to get

The mapping will be done by an agency which will reveal how much health facilities are required at which city, town or village level of the state" mapping done in the field of health. He said a separate provision has been made for health-related buildings in the health budget and soon a survey will be conducted for the dilapidated buildings of the Health Department and after the survey, the buildings will be repaired.

Sever shock to Ambala scientific goods industry facing nearly 50% slump

SATISH HANDA

Over 125 years old Ambala scientific instruments manufacturing industry has suffered severe shock from industry in China since past over a decade resulting nearly 50% drop in indigenous as well as export sale due to price war as such even suppliers in the country has started importing Chinese products and most of them selling in their own brand and Indian markets are today flooded with Chinese products due to price factor. According to manufacturers in 'Science City' Ambala once known all over in the world having nearly 3000 micro, small and medium manufacturing units in the town doing nearly 1800 crore annual turnover including exports to Europe, Gulf in and African countries has started losing production, business as well as reputation. The entrepreneurs of Am-



bala scientific instruments industry suffering severe shock from industry in China has approached government that they are dependent for basic raw material including glass tubing in hundreds of glassware manufacturing industries in the country on China as such are unable to compete their prices and demanded support from the government to keep once famous this industry alive when Lok Sabha member Ambala Ratan Lal Kataria former Union Minister raised this question in Lok Sabha session. It is to mention that Ambala scientific instruments industry supply-

ing components to defence organizations including HAL and used in 'Agni-5' Missile. Kataria also admitted there should be ban over imports from China on glassware products and microscopes to save collapsing Ambala industry. He said, there is immediate need to develop a Common Facility Centre in 'Science City' to assist small manufacturers since the project announced years ago still hanging on fire since a long time. Vikram Choudhary, President Ambala Small Instrument Manufacturing Association told that Ambala scientific goods manufacturing industry is dependent on raw material imported from China but still facing tough competition and challenge from manufacturers from manufacturers in China on the basis of quality products. He said that there should be control over the prices of raw material.

Haryana government suffers Rs 400 cr annual revenue loss due to illegal mining

SATISH HANDA

Haryana government suffering loss worth Rs 400 crores every year due to illegal mining going on in the state mainly at Ghaggar river near Panchkula, Tangri river passing through Ambala and other nearby places and Yamuna canal passing from Yamunanagar, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Gurugram, Faridabad, Palwal, Nuh, Bhiwani, and Mohindergarh districts as well as hilly areas in the state. Although, state government offers contact for mining sand, gravel and stone through e-auction every year but illegal mining is going on in majority of areas in the state by anti-social elements as well as mining mafias causing heavy revenue loss to government.



In spite of all efforts state government has failed to stop illegal mining and at times such mafias having team of musclemen and criminals do not hesitate to make attacks on the life of security men and on an average more than 250 cases are registered by the police every year in the state and most of the accused having shelter in influential people get relief or released on bail by courts and re-start illegal mining. Information reveals, state government earns revenue worth about Rs 1000 crore every year through allotment to contracts whereas the value of illegal mining going on in the state every year is much higher estimated as not less than Rs 25000 crore.

According to police record large numbers of attacks are made by anti-social elements involved in this illegal business. Recently, few days ago Surinder Singh DSP was crushed under the wheels of a dumper by mafia men in Mewat area and police has already arrested the driver identified as Shabbir and few more are likely to be arrested soon. Among few other serious cases of attack on security men include attack of ADC cum RTA Secretary Ranjit Kaur at Sadhora in 2020 who had a narrow escape, attempt to kill SDM Prem Chand and City Magistrate Naveen Ahuja under

a truck at Jagadhari in 2015, attempt to kill District Development Officer Gagandeep Singh at Jattowala in 2015, attack on in-charge of police post Kalanagar Ashok Kumar and Balwan Singh constable in 2014 and there is a long list of such attacks on security men by mafias. After the death of Surinder Singh DSP recently while he was on duty at Panchgaon in District Nuh, Gian Chand Gupta president Haryana Vidhan Sabha had a meeting at Chandigarh in which P.K. Aggarwal DGP Haryana, Alok Mittal ADGP CID, Sandeep Khirwar ADGP Law & Order and Saurabh Singh IG Security were present decision was taken to take strong steps against mining mafias and those criminals threatening MLAs and gangsters making ransom demand calls on mobile phones. Gupta suggested stern action against such criminals. He said, if required Vidhan Sabha will change law against such criminals. Meanwhile, Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij while talking to media persons said that state police has been given free hand to deal with mine mafias and as many as 700 policemen have been deployed at Tawdu to strictly deal with criminals. He said, Shabbir driver of dumper killed Surinder Singh DSP under the wheels of dumper was arrested and presently on five days police remand has named three mine mafias likely to be in police net soon and will not be spared. Vij said, illegal mining in the state will be completely wiped out. Information reveals, police has already seized 15 dumpers, 5 earthmovers, 10 tractors, large number of rock drilling machines and several motorcycles without number plate in a couple of days during campaign in which police has arrested 682 persons registering 494 FIRs. Vij said 19 police teams have been deployed to have thorough search for anti-social elements in 38 villages.

AAP's Sanjay Singh suspended for a week from RS ED raid at CSI Church HQ in Kerala

NEW DELHI: AAP member Sanjay Singh on Wednesday was suspended from the Rajya Sabha for a week for disrupting the House proceedings and showing utter disregard to the Chair.

With Singh, now 20 members from the opposition have been suspended in the Upper House.

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned for 15 minutes. Singh was suspended for continuously shouting slogans from the well of the house and throwing paper towards the Chair.

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V. Muralidharan moved a motion to suspend Singh when the House proceedings resumed at 12 noon. The motion was



adopted by a voice vote.

As Singh did not leave the House after suspension, deputy chairman Hariyansh adjourned the House for 15 minutes. When the Rajya Sabha resumed once again, the deputy chairman requested Singh to leave the House. After

a failed request, the deputy chairman adjourned the House till 2 p.m.

On Tuesday, 19 opposition Members were suspended from the Rajya Sabha for a week for disrupting House proceedings.

The 19 members include

seven from the Trinamool Congress, six from the DMK, three from TRS, two from CPI-M and one from CPI.

Suspended Trinamool Rajya Sabha members are Sushmita Dev, Mausam Noor, Shanta Chhetri, Dola Sen, Santanu Sen, Abir Ranjan Biswas and Nadiumal Haque.

Six suspended DMK Members are Kanimozhi N.V.N. Somu, M. Shanmugam, M. Mohamed Abdulla, S. Kalyanasundaram, R. Girirajan and N.R. Elango.

Other suspended members are B. Lingaiah Yadav, Ravichandra Vaddiraju and Damodar Rao Divakonda of TRS, V. Sivadasan and A.A. Rahim of CPI-M and Sandosh Kumar of CPI.

AAP takes fight to Parliament over liquor policy issue

FW DESK

After the Delhi LG ordered a CBI probe in the liquor policy, the AAP has taken the fight to the Parliament, giving a notice to suspend business in the Rajya Sabha. The party is upset that after Satyendar Jain was arrested by ED, this is the second case against the Delhi government minister.

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Singh has given Suspension of Business Notice under Rule 267 over the misuse of CBI and ED against the Delhi Government.

Delhi Lt. Governor V.K. Saxena recommended a CBI

probe into the AAP government's Excise Policy 2021-22, and the Chief Secretary has been asked to submit a detailed report on the roles of officials involved in amendment and implementation of the policy.

According to a source, taking the serious note of the 'gross violations and deliberate lapses' in the formulation, amendment and implementation of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, that came to the fore in the Chief Secretary's report to the Lt Governor and the Chief Minister, the Lt. Governor has sought the report from the Chief Secretary.



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday carried out raids at the institutions of the Church of South India (CSI) over corruption allegations at its Karakonam medical college. The ED raided the headquarters of the CSI South Kerala diocese which houses the office of Bishop, A Dharmaraj Rasalam, here.

The raid was in connection with a case registered for allegedly collecting huge amounts of money from students, promising them a medical seat at the Dr Somervell Memorial CSI Medical College in Karakonam, which is run by the church.

Meanwhile, Fr. C.R. Godwin, the Director of the Christian

Education Board told the media that the Crime Branch had already conducted an enquiry in the matter.

"As I said earlier, 25 people have filed cases against the medical college regarding capitation and the case was in the court. ED wants to know more about the case. We are happy to clarify, they are questioning the Bishop and he is happy to give answers to their questions. They reached at 6.30 AM and started the raid. They did not inform us earlier," Godwin said. Earlier, in February, the High Court had quashed a report of the Crime Branch giving the church authorities a clean chit in the Karakonam case.

Opposition obstructs development works: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the Opposition of obstructing development works, saying they keep their political interests above that of society and the country.

"Many times, the opposition parties put some obstacles in the government's work as they could not implement the decisions taken by them when they were in power," Modi said addressing virtually a programme on the 10th death anniversary of former Samajwadi Party Rajya Sabha member Harmohan Singh Yadav.

"Now, if they (decisions) are implemented, they oppose it. People of the country don't like it," he added, stressing in recent times, a trend of keeping "ideology or political interests above the interests of society and the country" is being witnessed.

Gold-plated roof of Sabarimala Temple found leaking

The gold-plated roof of the famed Lord Ayyappa Temple here, thronged by lakhs of pilgrims during its annual pilgrimage season, has been found leaking, following which the shrine authorities decided to repair it at the earliest.

The Travancore Devaswom Board, the apex temple body which manages the shrine, on Tuesday said a portion of the gold plated roof would be opened on August 3 to take stock of the leak. However, a TDB official said the leak, found on the front left corner of the sanctum sanctorum, was not a major one. Water was found dripping on the statues of the "dwarapalakas" (door guard) recently, he said adding that temple "tantri" (head priest) Kandarrarajeevaru has been informed about the leak following which he gave permission for the repair.

More than 3 cr income tax return filed so far

Income Tax Department on Monday said that more than 3 crore returns have been filed through e-filing portal till date for the financial year 2021-22.

"More than 3 crore ITRs for AY (Assessment Year) 2022-23 have been filed on e-filing portal till 25th July, 2022. The due date to file ITR for AY 2022-23 is 31st July, 2022. We urge you to file your ITR at the earliest, if not filed as yet," the department said in a tweet. Over 2.3 crore Income Tax Returns (ITRs) were filed till July 20 for the financial year 2021-22. Last fiscal (2020-21), about 5.89 crore ITRs were filed by the extended due date of December 31, 2021. ITR filing is an annual activity seen as a duty of every responsible citizen of the nation. Taxpayers can claim the refund of the excess tax paid/deducted during a financial year by filing it.

Arjun Munda participates in a cultural program presented by tribal artists from six states

FW DESK

Tribal dance troupes from six different states of India performed in honour of 15th President of India Droupadi Murmu ji at the National Tribal Research Institute, New Delhi in the presence of Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs and Mahendra Nath Pandey, Union Minister of Heavy Industries.

