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**MODI USING GOVERNORS TO HARASS CMS OF OPPOSITION RULED STATES: ARVIND KEJRIWAL**



## Shifting to old pension scheme may lead to liability add-up in future: Raghuram Rajan

As several state governments have shown their intent of shifting to the old pension scheme, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said that states doing so, would end up curbing current expenditure but may build liabilities for the future.

He also cautioned banks on tilting too much towards retail lending.

In an interview to an online portal on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, Rajan said that the reason why the new pension scheme was adopted because in the old scheme, huge liabilities had built up.

**“States doing so, would end up curbing current expenditure but may build liabilities for the future”**

He further said that defined benefit schemes are easier for governments to adopt as liabilities are not being recognised. Several state governments like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Punjab have indicated



that they will shift to the old pension scheme while Himachal Pradesh too has indicated the same intention. Rajan further added in the interview that though it is for each state government to decide, but these schemes should be aimed effectively towards the weaker sections of the society, so as to benefit them. The former RBI Governor

also had a word of caution during the interview, for Indian banks for their shift towards retail lending, as he noted that there could be potential risks in case of a downcycle. Rajan's comments have come at a time when Indian banks have seen a huge spike in retail assets in comparison to wholesale loans. He was quoted as saying in the interview that banks should check all risks involved while indulging in infrastructure lending. The former banker said between 2007 and 2009, the RBI had moved towards infrastructure loans, however later they created problems.

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**THREE TIMES INCREASE IN ON-LINE FRAUDS REPORTED IN PAST FIVE YEARS**



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**SHAH RUKH KHAN'S RETURN TO THE SILVER SCREEN AFTER FOUR YEARS OF LONG BREAK: JOHN ABRAHAM**



## Who is LG to stop, says Kejriwal on tussle over teachers training in Finland

**NEW DELHI:** While addressing the winter session of Delhi Assembly on Tuesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal lashed out at Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena over the ongoing tussle between the AAP government and the L-G office over sending government school teachers to Finland for training purposes. “We have the money of the people of Delhi who pay taxes. It is on taxpayers’ money that the elected government of Delhi is sending teachers for training to Finland. Who is L-G to stop them,” Kejriwal asked.

“It seems like ‘Begani Shaadi Mein Abdullah Deewana’ (a person who takes too much



interest in the affairs of others). Why is the L-G sitting on our head? The L-G is saying get the training done in the country itself... Why get it done here,” the Chief Minister questioned. Kejriwal added that in a

bid to motivate them and increase their efficiency, 30 teachers need to go to Finland for training. “This has been decided by the elected Chief Minister and the Education Minister. But strangely, all the files have to go to the L-G for approval. The L-G has objected twice which reflects his bad intentions. “Repeated objections mean that the intention is bad and the teachers should not be allowed to go. Many MPs have studied abroad, their children have gone abroad to study. Was any cost-benefit analysis done then,” Kejriwal asked, adding that it is a feudalistic mentality that the poor are not allowed to move ahead.

**People have opportunity to oust the BJP govt in 2024 Lok Sabha polls : Kejriwal**



YOGESH KANT New Delhi

Delhi Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Wednesday that people across the nation are aspiring for change and that the 2024 general election is the right time to oust the BJP Government from power at the centre. “The people of the country voted for the BJP with lots of hopes in 2014 and 2019, but their policies have destroyed the country, now the country is asking for change and there is an opportunity to bring change in 2024. BJP has to be uprooted and defeated in the 2024 elections and a government that thinks about the progress of the country and deals with issues such as unemployment, inflation, education, health needs to be elected to power,” Kejriwal said while addressing a public meeting organised by BRS president and Telangana Chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in Khammam in Telangana.

In an attempt to create a third front, opposition leaders unite for a goal, in the political battleground of the country ahead of the Lok Sabha 2024 elections, leaders of opposition parties, including SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and CPI's D Raja, attended the BRS public meeting.

“BJP has to be uprooted and defeated in the 2024 elections and a government that thinks about the progress of the country and deals with issues such as unemployment, inflation, education and health needs to be elected to power,” Kejriwal said.

Kejriwal called for the cohesive development of the country on the occasion and said: “India will progress only if we stop fighting and start learning from each other.” “Despite attaining independence 75 years ago, our country has not progressed because of the kind of politicians that we have had. Now some CMs and senior leaders are coming together to discuss the development of the country,” he said. Kejriwal further said that the Telangana government has started a wonderful initiative to conduct free eye checkups for its residents and AAP will implement this scheme in Punjab and Delhi as well.

“CM K Chandrasekhar Rao had visited Delhi to see our mohalla clinics, and on his return to the state, he implemented a similar initiative under the name Basti Dawakhana. Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin visited Delhi to see our government schools and he went back to his state and transformed the schools there and called me for the inauguration of these schools,” Kejriwal said.

## Congress Leader Priyanka Gandhi promises Rs 2,000 per month to women-led households in Karnataka

ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru

AICC General secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra announced a monthly cash assistance of Rs 2,000 under the “Gruha Lakhmi scheme” to every woman head of household in the Karnataka state if Congress party voted to power in the coming assembly elections in Karnataka.



to attend women's convention called “Naa Nayaki” (I am the woman leader). She said, Gruha Lakhmi scheme would benefit over 1.5 crore women in the

state, which means the government will have to spend Rs 36,000 crore a year to fulfil the promise she made. Earlier congress made big pre poll pledge that 200 units of free electricity to all households. The “Gruha Lakhmi” scheme is an attempt to share the “burden of the exorbitant LPG prices and the daily expenses that a woman bears, the party said. This decision took based on most women, from whom it sought suggestions, wanted the party to reduce their financial

burden. Addressing the Convention Priyanka Gandhi said, a Separate manifesto for women will be released and Rs 24,000 a year would be directly credited to their bank accounts under the scheme, “We want every woman in the Karnataka state to be empowered and capable of standing on her own and taking care of her children”. The scheme, along with many yet to be announced, seeks to provide financial independence to each woman in Karnataka, she added.

