

REGION

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CHIEF MINISTER MANOHAR LAL KHATTER & VIJ TO MONITOR RISING, WIPE OUT DRUG ADDICTION IN HARYANA



Clash between medical students and government of Haryana



SATISH HANDA

Clash between MBBS students in government medical colleges in Haryana state and state government is rising due to a bond agreement between the students and the government in which students admitted in a government medical college in the state will have to serve in government hospitals in Haryana state for a period of minimum seven years after completion of study. According to information, student during complete MBBS course have to spend expenses worth Rs 40 lakh and most of the

students desire to become a doctor remain unfulfilled in the absence of financial arrangements for which state government introduced a bond based agreement to arrange financial assistance for the study of a MBBS student in government medical college in case of filling up a bond to serve in a government hospital in the state for a minimum period of seven years, failing which the student will have to refund entire amount to the government along with interest which is not acceptable to students started agitation against this decision. However,

state government has allowed relation in this regard which is also not acceptable to protesting students demanding withdrawal of bond agreement. According to information, there is shortage of nearly 28000 doctors in government hospitals in Haryana state at present against the total population about 2.83 crore in the state, whereas according to World Health Organization (WHO) report a doctor is required on population of 1000 persons in the state but the present scenario reveals that there is a single doctors on 6300 persons in Haryana state making situation alarming and there is immediate need of doctors in government hospitals in the state providing free medical services to the patients as well as fast increasing OPD in government hospitals. According to a study, in case of Uttar Pradesh state having much higher population as compared to Haryana a doctor is available on population of 3700 persons.

BANKING & FINANCE

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FINMIN NIRMALA SITHARAMAN CHAIRS PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION WITH FINANCE MINISTERS OF STATES



Center Govt claims tax collections to cross budget estimates in current fiscal



FW DESK

Union govt claimed domestic tax collections will exceed the budget estimate by nearly Rs 4 lakh crore in the current fiscal owing to higher income

tax, customs duty, and GST collections, the government said on Wednesday. Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj was quoted as saying that the growth in tax revenues will continue to be higher than

POTPOURRI

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ACTRESS PREITY ZINTA HAD LEFT 'SOLDIER' CLIMAX SHOOT FOR PSYCHOLOGY EXAMS



Manish Sisodia's name not in CBI charge sheet, entire case fake: Delhi CM Kejriwal



FW DESK

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday that Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's name does not figure in the first charge sheet filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) naming seven accused persons in the Delhi excise policy case.

Sisodia's name is not there in the CBI charge sheet. The whole case is fake, as nothing was found in the raids. A total of 800 officers have found nothing in their probe for four months. Sisodia gave a ray of hope to crores of poor children in the country through a revolutionary education policy"

Terming the entire case as 'fake', Kejriwal alleged that attempts are being made to frame Sisodia, as the CBI has found nothing against him in its probe. "Sisodia's name is not there in the CBI charge sheet. The whole case is fake, as nothing was found in the raids. A total of 800 officers have found nothing in their probe for four months. Sisodia gave a ray of hope to crores of poor children in the country through a revolutionary education policy. I am sorry that a conspiracy has been hatched to defame such a person by implicating him in a false case," Kejriwal said in a tweet. The CBI charge sheet named Vijay Nair, Abhishek Boinpalli, Sameer Mahendra, Arun Ramchandra Pillai, Mootha Gautham, and two public

servants -- then Deputy Commissioner in the Excise Department, Kuldeep Singh, and then Assistant Commissioner in the Excise Department, Narendra Singh. The charge sheet filed before the Rouse Avenue Court mentioned that further investigation to find out the possible involvement of more public servants and others is underway. A supplementary charge sheet may also be filed later, the CBI said.

AAP will win in Gujarat with a thumping majority, says Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann



Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday said that the Aam Aadmi Party will win this assembly elections with a thumping majority in the Gujarat and they will eliminate unemployment, corruption and poverty after forming the government in the state. Addressing a massive gathering of people in his road shows here in Nazar, the Chief Minister said that there is a wave of change as people of Gujarat are so fed-up of the failed BJP government that they are themselves saying that they want to give a chance to AAP for the next 5 years to bring a revolution in Gujarat like the AAP did in Delhi and Punjab. He further said that the this time people will oust venal and tyrant BJP leaders from the Gujarat, which has pushed the state's economy by decades due to its ill advised policies.

Wasn't Twitter supposed to die by now or something, asks Elon Musk



Elon Musk on Wednesday shrugged off the #RIPTwitter hashtag again, saying that the micro-blogging platform under him is actually growing and is not going to die as projected. Despite too much criticism from several quarters, Musk said Twitter is where the "opinion leaders are". "Wasn't Twitter supposed to die by now or something?" Musk tweeted to his more than 118 million followers. "Maybe we've gone to heaven/hell and don't know it," he chuckled. The new Twitter CEO is currently busy attending late-night meetings with software teams, with an aim to build a more robust Twitter in days to come. "Twitter is where the opinion leaders are. I am cautiously optimistic that things will work out well," Musk further posted. Despite the hashtag #RIP Twitter that started to trend on social media amid an earlier exodus of some brands over the uncertain future of the company, Musk had said that "Twitter is ALIVE".

Kejriwal should answer what Satyendar Jain was doing with four people despite being a prisoner-Gaurav Bhatia

YOYESH KANT
New Delhi



The Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson demanded on Tuesday that Aam Aadmi Party Chief Arvind Kejriwal should apologise to the nation and dismiss his jailed minister Satyendar Jain over fresh allegations related to viral message video. While addressing to press conference, Gaurav Bhatia, spokesperson, BJP said that it is surprising that the person massaging Satyendar Jain is jailed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he is accused of raping a minor. How is the accused under POCSO giving message to Satyendar Jain?

He said that under the protection of Kejriwal, his own minister circumvents the law and meets with other accused and takes their services. This is just a protection message which is being done to protect that accused. The Aam Aadmi Party, which received flak over the videos, had asserted earlier that Jain was receiving physiotherapy in the jail, where he

is in judicial custody for the past five months over money-laundering charges. In a press conference, BJP spokesperson Bhatia added that if a prisoner gets the facilities of mineral water, TV and AC, then how is it wrong to raise questions on it. Kejriwal should apologize to the whole country because despite so many allegations against Satyendar Jain, he is keeping him as a minister. He said that if a message is happening on the head, then it has no meaning with the feet. If there is any medical issue then medical facilities will be given as per the jail manual, but every facility is being given to them violating the law.

Mamata Banerjee to attend PM-convened meeting in New Delhi on December 5

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will attend a meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 5 with chief ministers of all states to discuss the preparatory process for the country hosting the G20 Summit in 2023. According to state secretariat sources, the chief minister might use the opportunity of her visit to New Delhi to have a separate meeting with the Prime Minister on the occasion, where she can again raise the demands on the pending central dues to the West Bengal government. However, no confirmation has reached the state secretariat as yet on whether the separate meeting will happen or not. Few months back, Mamata

Banerjee went to New Delhi, had a separate meeting with her counterpart Arvind Kejriwal and requested him to clear the pending central dues under two heads namely state share in goods & services tax and pending funds under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Although in the meantime, the Centre has released funds under centrally-sponsored schemes, the state's dues on account of MGNREGA are still pending. Recently, at a public meeting, the chief minister also aired his grievance in this matter and questioned whether she will now have to touch the feet of the Prime Minister for the pending central funds.

Demonetisation was deeply flawed, P. Chidambaram tells SC

NEW DELHI: Senior advocate and Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Thursday told the Supreme Court that demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 currency notes was "deeply flawed". A five-judge bench, headed by Justice S.A. Nazeer and comprising Justices B.R. Gavai, A.S. Bopanna, V. Ramasubramanian, and B.V. Nagarathna, is hearing a clutch of petitions challenging the Centre's 2016 decision on demonetisation. Chidambaram, representing one of the petitioners, submitted that demonetisation impacted every citizen of the country and questioned Centre's power to invoke Section 26 of the Reserve Bank of India Act to demonetise currency notes.

He said the Centre cannot, on its own, initiate any proposal relating to legal tender, which can only be done on the RBI's central board recommendation and further argued that the decision-making process should be struck down for being "deeply flawed". "This is the most outrageous decision-making process which makes a mockery of the rule of law," he said, adding that the RBI has the right to regulate the issue of bank notes. Chidambaram said over 2,300 crore currency notes were demonetised against the backdrop of 300 crore notes per month capability of the government's printing presses, and this would mean it would take several months to print notes.

SGPC plans nationwide signature campaign for release of Sikh prisoners: Harjinder Singh Dhambi

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD OBSERVE MARTYRDOM DAY OF SAHIBZADAS AS SAHIBZADE SHAHADAT DIWAS & NOT AS VEER BAL DIWAS
JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar



The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in its today's executive committee (EC) meeting presided over by SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhambi has decided that the signature campaign to be launched from December 1, 2022, demanding release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh political prisoners) will be held nationwide. It was the first meeting of the SGPC EC which was newly elected on November 9, in

which many important decisions were taken. Speaking to the media after the meeting, SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhambi said that the active campaign under the struggle for the release of Sikh prisoners will be taken forward from December 1, 2022. He said a signature campaign will be launched, under

which, proformas will be filled besides spreading awareness among the Sangat about the cases of Sikh prisoners and the punishments served. "In order to make this movement nationwide, an approach will be made for filling proformas to different states through the SGPC's Sikh missions and Gurdwara management com-

mittees besides Punjab", said Dhambi. He said that the center of this campaign will be the SGPC office in Amritsar, while sub-centres will be established in every district of Punjab and Sikh missions outside Punjab. "Especially in Punjab, proformas will be filled by setting up camps at Gurdwaras, educational institutions, railway stations, bus stands, cities, towns and important intersections", said SGPC President. He said that after completing the work of filling the proformas, a one-day protest will be held by all SGPC members at Chandigarh, after which, the filled proformas will be handed over to the Governor of Punjab. He also said that besides filling the proformas, its entire written and digital record will also be maintained simultaneously.

Retired IAS officer Arun Goel takes charge as new Election Commissioner



Retired IAS officer Arun Goel on Monday took charge as the new Election Commissioner of India. The poll body will now have its full strength after the third post of Election Commissioner had been vacant for nearly six months. After Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra retired in May this year giving charge to Rajiv Kumar, the poll panel has been a two-member body only. Goel, a retired IAS officer from Punjab Cadre of the 1985 batch, was appointed to the post by President Droupadi Murmu on November 19. "The President is pleased to appoint Arun Goel, IAS (Retd.) (PB: 1985) as the Election Commissioner in the Election Commission with effect from the date he assumes the office," read an official communication from Ministry of Law and Justice issued on Monday. Goel will join Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey in the apex poll body.

UP ministers ready to cross shores for Global Investors' Summit

Uttar Pradesh ministers will travel to 19 cities across 17 countries between December 9 and 19, ahead of the Global Investors' Summit (GIS) scheduled early next year. The road shows will work in simultaneous mode which means that more than one road show will take place per day. Sources said the schedule had been verbally approved by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who may travel separately closer to the event in January. The required paperwork for visa and other things has been initiated by the partner industry bodies. Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce



and Industry (FICCI) have been engaged for the event that eyes to attract an investment of over Rs 10 lakh crore to the state. As per the schedule, state finance minister Suresh Khanna will travel alone between December 9 and 15 and lead roadshows in London, New York and San Francisco. Cabinet minister for indus-

tries and infrastructure development Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' and PWD minister Jitin Prasada will travel between December 9 and 14 to lead roadshows in Frankfurt, Brussels and Stockholm. On the same dates, Speaker UP Vidhan Sabha and former minister for industrial development Satish Mahana will travel to Canada to hold roadshows in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. He will be accompanied by Dharampal Singh, cabinet minister for animal husbandry, dairy development, political pension, minority welfare, Muslim waqf and haj and civil defence departments.

False narrative against Article 370, 35A exposed, Dr Farooq Abdullah

FW DESK

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said that the failures of the incumbent administration on all fronts had exposed the BJP's narrative against Article 370 as fake. Addressing a party convention in Samba, Abdullah said that the facts on the ground tell a different story. "The ruling dispensation misled people across the country that the abrogation of articles 370, 35-A will draw militancy in J&K



to a close. Has it happened?" Abdullah asked. "Targeted killings of non-locals, Kashmiri Pandits, local Muslims, Cops have brought back the horror of the 90s. Mass migration of Pandits, who had stayed back in Kashmir over the past thirty years is another reality of the post abrogation chapter unfolded by ruling BJP in

Kashmir. Today Kashmir is marked by uncertainty. Abdullah also highlighted the soaring unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir? "Didn't BJP promise 50,000 jobs for our youth when they were banging the drum for articles 370, 35-A abrogation. Where are those jobs?" he asked. Why are our educated, skilled and talented youth on the roads?" Abdullah added that unending job search has taken a toll on the mental health of our promising youth in Jammu, Pir Panjal and Chenab.

Khatter & Vij to monitor rising, wipe out drug addiction in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Drugs smuggling as well as fast increasing addiction of drugs among youths, aged and even women residing in urban as well as rural areas in Haryana is a matter of concern for state government and both Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khatter and Home & Health Minister Anil Vij has now decided to monitor this fast growing issue jointly to make Haryana drugs-free state. About a year ago state government formed Narcotic Control Bureau in the state to control smuggling and sale of drugs, especially in youths but satisfactory results could not be obtained as such both Khatter and Vij has now decided to undertake monitoring of the same themselves.

