

REGION

2



**MANISH SISODIA CRITICISES LT. GOVERNOR FOR SENDING BACK FILES ON TEACHERS' TRAINING**

BANKING & FINANCE

6



**EXPERTS PREDICT INDIA'S EMERGENCE AS 'THIRD POLE', DESPITE GDP GROWTH WORRIES**

POTPOURRI

8



**PICTURES OF RAKHI SAWANT, ADIL KHAN DURRANI 'COURT WEDDING' GONE VIRAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

## Congress MP from Punjab dies of heart attack, Bharat Jodo Yatra suspended

**JALANDHAR:** Congress MP Chaudhary Santokh Singh on Saturday died of a heart attack during party leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Punjab. He was 76 years old.

Chaudhary fell during the rush of the yatra in Phillaur town and was taken to a hospital in Phagwara in an ambulance where he died. Leader of Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa said Chaudhary was walking along with a fellow MP from Kerala and suddenly collapsed. In 2019, Chaudhary became the second-time MP from Jalandhar with a margin of 19,491 votes.

His cremation will take place on Sunday at 10.30 a.m. at his native Gakhlan Dhaliwal village in Jalandhar. After a day's



break, Rahul Gandhi had resumed his Bharat Jodo Yatra from Ludhiana on Saturday morning.

State Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring said the yatra will remain suspended till until the last rites

are performed. "He was a down-to-earth hardworking leader, a pious person and a strong pillar of the Congress family, who dedicated his life to public service from Youth Congress to Member of Parliament," Rahul Gandhi wrote on Twitter, expressing condolences. Chaudhary came out with Rahul when he collapsed. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra expressed condolences and praised him for being a dedicated leader and true public servant for the Congress ideology. "Shri Santokh Singh ji was a dedicated leader and true public servant for the Congress ideology. His death has caused an irreparable loss to the Indian National Congress," she wrote on Twitter.

## Delhi University colleges facing fund crunch urge L-G to intervene



**YOGESH KANT**  
New Delhi

Around 12 colleges of the Delhi University funded by the Delhi government are facing a serious funding crunch, and this has drastically impacted the quality of education imparted to students admitted in the university, alleged a delegation of Delhi University Principals Association (DUPA).

The delegation comprising Jaswinder Singh, DUPA president and

principal of Khalsa College, Manoj Sinha, principal of Aryabhata College, and the principals of three other colleges on Thursday met Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena. They brought to his notice the serious constraints being faced by 12 colleges under Delhi University, which are funded by the Delhi government.

The DUPA and the principals sought the LG's intervention in resolving the issue of the delay in releasing sanctioned grants. The DUPA in its representation said,

"numerous new and relevant courses were started in these colleges to cater to the needs of the emerging economy and provide employment to the youth and as a consequence many teaching and non-teaching positions were filled, the approval of which is pending with the government. The sanctioned grants are also often delayed on one pretext or the other."

The serious issues that are affecting the quality of education in these colleges include deliberate curtailment of funds, non or delayed payment of salaries to staff, non-sanctioning of teaching and non-teaching posts by the Delhi government and day to day interference and harassment by incapable and inexperienced persons appointed to the Governing Bodies of these colleges by the AAP government, said the LG Secretariat.

## Crypto currencies equivalent to gambling: RBI Governor



**NEW DELHI:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday reiterated that crypto currencies are equivalent to gambling, as their perceived value is only make believe.

Addressing a media event here, Das called for a ban on cryptos, saying there is no underlying value in it. Those supporting it call it an asset or a financial product, but there is no underlying value in it, he added.

To counter the growth of cryptocurrencies, the central bank recently launched in pilot mode, its own e-rupee or central bank digital currency (CBDC).

"Every asset, every financial product has to have some underlying (value) but in the case of crypto, there is no underlying value. So anything without any underlying, whose value is dependent entirely on make-believe, is nothing but 100 per cent speculation or to put it very bluntly, it is gambling," he said.

"Since we don't allow gambling in our country, and if you want to allow gambling, treat it as gambling and lay down the rules for gambling. But crypto is not a financial product," Das added.

He said that CBDCs are the future of money and its adoption can help save on logistic and printing costs.

## Punjab govt pulls out from mega textile park bid due to land unavailability

**CHANDIGARH:** Owing to unavailability of land the Punjab government has withdrawn its application for the centre's mega textile park scheme, informed Union Minister for Commerce and

Industry, Piyush Goyal. He clarified that the centre has launched production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes across sectors and does not discriminate between states. The Minister said that the Centre is building seven mega textile parks for which applications were invited under the PM Mitra scheme. Giving the reason of Punjab's withdrawal as land availability, he said, "So even if we want, we cannot consider Punjab under the scheme."

## Helmets for Sikh soldiers violate of Sikh Tenets and marayada

**CHANDIGARH:** Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) President appealed to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to personally intervene against the implementation of the reported move of the Government of India to make helmets mandatory for Sikhs in the country's armed forces. Describing the move as "provocative and insensitive in the extreme" Badal said that it was not just unprecedented in history but also defied all logic as Sikh soldiers had always remained in the forefront of the country's defense without ever feeling the need for such helmets in the past.

"If details emerging from various sources including newspaper reports are indeed true, then we are surprised that the Government has shown such callous disregard for the time honoured and established Sikh tenets, norms and practices on a matter of such critical emotional and religious sensitivity. It concerns Sikh Marayada which no one has a right to tinker or trifle with," said Badal in a letter to the PM, Narendra Modi.



He, however, hoped that the PM would look into the matter and order that necessary action be taken to stop any proposal in this regard. "Not even the British had forced such a decision on the Sikh soldiers. Sikhs are fiercely patriotic people and have led from the front in 1948, 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars as also in all other military



operations including Kargil. Why this sudden development when no Sikh had ever felt the need for such a protection?" asked Badal, adding that he still hoped that the reports in this regard are not true.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Badal also drew Modi's attention to the serious concern expressed by Jathedar Sahib of Shri Akal Takhat Sahib Jathedar Harpreet Singh ji over the reported move of the Ministry of Defence in this regard.

## Joshimath crisis: Demolition drive halted, locals angry over less compensation

**A CRANE HAD BEEN SENT FROM DEHRADUN, WHICH WOULD ARRIVE ON WEDNESDAY. SECRETARY TO CM, MEENAKSHI SUNDARAM SAID THAT THE DRIVE COULD NOT START ON THE SCHEDULED DAY SINCE THE CBRI TEAM GOT DELAYED IN REACHING THE SPOT**

**JOSHIMATH:** While the cracks that have appeared in the buildings of Joshimath are widening, the administration has been facing the opposition of the affected people in the demolition drive.

In a meeting between the administration and the locals, it was announced that a compensation of Rs 1.5 lakh would be provided to the affected families, which was refused by the locals. Hotel Mount View and Malari Inn were scheduled to be demolished on Tuesday. T Singh Rana, the owner of Malari Inn and his family have been sitting outside the premises and raising demands for



compensation. As soon as the officials reached the spot, the hotel owners started opposing the action and alleged that the economic evaluation of their structures had not been done. They added that no notice had been given to them by the administration. In view of the escalating protests, the administration had to step back and postpone the drive to Wednesday.

Disaster Management Secretary Dr Ranjit Sinha said that cranes were needed to demolish tall buildings which could not be arranged in the

area. He informed that a crane had been sent from Dehradun, which would arrive on Wednesday. Secretary to CM, Meenakshi Sundaram said that the drive could not start on the scheduled day since the CBRI team got delayed in reaching the spot.

Chief Secretary Dr S.S. Sandhu, in a meeting on Tuesday, instructed that the affected buildings which may pose a threat to life should be demolished on a priority basis.

723 buildings declared unsafe, 86 marked with red crosses:

## Centre-Delhi services row: SC questions need of elected government as Centre says UTs an extension of Union

**FW DESK**  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday questioned the need for having an elected government in Delhi after the Centre asserted the Union Territories are an extension of the Union which wants to administer them.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, while continuing the hearing for a third day on the vexatious Centre-Delhi government row over control of services, was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the central government, that Delhi being the national capital has a "unique status" and citizens of all states living there must have a "sense of belongingness".

Referring to a judgement, the law officer said "Delhi is a cosmopolitan, miniaturised India - it belongs to India".



During the day-long hearing, the bench, also comprising Justices M R Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli and P S Narasimha, referred to the subjects on which the Delhi government is incapable of making laws, and asked about the legal and constitutional position with regard to control of services in the national capital.

"As a broad principle, Parliament has the power to legislate upon entries of State and the concurrent list (of the 7th schedule). The Delhi legislative assembly does not have the power to legislate upon lists 1,2,18,64, 65 (Public order,

Police and Land etc) of state list," the bench said.

It said the Delhi legislative assembly has the power to legislate in respect of all entries in the State and the Concurrent list as far as they are applicable to the Union Territory.

The bench then said in respect of other entries of the State and Concurrent lists, the Delhi assembly has the right to legislate on subjects applicable to the UT.

"Does the legislative entry of services relate to Union Territory?" the bench asked, adding if Parliament has the legislative control over certain areas, then what about the executive powers of the Delhi government.

The court wanted the solicitor general to tell how legislative control of services were never intended to be part of the legislative powers of Delhi. "The Union Territories are an extension of the Union. The very purpose of creating

a geographical area as a UT shows that the Union wants to administer the territory," the solicitor general said.

"Then what is the purpose of having an elected government in Delhi at all? If administration is by central government only, why bother with a government," the bench observed orally.

The law officer said certain powers are co-terminus and the functional control over the officers will always remain with the locally elected government.

"Functional control will be that of the elected government and we are concerned with administrative control," he said.

If an officer is not discharging his role as desired, then the Delhi government will have no power to shift him and get someone else, the bench said, adding "can you say that they would not have any jurisdiction on where he should be posted".

## Gear Up For Assembly Polls: BJP leader to J&K unit

**FW DESK**

In an indication that Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir could be around the corner, BJP national general secretary B L Santhosh on Wednesday asked the party's J&K to be ready for assembly polls.

The meeting was also attended by Union minister Jitendra Singh, BJP national general secretary and J&K in-charge Tarun Chugh and J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina.

Santhosh made the statement days after senior party leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah held



deliberations with party functionaries from Jammu and Kashmir in Delhi.

This has raised the hopes that the assembly elections in the union territory might be

held this year. Government has, however, stayed short of making an official announcement yet.

"A leader is born when he selflessly works for the win of others and the organisation," In his address to party leaders, Santhosh said. "So you all must devote yourselves to organisational duties."

Union minister Singh said this was the first major election campaign after historic changes in J&K. "We need to contest these elections all together," Singh said adding that the BJP is the only party which has truly cared for the rights of the residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Rahul meets representatives of farmer organizations, listens to their problems

**SATISH HANDA**  
Kurukshetra / Ambala

The Bharat Jodo Yatra, which continues under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, reached Ambala from Dharma Nagri Kurukshetra. Thousands of women participated in Bharat Jodo Yatra despite heavy smog and biting cold on Monday on the occasion of Women's day. Rahul Gandhi's yatra was warmly welcomed by 50 women on reaching Tyoda village in Shahabad. Rahul Gandhi also met the families of farmers and women farmers who were martyred in the farmer's movement. Farmer leaders of Haryana told Rahul Gandhi that Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda

had given financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each to the families of martyred families. Farmer leaders said that during the agitation, MP Dependender Hooda helped in providing water, electricity, medical facilities and sanitation facilities at various dharnas.

On this occasion, representatives of various farmer organizations of the country, including Haryana, discussed in detail the problems of the farmers, including the MSP guarantee. Farmer leaders also said the current government did not live up to the written agreement made by the government during the farmer's movement last year.

In the meeting held in the presence of former Haryana



Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, State Congress in-charge Shakti Singh Gohil, State Congress President Udaybhan, Deepender Hooda, Rahul Gandhi listened to the farmers carefully. During this mainly

representatives of farmer organizations including Rakesh Tikait, Yudhveer Singh, Yogendra Yadav, Virendra Narwal, Prahlad Barukheda, Mandeep Nathwan, Joginder Nain, Rajbala, Deepak Lamba, Tejveer, Jagdeep Aulakh,

Jogendra Tiger were present.

On this occasion, former Chief Minister of Haryana Bhupinder Singh Hooda said BJP government had failed on its promises of doubling farmers income by the year 2022. "The anti-farmer face of the government has been completely exposed. The farmer is feeling cheated. Today the sugarcane farmers are on the streets but the government remains indifferent to the agitation. In 2015-16, the rate of sugarcane was Rs 317, if the income of the farmers had to be doubled, the rate should have been Rs 634," he said, pointing out the rate is only Rs 362 per quintal.

"The income of the farmers

has not doubled, on the contrary, the debt and expenditure on the farmers have definitely doubled. The loan on farmers has increased from 9 lakh to 18 lakh crore. The prices of diesel-petrol, fertilizers are increasing rapidly. By imposing tax on agricultural equipment, the government has only reduced the income of the farmers," he added. He said the Congress government in Haryana had increased the rate of sugarcane by a record breaking Rs 193, taking the rate from Rs 117 to Rs 310. "Along with this, timely payment was also ensured, at the time of leaving the government in 2014, the sugarcane mills did not owe a single penny to the farmers," he pointed out.

## Lakhimpur Kheri case: 'It might take 5 yrs to complete trial', judge tells SC

**NEW DELHI:** A trial court in Uttar Pradesh, which is hearing the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, has informed the Supreme Court that it might take five years to complete the trial in normal course. The cases involve Ashish Mishra as the prime accused, who is son of Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra.

A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and V. Ramasubramanian noted that the sessions judge says that in normal course, it may take five years. The sessions judge, in a letter sent to the apex court, said there are 208 prosecution witnesses, 171 documents, and 27 forensic science laboratory (FSL) reports in the case.

The top court was hearing a bail



plea filed by Ashish Mishra. During the hearing, the top court asked the Uttar Pradesh government counsel to confirm whether four accused in a separate case lodged over the killing of three occupants of the car, which allegedly mowed down farmers, are still in custody. The bench scheduled the matter for further hearing on January 19.

Last month, the apex court had asked the sessions court how much time in normal course would it take to complete the trial in the case.