## Union Budget 2023 might be presented in New Parliament Building



**NEW DELHI:** During the upcoming budget session of the Parliament, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman might present the Union Budget 2023-24 at the new Parliament building on February 1. Preparations for presenting this year's Budget is going on in full swing. According to sources, the construction work for the new Parliament House is almost complete and is expected to be ready by the end of January. Therefore, preparations have also started for the upcoming

Budget session to be held at the new Parliament building. Although a final decision on this count is yet to be taken, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has already started making new identity cards for the MPs of different parties for entry into the new Parliament House. The Budget session will commence on January 31 and is likely to continue till April 6, with a break between February 14 and March 12. As per tradition, on the first day of Budget session on Jan-

## J&K polls decision after considering security, weather: EC

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said on Wednesday that the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held with various factors in mind, including weather and security concerns. “We are conscious that in any place which is due for elections, it is our duty that we get the government in place as mandated,” Kumar told the reporters in New Delhi. The CEC said that the delimitation process and the revision of electoral rolls in the union territory has been completed. Similarly, returning officers and additional electoral registration officers have also been appointed.

## Gadkari calls for efforts by all to reduce road accidents by 50%

**NEW DELHI:** Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said efforts by all are necessary to reduce road accidents by 50 per cent before the end of 2025. Participating in a 4-hour telethon and outreach campaign “Sadak Suraksha Abhiyan” during the Road Safety Week, he said a law will soon be brought in the country to determine the working hours of truck drivers. During the event, megastar Amitabh Bachchan, Isha Foundation founder Sadhguru and many other stakeholders discussed the key issues related to road safety. Officials said that the Road Transport & Highways Ministry has undertaken multiple initiatives across all 4Es of Road Safety including Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Care for reduction in road fatalities and injuries. This year, it observed the Road Safety Week (RSW) from January 11 to 17, under “Swachhata Pakhwada”, to propagate the cause of ‘Safer Roads for All’.

## As Rahul Gandhi's yatra enters Jammu, twin blasts in Jammu area injure 7

**JAMMU:** At a time when Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra is in Jammu, the mysterious twin blasts near Narwal area this morning injured seven people. Gandhi's yatra is currently on a break at Chadwal, over 60 km from Jammu. Additional Director General of Police (Jammu) Mukesh Singh told media that seven people were injured in the blasts. One of the injured is said to be critical. The area has been cordoned off and security has been enhanced following the blasts. Vehicles are being checked as part of a search operation. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha condemned the blasts and announced Rs 50,000 financial assistance to the injured. “Such dastardly acts highlight the desperation and cowardice of those responsible. Take immediate and firm action. No efforts should be spared to bring the perpetrators to justice,” the Lt Governor said.



During the Week, the Ministry conducted multiple activities at various locations in Delhi including ‘nukkad natak’ (street shows), sensitisation campaigns, competitions for school & college students, road safety exhibitions in collaboration with corporates, walkathons, talk shows, and panel discussions with senior government officers and industry leaders. In addition, road owning agencies such as NHAI, NHIDCL etc. conducted special drives related to compliance of traffic rules and regulation, pedestrian safety, eye check-up camps for drivers at Toll Plazas and other road engineering related initiatives.

## Journalists have no statutory exemption from disclosing their sources to probe agencies: Delhi court

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi court has observed that there is no legal exception for journalists who need to reveal their sources to investigating agencies, particularly when doing so is vital to support and aid in the investigation of a criminal case. The observation was made by Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Rouse Avenue Courts, Anjani Mahajan. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had issued a closing report in a case pertaining to a report published in newspapers and aired on TV channels regarding allegations of disproportionate assets against late Samajwadi Party supreme Mulayam Singh Yadav and his

## Indian Women wrestlers end protest over sexual harassment

**NEW DELHI:** Protesting Indian wrestlers have called off a protest near the parliament building following a government assurance that an inquiry into their allegations of sexual harassment of young athletes by the federation would be completed in four weeks. The wrestlers and their nearly



200 supporters held a sit-in protest for three days at Jantar Mantar in the capital, New Delhi, accusing the federation president of sexually and mentally harassing young female athletes. They had sought the immediate removal of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President Brijbhushan Sharan

the court observed that a bare perusal of the closure report showed that the CBI had declined to carry the investigation to its logical conclusion. “Merely because the concerned journalists denied to reveal their respective sources, as stated in the final report, the investigating agency should not have put a halt to the entire investigation. There is no statutory exemption in India to journalists from disclosing their sources to investigating agencies, more so where such disclosure is necessary for the purpose of aiding and assisting in investigation of a criminal case,” the court said. “The CBI is well within its power to direct the concerned

journalists/news agencies by way of notices u/s 91 Cr.P.C. etc. to provide the required information and bring to their notice the requisite facts of the case warranting disclosure of the information as per law,” it further noted. The court noted that only Chaudhary was mentioned as a witness in the list of witnesses filed by CBI along with closure report and there was no mention of journalists Deepak Chaurasia, Bhupinder Chaubey and Manoj Mitta as they were also examined. “There are no statements u/s 161 Cr.P.C. of Deepak Chaurasia and Manoj Mitta on the record nor are they cited as witnesses in either of the lists of the witnesses filed by the CBI.”



Singh and some other officials pending inquiry against them. Singh, who is also an MP of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, earlier dismissed the allegations as a political ploy to usurp his position and told media he was “ready to be hanged” if even any female wrestler proved the sexual harassment charge.

On Friday, he cancelled a news conference meant to reveal a “conspiracy” against him and sent out his son to speak to journalists instead. “We are not authorised to speak on anything,” he told them, saying his father would instead address the media at the federation's annual meeting on Sunday.



# Modi using Governors to harass CMs of opposition-ruled states: Arvind Kejriwal

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was using Governors to harass the Chief Ministers of states ruled by non-BJP parties and to create hurdles in the progress of these states.

Addressing the inaugural public meeting of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) here on Wednesday, he said that the Prime Minister is not bothered about the problems faced by people like price rise and unemployment but he only thinks how to create problems for Chief Ministers and topple state governments by buying the MLAs.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said the Governors/Lt Governors of Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Delhi, and Punjab were harassing the Chief Ministers in their respective states.



“It is not Governors who are doing it. It is Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is creating problems. The Governors have nothing to do with this. They get a big bungalow, air-conditioned car and all other facilities to live luxurious life for five years,” he said.

The Delhi Chief Minister alleged that the governors get phone calls from Modi to create problems for the

Chief Ministers and halt their work. “If the Prime Minister thinks 24 hours which Chief Minister he should target next, how will the country develop,” he asked.

He also alleged that the PM was using the CBI, the IT, the ED and other agencies to target political opponents.

