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**CONTROVERSIAL AKALI LEADER SUCHA SINGH LANGAH AGAIN IN SIKH FOLD**

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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**NWTN UAE ELECTRIC VEHICLE ASSEMBLY FACILITY TO BE COMPLETED IN Q4**

POTPOURRI

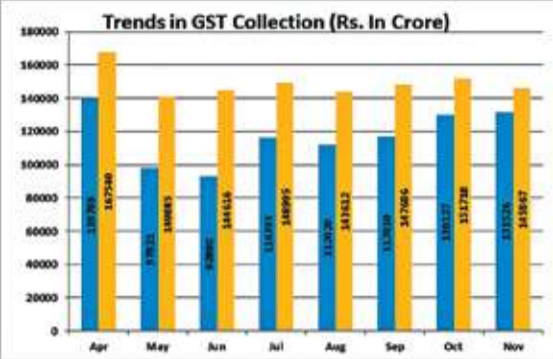
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**BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS RAKULPREET ON 'CHHATRIWALI': 'I AM FINALLY GETTING TO HEADLINE A FILM'**

## GST revenue Nov 2022 : ₹1,45,867 cr gross collection, records increase of 11pc YoY

## RBI launches Digital Rupee



**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA HAS LAUNCHED DIGITAL RUPEE PILOT IN 4 CITIES**

**DIGITAL RUPEE OR E-RUPEE ISN'T LINKED TO CRYPTOCURRENCY BY ANY MEANS**

**DIGITAL RUPEE OR DIGITAL CURRENCY IS JUST A DIGITAL FORM OF CASH/PAPER MONEY**

**NEW DELHI:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched digital Rupee pilot in 4 cities on December 1. The primary idea behind introducing digital Rupee is to eventually move away from paper cash and, in turn, lessen the cost of managing and transporting paper money. Interestingly, digital Rupee or e-Rupee isn't linked to cryptocurrency by any means and isn't based on Blockchain technology.



is basically Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), and the primary idea behind launching it is to eliminate cash money from the market eventually. Another aspect where crypto and digital Rupee do not match is the value factor. Cryptocurrency is a risk-driven market and its value changes depending on the market conditions. That's not the case with digital Rupee. Its value remains the same throughout, just like cash money.

In simple words, digital Rupee or digital currency is just a digital form of cash/paper money. Now that also means that the value of digital Rupee and paper money are the same. For instance: 1 digital Rupee is equal to Re 1 cash. So, unlike crypto, which is a volatile market and value fluctuates as per the market, digital Rupee's value never changes and has the same denominations as paper currency and coins.

The central bank of India has started the pilot of digital Rupee in four cities including -- Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar. For the initial testing, RBI partnered with four banks -- State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank. Once the testing process begins, RBI will extend the partnership to four more banks including -- Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank. The service will also be expanded to more cities in the days to come. Cities that will get access to digital Rupee in the second phase include -- Ahmedabad, Gangtok, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kochi, Lucknow, Patna, and Shimla. Digital Rupee and cryptocurrency are two different things and are in no way linked to one another. While crypto is based on blockchain, that's not the case with digital Rupee. The newly launched digital Rupee

Digital Rupee is a "digital" format of paper money. Interestingly, the value of digital Rupee and paper money is the same, just that handling digital Rupee is far easier and cheaper. For the initial testing, RBI has partnered with four banks -- State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, and IDFC First Bank -- to release digital Rupee to users. Currently, RBI is testing the pilot in -- Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneswar.

FW DESK

**New Delhi**  
The gross GST revenue collected in the month of November 2022 is ₹1,45,867 crore of which CGST is ₹25,681 crore, SGST is ₹32,651 crore, IGST is ₹77,103 crore (including ₹38,635 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹10,433 crore (including ₹817 crore collected on import of goods). The government has settled ₹33,997 crore to CGST and ₹28,538 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue of Centre and the States after regular settlements in the month of November 2022 is ₹59,678 crore for CGST and ₹61,189 crore for the SGST. In addition, Centre had also re-

leased ₹17,000 crore as GST compensation to States/UTs in November 2022. The revenues for the month of November 2022 are 11% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year, which itself was Rs. 1,31,526 crore. During the month, revenues from import of goods was 20% higher and the revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 8% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. The chart below shows trends in monthly gross GST revenues during the current year. The table shows the state-wise figures of GST collected in each State during the month of November 2022 as compared to November 2021.

**Mamata Banerjee to finalise Trinamool's strategy for Parliament's winter session**



**NEW DELHI:** West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supreme Mamata Banerjee will meet all the party MPs in New Delhi next month and finalise the strategy for the upcoming winter session of Parliament.

In all probability, party sources said, she will be holding the meeting at Lok Sabha member Saugata Roy's official residence on December 7. The meeting will deliberate on the issues to be highlighted during the session. "All the Lok Sabha and Rajya members of the party have been asked to be mandatorily present at the meeting," said a senior leader of the party who did not wish to be named. Sources further said that the chief minister will also outline on how to counter issues raised by other party MPs on the events of controversies in the state. The Chief minister will be going to Delhi to attend a meeting of all the state chief ministers convened by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for discussions on the G20 summit which will be hosted by India next year.

**After Srinagar residence, Mehbooba Mufti asked to vacate South Kashmir quarters**

**FW DESK**  
Jammu and Kashmir administration on Sunday asked PDP president Mehbooba Mufti and seven former legislators to vacate government residential quarters within 24 hours failing which action would be taken. The notice was served on the orders of the Anantnag Deputy Commissioner.

Mufti and some former legislators for the government quarters located in Housing Colony at Khanabal in the south Kashmir district, the officials said. Earlier in October, Mufti was served an eviction notice for her residence at the high security Gupkar area of the city here last month as well. The notices warned the occupants of action under law if they fail to vacate the premises within 24 hours, the officials said.

## Miracle will happen in Gujarat on Dec 8: Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann

**AHMEDABAD:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said that a miracle will happen in Gujarat on 8th December. There is a wave of change everywhere in Gujarat and everything is in favor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).



Mann said that this time the people of Gujarat will teach a lesson to the BJP and demolish its fort of 27 years. In this election the leaders will lose and the public will win. Senior leaders of BJP will lose the election this time with a big margin. Mann said that the people of Gujarat now want a govern-

ment with a new engine of the AAP, not the double engine government of the BJP. Both the engines of BJP are now old and filth of corruption and hooliganism has filled the engine of the BJP.

On Thursday, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal and AAP Rajya Sabha MPs Raghav Chadha and Harbhajan Singh campaigned for AAP candidates by holding roadshows at various places in Ahmedabad. Mann said that the BJP is trying to bribe voters but this time people are not going to fall prey to them. This time people will vote for the better future of their children. Referring to the AAP government in Punjab and Delhi, Mann said that we made electricity free for common

## Ludhiana court blast case: NIA arrests Harpreet Singh



**NEW DELHI:** In a latest development in connection with the Ludhiana court blast case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested most wanted Harpreet Singh alias Happy Malaysia, from Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, New Delhi, on his arrival from Malaysia. Earlier, the NIA had announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh for providing information about Singh. A non-bailable warrant (NBW) was also issued against him by a Special NIA court and a look out circular was also opened. The case pertains to the massive bomb blast that took place in the Ludhiana Court Building in 2021. One person died and six persons were injured in the explosion. The case was initially registered at Police Station Division-5, District Ludhiana Commissionerate of Punjab and later on the probe of the matter was taken over by the NIA. Investigations revealed that Harpreet Singh an associate of Lakhbir Singh Rode, Pak-based self-styled Chief of ISYF, was one of the conspirators of Ludhiana Court Building blast, along with Rode. Acting on the directions of Rode, he coordinated the delivery of the custom-made IED which had been sent from Pakistan, to his India-based associates, that was used in the blast. The arrested accused was also involved and wanted in various cases, including smuggling of explosives, arms and narcotics, "the NIA said.

**Sidhu Moosewala murder mastermind Goldy Brar detained in California**



**NEW DELHI:** Canada-based gangster Goldy Brar who masterminded the killing of famed Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, has been detained in California, sources said on Friday. He has been in police custody for the last seven days, the sources said, adding that further details are awaited. Brar had claimed the responsibility for the brutal murder of Moosewala on May 29, on behalf of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. On June 2, a Red Corner Notice (RCN) was issued against Brar in another murder case. Satinderjit Singh, alias Goldy Brar, a native of Sri Muktsar Sahib and having gone to Canada on a student visa in 2017, is an active member of Lawrence Bishnoi gang. The killing of Moosewala was executed by six sharpshooters and four of them were arrested and two shot dead in a police encounter.

## Purpose of delimitation to give immediate democracy to J&K: Centre to SC

**FW DESK**  
**New Delhi**  
The centre has told Supreme Court that the purpose of forming Delimitation Commission ahead of its schedule was to give "immediate democracy" to Jammu and Kashmir. "To wait till 2026 was legislatively found to be unwise," Solicitor General of India Tushar

Mehta told the Bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and A.S. Oka. Mehta also told the court that a Delimitation Commission formed to redraw the Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir was empowered to do so, arguing that the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 does



not preclude the establishment of Delimitation Commission by the Central Government. "It is submitted that Sections

61 and 62 of the 2019 Act do not preclude the establishment of Delimitation Commission by the Central Government under Section 62 of the 2019 Act... It is submitted that the 2019 Act provides for two alternative mechanisms to carry out delimitation for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir," Solicitor General of India told the court.

## BJP asks voters to avenge PM Modi's insult

**FW DESK**  
**New Delhi**  
Slamming the Congress for comparing Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Ravana, the BJP on Tuesday urged the people of Gujarat to avenge the insult meted out to the "Son of Gujarat" by voting against the grand-old party in the state Assembly polls. During an election meeting in the state, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge had compared the Prime Minister with Ravana. Addressing a press confer-



ence, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said: "Calling the Prime Minister Ravana is a grave insult. Even before this, Congress leaders have insulted

him. When Sonia Gandhi was the Congress chief, she had addressed the Prime Minister as 'mout ka saudagar' (merchant of death). After all, what do these people get by humiliating the Prime Minister?" "Former Congress leader and former union minister Subodh Kant Sahay had said that "Modi will die Hitler's death. Nicknames like 'cockroach', 'yamraj', 'monkey' were given to the Prime Minister by Congress leaders," Patra said. "Tukde Tukde gang', the people who divide the country, abuse the Prime Minister. I appeal to people of Gujarat to vote against the Congress in the Assembly elections and teach it a lesson," he said.

these people get by humiliating the Prime Minister?" "Former Congress leader and former union minister Subodh Kant Sahay had said that "Modi will die Hitler's death. Nicknames like 'cockroach', 'yamraj', 'monkey' were given to the Prime Minister by Congress leaders," Patra said. "Tukde Tukde gang', the people who divide the country, abuse the Prime Minister. I appeal to people of Gujarat to vote against the Congress in the Assembly elections and teach it a lesson," he said.

**BJP claims better performance than UPA govt in economic domain**



The political tussle between Congress and BJP has intensified with respect to the 'politics of performance'. While Congress is constantly trying to put the Modi government in the dock regarding the economic condition of the country and rising inflation, BJP claims that their government has fared much better in the domain of economy. Comparing the size of the country's economy in the tenures of UPA and NDA governments, BJP expressed on twitter that during 10 years of the UPA government, India moved up just one notch as the world's largest economy. On the other hand, the Indian economy has climbed up five places to become the world's fifth largest economy in just eight-and-a-half years of under Modi. India moved from 11th to 10th largest economy in ten years of UPA while India has moved from 10th to 5th largest economy in eight and half years of BJP-led NDA.

## Former Deputy CM appears before Vigilance Bureau

**JAGMOHAN SINGH**  
**Amritsar**  
Former Deputy Chief Minister O.P. Soni appeared before the Vigilance Bureau (VB) where he was grilled for nearly two hours as he had allegedly made disproportionate assets. Earlier, Soni was summoned in a disproportionate asset case. After coming out from the office of VB, Soni told the media, "The case against me was politically motivated and nothing else. VB asked numerous questions and I answered all the queries one by one. They were asking me particularly about my property. I told them whatever property I have already mentioned in the Income Tax Return which I have been filing for the last many decades. Moreover, I have contested more than seven elections and in every election I have disclosed everything in an affidavit submitted to the Election Commission and I never hide anything", he quipped adding that "he was always ready to cooperate in the investigation being done by VB. Vigilance SSP Varinder Singh Sandhu said Soni was given several types of performances to give



detail of his property he was possessing and was given one week period to submit detail comprehensively. Earlier, on November 25, Punjab Vigilance Bureau summoned former Deputy Chief Minister OP Soni but failed to appear before the VB as he was out of station, cited the reason and sought time. As per information, it was only after approval of Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann that notice was sent to Soni. Om Prakash Soni was also associated with the sanitizer scam in the previous Congress Government in Punjab. He was allegedly accused of buying sanitizer at thrice the cost during the pandemic while he was health minister.

## Gehlot & Sachin Pilot are assets of Congress: Rahul Gandhi

**BHOPAL:** Reacting to the escalating rift between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot, Rahul Gandhi on Monday said that both leaders were assets to the party. He made this remark while addressing a press conference in Indore during the Bharat Jodo Yatra on Monday. The Congress leader, however, said he would not want to create any controversy by making any comment on this particular issue, he said, and added, "What I can say is that both Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot are assets for the Congress." Notably, the Bharat Jodo Yatra, which is in Madhya



Pradesh right now, will enter Rajasthan on December 4, as per the schedule. While responding to the Congress MLAs who shifted to the BJP that had resulted in the collapse of Kamal Nath government in 2020 in Madhya Pradesh, Gandhi said they

should not be given a place in the party again. "Though, it is up to the Madhya Pradesh leadership to decide on this subject, but it is my personal belief that those MLAs who have taken money from the BJP to dissolve the Congress government should not be given the place again. It is my personal view, because they have been bought by the BJP, then they are not trustworthy," Gandhi added. During the press conference, he was also asked to share his opinion on 10 per cent reservation for general category, however, Gandhi maintained that at present, he has turned complete focus on Bharat Jodo

Yatra, and not any other political issue. "It may be that I will answer this question later, but at present my complete focus is on how to complete this Bharat Jodo Yatra." Rahul Gandhi also said that he was not thinking about the party or any political issue during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. "Will Bharat Jodo Yatra have any impact on Congress? And at what level? I am not thinking about all these issues. I am not even thinking about the Congress. I am walking around 25 km every day, meeting with people and listening to them and I have made my complete focus on the yatra only," Gandhi added.