# Manish Sisodia criticises Lt. Governor for sending back files on teachers' training

**NEW DELHI:** Criticising Delhi Lt. Governor V.K. Saxena, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday said the latter has sent back the files pertaining to sending government school teachers to Finland twice, citing different grounds.

"We had to send 30 teachers to Finland in March, but the L-G sent its file back with objections. Again, we submitted our reply to the objections but the L-G has again sent the file back with a remark that a cost benefit analysis should be done," Sisodia said.

"L-G sir! 30 teachers of



Delhi government were to go for training in Finland in December. You have rejected the file twice and sent it back.

Every time with new objections. Has a cost benefit analysis been done for L-G? Is L-G a benefit or a loss to Delhi?"

he had earlier tweeted, along with the files.

Earlier on Friday, in a press briefing, Sisodia alleged that both Lt. Governor Saxena and the BJP were "conspiring against" the education system of the national capital.

"Wherever the BJP has its government, they are not able to do anything for the education sector including the states where they have been ruling for 15-20 years. When the Delhi government is performing, they are trying to do everything to not let people get good education in the government schools," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi also alleged that the BJP was trying to 'use all its might' to stop the Delhi government's efforts to send school teachers to Finland for training.

"If you get the cost benefit analysis done of L-G's work, you will have to close the L-G office tomorrow..." he said.

"Leaders from all over the country have been going abroad. We want to send teachers, so they are stopping us. You have always misused the L-G office but we request you not to put any hindrance in it," he added.

# BJP-led government in Haryana a champion in rising unemployment: Rahul Gandhi

**SATISH HANDA**  
*Panipat*

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi strongly condemned the ruling BJP in alliance with JJP government in Haryana state on the rising inflation and unemployment among youths during the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' at Panipat in Haryana on Friday late afternoon.

While addressing a huge gathering he raised high question over rising unemployment in Haryana state. He said people also in small and medium weaving industries of Panipat, earlier a flourishing sector today facing decline and youths working in this industry are jobless. He said unemployment in Haryana state at present has been identified as 38%, highest in the country. He said, ruling government in the state has been unsuccessful to control rising prices of all essential commodities.

Rahul Gandhi raised a siren at the historic Panipat field for Congress victory in 2024 polls in the country assuring beneficial schemes for the welfare people living below poverty line, farmers and laborers to help them financially putting amount worth Rs 72000 in their bank accounts every year. Rahul Gandhi also interacted with people directly during rally. He was accompanied by senior Congress leaders



Mallikarjun Kharge Congress National President, Udaibhan State Congress President and the former Haryana Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda. Among others present on the stage were Kumari Shelja, Randeep Surjewala and Kiran Choudhary. Rahul Gandhi appreciated the role of former Haryana Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda to strengthen party network in Haryana state. Information also reveals that prior to this senior Congress had also addressed rallies at Panipat ground which include former Prime Minister Late Smt. Indira Gandhi had in 1978, followed by a rallies led by late Rajiv Gandhi in 1987 and by Smt. Sonia Gandhi in 2008.

While addressing gathering Mallikarjun Kharge said that Panipat has witnessed three historic wars in past and now Rahul Gandhi has arrived to fight war against ris-

ing prices and unemployment among youths since the ruling government in the state has completely failed to fulfill their assurances to provide employment to two crore unemployed youths every year besides Rs 15 lakh financial help as well as also assured farmers to double their income. Bhopinder Singh Hooda while addressing said that Congress will return to power in the country in coming 2024 polls. Udaibhan said that ruling BJP government has sold even railways, airports and privatization in every sector and now people in the country are looking at Congress to come to power for their rescue. Rao Daan Singh controlled the state. The interesting of all was a child Abhimanyu son of Sunil Congress convener at Rohtak, too, joined Rahul Gandhi in 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' without wearing shirt on his body during 6 degree chilling weather.

# Bharat Jodo Yatra: This is not a yatra but a five star hotel on wheels, from where the billions of rupees spent on the this?: Anil Vij



**SATISH HANDA**  
*Ambala*

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and said that Rahul himself should go to the shakha for a few days to know about RSS, then he will know what is RSS. He was interacting to the media persons here at his camp office Ambala. Taking a dig at Rahul Gandhi Vij said that it is wrong to comment on the RSS without knowing it. He said, Rahul Gandhi should attend RSS shakha and only after that he should say something about RSS. Home Minister said that what right do you have to share knowledge about which Rahul Gandhi does not know anything. Vij said, today this country stands because of RSS, this country is India. He said that lakhs of RSS volunteers are going to distant and remote places and tribals and are working to associate the country into the garland of one Bharat Mata since Rahul Gandhi is not knowing, so he doesn't even have the right to comment.

At the same time, Anil Vij said that Rahul Gandhi is worried about his yatra, that is why he is neither assessing nor expressing anything, because Har Har Mahadev is coming out of every voice in the whole country, what is their problem with this? Vij says, it is noteworthy that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had said during the Bharat Jodo Yatra without naming the RSS that the Kauravas of the 21st century used to wear half pants and set up shakhas.

Home Minister, naming Rahul's yatra, said that this yatra is not a yatra 'it is five star hotel on wheels'. He said that from where are the billions of rupees being spent on Rahul's yatra where is coming.

# Only 6.1% unemployment in Haryana: Khatter

**SATISH HANDA**

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar while addressing media strongly condemned Congress for making wrong propaganda regarding unemployment rate in Haryana state as 34%, which is incorrect since there is only 6.1% unemployment in the state. He surprisingly said why Congress leaders are projecting such incorrect figures during their Bharat Jodo Yatra. Khattar slammed the Congress for quoting fictional figures projected by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CME) for which we shall take action against CME for quoting unrealistic figures.

Khattar said, Congress leaders are in the habit of making false statements and befool peo-



ple by spreading false rumours that 34% youths in Haryana state are unemployed as against actual 6.1% as identified in 'Pariwar Pehchan Patra Programme' (family id) launched in the state in 2022 in which around 98% families were registered. Khattar said that there is 2.75 crore population of people between age 18 to 60 of them nearly 6.5 lakh people were found unemployed in the state whereas only about 6% people of age between 18 to 45 were identified only between 2 to 2.5% as such Rahul

Gandhi needs to provide correct figures before making a public statement.

Khattar disclosed that during eight years BJP government in Haryana state nearly 33,60,000 persons have been provided employment opportunities and nearly 50,000 Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSME) industrial units have been set up in the state in this period provided employment to more than 12 lakh persons. He said that nearly 9 lakh unemployed youth have been able to get jobs under Start up and Stand up schemes in the state. Chief Minister said, although it is not possible for a government to provide government jobs to everyone, but ruling government in the state provided government jobs to nearly a lakh youths and there

is a proposal to provide 40,000 government jobs in class III category and 20,000 jobs in class IV category during this year.

Chief Minister expressing regret said that doing this kind of petty politics over such fictional figures is undesirable from a leader of any sensible political party. Khattar said, if needed action would be taken against CME for releasing unrealistic figures which during month November, 2022 in its report had showed unemployment rate in Haryana as 29.3 percent which itself was far from the reality as now they are claiming unemployment rate in Haryana as 34% which itself is contradictory seems to be associated with political parties in opposition perhaps working on their tips.

# Detective teams to improve health services in Haryana: Anil Vij

**SATISH HANDA**

Talking to media persons Home and Health Minister Anil Vij said that health department detective teams in the state will function similar to CM Flying Squad in the state which have brought satisfactory results to control criminal activities in government offices as well as in private sector conducting surprise raids. Vij said that he will control detective teams himself in order to improve health services in government hospital in the state. After a recent incident of deaths of mother and new born child allegedly due to carelessness of hospital staff at village Chautala in the state where thorough investigation in the case has been ordered. Vij said that complaints as regard absence of doctors while on duty cause inconvenience to patients to wait for the treatment for a long time and decision has been taken to form a detective team comprising of health department officers as well as political workers to keep a strict eye over activities and bring reforms providing quick and efficient health services to suffering patients round the clock.

Vij while on action mode to improve health services in all government hospitals in the state going to have health department detective teams will have free hand to check a government hospital in the state to improve health services in the hospitals as in case of CM Flying Squad have



provided efficient services to arrest criminal activities not only in government offices but also in private sector in the state in past about one year. Vij warned that lapses as regard providing health services to suffering patients will not be tolerated at any cost in the state and stern action will be taken against irregularities in this regard.

Vij said that complaints are being received as regard few doctors coming late on duty as such biometric attendance system is being installed in all government hospitals in the state and action will be taken against late coming doctors and hospital staff causing inconvenience to patients. He said, complaints have also been received that few doctors are found missing in their rooms as a result OPD in the hospital suffers when patients sitting outside their rooms have to wait for the treatment. Vij said, he will remain in touch with Chief Medical Officers in all civil hospitals in the state through video conference especially to check and reduce child death rate (IMR) as well as mother death rate ((MMR) in government hospitals due to staff neglect.

# Hooda demands ruling government to issue white paper on rising debt and unemployment in Haryana

**SATISH HANDA**

Former Haryana chief minister and leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha Bhopinder Singh Hooda addressing media said that ruling government in the state is responsible for increase in debts of value worth over Rs 4 lakh crore and 37.4% unemployment in the state demanding ruling government to submit white paper on both issues, especially on financial condition of the state. Hooda said, the state government has loans worth Rs 3.25 lakh crore and other liabilities worth Rs 1.22 lakh crore and have come to a situation where the government is taking loans even to pay salaries to the employees, and most of times much delaying in disbursing salaries to the employees. He accused ruling BJP in alliance with JJP government pushed Haryana into the debt trap blaming that during winter Vidhan sabha session the ruling state government did not allowed discussion on various important issues.

Hooda said that rising prices of all essential commodities have gone higher by three times, debt have increased four times, crime in the state have increased five times and corruption have witness six times increase in past eight years Manohar government rule in Haryana state blaming that ruling govern-



ment is not a double engine (BJP & JJP) but a double mouth government. At the same time, Hooda demanded immediate resignation of former Haryana Sports Minister Sandeep Singh against whom a case allegedly sexually attack on a lady coach has been registered by Chandigarh police and it is not possible for the police to investigate the case fairly until alleged accuse submits resignation to Vidhan Sabha.

Hooda said that recent 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' organized by Congress for eight days was warmly welcomed by the people in the state in all seven districts it passed through in which the farmers told that government taking no decision on several important issues like cases filed against the farmers during the farmers agitation, refusing to accept their demand for hike in sugarcane price and guaranteed MSP of their crops. Hooda said, this Yatra got tremendous support from people in Haryana state.

# Haryana DGP PK Aggarwal reviews crime, law and order situation

**SATISH HANDA**

Addressing media persons at Panchkula, Director General of Police in Haryana P.K. Aggarwal said that in order to wipe out crime as well as fast rising drugs and liquor smuggling in the state, decision has been taken for stern action against anti-social elements mushrooming in the state involved in criminal activities within the state as well as in adjoining states in 2023 also. He disclosed that CID in the state has already prepared a list of hard core criminals involved in criminal activities including murders, attempt to murders, ransom demands, kidnappings, rapes, dacoities, drugs smuggling and few of them having links with gangster groups also having number of illegal properties built with black money in the state.

DGP told that Special Task Forces in Haryana state had identified as many as 72 illegal properties in the state owned by such hard core criminals, many of them involved in drugs smuggling which were demolished by bulldozers during year 2022. He added that CID has prepared a list of several hardcore criminals having illegal properties in Harayana state yet to be demolished this year. Aggarwal said that state police arrested 11463 anti-social elements involved in criminal activities during the year 2022 which included 334 hardcore criminals, most wanted by the police on which award up to Rs



one lakh was declared by the state government for their arrest, which included maximum number of 43 criminals from Faridabad, 40 from Mohindergarh, 28 from Palwal, 26 from Sonapat, 24 from Rohtak 21 each from Gurugram and Kurukshetra districts.

DGP said that among 72 properties in Haryana owned by hardcore criminals as identified by CID Haryana were demolished during year 2022 which included maximum number of 35 properties in Faridabad, 9 in Sirsa, 6 each in Kurukshetra and Rohtak, 4 each in Kaithal and Yamunanagar, 2 each in Ambala and Hisar and one in Rewari district. He said, there is a list of large number of illegal properties yet to be demolished in the state shortly.

Aggarwal told media persons that on an average 956 criminals and bale jumpers were arrested by Haryana police every month. He said according to police record total number 6552 persons involved in criminal activities and 4911 bale jumpers were rounded by the police during past year, of them 951 criminals and 912 bale jumpers were arrested by the crime branch and 5601 criminals and 3999 bale jumpers were rounded by police field units in the state.

# AAP MP Sanjay Singh sentenced to 3-month jail



**NEW DELHI:** A Sultanpur court has sentenced Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh and five others, including former Samajwadi Party MLA Anoop Sanda to three months in prison.

The court also slapped a fine of Rs 1,500 each on them.

The MP-MLA court pronounced the judgment in a 21-year-old case that was registered on June 19, 2001.

According to the police, people had blocked the road and staged a massive protest against the then BJP government in Uttar Pradesh led by Rajnath Singh.

The protest was against regular power cuts and improper water supply in Sultanpur city.

The police had filed a case against Sanjay Singh, Anoop Sanda, supporters Vijay Kumar, Kamal Srivastava, Santosh Kumar and Subhash for blocking the road and demonstrating, said government counsel Vaibhav Pandey.

Singh, who was present in the court while the judgment was being pronounced, blamed the then BJP government for mismanagement in the otherwise peaceful protest. He said he will appeal against the sentence in the high court.

# Nearly 45 'dhaba' at Murthal facing demolishing threat in Haryana

**SATISH HANDA**

Murthal in Sonapat district is famous for large number of five star 'dhaba' in the country, where residents of nearby Delhi as well as from adjoining other towns visit frequently to enjoy delicious foods. According to information, the owners of 63 'dhaba' on the National Highway No. 1 received demolishing notices from the municipal corporation to submit documents as regard land CLU, approval of site plan of building and permission from government for the operation of 'dhaba'.

According to a official spokesperson of municipal authorities, most of illegally constructed 'dhaba' are now running in five star buildings without seeking permission from the government, without having site plan of their



huge buildings approved from concerned department and not only this the owners of these 'dhaba' have encroached huge green belt area around 'dhaba' used for parking visitors' vehicles as well as built stalls rented out to others, which is

violation of Section 350 Rule 1994 of Municipal Act.