Stating that the country needs a change, Kejriwal called on people to throw the BJP

**“It is not Governors who are doing it. It is Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is creating problems. The Governors have nothing to do with this”**

out of power and elect a new government which thinks of the country's problems like unemployment, price rise, education of their children and healthcare.

He said the people gave mandate to BJP twice. “They have not come to power to bring a change in the country but they have come to destroy

it. 2024 elections is a chance to bring a change,” he said.

Kejriwal described the coming together of the Chief Ministers of various states to discuss the problems faced by the people as a ray of hope for the country.

He said the Chief Ministers of Telangana, Kerala, Punjab and Delhi and leaders of other parties discussed issues like health, education and farmers' problems throughout the day.

He pointed out that the states were learning from each other by replicating successful programmes. He said Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao visited Delhi to see Mohalla clinics and started Basti Dawakhana in Telangana. Similarly, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin visited Delhi to see government schools and he is now trying to improve government schools in his state.

# National capital Delhi minimum temperature 1.4 degree, season's lowest : IMD

Amid a fresh cold wave, the minimum temperature in the national capital on Monday plunged to 1.4 degree Celsius, the season's lowest so far, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD).

While the Saffording Observatory recorded 1.4 degrees, the minimum temperature around the Palam area was recorded at 5.3 degree Celsius.

The IMD has predicted a fresh spell of dense to very dense fog and cold wave conditions very likely over northwest India till January 18.

“The minimum temperatures are in the range of 7-10 degrees over many parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; in some parts over East Rajasthan and West Madhya Pradesh. They are in the range of 3-7 degrees over many parts of West Rajasthan. The lowest minimum temperature of -0.7 degrees observed over Churu (West



Rajasthan),” said the IMD.

The IMD has also issued a warning of dense to very dense fog very in isolated or some parts during night and morning hours over Punjab, Haryana and Delhi and Uttar Pradesh for the next five days.

“Dense fog very likely in isolated pockets during night & morning hours over Bihar during next five days; Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh,

Uttarakhand during next 4 days and Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, north Madhya Pradesh, Assam & Meghalaya and Tripura during next 2 days.

“Cold day conditions very likely in isolated pockets over Punjab and Haryana-Chandigarh during next five days; Uttarakhand and Rajasthan during next 2-3 days and Uttar Pradesh during January 18-19,” the Department added.

# Vij said the issue of Olympian players' protest is for the players, don't make it a political arena



SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

On the protest of the Olympians and the demand for the resignation of the Wrestling Association President, Home Minister Anil Vij while addressing media persons here clearly said that this is the issue of the players; it should not be made an arena of politics. He said that politicians also should not politicize it; even sports persons do not want to politicize it. The Home Minister said that some politicians had gone to the players' stage, where the players pulled them down and said that this is the players' arena, don't make it politics, so these politicians should keep their mouth shut and trust the government. He said that the government is very serious about this matter but the matter will be investigated before reaching any conclusion.

# SGPC officials condemn attack on Harjinder Singh Dhani



JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

The officials of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) today condemned the attack on SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhani by some persons, when he was returning after participating in Qaumi In-saf Mochra in Mohali yesterday. In a meeting of officials held here presided over by SGPC secretary Partap Singh, they termed the attack on SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhani as unfortunate and appealed to Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib to intervene. Secretary Partap Singh said the President of SGPC being the leader of a representative Sikh organisation, does not belong to any one party, but he is common to the entire community. He has also personally rendered notable legal services by pursuing the cases of those Sikh who went to jails during the Panthic struggle and is currently working continuously for the release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh prisoners) even as president of the representative Sikh body. He said those who attacked such a Panthic personality have tried to weaken the ongoing struggle for the release of Sikh prisoners, which is strongly condemned by all the employees of SGPC. Partap Singh said that the demand for the release of Sikh prisoners is of the entire community and not of any one party.

# Haryana residents raise question if this is 'Pehchan' or 'Pareshan' Patar?

SATISH HANDA

The scheme introduced by Haryana state government to prepare 'Parivar Pehchan Patar' (PPP) for every family in the state has brought discomfort for large number of families in the state due to incorrect information recorded while preparing them as a result large number of families belonging to below poverty line (BPL) in the state are deprived of their rights such as facilities by the government for such families in the state due to incorrect data as such these families not only suffering financial loss, deprived of their rights as well as now facing lot of inconvenience, waste of time and harassment of visiting government offices

for the correction of data in their PPP.

Information reveals, nearly 14 lakh complaints have been received by the state government Haryana as regard incorrect data in their PPP so far, which include 11.23 lakh complaints as regard incorrect annual income earned by the family as a result the names of nearly 9.60 lakh families below poverty line (BPL) have been deleted from the list of those families getting benefits by the government available to BPL families. Information also reveals that correction in about 2.25 lakh PPP has already been made so far and names of nearly 1.05 lakh new BPL families has also been included in the list of such families. According to



a government spokes person corrections to be updated in PPP are being made at the several centers set up by the government across the state in every ward in urban areas and in villages, besides such services are available at Atal Sewa Kendra, CSC Centre and Saral Kendra in every town

available in the state. According to government spokes person, the reason for deleting the family from BPL list may be on the basis of several reasons such as annual income of the family over Rs 1.80 collected on the basis of various reasons which include filing annual income tax return

# 270 gangsters arrested busting nearly 100 gangs solved 639 cases in Ambala division

SATISH HANDA

While talking to media persons Shrikant Jaghav Assistant Director General Police Ambala division comprising of three districts: Ambala, Yamunanagar and Kurukshetra said that police was able to bust 100 gangs in which 270 gangsters were arrested solving 639 cases during year 2022 in which goods of value worth Rs 4.33 crore were recovered by the police in the division. Jaghav said that Yamunanagar district leads where 160 gangsters were arrested and pushed behind the bars, followed by Kurukshetra district where 67 gangsters and Ambala district where 43 gangsters were arrested. According to police records, 667 accused were declared offenders by the courts and 487 bale jumpers were also rounded by the police in Ambala division during the year.