On the occasion, a welcome song and colourful dances were presented by the tribal artists. Jharkhand group performed Santari Lakhar Aneeh dance, Kunti group performed Mundari folk



dance, Orissa group performed Adwasi Santhali Kalash Folk Dance, Howrah, West Bengal group performed Santari Lakhar Aneeh dance, and Chhattisgarh group performed Panthi dance.

In his address on the occasion, Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda praised the artists coming from many states for their outstanding dance performances. Further, Arjun Munda said that today is a his-

toric day as Droupadi Murmu ji belonging to the tribal society has become the President of the country.

In his address, Mahendra Pandey appreciated the dance performance of all the artists. He said "The daughter of India, who hails from the world of water-land-forest, has today become the President of the country and this new history has been made in the Amrit kaal for the country. He also added that it is a clear indicator of the new thinking of the present government which is giving shape to a progressive India.

Gujarat hooch tragedy: Death toll rises to 21

The death toll due to the consumption of spurious liquor in Gujarat's Botad district has gone up to 21, officials said on Tuesday.

The police control room in Botad confirmed that 16 people from the district have died so far.

Five people from Dhandhuka taluka of neighbouring Ahmedabad district have also died during treatment since Monday.

Around 30 people are still undergoing treatment at various government hospitals in Bhavnagar, Botad, Barvala and Dhandhuka, officials said.

Gujarat Director General of Police Ashish Bhatia earlier said the police have detained three



persons from Botad district who were allegedly involved in manufacturing and selling the spurious

country-made liquor. The matter came to light early Monday morning when some

people living in Rojdi village of Barvala taluka and other surrounding villages were referred to government hospitals in Barvala and Botad towns after their condition started deteriorating.

Inspector General of Police (Bhavnagar range) Ashok Kumar Yadav had said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under a deputy superintendent of police-rank officer will be formed for a probe into the incident and to nab bootleggers who sold the spurious liquor.

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Ahmedabad crime branch have also joined the investigation.

India commemorates Kargil Vijay Diwas



President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday led the nation in paying tributes to the armed forces personnel who fought valiantly in extremely harsh conditions to defend the country's territory during the Kargil conflict.

On July 26, 1999, the Indian

Army announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay", declaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh.

The day is observed as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in the war.

"Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of extraordinary bravery, valour and determination of our armed forces. I bow to all the brave soldiers who laid down their lives to protect Mother India. The country will always be indebted to them and their family members. Jai Hind," Murmu said in a tweet in Hindi.

The President is the supreme commander of the armed forces. In a tweet, Prime Minister Modi said Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of pride and glory for the country.

"Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of pride and glory of 'Maa Bharati'. On this occasion, I salute all the brave sons of the country who achieved the height of valour in the defence of the motherland. Jai Hind," he said.

Rahul Gandhi detained during Cong protest against Sonia Gandhi's questioning



Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and several party MPs were detained by police at Vijay Chowk on Tuesday after they staged a protest against

the ED questioning of Sonia Gandhi.

Rahul Gandhi and the other Congress MPs had gathered at Vijay Chowk to march towards

the Rashtrapati Bhavan to draw the President's attention to the alleged misuse of agencies by the government, but were stopped by the police.

Gandhi was put in a police bus but officials did not disclose where he was being taken.

Other Congress MPs at the Vijay Chowk protest site were detained and taken away in separate police buses.

"India is a police state, Modi is a king," Rahul Gandhi alleged. He said discussions were not being allowed in Parliament.

"I am not going anywhere. We wanted to go towards the President's house. But the police are not allowing us," Gandhi said.

Honey-trapped Army jawan sends confidential documents to Pak agent, arrested



JAIPUR: An Indian Army jawan, Shantimoy Rana (24), resident of West Bengal, was arrested for sharing confidential videos and documents after being honey-trapped by a female agent, confirmed officials here on Wednesday. The CID Intelligence team arrested the accused and confirmed that documents of Army's strategic importance have been shared with a Pakistan female agent through social media by him.

Director General Intelligence Umesh Mishra said the espionage activities being carried out in Rajasthan by the Pakistani intelligence agencies are continuously monitored by CID Intelligence under Operation Sarhad. During this surveillance, it came to the notice that Army jawan Shantimoy Rana was in constant touch with the Pakistani intelligence handlers through social media. When the activities of the jawan were monitored by the team of Intelligence Jaipur, he was found sharing information of military's strategic significance with the Pak female agent via social media after being honey-trapped and in greed of money. On July 25, Shanti Moy Rana was taken into custody.

Mishra said that the accused jawan was interrogated by various intelligence agencies at the Joint Inquiry Center, Jaipur. During interrogation, he said that he is in the Indian Army since 2018 and was in touch with female Pak agents via WhatsApp chat and What'sApp audio and video calling for a long time. Mishra further said that one Gurnur Kaur alias Anika identified herself as a resident of Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh and said that she was working in the Military Engineering Service there.

Article 370 was a cultural, psychological barrier in country's integration: Tejasvi Surya

Article 370 was not only a constitutional barrier in the way of Jammu and Kashmir's full integration with India, but also posed as a cultural and psychological hurdle, BJP's Tejasvi Surya said here on Monday.

Article 370, that granted the erstwhile state of J&K special status, was abrogated by the Centre in August 2019.

Surya, the president of the party's youth wing, was here to flag off the first-ever Tiranga bikers rally from Lal Chowk to Kargil War Memorial.

Speaking at the historic Ghanta Ghar (clock tower), Surya said after the abrogation of Article 370, development came to Kashmir and the valley is now done with terror.

Kashmir is done with terrorism and is on the path of development. We used to hear and read every day about terrorist attacks, stone-pelting, Hurriyat-issued calendars, but today, the same Kashmir is known for its hydro-electric power projects, new expressway, IITs, AIIMS, IIMs, new central universities



and new initiatives of development. This is happening because Prime Minister Narendra Modi abrogated 370, he said.

The BJP leader said Article 370 was a cultural and psychological barrier which did not allow us to complete the constitutional vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat.

Smriti Irani sends legal notice to Cong over 'malicious allegations' against daughter

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Smriti Irani on Sunday sent legal notice to the Congress and its senior leaders Pawan Khera, Jairam Ramesh, Netta D'Souza over their "malicious allegations" against her daughter and asked them to tender a written unconditional apology.

She also asked them to withdraw the allegations they have made against her 18-year old daughter with immediate effect.

The notice, sent through her lawyer, said that these allegations have been made with the knowledge of their falsity, or at least in careless disregard of the truth. "The false allegations were intended to hurt the reputation of our client as a minister and a person in public life, and also to outrage her modesty and that of her daughter. These are serious offences under the Indian Penal Code and also a tort making the addressees liable to penal damages.

"In the circumstances as mentioned hereinabove, we hereby call upon addressees to tender a written unconditional and unequivocal apology forthwith not later than 24 hours from the receipt of this notice, which should be widely disseminated in print media and on social media. "Unconditionally withdraw the allegations with immediate effect and cause to remove all such false information from all platform(s) disseminating the allegations, including but not limited to the allegations. "Cease and desist from disseminating any content whatsoever, arising out of or in any connection with the allegations and/or similar content thereto in respect of our client and her daughter, Zoish Irani. Ensure that all the record of the allegations is permanently deleted and the same is never disseminated re-circulated in future," the legal notice read.

PM Modi meets Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attended a meeting of Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states.

Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers of all the BJP-ruled states are participating in the meeting, where BJP chief J.P. Nadda and national General Secretary, Organisation, B.L. Santhosh were also present.

In December last year, Prime Minister Modi held a similar meeting with Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers of party-ruled states in Varanasi.

Sources said that the works of BJP ruled state government will be reviewed and suggestions will be given to further strengthen public welfare and development works.

Govt, biotech firms must act to fight monkeypox

The World Health Organization, for the second time in two years, has declared a viral outbreak to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). With four cases confirmed in India and around 14,500 cases globally, monkeypox outbreaks have triggered international consternation in a world that is yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. After a split verdict at the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee meeting — on whether monkeypox deserves to be termed a PHEIC — it fell on WHO's Director-General, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, to take a call. A PHEIC is just one step short of a 'pandemic' classification. Following the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, WHO had come under criticism for not responding with alacrity on the public health threat that the coronavirus pandemic portended. It had termed the COVID-19 crisis as a PHEIC on January 30, 2020 when global cases were around 7,500, or about half the levels now reported for monkeypox. WHO has recommended that countries step up surveillance, amplify public awareness campaigns, governments work towards not stigmatising the disease, and health infrastructure be primed towards producing diagnostic kits. The experience from the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that governments implement measures to avoid 'panic' but are often opaque and vague with the information necessary to quell it. While it is unclear how the monkeypox outbreak will play out, the government must begin coordinated action with the States to summarise and disseminate the extent of the threat. Related to the eradicated smallpox virus, monkeypox is suspected to have amplified due to reduced immunity against the smallpox virus. Indian labs and biotech companies must step up research and mine their arsenal to prepare adequate defences if the need arises.

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“BUSINESS has only two functions - MARKETING and INNOVATION”
- Milan Kundera

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The Brunt of Minimum Support Price

80 crore people are given food security for months and now after the end of long agitation of farmers the central govt. is silent about making a law on MSP (Minimum Support Price) and a central minister says that it is not possible to pay MSP. Farmers will be panelized to pay the cost of overproduction and ultimately they are thrown amid free market forces as the market price of food grains is less than MSP. Moreover, they give an argument that If govt. purchases all production on MSP it would cost 17 lakh crore which is half the amount of the union budget. Someone is playing with data. Food production is not a waste which will be thrown or dumped. The government would compensate the farmer only the difference between the market price and MSP, not the whole MSP. Wrong interpretation of the data as according to the whole MSP of the crop creates confusion among common men. Moreover, the farmer is producing to feed the population of the nation. The question arises that if you have enough to eat then why GHI is going down and even ranked below Bangladesh and Pakistan. Indian people know hunger well. A food grain surplus nation cannot rank as low as India in the Global Hunger Index. The common myth that we are the huge producers of food grains and export a big amount of food grains may be because we are exporting more and consuming less. The per-capita consumption of grains started declining in 1990 and this trend continued in later two decades and a recovery in 2011 -2020 unfortunately, this decline was not taken seriously as academicians interpret it according to the Lorence curve that with increasing income a consumer diversifies his consumption and spends



a lesser amount on the consumption of food grains and more on fruits, nuts and animal products. But in the case of India, this doesn't happen as proven by GHI and malnutrition among children. If demand disappeared or declined for food grains, where did the grain go? For the last ten years, India has emerged as a big cereal exporter and we are not a food surplus state but consume fewer food grains. There is no authentic surplus food grain in the country. Any surplus visible in the forms of large exports and overflowing FCI stocks can be attributed to the fact that the average Indian was not able to maintain her already low level of grain consumption over the last thirty years. Needless to say, this 'average Indian' is located far away from the glittering lives of the metropolitan cities and invisible from the world of policy-makers. 196 million people are undernourished and malnutrition is the top cause of death and disability. It is clear that food security remains a serious challenge.