The owners of these 'dhaba' were directed to produce documents as regard CLU, approval of building site plan, permission sought for running 'dhaba' and few of these also

functioning like a hotel having rooms for night stay within seven days to avoid action against them. However, owners of only 18 'dhaba' bothered to reply and submitted documents available with them which have yet to be verified by the municipal authorities. However, the owners of as many as 45 'dhaba' have now been served final notices to submit required documents by 11th January 2023, failing which their 'dhaba' structures will be demolished with bulldozers at their cost without any further notice in this regard. Information reveals, the owners of these 'Dhaba' are now running to Chandigarh demanding to roll back the decision in this regard to save them having both ends meal as well as save employment of large number of staff working in these 'dhaba'.

# Two inter-state gangs lifting cars busted in Haryana in a week

**SATISH HANDA**

Haryana police busted two inter-state gangs involved in lifting and selling stolen luxury cars in a filmy style. Hisar police arrested and registered a case against four youths identified as Sunny Yadav resident of Shakarpur Delhi, Mehtab and Nadir both resident of Shamli in Uttar Pradesh and Sunny also a resident of Delhi allegedly lifted a luxury car for which an FIR was lodged with City police station on 6th December 2022. Investigations in the case revealed that the gang of four used to purchase those cars being sold at very low price because the owners of these vehicles failed to pay loan instalments and the vehicles were disposed of at much lesser prices to recover the loan amount.

According to police information, the gang members used to sell stolen vehicles through Car-24 network after preparing fake ID, Aadhar Card and fake



documents after installation of GPS system in the vehicle and used to sell such vehicles in other states retaining the duplicate key of the vehicle with them. According to the statement made by arrested accused during five days police remand admitted stolen such sold cars on the basis of GPS system in the vehicles with duplicate key retained by them when stolen vehicles were sold.

The arrested youths disclosed that both Mehtab and Nadir were responsible for searching out those vehicles in which the owners were defaulters and not

remitting loan instalments, Sunny Yadav was getting prepared fake documents of the vehicle, whereas the fourth member of the gang Sunny earlier working in a Car-24 showroom and was well aware of all formalities and documents required for sale of vehicles. According to police information, the gang members Mehtab and Nadir had stolen 'Kareta' car parked outside the Cloth market Hisar on the basis of location of vehicle through GPS system installed in the vehicle.

In another case, CIA staff of Nuh police in Mewat district busted a inter-state gang

involved in stolen luxury cars and other criminal activities including thefts, snatchings, ransom demand and ATM thefts arresting four persons including the kingpin of the gang Ikram alias Akram and seized from them a stolen car, three country made pistols, eight live cartridges, three master keys and two fake number plates. According to police record, a total number of 73 cases are already registered against the members of gang operating in Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan states. The kingpin of the gang Ikram alias Akram also carried a reward of Rs 60,000 on his arrest. The arrested accused were identified as Ikram alias Akram (30) also king pin of gang, Ajaruddin alias Ajru (30) both residents of Jaimat village, Sadruddin alias Sadar (24) and Azad (26) both residents of Rithat village in Nuh district. The gang was active in UP, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi states.

# Cheaper fuel, jobs and harmony: Rahul Gandhi's promises in letter

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has written a letter to the people of the country in a massive outreach programme of the party, promising cheaper petrol and diesel, gas cylinder at Rs 500, jobs and harmony.

The party on Friday announced that it will deliver Rahul Gandhi's letter to each house along with a charge sheet against the Central government from January 26. The letter is signed off as "aapka apna Rahul (your own Rahul)".

The letter is written in all regional languages and the exercise is an attempt by the Congress to reap the political benefits from the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Gandhi in his letter has tried to touch all the subjects. He mentions that this is written after completing the historic, 3,500 km long Bharat Jodo Yatra where millions of Indians walked with him from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

"It was the most enriching



journey of my life, and I am overwhelmed by the love and affection that every single Indian has showered on us. I heard intently, to all your stories along the way."

He said there is a palpable economic crisis brewing - joblessness among the youth, unbearable price rise, severe farm distress, and a complete corporate capture of the country's wealth... People are worried about losing their jobs, their incomes are falling further, and their dreams of a better future are shattering.

"There is a deep sense of hopelessness across the country. Today, even our plurality is under threat. Divisive forces are attempting to turn our diversity against us - different religions, communities, regions are being pitted against each other. These forces, which are only a handful in number, know that only when people feel insecure and scared can they sow the seeds of hatred for the 'other'. But after this Yatra, I am convinced that this vicious agenda has its limits, and it cannot go on any longer."

He wrote that he will fight to eradicate these evils - from the streets to Parliament, every single day and determined to create economic prosperity for everyone - right price for farmers' produce, jobs for our youth, fair distribution of the country's wealth, an enabling environment for MSMEs and entrepreneurs, cheaper diesel, a stronger rupee, and a gas cylinder for Rs 500.

"The people of our country realise that we cannot reach our full potential unless we embrace our diversity and work shoulder to shoulder. I strongly believe that India will reject hatred. We will rise above caste, religion, language, gender, and all other differences that cause rifts in a society. Our greatness lies in our Unity in Diversity. My message to each one of you - Daro Mat! Remove fear from your hearts, and hatred will vanish from within you."

"The Yatra has renewed my vigour to fight for each one of you. It has been a 'Tapasya'.

"I understand that my personal and political journey is one - to give voice to the voiceless, to be the weapon of the weak, to take India from darkness to light, from hate to love, from suffering to prosperity. I will carry forward the vision and values of those who gave us our extraordinary Constitution."

"The Congress family has been working tirelessly for 137 years, first to free, then to unite and then further to build this country and have always brought the country together during the difficult times. Today, again, our country finds itself in a state of crisis.

"The 'Hath se Hath Jodo' Abhiyan is our initiative to spread the message of unity and brotherhood. Through this historic Abhiyan, the Congress party is extending its hand to you - lend a hand, come together to put the country back on the path of building a 'Swarnim Bharat' - where every single Indian has an equal chance to fulfill their dreams."

## Several corrupts involved in frauds worth crores in FCI trapped in 'operation Kanak' by CBI

SATISH HANDA

The CBI launched 'Operation Kanak' in high level corruption alleged in the Food Corporation of India (FCI) conducted raids at 39 places in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi and recovered amount worth Rs 1.03 crore from senior officers involved in embezzlements in various godowns. According to a CBI spokesman, an network of employees from junior to senior level were found involved in corrupt practices. Some time ago embezzlements in dispatch of rice and wheat stocks of value worth crores of rupees for supply to below poverty line (BPL) families under government schemes sent to Gujarat and other states in the country were detected when a three members committee was sent to Gujarat which found that stocks were taken out from the bags before dispatches and corrupt employees even didn't spare poor families.

The CBI booked a total of 74 accused and registered FIRs against them including a DGM ranks officer from Chandigarh was arrested. Among others booked by CBI teams included FCI Executive Director Sudeep Singh and other suspects in the syndicate of officials, rice mill owners and middlemen involved in embezzlements. Among others allegedly indulged in corrupt practices by CBI sharing money were Deputy General Manager of FCI Rajiv Kumar Mishra who was arrested for receiving a bribe of Rs 50,000 from one Ravinder Singh Khera, the CBI said that few other senior officers of Punjab Government are also on CBI radar. Information reveals that among the 74 alleged accused, 34 are serving



officials, three are retired, 17 private persons and 20 entities. Information also reveals that the agency recovered Rs 80 lakh cash during investigation including Rs 10 lakh from a female officer found currency notes hidden in the washing machine in her bath room during search.

According to information, CBI teams conducted raids in FCI godowns in six states which included in Rupnagar, Sangrur, Morinda, Bassi Pathana, Fatehgarh Sahib, Mohali, Sunam, Bhatinda in Punjab, Dukheri (Ambala), Gurugram in Haryana, Kolar, Chikbalpur in Karnataka, Chinna in Tamilnadu, Chandigarh and New Delhi and also recovered Fixed Deposit documents of value worth Rs three crore in raids found a chain of officers, lower staff working in godowns, rice mill owners, grain merchants, brokers engaged in procurements, all involved in nexus of corruption. According to CBI information, it was alleged that alleged accuse used to accept bribe from rice millers, commission agents getting sub-standard grains, at times showing more procurement on papers that actual supplies while accepting bribe. Investigation also revealed that amount worth Rs 4000 was being collected from every truck carrying stocks in godowns allegedly being shared by the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, AGM, Research officer in lab, Storekeeper, Headquarter expenses and towards other miscellaneous expenses.

## Preparations underway for Modi's visit to K'taka's Kalaburagi on Jan 19



Kalaburagi (Karnataka): Preparations are underway for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Karnataka's Kalaburagi district on January 19, his second trip this month to the poll-bound state.

During the visit, Modi will distribute property documents to the residents of 'tandas' (makeshift houses for SC/STs in villages) at a mega event at Malkhed.

It is for the first time in the history of Karnataka that these documents are being distributed to 51,900 tанда residents.

The beneficiaries are chosen from the Hyderabad-Karnataka region districts of Raichur, Bidar, Yadgir and Vijayapura, according to Revenue Department officials.

The state Minister for Revenue R. Ashoka has been holding a series of meetings with officials in Kalaburagi to make it an impactful event.

A huge helipad, is being constructed for the event, while 600 cooks will be deputed to cook food and 200 counters will be opened on the day of the event.

The beneficiaries will be brought in 2,582 buses, according to the Minister.

Kalaburagi is the home turf of AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge and after his defeat in the last parliamentary elections, he wants to prove his might in the upcoming state Assembly polls.

Karnataka's ruling BJP wants to defeat his plans not only in Kalaburagi but in the entire northern region of the state.

## Drug smuggled from Pakistan at Indo-Pak border seized



JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Border Security Force (BSF) on Jan 9 seized 500 grams Heroin at Indo-Pak border which was smuggled to India from the neighboring country Pakistan.

In a statement issued by BSF official said that on 09th Jan' 2022 during afternoon hours, amidst dense foggy condition, BSF troops deployed on border heard sound of something thrown over the border fence towards own side of fencing in the area falling near Village - Mehandipur, District - Tarn Taran.

However, the smugglers managed to escape taking advantage of dense fog. Further, during the initial search of the area, troops recovered one packet of narcotics (Heroin) (Gross wt - 500 Gms) wrapped in yellow colour polythene.

## Delhi Akali chief objects to helmet plan for Sikh soldiers in Indian Army



**NEW DELHI:** When the Sikhs elsewhere in the world have successfully secured the right to work with their proud turbans in jobs requiring helmets, the BJP government back home has initiated a plan to bring in so-called special helmets for Sikh soldiers in the Indian Army, which is completely unacceptable, Delhi Akali chief Paramjit Singh Sarna said.

The Indian Army has reportedly issued a request for proposal for the emergency purchase of nearly 13,000 helmets for Sikh troops through a fast-track procedure.

"What is this happening? From the World Wars to the war with China in 1962, with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 to the Kargil conflict, the Sikh soldiers fought at the frontline bravely wearing their turbans. What's the motive behind getting them to wear helmets now?" Sarna asked. He reminded the BJP government that even the British tried to introduce helmets for Sikh soldiers in World War II but couldn't because the move was rejected by Sikh troops. He asked the government to drop its helmet plan for the Sikh soldiers of the Indian Army with immediate effect.

## Dhankhar's remarks against Constitution dangerous sign for future: Yechury

**NEW DELHI:** CPI-M General Secretary Sitaram Yechury on Friday termed Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's recent remarks against the basic structure of the Constitution as a "dangerous sign" for the future.

Dhankhar, while addressing the inaugural session of the All India Presiding Officers' Conference in Jaipur, had said that the Supreme Court had set a wrong precedent by its verdict in the Kesavananda Bharti case of 1973. Yechury strongly objected to Dhankhar's comment, saying that it was an unprecedented attack on the judiciary.

He said that the Indian Constitution established the Parliament, and the Executive, Legislature



and Judiciary derive their authority and power from the Constitution itself. He added that the Constitution is supreme and no government exercising its autocracy of majority can undermine the basic

structure of "our republic". The CPI-M leader added that the Vice President is questioning the supremacy of the same Constitution under which he assumed office. Yechury explained that the

centrality of the Constitution lay in upholding the sovereignty of India, which has been made apparent in its Preamble.

Yechury said that people's sovereignty cannot be substituted at any point in the thread of the constitutional scheme.

He said that the vision of an 'intolerant', 'fascist' Hindutva nation is an attempt to destroy the secular and democratic character of the Republic of India, which should be rejected and resisted.

Earlier, senior Congress leader and former Union minister P. Chidambaram, while reacting on the same, had said that all those who loved the Constitution should be cautious of the "dangers ahead".

## Shradha Walkar case: Bones cut with saw, says post-mortem report

**NEW DELHI:** A saw was used to cut up the bones of Shradha Walkar, killed by her live-in partner in May -2022, the autopsy report has revealed.

The Delhi Police have got the forensic analysis report of her 23 bones which were recovered during the course of investigation.

According to sources, it is called Osteological study or biophysical study of the bone pieces which help the police in such cases.

It has been learnt in the report that her bones were cut with the help of a saw and similar sharp edged weapon.

The post-mortem analysis was conducted in AIIMS on Tuesday.

"The post-mortem analysis has suggested that her bones were cut with the help of a saw. Now we will submit this



report before Saket Court," the source said. Walkar and Aftab Amin Poonawalla had met through the dating app 'Bumble' in 2018. They had come to Delhi on May 8, and shifted to Chatrapur area on May 15. On May 18, Poonawalla allegedly killed her and then chopped her body into 35 pieces and threw her body parts across various places over a period of 18 days.

He was reportedly inspired by the American crime show 'Dexter', which tells the story of a man with homicidal tendencies who lives a double life.

## World witnessing transforming India: Yogi Adityanath

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said that in the past eight years, the world has seen a transforming India and that Kashi (Varanasi) has embarked on a new journey with the launch of the longest river cruise.

Speaking at the flagging off of the world's longest river cruise-MV Ganga Vilas and inauguration of the Tent City by Prime Minister Narendra Modi via video conferencing, Adityanath said that new doors of possibilities have also opened along with the launch of the river cruise.