# Controversial Akali leader Sucha Singh Langah again in Sikh fold

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Akali leader and former cabinet Minister Sucha Singh Langah, who was excommunicated by Akal Takht the highest Sikh temporal seat around five years back, today was cleared for reinstatement in the Sikh Fold.

On October 5, 2017, after his video of immoral transgression went viral, Langah was excommunicated from the Sikh fold.

Akal Takht while clearing his way for reinstatement, today imposing Tankash (religious punishment) told him that he cannot become a member of any Gurdwara Committee or SGPC for the period of five years.

However, Jathedar Akal Takht Harpreet Singh has also slapped Tankah (religious punishment) and asked him to



perform Sewa selfless service in the community kitchen of the Golden Temple for twenty one days including cleaning of used utensils of pilgrims and to listen religious hymns here.

Earlier today, when he appeared with folded hands before the Five Sikh head priests led by Jathedar Akal Takht in a loud public view, Langah in a loud

minister was arrested by Gurdaspur Police on October 4, 2017 in rape case on the basis of complaint filed with police by victim. A case under Sections 376 (rape), 384 (extortion), 420 (cheating) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC was registered. However, later the complainant woman claimed in the court that she lodged a complaint under pressure, leading to Langah's acquittal in 2018.

After a marathon meeting of Five Sikh head priests headed by the Jathedar, Akal Takht had announced excommunication of Langah for his alleged bad deeds as highlighted in the section of media which extended severe damage to the community.

The then Jathedar Akal Takht Gyani Gurbachan Singh had said that severe resentment and anger was prevailing among the Sikh community after Lan-

gah was found in bad deeds. He had said that the advisory Committee to Akal Takht, Sikh scholars from home and abroad and various Sikh religious leaders were demanding strict action against Langah.

Langah was also member of SGPC Dharam Parchar Committee to promote Sikh religion but this man hurt the sentiments of Sikh community by and large, Jathedar had mentioned in the Hukamnama (regions verdict).

The act of Langah was not pardonable as a reason he was excommunicated from Sikh Panth and at the same time Sikh Community across the world has been asked to keep distance from such a defamed personality and shouldn't keep any relations with him as per Sikh customs, had mentioned in the Hukamnama of Akal Takht.



Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami with members of the committee and other Sikh organisations take part in a signature campaign demanding the release of Sikh prisoners who have completed their jail term, outside Teja Singh Samundri Hall in Amritsar on Thursday. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

## Two gangsters arrested after brief encounter



JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Police have arrested two alleged gangsters after a brief chase and cross firing in the Chehertha area of Amritsar.

Confirming the incident, Police Commissioner Jaskaran Singh said that there was information about the movement of few gangsters in the Inova car at Chehertha Area. On getting information, police swung into action, reached on the spot, and intercepted the Inova car. On seeing the police, all the occupants of the car fled away in the thickly crowded bazaar in the Chehertha area. After a brief chase, police located them hiding in the house, there was

cross firing between police and gangsters. Two of them were arrested on the spot along with five pistols and live cartridges.

Singh said that initially, it would be difficult to tell how many criminals were in the Inova car but two of them were arrested. Various police teams have been dispatched to nab the rest of the accused.

He said that initially the name of the nabbed accused could not be revealed since it would hamper the ongoing process to arrest the rest of the accused. He said that the arrested two gangsters were already facing various criminal cases. Rest of the details about them to be shared with the media after their brief interrogation, he added.

## Properties of another 28 drug smugglers to be attached, demolished in Haryana: Anil Vij

SATISH HANDA

Talking to media persons at his camp office Ambala, Haryana Home & Health Minister Anil Vij said that illegal construction of residential as well as commercial properties belonging to drug smugglers and suppliers in Haryana state are being demolished under state government's bulldozer campaign in the state in which several structures illegally constructed by these hard core criminals have already been demolished in past some time in Haryana and this campaign has been highly appreciated by several state governments in the country facing severe problems due to drugs smuggling and drug addictions in people, especially young generation. Vij told media persons that as many as 28 another such illegally built struc-



tures owned by drug smugglers have already been identified in Haryana state and the case has been forwarded to government in centre for clearance when action for demolishing these buildings immediately will be taken. Vij said, Narcotic Control Bureau constituted in Haryana state led by a senior IPS officer Shrikant Jaghav also holding the charge of ADC Ambala division has brought good results in past sometime when number of drug smugglers were arrested and their stocks seized presently having large number of illegal properties of drug smugglers, suppliers on its radar.

Vij said, no one would be allowed to play with the future and health of residents, especially young generation in Haryana state as long as he is there and

## Haryana police arrested 8 persons involved in immigration frauds, rescued 9 including 2 females



SATISH HANDA  
Kaithal

This correspondent dealing with the entrepreneurs in trade and industry since past over 26 years usually told by them they are not getting suitable employees, whereas there is no shortage of jobs for sincere and hardworking youths. It has been observed that in spite of good openings for jobs in the country many youths desiring to settle abroad have spoiled their future career. Undoubtedly, there is no shortage of jobs for hardworking youths in the country. Crime Investigation Agency of Kaithal police has recently succeeded in busting an international racket at Kolkata involved in cheating large number of youths in which Kaithal police not only arrested eight persons of a gang allegedly cheated them assuring to get them jobs on the basis of fake appointment letters, passports and visa documents in abroad but also rescued eight youths hailing from Nepal including two females.

Maqbool Ahmed SP Kaithal told that Kaithal police rescued eight Nepalese nationals, including two women during raids conducted at four to five places and finally from a house at Diamond Palace from Kolkata and arrested of eight members of an inter-state gang allegedly involved in kidnapping youngsters for ransom on the pretext of sending them abroad.

## Vigilance Bureau registers corruption case against retired SMO for taking bribe Rs 1,15,000

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

The Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB) during its anti-corruption campaign on Thursday, has registered a corruption case against a senior medical officer (SMO), Dr Satnam Singh, who was posted at civil hospital Majitha for demanding a bribe of Rs 1,15,000. In a statement issued here today, a spokesperson

lodged at the Chief Minister's anti-corruption helpline. Giving details he added that the complainant Malkiat Singh resident of village Athwal, Amritsar district informed that the above said SMO has demanded and accepted Rs 1,15,000 as a bribe for issuing him a medico legal report regarding a

police case. The spokesperson added that the VB has investigated the allegations levelled in the complaint and registered a corruption case against the above mentioned SMO after finding him guilty for demanding and accepting a bribe money.

## Three highways in Haryana to ease traffic on GT Road known as highway to heaven

SATISH HANDA

Automobile drivers as well as passengers travelling on GT Road between Delhi and Amritsar facing heavy traffic while travelling on this road now would find relief while driving on this route frequently having large number of road mishaps causing death as well as injuries to accident victims generally this GT Road is called as highway to heaven. Information reveals that Haryana state government with the assistance of central government has constructed three new highways: 135.6 km long Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Express Way, 227 km long six lane NH 152D highway joining Haryana-Delhi- Rajasthan from Narnaul bi-pass to Ambala and the third KGB Express



Way joining Haryana with Delhi and Uttar Pradesh via Kundli, Ghaziabad and Palwal and all these going to provide relief in traffic on this busy road known as National Highway No. 1 as well as highway to heaven also due to having maximum number of roadside illegal 'dhaba', encroachment by heavy vehicles parked on the roadside, repairs going on the road damaged at places, stray animals moving on the road in groups, large number of road cuts and complete darkness on the road during night.

Chief Minister Haryana Manohar Lal Khatter told media persons that the central government had approved construction of 17 new highways in Haryana state, of these construction of seven highways have been completed and construction work going on remaining 10 highways. According to NCRB recent report out of total 62 lakh kilometer road network in the country National Highways have 1.33 lakh kilometer long road in which 53615 persons were reported died in road mishaps during year 2021, whereas 39040 persons had lost their lives in road mishaps on state highways during year 2021. In case of road accidents on Express Ways 62967 persons reported died in 1899 road mishaps during year 2021.

## Phulkari WOA, organised a Cook off titled 'Something's Cooking'



FW DESK  
Amritsar

Phulkari WOA, the leading women's organisation of Amritsar, organised a Cook off titled 'Something's Cooking' for its members on 1 December, 2022 at The Bagh, Amritsar. The event was judged by Sukhmani Sakhi, top food blogger, a lifestyle content creator & founder of the creative marketing firm-Social butter consistency; Chef Sanjay, Executive Chef, The Bagh & Chef Santosh, an accomplished chef with expertise in global cuisine.

## World HIV-AIDS DAY : Fast spreading HIV AIDS in three Haryana districts

SATISH HANDA

On the eve of World AIDS day, awareness campaign were held in various districts in Haryana state by the district administration as well as in educational institutes and it was alarming on the report of state health department that the disease is fast spreading in the state especially in Ambala, Yamunanagar

and Kurukshetra districts. The Financial World had a detailed discussion with Dr B.B. Lala in-charge Anti Retro Viral (ARV) Centre in Sector 10 Polyclinic Ambala City who told that as many as 411 new cases of patients suffering from HIV AIDS have been registered in this centre in past 10 months from month January till October this year. He disclosed that on an average two



patients are detected suffering from this dreaded disease every

month in Ambala district alone, which is a matter of concern. According to Dr Deepak Nodal Officer ARV Centre at PGI Rohtak, 9000 HIV positive patients are being treated presently at PGI which also include nearly 1500 pregnant women having HIV positive symptoms and timely treatment can save expected babies to large extent. He told that patients suffering

from AIDS are given Rs 2250 towards financial aid by the state government Haryana. He told that many times HIV patients also suffer from TB or Black Jaundice. Information reveals that apart from Ambala, state government had approved proposal for setting up ARV centre at Yamunanagar and Kurukshetra also and the proposal is yet hanging on fire without action.

## Haryana's new textile policy-2022 to strengthen textile, garments industry

SATISH HANDA

Deputy Chief Minister Haryana Dushyant Chautala also holding charge of industry in the state while talking to media persons told that new textile policy 'Haryana Atam-nirbhar Kapda Neeti' in which initially state government planning to bring further Rs 4000-5000 crore investment as well as create employment opportunities for nearly 20000 persons in the state. He told that Micro, Small, Medium Enterprise (MSME) officers are in touch with the industry entrepreneurs in national capital region (NCR), textile town Panipat and other towns in the state willing to invest in textile, garments and hosiery sectors. Chautala said that this policy is likely to be finalized in Vidhan Sabha meeting to be held on December 1, 2022. He told that every care has been taken to develop textile parks, clusters in the state and make available land in NCR region as well as other suitable industrial belts in Haryana state enabling new investors to reduce their initial investment. Chautala said, detailed discussion in this regard has already been made with large number of entrepreneurs expressed desire to set up industry units in pro-



posed about seven textile parks in Haryana state. Haryana is famous for manufacturing as well as exports of textile, hosiery, blankets and carpets in the country as compared to other states and have international identification. During last Lok Sabha budget session demand was made by political leaders in the state to develop textile parks in Haryana at Panipat and surrounding area to bring further boom in this sector and it was decided to develop about seven textile parks in the state preferably near cotton crop production areas: Sirsa, Fatehabad and Hisar districts enabling to expand textile and garments manufacturing in the state. Chautala told that state government has decided to introduce several welfare schemes

to boost textile related industry in the state in new textile policy and assist those units especially producing technical textiles synthetic and regenerated fiber products. When The Financial World talked to entrepreneurs in textile sector in Ludhiana the neighboring Punjab state they expressed concern over more than 120 years old garment industry in the area having nearly 15000 tiny, small as well as medium and large manufacturing units doing annual business and exports for value worth Rs 3000 crore but most of the units are struggling to remain alive in the absence of neglect and government support as compared to knitwear industry at Tirupati, Ahmedabad, Surat, Kanpur, Panipat, Faridabad and Bhiwadi.

## North America's largest 'Bhangra' festival organized at Lovely Professional University

FW DESK  
Jalandhar

Lovely Professional University hosted North America's largest 'Bhangra' festival at its Shanti Devi Mittal Auditorium, today. Popularly known as "Flower City Bhangra", this 7th world-wide edition was organized for the first time in Punjab. Punjab Cabinet Minister for Tourism & Culture Affairs, Anmol Gagan Maan chaired the fest.



own participation in cultural festivals during college days, she advised all to always applaud the performers on the stage. She also shared that as a Minister her prime duty will be to promote the heritage of the state, particularly in its three

forms- Language; Dress; and, Culture. An AAP MLA from Kharar constituency, Hon'ble Minister is also sharing responsibilities for the departments of "Investment Promotion; Labour; and, Removal of Grievances". A



perfect youth icon, she is also a popular singer, lyricist, music composer and best known for her Punjabi folk and Bhangra songs. Upholding Punjab's lively culture, 9 out of 14 registered high-skilled 'Bhangra' teams

from the Punjab state's institutions performed at LPU stage. On this occasion LPU's Pro Chancellor Rashmi Mittal was honoured with "Life Time Achievement Award" for her contribution to propagate education and cultural heritage.

# 14th Edition of 'Aero India 2023' to be Held from 13-17 Feb 2023 in Bengaluru

BY ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Asia's Biggest Air show "Aero India 2023" announced by the Minister of Defence (MOD), The 14th edition of Aero India, Asia's largest air show, will be held at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Karnataka's Bengaluru from February 13. Air Force Station Yelahanka has been hosting the show since 1996.

Amid speculation and reports that the show would be shifted out of Bengaluru to Lucknow, Aero India 2021 was held in Bengaluru and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had clarified that Bengaluru was the best city to host the show. "Most of the industries related to aerospace are located in Bengaluru and Karnataka. This makes the city the most ideal place to hold the air show," Singh had slated.

Hindustani Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the nodal agency



that organises defence events in the country, will organise the aero show this year. Since restrictions for international travellers were eased in the country, organisers are expecting that this year's registration will exceed all previous editions.

The previous 13th, which was held in 2021, edition of the biennial event was held in a hybrid

model reduced to a three-day affair due to Covid pandemic, which is held for over five days, will return to its old avatar during the 2023 edition.

Asia's premier air show The 14th Aero India is expected to be bigger and better than the previous editions. The first edi-

tion of Aero India was held in 1996. Since then, the event has grown over the years, earned a great reputation, and grabbed eyeballs from across the world. It has also seen increased participation from both exhibitors and the public, statement said.

The Aero India show is a premier global trade show which

provides an opportunity for the international arms industry to showcase their products, technologies and solutions to the Indian military and decision makers and also to engage with India's emerging Aerospace and Defence industry.

There are two main defence related expositions organised by the defence ministry in India. One is the Aero India show which is for the Air Force and another is Defence expo. The Defence expo 2022 was held at Gandhinagar, Gujarat in October 2022. The Defence expo is India's premier military trade show for land, naval and homeland security systems.