Jaghav also holding the charge of Chief of Haryana Narcotics Control Bureau told that district wise record has been identified as 15 gangs were busted with the arrests of 43 gangsters in which 102 cases were solved by the police with recovery of goods of value worth Rs 59.39 lakh in Ambala district. He said, Kurukshetra



district police busted 26 gangs in which 67 gangsters were arrested solving 339 cases with the recovery of goods of value worth Rs 2.07 crore. ADGP Ambala division said, in case of Yamunanagar district, police busted 59 gangs in which 160 gangsters were arrested and 198 cases were traced out in which goods of value worth Rs 1.67 crore were recovered during year 2022. Jaghav told that during the year 2022 as many as 667 criminals declared offender in the courts and 486 bale jumpers released on the bale but failed to return back were also arrested in the division, which include 349 declared offenders and 188 bale jumpers in Ambala district, 188 declared offenders and 78 bale jumpers in Kurukshetra district and 130 declared offenders and 221 bale jumpers arrested in Yamunanagar district.

# Nearly 250 cases registered against fake passports prepared in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

In spite of all efforts preparation of fake passports could not be controlled in Haryana state in past couple of year as a result large number of hard core criminals as well as gangsters most wanted by police in different states managed to flee abroad with the help of such fake passports. Haryana state government has now started investigation of all passports prepared in the state in past five years from 2017 to 2022 under the supervision of Alok Kumar Mittal Chief CID in Haryana state.

The Regional Passport office for the states of Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh UT is situated at Chandigarh having other passport offices at Ambala, Karnal, Sonapat and Rohtak in Haryana state. Information reveals that maximum number of fake passports were prepared at Chandigarh and Ambala offices on the basis of fake documents, fake police verifications, and those falsely introduced address of the applicants caused not only danger to national security but also sheltered large number of



hard core criminals and gangsters most wanted by police who managed to flee abroad and such antisocial elements are spreading terrorism in the country while staying abroad.

Haryana state police has already constituted an SIT to investigate all passports prepared in Haryana state in past five years and take action against accused involved in preparing fake passports, which have already prepared a list of few suspected persons at Karnal and Fatehabad districts allegedly involved in illegal practices with the help of CM Flying Squad and security wing of Haryana state government. Information reveals, out of 32 passports suspected prepared on the basis of fake documents at Karnal as many as 18 passports were found prepared on the basis of completely false documents as

such cases 18 cases have been registered with different police stations in Panchkula district against accused involved in it.

Information also reveals that Haryana police has already detected and registered cases against accused of not less than 250 fake passport holders and those involved in conspiracies while preparing these passports already identified in the state so far. Similarly, large numbers of fake passport holders, most of them having in criminal background have been identified at Gurugram, already left country presently living in abroad. STF is trying for the arrest of those including agents involved in preparing fake passports in which two police personnel at Karnal and an officer at Delhi has also been arrested who admitted that as many as 21 fake passports were got prepared by them. According to CID Chief Large number of fake passports of hard core criminals most wanted by police in other states and gangsters from Punjab presently residing in abroad were prepared at Fatehabad in Haryana state.

# 7% High BP, 9% Sugar & 8% Anemic patients identified in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

According to recent 'Nirog Haryana Yozna' launched by the state health department initially having door to door survey conducted by the teams of Aanganwari and health workers in five districts in the state during first phase of survey campaign conducted on 98,13,714 persons it was identified that 7% people were found suffering from high blood pressure, 9% were suffering from sugar diseases and 8% people were found anemic which included maximum number of women and children.

According to a health department spokesperson, health cards of every person in the state are being prepared and handed over to them under this scheme, besides the entire data will also be uploaded on state health department record for future reference in six categories according to age group up to 0-6 months, 7-59 months, 6-18 years, 19-40 years, 41-60 years and above age 60 years.

During initial survey conducted in the state by health department teams in five districts Charkhi Dadri, Jhajjar, Kurukshetra, Sirsa and Fatehabad few persons were detected having cancer symptoms



in their body in which Charkhi Dadri was found in first position having eight confirmed patients, followed by five confirmed patients in Jhajjar district and four confirmed patients each detected in Sirsa, Fatehabad and Kurukshetra districts.

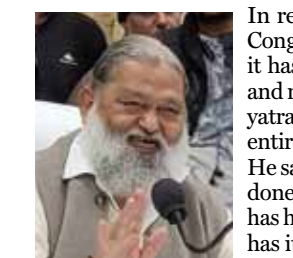
Information reveals that 'Nirog Haryana Yozna' aiming to provide efficient health services to residents in the state by the state government was launched few days ago at Kurukshetra by President of India Draupidi Murmu during her visit to Haryana in which state government launched a scheme for free health examination and treatment of 98,13,214 persons belong to families having annual income less than Rs 1,80,000.

# My name is Anil Vij, I will not let the people of my state cry and wail

SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij took a dig at Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, saying that Hooda has taken the contract to do all the wrong work. He said a scheme has been implemented for the benefit, the data of every Haryanvi has come in the Parivaar Pehchan Patra and people are getting benefits from it but Congress leader have taken the contract to do all the wrong things. Vij was responding to a question asked by media persons during the Janata Darbar in Ambala on Saturday at PWD Rest House Ambala Cantt when asked regarding Bhupinder Singh Hooda's statement that the Parivar Pehchan Patra scheme would be discontinued when Congress comes to power in the state.

In response to a question regarding the restoration of old pension in Himachal Pradesh, Vij said that it was their promise, which they have done. He said that this is an issue and the Chief Minister will consider what to do and what not to do.



In response to a question regarding Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra, Vij said it has been a gimmick for many days and no one is paying attention to it, the yatras had taken place earlier also, the entire public used to get up and come. He said that earlier yatra has also been done; now they have left, but nothing has happened. Vij said that 'every party has its own work, keep doing work'.

Replying to the question asked by media regarding women related crimes, Vij said that h has asked for information about all the cases registered under POCSO and on which action has not been taken because these are very serious cases, he will take strict action on them. In response to another question regarding increasing drug addiction in Haryana, the Home Minister said that Haryana Police is also arresting people from outside the state doing drug peddling and only yesterday rounded such criminals at Ambala as well as in past also police have arrested many such people quite often. Vij said, Narcotics Control Bureau in the state taking strict action conducting raids regularly.

The Home Minister said that he fix date regarding raids and on that day the police of entire Haryana conduct raids for the arrest of people involved in illegal criminal like gambling, sale of illicit liquor, betting, drugs smuggling and illegally supplying etc. and he is informed about such raids. Vij told that he is having entire data of such criminal activities of each district in the state to evaluate the performance of SP of every district in the state, moreover he is regularly in touch with senior police officers of every district in order to wipe out crimes completely from the state. Vij said that no matter how drugs are being smuggled in the state and if it comes then it is the duty of our police to catch hold of such smugglers and seize such drugs.