"Today is an important day. In the past eight years, the world has seen a transforming India. Kashi (Varanasi) has embarked on a new journey. The oldest city of the world (Kashi), which is famous as the spiritual and cultural capital of India, in the past eight years has emerged on the global stage in new 'kaya' (physique) and new 'kalevar' (form)," Adityanath said.

He added that along with Kashi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are also "entering into a new era". Highlighting the landlocked geographical feature of Uttar Pradesh, the Chief Minister said, "Being a landlocked state, UP used to yearn, as exporting MSME products to the international market used to be expensive.

## Bihar education minister does not have enough intelligence to understand Ramcharit Manas" - Anil Vij

SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij, while reacting to Bihar Education Minister Chandrashekhar's controversial statement on Ramcharitmanas, said that "YEH DESH RAM KA HAI, Jo NAHI RAM KA, WO NAHI KISI KAAM KA". He was addressing a press conference at his Ambala camp office and took a dig at the Education Minister of Bihar and said that "I do not think that the minister has read Ramcharit Manas and if he has read it, it seems from his statement that he does not have that much intelligence that can understand. While giving advice, Vij said that "YEH DESH RAM KA HAI, Jo NAHI RAM KA, WO NAHI KISI KAAM KA", do not spread disharmony in the country by talking like this. Home Minister said that the people of this country do Ram-Ram as soon as they wake



up in the morning, do Ram-Ram in the evening, do Ram-Ram in the villages and cities. Ram is living in every where and no question mark will be tolerated on that, he added.

Home Minister retorted on the statement of AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi and said that who is forbidding anyone from living in India, everyone should live together, why do you jump. Vij said that Mohan Bhagwat said that everyone has the right to live in India, that's why we say that common civil code should be brought soon and he will ask them to support common civil code because everyone should be equal and no one should have any special rights. Significantly, Owaisi had

said in a statement recently that Muslims do not need to take a certificate from Mohan Bhagwat to live in India.

Responding to the question asked on sex ratio in Haryana by a media persons, State Health Minister Anil Vij said that shops are open in the neighboring states of Haryana, the danger is coming from there and our districts are also affected from the same places, which are located around NCR or other states. He said that their details have been asked to be made, and the Chief Ministers of these states will be written that why ten ultrasounds are opened in a street. Vij said that a meeting has been held regarding the sex ratio and strict cognizance has also been taken on it. He said an action plan has been chalked out in consultation with all the officers and CMOs. Vij said that strict action will be taken on this and checking will be carried out at all the ultrasound centers of the state.

## Illegal mining will lead to many Joshimaths in Rajasthan, warn veterans

**JAIPUR:** What Joshimath is seeing today will be seen in Rajasthan somewhere after 25 years if the present menace of illegal mining remains unchecked in the desert state, veteran environmentalists say while warning of a "disaster which is out of expectation".

"There are many hills which have gone missing in the state. In fact, on the other hand, hills have been created on plains by the locals by dumping garbage," Congress MLA Bharat Singh quipped while mentioning the insensitivity of people engaged in illegal mining in the state.

Bharat Singh has been vocal on the issue of illegal sand mining and has been attacking his own government. He recently wrote a letter to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and demanded the dismissal of state Mining Minister Pramod Jain Bhaya, terming him "land mafia".

Speaking to media, Singh said, "Joshimath story will be repeated in Rajasthan too. It is sad that governments realise the gravity of the issue when the situation goes

out of control. In our state too, Joshimath story is being repeated... The illegal mining in the state has thrown many challenges out, however, everyone seems to be sitting with folded hands. They will wake up from slumber when disaster happens."

The Congress MLA further said, "The entire ecology has changed in the region. The sad part of the story is that such facts are being reviewed under its economic ambit, keeping monetary prospects in mind and hence everyone has joined hands in this illegal act... Unitedly, they are engulfing hills."

Singh said that he will protest in Mining Minister's constituency on January 23, the day when the Assembly session starts in Jaipur.

Meanwhile, environmental activist Mahendra Kachhwa, said, "Illegal mining and Rajasthan have become synonymous. In fact, these mafias have not even spared forests and have entered the core areas of forests, threatening the tiger breed. There has been



massive destruction in Ranthambore in core tiger conservation areas... many illegal mines are running in areas spread over 1,100 hectares of land."

"The sad part is that the miners have dug 30 feet deep pits in jungles, even in areas inside Ramgarh Sanctuary where tigers go to deliver. There is rapid encroachment

and mining inside jungles and hunting also goes rampant. If forest area gets disturbed, the surrounding areas will also be affected," he added.

"Jawai Sanctuary, Ranthambore national park and Sambhar lake are all dominated by these illegal mining mafias. Salt mafias dominate in the Sambhar region. The results

of it are out in open. The lake which once used to dry during May-June has now dried in November and December... The reason is simple, there is no trained dedicated staff to check it (illegal mining) and there is no protection for the staff who raise voice (against it). Eventually open murders are being reported in the state,

"Kachhwa asserted.

Like Singh, he also believes that Rajasthan will see Joshimath-like situation in the future. "What we are facing in Joshimath, after 25 years you will see the same situation here as encroachment and mining are increasing and the area is turning into concrete jungle".

Babulal Jaju, another environmentalist said, "Illegal mining has brought the state in a pathetic situation. It (illegal mining) is going on in almost all districts like Bharatpur, Alwar, Rajsamand and many more. Rivers have dried up because of this malpractice. Sand has been dug out from rivers openly under the nose of officials which has affected the aquatic life."

He warned: "Joshimath story will surely be repeated in Rajasthan if there is no full stop to illegal mining. The reason behind Joshimath story is greed and lust for unwanted development. They want to turn nature into business. Same story is being repeated here. There is greed for uncontrolled development, which

will become 'cancer' and will leave people crying."

In 2018, the Supreme Court also referred to a central empowered committee report that 31 hills or hillocks have vanished in the state's Aravalli area. The disappearance of hills in Rajasthan could be one of the reasons for the rise in pollution levels in Delhi, the apex court had said.

Earlier, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report also said Rajasthan's mines department granted, renewed and extended mining leases violating Supreme Court's orders against mining in the Aravalli mountain range.

Illegal mining in Rajasthan which has a rich reserve of copper, lead, zinc, rock phosphate, soapstone, silica sand, limestone, marble and gypsum in the Aravalli mountain range has razed several hills over the years, said sources.

Recently, a saint self-immolated in the state protesting against the illegal mining in holy Braj area alleging that holy hills are disappearing courtesy illegal mining.

## Rehabilitation norms crucial for eviction

The Supreme Court's timely intervention has halted the forcible eviction of some 50,000 people from Haldwani in Uttarakhand, where the occupants are accused of squatting on railway property for decades. The Uttarakhand High Court had taken a tough stand against the residents, and passed a slew of directions that would have entailed their eviction within a week, backed by force, including the deployment of paramilitary forces. It is significant that the Bench underscored the human angle to the issue and spoke about the need for rehabilitation before eviction while staying the order. The court has ruled that it was not a government order but only a communication on how to manage the land, and it does not amount to declaring it as 'nazul land', that is, land that has fallen into the hands of the state by escheat. As one of the nazul rules is that there cannot be sale or lease, the court rejected all claims made by occupants based on purported documents for lease, sale, and, in some cases, purchase through auction. Conflicts between occupants of public land and the state that wants to reclaim the land are a never-ending saga in the country. A shortage of housing, as well as inadequate recognition of the right to shelter, means that large masses of people encroach on vacant land, be it on the bed of water bodies or government property. This often leads to attempts to evict the occupants and spawns litigation. The Haldwani eviction effort has unfortunately taken communal overtones, and there appears to be a clamour for the early eviction of the Muslim residents. India does not have a good record on rehabilitation of those evicted from public spaces, and this case presents an opportunity to the Supreme Court to lay down the law on meaningful rehabilitation as well as effective prevention of encroachments.

### 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.

"When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it."

- Henry Ford

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

RNI NO. DELENG/2011/38860

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: BUILDING NO-23, NEHRU PLACE  
NEW DELHI 110019; PHONE: 9888040061

EDITOR\* ABDUL WASEY

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



DR. HARVINDER KAUR

## Go for farmer-friendly insurance

About 46% population directly or indirectly depends on the agriculture sector. Crop insurance is a crucial and key issue for the survival of agriculture. The unpredictability of agricultural yields and products often results in windfall losses making the lives of farmers debt-ridden and pathetic. The economic decisions involved in agriculture are massive and need to be recognized as such. Crop insurance is directly linked with the security of farmers in India. For instance, students of economics are familiar with the COBWEB theorem. A farmer has to take the decision to produce a particular crop minimum of six months before marketing so assurance of minimum support price is a must in agriculture. Every industry can increase or decrease its production according to the demand in the market but a farmer can not as he has sown the crop six months before, it reaches to market and the standard law of demand and supply of Dr Marshall does not work in food production. A farmer never knows what will be market and weather conditions in the coming next 5 to six months. The Cobweb theorem describes this dilemma of a farmer. How the market forces and nature play a major role in deciding the price of agricultural products as two third of total land has no irrigation facilities in our country. A farmer can be ruined because of a lack of demand and low prices. Even plenty of production can also ruin him when the price falls because of more production when supply surpasses demand and the equilibrium price falls. This is called poverty in prosperity in economics. Even the developed capitalist economies, where free markets supposedly rule, highly subsidize their farming communities. As agriculture depends on nature and undoubtedly is a risky occupation and this discourage farmer to invest and he rarely thinks of making agriculture a profession. has done a cost-benefit analysis of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (newly launched crop insurance scheme by the Central Govern-



ment) implemented in every state of India, in collaboration with the respective state. The agricultural sector performs a vital role in developing the Indian economy and it can be considered the backbone of the industry and service sector. The agricultural sector still depends upon the weather and climate conditions, which is always uncertain and unpredictable. Crop insurance is one of the ways through which farmers may be protected from the financial loss of their crops against natural disasters.

In Haryana, the first crop insurance scheme was introduced in 2004 during the Kharif season [4] through the Agriculture Insurance Company (AIC). The government of Haryana adopted this National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) with the collaboration of Govt. of India. A new scheme was introduced in 2009 in Haryana on a pilot basis known as the Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS). In 2011, a new scheme named

Modified National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) was started. Finally, the Government of Haryana implemented the central-sponsored scheme Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY) in 2016. It replaces all the previous schemes. we conclude that only a few schemes are implemented in Haryana state from India's various schemes from time to time. Here, the need arises to assess the performance of various crop insurance schemes in Haryana.

The studies should be done to evaluate the performance of the crop insurance schemes implemented in Haryana. only a few schemes are implemented in Haryana in comparison to other states of India. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana performs better continuously and proves beneficial for the farmers of Haryana. As a policy implication, policymakers should frame a provision of no claim bonus for the farmers.

In 2016 Prime Minister launched a new crop insurance scheme that replaces all of India's

prevailing yield crop insurance schemes by giving the slogan of 'One Nation One Scheme'. In Haryana, PMFBY was implemented in Kharif 2016 for cotton, paddy, bajra, and maize and in Rabi 2016-17 for wheat, barley, mustard, and gram. This scheme was based on the area approach. This scheme was compulsory for loanee farmers and voluntary for non-loanee farmers. Under this scheme, premium rates are 1.5 per cent for Kharif, 2 per cent for rabi, and 5 per cent for horticultural crops. The major difference between the PMFBY and the previous crop insurance scheme is that the premium rate under the PMFBY scheme is reduced and expands coverage of crops. This scheme was a more farmers-friendly provision that used advanced technology to estimate the losses accurately and make the payment on time to the farmers.

Dr. Harvinder Kaur, Associate Professor in Economics, Ambala, views are personal



NARVIJAY YADAV

INDIA'S POSITION IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT IS VITAL. IN TERMS OF THE WORKING POPULATION, INDIA IS POISED TO BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST LABOUR FORCE BY 2027. INDIAN COMPANIES ARE IN A BETTER POSITION AND IMBIBE HOPE IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT.

## Opportune time for India in terms of job

While millions of jobs are being lost around the globe and big IT corporate houses are laying off their regular employees, Indian companies are in a better position and offer hope in terms of jobs. In the past, giant companies like Facebook (Meta), Amazon, and Twitter laid off employees in bulk. Amazon has announced the removal of 18,000 i.e. 6 percent out of its 2.5 lakh employees. US-based software company Salesforce has also prepared to lay off 10 percent of its staff. At present, there are 80,000 employees in this company. Actually, the work of these companies had shot up during the Covid era, which is now decreasing fast. But in India, the situation is the opposite, and 2023 looks very promising. India's position in the field of employment is vital. In terms of the working population, India is poised to become the world's largest labour force by 2027.

Recording Jobs India's survey states that 45 percent of the leading companies are preparing for 20 percent of new recruitments. In the second half of the year, India will move forward in the manufacturing sector and domestic demand will increase



here. Some big foreign brands like Apple and Volvo are setting up their innovation centers in India. Last year, 50,000 new jobs were created in this sector and this trend is expected to continue further. Companies will recruit new heads for clean energy technology in the auto sector. The highest demand will be for posts like program manager, electronic engineer, system engineer, etc. There is a lot of hope in the field of the Internet and IT. Apart

from delivery professionals, there will also be a demand for analytics experts. A lot of employment will be generated due to performance marketing. Tech companies will focus their attention on quality. A lot of recruitment has already taken place in this sector. According to CII's IndiaSkills Report, India's employability score is above 50 percent, which means half of the candidates who apply for jobs are employable.

This is the time to learn new skills and upgrade yourself. Prime Minister Modi said at the Youth Festival held in Hubli recently that the youth need to learn new skills so that they can prepare themselves for the jobs of the future. This is a very important time when the whole world is looking toward India and its youth. This is the first time that both hope and opportunity are on India's side. He told the youth that if they have new ideas then they should not care about being ridiculed. New ideas are initially ridiculed. Regardless of this, you need to work on your idea. India is currently one of the five largest economies in the world and soon it will be counted among the top three economies of the world. As many as 48 percent of the 3,000 Indian companies surveyed in the latest Employment Outlook survey by Manpower Group say they will add more jobs in the days to come. Of these, 34 percent of companies do not want to make any changes in their existing workforce. The hiring outlook in India has been found to be good compared to other countries.