The last 13th edition of Aero India was limited for business visitors and was not open to the general public. The event was also one of the first largest hybrid aero show. Delegation from 43 countries along with 530 companies participated in the event.

## UIDAI releases October Monthly Progress & Achievement Report

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Aadhaar adoption and usage by residents continues to progress across India, indicative of how it is touching lives, and enabling ease of living for residents. In October, over 175.44 cr authentication transactions were carried out via Aadhaar.

A majority of these monthly transactions were done by using fingerprint biometric authentication, followed by demographic and OTP authentication.

So far, cumulatively almost 8426 crore authentication transactions have been completed by using the 12-digit digital ID by the end of October, indicative of how Aadhaar is increasingly playing a role in good governance and aiding welfare delivery. Whether it is 'Jeevan Pramaan', e-KYC, AEPSS for last mile banking, Aadhaar enabled DBT or authentication, Aadhaar, a digital infrastructure of good governance,



has been playing a vital role in supporting the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Digital India.

The number of face authentication transactions jumped from 4.67 lakh in September to over 37 lakh in October. Face authentication is facilitating pensioners to generate digital life certificate at home by using their mobile phones without visiting banks or common service centers, thus promoting ease of living of the senior citizens.

Similarly, in October alone, 23.56 crore e-KYC transactions were executed using Aadhaar, and the cumulative number of e-KYC transactions via Aadhaar has now gone up to 1321.49

crore by the end of October 2022. Aadhaar e-KYC service is increasingly playing a crucial role for banking and non-banking financial services by providing transparent and improved customer experience, and aiding ease of doing business.

An e-KYC transaction is executed, only after the explicit consent of the Aadhaar holder, and eliminates physical paperwork, and in-person verification requirement for KYC.

Similarly, Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPSS) has been an enabler of financial inclusion at the bottom of the income pyramid.

In October alone, 23.64 crore number of AEPSS transactions were carried out across India, a jump of over 12.4% when compared with September. Cumulatively, 1573.48 crore of last mile banking transactions have been made possible via the use of AEPSS and the network of micro-ATMs so far, by the end of October 2022.

## Drone from Pak brings 3 Kilogram narcotics shot down by BSF



JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Border Security force foiled smuggling bid while capturing the drone and 3.110 kgs narcotic at Indo-Pak border. In a statement issued here today, BSF said that on 28th Nov 2022 at about 2247 hrs, BSF troops deployed at Indo-Pak border heard buzzing sound of suspected drone entering from Pakistan into Indian territory in the area falling near Village - Chaharpur, District - Amritsar (Rural). As per drill, the troops tried to intercept the suspected drone by firing. Bullet hit the Drone due to which it fell down on the ground. Immediate after the whole area was cordoned. The Police & concerned sister agencies were informed. Further, during initial search, BSF party recovered 01 Hexacopter (Wt - approx - 18.050 kgs) in partial damaged condition along with three suspected narcotics packets in a white colour polythene attached underneath (Gross wt - 3.110 kgs) lying in farming field on own side of border fencing near Village - Chaharpur.

## Drug, arms and ammunition brought from Pakistan through drone seized

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Special Task Force of Punjab Police wing has arrested the accused with the recovery of drug, arms and ammunition which was smuggled to India through drone from Pakistan. There were eight Chinese pistols, 60 bullets and 2 kilogram heroin.

Confirming the recovery, official of STF said that two pistols out of eight pistols were in a special category which has the ability to shoot volley of bullets like AK-47 were seized. It was a first of its kind recovery whereupon such a sophisticated with modern technology a small size pistols were seized. The magazine of the pistols contains 32 bullets that could fire all the shots in a one go. Seized pistols were Chinese made. Besides eight pistols there were 60 bullets and 2 kilogram Heroin (drug) was also seized from the accused who was identified as Paramjit Singh resident of Indo-Pak border village Havlian falling in the Tarn Taran district.

Official said that there was specific information with the police for the last eight days



about the expected arrival of consignment of drugs, arms and ammunition from Pakistan. Finally the drone arrived on Indian Territory on Friday, after dropping the smuggled items when moving back to Pakistan came in the contact of BSF which shot it down.

Adding further, he said that as per the information, it came in the notice of police that smuggled consignment was retrieved by the accused on Saturday and Sunday morning when the accused was going to deliver to the next destination was intercepted by the Police at Ajnala road and all the smuggled items from Pakistan were seized during the frisking of his car.

Police said that the arrested accused had earlier remained in Hissar Jail in the case of fake currency and was a noted criminal.

## A wave of change is sweeping across Gujarat: Bhagwant Mann

VADODARA: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday stressed that a wave of change is sweeping across Gujarat. Youth-farmers, women and working class are all very angry with the BJP government and this time people of all classes are seeking change in Gujarat.

Mann said that this time the people of Gujarat want a new engine government of the Aam Aadmi Party, not the double engine government of the BJP. Both the engines of BJP are now old. The filth of corruption and hooliganism has filled the engine of the BJP. On Monday, Bhagwant Mann had reached

Vadodara for election campaign. Here he held road shows in favour of AAP candidates in various areas of Balasinor, Lunawada and Dakor and appealed to the people to form the Aam Aadmi Party government. Addressing a huge crowd of people during the roadshow, Mann said that only two days are left for the election. Now the people of BJP will lure you with the greed of money, but this time do not get trapped in their affair. This time we have to vote for the better future of our children.

Mann said that common people are grinding in the mill of BJP's inflation and unem-



employment. People did not have good options earlier, so they had to face the misrule of BJP for 27 consecutive years. This time common people have got a good alternative in the form of Aam Aadmi Party. That's why this time people of all classes want to get rid of BJP.

corruption, inflation, unemployment and misrule.

Referring to the AAP government in Punjab and Delhi, Mann said that we made electricity free for common people in Punjab and Delhi. Mohalla clinics are being opened at different places for better treatment. In Punjab, within just 6 months of forming the government, we have given government jobs to more than 20,000 youth and regularised the jobs of about 10,000 contractual workers. Give a chance to Aam Aadmi Party in Gujarat also, we will do all this here also, he added.

## NCSC Chairman Sampla asks Cochin Port authority to redress issues of SC employees

CHANDIGARH: Instructing the CMD and senior officers of Cochin Port authority and Cochin Shipyard limited for immediate redressal of issues faced by Schedule Castes employees, Chairman National Commission for Schedule Castes Vijay Sampla yesterday night concluded the two-day visit to Kochi in Kerala, said NCSC issued in a press release issued in Chandigarh.

Sampla was accompanied by Vice Chairman Arun Halder, Member Subhash Ramnath Parthand, Member Dr. Anju Bala, and senior officers of the NCSC.

On first day of his visit, Sampla met the representatives of the Schedule Caste Welfare association, Cochin Port Author-



ity followed by a review meeting with its senior officers led by the Chairman IAS Dr. M Beena.

On second day, Sampla had a long meeting with the office bearers of SC welfare Association, Cochin Shipyard Limited Kochi, followed by a detailed meeting with its CMD Madhu S Nair who came along with all the senior team. During review with

the management of Cochin Port authority and Cochin Shipyard limited, Sampla not only issued instructions with regards to issues and problems of Schedule Caste employees but also told them clearly that he would shortly organize another high-level review meeting to confirm the implementation of the instructions issued by him

## President of India awards coveted MAKA Trophy to Vice Chancellor Guru Nanak Dev University

GNDU WON THIS TROPHY A RECORD NUMBER OF 24TH TIMES

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

President of India, Droupadi Murmu presented the coveted "Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy" (MAKA) to the Guru Nanak Dev University for its all round best performance in sports for the year 2021-22 in an investiture ceremony held at Ashoka Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhawan this evening. The University received this for a record of 24th times.

In a release issued by the GNDU Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Jaspal Singh Sandhu and Dr. Kanwar Mandeep Singh, In-charge Sports Department of the University received this trophy. Prof. Karanjeet Singh Kahlon, Registrar of the University was also present. The replica of trophy and award money of Rs. 15 lakh was also presented to the University by the President for the promotion and development of sports. Before the presentation of award, a citation was also read out



depicting the commendable sports achievements of the University.

Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar has won the India's prestigious Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy (MAKA Trophy) of the year 2021-22 with Overall top performing University in International / National / Inter-University Championships.

The University won this trophy for a record number of 24th times from the President emerging again as the 'top university in sports' of India after the gap of three years.

It is pertinent to say that Guru Nanak Dev University has produced 6 Padmashree Awardees, 36 Arjuna Awardees, 2 Dronacharya Award-

## Warm welcome of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy at GNDU

MAKA TROPHY RESULT OF STUDENT-PLAYER'S HARDWORK SAYS VICE-CHANCELLOR

FW DESK  
Amritsar

There was celebration atmosphere at Guru Nanak Dev University campus when the country's coveted Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy reached here after the gap of two years. The trophy was warmly received by players, coaches, principals of affiliated colleges, sports department of University and other officials in the presence of Prof. Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Vice Chancellor. Prof. S.S. Behl, Dean Academics, Prof. Hardip Singh, OSD to Vice Chancellor, Prof. Karanjeet Singh Kahlon, Registrar, Prof. Anish Dua, Dean Student's Welfare, Dr. Kanwar Mandeep Singh, In-charge Sports Department of the University were present on this occasion. First Lady of the University, Prof. Shweta Shenoy, Head, MYAS-GNDU Department of Sports Sciences

and Medicine of the University was especially present.

Chief Minister Punjab Bhagwant Singh Mann also congratulated Vice Chancellor and University fraternity for the winning of MAKA Trophy. Gurmit Singh Meet Hayer, S. Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, Dr. Inderbir Singh Nijjer, S. Harbhajan Singh ETO, all Cabinet Minister, S. Satpal Singh Sokhi, member of Senate of the University, members of Syndicate and Senate of University and other eminent personalities also congratulated Vice Chancellor and University for this achievement.

The trophy was kept in flower decorated jeep and some players who won medals in international sports events were riding on open jeep moved in form of contingent led by sports department of the University started from main gate to major departments of the University and finished at Sri Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan Auditorium. During this student players and their coaches expressed their joy by dancing bhanga on the beat of drums.

## Union Govt directs FM radio channels not to play songs glorifying drugs

NEWDELHI: The Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry has issued an advisory cautioning FM radio channels against playing songs which glorifies drugs and gun culture.

The ministry has said that strict action will be taken against those who violate the advisory.

The ministry has learnt that some FM radio channels are playing songs which glorify liquor, drugs, weapons, gangsters and gun culture.

Broadcast of such songs or content is in violation of the All India Radio Programme Code and the Central government has the right to impose restrictions up to suspension of permission and prohibition of broadcast, the ministry has asserted.

The ministry has directed the channels to strictly follow the prescribed terms and conditions and do not broadcast any



content promoting anti-social activities including alcohol, drugs, gun culture.

According to the ministry, the High Court of Punjab and Haryana has taken judicial note that such material affects children of impressionable age. Apart from this, it gives rise to the culture of gangsters.

In the advisory, the ministry has asked the radio channels to strictly adhere to the terms and conditions prescribed in grant of permission agreement (GOPA) and migration grant of permission agreement (MGOPA) and not air any content in violation thereof.

## NIA arrested 2 armed Kala Rana gang members in Yamunanagar

SATISH HANDA

Spreading gangster's network in Haryana worries residents as well as government in the state. National Investigation Agency (NIA) in a drive against gangsters, smugglers and hard core criminals conducted as many as 13 raids in four states including Haryana in past few days. Among those raided included Kushal Choudhary, Vishal Maan, Binny Gurjar and Ravi Rajgarh. Dreaded gangster Lawrence Bishnoi was kept in police custody for interrogation for three days. NIA on the basis of gathered information raided two members of Kala Rana gang involved in carrying arms illegally identified as Simranjit Singh alias Bawa and Shubham accompanied by CIA Staff Yamunanagar police and Yamunanagar police force on Monday early morning hours



which continued for over four hours. Both were produced before a court and sent to four days police remand, a police spokesperson said. Rakesh Kumar said the duo was nabbed after they made an unsuccessful robbery attempt on a police team while patrolling in the area.

According to information, CIA-2 team of Yamunanagar Police had arrested two persons allegedly having links with the Kala Rana gang and

gun along with two cartridges from Shubham. During preliminary investigation it was found that they were affiliated to Kala Rana gang and Simranjeet a criminal was working on the tips of Kala Rana's brother Surya Pratap alias Nani presently lodged inside Ambala Central jail.

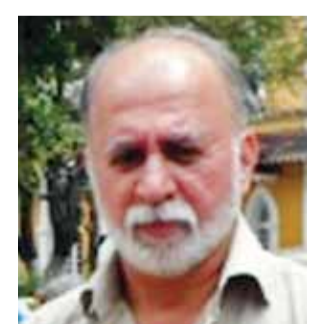
The cop further said that during a search raid at Kala Rana's house in Lakshmi Garden jointly with National Investigating Agency (NIA) and Special Task Force (STF) of the Haryana Police on Monday seized a packed parcel of mobile phones that was supposed to be sent to a jail along with five pistols, one short gun, and several active cartridges. Information also reveals that Ambala Central Jail security staff had recovered nearly four dozen mobile phones and its accessories in four weeks.

## Sexual assault case: SC refuses to entertain Tarun Tejpal plea for in-camera hearing

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea by former editor of Tehelka magazine Tarun Tejpal seeking in-camera hearing on Goa government's appeal against his acquittal in a sexual assault case.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising justice P.S. Narasimha told Tejpal's counsel that he cannot say that hearing on an appeal should be held in-camera. Chief Justice Chandrachud said: "The accused has no right to demand it should be in-camera." Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Tejpal, said there are privacy rights and also the reputation of his client is also involved here. He further added that Tejpal was acquitted and allegations were prima facie false, and also the judge said it will be an online hearing.

"It will be a media trial," said Sibal, adding that the identity of the victim will also be revealed. Senior advocate Amit Desai, also appearing for Tejpal, pressed that proceedings in the appeal should be held in-camera. However, the bench said, can somebody who is an accused assert that the trial should be in-camera when the victim does not demand so?



Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Goa government, said the judge had revealed the name of the victim in the judgment and it is an encyclopaedia as to how the victim should behave in such situations. The top court said that let the concerned judge take a call on the conduct of the proceedings and asked Tejpal's counsel to make a submission before the concerned court. After hearing arguments, the bench refused to interfere with Bombay High Court at Goa which rejected his application for in-camera hearing of the appeal filed by the Goa government against his acquittal in a sexual assault case. Tejpal had moved the apex court challenging the high court order.