India now ranks 101 out of 116 countries in terms of hunger and continues to be in the 'severe' hunger category according to the GHI of 2022. These situations clearly prove that food is not accessible in India. South Asia has the highest child wasting rate of any region, and India is the worst performer. At 17.3%, India's child wasting rate is only slightly better than it was last year, at 20.8%.

MSP is a crucial and key issue for food security and the survival of agriculture as it works as a social safety net for farmers. The unpredictability of agricultural yields and products often results in windfall losses making the lives of farmers debt-ridden and pathetic. The economic decisions involved in agriculture are massive and need to be recognized as such. The demand for Minimum Support Prices (MSP) is directly linked to food security in India. Hence, farmers have a rationale and urgency in seeking govt attention towards their economic well-being as made or

marred by new agricultural legislations of the central govt. For instance, students of economics are familiar with the COBWEB theorem. A farmer has to take the decision to produce a particular crop minimum of six months before marketing so then an assurance of minimum support price is a must in agriculture. Every industry can increase or decrease its production according to the demand in the market but a farmer can not as he has sown the crop six months before, it reaches to market and the standard law of demand and supply of Dr Marshall does not work in food production. A farmer never knows what will be market and weather conditions in the coming next 5 to six months. Cobweb theorem describes this dilemma of a farmer. How the market forces and nature play a major role in deciding the price of agriculture products as two third of total land has no irrigation facilities in our country. A farmer can be ruined because of a lack of demand and low prices. Even plenty of production can also ruin him when the price falls because more production when supply surpasses demand and equilibrium price falls. This is called poverty in prosperity in economics. Even the developed capitalist economies, where the free market supposedly rules, highly subsidize their farming communities. So the assurance of MSP is a must for the crops. Govt gives MSP only for 23 crops and only 6% of the total crop is sold on MSP because of loopholes in govt. marketing policies. The boom and bust of agriculture will be solved when we shift from state domination to individual freedom

Dr. Harvinder Kaur, S.D. College, Ambala. Views are personal



V SRIVIDHAR EXPLAINS WHY INTEGRATING TERRESTRIAL 5G NETWORKS WITH LEO SATELLITE NETWORKS IS CRUCIAL

A path to global connectivity

As terrestrial 5G mobile networks are being rolled out across countries, there is a renewed interest in integrating Non-Terrestrial Networks, the primary one being the low latency Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite networks (SatNets), as a complement to terrestrial networks. Towards this, Starlink, operated by the Elon Musk-owned SpaceX, and OneWeb, promoted by Bharti Global, have launched about 2,500 and 648 LEO satellites respectively at an altitude of about 1,200 km with the objective of promoting global broadband connectivity. There are other players such as Reliance Jio in a joint venture with Luxembourg-based SES and Amazon's Project Kuiper.

There are primarily three main use cases for integrating LEO SatNets with terrestrial 5G networks: (i) service continuity to provide seamless transition between terrestrial networks and SatNets in case of public safety, disaster management and emergency situations; (ii) service ubiquity to provide 5G services in unserved and underserved areas of the world, thereby bridging the digital divide; (iii) service scalability that utilises the unique capabilities of SatNets in multicasting and broadcasting similar content over a large geographical area. The LEO SatNets can provide service not only to stationary but also to in-motion users.

Integration process

Satellites and terrestrial networks have always been considered two independent ecosystems, and their standardisation efforts have proceeded independent of each other. In view of the above advantages, standard-setting organisations such as the Third Generation Partnership project (3GPP), comprising telcos and equipment manufacturers around the world, started integrating SatNets



in the standardisation process.

As an extension to terrestrial networks, satellites were first mentioned in a deployment scenario of 5G in 3GPP Release 14. This was to provide 5G communication services for areas where terrestrial coverage was not available and also to support services that could be accessed more efficiently through satellite systems, such as broadcasting services and delay-tolerant services.

Interestingly, wireless communications through LEO satellites over long distances is proven to be 1.47 times faster than communication over the same distance through terrestrial optic fibre. It is this advantage along with global coverage that provide a strong use case for LEO

SatNets to complement terrestrial optic fibre networks.

Issues to be addressed

This would necessitate addressing issues around frequencies to be allocated for satellite broadband, the methodology of allocation, the relatively higher cost of consumer equipment and the placement and interconnections of SatNets with terrestrial public landline/mobile networks at the ground stations.

The other major challenge in LEO SatNets is the cost of user terminal and access charges to the end users. A recent research analysing both Starlink and OneWeb concludes that the standalone LEO SatNets have a distinct cost ad-

vantage only if the density is less than 0.1 person per square km compared to terrestrial broadband networks. Hence it is to the advantage of LEO SatNet providers to integrate their networks with terrestrial 5G networks to improve the cost economies.

Realising the advantages, the Government, in its National Digital Communications Policy 2018, has indicated a number of areas including the development of an ecosystem for local manufacturing of satellite communication systems and promoting participation of private players for the strengthening of satellite communication infrastructure in the country.

Accordingly, the New Space India Limited (NSIL), a public sector enterprise, was established in 2019 under the administrative control of the Department of Space, to re-orient space activities from a 'supply driven' model to a 'demand driven' model, thereby ensuring optimum utilisation of the space assets. The Department of Space also established in 2020 a new regulatory body named the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe).

IN-SPACe is intended to provide a level playing field for private companies to use Indian space infrastructure and to promote and guide the private industries in space activities through encouraging policies and a friendly regulatory environment. All these, along with the proposed revisions to the Satellite Communications Policy of the Government, will provide the required fillip to LEO SatNets to become an integral part of the communication infrastructure of the country.

V. Srividhar is Professor at IIT Bangalore. Talleen Kumar is a Member (Finance), Space Commission, Atomic Energy Commission and Earth Commission. Views are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

'I'm chuffed at stimulating aspect of mentoring'

Cool as a cucumber: that's five-times World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand. Cooped up in Germany due to the Coronavirus pandemic, he returned home via a Vande Bharat repatriation flight, coped with the loss of his father, learnt Hindi, had the satisfaction of launching the WestBridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA) to nurture India's chess prodigies — and is chuffed at the stimulating aspect of mentoring.

"My approach towards the pandemic was not to fight the outlandish situation kicking and screaming, but to flow with the current without overthinking and making myself miserable. None of us could have been better or worse prepared for what we were up against," Anand writes in the bonus chapter of his memoir,

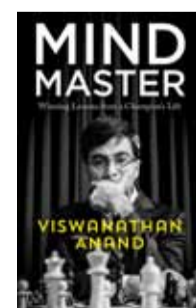
'Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life' with Susan Ninan (Hachette), that has been reissued as a paperback edition to mark the 44th Chess Olympiad that opened in Chennai on Thursday.

The Olympiad will see the participation of 343 teams from 187 countries, with 30 players from India matching their skills against the best in the world under Anand's mentorship. "When I look back at the worst days of the pandemic, I realise the learnings have been plenty. I've been forced to cope with the loss of a parent and that has drawn me closer to my family. When I peep into (son) Akhil's room I see a child trying harder than the rest of us to accept the reality of online classes and his friends being turned into tiny picture panels on the screen...I catch the proud smile

'When I look back at the worst days of the pandemic, I realise the learnings have been plenty. I've been forced to cope with the loss of a parent and that has drawn me closer to my family'

on his face when my achievements appear as questions in his school assignments," Anand writes.

Reminiscing about his father, who in his early years "doubled up as my manager and had to deal with a youngster who was trying to break free and discover himself," he writes that in his last years, the elder Anand's Sunday afternoon's were spent in the



Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life by Viswanathan Anand and Susan Ninan Hachette 312 page; Rs8599

company of his grandson over ice cream scoops.

"Every Sunday, we would buy ice creams and take them over to my father's house. He would enjoy Akhil greedily grab spoonfuls from all of us. They adored each other and it was special to watch that bond from a distance. My dad lived a full life and spent ten years of it watching Akhil grow up. But to me his final days will be inextricably linked with the circumstances the pandemic brought about, which didn't allow us even one final visit before he left us. Though I rarely demonstrate it, the pain of his absence feels like a giant boulder

bearing down on my chest," Anand writes. The pandemic, he writes, presented two options: mope about not knowing what lies ahead "or find an opportunity in the unexpected gift of time. We had all the time in the world, with no flights to catch and no office rush to beat. I asked myself what I always wanted to learn but had put off for later". "Turns out, the answer was Hindi. I had never found the time earlier to learn the language. In my years of living in Madrid, when I'd learnt Spanish by conversing with locals, I had never been embarrassed to make mistakes. With Hindi...well...it was different. My ignorance of the language meant I felt more lost in Delhi or Mumbai than I ever did perhaps even in Frankfurt (since I read, write and speak German reasonably fluently). I found it strange because I wasn't supposed to feel this way in my own country. It formed the premise of my motivation to take up Hindi lessons. I defined it as being able to survive an Indian airport," Anand writes.

Reliance expects gas price to rise in Oct, wants removal of ceiling prices

Reliance Industries Ltd expects prices of natural gas in India to rise again in October but wants government-dictated caps to go, in a bid to align domestic rates with global energy prices.

The conglomerate, controlled by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, expects the price cap for its KG-D6 gas sales to rise over the current USD 9.92 per million British thermal units, Sanjay Roy, senior vice-president for exploration and production, said in an investor call following the announcement of the firm's quarterly earnings on Friday.

After remaining a loss-making provision for several quarters, Reliance's gas exploration business has begun reaping rewards of a global surge in energy



prices that have already pushed the rates to a record high.

The government sets gas prices every six months based on international rates.

The price of gas from old or regulated fields was more than doubled to a record USD 6.1

per mmBtu from April 1, and that for difficult fields like those lying in deepsea to USD 9.92 per mmBtu.

Rates are due for a revision in October. It is anticipated that the price of gas from old fields of state-owned Oil and Natural

Gas Corporation (ONGC) will be hiked to about USD 9 per mmBtu and the cap for difficult fields will rise to double digits.

Reliance produced about 19 million standard cubic meters per day of gas from its newer fields in the eastern offshore KG-D6 block in the April-June quarter. KG-D6 block lies in deepsea and so gets a price equivalent to that for difficult fields.

"Price ceiling for KGD6 (R-Cluster/Sats) revised to USD 9.92 per mmBtu for H1FY23 (April-September 2022) which is expected to rise further for H2FY23 (October 2022 to March 2023)," Roy said.

But this rate remains disconnected with global prices.

Pak, China welcome any third country joining CPEC for mutual beneficial cooperation



Iraq has filed a complaint to the UN Security Council, requesting an urgent session to discuss a deadly artillery attack this week that Baghdad blames on Turkey, the Foreign Ministry said. Wednesday's attack on the district of Zakho in Iraq's northern, semi-autonomous Kurdish region killed nine Iraqi tourists, including a child, and wounded 20. Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad al-Sahaf said the ministry also recalled Iraq's charge d'affaires from Ankara. Iraq's parliament held a session Saturday on the attack, with lawmakers deciding to form a committee to investigate further.