# Ambala Air Force Station always remained on the target of Pak spies

SATISH HANDA

Ambala police, Air Force Station Security Staff and Army Intelligence Team have failed to get satisfactory result even after a week's investigation carried by them as regard a youth of age around 25 identified as Ramu originally hailing from village Garwa in Gazi-pur district in Uttar Pradesh, presently working in a pharmaceuticals manufacturing company at Paonta Sahib in Himachal nabbed while trying to scale nearly 12 feet high outer wall of the Ambala Air Force Station last week on Tuesday night at around 7.20 PM. The youth was caught on CCTV camera while trying to scale the wall with the help of a rope and a wooden stick. He was immediately nabbed by the quick reaction team of the Air Force security personnel. The accused was handed over to Panjokhra police station



Ambala for further investigation which registered a case against him on the complaint of Wing Commander Yashwant Singh under sections 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454 PM. The youth was caught on CCTV camera while trying to scale the wall with the help of a rope and a wooden stick. He was immediately nabbed by the quick reaction team of the Air Force security personnel. The accused was handed over to Panjokhra police station

ago to visit his home town in Uttar Pradesh in a bus when he was under the influence of some intoxicated substance but he was unable to say where he had taken intoxicated substance. He got down from the bus at village Dhankaur near Ambala Air Force Station in the evening and tried to climb over the wall assuming that there was Uttar Pradesh on the other side of wall as told by him during investigation. Ramu told that he had col-

lected wooden stick from the immigration ground near Air Force Station and was rounded when trying to climb the wall. Meanwhile, Air Force Security team as well as Army Intelligence team also interrogated alleged accused but failed to find any constructive clue from the youth. A police team was also sent to the home village of Ramu to find out if he was having any criminal background. However, during checking police recovered a voter card from the youth in which his age was mentioned as 17 years instead of 25. Police also failed to find out who had given him intoxicated substance and where he was for a period of nearly three to four days after he left the factory.

Past scenario reveals, Air Force Station as well highly sensitive cantonment area at Ambala has remained on the target of spies, especially from Pakistan from time to time. Ac-

ording to information after the newly-inducted 'Rafale' fighter aircrafts this Air Force Station is among the highly sensitive air bases in the country. During Indo-Pak war decades ago attempts were made to blast Air Force Station with bombs which fell over and destroyed adjoining hundreds years old famous holy church and a couple of residential houses in a nearby colony. Information reveals, some of the intruders were rounded by the security forces while attempting to enter inside the Airport and were sentenced imprisonment when they were found having connection with Pakistan army. In the year 1985 few antisocial elements had entered into Air Force Station during late evening hours and spent night hiding themselves on a three during night but some of them were arrested by Air Force Police in the early morning hours and a few of them managed to flee and escaped.



# PM Modi launched projects worth Rs 38,000 cr, and to dedicate Mumbai Metro Rail Lines 2A & 7 to the nation

YOGESH KANT  
New Delhi

In a bid to develop infrastructure, ease urban travel and strengthen healthcare in Mumbai, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of a string of projects worth more than Rs 38,000 crore, during his visit to Mumbai on Thursday.

The PM will dedicate to the nation the Mumbai Metro Rail Lines 2A and 7, worth around Rs 12,600 crore. He will also travel in a Metro train. "During his visit in train, flying activities, including use of drones, paragliders, and remote-controlled micro-light aircraft, will not be allowed under the limits of police stations at BKC and nearby areas in Mumbai from noon till midnight in view of the PM's visit," police said.

A few roads in the area will be closed for vehicles, while traffic will be diverted on some other routes, the traffic police said.

Notably, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has set its eyes on



the cash-rich Mumbai civic body to dislodge the rival Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) faction from power in the civic elections, the schedule for which is yet to be announced.

The much awaited metro line 2A connecting Dahisar E and DN Nagar (yellow line) is around 18.6 Km long, while metro line 7 connecting Andheri E - Dahisar E (red line) is around 16.5 Km long. The foundation stone of these lines was also laid by the Prime Minister in 2015. Prime Minister will also

launch "MUMBAI 1 Mobile App" and "National Common Mobility Card" (Mumbai 1). The mobile application which can be shown at the entry gates of Metro stations will facilitate ease of travel. It supports digital payment to buy tickets through UPI. The mobility card will initially be used in Metro corridors and can be extended to other modes of mass public transit including local trains and buses as well, the release said.

The app will facilitate ease of travel, can be shown on the

entry gates of Metro Stations and supports digital payment to buy tickets through UPI.

He will also lay the foundation stones for seven sewage treatment plants, a road concretisation project, and redevelopment of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus at a function to be held on the MMRDA grounds in the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), an official statement said. It will be built at a cost of around Rs 17,200 crores. These sewage treatment plants will be set up in Malad, Bhandup, Versova, Ghatkopar, Bandra, Dharavi and Worli. They will have a combined capacity of around 2,460 MLD.

In an effort to strengthen health care infrastructure in Mumbai, Prime Minister will inaugurate 20 Hindufriday-samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Aapla Dawakhana. This "Aapla Dawakhana" initiative provides essential medical services like health checkups, medicines, investigations and diagnostics completely free, to the people. The PM will also lay the founda-

tion stone for redevelopment of three hospitals in Mumbai viz. 360-bedded Bhandup Multi-speciality Municipal Hospital, 306-bedded Siddharth Nagar Hospital, Goregaon (West) and 152-bedded Oshiwara Maternity Home. This will benefit lakhs of residents of the city and will deliver top class medical facilities to them. Prime Minister will start the road concretisation project for around 400 Km roads of Mumbai. This project will be developed at a cost of about Rs 6,100 crore. Of the total roads extending to around 2050 Km in Mumbai, more than 1200 Km of roads are either concretized or are in the process of being concretized.

He will also lay the foundation stone for redevelopment of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus. The redevelopment is planned with a view to decongest the southern heritage node of the terminus, augmentation of facilities, better multi-modal integration and to conserve and restore the world famous iconic structure to its past glory.

## Avoid 'unnecessary remarks' on films: PM to Party Workers

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked BJP workers to refrain from making "unnecessary" comments about films.