## SC-govt tussle continues over Collegium system

The Centre appears determined to turn its conflict with the judiciary over judicial appointments into something unseemly. The sources of friction are two-fold. One is the daily diatribe by Law Minister Kiren Rijju, who appears to have been given an assignment to target the Collegium system with trenchant criticism of its known, but uncorrected flaws, and top it with unwarranted remarks such as asking the Court not to send any files, if it felt it was sitting on them. The second is the Government's strategy of delaying appointments recommended by the Collegium as a counterblast to its loss of primacy in the matter. It is not difficult to bring relations between the judiciary and the executive back on track, if only the two sides are willing to address each other's concerns. The Court has a valid point when it says the uncertainty over the fate of a recommendation for appointment is resulting in eminent lawyers withdrawing their consent or declining invitations to join the Bench. There are instances of the Government ignoring even two or three reiterations, and of the absence of any communication of objections or reservations, if any, that the Government may have about particular candidates. If the current trend continues, it is not difficult to conceive of a situation in which a major verdict that may go against the Government is portrayed by the political leadership as stemming from the hostility of the judiciary and not one on merits. One way of stopping further deterioration is for the Government to clear pending recommendations. Another way is for the judiciary to begin or agree to a process of reforms in the way the Collegium functions, especially with regard to expanding the range of consultation and widen the zone of consideration so that the superior judiciary, and those it consults, are more diverse and representative of all sections.

### LETTERBOX

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

The heaviest burdens that we carry are the thoughts in our head.



## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

RNI NO. CHAENG/2001/03736

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY SWINDER BAJWA ON BEHALF OF FW MEDIA

PRINTED AT JAGJIT PUBLISHING CO. PVT LTD D-12, INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-1, MOHALI, PUNJAB 160059

PRINTER & PUBLISHER SWINDER BAJWA OWNER\* : FW MEDIA

PUBLISHED AT: PLOT NO-F5, IT PARK, CHANDIGARH CHANDIGARH 160101; PHONE: 9888040061

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(\*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN CALLS FOR LIBERALIZATION OF LAWS THAT RESTRICT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FOR JOURNALISTS

## The woes of Indian journalism

The first week of November includes a day selected by the United Nations as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. It sadly passed unobserved in India.

The comparative advantages of a liberal society are transparency and equal opportunity in society and economy, which drive innovation, productivity and scientific progress. One might speculate that in ancient times, our ancestors may have enjoyed sufficient freedom to speak and criticise, because without this, there could not have been such striking advances in philosophy, grammar, law, mathematics, astronomy and medicine which characterise our civilisational legacy.

Though the Indian Constitution is liberal, its interpretation through legislation has been anything but; harsh omnibus laws infringe and limit liberties, violate human rights and lead to degeneracy among administration and law enforcement agents. There has probably never been a more adversarial atmosphere to journalism in India than what now exists; there is disquiet not only among the media that had a creditable record of helping to enforce accountability among officeholders, but also among activists and NGOs deemed objectionable by elected authority and its partisan instruments. Some years ago, a citizen was arrested for sedition in Uttar Pradesh five years after he allegedly posted a morphed photo of the Prime Minister; a chemistry professor in West Bengal was arrested because he uploaded a caricature of the Chief Minister on a social network. Now, from Aakar Patel being refused permission to leave the country to Sanna Mattoo facing similar and repeated obstructions to receive an international award, to the closure of Amnesty and funding curbs on Oxfam in India, as Booker Prize winner Shehan Karunatilaka wrote, "Complete freedom is a luxury for South Asian writers," and that in India a publisher could be jailed for something that offends.



The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA, and multiple other laws can be used by governing circles and their adherents to embrace anyone in interminable coils of police FIRs, with body and soul-destroying judicial procedures, constituting a threat to free expression. As Rajeev Dhavan has written, "A central characteristic of Indian press law has been direct governmental control." Our political leaders crave positive coverage, and thus establishment hostility to perceived negative reporting is a fact of life in India.

### Too many fetters

The media in India enjoys no immunity. Critics of the media confuse their notions of good journalism with what is legally permissible, which creates the problem. Journalists are subject to criminal and civil laws, such as defamation, contempt of court, sacrilege, contempt of Parliament and the Official Secrets Act, which places them in considerable jeopardy. There is a need to roll back such legislation and stop its perverse implementation, which is taken to absurd extremes. The answer is to liberalise the laws that restrict freedom of expression, and especially the criminal aspects in the statute book that affect the journalist profession.

A well-known columnist in Delhi once experimented with a set of daily newspapers for their advertisement content and concluded that four of the eight he studied were totally dependent on advertisement revenue from Union or State governments or public sector, while only three had a healthy allotment of private sector advertisement. This anecdotal example reflects the media's basic vulnerability: over-dependence on income flows from the state or state-run corporates which makes them accommodative to the paymasters' concerns. And what is true for print is more so for electronic media where operating costs can be higher.

The early decades after Independence were no golden age, with overt and covert inroads into press freedom, censorship, curbs on advertising space, restrictions on newsprint, attempts to regulate salaries, and the excesses of the Emergency. But there were also stinging criticisms of the government — on Bofors, anti-Sikh riots, Commonwealth Games kickbacks, 2G scam, and the Jan Lokpal movement. Leaders were not immune from criticism. There were clashes before the bench, and thanks to a plucky press and conscientious courts, freedoms that constitute the basis of liberties

we now invoke were largely safeguarded, and democratic norms were consolidated. Today, by contrast, the government's excesses and misdemeanours are defended in convoluted ways to deflect blame on the opposition or previous administrations. The judiciary frequently appears excessively compliant, giving rise to doubts about its independence as the ultimate arbiter of the laws of the land. The ideals of earlier times, whatever their defects, are now being discredited and, under the pretext of majority mandate, safeguard institutions are being dismantled. Indian diversity is being mutated into a more unitary form, and ethno-religious polarisation is hardening. The climate of insecurity and fear is having adverse effects on the democratic spirit and the quality of public debate.

The Hathras 2020 events are an example of monstrous illegitimacy. To disallow a family a last glimpse of its daughter, threaten them with consequences if they spoke up, ban media interaction and cordon off the village borders on the unimaginable. While no perpetrators have been punished, journalist Siddique Kappan spent two years in jail just for being on site and is still imprisoned to answer assorted charges despite being granted bail by the Supreme Court.

I cannot concur with any proposition that the media should play the role of parliamentary opposition, because the media should be free to criticise both the government and the opposition — that is the basis of a free press. I also cannot agree with the proposition that hate speech can best be countered by more speech because we know the depths to which most electronic and social media have sunk. By assuming shrill activism, many sections of the media have enhanced the confrontational environment in our society. The media should not act as investigator, law court and court of appeal — but nor should agencies of the executive.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary. Views are personal



ANWAR SADAT LOOKS INTO PAYOUT ASPECT THAT INVOLVES ESTABLISHING RELATIONS BETWEEN INJURER AND VICTIM

## Pitfalls and promises involving loss and damage decisions

A major takeaway from COP27 in Egypt, as far as loss and damage (L and D) is concerned, is the decision relating to new funding arrangements focusing on L and D — those particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

The decision includes a transitional committee to prepare elements relating to the operationalisation of the new funding arrangements to be adopted at COP28. The decision restores the faith of countries, especially those vulnerable, in the process of multilateralism. The committee will aim to identify and expand sources of funding, which demonstrates a lack of clarity on the source of funding (adequate and predictable) accruing to the new fund only. There is a question mark over the new L and D fund with non-compliance by developed countries as far as climate finance commitment (mobilising \$100 billion per year by 2020) is concerned. The new funding arrangements will complement the existing arrangements and include sources, funds, processes and initiatives under and outside the Convention and the Paris Agreement, which would assist in mobilising new and additional resources. This dilutes the consistent demand raised at COP27, and outside of it by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) to set up a dedicated loss and damage response fund, which would be on top of existing climate finance commitments.

The decision again recognises the mitigation-centric nature of the history of climate change negotiations to be suiting the agenda of developed countries. It says restricting the global average temperature rise to below 1.5° Celsius is essential to limiting future loss and damage.



The mitigation-centric nature of the negotiation can be traced to Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992. Adaptation as the second pillar of the climate change regime is possible once 'stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations is achieved at a level that prevents dangerous human-induced interference with the climate system and allows ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change'. L and D could gain traction after two decades of climate change negotiations at Paris 2015. Article 8(1) only makes the party recognise the importance of averting, minimising, and addressing L and D associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events.

### Past, present and the future

In the entire climate change negotiations, the developed countries have consistently opposed being made liable for climate-change related adverse effects. The basis for their contribution to various funds so far is the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and

respective capabilities (CBDR). For global environmental degradation, they only acknowledge their responsibility in view of the pressures their societies place on the environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command, according to research papers.

The compensation aspect involves a serious legal hurdle of establishing causal relations between the injurer and the victim since the adverse effects of climate change occur substantially later than the greenhouse gas emissions that cause them. During the negotiation process for the UNFCCC in 1991, AOSIS, which is at the forefront for the cause of loss and damage, "unsuccessfully" tried to include the establishment of an international insurance pool as a 'collective loss-sharing scheme to compensate the most vulnerable small island and low-lying coastal developing countries for loss and damage arising from sea level rise'. Funding was to come from assessed contributions according to a 'formula modelled on the 1963 Brussels Convention Supplementary to the Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy, with 50% based on parties' relative contributions to emissions in the year prior to a contribution year, and 50% based on parties' relative shares of gross national product in the year prior to the contribution year'.

### Taxing fossil fuel firms

The realisation of the 1991 proposal would have addressed at least who pays for the L and D. But the concept of an international insurance pool requires more research and deliberation amongst major emitters in developed and developing countries. In Egypt, AOSIS, instead of in-

sisting on an international insurance pool, demanded a dedicated L and D Response Fund. It wanted funding from governments on a grant basis, which would be on top of existing climate finance commitments. The fund would also draw upon other potential sources, which include, as UN Chief Antonio Guterres advocates, a windfall tax on oil and gas companies' profits. The idea of taxing fossil fuel oil and gas companies needs more research as it indicates an alternative to the nation-state approach of climate change negotiations. The idea highlights that 'substantial emissions have come from fossil fuels sourced from non-Annex I countries such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Iran, Brazil, and Mexico, and from nations that are not large-scale emitters, such as Nigeria, Venezuela, Kuwait, Angola, Malaysia, and Libya'.

The German-backed "Global Shield Scheme against climate risks", is a part of COP27's decision. The Shield is aimed at increasing pre-arranged finance to be disbursed before or just after disasters happen. The AOSIS favours a dedicated L and D response fund which would help disburse funding from different propositions, including the Global Shield, and avoid a piecemeal approach. The other probable avenues to address L and D are litigation, but the issues of causation, attribution and standing appear to be potential obstacles, at the domestic and international levels.

Anwar Sadat is Senior Assistant Professor, International Law, specialising in Environmental Law, at the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. Views are personal.

### BOOKS: REVIEW

## Assam resisted repeated invasions for 5 centuries

Assam is celebrating the year-long varied events on the occasion of the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit Borphukan, the great Ahom General who had inflicted the most crushing defeat on the mighty Mughals, a new book throws light on how Assam had fought relentlessly against Muslim invasions for close to five decades.

While the Assam government has made it a point to take the Lachit Borphukan story across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the celebration in New Delhi.

Lachit Borphukan, it may be recalled, had defeated the Mughal army in the Battle of Saraighat, one that took place on the Brah-

maputra in March 1671. Such was the defeat that it also signalled the beginning of the Mughal empire's gradual collapse.

"Unfortunately, the Lachit Borphukan story has largely remained untold to the rest of India. His 400th birth anniversary thus has come as an opportunity to project the heroism of the great Assamese General at both the national as well as international level," said veteran journalist and author Samudra Gupta Kashyap, who has recently published a book titled, "Assam's Great Heroes Who Fought the Muslim Invasions".

He told IANS: "It is a matter of regret that while kings and generals of other parts of the sub-continent have found place in

**'The Lachit Borphukan story has largely remained untold to the rest of India. His 400th birth anniversary thus has come as an opportunity to project the heroism of the great Assamese General at both the national as well as international level'**

Indian history, repeated invasion of Assam for nearly five centuries, beginning with Bakhtiyar Khilji of the Slave Dynasty in 1206 A.D., have somehow not found favour with our historians."

In his book, Kashyap has given in detail how Qutb ud-Din Aibak,



Assam's Great Heroes Who Fought the Muslim Invasions By Samudra Gupta Kashyap Yet not published

soon after taking over the reins of Delhi, had dispatched Ikhtiyar al-Din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji on a mission to central and eastern India.

"After conquering Bihar and Bengal in 1203 A.D., Khilji headed for Assam. But such was the counter-attack by the Kamrup (Assam) king Visvasundardeva that Bakhtiyar Khilji somehow managed to get back to Bengal after his entire army was literally wiped out on the banks of the Brahmaputra," Kashyap in his book said.

The Kamrup king's victory over

the first-ever Muslim invaders of Assam has been recorded in a rock inscription at Kanai-Borosi-bowa near Guwahati.

"Since then, there were a series of invasions of Assam by different Muslim rulers of Delhi and Bengal. While the invaders were successful in a few of those attempts, Assam however had managed to resist the invasions in most cases, with the kings of Kamrup as well as a number of local chieftains fighting valiantly with traditional weapons against the better-equipped invaders."

The book describes the heroism of kings and chiefs like Indra Narayan, Chakradhwaj, Nilambar, Chilarai, Indrapratap Narayan, Parikshit, Sonatan, Balarayan, Madhusudan, Parasuram, Jadu Nayak, Susengpha, Momai-Tamuli Barbarua, Tangchu Sandikui and several others who had resisted the invaders despite the latter having better fire-power.

# NWTN UAE Electric Vehicle Assembly Facility to Be Completed in Q4

**DUBAI:** NWTN Inc. (Nasdaq: NWTN), an eco-conscious mobility technology company bringing passenger-centric green premium mobility solutions to the world, today announced that construction on its UAE electric vehicle assembly facility in Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KEZAD) is on schedule and will be completed in Q4 of 2022.

NWTN signed a lease agreement with KEZAD Group for the facility, which measures approximately 270,000 square feet, in September of 2022 to establish NWTN's first EV assembly facility in Abu Dhabi. The facility will serve the growing demand for sustainable transport options in the Middle East and beyond, and will play an important role in promoting new energy mobility and sustainable energy transformation in the UAE and the Middle East.

Founded in 2016, NWTN is

headquartered in the UAE and aims to integrate avant-garde design, life-style personalization, IoT connectivity, autonomous driving technology, and green energy eco-systems to its future mobility solutions.