Power Minister asks states to formulate plans for biomass co-firing in power plants

The Ministry of Power has asked states to formulate time-bound plans to ensure the utilisation of biomass for co-firing in thermal power plants ahead of the Kharif harvest season to reduce stubble burning and air pollution. To address the issue of air pollution and to reduce the carbon footprint of thermal power generation, the Ministry of Power issued a revised policy in October last year for the use of agro residue-based biomass and mandated the use of five to seven per cent of biomass co-fired along with the coal for all thermal power plants.



Audi to focus on electric vehicles from 2033

German luxury car maker Audi would be focusing only on electric vehicles by 2033 and would stop making cars run on international combustion engines (ICE), a top official said on Tuesday.

Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon said the auto major would stop production of current models powered by ICE and would commence transition to sell only electric vehicles from 2033 onwards.

Dhillon clarified that the company would manufacture



all the existing models fitted with petrol engine and would retail till 2032 for its transition to electric vehicles.

Responding to a query about incidents of battery operated vehicles going up in flames, he said all the components for the

Realme strengthens its AIoT product portfolio



KULBIR SINGH KALSI

Realme, the world's fastest-growing smartphone brand has made numerous additions to its extended AIoT portfolio. The brand expanded its wearables, hearables, and tablets segment with the launch of realme Watch 3, realme Buds Air 3 Neo, realme

Buds Wireless 2S, and realme PAD X. Along with that, realme also entered new categories to further expand its TechLife Ecosystem portfolio with the realme Flat Monitor, realme Keyboard and realme Pencil. These products have been launched as part of realme's '1+5+1' strategy, which aims to deepen realme's commitment to

providing its consumers with an aspirational, trendsetting lifestyle that is in step with the newest technological breakthroughs.

Commenting on the mega launch, Madhav Sheth, CEO, realme India, VP, realme and President, realme International Business Group said, "realme believes in challenging and altering the status quo via innovative design and performance. It has always aimed to provide Indian consumers with the finest tech-lifestyle experience possible, and introducing a diversified and comprehensive variety of AIoT products underscores that commitment. We have reinforced our focus on being a 5G democratizer in India this year and offering high-performing tech lifestyle products for our consumers to experience a smart, flexible, trendsetting, and connected lifestyle.

Two99 Marketing is redefining the strategies for upcoming web 3.0 projects and companies

Web 3.0 is the next generation of the internet, an environment that will change the landscape of how individuals use and consume content. The first wave of the internet was dominated by search engines and social media. Web 2.0, which emerged in the early 2000s, enabled users to create and add value to content. Web 3.0 will create an environment where user-generated content becomes a commodity, and smart devices will become the primary interfaces between consumers and content generators.

In Web 3 marketing, trends and new technologies are incorporated to investigate the web. Technology is not only evolving but it is also revolutionising the way we think about the internet. The dawn of Web 3.0 has already begun encapsulating these core concepts with the rise of NFTs, crypto currencies, the metaverse and other decentralised technologies, and communicating these topics effectively from a marketing point of view is essential. Virtual selling, NFTs as VIP access tokens, involving communities in metaverse events, and promoting your brand on social media are some of the crucial marketing strategies that should be implemented by brands.

Talking about the effective marketing techniques, Agam Chaudhary, CEO of Two99 Marketing stated, "We define successful marketing techniques for your business using our patented scientific formula, which is a community experience. Whereas experience and communities are affected by different values and are directly proportional to one another. Communities include values such as purpose, contribution (both brand and community), the ability to share content, collaborations, and investments, whereas experience includes values such as search (broadly divided into brand level, category level, and query level), UI/UX (including technology, ease of use, and content), and Hooks (both options and commerce)."

Asian Paints Q1 profit jumps 80.4 per cent, sales up 55 per cent

Asian Paints Ltd on Tuesday reported an 80.39% increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,036.03 crore for the first quarter ended on June 30, 2022, as the business grew both in volume and value terms.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 574.30 crore during the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal. Asian Paints said in a regulatory filing.

Its revenue from operations was up 55 per cent to Rs 8,578.88 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 5,534.87 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

Asian Paints' total expenses were at Rs 7,287.84 crore, up 48.91 per cent in Q1/FY 2022-23, as against Rs 4,893.87 crore in the corresponding period.

Commenting on the results, Asian Paints Managing Director & CEO Amit Syngle said the domestic decorative business experienced good consumer demand and recorded stellar revenue growth for the quarter.

"The volume growth regis-



tered in the quarter is one of the highest in the last six quarters. The business also registered robust 4-year compounded growth in volume and value terms," he said.

Asian Paints' international business also delivered a good double-digit revenue growth for the quarter despite multiple headwinds across key geographies.

"While the persistent inflationary environment continued to impact the gross margins, we delivered healthy operating margins with strong push on the premium & luxury offerings and driving further operational efficiencies across businesses, said Syngle.

Shares of Asian Paints Ltd closed marginally up at Rs 3,108 on BSE.

ECGC introduces new scheme providing enhanced export credit risk insurance cover up to 90% for small exporters

ECGC has introduced a new scheme to provide enhanced export credit risk insurance cover to the extent of 90% to support small exporters under the Export Credit Insurance for Banks Whole Turnover Packaging Credit and Post Shipment (ECIB- WTPC & PS). The scheme is expected to benefit a number of small-scale exporters availing of export credit with banks which hold the ECGC WT-ECIB covers. This will also enable the small exporters to explore new markets/new buyers and diversify their existing product portfolio competitively.

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai on July 26, ECGC Chairman M Senthilnathan said, "We expect the cover to play a game changing role. We expect this to bring up percentage of accounts with



up to Rs. 20 crore, thereby lending further stability to ECGC portfolio". He further said, "By giving 90% cover to banks, we expect more small companies to get export credit from banks, benefiting these industries greatly. We expect

banks to provide more concessions. The net effect will be benefit to exporters, involving reduction in interest rate".

Thanking the Commerce Ministry and the Minister Piyush Goyal, ECGC Chairman said, "The Government supported us with adequate capital infusion in recent years. This, as well as the need to make our cover more helpful to exporters has led us to take the decision being announced today".

Explaining the role played by the premier Export Credit Agency of the Government of India, Shri Senthilnathan said, "Countercyclical role played by organizations like ECGC is similar to that of a fireman, when credit is suffering, credit insurance agencies step in to stabilize the market".

No night landing facility at 25 airports in India



NEW DELHI: There are 25 airports across the country which don't have night landing facilities. Kushinagar airport, Shimla airport and recently inaugurated Deoghar airport in Jharkhand are among the list of 25 airports.

The ministry of civil aviation on Monday said in the Rajya Sabha that the upgradation or modernisation of airports, including provision of night landing facility is a continuous process and is undertaken by Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other airport operators from time to time depending on the availability of land, commercial viability, socio-economic considerations, traffic demand and willingness of airlines to operate to/from such airports etc.

HAL signs USD 100 mn engine contract with Honeywell

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on Wednesday signed a contract worth over USD 100 million with Honeywell for supply and manufacture of 88 TPE331-12B engines/kits along with maintenance and support services to power the Hindustan Trainer Aircraft (HTT-40).

HAL CMD R Madhavan said the company has successfully developed Basic Trainer Aircraft (HTT-40) to address the basic training requirements of the IAF. "There is (a) potential



requirement of 70 aircraft. The contract for the same with IAF is under advanced stage of approval, he added.

We are proud of our four decade long partnership with HAL and happy to extend our relationship with this new order, said Senior Director, OE Sales, Honeywell Defense & Space, Eric Walters. The TPE331-12

family of engines has proven itself in operations all over the world, and we have committed to support and deliver engines as well as kits within the stipulated schedule to meet the requirements of the IAF.

Honeywell is committed to support export of HTT-40 aircraft in coming years along with other engine programmes which are currently on radar. This contract would pave the way for future collaboration between HAL and Honeywell", he said.

Gangar Eyenation organizes free eye check-up camp for Viramgam residents



FW DESK

A free eye check-up camp was organised today for the residents of Viramgam, Saurashtra in Gujarat by Gangar Eyenation, which is one of the leading eye care brands in the country. Around 3,000 people benefited from the one-day camp, which had a team of around 15-20 optometrists participating in it. They also distributed new spectacles for free.

Apart from measuring the eye power, eye health education & awareness sessions are conducted in order to increase the level of awareness and knowledge of common eye diseases like cataracts, glaucoma, dry eye and other vision disabilities. Timely eye checkup helps to minimize the risk of eye diseases and prevent loss of vision and blindness that can arise from factors that range from age, COVID as well as increased exposure to technology.

Jigar Gangar, Director of Gangar Eyenation, says that the one-day free eye checkup camp is part of their commitment to create awareness about eye-centric issues and disorders. As a universal need, we have put our efforts by creating access to good eye healthcare to all people, regardless of their

economic means and to provide high-quality and affordable eye care to more and more people around the country, but in a post COVID-world it has become even more necessary," he says, adding, "It's not just about diabetes or thyroid impacting the vision, there are more complications with the arrival of the virus. We are now pouring into our gadgets for everything and for long hours leading to eye-related problems to shoot up, especially among children."

Gangar also thanked the group of optometrists for their support in making the eye check-up camp a success. "We are proud to have touched so many lives in Viramgam and are looking forward to conducting similar free eye check-up camps in other places, thus spreading awareness to a larger number of people. We believe every citizen has a right to this information as well as have access to the treatments as well," he adds.

Over the past 44 years, Gangar Eyenation has proudly evolved from a single store into a mammoth leading retail chain. They are a privately owned Indian Eyewear company that is in the business of retailing frames, sunglasses, lenses, and contact lenses. Gangar Eyenation markets the world's leading brands.

Toyota's self-charging hybrid electric vehicle is eco-friendly: Misser

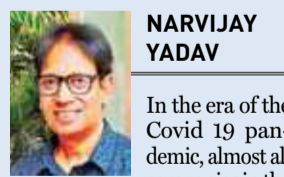


KULBIR SINGH KALSI

MOHALI: As the subcompact SUV segment is becoming more diverse and popular with today's car lovers, Globe Toyota is all out to make the most of emerging opportunities in and around 'Greater Tricity.' "There is a strong sentiment for SUVs in the Mohali region. This sentiment goes beyond the tricity to places like Ambala, Yamunanagar and Ludhiana. We are well positioned to cater to SUV needs of the region which we also identify as 'Greater Tricity,'" said Ashu Misser, Head, Marketing, Globe Toyota.

A reliable and key player in the SUV segment, Globe Toyota has added urban cruiser Hyryder, a self-charging strong hybrid electric vehicle to its kitty.