Information reveals, a meeting comprising of officers from as many as 17 government departments in the state including education, excise & taxation, agriculture, medical, higher edu-



cation, forest, drugs control, forensic science laboratories, jails, CID, legal and police was held at Chandigarh presided by Chief Minister to review this burning issue when a State Action Plan was also constituted by both Chief Minister and Home & Health Minister. Khatter told that state government is very serious in this regard and further strengthening Narcotic Control Bureau to deal the situation strictly and take stern action against drug smugglers as well as suppliers

in the state. Chief Minister told that state government introduced Bulldozer Scheme in the state in which illegal properties of large number of drug smugglers, gangsters and hard core criminals were demolished with the help of bulldozers in different parts in Haryana state which brought good results and many criminals went underground and decision has been taken to attach or demolish properties of all drug smugglers and suppliers in the state apart from pushing them in jails

as per law. Chief Minister told that state Narcotic Control Bureau in the state has been able to seize as well as destroy huge stocks of drugs in past few months. He told that complaints have been received as regard availability of drugs in few drug de-addiction centers in the state and decision has been taken that SDMs in districts will supervise the functioning and visit these drug de-addiction centers and take strict action against irregularities. Chief of state Narcotic Control Bureau in the state Shrikant Jaghva told that 2584 Mission Teams have been formed in 7590 villages in Haryana state to collect data of drug addicted persons in rural areas apart from 635 teams comprising of 10 persons in each ward apart from 190 teams being deployed at Primary Health Centers, 44 tams at Sub Division level to collect data of those suffering from drug addiction.

MCD Election: BJP Delhi Chief Adesh Gupta claims over 200 seats

NEW DELHI:

Adesh Gupta, president of the BJP's Delhi unit, has expressed confidence of winning more than 200 seats in the December 4 polls for the 250-ward Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), saying that the party's candidates have public support whereas the AAP's image has been tarnished due to corruption and scams.



200 seats. The BJP is way ahead then the AAP. Every scam and corruption of AAP is out, people know their intentions now.

In 2007 we had a direct fight with the Congress, which was repeated in 2012. In 2017 we had a triangular fight with the Congress and AAP and we won that time as well. Even in 2022, be it a direct or triangular fight, we will win.

Gupta made a statement to media. He said the "love and support" that the people in the national capital have given to the BJP is "giving us confidence that we will definitely secure a new term".

"There are so many achievements of the party be it beautification of parks, removal of 500 garbage dumps. Our candidates have public support. The 'imaandar' image of the Aam Adami Party has been tarnished because of corruption and scams," he added. Gupta said Arvind Kejriwal has not fulfilled any of his promises. He promised to

clean the Yamuna river but he did not. The Centre had also given him Rs 2, 500 crore to set up STP plants, but did not. He also promised to control air pollution.

Earlier he used to blame the Punjab and Haryana governments for air pollution but now that Punjab has an AAP government, he has shifted the blame to the Centre and the L-G of Delhi. He doesn't have the intention to do anything for the welfare of the people. He has set a Rs 1 crore budget to clean the Najafgarh Dam but Rs 800 crore for advertisement.

Delhi BJP chief claimed we are expecting to win more than

We cannot ignore the fact of anti-incumbency. We cannot keep everybody happy but the BJP focuses on larger interests and this is our strong point. We work for the people, for the welfare of the people. There is anti-incumbency but more than that the people are in our favour. We will cover anti-incumbency.

Adesh Gupta said we are meeting in small groups to cater to the needs of people. Thousands of such meetings are being held. Pocket meetings for women and old in society. We are even meeting professionals and we are trying to cover every segment of the society.

Four including 3 females arrested during raid running flesh trade

SATISH HANDA



Ambala

During third raid at Spa Centre within few days Baldev Nagar police station Ambala City team on a secret information conducted surprise raid at Crown Spa Centre at prestigious shopping complex on the national highway no. 1 Jaggi City Centre while involved in illegal sex business and arrested four persons including three females while found them in highly exposed condition. A case was registered against organizer of Spa Centre under immoral trafficking act.

Inspector Gaurav SHO Baldev Nagar police station told media persons that on getting clue that spa centre was being used for flesh trade a team was constituted led by DSP Headquarter Ambala accompanied by in-charge Baldev Nagar and Women Police Stations Ambala City on Friday evening which arrested four including three young females in highly exposed condition and also recovered several objectionable goods from the spot. All arrested were produced in the court of Saturday. Inspector Gaurav told that earlier, few days ago two spa centres in Baldev Nagar area were also raided where flesh trade was detected and few arrests were also made.

48 mobile phones recovered in a month from prisoners at Ambala central jail

SATISH HANDA

Ambala

A couple of days ago during search operation going on inside Ambala central jail by newly transferred Superintendent jail security staff recovered another 16 mobile phones from the prisoners lodged in this jail, most of the mobile phones were found hidden inside bath rooms and three mobile phone sets were recovered kept in an empty 'Bournvita' box. Information reveals, with the recovery of 16 mobile phones the total number of mobiles phones recovered from the prisoners in past one month reached 48 along with accessories including mobile phone chargers, cables, ear phones and sim cards now raising a question mark over the performance of previous security staff in this central jail in which hard core



criminals, killers, gangsters and many VIPs as well as senior government officers either undergoing sentence or having cases under trial against them are lodged in jail.

A few days ago, the prisoners lodged in this jail had burnt down or damaged as many as 22 mobile phones themselves on getting information that new Superintendent jail is visiting personally for checking in jail barracks in which hard core criminals as well as members of gangster groups were lodged.

BJP leader Sunil Jakhar opposed Haryana govt demand for separate space for VS in Chandigarh

CHANDIGARH: Reiterating that there should never be any doubt in anyone's mind over Punjab's full ownership of its capital city Chandigarh, veteran Punjab leader and former Member Parliament (MP) Sunil Jakhar on Sunday urged both Haryana and Punjab Chief Ministers to show magnanimity and statesmanship and decide amongst themselves to not rake up a non-existent issue; and utilise our historic Vidhan Sabha on rotational basis.

Referring to the demand made by Haryana Speaker for separate space for state Vidhan Sabha in Chandigarh, Jakhar while cautioning leaders of both states to avoid any spectre



mongering for political gains over this highly sensitive issue which could be misused by vested interests to foment strife in the border state termed this demand as outrightly illogical and baseless which should not have been raised in the first place. I still have not understood as to why Bhagwant Mann ji as Punjab Chief Minister while responding to his Haryana counterpart's demand for separate space had raised a similar demand.

MSME provided employment opportunities to 19 lakh youths in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

On the directions of Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khatter, in a review meeting held at Chandigarh Chief Secretary Haryana Sanjeev Kaushal held a review meeting with the officers of Haryana state industry department, HSIIDC and Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) told that more than 19 lakh youths in the state have been offered employment in MSME units in the state and directed all present to implement beneficial schemes offered by the state government to those willing to set up new industry in the state. A general survey by media persons in this regard reveals that many youths are willing to make investment and start their own industrial units in the state but had to drop the idea due to lengthy government procedures as well as lack of cooperation in concerned government offices although usually claimed by the government that all facilities are available under a roof which is merely on papers only they said. Most of the young entrepre-



neurs willing to start industry told that getting various permissions from the government to start an industry which include obtaining a production license, permission from municipal corporation or committee, getting power supply from electricity department, obtaining no objection certificate from different government departments like industry, state pollution control board, fire department and getting financial support from banks and other institutions was too difficult and most of the youths after moving from one table to another in these government offices for a long time in the absence of cooperation in these offices lost interest in making investment in setting up an industry and started looking for job.

Chief Secretary Haryana directed all those government officers present in the meeting to

extend full cooperation to visitors in their office and also to submit a report of last quarter of this year desiring industry investment up to Rs 1 crore to provide assured turnover up to Rs 5 crore in case of a micro industry, similarly turnover up to Rs 50 crore on the investment of Rs 5 crore in case of a small industry and Rs 250 crore turnover on investment up to Rs 50 crore in case of a medium industry. Sanjeev Kaushal told that there are nearly 9.53 lakh micro industry units in Haryana state at present providing maximum sources of employment to youths in the state and in case of Haryana Udhm Memorandum (HUM) nearly 45,844 industrial units are registered in the state and 4,14,000 units are registered under uniform rules for collection (URC) which include 3,90 lakh micro units, 21,164 small and 1893 medium units manufacturing products including automobile, food, instrument, textile, leather, wooden, paper, metal, engineering, Chemicals, pharmaceuticals, petro-chemical, rubber and electronics.

BJP's Manoj Tiwari questions AAP on Satyendar Jain's massage video



NEWDELHI: Delhi BJP MP Manoj Tiwari questioned the Aam Adami Party (AAP) over the video showing party minister Satyendar Jain getting a massage inside his jail cell.

Addressing a press conference here, Tiwari said that AAP's response on the video is "funny".

"Some saying he's (Jain) getting medical treatment some saying that physiotherapy is going on. AAP said they will go to court regarding who released the video. It doesn't matter Kejriwal ji, the truth has to come out. Now we need answers from you," he added.

The MP also claimed that a physiotherapist reacting to the video said that physiotherapy is not a massage and is not allowed in jail premises.

"Satyendar proved in court that he has lost his memory yet while getting massage he is reading some paper and person who gave him the paper was discussing something with him. The question is what is that paper he is reading? The BJP is demanding to know about the content of that paper," Tiwari added.

Four die, four struggling for lives took spurious liquor in Sonipat



SATISH HANDA

Like past year when large number of persons were reported killed in Sonipat and adjoining district after consuming spurious Desi liquor, this year too four persons after taking poisonous liquor have died and four others are yet struggling for their lives, police said. Among four persons reported died and three of after consuming spurious liquor three are from Shamdi village in Sonapat and the fourth victim is from Bursham village in Panipat. The deceased had consumed the liquor together and the condition of four others, all from Shamdi village is

information reveals that they had not purchased liquor from any liquor shop and an FIR as well as investigation will start after recording the statements of those undergoing treatment. According to police, Ajay and Sunil had consumed liquor with Anil and his brother at Panipat after returning to Shamdi village, Ajay and Sunil consumed the same liquor with five other persons, including Surrender.

When Ajay returned from cremation of Anil from Panipat, he and others from Shamdi too complained of diarrhea, vomiting. After their health started deteriorating all of them were rushed to Bhagat Phool Singh medical college for women at Khanpur Kalan where three of them died, a police official said the family members of Anil cremated his body after considering that he died of heart attack on Monday but now they suspect that he also died after consuming the liquor. The residents of Shamdi village are in the state of shock due to several deaths and demanded a thorough probe into the incident.

Additional chief secretary, agriculture, Devesh Chaturvedi, said that the step was taken to discourage farmers from burning farm waste. "It is just a warning to the farmers who are not abiding by the state government directions," he said. Experts said that the threat of stopping the grant under PMKSN was bound

Uttar Pradesh Government issues warning to stubble burning farmers



Uttar Pradesh agriculture department has warned that it will stop giving benefits of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (PMKSN) to farmers who are found engaged in stubble burning, leading to air pollution.

The first such action has been reported from Deoria where the department has slapped served a notice on nine farmers accused of burning agricultural wastes despite repeated warnings.

Additional chief secretary, agriculture, Devesh Chaturvedi, said that the step was taken to discourage farmers from burning farm waste. "It is just a warning to the farmers who are not abiding by the state government directions," he said. Experts said that the threat of stopping the grant under PMKSN was bound

to send jitters to around 2.83 crore farmers who are registered under the scheme. Though there is no provision allowing the state government to stop the central grants to the farmers, the measure would caution the farmers, officials said. The move comes days after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked officials to set up district wise camps to sensitise farmers about the ill effects of stubble burning.

Yogi Adityanath, in fact, had suggested fermenting the stubble by adding urea and water. Joint Director, Agriculture, R.K. Singh said, "The department has been taking strict action to bring down the instances of stubble burning in the state. The situation has improved a bit but there is still room for improvement."

Officials said that stringent action, including lodging of FIRs, imposing fines between Rs 2, 500 and 15, 000 and seizing farm equipment had been taken by the district authorities. However, there has been a spate of instances of burning of crop residue.

According to the data collected by the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB), close to 800 incidents of farm fire were reported from across the state until earlier this month this season.

UP happens to be the highest producer of agricultural residue (40 MT) followed by Maharashtra (31MT) and Punjab (28 MT). The state government had, in fact, proposed funding transportation of stubble to shelter homes meant for stray cattle.

Gangster-terror nexus case: National Investigation Agency to grill gangster



The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday got ten days' custodial remand of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi in connection with the gangster-terror nexus case.

A number of Punjabi pop singers were on the target list of the gangster, the agency officials said.

The central agency has also claimed that the gangsters were getting arms and ammunition from Pakistan.

Bishnoi is currently lodged in Punjab jail, from where he will be brought to Delhi. He will be grilled at the NIA headquarters.

In the first week of November, the probe agency had questioned two Punjabi singers Dalpreet Dhillon and Mankirat Aulak for hours at its Delhi based headquarters.

Mankirat has been living abroad, this is the first time he is in India.

Both the singers were asked questions related to Bambiha gang and Lawrence Bishnoi. They were also asked about a few of their projects.

In October, the probe agency grilled Punjabi pop singer Afsana Khan, an associate of late Moosewala.

Lawrence Bishnoi gang had allegedly killed Moosewala to avenge the death of Vicky Middukhera. But before commissioning the crime, a number of persons of Punjabi pop industry were threatened, a few were even attacked.

The sources said that they are also trying to explore the tiff between gangsters and Punjabi Pop Industry.

The Delhi Police Special Cell and the Punjab Police have arrested over a dozen gangsters in connection with the murder case of Moosewala.

During the probe, the agencies learnt about the sinister Gangsters-terrorists nexus. The MHA took the matter seriously and asked the NIA to carry out a thorough probe.

The sources have claimed that in coming days, few more persons of Punjabi Pop Industry can be summoned to join the investigation.

Constitution Day celebrations: PM Modi to launch various new initiatives under e-court project

FW DESK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the Constitution Day celebrations in the Supreme Court on 26th November, 2022. The day has been celebrated as Constitution Day since 2015, to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949.

During the programme, the Prime Minister will launch various new initiatives under the e-court project. The Project is an effort to provide services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary through ICT enablement of courts. The initiatives being launched by the Prime Minister include Virtual Justice Clock, JustIS mobile App 2.0, Digital court and S3WaaS Websites.



Virtual Justice Clock is an initiative to exhibit vital statistics of the justice delivery system at the Court level giving the details of the cases instituted, cases disposed and pendency of cases on day/week/month basis at the Court level. The effort is to make the functioning of the courts accountable and transparent by sharing with the public the status of case disposals by the court. Public can access the Virtual Justice Clock of any court establishment on the District Court's website.