NWTN plans to initially operate the facility for manufacturing, research and development, vehicle testing and logistics area. Since obtaining approval from KEZAD Group for the required modifications and the industrial license in October, NWTN has completed 80% of the equipment installation and tooling in the facility, including the robots used for the vision system and advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) calibration. The full semi-knock down (SKD) management and operations team will be in place by the middle of December, 2022, and the facility will be fully operational by the end of this year. The annual capacity of



the facility will initially be 5,000-10,000 units for the semi-knock down electric vehicles to meet rapidly increasing demand for new energy vehicles and sustainable transport options in the UAE and in other nations in the Middle East and North Africa. In phase two, NWTN will introduce several new electric vehicle models and expand

capacity to 50,000 units annually with an expected start date in the first quarter of 2024.

The development of NWTN's EV assembly facility has gained strong support from the UAE government and agencies, and is fully aligned with UAE's "Net Zero 2050" strategic initiative that plans to achieve net-zero emission by 2050 with investments

of over 600 billion Dirhams (US\$160 billion) in renewable energy and sustainable technologies. The completion and future expansion of NWTN's facility will kick off the long-term development of the local electric vehicle research and development, manufacturing, supply chain establishment, and further into innovations in energy generation, usage, transportation and storage in the region. With increasing accessibility and affordability of sustainable energy supported by infrastructures such as NWTN's KEZAD plant, the UAE's transformation towards a sustainable and intelligent future will be significantly accelerated.

NWTN recently completed a merger with East Stone Acquisition Corporation, a publicly traded special purpose acquisition company (SPAC), and was listed on the NASDAQ exchange on November 14.

# Anadron Systems to set up its R&D centre in Odisha

FW DESK



The centre will focus on providing end-to-end drone solutions for the domestic armed forces and export requirements.

Bhubaneswar (Odisha): Anadron Systems, an Odisha-based target drone manufacturer has announced to set up a state-of-the-art R&D centre for sophisticated drones in Odisha. The statement was made today by the Managing Director, Anant Bhalotia, during the 'Odisha Make-In-India Conclave 2022'.

The said plant will be up and running within six months to provide drone solutions for the domestic armed forces and export requirements. Simultaneously, the new set-up will incur revenue for the state as well as will offer diverse employment opportunities to the people of Odisha, thereby supporting the very pillars of the 'Make-in-India' initiative.

Commenting on the objective behind the announcement, Bha-

lotiasaid, "With this new plant, our effort is to become the leading partner to the defence forces in its test and evaluation of sophisticated weapons and systems, and to maximise indigenization. We see a huge potential in developing other systems such as surface and land targets at this centre."

The new R&D centre will have capabilities to develop futuristic target drones such as subsonic and supersonic targets. Its primary objective will be to become an all-encompassing destination for indigenous drones that will meet national

requirements, thereby reducing the import burden on the Indian economy. The news comes as a strategic expansion move right after the company bagged the contract to supply 125 Manoeuvrable Expendable Aerial Targets (MEAT) and associated equipment worth Rs 96 crore to the Indian Army and Air Force, which happened earlier this year.

Bhalotia also lauded the Government of Odisha for encouraging entrepreneurs and promoting the indigenous defence manufacturing sector in their state.

## IndiGo in collaboration with DGCA launch 'Digital e-logbook' for pilots



**NEW DELHI:** IndiGo airline in collaboration with aviation regulator DGCA launched 'Digital e-logbook' for the pilots. The e-logbook will provide direct flight data transfer service to pilots from IndiGo systems to eGCA logbooks from Thursday.

Owing to this automated process, the flying hours entered in eGCA e-logbook will have consistency of data and format for all the stakeholders, which will increase safety and efficiency in operations. This will also offer real time availability of flying hours data for pilots in compliance with rule 67A of Aircraft rules, and enable data accuracy and timely submission of issuance, renewals, and endorsement of licenses by removal of multilayer data validation. This process will allow pilots to devote more time towards their skill enhancement and improve quality of life by freeing up time required for work manual log filling.

Captain Ashim Mitra, Senior Vice President, Flight Operations, IndiGo said, "We are proud to partner with DGCA to become the country's first airline to introduce Digital e-logbook, taking a leap towards digitalisation in Indian aviation. This initiative is the beginning of a new era to enhance operational efficiency and easing of complexity and workload for pilots. This step is in line with the Government's vision of 'e-Governance and Digital India' and our philosophy of providing a hassle-free experience to our pilots."

"I would like to extend a big thanks to the training team which under the guidance and leadership of Capt Rajiv Singh has been working relentlessly. I would also like to thank DGCA, the team of eGCA, and TCS for turning this into a reality and to all the leadership pilots and e-logbook verifiers for their immense contribution."

With its fleet of over 280 aircraft, the IndiGo airline is operating over 1,600 daily flights and connecting 75 domestic destinations and 26 international destinations.

## Six airbags, BS VI stage 2 may affect demand in lower end of car segment: Maruti Suzuki



**NEW DELHI:** The regulatory changes in car safety norms and its impact on the production cost and sales price may impact the demand in the lower end of the segment next year, but the overall market size is also expected to grow, said a senior official of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.

He also said that in the near term, increased interest rates are getting reflected in retail finance and one has to keep a watch on the interest rates as 80 per cent of car purchases are under finance. Further, the interest rate hike is also affecting the inventory financing. The fitting of six airbags in some models and the implementation of BS VI stage 2 norms next year may have an impact on demand in the lower end of that vehicle segment, but the overall industry is expected to touch 4.1 million units, said Shashank Srivastava, Senior Executive Director, Marketing & Sales, Maruti India.

He said the industry is expected to close the current year with a total volume of about 3.8 million units.

Queried about the downward trend in commodity

prices and the rationale for hiking prices, Srivastava said the prices are still high as compared to the rates two years ago. He said the manufacturers are not able to pass on the cost increase fully and Maruti Suzuki is watching the price situation.

According to Srivastava, during December, the companies log highest sales with buyers trying to avoid paying a higher sum later as the manufacturers will hike their prices at the start of the year.

Srivastava also said the company will moderate the production as buyers may not want to buy a 2022 model in 2023. He said the stock build-up for the industry as a whole is only about 20-22 days and hence production will not be greatly affected in December 2022.

On the sales trend in cars powered by compressed natural gas (CNG), Srivastava said the increase in fuel prices has slightly impacted the demand for such models.

However, the cost of ownership of CNG model is far less than that of diesel or petrol powered cars, he said, adding that Maruti Suzuki has added more CNG models to its portfolio.

## Biocon Biologics completes Acquisition of Viatrix' Global Biosimilars Business

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Biocon Biologics Ltd., a subsidiary of Biocon Ltd. announced Tuesday that it has successfully completed its multi-billion-dollar (USD) acquisition of the global biosimilars business of its partner Viatrix Inc. (NASDAQ: VTRS), The Bengaluru-based company said in a statement.

Biocon Biologics and Viatrix have obtained all applicable approvals from key global regulators including the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, the Competition Commission of India and the Reserve Bank of India, and its investors. The acquisition provides biocon biologics with direct commercial capabilities and supporting infrastructure in the advanced markets and several key emerging markets, also bringing it closer to patients, customers, and payors. An 'end to end' integrated biosimilars organization, biocon biologics



aspires to expand access and enhanced the quality of experience of customers, partners and patients.

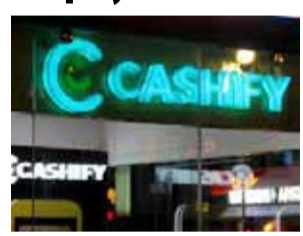
Kiran Masumdar-Shaw, Executive Chairperson, Biocon Biologics said in her statement "The completion of the acquisition of Viatrix' global biosimilars business is a historic inflection point in Biocon Biologics' journey of becoming a world leading, fully integrated biosimilars enterprise, commit-

ted to serve patients' needs for affordable access to essential biomedecines. It will fast-track our direct entry into several advanced and emerging markets. This acquisition builds on our decade-long partnership and will enable us to realize our vision of addressing global health inequities. I believe this move will strengthen our value proposition to deliver long-term value to Biocon and Biocon Biologics Shareholders".

## Cashify to open 250 physical stores by March 2023

**NEW DELHI:** Re-commerce marketplace Cashify announced to launch 250 physical stores by March next year, with an aim to reach 120% annual growth. The company aims to expand to 30 more cities by the end of this year, reading to customers in over 100 cities.

After opening its 100th store in March, Cashify registered 70 per cent growth within a short span of eight months. Currently, the company has 170 stores in over 77 cities. "In the last couple of years, we have witnessed multifold growth in terms of expansion, consumer reach and marketing. We are at the forefront of the organised



refurbished sector in India," said Alok Shukla, VP-Retail at Cashify. The company claims a footprint of around 2 lakh people per month for services such as phone repair, purchasing refurbished phones, selling old phones and buying accessories for their devices.

"With the company's 40 per cent of business being driven

through online channels and 60 per cent focusing on their offline retail stores, we will soon convert their stores into exclusive experience centres," said Shukla. Cashify started with a team of three in 2013 and has expanded to more than 15,000 serviceable locations in a span of nine years, with over 40 lakh customers to date.

In June, the company secured \$90 million in its Series E funding from NewQuest Capital Partners and Prosus.

Apart from smartphone buyback, Cashify has become a smartphone-centric brand with comprehensive mobile care at users' doorsteps.

## Ola Electric opens 14 new experience centres in India, plans 200 by year-end

**NEW DELHI:** Ola Electric announced that it has expanded its direct-to-consumer (D2C) footprint by opening 14 new experience centres across 11 cities in the country.

The company opened 3 centres in Bengaluru, two in Pune and one each in Ahmedabad, Dehradun, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kota, Bhopal, Nagpur, Ranchi and Vadodara, it said in a statement. Ola Electric now



has more than 50 experience centres and aims to open 200 by the end of this year.

The centres allow electric vehicles (EV) enthusiasts to

experience its EV technology and also enable customers to take test rides of the S1 and S1 Pro.

"EV enthusiasts are loving the holistic experience that Ola Experience Centres offer by serving as go-to places for them to touch and feel our products, clarify their queries, and avail support both before and after purchase," said Anshul Khandelwal, chief marketing officer, Ola Electric.

"We are rapidly increasing our offline footprint across the country with an aim to open a total of 200 of these centres by the end of this year," Khandelwal added.

With the help of its experience centres and recent expansion of physical contact points through its robust D2C model, Ola has already organised more than 1 lakh customer test rides across India.

# Wipro Lighting partners Aura Air to help enterprises breathe clean indoor air

**NEW DELHI:** Wipro Lighting on Wednesday announced a partnership with Israel-based Aura Air to gain exclusive access to all its enterprise offerings like indoor air quality solutions for the India market.

To begin with, the enterprise product offered to Indian customers will be high-quality internet of things (IoT) air purifiers, a cloud-based dashboard and a suite of mobile apps to monitor as well as improve air quality in line with global standards.

"We are aiming to grow

beyond lighting and seating solutions. We are striving to become the one-stop solution for all our B2B clients in the evolving landscape of interior and design today focused on employee health and wellness," said Anuj Dhir, VP and Business Head for Commercial and Institutional Business, Wipro Lighting.

Founded in 2018, Aura Air is now purifying the air in homes, hospitals, schools, businesses, hotels, restaurants, buses, and nursing homes in several 50 countries around



the world. Aura is headquartered in Tel Aviv with global offices in the US and India.

"Aura Air technology is extremely successful in filtering

viruses of all kinds, and this has been validated by NABL accredited laboratories and various studies across India," said Aviad Shnaiderman, Global CEO of Aura Air.

Through Wipro Lighting, Aura Air will be making its products available to "enterprise customers across India to monitor and clean the air they breathe", he added.

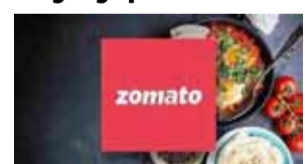
Aura Air purifiers detect, capture, and kill 99.9 per cent of viruses, bacteria, mold and can remove airborne particles as small as 0.3 microns, in-

cluding allergens and viruses.

These IoT-enabled devices connect to a mobile phone and deliver real-time updates on the overall indoor and outdoor Air Quality Index (AQI) based on VOC (volatile organic compounds), CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide), CO (carbon monoxide), and fine particulate matter levels.

Aura Air entered the Indian market in mid-2021 and since then, it has witnessed positive traction in the indoor air quality improvement space in the country.

## Zomato now available in Hindi, delivering 150K orders via regional language platforms



**NEW DELHI:** Online food delivery platform Zomato announced it is now available in Hindi and other widely spoken regional languages including Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu.

The company said it is delivering more than 150,000 orders a month via the regional language versions of the Zomato app.

"Hindi and Tamil contribute to 54 per cent and 11 per cent of these orders currently, respectively, and the rest are growing rapidly," said the company.

Zomato currently delivers food in more than 1,000 cities.

"While we are grateful for the positive sentiment, we recognise that we're just getting started. We will continuously work on improving the quality of our regional app to make them more accurate and contextual," said the food aggregator.

## Zoomcar appoints Naveen Gupta as Country Head for India



**NEW DELHI:** Domestic car sharing marketplace Zoomcar announced the appointment of Naveen Gupta as Vice President and Country Head for India.

In his new role, Gupta will be responsible for all aspects of growth, operations and customer experience for the company in the country.

"His diverse skillsets and seasoned leadership will play an instrumental role in continuing to scale the India business," said Greg Moran, CEO and Co-Founder of Zoomcar.

In February this year, Bengaluru-headquartered Zoomcar had elevated Nirmal NR as the CEO for India market.

Gupta previously worked with Hero MotoCorp, redBus, Swiggy and Cars24.

"At Zoomcar, we're currently sitting on the cusp of a dramatic transformation within personal mobility, and I look forward to help the compa-

ny reach new heights," said Gupta.

In February this year, the company said it expects to grow the platform to over 50,000 cars and 100 cities this year.

At present, Zoomcar offers individual vehicle owners a joining bonus of Rs 10,000 along with additional incentives tied to high quality host ratings on the platform.

A Zoomcar also offers enhanced incentives for the host's initial time on the marketplace.

In 2020, it launched Zoomcar Mobility Services, the Company's enterprise SaaS based mobility solution to vehicle OEMs and insurance companies.

In November 2021, Zoomcar completed a \$92 million private placement led by New York City-based SternAegis Ventures, along with participation from other investors.

# RBI's Monetary Policy Committee may hike policy rate by 25-35 bps: Experts

**MUMBAI:** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may hike the repo rate between 25-35 basis points (bps) in its upcoming meeting, said experts.

"We expect a 35 bps rate hike in the upcoming meeting. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is likely to moderate further in the coming months and slip below six per cent by the end of the fiscal year," Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CARE Ratings told to media.