Work from Home is the first choice of Gen Z



NARVIJAY YADAV

In the era of the Covid 19 pandemic, almost all companies in the world extended the facility of work from home (WFH) to their employees. In many companies, the WFH system continues to this day. Some companies have adopted a hybrid model, in which employees are asked to come to the office on some days, while on the rest days they can work from their homes. Many benefits of working from home were directly visible, such as the time spent commuting to the office being saved. Fuel consumption was drastically reduced. There was time for family. Everyone liked the flexibility in working hours. Microsoft recently conducted a survey, in which young people born after 1990 (Gen Z) were asked about their views on this matter.

The report titled 'Work Trend Index Generation Z' revealed that sectors that do not have



work-from-home facilities are not getting qualified workers. Construction, finance, hospital, and manufacturing are sectors that are facing the problem of qualified manpower. Most of the youth now prefer to work from home only. That is why technology companies have no shortage of young and qualified employees. After the global recession in 2007, jobs in big banks were rapidly lost, so now graduate youth are more attracted to technology companies than big banks. Perhaps that is why, between 2011 and 2020,

the number of young people studying computer science in the UK increased by 50%.

Preparations are being made to push more electric buses into the public transport system in the country. For this, the number of electric buses is being increased. State-owned Convergence Energy Services Ltd. (CESL) has floated a tender for 50,000 new electric buses worth \$10 billion (approx Rs 80,000 crore). In order to reduce pollution, the attention of the government and private companies has been drawn towards the electrification of

public transport. Looking at the current situation, it seems that in the next 5 to 7 years, most of the vehicles on the Indian roads will be electric models.

In Punjab, where the number of petrol and diesel vehicles is high, the state is lagging behind in the case of electric vehicles. There are hardly about 15,000 electric vehicles (EVs) in Punjab, while in Haryana their number is more than 78,000. It was informed in the Lok Sabha that Punjab has lagged behind in developing vehicle charging infrastructure also. There are only 41 electric charging stations in the state, that too in the private sector. No work has been done in this direction at the government level.

5G facility is going to start in India by the end of this year, for which telecom companies are gearing up rapidly. This will be a service with ten times more speed than the current 4G service. For this, initially, customers may have to pay up to a 20% higher tariff. Also, 5G handsets will also be expensive.

When any new technology comes into the market, it is generally expensive. When people start using it on a large scale, that is, the number of customers goes up, then gradually its cost starts decreasing. Telecom companies are assuming that the facility of 5G will be first taken by the customers of urban areas.

Some people may feel that our country lacks facilities and natural calamities are more frequent here. But the reality is that the situation is not good even in western nations. Due to global warming, this time most parts of the US and Europe are facing severe heat. For the first time in the history of Britain, the day temperature has reached 40 degrees. The temperature of 40 degrees may not matter much for us in India, but it is a big problem for the people of London because the temperature there was often only up to 20 degrees. You must have often seen that when British tourists used to come to India, especially in winters, they liked to sit in the sun whenever they got a chance.

Reserve Bank of India in favour of ban crypto currencies, claims to launch own digital currency on Blockchain technology

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in the Lok Sabha in reply to a written question that the Reserve Bank of India is in favour of banning cryptocurrencies, it was clear that it is concerned about their destabilising effect on monetary and fiscal stability.

Money has three main attributes: it is used as a unit of account, as a medium of exchange, and as a store of value. In most countries, money is issued by a government backed authority (such as RBI in India) and carries sovereign guarantee. Entities authorised to hold money and enable payments (such as banks, credit cards and payment wallets) are licensed by a government agency. This means that there is a government-regulated centralised system of validating transactions and keeping track of money flow.



The Union Finance Minister said, "In view of the concerns expressed by RBI on the destabilising effect of cryptocurrencies on the monetary and fiscal stability of a country, RBI has recommended framing of legislation on this sector. RBI is of the view that cryptocurrencies should be prohibited."

As at present, cryptocurrencies are not regulated in India. The Finance Minister

man in Parliament.

However, the much-expected Cryptocurrency Bill is yet to see the light of the day. One reason is that effective legislation on this matter is possible only through international collaboration. Cryptocurrencies are by definition borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage. Therefore, any legislation for regulation or for banning can be effective only after significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards.

What is Cryptocurrency : Historically, currencies were devised as means to replace the barter system. Currencies that we use in our regular life are also known as «fiat currencies» since they are backed by a convertible or a commodity. In

simple terms, the currency that we use is issued by the Government and is a promissory note issued by the Government promising to pay the bearer the amount specified on the currency.

The VCs are basically a collection of binary data, which is stored using cryptography to secure the transaction records. VCs are not fiat currencies and are not backed by the Government. VCs are based on the concept of decentralised control and have no single authority regulating its issuance. VCs do not exist physically. They are distributed over a vast network of computers. Unlike regular currencies, VCs have a limit. Every ASCII computer file specifies the quantity of a coin. Thus, as the demand for VCs increase, so does its value. It works on the principle of demand and supply.

CGST Commissionerate Mumbai West busts Rs 10.61 Crore fake GST invoice racket



FW DESK

Officers of Anti-Evasion wing of CGST Commissionerate Mumbai West of Mumbai Zone have unearthed a fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) Network of Rs 10.61 Crores involving bogus invoices of more than Rs 76 Crores and arrested the Proprietor of a Malad based company for GST fraud.

Acting on a tip off received, an investigation was initiated against M/s Sanghvi Traders which revealed that fake Input

Tax Credit (ITC) of Rs.10.61 Crore was availed and passed on without actual receipt or supply of goods, in gross violation of provisions of the CGST Act, 2017. For this fraud, bogus invoices of more than Rs. 76 Crores were issued.

During investigation, statement of the proprietor of this company was recorded, wherein he admitted his role in this GST fraud. He was arrested on 27.07.2022 under Section 69 of CGST Act, 2017 for contravention of Section 132 of the CGST Act,

2017. He was produced before the Hon'ble Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Esplanade on 27.07.2022. The Magistrate has remanded him to judicial custody for 14 days.

The officers of Mumbai Zone are using data analysis and network analysis tools to identify potential fraudsters. This case is a part of special drive launched by the CGST Mumbai Zone against the fraudsters and fake ITC network dealers, who have been causing un-healthy competition for the honest taxpayers.

During the financial year 2021-22, the CGST Mumbai West Commissionerate has detected GST evasion of Rs. 603.88 Crores, recovered Rs. 68.21 Crores and arrested 7 tax evaders. CGST Mumbai West Commissionerate will intensify the drive against the fraudsters and fake entities, engaged in availing and passing of fake ITC, in the coming days.

New Banking Policy for Purchase from Foreign Countries: Ajay Bhatt

FW DESK

In line with opening of allocation of Government business to Private Sector Banks by the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Defence has assigned HDFC Bank,

ICICI Bank and Axis Bank to provide financial services in form of Letter of Credit (LC) and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) business for overseas procurement by the Ministry. Till now, only authorised Public Sector Banks were utilised to provide these services to the Ministry. Allocation of LC and DBT business to Private Sector Banks is expected to bring in greater competition and efficiency in the banks. This information was provided by Raksha Rajya Mantri Ajay Bhatt in a written reply to Geeta alias Chandraprabha in Rajya Sabha.

Prompt grievance redressal of taxpayers top priority: CBDT chairman Nitin Gupta



Prompt redressal of taxpayers' grievances remains the top priority for the tax department, the newly appointed chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Nitin Gupta said.

In his message on the occasion of Income Tax Day, he said the tax department has reported the highest ever tax collection of Rs 14.09 lakh crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022 due to streamlining of policies and processes that eased compliance for taxpayers.

"However, we cannot rest on our laurels and need to keep working hard to maintain this momentum," he said. "Prompt redressal of taxpayers' grievances in the true spirit of the Taxpayers' Charter shall remain a top priority area."

CBDT, the tax administration arm of the government, will continue to engage proactively with the taxpayers and other stakeholders and will use their feedback to keep improving processes. Gupta said the last few years have witnessed tremendous changes across sectors in the economy including increasing digitization, emergence of new categories of businesses and new asset classes.

"The taxpayers of today desire ease of compliance and prompt redressal of their issues," he said. "Alive to such changes the department has redesigned its policies and re-engineered its processes with the aim of enhancing taxpayer convenience and infusing greater transparency into its functioning."

CBDT, he said, is an enabler and service provider.

Stating that the Income Tax Department is not a monolithic entity, he said there are many areas of technical specialisation and differentiation which are being administered by committed cadres of officers and officials.

CoinSwitch announces zero-fee Bitcoin Trading Fest

India's largest crypto investing app, has waived off trading fees on bitcoin transactions on its platform for a limited period. All CoinSwitch.co users with fully-verified Know-Your-Client (KYC) and Indian Bank accounts can trade Bitcoin at zero fees in Indian Rupees for the offer period.

Bitcoin is the largest crypto by market capitalization and weighs over 35% on CREB, the real-time Indian crypto



market index. The zero-fee trading offer extends to all

bitcoin transactions, including SIP and limit orders as well as sale of bitcoins received as rewards for referrals and other promotional activities.

Both fractional and high-value investors can avail the offer as there is no lower or upper limit on the order value. CoinSwitch also provides educational materials through its blog and YouTube videos to enable users to make informed investment decisions.

CoinSwitch listed the 100th coin on its trading platform last month enabling users to purchase and sell these Crypto assets in Indian Rupees following safe investing guidelines.

CoinSwitch is on a mission to Make Money Equal for All. India's largest crypto investing app and a Great Place to Work, CoinSwitch is creating an ecosystem that simplifies crypto and is trusted by over

18 million registered users. Founded in 2017 by Ashish Singhal, Govind Soni, and Vimal Sagar Tiwari, and backed by blue chip investors including Andreessen Horowitz (a16z), Tiger Global, Sequoia Capital India, Ribbit Capital, Paradigm, and Coinbase Ventures, the company is evolving into a wealth-tech destination for every Indian. For more information, visit: www.coinswitch.co

Income Tax Department conducts searches in Mumbai

Income Tax Department carried out a search and seizure operation on 05.07.2022 on a group engaged in agro and textile business, and another group of entry operators. A total of 27 premises were covered during the search action in Mumbai and Delhi NCR.

During the course of the search operation, a large number of incriminating evidences in the form of hard copy documents and digital data have been found and seized.

It was found during investigation that most of the turnover of the listed companies of the main group has been generated through circular trading. The promoter of the group was involved in systematic manipulation of performance of certain group companies on

stock markets, with the help of stock brokers. Several instances of out of books payment to some stock brokers for unlawful purposes, have also been found. All



such irregularities have been admitted by both, the promoter and the stock brokers. The group is

also supported by a professional person, who is primarily engaged in providing accommodation entries to several other groups, in exchange of cash.

These evidences also revealed that the group has generated huge amount of cash through claiming

bogus purchases of various materials including packing material of more than Rs. 100 crore. Moreover, the group has also indulged in unaccounted sales of agro and textile items over Rs. 150 crore. Handwritten diaries containing cash transactions have also been found and seized, which have been duly corroborated by statements of some of the counterparties/beneficiaries covered under the search action.