JustIS Mobile App 2.0 is a tool available to judicial officers for effective court and case management by monitoring pen-

gency and disposal of not only his court but also for individual judges working under them. This App is also made available to High Court and Supreme Court Judges who can now monitor pendency and disposal of all the States and Districts under their jurisdiction. Digital court is an initiative to make the court records available to the judge in digitised form to enable the transition to Paperless Courts.

S3WaaS Websites is a framework to generate, configure, deploy and manage websites for publishing specified information and services related to district judiciary. S3WaaS is a cloud service developed for government entities to generate Secure, Scalable & Sugamya (Accessible) websites. It is multilingual, citizen friendly and divyang friendly.

Experts optimistic about India's growth, says Prime Minister Narendra Modi

FW DESK

With rising inflation and the weakening rupee causing concern, even as geopolitical situation remains fluid, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday sounded a note of optimism, saying that economists see India as a bright spot.

"Even as experts in developed nations fear a major crisis, economists say India has golden opportunity to display economic capability," he said while virtually addressing a "Rozgar Mela", where 71,000 appointment letters were issued to newly inducted recruits.

Modi also launched the Karmayogi Prarambh module — an online orientation course for all new appointees — on the occasion. "Experts around the world are optimistic about India's growth and confident



that it is set to become global manufacturing hub," the Prime Minister added further.

On the Karmayogi Bharat technology platform, he said it has several online courses and this will greatly help in upskilling the youth.

"Youth is the biggest strength of the country and the government is giving top most priority to ensure that their talent is utilised in nation building," Modi said.

Today's Rozgar Mela shows that the government is working in mission mode to provide government jobs, the Prime

Minister said further.

Touching upon the crisis created for the youth at the global level due to the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, Modi said that as per experts, India has become a major force in the service sector and soon it will be the manufacturing hub of the world too.

While initiatives like PLI will play a huge role in this, the main foundation will be the youth and the skilled manpower of the country, he added.

The PLI scheme is likely to create 60 lakh jobs, the Prime Minister informed.

Aaftab has never confessed in court of law he killed Shraddha, says his lawyer



NEWDELHI: Aaftab Amin Poonawala has not yet confessed to killing his live-in-partner Shraddha Walkar in the court of law, his lawyer said on Tuesday. "I spoke to Poonawala for five-seven minutes today. When I spoke to him in the morning, he appeared relaxed and was very confident. He did not show any signs of aggressiveness," said Defence Counsel Abinash Kumar, who is representing Poonawala. The lawyer said when he asked Poonawala if he is able to follow the legal proceedings in the case and if he was satisfied with the defence, he replied in the affirmative "He has never confessed in the court of law that he killed Walkar," Kumar told to media.

Mangaluru Auto explosion an act of terror: Police

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Mangaluru

Karnataka DGP Praveen Sood on twitter Sunday confirmed the explosion in coastal Karnataka mangalore in the moving autorickshaw was not accidental, but an act of terror. "It's confirmed now. The blast is not accidental but an ACT OF TERROR with intention to cause serious damage," Sood tweeted. The Karnataka police is probing deep into it along with central agencies, he added. Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra also confirmed that the incident was an act of terror in a video message. He said, "Yesterday afternoon in Mangaluru, an explosion was reported in the moving autorickshaw. Injured driver in the mishap is undergoing treatment, and not in a position to speak now. After the investigation, the Karnataka Police confirmed it as an act of terror." Full details of explosion will be known in a day or two, the minister said and suspected that there could be involvement of terrorist organisations. Home minister Araga Jnanendra also said that probe also has been initiated in similar incidents that took place in the coastal region of the state in the last few years. "The truth will be revealed soon," the minister added. CCTV footage posted on social media yesterday had gone viral. The video purportedly depicts the autorickshaw going in flames and then exploding, resulting in both the driver and the passenger who was carrying a bag suffered burn injuries and were admitted to hospital in mangaluru.

India-Gulf Cooperation Council decide to pursue resumption of Free Trade Agreement Negotiations



FW DESK

Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution and Textiles, Government of India, and Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, Secretary General, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held a Joint Press Conference, in New Delhi today, to announce the intent to pursue negotiations on the India-GCC FTA.

With forward-looking and solution-oriented deliberations, bilateral engagements witnessed significant progress on all matters of mutual interest across the entire gamut of bilateral economic relations between India and the GCC nations.

Both sides agreed to expedite conclusion of the requisite legal and technical requirements for formal resumption of the FTA negotiations. The FTA is envisaged to be a modern, comprehensive Agreement with substantial coverage of goods and services. Both sides emphasized that the FTA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in India and all the GCC countries. Both sides agreed to significantly expand and diversify the trade basket in line with the enormous potential that exists on account of the complementary business and economic ecosystems of India and the GCC.

Vice President describes India and Africa as neighbors across the Indian ocean

FW DESK

Vice President, Jagdeep Dhankhar underscored the civilizational connect and shared historical bond between India and Africa, and said that "we are neighbors across the Indian ocean".

Addressing the valedictory session of UNESCO-INDIA-AFRICA (UIA) Hackathon at Greater Noida today, the Vice President said that the event reflects close relations cherished by India and its African counterparts and embodies the spirit of collaboration — bringing them together to solve problems for the betterment of humankind. "This global Hackathon conveys the message that youth can come together to make a better world," he added.

The 36-Hours Hackathon, involving young entrepreneurs from India and 22 African countries was organized by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education, (Government of India), the AICTE and UNESCO at Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida.



Nearly 600 young innovators come together to find solutions for social, environmental and technical problems during the event.

In his address, Dhankhar referred to Mahatma Gandhi Ji's close relationship with Africa and said that our age old civilizational ethos of "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam" continue to guide India's engagement with the world.

Describing India as a favoured global destination for opportunities and investments, the Vice President said that a new culture of innovation based

entrepreneurship is taking roots in India. Mentioning various initiatives such as Start-up India, Digital India, Bharat Net, PM GatiShakti Mission, the Vice President commended the Government for creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation to thrive.

Observing that technology has truly democratized governance by ushering in transparency and accountability in the system, Dhankhar said that it helps us in achieving the ideal of inclusive and sustainable growth.

BKI activist smuggling arms, RDX and drugs from Pakistan dies

SATISH HANDA

Khalistani activist Harvinder Singh alias Rinda involved in large number of terrorist activities working for Pakistan based ISI agency to spread terrorism in Punjab, Haryana and other part of country supplying arms, explosive material and drugs mainly heroine from Pakistan through drone to be delivered at Indo-Pakistan border areas in Punjab with the help of his network in India. Rinda was involved in nearly one and half dozen criminal cases registered against him most wanted by Punjab police in few murder cases including the RPG attack

on the Punjab Police Intelligence Headquarters in Mohali in May this year as well as hand grenade attack at CIA staff office at Nawanshehar in Punjab.

Information reveals, Rinda suffering from Kidney problem died in Pakistan on Saturday where he was admitted to a hospital in Lahore suspected died due to drugs over dosing. He was a member of the banned Khalistani outfit Babbar Khalsa International working for local gangsters as well as on the tips of Pak based agency ISI and Canada based terrorist Lakhbir Singh Landa. The 35 years old criminal Rinda was also involved in recovery of hand



granades, IED and timer at village Saddopur near Haryana-Punjab border at Ambala and also recovery of RDX at Karnal, Kaithal and at Shabad in Kurukshetra district. Rinda was also charge-sheeted in a case related to seizure of arms and explosives from a vehicle in Haryana some time back.

Rinda was involved in large-

scale cross-border smuggling of drugs and weapons. He was a most-wanted 'A' plus category gangster when he was in Punjab and also wanted in many cases in Maharashtra, Chandigarh, Haryana and West Bengal. According to police record, Rinda had migrated from Sarhali village in Tarn Taran district in Punjab many years ago to Nanded in Maharashtra, entered the world of crime in 2008 when he allegedly killed a man due to personal enmity in Tarn Taran. Rinda was also involved in the killing of Satnam Singh the Sarpanch of Hoshiarpur in Chandigarh in a sensational broad day light incident.

Ministry of Petroleum amends Natural Gas Tariff, Authorisation and Capacity Regulations

FW DESK

To accelerate the development of the natural gas infrastructure and usher rapid growth of natural gas market in the country, Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has brought out amendments in its three regulations namely Natural Gas Pipeline Tariff, Authorisation and Capacity Regulations. These amendments will act as stepping stone for implementation of Unified Tariff regulations which will be effective from 1st April 2023. To address the settlement issues



and one tariff.

To simplify the implementation of unified tariff, entity level Integrated natural gas pipeline tariff has been introduced in the said regulations which will act as a building block for unified tariff at national level. Further to protect the overall interest of consumers in different regions number of unified tariff zones have been increased from two to three.

In addition, other amendments like allowing unaccounted gas, moratorium period, ramp up in capacity, etc., have been incorporated.

Mumbai Terror attack 26/11: slain fishermen's kin still struggling for full compensation



panchayat sarpanch and social workers first we fought to get a missing certificate or death certificate which neither the Maharashtra or the Gujarat governments were ready to issue." Left with little hope, but with the help of a NGO a petition was moved in the court to direct the state to issue the death certificate. It took almost ten long years, she said and added that it was only in 2019 that the court declared them dead and directed the state government to release the compensation.

For all these years Dharmistha worked as a maid in the village trying to make the two ends meet. During that time, her son Nitin grew up, started working as a labourer and

shared the financial burden. However, this did not last long, she lost her son seven months ago after a brief illness.

She, along with the other three families, received Rs five lakh as compensation in 2020, which is in a fixed deposit form, so only the interest is allowed to be withdrawn. Every three months she gets Rs 3000 as interest, from which she has to meet the expenses of herself and her daughter Asmita who is studying in class 10. Even a maid's job is not easily available as the village is small and most of the villagers are middle class families. She is hardly paid Rs 50 to Rs 100 per day, but does not get to work for all 30 days in a month.

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde recently announced a massive vaccination drive by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and the Health Department in the Megapolis of Mumbai in a bid to prevent the outbreak of measles here.

Around 12,000 children were vaccinated by the Municipal Corporation as a preventive measure, Shinde said during his visit to patients undergoing treatment for measles and also reviewing safety measures with the concerned medical officers.

Talking to media later, he said it was assumed that lack of vaccination had caused the measles outbreak in children and therefore an alert had been sounded among the concerned health and municipal officials.

While efforts to increase the vaccination rate was on, emphasis was also being laid on the children being given vitamins to boost their immu-



nity, besides also coordination among the entire health system in these situations, he said.

Shinde said that the Maharashtra Government is also focusing on the policy of Mumbai city being clean, beautiful and healthy, where the Dharavi slums area will be undergoing redevelopment and the near future will be witnessing such colonies taking shapes that will attract global attention.

Meanwhile, the search is on for a developer to redevelop the region, besides his Government also emphasizing on

MAHARASHTRA NEWSLETTER

Maharashtra CM highlights measles vaccinations, redevelopments in State

Minister of Mumbai suburbs Mangal Prabhat Lodha was also present on the occasion.

Earlier, the Chief Minister inaugurated the businesses of 60 entrepreneurs started under the "Chief Minister Employment Generation Program" by giving them the keys to their food vans and taxis.

District cooperative banks in 14 Maharashtra districts have been included in this program. While earlier it was mandatory to take loans only from nationalized banks, the Maharashtra Government has expanded the scope of this program.

Around six candidates selected through the Maharashtra Public Service Commission of the Maharashtra State Industrial Development Corporation were provided appointment letters in symbolic form.

Maharashtra will invest between Rs 30,000 and 40,000 crores to generate employment to thousands of people, State Industries Minister Uday Samant said while recently

inaugurating the Maharashtra Pavilion at the Indian International Trade Fair 2022 in Delhi — where the theme was "Vocal for Local, Local to Global."

Noting that the State Government will frame suitable policies and window clearances in order to boost industrial investment, Samant also disclosed to the media the State Government's plans to hold a +mega-event+ in Delhi in February 2023 for which global businesspersons and industrialists would be invited.

Meanwhile, Khadi's global popularity has begun drawing even India-based Ambassadors of other countries including Thailand's Ms. Pattarat Hongtong and Oman's Mr Issa Alshibani.

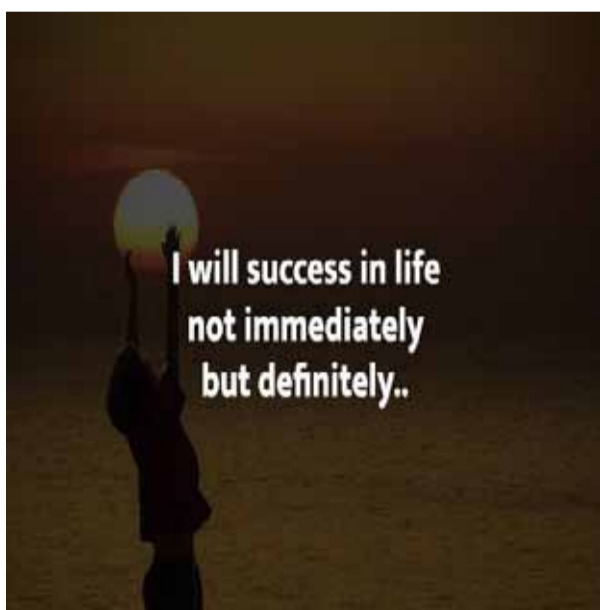
The two Ambassadors had visited the Khadi India Pavilion at IITF 2022 and also clicked selfies with the portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and Narendra Modi there, while appreciating the sheer variety of the products and exquisite craftsmanship of Khadi artisans.