She also said the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has also fallen sharply from 16 per cent in May/June to around eight per cent.

"The fall in global commodity prices comes as a big relief. However, the concern is that core inflation in India still remains high above six per cent. Food inflation and specifically cereal inflation is also high,"



Sinha pointed out.

This, in turn, will put upward pressure on household inflationary expectations which is already at a high of around 10 per cent. Hence, while there is some reprieve on the inflation front, RBI would remain vigilant, she added.

There are chances of the US Federal Reserve also moderating its pace of rate hike and that would also provide

some breathing space to other Central banks, including RBI.

On the growth front, high frequency economic indicators like auto sales, GST collection, e-way bill, PMI continue to indicate healthy recovery. However, some consumption indicators like IIP consumer durables and non-durables remain weak, Sinha said.

Moreover, external demand

is weakening as the global economy slows down.

"RBI would be very cautious so as to not hike more than required as real interest rate enters the positive territory. The Central Bank would also like to give more time to see the effectiveness of the monetary policy tightening so far," she added.

Expecting a rate hike of 25-35 bps as inflation is well above six per cent, Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda told IANS: "Inflation unlikely to come below six per cent till March."

"Having orchestrated a little more than two-and-a-half per cent move in the overnight operative rate through policy rate hikes and liquidity unwind measures, monetary policy committee (MPC) can now afford to embark on baby steps from here on," said Radhavi Deshpande, Joint President & Chief Investment Officer,

Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company.

Incremental momentum in inflation is showing signs of moderation owing to falling commodity prices amidst global growth slowdown.

"Hence MPC focus can shift to assessing the lagged impact of past policy actions. We expect a 25 bps in the coming policy and a data dependent stance going forward," Deshpande said.

According to Churchill Bhatt, Executive Vice President & Debt Fund Manager, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company there are early signs of inflation peaking as a result of sharp monetary tightening witnessed in the recent past.

Since monetary policy acts with a lag, the MPC may want to take a bit of a breather in its fight against inflation to assess the impact of past policy actions, Bhatt said.

# After FTX, crypto finance firm BlockFi files for bankruptcy

**NEW DELHI:** Crypto finance firm BlockFi has filed for bankruptcy to help "stabilise its business," as investors are yet to recover from the fall of crypto exchange FTX.

BlockFi and eight of its affiliates has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy Code in the US Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Jersey to provide the company with the "opportunity to consummate a comprehensive restructuring transaction that maximises value for all clients and other stakeholders".

"With the collapse of FTX, the BlockFi management team and board of directors immediately took action to protect clients and the Company," said Mark Renzi of Berkeley Research Group, the Company's financial advisor.

"From inception, BlockFi has worked to positively shape the cryptocurrency industry and advance the sector. BlockFi

looks forward to a transparent process that achieves the best outcome for all clients and other stakeholders," Renzi said in a statement. The company said that platform activity continues to be paused at this time.

BlockFi has \$256.9 million in cash on hand, which, it said, is expected to provide sufficient liquidity to support certain operations during the restructuring process. According to a report from Decrypt, the company is also planning to lay off "a large portion" of its workers.

Earlier this month, FTX filed for bankruptcy due to "an extreme amount of coordinated pressure", which its CEO Sam Bankman-Fried said he agreed to "reluctantly".

Bankman-Fried "froze up in the face of pressure" as his company collapsed, bringing its collateral down to \$8 billion from \$60 billion.

# WhatsApp denies 487 million users' data leak for sale



**NEW DELHI:** Meta-owned WhatsApp on Monday denied that phone numbers of 487 million users have been stolen and put on sale on a «well-known» hacking community forum.

Cybernews first reported that the dataset allegedly contains WhatsApp user data from 84 countries and phone numbers of over 32 million users from the US, 11 million from the UK, and 10 million from Russia.

«The claim written on Cybernews is based on unsubstantiated screenshots. There is no evidence of a «data leak» from WhatsApp, «a company spokesperson told to media.

The purported list is a set of phone numbers and not «WhatsApp user information».

According to the report, the hacker claimed to have a significant number of phone numbers belonging to the citizens of Egypt (45 million), Italy (35 million), Saudi Arabia (29 million), France (20 million), and Turkey (20 million).

The hacker was selling the US dataset for \$7,000, the UK for \$2,500, and Germany for \$2,000, according to the report.

Cybernews researchers were able to get in touch with the hacker. Upon investigation, the researchers found that all of them were active WhatsApp users.

However, the hacker did not specify how they obtained the data, suggesting they «used their strategy, «and that all the numbers belong to WhatsApp users, said the report.

This database can be used by hackers for spamming, phishing attempts, identity theft, and other cybercriminal activities, the report had said.

# Railways Revenue Earnings up by 76% in Passenger Segment



**FW DESK New Delhi**

The total approximate earnings of Indian Railways on originating basis during April to November 2022 is Rs. 43324 Crore, registering an increase of 76 % in comparison to Rs. 24631 Crore achieved during the same period last year.

In reserved passenger segment, the total approximate numbers of passengers booked during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 is 5365 Lakhs as compared to 4860 Lakhs during the same period last year, showing an increase of 10%. The revenue generated from reserved passenger segment during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 is 34303 Crores as compared to 22904 Crores during the same period last year, showing an increase of 50%. In Unreserved passenger segment, the total approximate numbers of passengers booked during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 is 35273 Lakhs as compared to 13813 Lakhs during the same period last year, showing an increase of 155%.

# ASSOCHAM urges RBI to begin halt in rate hikes; provide concessional loans to EVs

**NEW DELHI:** Ahead of the bi-monthly meeting of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, the ASSOCHAM has impressed upon the MPC to moderate interest rate hikes, in order to ensure that the rising cost of borrowing does not have an adverse and disproportionate impact on nascent economic recovery.

At most the new rate hike should not exceed the 25-35 basis points band, the ASSOCHAM said in its letter to the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, along with highlighting other issues before the industry. One of the key recommendations advanced by the ASSOCHAM to the RBI is to treat retail loans for purchase of Electric Vehicles (EVs) as priority sector lending, with a concessional rate of interest. "Retail advances against Electric Vehicles may be included under Priority Sector Lending. This may help in catalysing the India EV story", ASSOCHAM Secretary General Mr Deepak Sood said in a presentation to the RBI.

In a separate discussion, Mr Sood said, "while India has been marching well on the EV journey, the cost of acquiring an electric vehicle is on the higher side; thus needing a positive discrimination in the interest rates by the banks". He said the EV push is required from all sides, including banks.



As regards increasing cost of borrowing, the chamber said that the recovery in the Indian economy is quite noticeable, especially in the backdrop of the global headwinds. However, it is still in the nascent stage and needs to be supported. "Signs of inflation peaking are visible when it comes to the domestic economy. Even in the developed markets, early indications of inflation peaking are visible, thus setting a stage for the RBI-MPC to move towards halting the rate hike cycle," Mr Sood said.

In another suggestion, the chambersaid RBI may consider a special window of borrowing for IREDA at repo rate (presently for AIFs such as NHB, NABARD) to ensure availability of low-cost funds for renewable projects.

In a unique proposition, ASSOCHAM urged the central bank to consider a time bound

approach for getting all banks under Account Aggregator (AA) framework. The framework helps an individual to access and share information from one financial institution to any other in the AA network securely and digitally. Other financial institutions, regulated by SEBI/ IR-DAI may be encouraged to join the framework as information providers and information users. ASSOCHAM also pressed for easing of norms for infrastructure lending and greater flow of funds for the non-banking finance companies.

To achieve priority sector targets, the Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) may be allowed to co-lend to NBFCs as well. ASSOCHAM further said, the tier-4 UCBs may be allowed to appoint Corporate Banking Correspondents to expand their reach.

# Investors reward well-governed corporates: NFRA Chairperson

**FW DESK New Delhi**

Speaking at the conference on "Financial Reporting and Corporate Governance in the Corporate Sector", Dr Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey, Chairperson, NFRA, said here today that Sound Corporate Governance is bedrock of corporate sector that contributes to the sustainable growth and development of the Nation as whole. He further said that investors reward the well-governed corporates.

Dr Pandey mentioned about a number of path breaking reforms initiated by Indian Policy Makers during last few years, both for enabling growth and development of business sector and society such as Digital Reforms like Aadhar, UPI,



GST and Tax Reforms. He also mentioned about several institutional building reforms like NFRA, IBC, NCLT etc.

Dr Pandey said need of the hour for the Finance Community and Directors is to take measures to prevent frauds and failure of internal financial controls such as developing Case Study of Register of Frauds. Perhaps it is time to go Back to Basics of Internal Financial Controls as not all the corporate frauds were committed by very sophisticated designs but by age

old methods of fictitious sales and loans and advances, over invoicing of purchases, related party transactions and due to failure of basic internal controls.

In relation to building trust and meeting stakeholders expectations, Dr Pandey mooted idea of crowdsourcing of risk related matters and matters of emphasis for auditor consideration. He also suggested consideration of UK Brydon report recommendation of publication of Directors Risk Report before the audit scope is decided by The Audit Committee which can evaluate stakeholders inputs on that Risk Report.

On the Sustainability Reporting Standards, he said it is better to align with those of International Sustainability Standards Board of IFRS Foundation.

# India Post Payments Bank cautions its customers from Cyber Frauds

**FW DESK New Delhi**

Due to the rise in multiple fraudulent activities where fraudsters open fake accounts in the name of villagers, tribals and not so literate people by giving an impression that account holders would get monetary benefits under various government schemes, bank account holders need to be careful while sharing their personal details with unknown persons. These accounts are used for illegal money transactions in various cyber-crimes beyond the knowledge of the actual account holders.

Customers should not use mobile number of any third person for bank account opening. Customers are advised not to accept or send any money without knowing the genuineness of transaction. Customers are advised not to share control of their bank account like sharing of their mobile banking details with unknown persons to transact on their behalf.

Customers are advised not to share their IPPB account details with people luring job offers or people offering opportunity to make easy money via social media.

Customers should verify the



company and person before transacting with or sending money

IPPB does periodical updating of customer identification data post account opening & their transactions are also monitored in order to protect them from misuse by such fraudsters.

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by Government of India. IPPB was launched by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on September 1, 2018. The bank has been set up with the vision to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India. The fundamental mandate of India Post Payments Bank is to remove barriers for the unbanked & underbanked and reach the last mile leveraging the Postal network comprising 155,000 Post Offices (135,000 in rural areas) and 300,000 Postal employees.

# DHFL 34,615 cr loan fraud case : Money laundered via 87 shell firms

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in its charge sheet lodged in the Rs 34,615 crore DHFL loan fraud case has said that the accused created 87 shell companies and 2,60,000 fake borrowers to launder money. The charge sheet was filed in the second week of October.

The federal probe agency has also said in its charge sheet that the accused set up a virtual branch to launder money. The CBI had on October 15 filed the charge sheet against 75 accused, including private companies before the Rouse Avenue court in Delhi. It has been alleged that Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan laundered money and purchased 24 paintings worth Rs 63 crore. The charge sheet said that the laundered money was spent on credit cards, foreign trips and renting chartered planes. The CBI has alleged that Wadhawan was using a special designed software which was generating dummy data. The software was also showing various fake entries of home loan takers.

The accused also created a virtual branch in the name of Bandra branch with a code 001 whereas in reality this branch does not exist. From this virtual branch, loans were given to shell companies.



**Case history**

The charge sheet has been filed against Kapil Wadhawan, Dheeraj Wadhawan, both the then CMD, DHFL; Harshil Mehta, its ex-CEO, Ajay Vazirani; Advocate, Jayesh Khona; the then Vice President (Accounting), DHFL, Dinesh Bansal; Director of D K Realty (India) Pvt. Ltd, Sunny Bathija; Director of Sunlink Real Estate Pvt. Ltd, Ajay Navandar; Jignesh Mehta, CA of Chaturvedi & Shah LLP, Amit Chaturvedi, Partner of Chaturvedi & Shah LLP and others. In July the CBI had seized a helicopter parked in a hangar at the premises of Avinash Bhosale, one of the accused, at Baner Road in Pune. "It came to light that RKW Developers Pvt. Ltd (a company owned by Wadhawan family) allegedly has stakes in Varva Aviation (an Association of Persons) which owns an AW109SP Grand New Helicopter (AgustaWestland Helicopter) which was allegedly purchased in 2011. RKW Developers Pvt. Ltd joined the Association of Persons in 2017 contributing towards cost price and maintenance of said helicopter.

# MOIL's production and sales jump in November 2022



**FW DESK New Delhi**

With a production of 1.2 lakh tonnes of Manganese Ore in November, 2022, MOIL has registered a significant growth of 60% during the month over October, 2022. On the sales front, MOIL has recorded a growth of 82% during the period over the previous month, in spite of challenging market conditions.

Smt. Usha Singh, Director (Human Resource) & CMD (Addl. Charge), attributed the improved performance of the company to the great team effort exhibited by all concerned and reiterated that MOIL is geared up for much better performance in the remaining period of the financial year.

MOIL Limited is a Schedule-A, Miniratna Category-I CPSE under the administrative control of Ministry of Steel, Government of India. MOIL is the largest producer of manganese ore in the country and operates eleven mines in the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. MOIL holds about 34% of the manganese ore reserves of the country and is contributing approximately 45% of the domestic production. The company has an ambitious vision of almost doubling its production to 3.00 million tonnes by 2030.

# Coal Production increases 17.13% during April - Nov 2022

**FW DESK New Delhi**

India's coal production increased impressively by 17.13% to 524.20 Million Ton (MT) during April -November 2022 as compared 447.54 MT production during the same period of the previous year. Coal India Ltd (CIL) coal production reported 412.63 MT up to November of FY 23 as compared to 353.41 MT during the same period of the previous year representing an increase of 16.76%.

With an objective to enhance coal production capacity, Ministry of coal has put 141 new coal blocks for commercial



auction and has been engaging regularly with various coal companies in the country and monitoring their production. The all-round efforts made to increase the domestic production and despatch have shown extremely good results. India is the world's third largest energy consuming country and the demand for electricity grows

by about 4.7% annually.

The Ministry has also amended the Mineral Concession (Amendment) Rules, 1960 under MMDR (Amendment) Act, 2021 to allow lessee of captive mines to sell coal or lignite up to 50% of the total excess production after meeting the requirements of the end-use plant.

# Bringing banking to rural India through SAVE

**FW DESK**

Even as India strives to be the economy to reckon with, financial literacy especially among the rural and womenfolk remains an alien topic. In a society where men control the finances in most households and education plays an important part, achieving the goals on similar lines can be quite a challenge. Way back in 2008, three young and daring to go graduates envisaged the need to fill this gap and came up with what is now touted to be among the country's leading banking correspondent network and a one stop solution for financial services, SAVE Solutions. The Financial World spoke to Ajeet Kumar Singh, MD, CEO, and Founder, SAVE Solutions Pvt. Ltd to know about the strides the company is making in financial literacy among others.