Searches were also conducted in case of another group which is involved in providing accommodation entry. This group is found to be operating and controlling various concerns including LLPs, companies and proprietorship concerns through which ac-

commodation entry of sale and purchase of cut and polished diamond as well as shares are given in the guise of genuine business. The main persons of the group have admitted in their statement under oath, about arranging accommodation entries pertaining to expenses and unsecured loans for various beneficiaries, against cash. A preliminary analysis of few years of such transactions shows that accommodation entries in the nature of bogus loans and expenses exceeding few hundred crore have been provided through these entities.

Unaccounted cash of Rs. 1.4 crore has been seized during the search operation. Further investigations are in progress.

SEBI notifies social stock exchange framework

Capital markets regulator Sebi has notified a framework for the social stock exchange to provide social enterprises with an additional avenue to raise funds.

The framework for the Social Stock Exchange (SSE) has been developed on the basis of the recommendations of a working group and technical group constituted by the regulator.

The social stock exchange is a novel concept in India and such a bourse is meant to serve the private and non-profit sectors by channelling greater capital to them. The idea of SSE was first floated by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget Speech 2019-20.

Under the new rules, SSE will be a separate segment of the existing stock exchanges, according to the three separate notifications issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on Monday.

Social enterprises (SEs) eligible to participate in the SSE will be entities -- non-profit organisations (NPOs) and for-profit social enterprises -- having social intent and impact as their primary goal. Also, such an intent should be demonstrated through its focus on eligible social objectives for the underserved or less privileged populations or regions.

The social enterprises will have to engage in a social activity out of 16 broad activities listed by the regulator. The eligible activities include eradicating hunger, poverty, malnutrition and inequality; promoting healthcare, supporting education, employability and livelihoods; gender equality empowerment of women and LGBTQIA+ communities; and supporting incubators of social enterprise. Corporate foundations, political or religious organisations or



activities, professional or trade associations, infrastructure and housing companies, except affordable housing, will not be eligible to be identified as a social enterprise. Concerning fund raising, Sebi said eligible NPOs can raise funds through zero-coupon zero principal bonds and mutual funds, while for-profit social enterprises can mobilise capital through the issuance of equity shares on the main board, SME platform or equity shares issued to an alternative investment fund, including social impact fund. NPOs desirous of raising funds on the SSE will be required to be registered with the exchange.

In respect of disclosures, a social enterprise, raising funds or registered on SSE, will be required to submit an "annual impact report" to such a bourse. The annual impact report will be audited by a social audit firm employing a social auditor.

Also, social venture funds under Sebi's alternative investment funds norms have been rechristened as social impact funds in a bid to make such funds an attractive means for investment in NPOs. Further, the corpus requirements for such funds have been reduced from Rs 20 crore to Rs 5 crore and the minimum value of the investment by an individual investor in such funds will be Rs 2 lakh.

Vocal for local in food processing sector

As part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan - Vocal for Local Initiative in food processing sector, Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is implementing a centrally sponsored "PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme" for providing financial, technical and business support for setting up / upgradation of micro food processing enterprises in the country. The scheme is operational for a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 Crore. Scheme primarily adopts One District One Product (ODOP) approach to reap the benefit



of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products. It provides the

framework for value chain development and alignment of support infrastructure. As per the Annual Sur-

vey of Industries, 2015-16 and 73rd Round Survey of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), there are about 25 lakh unregistered/unincorporated food processing enterprises in the country.

The PMFME scheme is designed to address the challenges faced by the micro enterprises and to tap the potential of groups and cooperatives in supporting the upgradation and formalization of these enterprises. The scheme aims to enhance the competitiveness of new and existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganized segment of the food processing industry and

promote formalization of the sector.

Capacity building and training is a critical component of the scheme in technical upgradation and formalization of micro food processing enterprises. The focus areas for capacity building are entrepreneurship development, compliance of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) standards and general hygiene and other statutory compliances. District Resource Persons (DRPs) have been entrusted to provide hand-holding support to micro food processing enterprises for the compliance of FSSAI and other statutory requirements.

Housing prices rise up to 15 % during April-June

Average housing price rose up to 15 per cent during April-June 2022 across 9 major cities, with Chennai witnessing the highest appreciation of 15 per cent, according to data analytic firm PropEquity.

The weighted average price rose by 15% in Chennai to Rs 6,744 per square feet in the June quarter from Rs 5,855 per square feet in the year-ago period.

Gurugram witnessed 12 per cent increase in prices to Rs 11,517 per square feet from Rs 10,315 per square feet, and Hyderabad too saw 12 per cent rise to Rs 6,472 per square feet from Rs 5,764 per square feet.

The average prices in Noida rose 9 per cent to Rs 7,411 per square feet from Rs 6,791 per square feet. In Bengaluru, the prices were up 8 per cent to Rs 6,196 per square feet from Rs 5,760 per square feet.

Housing prices in Mumbai,



Thane and Pune increased by 3 per cent. In Mumbai, the prices of residential properties rose to Rs 18,896 per square feet, while in Thane, the rates appreciated to Rs 6,325 per square feet from Rs 6,165 per square feet.

Housing prices in Pune too increased to Rs 5,348 per square feet from Rs 5,189 per square feet.

Kolkata witnessed the minimum increase of 1 per cent in the average housing prices

to Rs 5,431 per square feet in April-June 2022 from Rs 5,355 per square feet in the same period last year.

"Residential market has been witnessing steady growth in sales and price appreciations over the last one year," Samir Jasuja, Founder and MD of PropEquity, said. As per the data, the housing sales rose 96 per cent year-on-year to 93,153 units during the June quarter this year. Sales, however, dropped 7 per cent from the previous quarter.

Total units launched across the top 9 cities rose 51 per cent annually to 69,813 units during the April-June period, but fell 24 per cent from the previous quarter. The unsold housing inventory dropped 11 per cent annually to 4,05,586 units in the June quarter. The fall was 5 per cent from the previous quarter.

Mumbai-based realty firm Kalpataru Ltd, which is developing many projects in Mumbai and Thane, Director-Sales Mukesh Singh attributed the rise in housing sales and prices in Thane to a higher demand.

"Over the past decade, Thane has transformed into a bustling metropolis. The city is in the midst of infrastructure and connectivity transformation which is expected to appreciate property prices and rentals," he said.

As per the PropEquity data, housing sales in Thane

more than doubled to 22,966 units during the June quarter from 10,878 units in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Housing sales in Pune doubled to 21,927 units from 10,829 units, while sales in Mumbai rose 98 per cent to 11,733 units from 5,929 units.

Hyderabad saw 77 per cent increase to 14,457 units from 8,176 units. Bengaluru witnessed 119 per cent increase to 13,324 units from 6,088 units. The sales of apartments in Chennai rose 45 per cent to 3,453 units from 2,374 units. Kolkata saw 56 per cent growth in sales to 3,103 units from 1,988 units.

In Delhi-NCR, Gurugram witnessed 57 per cent rise to 1,205 units from 769 units, while Noida saw 87 per cent growth to 1,010 units in the April-June period from 539 units last year, the data showed.

INTERNATIONAL

Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss neck and neck after first TV debate clash

There was no clear winner between former Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss on Tuesday after the UK's prime ministerial candidates went head-to-head in their first television debate as finalists and clashed fiercely on their economic policies and tax plans.

A snap Opinion poll of who performed best in the BBC debate on Monday night found Sunak just slightly ahead at 39 per cent, compared to Truss at 38 per cent. However, 47 per cent of Conservative Party voters quizzed thought it was the Foreign Secretary who was the better performer, with 38 per cent preferring Sunak.

Overall, the survey of 1,032 British adults held that voters could not decide between Sunak and Truss, with just one point dividing the pair.

In a reflection of what a general election might throw up, data showed that 41 per cent of Opposition Labour Party voters in the survey thought 42-year-



old Sunak did better while 30 per cent preferred Truss.

Of those surveyed, 43 per cent also said the Conservatives should elect Sunak while 41 per cent said they should elect 47-year-old Truss, with 12 per cent either choosing "do not know" or abstaining.

You've promised over 40 billion pounds of unfunded tax cuts 40 billion pounds more borrowing, said Sunak, repeatedly confronting his opponent on her pledge to cut taxes from day one as a new Prime Minister.

That is the country's credit card, and it's our children and grandchildren, everyone here's kids will pick up the tab for that. There's nothing Conservative about it," he said.

The former Chancellor insists the UK's tax burden is the result of the unprecedented levels of government spending needed to keep the economy afloat during the COVID pandemic and that getting a grip on inflation is a priority before any tax cuts.

He warned that Truss' tax cut plan would "tip millions of

people into misery" and cost the Tories the next general election, expected around 2024.

The Foreign Secretary, meanwhile, insisted that no other country was putting up taxes and accused Sunak of having no plan for growth. "This Chancellor has raised taxes to the highest rate in 70 years, and we're now predicting a recession. The truth is in the figures," she said.

The debate got heated at several points as the economic policy remained the key dividing line during the fiery programme entitled Our Next Prime Minister, which also saw the pair grilled on their tough stance on China and even their dress sense after jibes on social media over Sunak's expensive tastes.

Sunak was defiant and said he was "not going to apologise" for his background, adding that his parents had worked hard and saved for him and his siblings to get a good, if expensive, education.

"Such aspirational values are

Conservative," he declared, attracting a round of applause from the audience in Stoke-on-Trent in central England.

Truss sought to downplay her camp's jibes at the British Indian ex-minister's choice of attire, saying she did not have "any issue with how expensive anybody else's clothes are" and is "not going to give Rishi fashion advice", adding that she is a "great admirer of his dress sense".

During the more mellow moments of the debate, Sunak said he admired Truss and that they were ultimately on the same team. Asked if he would work in a government headed by her, he answered in the affirmative. Truss also said she would "love" to have Sunak on her team if she becomes Prime Minister.

The pair will continue their intense campaigning up and down the country as they appear at a series of hustings organised by the Conservative Campaign Headquarters.

Thai PM sails through last no-confidence vote ahead of polls



Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha sailed through his fourth and final no-confidence vote in Parliament on Saturday with no surprises, ahead of a general election next year.

The vote came after four days of debate targeting Prayuth and 10 of his Cabinet members for economic mismanagement and their failure to prevent corruption.

All 10 ministers also survived the vote, thanks to the ruling coalition government's majority in Parliament.

Prayuth won 256 confidence votes, with 206 against and nine abstaining.

Cholanan Srikaew, head of the main opposition Pheu Thai Party, said the vote result was disappointing as it didn't reflect public sentiment.

We know we cannot win in the Parliament but we will not lose in the general election, he said.

A retired general, Prayuth has weathered three earlier censure motions since 2020. No targeted Cabinet ministers have ever been ousted by no-confidence voting in Thailand's parliamentary history.

Prayuth, 68, came to power during a 2014 coup and was later elected in 2019 general elections.