Covid-19: Time to ease norms but caution required

As the third winter begins in India after the COVID-19 pandemic began in January 2020, fresh daily infections of the novel coronavirus — there was a small spike in July and August — have been dipping since the third wave peaked in late January 2022. Daily new cases nationally dropped below the 1,000-mark after November first week, and below 500 in the last few days. The test positivity rate and the number of hospitalisations due to moderate to severe COVID-19 disease are at a low level — a far cry from the peak of the second wave in 2021. COVID-19 deaths too have been very low, with many States not reporting any for days together; Kerala has been reporting some backlog deaths on certain days but nil fresh deaths on many days. Nationally, the case fatality rate has been 1.19%. The situation in India is vastly different from what it is like in a few other countries where the daily infections are witnessing a sharp spike. Even the extremely high transmissible Omicron sub-lineages and recombinant lineages have only caused a small spike in fresh cases but no concomitant increase in hospitalisations or deaths in India. A week ago, India made mask wearing optional for air passengers precisely because of the improved ground situation. It is only in hospitals and health-care settings that mask wearing should remain mandatory. The low level of infection notwithstanding, it is advisable that the vulnerable population including the elderly and those with comorbidities at least wear a mask to reduce the risk of infection. Long COVID is real and poses a risk even to otherwise healthy people. The virus is evolving, and the emerging variants of concern will, by default, be even more highly transmissible. Their lethality cannot be predicted as transmission happens prior to disease onset and so the selection pressure is for higher transmission and not disease severity.

LETTERBOX

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A nation of youth India is full of hope

India is a country full of diversity, but it has now got the distinction of being a country with the largest number of youth in the world. The country is bubbling with 440 million youth. No other nation in the world has such a huge young population. These include young people who were born between 1981 and 1996. In the US style, they are termed as Millennials. Most of these boys and girls have been born in the midst of the technological transformation of the country and almost all of them are aware of the new lifestyle associated with the smartphone and fast speed automobiles, be it the youth of the rural areas or the townfolk. Of course, the urban youth use all kinds of gadgets. Social media is the super-connector and it keeps them busy all the time, whether it's work or leisure time. There may be many shortcomings in the new generation, but the merits are also not less. Whatever progress is being made in today's era and new technology is coming, behind it all is the innovative thinking of the new generation. Google (Alphabet) CEO Sundar Pichai is very impressed with this quality of the youth, and says that "the new generation is leading the changes in the world".

Google is a company with lots of young employees and a positive thinking envi-



The first 10 hobbies that emerged, in order of preference for engineering youth include - learning new things, watching online documentaries, traveling, reading, gardening, painting, cycling, cooking, online games, and photography...

ronment where they only talk about the possibilities. It has a culture of looking at the positive side of things and never losing hope. Actor and filmmaker Satish Kaushik also said in one of his interviews that "the new generation filmmakers work on new themes and they understand the value of time". However, engineering students are

least interested in sports. This fact has come out from the latest survey. Sports and gym are not even mentioned in the top 10 hobbies of these students. The Stanford University of USA conducted a survey of the hobbies of students from 167 technical institutes in the US, China, Russia, and India, in which new information

about engineering students came to the fore. A similar survey was also conducted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). About 90 thousand students took part in it. Their top three hobbies include learning something new, reading, and watching documentary films on YouTube.

The first 10 hobbies that emerged, in order of preference for engineering youth include - learning new things, reading, watching online documentaries, gardening, tourism, painting, cycling, cooking, online games, and photography. Meanwhile, Tennis champion Rafael Nadal said on the Australian Open TV stage that "After every tournament, I try to discover myself, and for this, I often go on sea voyages. I find immense peace and energy in the midst of the ocean. When I come back after spending some time in the sea, I find it easier to balance life. I have to save my energy for practice. That's why I don't waste my energy by getting entangled in useless things. To get success, it is necessary to put your energy in the right place. I find my energy in the ocean, you can find it somewhere else. Find the source of energy and put it in the right place, your success is certain".

Narvijay Yadav is a senior journalist and columnist. Views are personal



SAURAV DAS EXPLAINS HOW THE INSTITUTION MANDATED TO GUARD TRANSPARENCY ADDS TO ITS OWN DOWNFALL

Losing cherished right to know

The most vital mandate of the Central Information Commission, the apex body under India's transparency regime, is to decide whether certain information sought by a citizen ought to be disclosed or not. Its primary duty is to decide the disclosure or the non-disclosure of information. But the commission has seemingly relinquished this primary duty in cases of larger public importance.

Citizens can file applications under the Right to Information Act with any public body and are guaranteed a reply from the public information officer of that public body within 30 days. In case of a no reply or dissatisfaction with the response, the citizen can file an appeal at the departmental level and then a second and final appeal with the Information Commission. Each State has its own State Information Commission to deal with second appeals concerning State bodies.

At the centre, it is the Central Information Commission (CIC). Until the 2019 amendment to the RTI Act, Information Commissioners (ICs) appointed to the CIC were equal in status to the Chief Election Commissioner, and that of a Supreme Court judge. They had a five-year fixed term and terms of service. After the amendments of 2019, the Centre gave itself powers to change and decide these terms whenever it wished, thereby striking at the independence of the commission and those who man it.

The CIC was a functioning institution until four years ago. It had passed orders seeking transparency in many cases of public importance — from boldly pronouncing that political parties were under the RTI Act's ambit, and hence accountable to the public, to ordering disclosure of the current Prime Minister's education qualifications and the Reserve Bank of India's list of willful defaulters of loans. The commission acted as a strong proponent of transparency in public life.

Now, the CIC has become more like a



walking dead institution, where records will show that not a single order for disclosure has been forthcoming in matters of public importance. The present set of Information Commissioners have together adopted a new jurisprudence that has created additional hurdles in a citizen's quest for accountability.

Cases at the CIC come up for a hearing roughly after a two year wait. If the matter is not already infructuous or lost its significance, one can look forward to the commission deciding one's case. But in matters of public importance, such as cases seeking disclosure of files related to the national lockdown during COVID-19, or the case seeking disclosure of data pertaining to phone tapping orders passed by the Home Ministry, the Commission has adopted a new way of delegating its mandate — to decide cases — to the Ministry before it (the very same party that stands accused of prohibiting transparency). In most cases, the Ministries reiterate their earlier stand of non-disclosure, most often under vague grounds of national interest.

More worryingly, after these public authorities pass fresh orders, which are usually a reiteration of their earlier stand against disclosure, the CIC refuses to accept any further challenge to such orders,

therefore, refusing to do its duty of deciding the cases. One of the cardinal rules of natural justice is that no one should be a judge in their own cause. However, the commission now allows, or rather wants, the very Ministry that stands accused of violating the RTI Act to act as the judge in their own cause and decide whether a disclosure is necessary.

A similar situation arose when the CIC refused to hear the Internet Freedom Foundation's challenge to the fresh non-disclosure order passed by the Home Ministry in the phone tapping case. The organisation had the resources to challenge this before the Delhi High Court and enforce their right to a fair hearing before the Commission. But many do not, in a country where a small percentage of the populace has the access and the resources to justice redress. And it is not as though the Information Commissioners were not made aware of this problem with their orders. They were. Hence, the need to strongly protest such conduct on their part which continues.

Fairly simple to handle

More recent examples from CIC cases do not instill confidence about where India's information regime is headed. In a case

seeking disclosure of documents relating to the making of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019, the commission has resorted to keeping the matter pending for final order for more than three months now, something which is unheard of. Unlike court cases, RTI matters do not involve complex legal arguments and are fairly simple to adjudicate. In another case related to disclosure of non-performing assets and top defaulters of a co-operative bank, the matter was listed out-of-turn to issue a "stay" order against the Bank's First Appellate Authority's order for disclosure. A stay order is unheard of and there is no provision in the RTI Act for the same.

One cannot help but ask whether actions or inactions such as these are meant to deliberately frustrate citizens who dare to seek answers from the powers that be, and reduce the efficiency of the RTI Act. The effects are already being felt. It is getting more difficult, if not impossible, to extract any information of importance under the present dispensation. Bureaucrats reject RTIs with glee with no fear of facing penal provisions outlined in Section 20 of the RTI Act, knowing fully well that they have a free hand under the Information Commissioners.

To even think of the possibility of the very institution mandated to guard India's transparency regime to be responsible for its downfall should set alarm bells ringing as far as civil society and citizens who care and dare to question are concerned. Dark clouds surround India's transparency regime. Citizens have to mount intense pressure on authorities to act and appoint commissioners of integrity. Lawyers have to help willing citizens take matters to court and seek justice. If there is a failure to do so, India will lose its cherished right to know.

Saurav Das is an independent investigative journalist and a transparency activist



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book explores heroic exploits of bravehearts

Lachit Barphukan was a master tactician and war strategist whose military zeal infused a sense of immense responsibility in his army, says a new book on the Ahom general of Assam who led his force to victory over a numerically larger and superior Mughal army.

In his book "Bravehearts of Bharat: Vignettes from Indian History", historian Vikram Sampath profiles 15 unsung heroes and heroines of India from varied time spans who fought to uphold the tradition and culture of their land.

The book comes at a time when the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit is being celebrated in the national capital from November 23 to 25 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi slated to attend the valedictory function.

In the chapter on Barphukan, the author describes how Assam's "man of destiny" stood up to be

counted and to create history for himself and his clan.

Sampath also goes on to give a brief overview of the Ahom kingdom, which, he says, was highly regimented in its structure.

The Barphukan was the military and civil commander of the Ahom army. Assam was invaded several times by the Delhi Sultanate up to the 16th century, but this met with no success. The inhospitable and inaccessible terrain, and the warrior spirit of the people who fiercely guarded their independence enabled them to maintain their dogged resistance against all attacks.

By December 1636, Kamrup was occupied by the Mughals. According to the Treaty of Asurar Ali, enacted in 1639 CE between the Ahom general Momai Tamuli Borbarua and the Mughal commander Allah Yar Khan, the whole of western Assam, beginning Guwahati, passed into Mughal hands. A most humiliating

The book comes at a time when the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit is being celebrated in the national capital from November 23 to 25 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi slated to attend the valedictory function

treaty was concluded in January 1663 at Ghilajhari Ghat according to which the Ahoms were forced to give up western Assam to the Mughals. But there was a revival after Chakradhwaj Singha became the king. Lachit, born in 1622 CE, was the youngest son of Momai Tamuli Borbarua. He was first made the Soladhara Barua, the scarfbearer of the king, a position akin to that of a private secretary.

In due course, Lachit also held various positions like Ghora Ba-



Bravehearts of Bharat: Vignettes from Indian History By Vikram Sampath Penguin Viking; 512 pages; Rs799

rua (in charge of the royal stable), commander of Simalugarh Fort and later the Dolaksharia Barua (Superintendent of the Royal Household Guards) to Maharaja Chakradhwaj Singha.

During Mir Jumla's invasion, Lachit had engaged in his limited capacity with the enemy at Dikhowmukh and earned considerable success. Sampath cites an anecdote of a test that Lachit underwent before being formally anointed as the Barphukan.

Lachit was asked to present himself in the royal court before the king, and as he knelt before him, in a planned move, an attendant rushed from behind and snatched away Lachit's headgear. "This was, and still is, considered as a grave affront to a man's dignity and self-respect,

in Assamese traditions. The king wanted to check Lachit's sense of self-worth and his reflexes. The young man leapt from his knees, unsheathed his sword and rushed to cut off the head of the errant attendant, who had by now safely plonked himself at the king's feet seeking his shelter.

"The king was deeply satisfied by this act and he formally installed Lachit as his general and Barphukan, presenting him a gold-hafted sword and the customary paraphernalia of regal distinction," the book, published by Penguin India, says.

The author also mentions that among those engaged by Lachit was a person named Bagh Hazarika, whose real name was Ismail Siddique.

"The Ahom spies had managed to render several of the Mughal cannon as unworthy by filling water in their muzzles. This was led by one Bagh Hazarika, whose real name was Ismail Siddique, and so called because he had once killed a tiger barehanded. When the Ahoms attacked, the Mughals realized to their horror that their cannons were all rendered utterly useless," he writes.

MP CM Shivraj Chouhan in Bengaluru to showcase the future readiness of state to potential investors

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Bengaluru to showcase the future readiness of Madhya Pradesh to potential investors. He is leading a high-level delegation in a roadshow organized by MPIDC – Madhya Pradesh's apex industries development body in coordination with MP State Electronics Development Corporation.

The roadshow was for two days till 24th with one-to-one meetings with key industry captains which included Ajay Vij, MD Accenture, Narendra Goenka, AEPC, Ashish Kumar, Arvind Mills, Vinod Yadav and Padmanabhan of Shahi Exports amongst and many others.

The Chief Minister Chouhan hosted a networking dinner

wherein 60 plus prominent industrialists from across industry segments participated. They represented sectors like textiles, garments, IT and ITES, electronics, entertainment, and manufacturing. Over the dinner HCM interacted with them and invited them to explore investment opportunities in Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Chouhan chaired two sector-specific roundtables focusing on IT, ITES and ESDM sectors and the Textile and Garments sector, respectively.

During the IT, ITES and ES the peaceful labour dynamics and enhanced ease of doing business and ease of living which make Madhya Pradesh an ideal destination for the sector. He appealed to youngsters from the state working in Bangalore to come work in Madhya Pradesh. He emphasized that the GoMP is committed to



facilitate them through its various initiatives for IT and Start-ups.

The round table on textile and garments was attended by industry leaders from Karnataka and Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Many investors commended the garment sector policy and competitive incentive package provided by the state. HCM also assured investors that Madhya

Pradesh will develop the required infrastructure for wet processing in the state.

After the roundtable, HCM also held a session on Investment Opportunities in Madhya Pradesh which saw the participation around 500 senior industry leaders. This session detailed out the world-class infrastructure, availability of

Gujarat has become the first state to get 'True 5G' across all districts

Reliance Jio on Friday said Gujarat has become the first state to get 'True 5G' in each of the 33 district headquarters. With this, Jio 'True 5G' is now present in 10 cities/regions in India (including Delhi-NCR).

As a model state, Jio will launch a series of True 5G-powered initiatives across education, healthcare, agriculture, Industry 4.0 and IoT sectors in Gujarat, and then extend it across the country.

To begin with, Reliance Foundation and Jio will digitize 100 schools in Gujarat as part of an initiative called 'Education-For-All'.

"Gujarat is now the first state to have 100 per cent district headquarters connected with our robust True 5G network. We want to showcase the



real power of this technology and how it can impact a billion lives," said Akash M Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited.