Narvijay Yadav is a senior Journalist & Columnist. Views are personal



### BOOKS: REVIEW

## Book discusses cases that shaped financial landscape

Examining 15 judgments that have shaped the financial landscape of India, an upcoming book by senior advocate and author Saurabh Kirpal will offer insight into judicial thinking in matters concerning the economy since independence.

"Fifteen Judgments: Cases that shaped India's financial landscape" will hit the stands on November 21. It is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).

The book examines major judgments delivered on a variety of subjects, ranging from the environment and sex discrimination to disinvestment and insolvency, to show how far reaching the role of the court has been in influencing the economic development of India.

"The book is not a legal text

aimed solely at lawyers but is an attempt to demystify the process of judicial adjudication. The law as well as the historic and socio-economic context of the issues at stake are discussed in a language accessible to the lay reader," writes the author in his introduction of the book.

The judgments, including RC Cooper v. Union of India (the 1970 case for bank nationalisation) and Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (the 1997 case on how to deal with the menace of sexual harassment against women at workplaces), have been examined to give the reader a flavour of the jurisprudential philosophies at different times in the country since Independence.

According to the publishers, the 15 judgments also trace the long path of the economic history of the country.

**'The texture of these rivalries has undergone paradigm changes during the past 100 years but the suspicion of the big powers against each other continues to haunt the world'**

"From the almost laissez-faire conception of the economy in the fifties to the socialism of the seventies and eighties; from the recognition of the effects of liberalization in the 90s to the attempt to reign in the perceived excesses of liberalization, the judgments reflect the sentiment of the era that they were delivered in," it added.

Kirpal, who has been practising at the Supreme Court for over two decades, is also the editor of



the 2020 released book "Sex and the Supreme Court", an anthology about issues relating to law, gender and sexuality.

Kirpal, after studying physics at St Stephen's College in Delhi, read law at the University of Oxford and did his masters in law at the University of Cambridge.

He did a brief stint with the United Nations in Geneva before returning to Delhi where he has been practising at the Supreme Court for well over two decades. He has appeared in a range of matters covering diverse subjects from commercial to constitutional law.

This is reflected in the variety

of clients he has appeared for—from Anil Ambani in his legal battle with his brother to being counsel for Navtej Johar, Ritu Dalmia and others in the case that led to the reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.

A self-described 'accidental activist', he is also a trustee of the Naz Foundation Trust, the NGO that first fought for decriminalization of homosexuality in India. He is the editor of the recently released book Sex and the Supreme Court, an anthology about issues relating to law, gender and sexuality.

The new book examines fifteen judgments that have influenced the financial destiny of India. With significant macroeconomic dimensions, these judgments, when explored, show a long-term impact on the economy.

In doing so, judgments from different times of history have been examined to give the reader a flavour of the jurisprudential philosophies at different times in the country since Independence.

# 7th edition of MP Global Investors Summit begins in Indore

FW DESK

The two-day Global Investors Summit (GIS) organised by the Madhya Pradesh government began on Wednesday at the Brilliant Convention Centre in Indore. This is the seventh edition of GIS, and the state government has high hopes from business houses to invest in Madhya Pradesh.

Addressing a gathering of 431 delegates from 84 countries, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that industrialists have become familiar with the environment prepared for industries in the state.

Chouhan said that the seventh edition of GIS will prove to be a milestone for the state's \$550 billion economy. He was



referring to the aim of making the state's economy grow from \$150 billion to \$550 billion by 2026. "The Global Investor Summit (GIS) is global in the true sense as representatives of 82 countries are participating and there are 10 partner countries involved. The President of two countries, several foreign ministers, finance ministers, and mineral ministers of different

countries will be participating in the summit. Many international industries and trade organisations also participating in it," Chouhan said.

Chouhan said that over 5,000 industrialists and 70 big industrial houses are participating in the summit. "There is immense enthusiasm for investment in Madhya Pradesh, not only among the domestic

investors, but investors from across the world. When Indore's super corridor and roads were discussed, I used to compare them with America. Today, representatives of many countries are watching the work done in the basic areas, including cleanliness. Continuous work is being done for greenery and environment protection," he said.

Chouhan also assured the investors, saying that the demand for land will be fulfilled on priority.

"There is sufficient availability of land in the state. The work of providing it for the establishment of industrial units will be done on priority. About two acres of land are available in the land bank created for Madhya Pradesh industries," he said.

# Infosys Q3 results: Net profit jumps 13 per cent to Rs 6,586 crore, revenue up over 20 p c

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

IT major Infosys announced on Thursday its Q3 financial results, with net profit up over 13 per cent year-on-year to Rs 6,586 crore in comparison to Rs 5,809 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. The company's consolidated revenue from operations also increased 20.2 per cent to Rs 38,318 crore. The attrition rate for Infosys dipped to 24.3% on a 12-month trailing basis, from 27.1% quarter ago. Margin has dipped by 200 basis points on year, but largely stable sequentially.

Infosys' performance in the quarter reported better than its larger rival, Tata Consultancy Services Limited, (TCS) which missed profit estimates and flagged challenges in Europe as clients tightened spending due to the ongoing global economic slowdown.



Salil Parekh, Infosys, CEO and MD said, the revenue growth was strong for the quarter, with both digital business and core services growing. "This is a clear reflection of our deep client relevance, industry-leading digital, cloud, and automation capabilities, and the unremitting dedication of our employees", Parekh said.

"As reflected in the large deals momentum, we continue to gain market share as a trusted transformation and operational partner for our clients. Our end-to-end capabilities and global scale make us a preferred choice as clients look at consolidating vendors. We re-

main focused on helping businesses accelerate their digital agenda to uncover new value and growth, as well as improve operational and cost effectiveness" Parekh added.

Nilanjana Roy, Chief financial officer (CFO) said, "Operating margins in Q3 remained resilient due to cost optimization benefits which offset the impact of seasonal weakness in operating parameters." "Attrition reduced meaningfully during the quarter and is expected to decline further in the near-term," he added.

Capital allocation:-- Infosys informed bourses that it started share buyback program through open market route from December 7 and till date, it has bought back 31.3 million shares worth Rs 4,790 crore or 51.5 per cent of total authorisation of Rs 9300 crore at an average price of approximately Rs 1,531 per share (compared to maximum Buyback price of Rs 1,850 per share).

# BMW recalls over 14K electric cars over crash risk



Automaker BMW has recalled over 14,000 electric vehicles for a software malfunction that may lead to a loss of power and an increased risk of a crash.

The recall covers certain iX SUVs and i4 and i7 sedans produced between October 14, 2021, and October 28, 2022. The software issue relates to the high voltage battery electronic control unit, according to BMW.

"The high voltage battery electronic control unit (ECU) software may cause an interruption of electrical power," it said in the recall notice.

Specifically, a misdiagnosis can sporadically occur within the battery management electronics, which could cause the electronic control unit to reset. "If a reset occurs, this could cause an interruption of electrical power," according to the company.

The owners of these cars can drive vehicles while waiting for a software update to fix the problem.

Last year, the automaker recalled a "small number" of 2022 i4 sedans and iX SUVs due to the risk of battery fires.

According to the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a short-circuit in a high voltage battery increased the risk of a fire.

The recall was issued after BMW became aware of "a non-US field incident involving a 2022 BMW i4 eDrive40".

In June last year, Ford Motor recalled nearly 49,000 Mustang Mach-E electric crossovers over battery safety concerns, and told dealers to temporarily halt selling the popular electric vehicle.

The battery issue affects Mach-Es that were built from May 27, 2020, through May 24, 2022, at the automaker's Mexico plant.

# Ethanol blending hiked from 1.5% to 10% since 2013-14: Puri



**NEW DELHI:** The government has increased ethanol blending in petrol from 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 10.17 per cent in 2022 and advanced its target to achieve 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol from 2030 to 2025-26, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri said on Tuesday.

He said that India has been able to navigate through the most formidable energy crisis the world has seen since the 1973 oil crisis thanks to its energy security strategy focussing on diversification of energy supplies, increasing India's exploration and production footprint, and meeting energy transition through gas-based economy, Green Hydrogen and electric vehicles.

Puri said that India has increased the number of its crude oil suppliers from 27 countries in 2006-07 to 39 in 2021-22, adding new suppliers like Columbia, Russia, Libya, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea among others.

"At the same time, we have strengthened our relationship with countries like US and Russia," he added.

The minister further said that diesel prices, which in India between December 2021 and December 2022 rose by only 3 per cent, went up by 34 per cent in the US, 36 per cent in Canada, 25 per cent in Spain, and 10 per cent in the UK.

# IDP Education strengthens India presence with launch of 4 new offices



IDP, a leader in international education services, will launch four new offices in India by February to help Indian students realise their overseas education dream.

With this expansion, IDP will have 73 offices across the country, leading on the path of the maximum number of physical presence across India in the international education industry. The offices will be inaugurated in Delhi (North), Dilsukhnagar (Hyderabad), Khanna (Punjab), and Hoshiarpur (Punjab). Looking at the growing demand for study abroad, IDP also plans to grow its existing offices at Guwahati, Jammu, Calicut, and Trissur with larger teams.

With its world-class counselling and digital innovation, IDP Education helps students pursue their academic goals in popular countries such as Australia, Canada, the US, the UK, New Zealand, and Ireland and provides end-to-end study abroad assistance right from choosing the best destination, programs and institution, completing applications and visa requirements, applying for education loan, health insurance, money transfer services, accommodation, overseas bank account, SIM card, etc.

On this occasion, Piyush Kumar, Regional Director, South Asia and Mauritius, IDP Education, said: "Our aim is to fulfil the study abroad dream of every student in India. Launching these four new offices is another step to getting closer to our customers and providing them with the best services. We pride ourselves in being the one-stop solution for all international education requirements and support our customers at every part of their study-abroad journey."

The international education industry is growing at a rapid pace. Almost 1.8 million Indian students are expected to study abroad by 2024, with total student spending exceeding \$75 billion.

# Iconic global sandwich chain Subway heading for sale?

US-based global sandwich chain Subway, whose control has been held by the families of its co-founders since its inception, may be up for sale soon, with an estimated valuation of over \$10 billion, media reports said.

The Connecticut-headquartered quick-service food chain, known for its signature submarine (sub) sandwiches and wraps, has retained advisers to explore a sale, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people familiar with the developments. Quoting people as saying that the process may attract potential corporate buyers and private-equity firms, the paper said that the process is still in its early stages and there is a possibility that the sale may not go ahead at all.

Subway refused to comment on the purported plans.

"As a privately-held company, we don't comment on ownership structure and business



plans. We continue to be focused on moving the brand forward with our transformational journey to help our franchisees be successful and profitable," the company was quoted by the WSJ as saying.

Set up by 17-year-old Fred DeLuca and financed by Peter Buck in 1965 as 'Pete's Super Submarines' in Bridgeport, Connecticut, it had several name changes before finally becoming Subway in 1972. It began fran-

chise operations in 1974, while its first global store was opened in Bahrain in December 1984. Subway has over 21,000 establishments across the US and over 40,000 in over 100 countries around the world, where it suitably changes its menu in line with local preferences.

Becoming one of the world's largest restaurant chains by aggressive expansion, it, however, saw sales plateauing while several competitors also emerged.

# Diamantaire Nirav Modi's HCL House price slashed, DRT orders re-auction in Feb-23

Finding no takers for fugitive diamantaire Nirav D. Modi's one property, its price has been slashed and the DRT has ordered its re-auction, along with certain other prime assets, in one of the cases pertaining to the Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam.

Last week, the DRT-I Recovery Officer Ajeet Tripathi put up the HCL House in Marol for e-auction -- plus three other lots of properties -- to recover a portion of the outstanding of a staggering Rs 22, 13, 16, 39, 411.

When it went on the block in September 2022, the unsold HCL House, comprising the entire building with the land, carried a reserve price tag of Rs 52 crore, which has now been slashed to Rs 40 crore, as per the DRT-I announcement.

Besides, the DRT-I has put on the auction block other assets of Modi, including Offices No. 2001-2002 on the 20th floor of the posh Peninsula Park B in Lower Parel with a reserve price of Rs 66 crore, plus over Rs 1.72 crore outstanding maintenance dues till December 2021.

Another property of Modi, the 6th floor of the Mafatlal Centre in Nariman Point along



with four parking slots will also go under the e-hammer with a reserve price of Rs 62 crore, besides unpaid maintenance charges for five years coming to over Rs 1.17 crore till May 2022.

Modi's huge residential 4-BHK flat in Grosvenor House at Peddar Road is going up for auction sale with a reserve price of Rs 15.87 crore, further details of which are not available. Modi also has another address in the prestigious Al Shera Towers, Dubai. The encumbrances or outstanding on HCL House and Grosvenor House are not known and all the properties

shall be auctioned off on the basis of 'as is where is' and 'as is what is'. The e-auction is scheduled for February 10 -- a week after the DRT-I ordered the sale of Modi's two tony flats in the YOOPUNE housing scheme in Pune, valued at a total of Rs 18 crore, on February 3.

In the fresh auction list concerning PNB versus Firestar International Ltd, the names figuring are Modi and his group companies like Bentley Properties Pvt. Ltd., MAK Business Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., ANM Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., NDM Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., Neeshal

Trading Pvt. Ltd. -- all operating from a common address at Opera House.

The other companies are: Firestone Trading Pvt. Ltd., Paundra Enterprises Pvt. Ltd. and Radashir Jewellery Co. Ltd. -- all registered in a single address at the Bharat Diamond Bourse (BDB) in Bandra Kurla Complex. The February 3 and 10 e-auctions may help the PNB and a consortium of around 15 banks to recover a minuscule portion of massive dues, pending since the past five years after the country's mega-banking scam was admitted by these banks in February 2018. After the PNB's complaint on the scam, estimated at over Rs 14,000 crore, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered the first offence in January 2018 -- but by then Modi, his wife Ami and other accused had already fled India. Later, other probe agencies like Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax Department (ITD) entered the picture targeting the two prime accused -- Modi and his maternal uncle Mehul C. Choksi -- but both had flown the coop well before the scam erupted to shake the roots of the Indian banking sector.

# Airlines in India to add 100 aircraft per year to fly 412 mn passengers



As Indigo Airline has expanded its fleet to 300 aircraft, the country's airlines' fleet is likely to add over 100 aircraft every year till the next few years as per the expected growth in the aviation sector.