Over the past four days of censure debate, Prayuth was the key target of the opposition parties.

Opposition chief whip Sutin Klungsang said that Prayuth's key failure was economic management.

Prayuth, who is also Defence Minister, was also accused of spying on political dissidents with Pegasus spyware, and of misusing the country's budget.

The opposition also accused Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul of legalising cannabis without proper controls.

Prayuth has defended his government's record, noting that Thailand's economy is stable despite rising energy prices and high inflation.

For the remaining 250 days of the government, I insist that I will do everything to take the country out of the crisis as soon as possible, he said. The government has forecast the economy to expand between 2.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent this year, up from 1.6 per cent last year.

Ukraine pushes to try alleged war crimes as fighting rages



The appeal of Ukraine's first war crimes conviction was adjourned on Monday, as prosecutors keep pushing to hold Russia legally accountable for atrocities even as fighting rages in the south and east of the country.

Thin and subdued, Vadim Shishimarin, a 21-year-old captured Russian soldier who pleaded guilty to killing a civilian and was sentenced in May by a Ukrainian court to life in prison, sat in a glass box in the courtroom as he faced news cameras. The hearing was postponed until July 29 due to his lawyer's ill health.

Around Ukraine's capital region, where Russian forces pulled out four months ago, much of the work of documenting crime scenes and interviewing witnesses has been done. Now a more difficult phase in the search for accountability is underway: Finding those responsible. While conducting searches in the previously occupied region, we regularly find documents, passports and lists with names of participants of the units, with their complete data, including sites of birth and dates of births, Andrii Nebytov, head of the Kyiv regional police, told The Associated Press.

All of this information is being transferred to the relevant law enforcement. The investigators are working with the victims, trying to identify the people who committed crimes against them.

Bilateral Trade between India & GCC US\$ 154.66 billion in FY 2021-22

Bilateral Trade between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) grew from US\$ 87.35 billion in FY 2020-21 to US\$ 154.66 billion in FY 2021-22,

registering an increase of 77.06 per cent on a year-on-year basis. Since FY 2017-18, on a compounded annual growth rate basis, bilateral trade between India and the GCC has grown by 10.57%.

This information was given by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Anupriya Patel, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

US judge OKs online publication of New Mexico voter records



A conservative-backed initiative to publish voter registration records from across the country online for public consumption can move forward over the objections of New Mexico election regulators, a federal judge has ordered in a preliminary opinion. Albuquerque-based US District Court Judge James Browning issued an order last Friday preventing New Mexico state prosecutors from pursuing allegations of possible election code violations against the creators of VoteRef.com. The VoteRef.com website provides searchable access to voter registration records by name and street addresses, often indicating when people voted in past elections. The online records do not say for which candidates the people voted or how they voted on initiatives. Party affiliation is listed for voters in some states but not all.

Trump returning to Washington to deliver policy speech

Former President Donald Trump will return to Washington on Tuesday for the first time since leaving office, delivering a policy speech before an allied think tank that has been crafting an agenda for a possible second term.

Trump will address the America First Policy Institute's two-day America First Agenda Summit as some advisers urge him to spend more time talking about his vision for the future and less time relitigating the 2020 election as he prepares to announce an expected 2024 White House campaign.

I believe it will be a very policy-focused, forward-leaning speech, very much like a State of the Union 5.0," said Brooke Rollins, AFPI's president. Composed of former Trump administration officials and allies, the nonprofit is widely seen as an administration in waiting that could quickly move to the West Wing if Trump were to run again and win.

Trump's appearance in



Washington his first trip back since Jan. 20, 2021, when President Joe Biden was sworn into office comes as his potential 2024 rivals have been taking increasingly overt steps to challenge his status as the party's standard-bearer. They include former Vice President Mike Pence, who has been touting his own Freedom Agenda in speeches that serve as an implicit contrast with Trump.

Some people may choose to focus on the past, but I believe conservatives must focus on the future. If we do, we won't just win the next election, we will

change the course of American history for generations. Pence had planned to say in a speech at the Heritage Foundation in Washington on the eve of Trump's visit.

Pence's appearance was postponed because of bad weather, but he will be delivering his own speech Tuesday morning before the Young America's Foundation not far from the AFPI meeting.

Trump has spent much of his time since leaving office fixated on the 2020 election and spreading lies about his loss to sow doubt about Biden's victory. Indeed, even as the Jan. 6 committee was laying bare his desperate and potentially illegal attempts to remain in power and his refusal to call off a violent mob of his supporters as they tried to halt the peaceful transition of power, Trump continued to try to pressure officials to overturn Biden's win, despite there being no legal means to decertify the past election.

PM Modi congratulates Kuwait's new PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday extended his best wishes to Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al Ahmed Al-Sabah on his appointment as the prime minister of Kuwait. The country's ruler has appointed Sheikh Ahmad as prime minister. "My congratulations and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al Ahmed Al-Sabah, on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Kuwait. I look forward to working with him to further deepen and expand our excellent bilateral relations," Modi tweeted.

Iraq submits complaint to UN against Turkey after attack



Iraq has filed a complaint to the UN Security Council, requesting an urgent session to discuss a deadly artillery attack this week that Baghdad blames on Turkey, the Foreign Ministry said.

Wednesday's attack on the district of Zakho in Iraq's northern, semi-autonomous Kurdish region killed nine Iraqi tourists, including a child, and wounded 20. Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad al-Sahaf said the ministry also recalled Iraq's charge d'affaires from Ankara. Iraq's parliament held a session Saturday on the attack, with lawmakers deciding to form a committee to investigate further. Turkey, which has several bases in northern Iraq and often conducts cross-border military operations there, says it's targeting militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

Sahib Singh becomes Burberry's campaign stars



Four year old Sahib Singh from London has become a viral superstar for Burberry overnight. Their first Sikh childrens model & the first to wear a patka (head covering) - a massive leap in representation!

Burberry released its new fall/winter 2022 campaign on July 26 and already, it's been met with immense praise from fans in the Indian community. The core reason for that is because it stars Sahib Singh, the brand's first-ever Sikh model to feature in a children's campaign. Inspired by the iconic Burberry Thomas Bear, the campaign aims to recreate the innocent nature of childhood and all its joy through teddy bear motifs and playful imagery. Offering contemporary takes on archival graphics and signature silhouettes, the collection sees honey-colored trench coats and diamond-quilted jackets reworked alongside the debut of Burberry's TB Monogram print in a new-season orange colorway. Singh stars in the campaign

Plane crashes near lifeguard competition, pilot rescued



A small plane towing a banner crashed in the ocean July 22 during a lifeguard competition that turned into a real-life rescue along Southern California's popular Huntington Beach.

Corinne Baginski was at the beach for her 17-year-old daughter's races in the junior lifeguarding division around 1:30 pm when she heard the sound of the aircraft slamming into the water. She instinctively turned to the tent where the teens were waiting for the next event to begin as part of the 2022 California Surf Lifesaving Association Junior Lifeguard Championship. I heard a thump and then I looked at the tent and I see all the kids turning and running, she said. Like well-trained lifesavers, they ran towards the crash. Professional lifeguards were also in the water immediately, paddling out to the single-engine Piper Cub that floated on its wings.

Biden's Covid symptoms improve, WH says he's staying busy

COVID-19 symptoms left President Joe Biden with a raspy voice and cough as he met Friday via videoconference with his top economic team. But the president tried to strike a reassuring tone, declaring, I feel much better than I sound.

Biden took off a mask and sipped water as he opened the meeting to discuss the decline in gas prices in recent weeks. Reporters were allowed into a White House auditorium to view a few minutes of the proceedings, and when they asked how Biden was feeling, he flashed a thumbs up.

The president's doctors said his mild Covid symptoms were improving and he was responding well to treatment, as the White House worked to portray the image of a president still on the job despite his illness. He received his presidential daily security briefing via video call while, separately, Chinese President Xi Jinping wished Biden a speedy recovery.

India condemns recent killings in northern Iraq's Dohuk



India on Monday strongly condemned last week's attack on a mountain resort in Dohuk region of northern Iraq in which eight tourists were reportedly killed and 20 others wounded.

Following the killings last Wednesday, some Iraqi officials claimed that Turkey was behind the attack, but the Turkish foreign ministry rejected the allegations.

"India strongly condemns the recent killings in the Zakho district of Dohuk governorate, Kurdistan region of Iraq, which is a clear violation of the coun-

Sri Lanka to restrict fuel imports for one year amid worst economic crisis

Sri Lanka will restrict fuel imports for the next 12 months as it is facing a severe shortage of foreign exchange, Minister of Power and Energy Kanachana Wijesekera has said while announcing a rationing system for the distribution of fuel across the crisis-hit island nation.

Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people, is under the grip of an unprecedented economic turmoil, leaving millions struggling to buy food, medicine, fuel and other essentials.

The severe foreign exchange shortage has hampered the import of fuel and other essentials in the country reeling under the worst economic crisis in seven decades. Taking to Twitter on Monday, Wijesekera said a QR system has been introduced as the daily fuel demand cannot be fulfilled.

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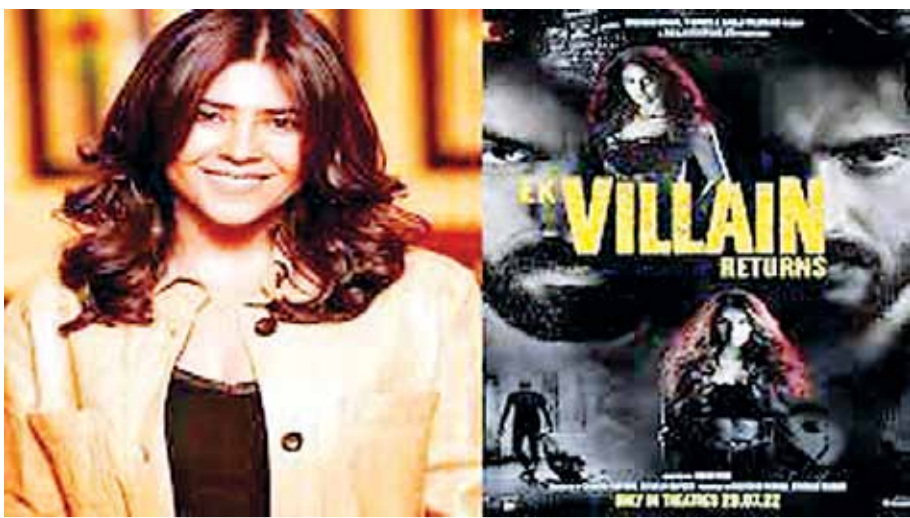
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Ekta Kapoor insists 'Ek Villain Returns' is not a Korean film's remake

Ekta Kapoor wriggled out of answering a question on whether Mohit Suri's 'Ek Villain' was a Korean film's rip-off and said instead that 'Ek Villain Returns' wasn't. She was speaking at a media interaction in the national capital on Monday evening.