He made the observation while addressing the last day of the two-day National Executive meet here on Tuesday.

During his address, Modi also asked BJP members to reach out to every section of society, including minorities such as Bohras, Pasmandas and Sikhs, and work for them without electoral considerations.

The Prime Minister's state-



ment comes amid the recent protests against Shah Rukh Khan's film 'Pathaan', with several BJP leaders like Ram Kadam and Narottam Mishra criticising the makers over

Deepika Padukone's saffron costume in the song 'Besharam Rang'.

The song has been in news for a saffron coloured bikini worn by Deepika along with a few shots that several politicians and trolls found 'vulgar'.

As per reports, Hindu sentiments have been hurt and people have also criticised the makers as they find an "over-dose" of the sexually appealing look of the actress.

Protests are on with the social media campaign seeking boycott of the movie.

## Party demands Article 371 for Jammu and Kashmir

FW DESK

The Congress on Friday demand Article 371 for Jammu and Kashmir along with restoration of statehood.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said several states in India were covered by Article 371. "Regions like Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and some areas of Assam, some areas of Karnataka-Hyderabad region



have special provisions under Article 371," Ramesh said in reply to a question about Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti's demand for the restoration of Article 370.

Elaborating further, Ramesh said that in states like Nagaland,

no act of Parliament would apply in matters relating to religious or social practices of Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources. Ramesh said Article 370 was not revoked in a democratic way. "The bill was passed without discussion and dialogue and was passed by a brute majority," he said. "Jammu and Kashmir was a state. It was a full-fledged state. It turned into a Union Territory. We are against it."

## Nearly 40% of Indian population suffers from fatty liver says health experts in ASSOCHAM Webinar



NEW DELHI: The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), an apex body, organized a webinar on "Caring for Liver- Prevention & Management" with the paramount objective to cascade awareness and disseminate knowledge about liver care, to lead a healthier, happier, and prosperous life. The webinar, which is a part of the Illness to Wellness initiative, underlined the cause of liver diseases and prevention of the largest organ in the body.

Over 500 fundamental bodily functions are carried out by the liver, a crucial organ. Among them include the elimination of waste materials and foreign substances from the bloodstream, control of blood sugar levels, and production of vital nutrients. Taking proactive measures to live a healthy life is the greatest strategy to prevent liver disease.

## Congress opposes Centre's new IT rules draft, dubs it 'censorship'



NEW DELHI: Indian National Congress on Thursday opposed the new IT rules draft and accused the Centre of muzzling the Internet and Censoring Online Content through PIB calling it the Narendra Modi government's definition of "Fact Checking".

Addressing a press conference here, the party's Media department Chairman Pawan Khhera said, "Bulldozing the Press is not new for the Modi government. The popular term 'Godi Media' is now ingrained in the psyche of most Indians, and now this Government wants to make it 'Godi Social Media!'"

The Congress alleged that the Fact Checking Unit (FCU) of the PIB has remained a habitual offender in converting "Truth" to "Fakery", to save Modi government's image.

This, the Congress leader said, "essentially means that PIB's Fact Checking Unit has become a judge in taking down content which might not suit Modi government's image. Even the Editors Guild of India, on Wednesday, released a statement showing 'deep concern' about this sly insertion in the Rules. Objecting to the words, 'in respect of any business of the Central Government', they said that 'this will stifle legitimate criticism of the government and will have an adverse impact on the ability of the press to hold the government accountable'".

## Telangana CM Chandrasekhar Rao had breakfast meeting with chief ministers of three states



NEW DELHI: Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Wednesday had breakfast meeting with chief ministers of three states and leaders of various political parties who will be attending Bharat Rashtira Samithi's inaugural meeting at Khammam later in the day.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Uttar Pradesh's former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, CPI national general secretary D.A.Raja and other leaders attended the breakfast meeting at the chief minister's official residence Pragati Bhavan.

The leaders had reached Hyderabad on Tuesday night to attend the BRS public meeting. Chief Minister KCR wel-

comed the guests when they reached his official residence and presented them bouquets and shawls.

The BRS chief is understood to have discussed national politics with his counterparts from three states and other leaders.

Chief Minister KCR, along with other leaders, later left for Yadgirigutta to offer special puja at Yadagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple.

Telangana ministers Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar and MLC Kavitha also accompanied the breakfast meeting. After landing at Yadagirigutta, all the leaders drove to the Presidential Suite at the renovated temple. They later visited the temple where priests accorded them traditional welcome.

## JIH delegation visits Joshimath, expresses solidarity, and offers relief to victims

FW DESK  
New Delhi

A delegation of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind visited Joshimath (Uttrakhand) under the leadership of Mohammad Ahmed (National Secretary, JIH) along with Mohammad Nayar and Inamur Rahman (Assistant Secretaries, JIH).

Currently, a large number of houses have been destroyed in Joshimath due to subsidence and other reasons. In such a situation, people are going through extreme distress. Hundreds of houses have been marked and vacated by the administration, and are being prepared for demolition.

On behalf of the victims, under the joint banner of Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, demonstrations are being held at the tehsil office with their demands. In this hour of distress, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind expresses solidarity with the victims and the affected people in Joshimath. Jamaat is committed to providing all possible support in the relief work. The JIH delegation demanded from the government and administration officials to do their utmost in the rehabilitation



of the victims on humanitarian grounds. The authorities should show more seriousness and be more proactive in solving their problems.

The delegation also met the officials of the Mutt and expressed solidarity and sympathy with them. The people in charge of the Mutt expressed great happiness at this expression of support and solidarity. They said that this is a time when we need to work together through cooperation without showing any discrimination against religion and commu-

nity. The delegation also met the Muslim leaders of Joshimath to know their situation and assured them of support. It should be noted that more than 20 houses belonging to Muslims in Joshimath. The delegation also inspected these affected places and houses.

On the return, the delegation will present its observations to the leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, in the light of which a plan for implementing further relief work and financial support shall be prepared.

## Opposition Grills Goa Govt over River Mhadei issue, alleged corruption in Event Management Tenders



DOMINICK RODRIGUES  
Panjim

The Goa Government came under heavy grilling from the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly over the River Mhadei issue and alleged corruption worth crores of rupees in the tender process for event management companies.