Jio earlier announced that 'True 5G' will now be available in Pune, offering unlimited 5G data at speeds of up to 1Gbps.

Starting November 23, Jio users in Pune will be invited

to the Jio Welcome Offer, to experience unlimited data, at no additional cost.

Last week, Jio provided 'True 5G' services across the entire Delhi-NCR region, including Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and other major locations, becoming the only operator to do so.

Self-Made Orphan Seeks Redemption and Her True Calling in Immersive Story of the Deep South

CHapel Hill, NC: Few things can cause distant memories to bubble to the surface faster than music, and when Mary "Myra" Boone hears the soulful, gravelly voice of Ray Charles Robinson, she is instantly transported to a time when she was her mother's greatest miracle — before her own actions left her an orphan.

In Goodlife, Mississippi, Eileen Saint Lauren plunges readers into 1950s and '60s Mississippi, where young Myra grapples with complex feelings of guilt, loss and segregation. By age 12, she's already had to persevere through a lifetime of experiences — from watching a housefire of her own making consume her parents, through enduring the prejudices of having been born questionably biracial, to the supernatural religious experiences in the Piney Woods.

Keeping her afloat is her dream of one day meeting Ray Charles Robinson, who had been a friend of her daddy's, and finding her natural sense of place in the grand scheme of life: her true calling.

Saint Lauren weaves historical truths with magical realism through the constant threading of the ordinary with the extraordinary and supernatural.

Though Myra's scars — inside and out — will remain, she emerges a young woman of compassion with a self-forged faith in the underlying goodness of the universe and her value in the world.

Water-borne diseases impacts around 37.7 million Indians annually says health experts in a webinar organized by ASSOCHAM

NEWDELHI: The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), an apex body, organized a webinar on "Water Borne Diseases-Prevention & Symptoms (Jal, Jeevan aur Jeevan)" with the paramount objective to cascade awareness and disseminate knowledge about Water Borne Disease, to lead a healthier, happier, and prosperous life. The webinar, which is a part of the Illness to Wellness initiative, highlighted about the pathogenic microbes spread via contaminated water leading to water borne illnesses.

Viruses and bacteria among other microscopic organisms that are ingested through contaminated water can induce conditions known as waterborne infections. Many diseases can be spread when bathing, washing, drinking, or eating food that has come into contact with contaminated water. Typhoid, hepatitis A, jaundice, and diarrhoea are a few of the most prevalent waterborne illnesses in India.

Anil Rajput, Chairperson, ASSOCHAM CSR Council, in his welcome address said, "Water stands out to be the most essential element in our lives as human body constitutes 60% of water". Highlighting the high burden of water borne diseases, he said, "80% of the global diseases are water borne which arise out of consumption of unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene practices.

Monster.com will be known as "Foundit.in" with new logo

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Monster.com, India's popular job search portal today announced the launch with new name and logo as "Foundit.in" ushering in a new revolution in the job market.

Unveiling new brand event, Sekar Garisa, CEO foundit.in (previously Monster) said, "Technology is leading disruption across sectors and talent Acquisition is no exception. The pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we work and the way we hire. He added,

"We have been privileged to witness the talent acquisition landscape evolve over the last three decades, giving us an unparalleled depth of insights in to recruitment. The platform of the future needs to cater to highly dynamic job market, skill-based hiring and changing expectations from careers. We are excited to unveil a new direction for Monster from simply facilitating job and candidate discovery to enabling significantly better talent management outcomes"

Ajit Isaac, Founder and Non-Executive Chairman of Qness Corp and Monster (now foundit.in) said, "Over the last 15 years,



Qness has been known for its service led offerings that have won the confidence of its associates and customers alike. As an institution, steadfast on our commitment to formalise jobs in India, we have been focusing on building a product-led portfolio that can help democratise access to formal employment across white, Bulue and Grey collar workers."

He said, "We acquired Monster APAC & ME with a vision to transform while-collar talent acquisition. Over the last couple of years, organisations experienced everything from the Great Resignation and the Great Regret leading to mass hiring at an unprecedented pace. But now as the market settles, hiring is going to be a lot sharper,

focused and skill based. Such precision can only be achieved through the combination of human ingenuity and technology and this is what we have offer our recruiters and job seekers through Foundit.in" he added.

Qness Corp acquired Monster Worldwide's APAC & ME IN 2018 as strategic investment to strengthen its HR services portfolio, and has been operating in India, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, UAE and Saudi Arabia. In 2021 Monster raised rs 137.5 crore in funding round led by investors Akash Bhanshali of Voirado Venture Partners and Mohandas Pai of Meridian Investments to fuel its product led offering and market expansion.

Bob Iger returns as Walt Disney CEO, Bob Chapek steps down

The Walt Disney Company has announced that Robert A. Iger (Bob Iger) is returning to head the company, as Bob Chapek has stepped down as CEO amid the company's plans to reduce workforce to navigate the rough global conditions.

Iger, who left the company last year, after spending more than four decades at the company, including 15 years as its CEO, has agreed to serve as Disney's CEO for two years. He will work closely with the Board in developing a successor to lead the company at the completion of his term, Disney said in a statement late on Sunday. "We thank Chapek for his service to Disney over his long career, including navigating the company through the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic," said Susan Arnold, Chairman of the Board.

"The Board has concluded that as Disney embarks on an increasingly complex period of industry transformation, Bob Iger is uniquely situated to lead the company through this pivotal period," she added. The change at the top comes



as facing slow revenue growth, Disney has reportedly planned to reduce its workforce and freeze hiring. According to an internal leaked memo from Chapek, the company is "limiting headcount additions through a targeted hiring freeze". The outgoing CEO also advised executives to only take necessary business travels. Virtual meetings should be conducted as often as possible. "I am extremely optimistic for the future of this great company and thrilled to be asked by the Board to return as its CEO," Iger said.

During his 15 years as CEO, from 2005 to 2020, Iger helped build Disney into one of the world's most successful and admired media and entertainment companies with a strategic vision focused on creative excellence, technological innovation and international growth.

India-Australia FTA to offer big opportunities for exporters: ASSOCHAM

FW DESK
New Delhi

Congratulating Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal for proactively following policies aimed at giving Indian products, services and investors wider global reach, ASSOCHAM today said, ratification of the India-Australia Free Trade Agreement by the Australian Parliament is testimony to our growing importance as an economic partner.

"The Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is aggressively following policies including the economic cooperation and trade agreements, commonly known as FTAs for ensuring greater market access for Indian businesses. This is quite a courageous glidepath

because we are embarked upon trade -opening policies at a time when there is a clamour in some parts of the world to look inward. It is a reflection of the inherent strength of the Indian economy. For us AtamNirbhar Bharat is reaching out to the world," ASSOCHAM Secretary General Mr Deepak Sood said.

He said, the India-Australia FTA which is fast nearing the implementation stage, would lead to enhanced trade and investment between the two major economies of the world, scaling opportunities for increased employment in several job-oriented sectors such as textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, sports goods and engineering.

Jeep India launches the iconic Grand Cherokee at an introductory price of ₹ 77.50 Lakh



KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

The Jeep brand introduced the all-new Grand Cherokee by recreating the iconic moment when the SUV was launched 30 years ago, driving

through a glass window at an Auto show in Detroit. Since then, the Grand Cherokee has set an industry benchmark and quickly became synonymous with upscale design and uncompromised capability. Today, the 5th generation of

the iconic nameplate continues to build on its legacy as the most awarded SUV ever, with its all-new exterior and interior design, world-class craftsmanship and first-to-market technologies.

Commenting on the launch of the all-new Grand Cherokee in India, Roland Bouchara, CEO and Managing Director, Stellantis India, said, "As promised, the Jeep Grand Cherokee is the fourth model to be Made in India. With the all-new Grand Cherokee, adventure lovers will have a distinctive blend of luxury, fortified with segment best features, innovative technology, and composed driving dynamics elevating the brand position to the luxury segment."

Trident Realty launches Trident Hills Luxury Township in Panchkula

KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Panchkula

Trident Realty launched its luxury residential project - Trident Hills in Panchkula. The company, a pioneering real estate developer in India, has acquired a 200-acre plot of land and plans to invest Rs 3,000 crore to develop an integrated luxury township.

With its sizeable presence in NCR, and MMR, the company

plans to foray into Tier-2 Real estate Market with the launch of Trident Hills. The initial development of 125-acre land will include plots and low-rise floors. S K Narvar, Chairman, Trident Realty, said, "We are excited to launch Trident Hills set amidst Panchkula's scenic surroundings. Luxury homes are witnessing high demand in Tier-2 cities because of the aspirational upper middle and upper class. The company is



in an expansion mode and considering the remarkable

growth momentum of the realty sector in the last 2-3

Teledyne DALSA announces its new line of high-performance X-ray detectors at RSNA 2022

FW DESK

WATERLOO, Ontario: DALSA is pleased to announce its presence at the RSNA 2022 Technical Exhibition with a new offering of X-Ray detectors based on Indium Gallium Zinc Oxide (IGZO) in addition to their premium line of CMOS-based detectors. The show takes place November 27 - December 1, Chicago, IL. Teledyne will exhibit its full line of detectors in booth #3709.

Teledyne will introduce its



breakthrough line of X-ray detectors that narrows the gap between amorphous silicon and CMOS-based detectors at RSNA 2022. The new Axios flat

panel detector series, designed and manufactured entirely by Teledyne, are based on an innovative IGZO technology, proprietary new image chain and

use the highest performance components. The Axios product line is engineered to deliver an unprecedented balance of performance and value, while addressing the needs of the most demanding real-time applications for diagnostic and interventional imaging like orthopedics, vascular cardiology and surgery. The high image quality performance of the Axios detectors will enable better diagnosis of medical anomalies and better procedure outcomes, resulting in reduced treatment costs.

NBA Legend Jumps Into Functional Foods Game as Industry Profits Soar

FW DESK
New York

Kudo, The Good Conscience Snack Co., entered the functional foods market in 2022 with a product line that features 100 percent whole grain kettle-popped protein popcorn, protein "krisps" and nutritional gummies.

Functional foods are whole, fortified, enriched or enhanced foods that provide health benefits beyond the provision of essential nutrients (e.g., vita-

mins and minerals). It's an industry that was valued at \$189 billion globally in 2021 and is projected to reach \$285 billion in 2030, according to research by Spherical Insights & Consulting.

Founder and CEO Ryan Lewis created Kudo to address a gap he found in the snacking marketplace. "Healthy snacking always seemed like a never-ending obstacle. There just didn't seem to be any good options that were healthy, convenient and great tasting," Lewis said. He had already launched

two successful start-ups in the supplement and food industry before landing on the idea of infusing a perennially favorite snack — popcorn — with protein.

"I've never been more excited about a line of products," Lewis said. "These products taste good. Without that, all the nutrients in the world won't sell a product." NBA legend Fred Brown joined the Kudo team as a board member and adviser after meeting with Lewis and learning about his product.

FinMin Nirmala Sitharaman chairs Pre-Budget consultation with Finance Ministers of States



FW DESK
Union Finance Minister held the pre-budget consultations with the Finance Ministers of States and Union Territories (with Legislature). The meeting was attended by Union Ministers of State (Finance), Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief Ministers, Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Finance Ministers, Ministers and Senior Officers from the States/

Union Territories and the Union Government. The Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, welcomed all the participants to the meeting and informed the importance of this particular consultation for the ensuing Budget. Most of the participants thanked the Union Finance Minister for financially supporting their States/Union Territories by enhancing bor-

rowing limits, providing two advanced devolution installments and through Special Assistance for capital expenditure. The participants also gave numerous suggestions to the Union Finance Minister for inclusion in the Budget Speech. Union Finance Minister thanked the participants for their inputs and suggestions towards Budget 2023-24 and assured to examine each of the proposals.

Binod Kumar appointed as Executive Director of Punjab National Bank

KULBIR SINGH KALSI
New Delhi

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Binod Kumar as the Executive Director of Punjab National Bank with effect from 21st November 2022 for a period of three years.

Binod Kumar, a Graduate in science from Ranchi University and holds Post Graduate Diploma in Banking & Finance from NIBM, Financial Risk Manager (FRM) from GARP (USA) and a Certified Associate Member of Indian Institute of Bankers (CAIIB).

Kumar started his banking journey in Punjab National Bank as Management Trainee in the year 1994 and has served the bank for last 28 years. He has rich and diversified banking experience of over 28 years, ranging from Branch and Administrative Office to Risk Management,



Credit etc. He has also headed BO: DIFC as Chief Executive Officer and was previously heading the Corporate Credit Division, Head Office of Punjab National Bank as Chief General Manager. Kumar has also served as the Nominee Director on the Board of PNB Housing

Finance Limited and ISARC (India SME Asset Reconstruction Company Limited). He has diploma in Treasury Investment & Risk Management, Banking & Finance by IIBF and has also done Leadership Skill Development Program from IIM Bangalore.

Union Govt releases Rs. 17,000 crore of GST compensation to States

FW DESK

Union Government released an amount of Rs. 17,000 crore to states on 24.11.2022 towards the balance GST compensation for the period April to June, 2022 (State-wise details as per Table below). The total amount of compensation released to the States/UTs so far, including the aforesaid amount, during the year 2022-23 is Rs.1,15,662 crore.

This is despite the fact that total Cess collection till October, 2022 is only Rs.72,147 crore and the balance of Rs. 43,515 crore is being released by the Centre from its own resources. With this release, the Centre has released, in advance, the entire amount of Cess estimated to be collected this year till March-end available for payment of compensation to States. This decision was taken to assist the States in managing their resources and ensuring that their programmes especially



the expenditure on capital is carried out successfully during the financial year.

Even in May this year, the Central Government had released Rs. 86,912 crore as provisional GST compensation to States for the period Feb-May'2022 despite the fact that there was only about Rs. 25,000 crore in the GST Compensation Fund, by making arrangement of funds of around Rs. 62,000 crore from its own resources.

Wheat prices being closely monitored: Government



The government on Wednesday said that wheat prices are being closely monitored and their rise since the ban on exports in May this year has only been 7% in retail.

Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said while addressing media persons that the ban on wheat exports has led to a rise in stock availability. Wheat prices, Chopra said, have gone up only by 7 per cent in retail. However, he added that if the hike in MSP is considered then the price rise is only around 5 per cent. He further said that wheat and rice stocks position is comfortable and much above the government's buffer requirements. Government had banned exports of wheat in May this year to boost domestic supplies and control prices. Subsequently its wheat procurement fell to 187.92 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 marketing year from 434.44 lakh tonnes due to fall in domestic output and aggressive purchase by private parties.

Chopra further said that the government wasn't considering any further steps like stockholding limits and open market sale scheme to check wheat prices. In September, the government had also banned exports of broken rice due to an anticipated fall in production of rice. The Secretary said that an inter-ministerial committee is monitoring the prices of essential commodities on a weekly basis. On edible oil prices, Chopra said that international prices were coming down, so domestic retail rates are also likely to fall.

SBI warns customers against instant loan apps: Country largest lender

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) has warned customers against instant loan apps and even suggested measures to safeguard against the menace. "Please refrain from clicking on suspicious links or giving your information to a company posing as a Bank or Financial Company. Report cybercrimes at cybercrime.gov.in," the bank tweeted.

Instant loan apps, especially those originating from China have been a menace as the government as well as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), have received several complaints against them. Their proliferation has led to increased cases of cyber crime and also extortion of hapless borrowers. Sharing some safety tips, the



SBI suggested that it is always better to check the authenticity of an app before downloading. There are lots of illegal apps that may trap users and siphon off money from their accounts. Customers should not click on suspicious links and discretion should be used to avoid

falling for unauthorised apps, the SBI said. Check the app permission settings to secure your data from getting stolen and in case of theft, such matters should be reported to the local police authorities, the bank cautioned further.

Google's parent company Alphabet 'prepares' to lay off 10K employees

SAN FRANCISCO: Alphabet, Google's parent company, is reportedly gearing up to lay off about 10,000 "poor performing" employees, or 6 per cent of its workforce, in the Big tech layoff season kicked off by Meta, Amazon, Twitter, Salesforce and more amid the rough global conditions.

According to a report in The Information, Google plans to ease out 10,000 employees through a new ranking and performance improvement plan.

"A new performance management system could help managers push out thousands of underperforming employees starting early next year. Managers could also use the ratings to avoid paying them bonuses and stock grants," the report mentioned.

Under the new system, managers have been asked to categorise 6 per cent of employees, or roughly 10,000 people, as low performers in terms of their impact for the business.

The new system also reduces the percentage of employees that can score a high rating. Additionally, the new performance system at Alphabet could use the ratings to avoid paying bonuses and stock grants, according to the report. Alphabet has yet to comment on the report.



Alphabet has a workforce of nearly 187,000 employees. The median compensation for an Alphabet employee last year was around \$295,884, according to a US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing.

Alphabet reported a net profit of \$13.9 billion in the third quarter (Q3), down 27 per cent from a year earlier, while revenue increased 6 per cent to \$69.1 billion, amid global slowdown and recession fears. The company's CEO Sundar Pichai aims to make Alphabet 20 per cent more efficient, hinting at job cuts.

Reports earlier surfaced that Alphabet was giving some workers 60 days to apply for a new role at the company if their jobs are set to be cut. Pichai had said the company is "still investing in long-term projects like quantum computing. But it's important to be smart, to be frugal, to be scrappy, to be more efficient".

Twitter's alternative Hive sees surge in new users



SAN FRANCISCO: Twitter alternative Hive has seen a boost in new sign-ups since users started switching to other social media platforms after Elon Musk's takeover of the micro-blogging platform.

Due to the ongoing deterioration of the situation at Twitter, Hive is currently ranked among the top 20 in the US App Store, reports TechCrunch.

Founded in 2019 by Cassandra Pop, Hive is not a Twitter clone but a Generation Z-focused social platform which combines ideas from many other social-media applications, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and even MySpace.

The platform allows users to browse their interests across a range of topic-based communities, like Science, Tech, Cars, Music, Fashion, Gaming, and many others. Additionally, it allows users to like, comment and repost the shared content, just like other platforms. Former Twitter users seeking a new home are likely to feel more at ease with Hive because of the application's simple and familiar set of navigation options.

It features tabs for accessing the profile, the main timeline or feed, a "Discover" section for browsing the social network, and a tab for notifications. Hive gives users the option to pay to unlock extra slots on their profile which allows them to display more of their favourite music. The second slot costs \$0.99, and the third or fourth are priced at \$1.99, the report said.

India likely to grow at 6.5% to 7.1% in current fiscal: Deloitte

FW DESK

India may record a growth in the range of 6.5 per cent to 7.1 per cent during the current financial year 2022-23 mainly due to rising inflation and expectations of a global slowdown, Deloitte India said in a report.

Deloitte expects "India to post a 6.5-7.1% growth during 2022-23 and 5.5-6.1 per cent the following year contingent on the revival of the global economy and improving economic fun-



damentals." India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 8.7 per cent in 2021-22. "The seemingly unending saga of global economic uncertainties has begun to negatively impact

India's main drivers of growth. So volatile is the current economic environment that if one is looking for certainties from the recent data releases, it is unlikely that a consistent outlook will emerge," Deloitte further said.

Constantly rising inflation, which has remained above RBI's tolerance limit of 6 per cent for the past 10 months has been a concern for the Government, despite the central bank raising repo rate four times in the last six months.

You Can Now Mint XEN Crypto for Free on OKC

FW DESK
Victoria

OKC (OKX Chain), the EVM and IBC compatible chain backed by OKX - the world's second-largest crypto exchange by trading volume - today announced an integration with XEN Crypto, the fastest-growing community in the crypto space. Now, users can mint and stake XEN tokens on OKC.

XEN Crypto is a fair crypto

for the masses, based on the first principles, delineated by Satoshi Nakamoto in the Bitcoin Whitepaper and realized by Jack Levin, the founder of XEN, it aims to empower the individual with no pre-mint for investors and founders, an immutable contract with no admin keys, and proof of participation protocol.

"Over 60 million wallet addresses have engaged with the XEN ecosystem since launch. Staying true to first



principles of Crypto, XEN has experienced one of the

fastest-growing engagements with its users. We are pleased

to be welcomed by the OKX Crypto Ecosystem, bringing the friendliest, lowest barrier-to-entry Crypto Project to its new playground," shares Levin.

"There is no better project that we could work with, considering the fair launch nature of XEN, reiterating why we are all here in the first place. The OKC team is always looking for the next project that could provide better utility and experience

for our users, and one that could also inspire innovation within the ecosystem - we're happy to have XEN integrated with us," Chai Li, Head of OKC Ecosystem elaborates.

OKC users can mint XEN tokens and stake to mint more XEN with OKX Web3 wallet or Metamask. Users can stay updated with the XEN project's latest developments through OKC's Twitter channel (@okcnetwork).

14th Assocham Global Insurance Summit: data should be the DNA of an insurance company: Saurabh Mishra

MUMBAI: Insurance is one of the defining factors of a developed country. An insured country & citizens will help us move decisively and irreversibly towards a developed society, says Saurabh Mishra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, GoI. He was speaking at the 14th Assocham Global Insurance Summit and Awards, held at Mumbai.

"Insurance is not just one of those high-ended glam black jacketed investment banking product, it is a product for each one of us. If every eligible citizen, every eligible asset is insured, I think we move decisively towards becoming a society which is a developed society from all stretch of imagination," says Joint Secretary, "Data should be the DNA of an insurance company from the way he drives the customer, analysing the customer. If you are able to do that, another important sign that will be-

have like a developed country delivering and consuming insurance."

Addressing the summit, Thomas M Devasia, Member-Non-Life, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India said, "We are working on certain broad-based initiatives towards affordability and availability of insurance, and one of them is already in the news is the big infrastructure initiative with a social safety net product being developed by the industry and we have received some good feedback."

In his speech, Anuj Mathur, Chairman, ASSOCHAM National Council for Insurance and MD & CEO, Canara HSBC Life Insurance Co. Ltd. Says, "India is set to become the 6th largest insurance market with an average growth of 14% over the next 10 years. We are at the cusp of becoming the 5th largest world economy and

it's a moment of pride for all of us. Today the business environment is very positive. Insurance regulator IRDAI is really focused on increasing the insurance penetration at an accelerated pace, and the year 2047 is where the government and IRDAI are aiming for insurance for all."

"I am extremely excited to be associated with this industry at this point of time which is looking at disruption as well as inclusiveness. We are going to witness more global players with the government's favourable FDI policy and I think things have really changed in the last 2 years for the flexibility it has shown, and investors are really looking at India as an investment destination." He added.

BC Patnaik, MD, Life Insurance Corporation of India said, "For an insurer, data is sacrosanct and unless we have a sanctity of data, there

will be mayhem across the country. India is a country which is underpenetrated and there is a lot of scope in returns in terms of absolute terms in life insurance premium itself and there is a potential to reach 10 lakh crore at any point of time. For health, we are just at the tip of the iceberg at just 1%, some days we should be reaching around 5-6%."

G Srinivasan, Advisor, ASSOCHAM National Council for Insurance & Director, National Insurance Academy said, "There is a mission to increase insurance penetration in our country. However, insurers are still to reach a large number of people and I think we still have a long way to go to deepen the insurance penetration. I think the customer experience is still a challenge. What we really need to do is to capture the imagination and mind space of customers."



"The next level of penetration will come from technology and data, which will really play a very important role in achieving present customer experience. Augmented reality can really help in risk inspections, loss assistance. There's no need for people to go and assess losses. Blockchain can help in development insurance along with

technology known solutions for better claims settlement and better customer experiences." He adds.

Addressing the gathering, Sarbvir Singh, CEO, Policy Bazaar said, "We are a unique country and when you think about it, insurance is the best possible solution compared to relatively higher income countries which have social security, but for India it is the most logical and a brilliant concept. It is actually cheaper in India compared to other countries globally, may it be Health Insurance, Term Insurance or any other insurance product it is much more affordable. So, terms are cheaper in India compared to Singapore. Health insurance is an amazing product and is relatively affordable. It is completely networked till the last step. In my opinion products are not the problem. Actual problem is not awareness, the problem is

action. The 30 crore, 40 crore or 50 crore population have the wallet, but still, they are not buying the volume they should have, for their own individual reasons. One of the first things that strikes you is awareness, there is always a concern that there is not enough awareness but in my opinion the awareness is only the surface, actual problem is not awareness actual problem is action. Action issue vs awareness issue. The only solution you have is to find ways to approach people in a segment of one."

Murali Urs, SecOps Leader, ServiceNow India said, "In the insurance industry we are contributing in a very big way, we figure in the top 10 in every category of insurance but there is a great deal of risk, as all of data including Aadhar card, Pan card can be misused, and hence protection of the data is very important."

INTERNATIONAL

India receives wide praise at UNSC for counter-terror leadership, guiding 'Delhi Declaration'

India has received wide praise for its leadership of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and for guiding the adoption of the Delhi Declaration on fighting terrorists using emerging technologies at its special meeting in New Delhi.

"We welcome the adoption of the forward-looking Delhi Declaration and appreciate that it will serve as a non-binding benchmark for countering the new narratives of terrorists," Security Council President Harold Adlai Agyeman said on Wednesday.

"We thank the chair of the Committee and the government of India for hosting the committee's special meeting in October with a focus on countering new and emerging technologies for



terrorist purposes." The sentiment was echoed by representatives of several countries across the geographic and diplomatic spectrum, who spoke after the CTC chair, India's Permanent Representative Ruchira Kamboj, briefed the council on the committee's work.

The CTC held a special two-

day meeting in Mumbai and New Delhi — a rare session away from the UN headquarters — where the Delhi Declaration was adopted.

Held on the theme of fighting terrorists' use of new and emerging technologies, the session focused on drones, financing and information and commu-

nications technologies, and the declaration set out measures countries should take to counter these developments.

China's Deputy Permanent Representative Geng Shuang said "India as the chair of CTC hosted a special session this October and adopted the Delhi Declaration, thereby giving impetus to member states' efforts in better tackling the new counter-terrorism challenges."

United Arab Emirates (UAE) Deputy Permanent Representative Mohamed Abushahab said the Delhi Declaration "is a crucial contribution to our collective response to the threats discussed during the special meeting, including terrorists' deployment of unmanned aerial systems". The UAE ex-

presses "sincere gratitude" to India "for ensuring the committee's engagement on a wide range of regional and thematic issues, including evolving threats", he said. Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative Anna Evstigneeva said the New Delhi meeting of the CTC "was outstanding in terms of organisation". She said the array of experts at the meeting succeeded "in providing support to tackle the multifaceted tasks on the agenda of the committee and the council as a whole in counter-terrorism".

A delegate representing France said that through the special CTC session in New Delhi India "provided an opportunity to reflect on the evolutions of the terrorist threat".

Germany relaxes Schengen visa rules for Indians

Bringing a cheer to Indians, Germany has relaxed its Schengen visa appointment rules with the country centralising its short-term visa processing at its centre in Mumbai.

"As a result of centralisation of Schengen visa (short term visa) processing in German Visa Centre Mumbai, we are pleased to inform about... relaxation regarding appointment bookings," the German embassy said in a statement.

A short-stay Schengen visa allows one to visit Germany and other Schengen countries for a maximum of 90 days within a 180-day period.

This visa is issued in the form of a sticker affixed to the passport of the traveller.

"Appointments can be booked and Schengen visa applications can be submit-



ted in all Visa Application Centres run by VFS Global all over India, regardless of your place of residence," the Mission statement read.

"If the Application Centre closest to your home town is already fully booked, please feel free to check for available appointment slots in one of the other major Indian cities," it added.

The relaxation, however, does not apply to applications for national visas (D-visa cat-

egory) such as student, employment or family reunion visas, the embassy stated.

A Schengen visa application form may be submitted three months prior to the intended travel date.

The German Schengen Visa costs 80 euros (Rs 6, 700) for adults and 40 euros for minors, while work permits (or visas) cost 75 euros.

Visa fee is waived for children under six years of age.

Earlier this year, the German National Tourist Office (GNTTO) observed a 214 per cent year on year increase in Indian tourists arriving in Germany.