Shraddha Kapoor, Ekta chose instead to talk about 'Ek Villain Returns' and how it came about. (Kamaal R. Khan, who's better known for his stint on 'Bigg Boss' and his tweets, incidentally, made a guest appearance in 'Ek Villain'.) "I will tell you the real story of this movie," Ekta said. "Mohit told me about the script and I said that the 'Ek Villain' franchise had to be bigger this time. Mohit worked on the script

and Rohit Shetty liked it. I then went to Rohit, and I am his sister, so I requested him, and he, very sweetly, like good brothers do, gave me the script back and said that's yours."

She added: "Whosoever is going to listen to this script will like it. It has not been made in any other language. I don't know what Korean Mr KKK is watching. But he seems to know more than I know, I think."

Trouble in Tollywood ? Telugu producers divided over stopping film shoots



Tollywood producers appear to be divided over the decision of one section of movie makers to halt shootings from August 1. While the Active Telugu Producers Guild (ATPG) has announced they will be voluntarily withholding film shoots starting August 1, the Producers' Council has clarified that no decision has been taken yet to stop shootings. The ATPG took the decision after a meeting with producers, exhibitors, distributors and studio owners, announcing that they would be withholding all shoots until they can sit down and discuss ways to find solutions to their problems.

The producers' body mentioned revenue and costs as their concerns. "Post-pandemic with the changing revenue situations and increasing costs, it is becoming important for producers to discuss all the issues we are facing as a community of filmmakers," the ATPG said. However, Producers' Council President C. Kalyan said no decision has been taken on stopping the film shootings. Producers' Council, which claims to be the representative of the overwhelming majority of producers, is the producers' wing of the Film Chamber of Commerce.

Mithali Raj: Shafali is a once-in-a-generation player



Shafali Verma belongs to that rare breed of players who emerge once in a generation with an ability to singlehandedly win matches against any opposition, legendary former skipper Mithali Raj said on Monday.

Mithali, who recently announced her retirement from international cricket, is amazed at the kind of "raw power" that the 18-year-old generates in her shots.

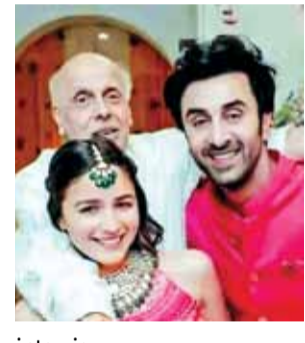
"I have been a big fan of her game. I have seen that she's one player who has the ability to win the game single-handedly for India against any attack and any team. She is one of those players that you get to see probably once in a generation," Mithali told ICC's 100 percent 'Cricket Podcast'.

Shafali made an instant impression on Raj on India's domestic circuit.

Mahesh Bhatt on becoming grandfather: My most challenging role

As Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor look forward to embracing parenthood, veteran filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt says his role as grandfather will be the "most challenging" part he has played as yet.

Alia Bhatt, who tied the knot with Ranbir Kapoor in April, announced her pregnancy last month and her father Mahesh Bhatt said he was overwhelmed after he heard the good news.



"It's the most challenging role I have to play as a grandfather. When I heard that she is going to have a baby, (I was like) 'Ah, my baby's going to have a baby.' I had hardly recovered from the phenomenal challenge that she displayed in recent years and kind of stunned the nation as well. And her magic was all in itself awesome. Then the magic that she is going to be a vehicle of life left me awestruck," the filmmaker told PTI in an email

interview.

Mahesh Bhatt, who has lent his voice for an audiobook titled "A Taste of Life", based on his own 2009 book on philosopher U G Krishnamurti, said it is the perfect gift that he would want to leave behind for his grandchildren. The audiobook was released by Audible on July 8.

"By the time my grandchildren grow up, the written word may perhaps perish and at least I'm leaving my voice behind so

they can say that, 'This is my grandfather's voice'. So that's what I feel is a gift. This is the best thing I could leave," he added.

The filmmaker, one of the most recognised storytellers of the Indian cinema, is known for directing acclaimed films such as "Arth", "Saaransh", "Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke", "Tamanna", "Aashiqui", "Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahin", "Sadak" and "Zakhm".

Mahesh Bhatt said "A Taste of Life" outweighs all his cinematic work and is closer to his heart primarily because it gave him the opportunity to go deeper into the bond that he shared with his mentor Krishnamurti.

"It has the defining love story of mine with my master, teacher, father, the love of my life, the breath of my life, U G Krishnamurti, and it chronicles my journey with him, particularly the last phase of life," he added.



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, at Chandigarh War Memorial in Chandigarh on Tuesday. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

Mumbai Police register FIR against actor Ranveer Singh over obscene pictures



The Mumbai Police on Tuesday registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh over his nude pictures on social media, an official said.

A Mumbai-based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) had approached the Chembur police here with a complaint against the actor.

Based on it, the police registered the FIR against Singh under various Indian Penal Code Sections like 292 (sale of obscene books, etc), 293 (sale of obscene objects to young people), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and provisions of the Information Technology Act, an official from the Chembur police station said.

An office-bearer of the NGO had alleged that the actor hurt the sentiments of women in general and insulted their modesty through his photographs, police earlier said. Ranveer Singh, a recipient of several awards, is known for his roles in films like "Bajirao Mastani", "Padmaavat" and "Gully Boy".

Rugby league players refuse to play NRL game in pride jersey



Seven Manly Sea Eagles players have withdrawn from a National Rugby League match in Australia because they're unwilling to wear their club's inclusion jersey. The jersey has rainbow stripes and a rainbow collar in place of the regular white sections to support LGBTQ inclusion in sports, and the club plans to use it for one game against Sydney Roosters. Sea Eagles coach Des Hasler on Tuesday said seven players advised club officials that wearing the pride jersey conflicts with their cultural and religious beliefs.

The players will not play on Thursday and we accept their decision, Hasler said. "These young men are strong in their beliefs and convictions and we will give them the space and support they require. The playing group are solid and understanding of each other's views. As a club we will wear the jersey on Thursday night. Josh Aloiai, Jason Saab, Christian Tuipulotu, Josh Schuster, Haumole Olakau'atu, Tolu Koula and Toafofoa Siplea are not available for selection on Thursday.

Want to focus on my OTT career: Aamir Ali

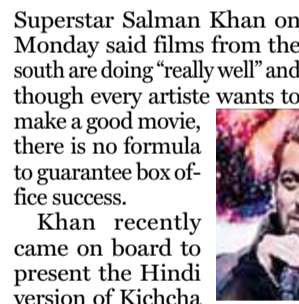


Actor Aamir Ali says after exploring the field of television "deeply", he wants to scale a new mountain, the digital space.

The popular actor began his career on TV in the early 2000s and has since starred in serials such as "Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki", "Woh Rehne Waali Mehlon Ki", "FIR" and "Dilli Wali Thakur Gurls". While TV has a lot more "drama", the shows on streamers tend to portray reality in an "authentic manner", he said.

"I have thankfully had an amazing experience on both TV and OTT... TV has a lot more drama in it, the OTT shows however tend to portray reality in an authentic manner... I owe so much of my career to TV. "However, now that I have explored TV so deeply, I am looking forward to doing more OTT. It is a new challenge for me, a new mountain to climb and I am excited about it," Ali told PTI. According to the 44-year-old actor, there is much more left for him to do as an artiste.

Salman on south films doing well: Want to do best, but no formula to success

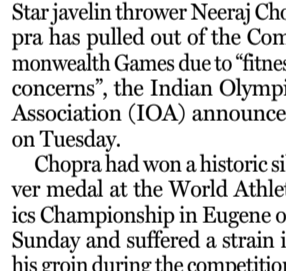


Superstar Salman Khan on Monday said films from the south are doing "really well" and though every artiste wants to make a good movie, there is no formula to guarantee box office success.

Khan recently came on board to present the Hindi version of Kichcha Sudeepa's upcoming Kannada fantasy action-adventure film "Vikrant Rona". At a special event of the film, Khan inter-

acted with the cast when actor Neetha Ashok said she was taken aback after she saw that the Bollywood superstar had shared the movie's trailer on Twitter. To this, Khan said, "I'm also presenting the film! I have to do this (promotions). I don't want to go into losses... South films are doing really well." The same time, the 56-year-old actor believes there is no formula to deliver a successful movie.

Neeraj Chopra pulls out of Birmingham Commonwealth Games due to groin strain



Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has pulled out of the Commonwealth Games due to "fitness concerns", the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) announced on Tuesday.

Chopra had won a historic silver medal at the World Athletics Championship in Eugene on Sunday and suffered a strain in his groin during the competition.

IOA Secretary General Rajiv Mehta said the reigning Olympic champion has been advised rest for one month. "Team India jav-



elin thrower Mr. Neeraj Chopra had called me earlier today from the US to convey his inability to take part in the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games owing

to fitness concern," Mehta said. "Following his participation in the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Mr. Chopra had had an MRI scan done on Monday and, based on it, he has been advised a month's rest by his medical team," Mehta added.

The 24-year-old had become only the second Indian athlete to win a medal at World Championship, after Anju Bobby George, who won a bronze medal in long jump at the 2003 World Championship held in Paris.

Lilly Singh, Diljit Dosanjh, Priyanka bow down in respect to each other

Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has shared some candid pictures with Punjabi singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh and social media personality Lilly Singh from their time together in Los Angeles.

Priyanka took to Instagram sharing a slew of pictures. In one picture, the three are seen bowing down to each other. Priyanka and Lilly recently attended Diljit's concert in Los Angeles.



"I had a much-needed super fun night out watching @diljitdosanjh doing what he does best! He had the au-

dience wrapped around his finger! None of us sat even for a moment! You're such a superstar, @diljitdosanjh. I highly recommend you get tickets to Diljit's current tour!"

"Also, kudos to the team that made it so comfortable and awesome for my friends and me! Thank you, @lilly, for always having the best ideas for nights out! Lots of Love! PS- watch us trying to outdo respecting each other! I'll bow lower! Lol! #DesiThings #DesiCrew."

On the work front, Priyanka will now be seen in Russo Brothers' 'Citadel'.

Film industry needs more ensemble films: Arjun Kapoor



Actor Arjun Kapoor on Monday said the Hindi film industry needs to make more ensemble films, a kind of cinema that he grew up watching.

In his appearance on "Coffee With Karan" last week, Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar had said that he and host-filmmaker Karan Johar faced difficulty in casting a second male lead in their upcoming joint production.

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In the month of Sawan, Shiva devotees from different provinces of North India carrying the tricolor symbol of patriotism along with Kanwar go to Shiva's temple and perform Jalabhishek with Ganagjal and embark on a difficult journey to attain virtue. PHOTOS: KULBIR SINGH KALSI



In the month of Sawan, Shiva devotees from different provinces of North India carrying the tricolor symbol of patriotism along with Kanwar go to Shiva's temple and perform Jalabhishek with Ganagjal and embark on a difficult journey to attain virtue. PHOTOS: KULBIR SINGH KALSI