Civil Aviation Ministry officials said that there were about 400 aircraft in 2013 and in 2021-22, the number increased to 700. Airlines in India are going to add 15 per cent capacity or 100 to 110 aircraft per year and the aviation sector is looking at close to 1,200 aircraft by 2027.

Officials said that expansion of the fleet size of an airline is a commercial decision and therefore each airline decides induction of aircraft keeping in view commercial viability, traffic demand and its business plan.

Barring the Covid period, the aviation traffic has witnessed consistent growth. The all-India passenger growth as projected by the Airports Authority of India for the next few years is 371 million passengers in 2023-24 and 412 million in 2024-25.

Similarly, airport infrastructure has also recorded corresponding growth in the last few years. Officials said that the total number of airports has nearly doubled from 74 in 2014 to over 141 in 2022.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Mopa International Airport in Goa for which the foundation stone was laid in November 2016. Developed at a cost of around Rs 2,870 crore, the airport has been built on the theme of sustainable infrastructure.

Before this, Donyi Polo Airport, Itanagar, the first Greenfield Airport of Arunachal Pradesh, was inaugurated in November, 2022.

Keeping in view the growth in aviation traffic, the government has accorded in-principle approval for setting up 21 Greenfield Airports across the country.

These 21 airports include Mopa in Goa, Navi Mumbai, Shirdi and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Hassan and Shivamogga in Karnataka, Dabra (Gwalior) in Madhya Pradesh, Kushinagar and Noida (Jewar) in Uttar Pradesh, Dholera and Hirasar in Gujarat, Karaikal in Puducherry, Dagadharthi, Bhogapuram and Oravakal (Kurnool) in Andhra Pradesh, Durgapur in West Bengal, Pakyong in Sikkim, Kannur in Kerala and Donyi Polo, Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh.

Out of these, many Greenfield airports including Durgapur, Shirdi, Kannur, Pakyong, Kalaburagi, Oravakal (Kurnool), Sindhudurg, Kushinagar and Donyi Polo, Itanagar and Mopa have been operationalised.

In keeping with the growth in the aircraft and passenger traffic, the aviation regulator has issued nearly 1100 commercial pilot licenses in 2022 as against 862 licenses in 2021. Officials said that there are 34 DGCA approved Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) operating at 52 bases in the country. Of these, IGRUA at Amethi (UP) is under the Central government, eight are under state governments and 25 are in the private sector.

# Exela Technologies Signs Strategic Partnership with Quintes Global

**CHENNAI:** Exela Technologies, Inc., a global business process automation ("BPA") leader, announced a partnership with Quintes Global ("QG"), an innovative company with a differentiated first-of-its-kind offering of 'Dedicated Captive Solutions' headquartered in New Delhi, India. Exela will deploy its cloud-based Robotic Process Automation ("RPA") solution, to enable end-to-end digitization of processes performed by QG for its customers under the unique Dedicated Captive Model.

Exela provides an intuitive and fully customizable RPA solution that can be leveraged to create task-specific software bots that deploy best practices using big data, machine learning, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, and predictive analysis. The solution is a component of



Exela's Exchange for Bills and Payments ("XBP") portfolio within the Information and Transaction Processing Solutions ("ITPS") accounting segment, which generated \$874.2 million in revenue for FY 2021.

"Exela is maximizing its relationships and infrastructure in Asia to drive revenue within the region. We are excited to partner with Quintes Global to enable end-to-end digital

challenges."

Rakesh Sinha, Founder and CEO, Quintes Global emphasized the value of the strategic partnership between QG and Exela by stating, "QG's Transformation Capability as a Service ("TCAAS") offering combines the optimization of existing technology as well as bringing in new-age technology for effective transformation. Exela brings immense value to our aggregated capabilities for cutting-edge technology and tools that help in driving end-to-end enterprise services transformation. We firmly believe in our mantra of 'Transformation in a Box' -- blended and balanced focus on technology, process redesign and change enablement."

QG is a venture of a few pioneering leaders who have led the Business Process Management value story of In-

dia since the mid-1990s. The Company was established to provide transformation-centric business process solutions under the Dedicated Captive (D-Cap™) model, with the objective of 'co-creating value.' QG draws upon the rich business services experience of the Founders in respect of setting up, managing, and handing over Captive Shared Services across a spectrum of support functions and industry verticals and a wide variety of business process transformation and automation assignments serving some of the marquee global and Indian companies.

Exela is a business process automation (BPA) leader, leveraging a global footprint and proprietary technology to provide digital transformation solutions that improve efficiency, quality, and productivity.

# Experts predict India's emergence as 'third pole', despite GDP growth worries

If any major middle-income country is truly outperforming in the coming decades, it's the world's soon-to-be third largest economy (and its largest democracy), India, Eurasia Group said in a report.

"In my view, 2023 will be remembered for India's emergence as the third pole of the world," wrote Shigesaburo Okumura, Editor-in-Chief of Nikkei Asia, in a recent article.

Another important factor not to be neglected is India. This year will likely be remembered for marking its emergence as the world's most populous nation, Okumura wrote.

According to the UN, China's population last year was 1.426 billion while India's was 1.417 billion. In July, the UN forecast that China's population would fall in 2023 while India's would surpass it.

By 2050, the UN expects India will have 1.6 billion residents and China 1.3 billion.

A growing working-age population is an important

source of economic growth, so India's emergence will give it new power in international politics, Okumura said.

Moreover, decoupling between the US and China and the rebuilding of technology supply chains to exclude China benefits India. Apple is building iPhone 14s in India.

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, chairman of Tata Sons, has talked of plans to produce semiconductors in the subcontinent.

In March, India will host the plenary session of the Trilateral Commission for the first time. This year, it is also chairing the Group of 20, a role that will involve a leaders' summit and many ministerial meetings. The Modi government will be eager to show leadership ahead of India's own elections in 2024, Okumura wrote.

"The new year thus could mark the beginning of a tripartite world, involving the US, China and India. New Delhi is undeniably on the rise," Okumura concluded.



Challenges, however, are mounting for India's economy with the GDP forecast at a half-century low.

Motilal Oswal Financial Services forecast in a note that after growing strongly for two consecutive years, India's real GDP growth would decelerate to 5.2 per cent YoY in FY24, while nominal GDP growth would weaken even sharply to 7-7.5 per cent, led by easing inflation.

A combination of factors

such as slower global economy, fading pent-up demand and normalising base effects would contribute to slower real growth.

With an expected retail inflation print at just 4.3 per cent and a mere 1 per cent growth in the wholesale price index (WPI) in FY24, the GDP deflator could be around 2 per cent, dragging down India's nominal GDP growth to the lowest level compared to any year between the early 1970s and FY19 (that

is, half-a-century pre-Covid period), the report said.

Such slow growth rate would have some serious implications for the macro economy and financial markets.

"Overall, we believe that unlike the past 12-15 months, the narrative will reverse in FY24. Inflation concerns will take a back seat and growth worries will resurface. This may be true not only for India, but also for the entire global economy. At the same time, restrictive monetary policy will fail to boost financial markets. Accordingly, CY23 could be very painful," the report said.

Revenue of listed companies is highly correlated with nominal GDP growth (and WPI-inflation). In case of single-digit nominal GDP growth, corporate sales growth is also expected to weaken from an average of >30 per cent YoY in the past seven quarters to single digits in FY24.

With an expectation of weaker nominal GDP growth in FY24, we estimate India's

## Rs 13,573 cr invested via MF SIPs in Dec '22



**NEW DELHI:** The systematic investment plans (SIP) of Indian mutual funds gathered Rs 13,573.08 crore from investors, up from Rs 13,306.49 crore invested in November 2022, the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) said on Tuesday.

Last month's SIP contribution was much higher than Rs 11,305.34 crore that was invested in December 2021.

"Investors will continue to invest in the India growth story through the mutual fund route over the near future. Investors are looking forward to a growth-oriented budget which should have a positive impact on the markets.

"The importance of investing in equity markets for the longer term goals is not lost on investors and the same is reflected in the ever-increasing awareness and adoption of SIP as a goal-linked route to create wealth over the long term. This month almost 24 lakh new SIPs were registered, which shows increasing investor belief in the instrument. SIPs are the simplest route to build a disciplined habit of regular investing," AMFI's Chief executive N.S. Venkatesh said.

According to the AMFI, the industry's net assets under management (AUM) at the end of December 2022 stood at Rs 39,88,735.37 crore (Rs 37,72,696.31 in December 2021) and the average AUM at Rs 40,76,170.53 crore.

The retail AUMs (Equity+Hybrid+Solution-Oriented Schemes) in December 2022 stood at Rs 20,55,212 crore and the average AUM stood at Rs 20,88,946 crore.

According to the industry body, the number of SIP ac-

## World Bank projects slowdown in economic growth of India at 6.6 per cent next fiscal



**NEW DELHI:** Predicting a slight decline in India's economic growth, the World Bank said that India will grow at 6.6 per cent in next financial year from an expected 6.9 per cent in 2022-23. However it said that India is likely to remain the fastest growing economy of the seven largest emerging-market and developing economies (EMDEs). For 2024-25, the growth rate is projected at 6.1 per cent. "The slowdown in the global economy and rising uncertainty will weigh on export and investment growth," it said. "Before falling back toward its potential rate of just above 6 per cent, India's growth is anticipated to slow, to 6.6 per cent in FY24," it said.

## Paytm logs Rs 3.46 lakh cr in GMV for Q3 FY23, a robust 38% growth

Leading payments and financial services company Paytm on Monday announced its business operating performance for the third quarter in FY23, saying its robust growth continues with Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) for Q3FY23 at Rs 3.46 lakh crore.



The company said it continues to reign the market in offline payments with 5.8 million merchants now paying subscriptions for payment devices, while user engagement also continues to grow. In its stock exchange filing, Paytm said that the aSuper App continues to see growing consumer engagement for its wide array of payment and financial services.

The company's average monthly transacting users (MTU) for the quarter ended December 2022 stood at 85 million, registering a robust growth of 32 per cent (year-on-year).

"Our payments and lending business continues to scale with strong adoption by consumers and merchants. We continue to remain focussed on execution and are confident on our profitability plans, a the company said.

Paytm reached a new milestone in offline payments with 3.8 million devices added year-on-year.

Highlighting its plans for its core payments business, the company said that with a focus on creating additional payment

with disbursements growing 330 per cent YoY.

Loans worth Rs 3,665 crore were disbursed in the month of December. The number of loans grew 117 per cent YoY to 3.7 million for December, and 137 per cent to 10.5 million cumulative loans for the three months, ended December 2022.

As a result, total disbursements for three months ended December 2022 was Rs 9,958 crore, a growth of 357 per cent YoY.

The total merchant GMV processed through the platform for Q3FY23 aggregated to Rs 3.46 lakh crore (\$42 billion), marking a YoY growth of 38 per cent.

"Our focus over the past few quarters continues to be on payment volumes that generate profitability for us, either through net payments margin or from direct upsell potential," the company said in its stock exchange filing.

## Paytm approved the incentive scheme of Rs 26 billion for promotion: Morgan Stanley

India's leading digital payments and financial services company Paytm will be a key beneficiary of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) incentive scheme, brokerage firm Morgan Stanley said on Thursday. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the incentive scheme of Rs 26 billion for promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M) for FY23, compared with Rs 15 billion in FY22.

"Apart from banks, Paytm should be a key beneficiary of the above. On our estimates, Paytm would have received 5-7 per cent of the FY22 incentive, and assuming a similar share for FY23, this would represent 3-5 per cent of our contribution profit estimate (1 per cent higher than what we previously assumed for FY23)," the brokerage firm mentioned.

## TN government extends 100 per cent road tax exemption for EVs till 2025



**CHENNAI:** With the aim to promote electric vehicles in the state, the Tamil Nadu government has extended 100 per cent exemption of road tax for EVs till December 31, 2025.

It has extended the relaxation for both transport and non-transport e-vehicles registered in the state, said a G.O. issued by K Phanindra Reddy, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Transport department on Friday.

Earlier, the state government had granted 100 per cent relaxation between November 3, 2020 and December 31, 2022. As the state government had not extended the relaxation further, registration of electric vehicles disrupted across the State. Following the request from the vehicle manufacturers and dealers, the transport department has now extended the sops for two more years.

## Centre approves promotional incentives for Rupay debit card, low value BHIM-UPI transactions

**NEW DELHI:** The union cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved Rs 2,600-crore incentive scheme to promote Rupay debit card and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (person-to-merchant) in FY23.

In-line with the objective of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', the scheme will also promote UPI Lite and UPI 123PAY as economical and user-friendly digital payments solutions and enable further deepening of digital payments in the country, across all sectors and segments of the population. The Union Cabinet has also approved the setting up of three national-level multi-state cooperative societies under Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002. Earlier in 2021, the Cabinet, chaired by PM Modi, had approved an incentive scheme to promote RuPay Debit cards and low-value (upto Rs 2,000) BHIM-UPI transactions (Person-to-Merchant (P2M)) in the country.

## Delhi HC asks Ashneer to maintain decorum in a plea filed by BharatPe

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Monday asked BharatPe's former Managing Director Ashneer Grover's counsel to advise his client (Grover) to maintain decorum following his termination from the fintech company while hearing a plea filed by the company seeking orders to restrain Grover and his kin from making defamatory statements against the company, and other reliefs.

Justice Navin Chawla said: "This social media has brought us down to this level. Ask him to maintain decorum." The court made its remark after seeing some tweets and allegations made against BharatPe and its staff by Grover. The court was informed that some of those utterances contain language that prevents their repetition in open court.

The court then ordered: "Issue notice on defendants' application to the plaintiff. Notice accepted. Three more weeks time granted to the defendants to file their responses to the interim applicants. Written statements to be filed in response to the main suit as well."



On December 8, the HC had issued summons to Grover and his wife and others and gave them two weeks' time to file replies to the interim relief application filed by the company.

In its suit, running into 2,800 pages, BharatPe has claimed damages worth Rs 88.67 crore from Grover, his wife, and his brother for alleged cheating and misappropriation of funds.

The damages sought include a claim for payment made against the invoices of non-existent vendors amounting to Rs 71.7 crore, a claim for Rs 1.66 crore penalty paid to GST authorities, payments

The suit further claimed that the Grovers used the company funds to pay the rent and security deposit of their posh duplex and for home appliances, too. The duplex was first taken over by Grovers as the company's guest house but eventually they started living there, the suit claimed.