It said that the country accounted for 9 per cent of European trips of Indians, adding that 55 per cent of Indians visit Germany for leisure while 38 per cent travel for business.

Slain Indian-origin teen's father regrets moving to Canada



TORONTO: The father of 18-year-old Mehakpreet Sethi, who was stabbed to death at a parking lot of a school in Surrey, has told a news channel that he regrets moving to Canada along with his children.

Sethi died in the hospital after being attacked with a knife by a 17-year-old student of Tamanawis Secondary School in the Newton area, on Tuesday.

"When I went to the hospital, the doctors told me that the weapon directly pierced his heart, which is why he died," Harshpreet Sethi, Mehakpreet's father, told Omni Punjab.

The family moved from Dubai to Canada eight years back. They hail from Punjab's Faridkot district, the channel reported.

"I came to Canada with the hope that my children will have a better future, they will be safe... Now I am regretting why I came to this country along with my children," Harshpreet said. Fighting back his tears, Harshpreet told the local TV channel that the attacker could have slapped him, hit his arm or legs, instead of taking his son's life. Police said that a fight broke out between Sethi and a 17-year-old boy that ended with the teen being stabbed. The suspect has been taken into custody after being identified by the witnesses. "What kind of upbringing his parents have given him (suspect)?" Harpreet asked, adding that it is not easy to bring up children for 18 years, and then lose them in an incident like this.

'Ordinary' Voice Shares Untold Story of North Korean People



San Francisco, November 22, 2022 — Humanitarian, movie producer and successful entrepreneur Joon Bai offers readers a rare glimpse inside the borders of North Korea in his engaging new memoir, Promises, in which he shares his extraordinary life story and the lessons he learned about courage, challenges and hope.

From his early childhood years in what is now North Korea, Bai lived through the devastation of World War II and the Korean War, before finding his way to America as an exchange student. After earning his engineering degree and embarking on a successful career in business, he eventually opened his own factory in rural Pennsylvania, buoyed by the support of his beloved wife, Kyuhee, and his mother. Hard-won success at hand, Bai returned to North Korea to help farmers and children devastated by the country's ongoing famine, spending millions of dollars and saving countless lives.

Australia clears free trade agreement with India

Australia on Tuesday cleared the free trade agreement (FTA) with India as its Parliament has approved the pact.

Taking to Twitter, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said: "BREAKING: Our Free Trade Agreement with India has passed through Parliament."

The pact is likely to be implemented on a mutually agreeable date.

According to Australian law, the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA) needs ratifica-



tion by that country's parliament before its implementation.

The pact will enable duty-free access for Australian products in India in sectors like textiles, leather goods, jewellery etc.

Union Commerce and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal reacted to the development by tweeting: "Delighted that India-Australia Economic Cooperation & Trade Agreement has been passed by Australian Parliament. A result of our deep friendship, it sets the stage for us to unleash the full potential of our trade ties and spur massive economic growth."

Australia on its part would offer zero duty access to Indian products, which currently attract customs duty to the tune of 4 to 5 per cent in that country.

Pak appoints General Asim Munir as new Army Chief

Government of Pakistan appointed General Asim Munir as new Army Chief, with the appointment of the new Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir, his predecessor General Qamar Javed Bajwa's contentious six-year tenure has come to an end. The latter's last year as chief will always be remembered for the ouster of Imran Khan as prime minister and the political turmoil that followed it culminating in an assassination attempt on Khan.

The turmoil still prevails in Pakistan and it would be interesting to see how General Munir would seek to resolve it. And whether he would act neutral in the true sense of the term in the fight between the current coalition government and Khan who is currently leading a march against the government.

To predict General Munir's future moves won't be easy but knowing where he comes from would certainly help. General Munir has been a close aide of General Javed Bajwa ever since he commanded troops in the Force Command Northern Areas as a brigadier under the outgoing army chief, who was then Commander X Corps.

He was later appointed Military Intelligence director general in early 2017, and in October next year was made the Inter-Services Intelligence chief.

However, his stint as the top intelligence officer turned out to be the shortest ever, as he was replaced by Lt Gen Faiz Hamid



within eight months, on the insistence of then Prime Minister Imran Khan. So General Munir is expected to not be sympathetic to Khan and rather be more inclined to continue supporting Shahbaz Sharif's government. But under the circumstances when Khan has emerged as the most popular Pakistani leader, such an approach would mean continuing instability in the country in the run up to next year's national election. Khan, who sees his ouster as part of a regime-change conspiracy encouraged by the United States, has been demanding an early election.

However, beyond what General Asim does to resolve Pakistan's ongoing turmoil, it would be interesting to see his approach towards India and also vis-a-vis the situation in Kashmir. During Bajwa's term in office, Pakistan largely exercised restraint in its dealings with India. This despite the fact his term witnessed the 2019 Pulwama attack that killed over 40 security personnel leading to the first aerial dogfight between

the two neighbours in 48 years. Earlier in 2016, Pakistan didn't respond when India carried out a surgical strike across the LoC.

What is more, Pakistan stopped short of militarily escalating the situation when in August 2019 New Delhi revoked Article 370 that granted J&K an autonomous status under the Indian constitution — albeit, it did raise diplomatic ante which, in turn, achieved nothing. Pakistan also didn't escalate militancy in Kashmir, as many analysts had warned. A year after in a dramatic turn of events Pakistan engaged in a back-channel dialogue with India and by February 2020 the two countries re-affirmed the 2003 ceasefire agreement along Line of Control.

There was suddenly a brief spell of bonhomie between the two countries. Both the then Pakistan prime minister Khan and the Army chief Bajwa called for dialogue and resolving Kashmir in a peaceful manner. Bajwa even said that it was time for the two countries to "bury the past," and move on. India, however, remained cool to these overtures.

Pakistan wanted to place Kashmir at the front and centre of its dialogue with New Delhi which is unacceptable to the government in New Delhi led by prime minister Narendra Modi. Islamabad was also reported to ask India to restore Article 370 that granted J&K its special status.

Meta denies Mark Zuckerberg is set to resign next year

Meta (formerly Facebook) has denied reports that its founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg is resigning next year amid slow growth and massive layoffs at the social network.

The Leak portal first reported, citing its source privy to plans at Meta, that "Zuckerberg is set to resign next year".

The report claimed that Zuckerberg has decided to step down himself and it will not "affect metaverse", his multi-billion dollar project.

Andy Stone, Meta's Communications Director, refuted the report late on Tuesday, tweeting that "This is false".

Despite serious concerns raised by investors and industry experts, Zuckerberg is determined to aggressively push his Metaverse dream.

Earlier this month, in one of the worst lay-offs ever in the tech industry, Zuckerberg sacked more than 11,000 employees — about 13 per cent of the global workforce — and extended hiring freeze through Q1 2023.

The company posted another quarterly revenue decline as investors begin to lose faith in its loss-making, billion-dollar metaverse dream.

In the third quarter (Q3), Meta's revenue declined 4 per cent year over year to hit \$27.7 billion. The company posted a net income of \$4.395 billion, down from \$9.194 billion year



over year. This decline was due to Meta's huge losses in Reality Labs, Meta's virtual reality division, which lost \$3.672 billion in Q3.

"There's still a long road ahead to build the next computing platform. But we're clearly doing leading work here. This is a massive undertaking and it's often going to take a few versions of each product before they become mainstream," Zuckerberg had said.

Meta CFO David Wehner, however, said that some of the revenue decline is due to inflation.

Meta investors have called on the company to reduce its workforce by at least 20 per cent and stop making investments in metaverse.

In a sharp criticism of Zuckerberg, Altimeter Capital Chair and CEO Brad Gerstner had said that the social network needs to reduce more headcounts and stop spending too much on metaverse to get its "mojo back".

Poland will receive support from the European Union recovery fund: PM Mateusz Morawiecki

WARSAW: Poland will receive support from the European Union (EU) post-pandemic recovery fund within a year and a half, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said.

"Our side is in ongoing talks and in ... a year or a year and a half, we will receive this money, which is why we have already started on certain projects which are being pre-financed by the Polish Development Fund," Xinhua news agency quoted Morawiecki as



saying to the local media on Thursday. "Everything is going accord-

ing to plan," he added. The prime minister also said that Poland and Hungary were in "completely different places when it comes to negotiating for EU funds", and were not working together on the issue.

Both countries are deeply euro-sceptic, and have been frozen out of the fund due to their respective disputes with Brussels.

In early June, the European Commission (EC) approved Poland's National Recovery

Plan, which outlines how the Polish government will spend the recovery fund.

The approval opened the way for Warsaw to receive 23.9 billion euros (\$24.9 billion) in grants, and 11.5 billion euros in loans from the bloc's post-pandemic Recovery and Resilience Facility.

However, the EC has refused to grant Poland access to funding until it meets several conditions regarding the country's application of the rule-of-law.

Canadian MPs request for direct flights to Amritsar

Given the demographic dominance of Sikhs and Punjabis in Canada, Conservative MPs have called upon the the country's flag carrier to establish direct flights between their country and Punjab state.

In a letter addressed to Air Canada, MPs Tim Uppal, Jasraj Singh Hallan, Bradley Vis and Mark Strahl called for direct flights between Canada and Amritsar to bolster tourism and empower families to stay connected. "As Canadian MPs representing vast and diverse communities, we write to highlight the significant economic and social value in establishing direct flights between Canada and the state of Punjab," the MPs wrote last week.

According to estimates, as many as five lakh passengers travel annually from India to Toronto alone, the majority of them Punjabis. The MPs stated that "direct flights between Canada and Amritsar would symbiotically bolster tourism, trade and empower families to stay connected".

There are currently no direct flights between Canada to Am-



ritsar, India, requiring travellers to make multiple stops along, making the journey "lengthy and arduous". Canada recently announced an expanded air transport deal with India, allowing designated airlines to operate an unlimited number of flights between the two countries.

But the pact gives Canadian airlines access to Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai, excluding Amritsar, despite demands from passengers from both sides.

There are approximately 950,000 Punjabis in Canada, accounting for roughly 2.6 per cent of the country's population, as per the 2021 census. Many of these families have direct ties to

family, friends and businesses in Punjab. India is Canada's fourth-largest international airport market, and hundreds of thousands of Punjabis travel to the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Over 14,000 Canadian citizens and permanent residents joined an official parliamentary petition this year calling for the creation of a direct flight from Canada to Amritsar, the letter noted.

The MPs said that the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the significant need for flights from Amritsar directly to Canada.

At the time of initial pandemic lockdowns, when 30,000 Canadians were in India, border closures and flight

cancellations forced the federal government to institute 37 repatriation flights — many directly out of Amritsar's Sri Guru Ram Das Ji International Airport to Pearson International Airport in Toronto.

"The pandemic has shown us that direct flights from Amritsar to Canada is both feasible for airlines and met by a high demand for travellers," the letter read.

"So many of my constituents and Canadians have been asking our office for flights like these for years. This will help our seniors, those most in need and parents of small children with access to direct flights," MP Hallan, one of the signatories of the letter, wrote on Twitter.

According to media reports, Canadian Transport Minister Omar Alghabra has raised the issue with Indian counterparts.

In India, MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney has also written a letter to Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia requesting him to commence direct flights from Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal to Amritsar and Mohali airports.

Rajwinder Singh, the key suspect in 2018 murder of Australian woman, arrested in Delhi

FW DESK
The Australian High Commission had informed the declaration of reward of One Million Australian Dollars on the arrest of one Rajwinder Singh, an Indian-origin

Australian citizen, who had committed the gruesome murder of an Australian lady on 21/10/2018 in Queensland, Australia, and had been absconding ever since. INTERPOL had issued Red Corner Notice (RCN), Control No. A-2639/3-2021 regarding the said accused; the CBI/INTERPOL, New Delhi had got issued a non-bailable warrant, under The

Extradition Act, against his name from the Patiala House Court on 21/11/2022. On 25/11/2022 at 06:00 hrs, based upon inputs shared by CBI/INTERPOL and Australian counterparts, in an intelligence-based operation, the accused was apprehended from near GT Karnal Road and arrested by Special Cell u/s 41(1) Cr PC. The accused



is being produced before the concerned court as per law for further proceedings. The joint media release with Australian Federal Police and Queensland Police Service The AFP in partnership with Queensland Police Service (QPS) has assisted Indian Law Enforcement in the arrest of a man wanted for the murder of a Queensland woman on 22 October, 2018.

The AFP Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team (FAST) and AFP New Delhi have been actively assisting QPS in the search and arrest of the man suspected of her murder.

Police received information on the whereabouts of the individual and today (25 November, 2022) he was arrested by Indian Law Enforcement in New Delhi. It is anticipated that he will face court in India

and be subject to extradition proceedings to Australia.

The man was believed to be avoiding apprehension in the Punjab region in India since travelling to the country on 23 October, 2018. In March 2021, an extradition request was approved by the former Australian Attorney-General and presented to the Government of India who accepted the request. On 3 November, 2022, a \$1 million reward was announced by QPS and Police Minister Mark Ryan for information leading to the arrest of this man. Between 27 October and 8 November, 2022 QPS officers travelled to India and in conjunction with AFP New Delhi had direct engagement with Indian Law enforcement to share information with the intent to arrest the man.

AFP Commander Transnational Operations Richard Chin said AFP investigators worked tirelessly with their state and international counterparts to ensure the man was apprehended to face extradition back to Australia.

Actress Preity Zinta had left 'Soldier' climax shoot for Psychology exams

THANK YOU RAMESHJI FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY & FOR NOT GETTING UPSET WITH ME FOR LEAVING SET FOR MORE THAN A WEEK TO TAKE MY PSYCHOLOGY EXAMS DURING THE CLIMAX SHOOT IN RAJASTHAN



MUMBAI: Actress Preity Zinta penned a heartfelt note for the makers of her film 'Soldier', which released in 1998, and shared anecdotes from the shoot of the film. She took to Instagram, where she shared a clip of the title track of 'Soldier', pictured on herself and Bobby Deol. She wrote: "Soldier was my second release but the first film I signed. I was so confused that I would be working with two directors with one name. Thank you Abbas Bhai & Mustan Bhai for never letting me falter."