SAVE leverages its wide net-

Tell us about the company

The Group serves approximately 21 million rural Indians in over 8,600 villages across 559 districts in 28 states and three union territories. It has an estimated network of 12,000+ Customer Service Points (CSPs). As a last mile banking service provider, we have a daily footfall of 400,000 clients. Our objective is to provide services to rural unbanked people and bring them under the umbrella of organised finance. We also providing financial services to the untouched and underserved communities besides offering financial products including Micro Loans, MSME Loans, Housing Loans, SBL Loans, Secured and Unsecured Loans.

How are you increasing awareness regarding financial literacy among rural women?



work of CSPs to provide both cash-in and cash-out services at the doorstep of these women micro-entrepreneurs. The officers of SAVE Microfinance create awareness about JLG loans amongst women of the villages. Women who are interested in JLG loans are provided with Financial Literacy. The loan process is initiated by creating groups of 8-30 women. Once all the processes are completed as per the rules, the loans are sanctioned. Once a month, a center meeting is organized at the home of any

chosen woman from the JLG. In the meetings, the EMIs are collected and the women are informed about new products.

SAVE Solutions is cognizant of the fact that one-size-fit-all solutions do not work since everyone has a unique financial requirement. In our bid to promote inclusivity and foster women empowerment in India, we offer customized loans of different ticket sizes and different tenures, subject to the borrowers' requirement. Moreover SAVE's NGO also conducts financial literacy camps in the rural areas for everyone, which are focused on reiterating the importance of banking, account opening, insurance etc. The Customer Service Point Coordinators also regularly organize gram sabhas for the community, to spread awareness about banking schemes, Govt. schemes and so on.

Do you think people have become more aware of different means of saving and investing in rural India?

Due to lack of organised banking facilities in the villages in the past, it was difficult for rural people to open their accounts and save money. Bank branches were located too far and it was a cumbersome process to visit them and wait in queues. So they preferred to keep their money stacked at home, which restricted the multiplication of the money or they only invested their money in buying gold or pieces of land. As Customer Service Points reached the rural areas, people understood the importance of saving and also investing, because that would mean that their money would multiply through the savings in the form of interest, Fixed Deposits, Mutual Funds, and different government schemes etc.

# Indian Railway earns Rs 105905 Cr from freight loading till November 2022

**FW DESK New Delhi**

Indian Railways' Freight loading for first eight months of this financial year 2022-23 crossed last year's loading and earnings for the same period.

On cumulative basis from April -Nov. 22, freight loading of 978.72 MT was achieved against last year loading of 903.16 MT during the same period, an improvement of 8%. Railways have earned Rs 105905 crore against Rs 91127 crore over last year which is an improvement of 16% as compared to the same period of last year.

During the month of November 22, Originating freight loading of 123.9 MT has been achieved against loading of 116.96 MT in Nov. 21, which is an improvement of 5% over last year. Freight revenue of Rs. 13560 crore have been



achieved against Rs 12206 crore freight earnings in October 21, thereby showing an improvement of 11% over last year.

Following the Mantra, "Hungry For Cargo", IR has made sustained efforts to improve the ease of doing business as well as improve the service delivery at competitive prices which has resulted in new traffic coming to railways from both conventional and non-conventional commodity streams. The customer centric approach and work of Business Development Units, backed up by agile policy, making helped Railways towards this landmark achievement.

# INTERNATIONAL

## India stands tall, proud and no one pushes it around: Ruchira Kamboj

**UNITED NATIONS:** India is a big country that "stands tall and proud on its own" with its own relations with competing international blocs and nobody pushes it around.

That was the message from India's Permanent Representative Ruchira Kamboj on Thursday when she was asked at a news conference about Russia's Foreign Minister's assertion that the western military group NATO was pushing New Delhi towards an anti-Moscow and anti-Beijing alliance.

"India is a bigger country. It stands tall and proud on its own," she said emphasising its multi-dimensional, independent policy. "We do have a relationship with Russia, an



important relationship with Russia... And as far as the relationship with the US is concerned, it's a comprehensive strategic partnership, which has never been closer, tighter or stronger than it is today." India has taken over the pres-

idency of the Security Council when it is paralysed on the invasion of Ukraine by veto-wielding Russia and the global tensions reflected in it.

India's open lines of communication to the West and to Russia could be useful in this

context. Ukraine issues were not included in the Council's programme of work for the month adopted on Thursday but Kamboj said she expected it to come up.

Diplomatic sources said that the western countries were planning to bring up as early as next week the humanitarian situation in Ukraine that is under a fierce attack by Russia. Looking from the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that is driving the discourse, Kamboj said: "We have been very clear and consistent right from the outset, we have spoken in one voice, that we are for peace. Peace is also a right. And we favor that diplomacy and dialogue." "To this end, our Prime

Minister (Narendra Modi) is speaking to both sides, our Foreign Minister (S. Jaishankar) is speaking to both sides. "We are among the few countries, dare I say this, which is speaking to both." She recalled Modi telling Russia's President Vladimir Putin "This is not an era of war," and said that it "has received global acceptance" and was included in the G20's recent declaration.

G20, the group of major industrialised and emerging economies, at its summit in Bali last month accepted the wording for a consensus to adopt the declaration. She also said that India has condemned the attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

## Vladimir Putin fell down the stairs at his home and soiled himself, claims report



**NEW DELHI:** Vladimir Putin has fallen down the stairs at his official residence and soiled himself while continuing to suffer from cancer, a Telegram channel which claims links to his bodyguards has suggested, Daily Mail reported.

The 70-year-old Russian leader, whose health has visibly deteriorated since he launched his war in Ukraine, suffered the fall on Wednesday evening when he slipped coming down stairs at his Moscow home, General SVR channel claimed. Putin landed on his coccyx, fell down five steps, then rolled on to his side and slid down two more. The sharp impact caused him to involuntarily defecate due to cancer of the gastrointestinal tract, according to the channel.

General SVR has posted updates about Putin's health since the start of the war, though it has provided no evidence to support its claims or proof that it does indeed have connections within his guards, Daily Mail reported. In the latest post, the channel wrote. "Putin

stumbled and fell to his back, after which he fell on his side and slid down a couple of steps. "The incident took place in front of the President's bodyguards, who reacted quickly and rushed to Putin's aid. Three security officers helped the President get to the nearest sofa and called the doctors who were on duty at the residence."

The channel said that medics arrived within a few minutes, but could not immediately examine the President.

This was due to him suffering oncology of the gastrointestinal tract, as a result of which he already experiences serious problems with digestion - and the fall caused an involuntary defecation. "Before the examination, the doctors escorted the President to the bathroom and helped to clean up."

The report said: "After a complete examination, a bruise of the coccyx and soft tissues was diagnosed," Daily Mail reported.

## Brazil unemployment rate drops to lowest in October



**FW DESK**

Unemployment in Brazil fell to 8.3% in the three months ending in October, 0.8% points lower than the previous three months and 3.8% points lower than the same period last year.

The state-run Institute of Geography and Statistics said on Wednesday that there were 9 million registered unemployed people in October, the lowest for the three months ending in October since 2014 and the lowest level of unemployed registered this year, reports Xinhua news agency.

Meanwhile, the employed population reached 99.7 million, a record high since the data began to be tracked in 2012, and an increase of 1 per cent compared to the previous three months and 6.1 per cent year-on-year.

The average monthly wage in Brazil grew by 2.9% compared to the previous three-month period and by 4.7% year-on-year to reach 2,754 reals (\$531).

## 13,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed since war began: Report

**KIEV:** A top government official in Kiev has revealed that around 13,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia waged its ongoing war on February 24.

Speaking to Ukrainian media on Thursday, Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to President Volodymyr Zelensky, said: "We have official evaluations by the General Staff, official evaluations by the commander-in-chief (Zelensky), and they range from 10,000 to 12,500-13,000 killed," the BBC reported

He said that the number of civilians killed could also be "significant"

Podolyak further suggested that up to 100,000 Russian soldiers had been killed since the invasion began, and that an additional 100,000 to 150,000 had been wounded, or were missing or unable to return to combat.

The Ukrainian military has however, not confirmed the tally given out by Podolyak. The latest figures come after



General Mark Milley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said last month that around 100,000 Russian and 100,000

Ukrainian soldiers have been killed or injured till date.

But Moscow's latest update in September said that just 5,937 troops had been killed since the start of the war.

The American General had also noted that between 15 and 30 million refugees have been created since Russia launched its invasion.

The UN has recorded 7.8 million people as refugees from Ukraine across Europe, including Russia.

## King Charles III to visit newly-built Sikh gurdwara in UK on December 6



**LONDON:** King Charles III will visit a newly-built Sikh gurdwara on his first trip to Bedfordshire as monarch on December 6.

At the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Luton, the King will speak to the community members to learn more about the initiatives delivered to the locals, like Covid vaccine clinics

and free meal (langar) services. "We are delighted that King Charles will come to officially open our new Gurdwara and recognise GNG's amazing work supporting local communities -- Langar service, Soup Kitchen, Covid Vaccine Clinics," the Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Luton, said in a Twitter post. He will also meet the vol-

unteers at the gurdwara's Sikh Soup Kitchen to understand how they support the local community via their food and health programmes.

The Sikh Soup Kitchen recently reached the 5,000-meal landmark since its opening in November last year, and serves 150 hot vegetarian meals every Sunday outside the Luton Town Hall. The King will be greeted by Professor Gurch Randhawa, member of the Sikh Congregation at the gurdwara.

He will also talk to children learning Punjabi and traditional music, GPs who ran the Vaisakhi vaccine clinic during the pandemic, and the volunteers who run the 24-hour kitchen, before unveiling a plaque, ITVX reported. Funded by community donations, the construction of the gurdwara started on June 22, and was finished in two years.

## NZ PM announces multimillion-dollar package to combat retail crime, reoffending

**New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern** announced a multimillion-dollar package to tackle widespread retail crime and reoffending.

The initiative, which partner with small businesses and local councils, are the most significant crime prevention financial package, reports Xinhua news

agency. "While youth crime is now much lower than in the past, the risks and harm from ram raids and other retail crime is concerning communities and creating victims," Ardern said in a press conference following a series of raids of local shops in several cities. "Shop owners and workers



feel targeted. That's unacceptable," she said.

The Prime Minister added that the police have already been working to reduce the offending rates, with raids this month down by 83 per cent compared with August.

Crime prevention initiatives have been further supported, such as better street lighting, cameras and more fog can-

nons, said the prime minister.

The government will establish a new fog-cannon subsidy scheme open to all small shops and dairies in New Zealand.

The fog cannon fund was set up in 2017 after aggravated robberies of commercial premises had doubled from 599 to 1,170 since 2015, statistics show.

## UK PM's plan to restrict entry of foreign students seen as setback by varsities, education companies

**NEW DELHI:** UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's plan to restrict the entry of foreign students to curb increasing migration is being seen as a setback for universities and the UK economy in general by migration and education advisors.

According to media reports, Sunak is considering curbs on foreign students taking "low quality" degrees and bringing dependents. The UK Prime Minister's spokesman said the idea was being considered after official figures showed net migration to the UK had climbed to a record half a million, the reports said.

The Prime Minister's plans to bring down foreign student numbers could include restricting admissions to top universities, as well as restricting visas for students' dependents.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman has been quoted as saying as per media reports that foreign students have been "bringing in family members who can piggyback onto their student visa" and "propping up, frankly, substandard courses in inadequate institutions".

However, a government migration adviser warned it would bankrupt many universities. Moreover, an adviser on immigration policy has warned that some universities could go bankrupt if there is a clampdown on so-called "low-quality" degrees. Hershna Pandya, Executive Director of



UK Partner Relations of M Square Media, an education management company, has also aired her concerns over this new development.

"Firstly, it was the UK government that set a target of 600,000 international students which was met and delivered well in advance through the hard work of universities, agents, and third-party providers," Pandya said, adding that "now the UK government is once again putting international students under the spotlight when these students should never be included in the net migration statistics. The UK government must stop this yo-yo effect if it wishes to promote the country as the number one choice for international students". Just last week, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt insisted that immigration was required to boost growth, underscoring

the need for "a long-term plan if we're going to bring down migration in a way that doesn't harm the economy." Hunt said that migration would be needed "for the years ahead - that will be very important for the economy". In the 2020-21 school year, the number of international students at UK universities totalled 605,130, up by 48,505 or 8.71 per cent from the previous year's total of 556,625 students. International students paid a total of 9.95 billion pound in tuition fees for the school year 2020-21.

According to media reports, Scotland Deputy First Minister John Swinney described the proposals as "stupid" while Education Minister Jamie Hepburn warned that the proposal would be "deeply damaging to Scotland's world-class university sector."

## German inflation slips back to 10 per cent in November



**BERLIN:** The annual inflation rate in Germany, Europe's largest economy, declined slightly to 10 per cent in November, according to preliminary figures published by the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis).

After rising for three months in a row, the rate peaked at 10.4 per cent in October, the highest level since the country's reunification in 1990, reports Xinhua news agency citing the Destatis data.

In November, food prices still increased by an above-average rate of 21 per cent year-on-year.

Although energy prices eased slightly, German consumers were still paying 38.4 per cent more for energy products, including household energy and motor fuels, than a year ago.

Since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, energy and food prices have increased considerably and have had a "substantial impact on the inflation rate", Destatis said on Tuesday.

To cushion the effects of the energy crisis and the record inflation levels, the German government has passed three relief packages worth 95 billion euros (\$98 billion).

Measures include a tax reduction on natural gas from 19 per cent to 7 per cent, which took effect retroactively from October.

An even bigger "protective umbrella" of up to 200 billion euros was also set up.

On November 25, the government approved the draft laws for the "centre piece" of the protective umbrella, the cap on electricity and gas prices.

The price cap is to be in effect until April 2024.

The aim is to "relieve consumers as well as the economy and protect them from very high energy prices," the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) said in a statement.

As inflation still outstrips the rise in nominal earnings, real wages in Germany are continuing to fall and declined 5.7 per cent year-on-year in the third quarter of 2022, according to provisional figures also published on Tuesday.

The German Council of Economic Experts (GCEE), the official advisory body to the government, expects an inflation rate of 8.0 per cent for 2022 before falling to 7.4 per cent in 2023.

## 6 million households across Ukraine without electricity

**KIEV:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that about 6 million households across the war-torn nation are without electricity as a result of Russian strikes hitting critical power infrastructure. He made the remarks in his nightly address to the nation on Wednesday evening.