BharatPe had filed an interim relief application seeking disclosure of assets of Grover and his family members, and an interim injunction restraining them from making defamatory/derogatory statements about the fintech company, its directors, employees and/or publicising the same. The application also sought direction to defendants to delete/remove within a period of five days all statements, tweets, social media posts, books, re-tweets, hashtags, videos, press conferences, interviews, comments, etc., made against the company and orders granting liberty to BharatPe to approach all social media platforms, media organisations, publications, websites, blogs, etc., to seek deletion/removal of all such material.

## 599.9 grams Gold valued at Rs 33,71,438 seized at SGRDJI Airport



**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**

The Customs Department in Amritsar has seized smuggled Gold having value Rs 33,71,438.

Commissioner of Customs, Mr. Rahul Nangare in a statement issued here today stated that on January 12, one passenger arriving from Australia via Singapore by Scoot Airlines was intercepted on the basis of profiling and suspicious movements by Customs officers at Shri Guru Ramdas ji International (SGRDJI) Airport, Amritsar.

On carrying out his personal search, raw gold weighing 599.9 grams of 24 Carat in the shape of five Kadas (bangles) valued at Rs. 33,71,438/- was recovered. The same has been seized under the relevant sections of the Customs Act. Further investigation is in progress, he informed.

# Global economy staring at two recessions in same decade which would mark a first in over 80 years

**NEW DELHI:** Global growth is slowing sharply in the face of elevated inflation, higher interest rates, reduced investment, and disruptions caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report.

Given the fragile economic conditions, any new adverse development -- such as higher-than-expected inflation, abrupt rise in interest rates to contain it, a resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic, or escalating geopolitical ten-



sions -- could push the global economy into recession.

This would mark the first time in more than 80 years when two global recessions have occurred within the same decade, the World Bank said.

The global economy is projected to grow by 1.7 per cent in 2023 and 2.7 per cent in 2024. The sharp downturn in growth is expected to be widespread, with forecasts in 2023 revised down for 95 per cent of advanced economies and nearly 70 per cent of emerging markets and developing

economies.

"The crisis facing development is intensifying as the global growth outlook deteriorates," said World Bank Group President David Malpass.

"Emerging and developing countries are facing a multi-

year period of slow growth driven by heavy debt burdens and weak investment as global capital is absorbed by advanced economies faced with extremely high government debt levels and rising interest rates. Weakness in growth and business investment will compound the already-devastating reversals in education, health, poverty, and infrastructure and the increasing demands from climate change."

In the US, growth is forecast to fall to 0.5 per cent in 2023 -- 1.9 percentage points

below previous forecasts and the weakest performance outside of official recessions since 1970.

In 2023, euro-area growth is expected at zero per cent -- a downward revision of 1.9 percentage points. In China, growth is projected at 4.3 per cent in 2023, 0.9 percentage point below previous forecasts.

Excluding China, growth in the emerging markets and developing economies is expected to decelerate from 3.8 per cent in 2022 to 2.7 per cent in 2023, reflecting significantly weaker

## War plunges Ukraine's GDP to record 30.4 per cent in 2022



In the wake of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, the country's GDP declined by a record 30.4 per cent last year, the Economy Ministry said citing preliminary estimates.

"In 2022, the Ukrainian economy suffered its largest losses and damage in the entire history of independence," Xinhua news agency quoted Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko as saying.

In December 2022, Ukraine's GDP declined 34

per cent due to a certain stabilisation of the situation with energy supply, after a fall of 37 per cent in November, the Ministry said. In the fourth quarter of last year, Ukraine's economy experienced a decline of 35.5 per cent compared with the same period in 2021, it said. The Ukrainian economy saw a 3.4-per cent growth in 2021. The country's GDP is expected to rise 3.2 per cent this year, according to the government's projection.

## Piyush Goyal mocks 'mini' trade deal with US, concedes no FTA on offer

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that India was not interested any longer in the "mini" trade deal that was once under discussion with former US President Donald Trump and a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is not on the table because President Joe Biden's administration is not currently interested in negotiating one with any country.

India and the US have decided to focus instead on greater market access, ease of doing business between the two countries and a larger footprint regarding trading, investment and business, the Minister said on Wednesday. Two specific targets for this elevated engagement were semiconductors and defence production.

Goyal made the remarks while speaking with reporters after discussions with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai at the 13th meeting here in Washington D.C. of the Trade Policy Forum, which is the highest platform for trade talks between the two countries. Recent trade relations between India and the



US have been marked by lack of significant progress, specially after President Biden took office, in stark contrast to the frenetic pace set by the two sides just a year before in the run-up to Trump's visit to India in February 2020, in anticipation of a deal. Talks collapsed and Goyal had blamed the Trump administration for it, saying the former administration kept shifting the goal-post.

"In terms of the mini trade deal, I think it was too mini to really merit any great effort on both sides," Goyal said of the negotiations. "And we have even forgotten most of those issues. We are looking at much much bigger ambitions in our trade

with the US."

Goyal had himself led the talks on the Indian side then, as now, and he had at one stage exuberantly declared that the deal was "just a phone call away". The Minister was also dismissive of the withdrawal of preferential zero-duty benefits the US had provided to imports from India under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme.

Trump had ordered the withdrawal of the benefits in 2019, just a few days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi started his second term, to compel India to concede more market access to US products as part of a trade deal Washington was trying to inflict on New Delhi.

## UNSC confirms re-authorization of cross-border aid deliveries to Syria



The UN Security Council (UNSC) has adopted a resolution to confirm the re-authorization of cross-border aid deliveries into Syria for another six months till July 10.

Resolution 2672 confirms Resolution 2642 of July 2022, which decides to extend the authorization for aid deliveries through the crossing at Bab al-Hawa on the border with Turkey for six months till January 10, 2023, and decides that a further extension of an additional six months will require a separate Security Council resolution, reports Xinhua news agency.

Resolution 2672, which won the unanimous support of the 15-member Council, requests the UN Secretary-General to provide a special report on the humanitarian needs in Syria no later than June 10.

## Joe Biden's legal team finds fresh batch of classified documents

US President Joe Biden's legal team has found a fresh batch of classified documents at a second location following the initial discovery of confidential material dating back from the time when he was Vice President at his former think tank office in Washington, media reports said.

Since the original batch of about 10 documents was discovered in November 2022 at the Penn Biden Center think tank near the White House, but only came to light this Monday, Biden's aides have been searching for any additional classified materials that might be in other locations he used, an informed source told CBS News on Wednesday.

The classification level, number and precise location of the fresh batch of documents was not immediately clear. It was also not known when the additional documents were discovered and if the search for any other classified materials Biden may have from the former Barack Obama admin-



istration is complete. The White House has not yet commented on the newly discovered batch.

Earlier on Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre declined to answer questions about the first cache of files during her daily press briefing, the BBC reported. "This is under review by the Department of Justice" she said. "I'm not going to go beyond what the president shared yesterday." On Tuesday, Biden said he was "surprised to learn there were any government records that were taken there to that office" which he periodically used from mid-2017 until the start of his 2020 presidential campaign.

## Canada finalises agreement to buy 88 F-35 fighter jets



The Canadian government announced that it has finalised an agreement with the US and Lockheed Martin with Pratt & Whitney to buy a fleet of 88 F-35 fighter jets.

The first deliveries of the aircraft are anticipated to begin in 2026 and a fully operational fleet is expected between 2032 and 2034, Xinhua news agency quoted a statement issued by the Public Services and Procurement Canada.

Estimated at C\$19 billion (\$15 billion), this is the largest investment for the Royal Canadian Air Force in the past 30 years.



The agreement includes associated equipment, sustainment set-up and services, as well as the construction of fighter squadron facilities, the statement said. The acquisition will occur as a staggered process and acquisition plans for a number of aircraft are already confirmed with this process continuing until the full fleet of 88 jets is acquired, it added.

## Australian Cardinal convicted of child abuse dies



Cardinal George Pell, whose conviction on child abuse charges shocked the Catholic Church before being quashed, has died of heart complications after hip surgery, officials said on Wednesday. He was 81. The former Vatican treasurer is Australia's highest ranking Catholic cleric, and the most senior Church figure ever jailed for such offences, reports the BBC. Cardinal Pell served as Archbishop of both Melbourne and Sydney before becoming one of the Pope's top aides.

## Indian-origin driver charged for killing 4 Sikh men in Aus crash

A 41 year-old Indian-origin man, has been charged with four counts of dangerous driving causing the death of four men from Punjab in Australia's central Victoria province.

Harinder Singh Randhawa, who is recuperating in the hospital under police custody, was driving a Peugeot with four passengers inside when it collided with a Toyota Hilux ute at an intersection at Pine Lodge, near Shepparton earlier this month, the SBS Punjabi channel reported. Randhawa will be appearing in Melbourne Magistrates' Court on June 8. The four men died on the spot, the police said, adding that they are investigating whether they were wearing seatbelts.

The deceased men have been identified as Harpal Singh from the Mukstar, Bhupinder Singh from Jalandhar, Baljinder Singh



and Kishan Singh from Tarn Taran. "They belonged to the state of Punjab and were on visitor visas in Australia to see their extended families," Melbourne-based social worker Phulvinderjit Singh Grewal told SBS Punjabi. Grewal told the channel that the families of the four men "were inconsolable".

Victoria Police Acting Assistant Commissioner Justin Goldsmith told media that early signs pointed to a "T-bone type collision", that is, when the front of one vehicle strikes the side of another, forming a 'T' shape.

## Aussie police seize \$1mn cash, cocaine, methylamphetamine



Police in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) has charged four men after seizing more than 5 kg of cocaine and methylamphetamine, and cash worth \$1.03 million in Sydney.

In a statement released on Monday, the NSW Police said that the officers stopped a sedan at Strathfield, a suburb in the

inner west of Sydney, at about 3.40 p.m. (local time) on Sunday and spoke with the two male occupants, aged 23 and 28, reports Xinhua news agency.

During a search of the sedan, officers detected about 2.3 kg of cocaine and A\$24,000 in cash.

A subsequent search of a hatchback parked nearby located a further 550 g of cocaine and 140 g of MDMA.

Following that, investigators executed two search warrants at related properties, where they located and seized a further A\$1.5 million cash, 2 kg of methylamphetamine, 2 liters of methylamphetamine oil, almost 700 g of cocaine as well as cannabis and steroids.

Three vehicles, two hydraulic press machines, two ballistic vests, a firearm and ammunition, multiple driver's licenses and other items consistent with the manufacture of illicit drugs were also found on site.

Two more men, aged 18 and 35, were arrested at one of the properties and taken to the police station.

# Afghanistan—what next?



BRIGADIER (RETD.) RAJ BHUTANI

Archaeologists confirm human habitation in Afghanistan from as far back as 50,000 BC. The indigenous people were small farmers and herdsmen, as they are today. They were grouped into tribes with small local kingdoms, rising and falling through the ages. It is believed that the region had early trade contacts with Mesopotamia. Before the arrival of Islam in the 7th century, there were a number of religions practiced in ancient Afghanistan, including Zoroastrianism, Surya worship, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Afghanistan is a landlocked mountainous country at the cross roads of central and South Asia. It has borders with Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In the middle ages and upto the 18th century, the region was known as Khorasan. The present day cities of Balkh, Herat, Ghazni and Kabul comprise the Khorasan area. Afghanistan is a notoriously difficult country to govern. Empire after empire, nation after nation have failed to pacify what is today the territory of Afghanistan. It is therefore, called the 'Graveyard of Empires'.

Genghis Khan, in his bid to expand the Mongol Empire towards central Asia and the middle east, invaded Afghanistan in 1219—21 but could not hold it for long, as he was defeated by the forces of Jalal-ad-Din at Parwan. Britain, in order to protect its Indian Colony from any invasion by the Russian Czars, played the 'Big Game' in the area in order to check Russian influence in central Asia and the middle east. There were three Anglo-Afghan wars in the area but in the first Anglo-Afghan war which was fought in 1839-42, all 4500 British troops and 12,000 civilians were slaughtered by the Afghan tribal warlords.

In 1979, the Soviet Union decided to prop-up a communist regime in this strate-



gically located central Asian country. Soviet troops fought for over nine years to have a grip on the country but, had to abandon their adventure, after having lost 15000 of their soldiers and killing two million Afghan people.

But this victory cannot be wholly attributed to the superiority of Afghan mujahideen as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) forces under the United States, were providing complete war material, finance and intelligence through covert operations and for this, CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) of US and ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) of Pakistan, were hand in glove with each other. At the end of withdrawal of soviet forces, no doubt, the visible victory went to Afghanistan but, in actual fact it was the covert victory of America over the Soviet Union which was its cold war enemy after WW II.

Now Afghanistan was free to be taken over by the Taliban which was waiting in the wings in Pakistan. The withdrawal of soviet forces also saw, a huge availability of military hardware left by the US and the Soviets which became the legitimate property of Taliban when it took over the country in 1996. Taliban, with its medieval ways of governance, created terror in the minds of common people

with public lashings and public hangings. Their barbaric rule ended when they allowed Al Qaeda leader, OSAMA BIN LADEN to use the Afghan soil to launch the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and the US response thereto. In Oct, 2001 the US war in Afghanistan started and continued for 20 years. In these 20 years, US forces faced continuous guerrilla attacks from the mujahideens. At the end, the American public got fed up with this war and receiving body bags for such a long period of time. It made them sick which resulted in a hasty and ignominious withdrawal of US troops from Afghan soil on 30th Aug, 2021. Their achievements are there to seefor the whole world!

The Taliban were virtually handed over the complete Afghan territory on a platter and the whole world condemned this action. The Taliban had occupied Afghanistan on the 15th of Aug, 2021. But before the departure of US forces from Afghan soil, the US signed an agreement with Taliban at Doha in Qatar that, once the US troops leave Afghan soil, the Taliban would rule the country by forming an inclusive government in which the representation of all ethnic groups would be ensured

and democracy would prevail. Women too would be given due representation in governance. Women education would not be stopped and justice would be delivered by keeping in mind the human rights principles. And in case, the future government fails to abide by the Agreement, it would not be recognized and therefore, no financial help would be forthcoming from the international financial institutions for the reconstruction and economic development of the country. It was also mentioned that the Afghan Central Bank funds to the tune of nine billion dollars would be blocked by the US and not made available for the development of Afghanistan.