Thousands of people gathered at Virdi-Sanquelim area in Goa to extend support to the "Save Mhadei" movement, which highlighted several resolutions demanding that the Central Water Tribunal withdraw the approval of DPR (allowing diversion of 3.9 TMC feet water of this River) granted to Karnataka for diverting the natural water flow of the River Mhadei.

Pointing out that the Mhadei River diversion would severely impact the population of Goa's six talukas for their drinking water needs, the gathering noted that the affected also included the river's flora and fauna, local people's life and culture, besides the Western Ghats, fisherfolk, farmers, cultivated areas and biological resources.

Urging the Goa Government to not "sacrifice" the Mhadei River under any pressure, the gathering, in another resolution, stated that the Government come out publicly in support of this "Save Mhadei" movement since this issue is associated with the "self-respect, identity and future" of Goans.

TMC leader Kirti Azad questioned the survival and future of Goa's wildlife parks and tourism

if the Mhadei River diversion became a reality. Chicailim social worker and Green activist Fr Bolmax Pereira said that the Goa Chief Minister and Mlas should resign in protest if they failed to resolve this issue.

Poet Datta Damodar Naik questioned how the State of Karnataka is allowed to divert this River when even nations could not do this. "As many as six rivers flow from India to Pakistan but the flow was never stopped. So why is Karnataka doing this?," he queried.

Social activist Xencor Polgi --while highlighting Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's claim that the River Mhadei is "more than a Mother to him" --noted the CM's absence at this gathering. Since the politicians had failed to protect the Mhadei River in Goa, the people's protest in this regard should be supported by the politicians, he said.

Prominent among those attending the meeting were MLAs Alton D'Costa, AAP's Vency Viegas and Cruz Silva, besides former MLAs Alina Saldanha, Ramakant Khalap, Pratap Gawas and Victor Gonsalves.

Earlier, the six-MLAs Opposition group in the Goa Legislative Assembly -- in an attempt to urge the Goa Governor P S Sreedharan to speak on the Mhadei imbroglio in the ongoing Assembly session -- held placards and shouted slogans besides rushing to the well of the House, from where the Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar ordered the marshals to eject them from the house.

## BJP all set to launch Rath Yatra in Karnataka

BENGALURU: Ruling BJP in Karnataka is all set to take out a 'Rath Yatra' in the state after the budget session ahead of Assembly elections.

The Rath Yatra would be taken out from four directions in the state to reach out to the people.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has stated on Monday late night that the details regarding the same are yet to be finalised. CM Bommai is taking part in the two-day National Executive Committee

meeting. He also stated that many political decisions were being taken in the meeting. The information right from the booth level to the party organisation had been given.

The high command is likely to take a call regarding B.Y. Vijayendra, son of party veteran B.S. Yediyurappa. The party had snubbed him during the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Hubballi to inaugurate the National Youth Festival.



BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal from Vijayapura has attacked the ruling BJP government in Karnataka over

providing reservation to Panchamasali sub sect under OBC quota. He had attacked CM Bommai and cabinet ministers

## PM Modi launches veiled attack on Congress in poll-bound Karnataka



In a veiled attack on the Congress in poll-bound Karnataka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said previous governments were responsible for backwardness of northern part of the state.

Addressing a public rally in Kudakal village of Yadgiri district, Prime Minister Modi said: "The north Karnataka region has the same potential as other regions. But, the previous governments did not even bother to think of providing infrastructure, water, road and power to the region."

He appreciated Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and team for working towards speedy development of north

Karnataka region. The region will take strides in development in coming days, he added.

"We have to learn from the past blunders. Earlier governments have washed their hands of ensuring development by declaring the region as backward," he said. "They did not bother to look into what is preventing the development. They were only focusing on vote bank politics. But Our priority is not vote bank politics. Our priority is only development, development and development," Prime Minister Modi said.

He further attacked the opposition that they were only eyeing votes on caste and religion basis.

## Reinventing Homeland Security Through Emerging Technologies : VSK Kaumudi

ASSOCHAM CONDUCTED A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

NEW DELHI: "Finding comprehensive solutions along with the private sector for homeland security, that also serves as a force multiplier, is a crucial concept for Aatmanirbhar and Surakshit Bharat, stated VSK Kaumudi, IPS (Retd.), former Secretary (Security), Cab. Sectt., & Spl. Secy., Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, at the national conference on "Homeland Security: Public-Private Partnership for Managing New Age Challenges." The conference was organized by the apex industry body, Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

In order to protect against criminal activities, terrorism, and other threats to the country, Shri VSK Kaumudi underlined the importance of advanced security systems. He spoke about the nexus between inimical elements abroad and

local terrorists and criminal gangs that affects the well-being of Indian citizens along the borders as well as in the heartland. The Indian government has been encouraging startups and private parties for developing sophisticated technology for weapons and security equipment, skill development of security personnel, and in cyber security through private-public partnership", he added.

According to VSK Kaumudi, India needs private-public partnership to foster the development of start-ups and to adopt the best available technology for robust security architecture.

Sanjay Agrawal, Dy Director General (Disaster Management) at the Ministry of Communications of the Government of India, highlighted the importance of establishing a public-private partnership model to enlist industrial partners for commercial



use of the network while taking into account geographical areas and designing communication models for nationwide homeland security.

He further emphasized the need to utilize modern technologies in tandem with an integrated communication system in order to enhance safety measures. Additionally, he proposed that a well-devised communication strategy is essential in worst-case scenarios.

He stressed that a combination of modern technologies and

an integrated communication system will bolster safety, and a well-prepared communication strategy is essential in the event of a crisis.

Kunwar Vikram Singh, Chairman of the Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI), underscored the responsibility of the government to protect its citizens with the collaboration of all stakeholders. He also highlighted that due to socio-economic conflicts, it is essential to come up with a plan of action to address them.

According to him, private security is a major component of the sector and India has the largest security workforce of around 1 crore personnel who safeguard the nation.

Shri Jasbir Singh Solanki, CEO of Mahindra Defence System Limited's Homeland & Cyber Security division, highlighted cyber security as the biggest challenge given the prevalence of cybercrime around the globe. He urged a shift from a trader mentality to a builder mindset and advocated for the allocation of funds towards security protection technology.

Alpesh Kankariya, Partner (Homeland Security and Surveillance) at PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited (PwC), emphasized the fundamentals of homeland security, which encompasses counter-terrorism initiatives, security from natural disasters and public health hazards, as well as national security from external adversaries.