She then thanked Bobby for bringing her into the movies. "Thank you Bobby for being you & for bringing me into the movies & thank you to the entire cast n crew for so much fun during the Australia, New Zealand & Rajasthan schedules. I will always miss you Saroj ji You taught me how to be a Heroine #soldier #soldieranniversary #memories #ting," she concluded. "Soldier" is an action thriller film directed by Abbas-Mus-

tan starring Bobby Deol, Preity Zinta and Raakhee Gulzar. According to the film's writer Shyam Goel, it was inspired by a real incident that happened in Punjab where a woman's forehead was etched with the message that her husband was a traitor. Her husband, a soldier, was accused of treachery, and she was thrown out of her village. The story was already made as a Tamil movie in 1989 titled 'Thaai Naadu', starring Sathyaraj in dual roles.

Indian men's hockey team faces Australia test ahead of World Cup



ADELAIDE: The Indian men's hockey team will get another chance to reassess its strength and weakness ahead of the World Cup when it squares off against world number one Australia in a five-match series, starting here on Saturday. It has always been a herculean task for India to challenge the might of the Australians, who are dominant force in World hockey. It will be the first time they meet since Australia thrashed India 7-0 in the CWG final in Birmingham. World No.5 India will clearly start as underdogs against the Kookaburras though Graham Reid's team has been a force to reckon with since winning a historic bonze in the Tokyo Olympics last year. India are coming into the match after two victories against New Zealand and mixed results (1W, 1L) against Spain in Bhubaneswar in the fresh FIH Pro League season. Both Spain and New Zealand are lower-ranked sides -- at eighth and ninth respectively -- and facing Australia at home will be an altogether different proposition for the Indian side. Talking about the series, India head coach Reid said, "There is no better place to come than Australia for preparation for the World Cup."

Ready to return to directing, Bollywood actor Anupam Kher

Bollywood actor Anupam Kher, whose this year's credits include successful Indian films - 'Kashmir Files', 'Karthikeya 2' and 'Uunchai', says he is ready to return behind the camera. Speaking to 'Variety' on the side-lines of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Kher said, "I would love to direct. After a long time, a story has come to me. My niece is autistic and I have a story about a grandfather and his autistic granddaughter who live together. I have a rough structure already. Once I write the script, I may start by the end of this year or next year."



Such a move would come twenty years after his feature directing debut, 2002's 'Om Jai Jagadish', reports Variety. Before that, he will close out this year with the release of Tamil horror 'Connect' (December 2022), in which Kher plays a priest conducting an exorcism via Zoom. He's also on board to start shooting Canadian filmmaker Eisha Marjara's 'Calorie', which was in the Co-Production Market at Film Bazaar in 2016. Produced by Joe Balass of Compass Productions and Filmoption International, it is an inter-generational story of three women whose past lives collide during an emotionally-packed summer trip to India. "It's a very good script. Unfortunately, it has been delayed, but I will shoot for that. It will be filmed in Canada and India," Kher said.

TAC Security CEO Trishneet Arora meets US Vice President Kamala Harris

KULBIR SINGH KALSII Chandigarh

It was a heart-warming moment for 29-year-old Trishneet Arora, the founder and CEO of TAC Security, when he met Indian origin US Vice President Kamala Harris in Albuquerque recently. Two iconic personalities with common Indian roots discussed ways and means to tackle cyber security challenges effectively. TAC Security has its corporate office at Mohali near Chandigarh and offices in other parts of India and US. The young entrepreneur expressed his joy through a tweet after meeting Harris. He tweeted, "Glad to have met the Vice President Kamala Harris during my recent visit to the United States. @VP is empowering women across the world and stands as a strong inspiration for them."



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Actor Randeep Hooda's 'Cat' exposes how drug cartels penetrated Punjab

MUMBAI: Actor Randeep Hooda, is set to bring an intense and authentic story from Punjab with his upcoming crime thriller series 'Cat'. This will be Randeep's second venture in the streaming space after 'Extraction,' in which he shared the screen with Hollywood star Chris Hemsworth. The trailer of the series was unveiled on Friday and it shows Randeep's character of Gurnam Singh, a simpleton, who is compelled to infiltrate the drug cartels of Punjab as he works for the police in a bid to save his brother.



While Gurnam is not new to this, the stakes are high, this time around. He finds himself plunged into the dark world of politics, corruption and crime. The trailer is laced with drama, gore, thrill and brings together the world of Punjab's underbelly, politics, police and drug lords. Commenting on the occasion of trailer release, Randeep said: "Gurnam Singh is fierce yet calm, he is strong yet fragile and while you will find a familiarity with this character, you will not be able to guess his next move. I am thoroughly excited with 'Cat' and that Balli (Balwinder Singh Janjua, the creator) has brought authenticity and genuineness to each and every scene."

Created and helmed by filmmaker Balwinder Singh Janjua, the series goes beyond the romanticised version of Punjab and puts forth a story of a brother's love, remission and espionage. Created and helmed by filmmaker Balwinder Singh Janjua, the series goes beyond the romanticised version of Punjab and puts forth a story of a brother's love, remission and espionage.

Season 2 of school drama 'Crushed' to have more twists and turns



The second season of school drama 'Crushed' announced on Thursday promises more twists and turns as teenagers come to grips with adulthood. Amazon miniTV - Amazon's free video streaming service is set to stream the second season of the series from December 2. Created by Dice Media (Pocket Aces), the series will feature showrunner Akshata Samant, Aadhya Anand, Naman Jain and Urvi Singh, among others. Directed by Mandar Kurundkar and written by Tatsat Pandey, Abhinav Vaidya, Sankalp Raj Tripathi, Akshata Samant being the showrunner, Dice Media. The show will take everyone through the lives of Aadhya (Aadhya Anand), Jasmine (Urvi Singh), and Prateek (Naman Jain) as they experience the highs and lows of adolescent love. In the second season of Crushed, these youngsters will be facing their future and evolving as individuals as fate presents new challenges in their lives. Facing roadblocks that challenge their friendship, love, and all other relationships they build, Season 2 of Crushed promises high entertainment and drama throughout. Commenting on the launch of Crushed Season 2, Aadhya Anand shared, "The last season was incredibly successful and got so much love and adulation from the audiences. The second season of Crushed will show how our characters evolve as individuals while preparing for the board exams. I hope that the viewers will love the new season just a little more than they loved and enjoyed the last one."

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Urvashi Rautela's airport look along with a Fendi Sunshine Tote Bag



Urvashi Rautela, Bollywood's youngest superstar is well-known for her fashion choices. The stunning actor is widely adored for her brave and edgy sartorial choices. She has unquestionably established the most stylish example for Gen Z women. Recently, the gorgeous celebrity was sighted at the Mumbai airport, where she once more won the hearts of her admirers with her fashionable clothes. Urvashi was seen wearing a body-hugging, full-sleeved, black iki chicstylish mini dress with a square neckline and silver tassels at the bottom. The garment cost about 30,000. Urvashi selected a straightforward cosmetic style to enhance her looks. The actress was wearing a gorgeous outfit that let her long, toned legs stand out. Urvashi looks sensational and radiant in her glamorous outfit as she strikes a candid pose. She paired her look with a Fendi x Versace Gold Baroque & FF Motif Fendace Sunshine Tote Bag worth 5 lakhs. She wore a Chanel bracelet, earrings, and sunglasses to complete the ultra-chic set, with the accessories alone costing 3 lakhs. The entire airport look costed worth 8.5 lakhs. There is no question in our minds that she looks amazing and amazes us. She welcomed her admirers and the photographers in a very beautiful and happy manner.

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Guru Randhawa wishes to sing for Amitabh Bachchan

Punjabi singer Guru Randhawa expressed his wish to sing for megastar and host of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 14' Amitabh Bachchan. In a video message, the pop singer shared for his fan Sonu Bharti Nagda from Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, he said: "It means a lot to me that someone who loves me and is my fan is on your show. The entire world adores you, and we wish you well and happiness. I wish I could sing for you one day." In a conversation with the host, the 'KBC 14' contestant told him how big a fan she is of the Punjabi pop musician and singer Guru Randhawa. When the host asked about her favourite singers, Sonu said that she is fond of Arjit Singh and Guru Randhawa. Talking about Guru, she shared: "I am a big fan of his even though I have not done anything crazy for him. I have listened to all of his songs and since the beginning of his music career, when he was still gaining a foothold in the industry, I have been an ardent fan of his and have listened to his songs."



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Actress Khushboo Atre credits her obsession with sports as her secret to fitness

Cinema and sports go hand in hand in more ways than one, and there is no denying the fact that one activity that a lot of Bollywood actors indulge in is sports. Fitness plays a key role in every B-town actor's life, indulging in sports is a great source of fitness and a medium for them to improve their personal and interpersonal values. Many Bollywood celebrities are currently keen sportspersons, one of whom is Khushboo Atre. The actress is known for her character Ratna in criminal justice. And now she talks about her second love, which is 'Sports'. Khushboo has worked in many series and movies and will be next seen in the movie, "Capsule Gill", working along with Parineeti Chopra and Akshay Kumar. The actress now shares her thoughts about her second love, besides acting. She says, "As actors, we have long schedules and hectic days at work; and playing a sport is also an extremely effective stress-buster. "Fitness is a crucial component of a healthy lifestyle, as we all know. I view sports as a healthy way of life and believe in staying fit. It is a voyage of self-control, relaxation, and mental peace."

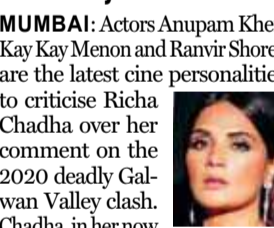
Khushboo has also been an avid sportsperson since she was in school. She was highly active and sports-oriented. She also served as captain of her college's cricket team. We would love to see such sports enthusiast in a sports film. On the work front, Khushboo has had prominent roles in movies and series like Criminal Justice season 2, Raazi, Illegal, Shamitabh, and Vodka Diaries. Currently, the actress is shooting for Bollywood films, and she just completed the shooting for one of them, which is Capsule Gill along with Akshay Kumar and Parineeti Chopra.



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Anupam Kher, Kay Kay Menon criticise Richa Chadha's 'Galwan says hi' tweet

MUMBAI: Actors Anupam Kher, Kay Kay Menon and Ranvir Shorey are the latest cine personalities to criticise Richa Chadha over her comment on the 2020 deadly Galwan Valley clash. Chadha, in her now deleted tweet, had written "Galwan says hi" in response to the Northern Army Commander Lt General Upendra Dwivedi's statement that the Indian Army is "waiting for orders from the govt (sic)" in reclaiming Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).



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Kashmir and Bollywood - A never ending love story



SRINAGAR: The love story between Kashmir and Bollywood began way back in 1949 when Raj Kapoor shot parts of his film 'Barsaat' in the Valley, taking its beauty to a wider audience. Ever since, the Kashmir Valley became the focus area of many film producers. In the 60s and 70s, several Bollywood films, including 'Kashmir Ki Kali' (1964), 'Jab Jab Phool Khile' (1965) and 'Bobby' (1973), among many others, were shot in Kashmir. The songs of these films re-

mained favourites for generations to come. Not only this, there are many places in Kashmir which are known by movie names or characters, like the landmark 'Bobby Hut' in Gulmarg, where the song of the super hit movie 'Bobby' -- 'Hum tum ek kamray main...' -- was filmed, or the 'Betab Valley' in Pahalgam where the Sunny Deol-Amrita Singh starrer 'Betaab' was shot. This beautiful relationship between Kashmir and Bollywood lasted until Vidhu Vinod Chopra's 'Khamosh'

in 1985, after which the unfortunate circumstances that ensued due to terrorism in the region brought a temporary end to this love story. Bollywood made a comeback to the Valley post 2000, when films like 'Mission Kashmir' and 'Haider' were shot in Kashmir. This relationship is also unique because this time the subject of these films was not the beauty of the Valley, but Kashmir itself. During the last few years, many popular Bollywood films and web series have been shot in Kashmir, while many local actors also rose to prominence. Notable among them are Mir Sarwar, who acted in films like 'Qaisari' and 'Bajranghi Bhaijaan', and Zaira Wasim, who acted in Aamir Khan's 'Dangal' and 'Secret Superstar', among others. Film screening also got a boost in the region this year with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurating cinema halls in Srinagar, Shopian and Pulwama districts. Also, a new film policy has been implemented in Kashmir, besides the announcement by Sinha about opening cinema halls in every district of the UT.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui: Initially accepted small roles for survival

PANAJI: While recalling the journey of becoming actor, Nawazuddin Siddiqui on Tuesday said that initially, he accepted small roles for survival as he had no other alternative. He was speaking on the topic - 'Journey as an Actor' in International Film Festival of India, underway in Goa. "I was offered small roles which I accepted for survival then. I had no other alternative. But I never got disappointed. It is the difficult time that makes you strong," he said. He said "if you have to begin from zero, you have to first unlearn what you have learnt". Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who has appeared in some of Bollywood's major films such as 'Black Friday', 'New York', 'Pepli Live', 'Kahaani', and 'Gangs of Wasseypur', spoke about struggles and challenges. Nawazuddin said that after graduating from a college, he worked as a chemist in a petrochemical company for a short while. However, to fulfil the dream of becoming an actor, he got associated with theatre. Eventually, he got admitted to the National School of Drama (NSD) in Delhi. Responding to a question on how 'Gangs of Wasseypur' turned out to be a turning point



in his acting career, he said that the movie made him believe in himself. "I was confident that my struggles will get over after this and people will appreciate this movie," he said. Nawazuddin also shared his experience of working in web-series on Netflix and other OTT platforms. He said that initially he was hesitant to work in series on OTT platforms as he had no idea about them. However, Anurag Kashyap convinced him for working on these platform. It is to be noted that Sacred Games web-series turned out to be a big hit on Netflix. Nawazuddin also shared his words of wisdom on playing versatile roles in biopic 'Manto', where he played role of prominent Urdu author Saadat Hasan Manto, and 'Thackeray', in which he played the role of Bal Thackeray.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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