The population of Afghanistan is around 40 million. The nation is composed of a multi-ethnic and multilingual society. Ethnic groups in the country include Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and others. Afghanistan has two official languages, Pashto and Dari. Pashto is spoken in most regions of Afghanistan. The country is an Islamic Republic and 90% of the population follows Sunni Islam, the rest are Shia Muslims.

Pashtun aspirations to rule this country with Sharia laws, have not allowed the country to progress in tune with the new world order. Its leaders, or to put it more appropriately, its warlords, never allowed scientific education to its people which kept the whole country devoid of holistic progress. This was one of the major reasons that outside powers came to Afghanistan and used its people for their ulterior motives and ultimately leaving the country in lurch. A large number of countries in the Arab world impose Sharia laws but they do not hinder the scientific outlook and progress of their people. The problem with the autocratic leaders of this country is that, they listen to the Islamic clerics blindly and impose ultra-austere interpretation of Islam thus creating a near theocratic state in which, barbaric punishments are handed down like public lashings and public hangings.

The imposition of ultra-austere interpretation of Islam has not helped the country and its people. A country that debarbs half of its population to stay away and not be part of the progress and development, can only expect to remain in the lower rung of countries on a global scale. What a shame to see that in the 21st century, a government issues a diktat that the role of women is only to bear and deliver children as also to look after affairs within the four walls of the house.

What Next? It is very clear that the West wants the Taliban to run the



country in a transparent manner and not be an impediment to the progress made in the last two decades in terms of education including the women education, societal harmony and fair legal system.

Russia is on the same page as India that Afghanistan being an Asian country, the finding of solution to its problems should be left to the Asian countries bordering it or situated in its vicinity. India is a very important country in its vicinity and it can't afford to ignore Taliban in order to safeguard against potential terrorist attacks by anti-India forces from the Afghan soil. India also can't ignore very ancient historic and cultural ties with this country. Although India does not recognize the Taliban Government yet it has been providing medical assistance to the Indra Gandhi Children's Hospital, Kabul, Afghanistan. India has been sending humanitarian aid in terms of wheat and medical supplies. This contact must continue and at a later stage both the countries would find ways and means to establish a sound economic relationship.

In my opinion the world powers have a collective responsibility towards the situation in Afghanistan; its resolution will be time consuming and challenging. Foreign powers should not rush to fill the vacuum with ulterior motives, due to the geostrategic importance of Afghanistan.

The world body and more importantly the US has to catch the bull by its horns and make sincere efforts to bring the governance of Afghanistan in tune with the present world order. The US is morally responsible to discipline the Taliban, not with the barrel of a gun but by showing compassion for the 40 million Afghans, most of whom were not responsible for the attack on twin towers. One way forward is by asking the Taliban to allow establishment of a large number of NGOs who could be working for

alleviation of poverty, medical assistance, assistance for the handicapped, assistance and medical advice to the pregnant women, running de-addiction centres, adult education and encouraging others to acquire education, helping people living in far flung areas to maintain personal documentation and land records, providing legal assistance to poor people, vocational training in industry, educating people to enhance the agricultural productivity and finally to wean away people from growing poppy crops.

These NGOs should be funded for a period of 20 years from the nine billion dollars blocked by the US and everyone knows that these funds legitimately belong to the people of Afghanistan. Every year, 500 million dollars should be allocated directly to these NGOs and since in the last one and a half year, Taliban has not kept its promise on most points mentioned in the Doha Agreement, the funds cannot and must not be routed through the government agencies. In this way Taliban government can be lured into accepting the establishment of these NGOs. With this, their constant harping about the release of the blocked funds would also stop.

In the end, I would like to advise the law makers of America to start thinking out of the box—if they are sincere to bring reforms in Afghanistan. The President of the United States of America needs to sit back and deliberate; did a super power of 280 million people (in the year 2001) require a 20 years of bombing campaign to avenge the twin towers attack on an already beleaguered country of 20 million people and send them back to the medieval ages?

Brigadier (retd.) Raj Bhutani: (The author is a freelance writer, a war veteran of 1971 war and retired Brigadier with 32 years of service in the Indian Army)

# Pictures of Rakhi Sawant, Adil Khan Durrani 'court wedding' gone viral on social media



Pictures of Rakhi Sawant and her longtime boyfriend and Mysore-based businessman Adil Khan Durrani have gone

viral on social media in which they can be spotted wearing garlands and signing papers and highlighting it.

Rakhi opted for pink coloured sharara with a dupatta over her head while Adil wore black coloured shirt and jeans.

If the pictures that are going viral on social media are to be believed it seems to be a court marriage. However, no official announcement has been made by the couple. Soon after the pics went viral, many of Rakhi's fans congratulated her and wished her a happy married life. Rakhi has been dating Adil for quite long, and in May last year, during an event, she made an official announcement about her relationship with him.

Before dating Adil, she introduced her husband Ritesh on 'Bigg Boss 15' but later they both parted their ways. Soon after she introduced her boyfriend Adil with whom she has been sharing a number of videos on Instagram. In fact, while speaking to the media, she had talked about settling down with him.

# 'Bigg Boss 16': Salman Khan dances with Bharti-Haarsh's son 'Gola'



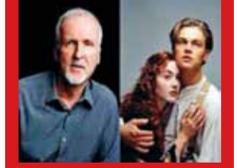
MUMBAI: In the upcoming episode of 'Bigg Boss 16', Salman Khan will be seen turning babysitter for Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiyaa as they left their son Laksh, lovingly called Gola, with the 'Dabangg' song.

A promo shared by the channel Colors, showed Bharti walking onstage calling out her son's name 'Gola.'

Bharti says, "Haan, yeh Bharti ka bachha hain." Moments later, Bharti and Harsh, leave Gola and Salman on stage. As they go, Bharti shares: "Do din bachha sambhalna hain" and Haarsh adds, "Chachu ko pareshaan maat karna."

Salman asks if Gola would like to dance and they shake a leg to the actor's song 'Baby Ko Bass Pasand Hai' from the 2016 film 'Sultan'.

# James Cameron says Leonardo DiCaprio thought 'TITANIC' was 'boring'



'Titanic' remains the biggest hit of Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio's career, but it sounds like getting the actor to star in the film was tough work for director James Cameron. The filmmaker recently told People magazine that DiCaprio thought the 'Titanic' screenplay was "boring" and didn't want to star in the epic disaster romance film. Cameron had to "twist" DiCaprio's arm, reports 'Variety'.

"He didn't want to do a leading man," Cameron said. "I had to really twist his arm to be in the movie. He didn't want to do it. He thought it was boring. (He) accepted the part only when I convinced him that it was actually a difficult challenge."

As revealed to GQ magazine earlier this year, Cameron and DiCaprio hit another speed bump on the road to "Titanic" when DiCaprio refused to screen test for the movie. Kate Winslet had already landed the role of Rose, and Cameron wanted DiCaprio to screen test with her before officially giving him the role of Jack.

"I had the camera set up to record the video," Cameron said. "Leo didn't know he was going to test. He thought it was another meeting to meet Kate. So I said, 'Okay, we'll just go in the next room, and we'll run some lines and I'll video it'. And he said, 'You mean, I'm reading?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Oh, I don't read'. I shook his hand and said, 'Thanks for coming by.'"

# 'It was a beautiful torture': Ram Charan looks back at 'Naatu Naatu'



When Marc Malkin of 'Variety' asked Ram Charan if he would like

to be a Marvel superhero, the 'RRR' hero responded at once: "Absolutely. Why

not?" And when he was asked about his favourite Marvel superhero, he said without thinking much: "Tony Stark." He was referring to the character Robert Downey Jr plays in the Iron Man franchise.

"Or maybe Captain America, why not?" Ram Charan added as an afterthought. "We have some amazing superheroes in India too," he pointed out. "How about you invite one of our heroes over here?"

Talking specifically about 'Naatu Naatu', he said: "My knees still wobble talking about it today. It was a beautiful torture and look where it has got us."

On the positive response 'RRR' has been getting in the run-up to the awards, Rajamouli

# POTPOURRI

said: "It humbles me that I get love from so many people." In the same spirit, NTR Jr had told 'Variety' in another red carpet interview: "We thought we had a winner, but it turned out to be more than a winner ... you don't expect this to happen."

Cheering the win, 'Los Angeles Times' tweeted (and promoted the profile it carried of Rajamouli): "Last night, the audience at #RRRMovie's sold-out Chinese Theater screening swarmed the stage to dance during the 'Naatu Naatu' number. Today, composer M.M. Keeravani won the Golden Globe for best original song."

# Navina Wadekar joins 'Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah'

Actress Navina Wadekar has been roped in to play the role of Bawri in 'Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah'. After Monika Bhadoriya, who was playing the character quit the show, there was a search for a new face and maker Asit Kumarr Modi has found Navina a perfect replacement.



need to fulfill their expectations. I am sure that they will love Bawri, played by Navina Wadekar."

character Bawri was not seen in every episode and her presence was not that noticeable.

However, now the character will be given more prominence. Now in the show, viewers can see that Bawri is back from her town and promises to meet Bagha in the garden but instead of meeting him, she just sends a message of breaking up.

Bagha is surprised and wants to know the reason.

While talking more about the actress, the creator of the show adds that after looking at a number of talents, he finally found her suitable for the role.

# Only female to produce the highest number of Punjabi Movies : Ravneet Kaur Grewal



KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

It is said that with hard work and effort, you can achieve anything. And all this came true for Ravneet Kaur Grewal as well. Ravneet Kaur Grewal is a famous Punjabi producer who has rendered numerous hit Punjabi movies under the banner of her production Houses - Humble Music and humble motion pictures. Being one of the directors of the said production house, she has delivered her perfection and persistent effort into the house in a prime manner. As a result, Humble Motion Pictures & Humble Music are one of the biggest production houses in Punjabi Entertainment Industry. Apart from a producer, if her personal life is concerned, she is happily married to producer, actor and singer Gippy Grewal (Rupinder Singh Grewal) and is mother to three boys - Gurbaaz Grewal, Ekam Grewal and Shinda Grewal. Ravneet's journey from zero to zenith was quite long as there was time when she used to juggle in Canada for work with her husband Gippy Grewal. With her constant support and their joint efforts, the couple managed to make their own identity in the Punjabi Entertainment Industry and now own the biggest projects of the same.

# Kim 'hates' Kanye West's new wife, shares cryptic quotes

LOS ANGELES: Reality TV star Kim Kardashian reportedly doesn't approve of her former husband and rapper Kanye West's alleged new wife Bianca Censori.



"Kim hates her," an insider told Page Six of the 'Donda' artist's architectural designer wife. "She's pretty. And Kim hates pretty girls."

It was also said that it was well known around the Yeezy HQ that the SKIMS founder didn't like Bianca, who reportedly worked at Yeezy as an architectural designer for several years. Kim allegedly suspected that Bianca had a secret agenda by approaching Kanye.

Kim also appeared to react to the wedding news with cryptic quotes. Amid reports that her ex-husband has remarried, the 42-year-old star, who shares four kids with the rapper, shared a message on Instagram.

A third post, meanwhile, read: "People who want to see you win, will help you win. Remember that."

In other news related to Kanye, it was said that he and his new wife Bianca went on honeymoon in Utah following their private wedding ceremony. Daily Mail reported that the embattled star and the Yeezy architectural designer spent time at Amangiri resort last week.

News of their shocking marriage broke on Friday. While the pair reportedly tied the knot in private nuptials, it is believed that the union is not legally binding as they haven't filed a marriage certificate.

# Sudarshan Pattnaik builds world's largest hockey stick



MANPREET SINGH Bhubaneswar (Odisha)

Ahead of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup inaugural ceremony, eminent sand artist Padma Sri Sudarshan Pattnaik sculptured World's largest hockey stick on the banks of Mahanadi River at Cuttack, where the 'celebration' event is scheduled for on 11 January to mark the opening of the mega hockey event starting 13th January at Bhubaneswar-Rourkela. Sudarshan Pattnaik created a 105-feet long hockey stick, using 5000 hockey balls. The sand artist used over five tonnes of sand for the sculpture which also showcases

the newly built Birs Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela. Having taken two days to complete this incredible art installation, Sudarshan Pattnaik has once again showcased the passion Odisha has for the national sport. He said, "There is a festive atmosphere in every village you travel to in Odisha because of the World Cup. It is a very special event for the people of Odisha and there are celebrations everywhere. To welcome everyone to this beautiful state, we wanted to create something unique this time, that's why we thought of using hockey balls and create this installation." It took Sudarshan and his

# XLRI Jamshedpur hosted its Graduation Ceremony for Postgraduate Certificate in General Management



MANPREET SINGH Jamshedpur

XLRI is among the top 10 Indian B-schools & pioneers in Live Virtual Learning. Over 7000 working professionals have pursued Postgraduate Certificate Programmes so far and have advanced their careers within and outside of their organisations. And today on January 6, 2023 another set of 30 working professionals of Tata Steel graduated. The programme consisted of 5 days of intensive campus learning and group learning sessions. T V Narendran, Managing Director of Tata Steel Ltd graced the graduation ceremony as the Chief Guest and delivered the Convocation address.

Jamshedpur addressed the audience - "It gives me immense pleasure to have each one of you here. After hard work and commitment, you all have reached here. Let's cherish this day and keep it in our memory forever." T V Narendran presented the Medal for Academic Excellence to Pankaj Kumar Tiwari, PGCBM (2021-22) Batch. Addressing the crowd, he said, "This course is a win-win for both the organisations: XLRI & Tata Steel. It's the best for Tata Steel to take full leverage of XLRI as an institution to nourish our employees. Anyone can reach anywhere in Tata Steel. That's why we invest in the people and people invest in our organisations. Another batch of our working executives is getting ready to be a part of this course."

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

Read & Lead

A weekly Newspaper from Chandigarh & Delhi

For more stories & E-paper log on  
[www.thefinancialworld.com](http://www.thefinancialworld.com)

SUBSCRIBE: YOUTUBE CHANNEL  
FW News

FOLLOW US

@thefinancialworld
@FWMedia\_Tweets
fw.thefinancialworld