"Energy workers and utility workers, all our services are doing everything to stabilise the system and give people more energy for longer... It is very important that people understand when and for what period of time they will be left without electricity," the President said. Besides Kiev, some of the other affected regions are Vinnytsia, Lviv, Odessa, Khmelnytskyi and Cherkasy. "People have a right to know.

## Canadian Sikhs reach out to drivers stranded in snowstorm

Volunteers with a Sikh gurdwara in Canada stepped in with food, hot tea and shelter when heavy snow led to blocked bridges and highways around Vancouver leaving many drivers stranded and shivering.

Drivers reported being stuck on New Westminster's Queensborough Bridge and Highway 91 on Tuesday night for hours along with a group of volunteers from Gurdwara Sahib Sukh Sagar, the Global News channel reported.

The group made their way to the Gurdwara, which was adjacent to the bridge on the

Queensborough side, and came back with hot tea and packed snacks for the stranded motorists.

As the traffic stood still even after sunset, the volunteers decided to use the temple's kitchen to cook meals for the people trapped in their vehicles.

"We decided we should prepare 200 meals, 300 meals right away so we could feed maximum people when they need it. We just thought we have to do that," Amandeep Singh Garcha, spokesperson for the Khalsa Diwan Society of New Westminster, told the



Global News channel.

By midnight, Garcha said they had served close to 200 people.

The gurdwara also opened

its doors for drivers who wanted to sleep and stay warm until traffic began moving on the bridge, the news channel reported.

The bridge eventually reopened around 3.30 a.m. on Wednesday.

Posting a video of the volunteers at work on their Twitter handle, the Sikh Community of BC wrote: "Thank you to community members and teams at local gurdwaras for providing emergency assistance and food to stranded drivers during the storm. Sikhs protect the oppressed and serve those in need. We call upon local politicians to step up and be proactive in extreme weather events." Many drivers described Tuesday's commute home as a

nightmare with most taking nine or even 12 hours to reach home.

"Yesterday I stood in the bus for eight hours, a Sikh who had his seat got up and gave me his seat to sit. I have a lot of respect to the Sikhs worldwide as they are there always to help in any worldly crisis," Ray John George, a commuter who was stuck in the traffic snarl, wrote on his Twitter.

According to weather forecast, temperatures are expected to drop further in Canada in the coming days leading to icy conditions and more roadblocks.

# Bollywood Actress

## Rakulpreet on 'Chhatriwali': 'I am finally getting to headline a film'

**MUMBAI:** Actress Rakul Preet Singh talks about her upcoming film 'Chhatriwali', which focuses on male contraceptives and safe sex. Rakul says: «For me, every film of mine has been special but 'Chhatriwali' is extra special for many reasons. After so many years in the industry, I am finally getting to headline a film and what better than an entertaining film with a thought-provoking social message.»

condom factory. It is shown in the film that though initially, Rakul was somewhere shy about her job, she slowly realised its importance. She understands the relevance of sex education and takes the responsibility of spreading awareness. As today (December 1) is World AIDS Day, which is observed to spread awareness about HIV among people, the actress asserts that it is an important day to announce this



film as the subject deals with the issues of safe sex. «This World Aids Day, I join the fight against HIV by raising awareness on the importance of safe sex and the use of male contraceptives via my upcoming film, 'Chhatriwali', « adds the actress known for 'Cuttputti', 'Runway 34', 'Attack', among others. Produced by Ronnie Screwvala and directed by Tejas Prabha Vijay Deoskar, 'Chhatriwali' features Rakul Preet Singh and Sumeet Vyas. It will be released soon on ZEE5.



# YAMI GAUTAM talks about the 'LOST' screening at IFFI

**MUMBAI:** After getting a good response at 53rd International Film Festival of India, the Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury directorial 'Lost' is all set to premiere on a digital medium. Yami Gautam, who plays a lead role in the film, spoke about 'Lost' and how she felt about the response the movie received at the festival. Yami has worked in TV shows such as 'Chaand Ke Paar Chal' and 'Yeh Pyar Na Hoga Kam', and later was seen in movies such as 'Vicky Donor', 'Badlapur' and 'Uri: The Surgical Strike'. She said: «'Lost' was a special experience for me, and I have been eagerly waiting to see how the audience is going to react. I absolutely cannot wait for the release.» Director Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, who is known for the Amitabh Bachchan and Taapsee Pannu



starrer 'Pink' also talks about his film which is inspired by many incidents that he saw in his life. He is quite happy with the response the movie got at IFFI. He added: «It is always a magical moment to watch the fruit of your toil be as loved as it is. The screening at IFFI was truly an experience for me.» 'Lost' is the story of a young crime reporter who tries to find the secret behind the sudden disappearance of a theatre activist. Produced by Zee Studios and Namah Pictures, 'Lost' also stars Pankaj Kapur, Rahul Khanna, Neil Bhoopalam, Pia Bajpie and Tushar Pandey in pivotal roles.

# POTPOURRI

## SGPC demands from Punjab government to stop release of Dastaan-E-Sirhind film

**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**  
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhama has demanded from the Punjab government to stop the release of Dastaan-E-Sirhind film. In a press statement issued from his office, SGPC President said that in this film the sahibzadas (sons) of tenth Sikh Guru have been personified, due to which, there is huge protest among the Sangat (Sikh community). He said several organisations and the Sangat are expressing their protest to demand a ban on this film. He said several objections regarding this film have also reached SGPC. Dhama said nobody is above the sentiments of Sangat, therefore, representing the same, the release of this film should be stopped immediately. He said the Punjab government should take immediate



action in this regard and at the same time, the film censor board should also reconsider its decision. He also clarified that the Sikh body SGPC has not given a no-objection certificate (NOC) to this film. Harjinder Singh Dhama said the decision regarding any

film related to Sikh history is taken in the light of Sikh history, principles, Sikh maryada (code of conduct) and traditions, therefore the SGPC is committed to the sentiments of the Sangat and Sikh principles in the case of this film as well.

## 70% Indians are thin outside but fat inside, show preventive health tests at NURA

**ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru**  
Out of 5,000 healthy, asymptomatic individuals who underwent preventive health screening at NURA in Bengaluru, over 70% were found to have excess visceral fat (more than 100 cm) in their bodies. Nearly 35% were at high risk, with visceral fat of more than 160 cm, with high probability of developing insulin resistance, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol levels, stroke and Alzheimer's disease. Nearly 2/3rd of these were men and 1/3rd were women, which showed that men have double the risk of developing visceral fat compared to Women. Dr. Tausif Ahmed Thangalva, Medical Director at NURA, a collaboration between Fujifilm Healthcare and Dr Kutty's Healthcare offering AI-enabled imaging in bengaluru said, "Most fat in our body is stored under the skin and is called sub-



cutaneous fat. This is what we see and feel every day, based on which we decide if a person is thin or fat. However, this is not dangerous fat. Medical science tells us that dangerous fat in our body is visceral fat. This is the fat that is wrapped around the organs such as liver, intestine and kidneys inside the abdomen and cannot be seen from outside. In some people, we may not be able to even feel visceral fat, as they may have slim bodies on the outside. That is why visceral fat is called hidden obesity." According to doctor, Indians are much more susceptible to accumulating visceral fat compared to other people, "As per a study conducted in 2001, Indian men tend to have a 10% higher

percentage of visceral fat compared to Caucasians with similar body mass index. Another study in 2012 showed that while Indian children are slimmer, they have a higher percentage of body fat compared to children from other ethnic groups. That indicates that our predisposition to visceral fat accumulation starts from childhood itself," the doctor said. Normally, only about 10% of the total fat in the body should be visceral fat, not more. "While our genes determine our body shape and how our body stores visceral fat, our lifestyle has a major impact on it. Lack of exercise, stress and poor dietary choices are the biggest culprits. Some of the foods that can lead to visceral fat accumulation include those containing trans-fats like deep fried and processed food, carbonated drinks, candy, processed baked foods and foods that use high-fructose sweeteners.

## Revathi chose Vishal Jethwa as she felt he would understand his character

**MUMBAI:** Revathi chose Vishal Jethwa as she felt he would understand his character Actress and film director Revathi shares the reason for signing Vishal Jethwa for the role of Venky in her film 'Salaam Venky' starring Kajol in the role of a mother. She shares: "When we narrated the script of 'Salaam Venky' to Vishal, we could notice how involved he was in the script. So, I felt that he would

understand the character's depth to a T." Revathi is known for her work in Tamil and Malayalam cinema. She made her acting debut with Tamil film 'Mann Vasana' in 1983 and in 1991, she made her debut in Hindi with Suresh Krissna's 'Love' starring Salman Khan. She was also seen in '2 States'. Now, the actress is directing 'Salaam Venky' featuring Kajol as a mother, who is struggling

for the life of her son Venky, played by Vishal Jethwa, suffering from Duchenne muscular dystrophy which is a genetic disorder. It is a story of how she handles it and tries to make him have a normal life like other children. The director adds that she liked the way Vishal understood the character and thus took no time in casting him for the film. "As you know artists are always accompanied by their managers who handle their dates and everything, so before the whole drama starts with the dates, I called up my producer Suraj and fixed Vishal for the character of Venky saying we need him for this movie," she adds. Revathi is coming with Kajol and Vishal Jethwa for promoting 'Salaam Venky' on 'The Kapil Sharma Show'.

## MultiFit announced its partnership with Suniel Shetty and inaugurated a new branch in Wadgaonsheri



**FW DESK Pune**  
Over the years MultiFit has become a name that has become synonymous with fitness. They have evolved one's understanding, and relationship with fitness and this powerhouse wellness brand organized a 'Fitness Carnival' to announce their partnership with Suniel Shetty- the quintessential action hero known for his rigorous fitness routine and macho good looks and inaugurated the new branch in Wadgaonsheri. During the launch, the actor shared his fitness regimen routine, interacted with the member and actively participated in some fitness games that were organized. Gone are the days when 'going to the gym' was only meant for those who wished to shed a few kilos or gain a few kilos. Today, fitness is embraced as a lifestyle, people are focusing on building a more positive and healthy relationship with their bodies. MultiFit has been a pioneer in transforming the fitness industry in the country by introducing functional and strength training programs by building a community. They have been dedicated towards making fitness a lifestyle choice for every individual. The fitness carnival celebrated the essence of fitness by hosting a range of fun activities. From a Yoga masterclass to a HIIT masterclass, followed by a Nutrition and dance masterclass, all these were carried out by industry experts.

## Spotify Launches Wrapped 2022: feature Most-Streamed Artist of The Year

The last couple of weeks saw plenty of hype for Spotify Wrapped - the year-end stats and data for each user and the music platform's streaming charts at large. Hilarious tweets came in and in parallel, we even saw a third-party app that created festival lineup posters based on each user's listening habits. All of this points to the importance of data and user-generated content from Spotify. This year, their Wrapped feature for users and artists has become even more interactive and colorful, assigning music personalities and specific data points like the most number of times you played a song in a day. The kaleidoscopic hues as a visual aesthetic serve as just the background for the artists who will pop up on various device screens starting today, after Spotify launched its Wrapped campaign, announcing the artists



and albums that clocked the most plays this year's November as Hindi song "Kesariya" from the Bollywood film Brahmastar by Pritam, Arijit Singh and Amitabh Bhattacharya is the runaway hit, with Singh as the most streamed artist in India this year and Pritam in second place. Composers like A.R. Rahman, Anirudh Ravichander and singer Shreya Ghoshal round off

the top five. AP Dhillon takes sixth place on the list of most streamed artists in India, but his song "Excuses" is the most streamed song in India. Coke Studio hit "Pasoori" by Ali Sethi and Shae Gill takes second place, while "Kesariya" is the third-most streamed song of 2022 in India. Punjabi pop artist Shubh's song "No Love" takes the fourth spot, while Aditya A's "Chaand Baaliyan" is in fifth place. Sidhu Moose Wala's tragic passing this year undoubtedly propelled the late Punjabi star's fandom to new levels. His collaborative album Moosetape is the most streamed album of 2022 in India, with film soundtrack Shershaah taking second place and AP Dhillon's Hidden Gem landing the third spot. Moose Wala is also at number eight among the most streamed artists in India in 2022 on Spotify.



Indian Border Security Force (BSF) Additional Director General (ADG), P V Rama Shastri, addressing the media persons during the curtain raiser ceremony of the 58th BSF Raising Day at BSF headquarters, in Amritsar on Wednesday. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

## 'Harry Potter' TV series likely soon, says Warner Bros. TV CEO



**FW DESK New Delhi**  
Warner Bros. TV CEO Channing Dungey has shared that a TV series based on the mega-popular book and film series 'Harry Potter' may be coming soon. «There is a tremendous amount of ambition for that, « Warner Bros. TV CEO said, adding, «and we are engaged in a number of different conversations, « reports online.com. «I wish I could tell you that something was imminent on the horizon but there is a lot of interest and a lot of passion for it, « she continued. «What's great is that you see how the audience is so engaged and so ready.» However, Dungey stated she's optimistic about what the future holds,

## IFFI jury head terms 'The Kashmir Files' as 'vulgar', 'propaganda' film

Nadav Lapid, IFFI's jury head, during the concluding ceremony of the festival, termed the movie 'The Kashmir Files' as 'vulgar' and 'inappropriate', and said that the spirit of the festival can surely accept a critical discussion as well, which is essential for art and life. Earlier on Monday, Lapid said that the IFFI was disturbed about this film. Sharing the experience of the jury, he said that 14 out of them (international films) had cinematic quality. "All of us were disturbed and shocked by the 15th film 'The Kashmir Files'. That felt to us like a propaganda, vulgar movie, inappropriate for an artistic competitive section of such a prestigious film festival," Lapid added. "I feel totally comfortable to openly share these feelings here with you on this stage. Since, the spirit of the festival can surely also accept a critical discussion, which is essential for art and life," he said. On November 23, Anu-



« I feel totally comfortable to openly share these feelings here with you on this stage. Since, the spirit of the festival can surely also accept a critical discussion, which is essential for art and life" pam Kher, lead actor in this movie, speaking about the 'The Kashmir files' had said that it helped people all over the world to be aware of the tragedy that happened to Kashmiri Pandits community in 1990s. "It is a film based on true incidents. Film Director Vivek Agnihotri interviewed around 500 people all around the world for the movie. On the night of January 19, 1990, five lakh Kashmiri Pandits had to leave their homes and memories in the Kashmir Valley following rising violence. As a Kashmiri Hindu, I lived with the tragedy. But nobody was recognising the tragedy. World was trying to hide this tragedy. The film started a healing process by documenting the tragedy," Kher had added.

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