## Curbing freedom of Fourth Estate will be dangerous

**A** proposal by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology that seeks to force social media platforms to take down content “fact-checked” by the Government’s Press Information Bureau (PIB) as false needs to be opposed without even a second look. The proposed amendment to the IT Rules opens the door for the PIB or any other agency “authorised by the central government for fact checking” for the purpose of such takedowns. This is problematic at many levels, with deep implications for free speech and information. At the most basic level, the question to be asked is how a wing of the “nodal agency of the Government of India”, whose job is “to disseminate information to the print and electronic media on government policies, programmes, initiatives and achievements”, could be the deciding authority on what is factual and what is not. The disturbing absurdity of an interested party also playing the judge cannot be missed. It is a really nasty world of disinformation out there but one would have to be delusional to think that governments do not have an axe to grind. If the proposal is implemented, the government can play the super censor at will. While this proposal signals a new low in the administration’s thinking on matters of regulating news and information, things were not rosy prior to this either. The government in recent years has given enough indications that it wants to control the news sphere. The reworked IT Rules in early 2021 are an example of this. A similar mindset was reflected in the provisions of the data privacy Bill that gave government agencies a free pass. Fake news has to be dealt with in an appropriate manner, but the proposal in question will only make the task harder. The freedom of the Fourth Estate is crucial for a democratic system.

### 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.

**Success**  
DOESN'T COME FROM  
WHAT YOU DO OCCASIONALLY  
IT COMES FROM WHAT YOU DO  
CONSISTANTLY.

## 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)



SUNIL THAPLIYAL

## Pak Hockey: Learning from mistakes

**S**ince the hockey world cup begins in Odisha, hockey fans across the subcontinent are concerned about Pakistani hockey’s future. The team failed to earn a spot in the 2023 World Cup. The Pakistan hockey team had titles like “World champion,” “World beater,” “hockey giant,” and “champion-of-champions.” It was once one of the world’s leading hockey nations, dominating the last quarter of the 20th century and winning all major tournaments, but since winning the World Cup in Sydney in 1994, the team has lost its lustre and has failed to qualify for 2023 World Cup.

Pakistan Hockey has missed the multi-sport competition Olympics games twice in a row, most recently in Tokyo (2021). Additionally, it also failed to qualify the 2014 World Cup and placed a dismal 12th in the 2018 competition.

In Pakistan, the end of this sport is near, and hockey’s collapse seems to be practically complete. With the exception of a few victories on the Asian stage, the Pakistani hockey team hasn’t been able to win any international hockey titles in the twenty-first century.

Poor management, a lack of professionalism, and government apathy are killing hockey in Pakistan. Even the Dutch coach of the Pakistan national hockey team, Siegfried Aikman, has returned home after not being paid his salary for months.

The green-shirt failed to cope with the new pace of the game, and inconsistent policies of the concerned agencies to revive the game have damaged Pakistan hockey badly. Poor sports administration, a collapsing economy, religious fanaticism, and terrorism have all ruined sports in Pakistan, including hockey. Ironically, the Pakistani sports fraternity, despite knowing the root causes of the decline of the game, is passively watching it die.

Between 1978 and 1994, Pakistan



dominated the world of hockey and won every major championship. Despite these achievements, however, Pakistan did little to create a system that would allow them to develop and sustain talent over the long term. They had lost their way and had no infrastructure in place. They did not work to develop new talents and heavily depended on those they were born with.

In order to revitalise Hockey in Pakistan, there needs to be a framework that can draw new sponsors and offer financial stability to the players. The Pakistan Hockey Federation needs a vision, just like the hockey federations in Belgium and India did. The Pakistani athletic community must persistently work on it. As the hockey teams from Belgium and India are demonstrating, it takes more than ten years to accomplish the desired outcome.

The game has changed over the years and became more fitness demanding, but according to commentators, Pakistan was left far behind in the race. Hockey would not be Pakistan’s national sport if events kept going in the current way since there would be no prospect for the Pakistani hockey team to win important competitions in the future.

On the other hand Indian hockey has improved since the 2008 disaster when it failed to qualify for the Beijing Olympics because lessons were learned from that experience. The Indian Hockey Association tried to not only revitalise the sport but also to gather money to support both the game and its participants financially. The Indian Hockey Federation, which was once insolvent, is today one of the most powerful countries in the hockey world

and offers its players the best facilities.

Only through the perseverance of hockey players, supporters, and the system has Indian hockey been brought back to life. The results also reveal the narrative.

The Pakistan Hockey Federation must locate sponsors eager to support their game. Hockey players will benefit from new sponsors’ financial incentives, which will increase their financial, economic, and psychological security. Furthermore, the PHL can develop local and club level players, allowing Pakistan to attract more talent, much as the Pakistan Super League has introduced some stars to cricket.

Can Pakistan Hockey learn from its past mistakes and try to advance hockey!

*Sunil Thapliyal, has been active journalist in sports over a decade, Views are personal*



NARVIJAY YADAV

POST-RETIREMENT LIFE CAN BE LIVED HAPPILY IF PREPARATION IS DONE IN ADVANCE FOR FINANCIAL, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL MATTERS. THIS IS THE TIME WHEN PEOPLE CAN TAKE A TOUR OF THE COUNTRY, READ BOOKS AND CAN INDULGE IN ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE FREE TIME.

## Age gracefully to spread joy all around

**T**he elders are said to be a treasure trove of experience and wisdom. The post-retirement age is a time of freedom and fulfillment for some elders, while for many others it is a phase of health-related issues. Physical problems can be kept to a minimum if preparations are made in advance and lifestyle is maintained properly. In our country, there is no such guarantee of social security for the elderly as is provided in many developed countries. Yet there are a few government schemes that can be availed at this age. The total number of elderly people above 60 years of age in India is 140 million, which is about 10 percent of the total population of the country. It is estimated that by the year 2050, the number of elderly people in the country will swell to more than 300 million. An employment portal is also to be started by the government for the elderly who are willing to work post-retirement.

A few welfare schemes are being run by the government to support senior citizens in the country. There is the Prime Minister’s Senior Citizen Scheme, in which a minimum pension of Rs 3000 to a maximum of Rs



10,000 per month is given. It is a pension scheme for citizens above 60 years of age in which 8 percent interest is given on deposits for ten years. Basic medical facilities for senior citizens in government hospitals and government health centers are given either free of cost or at very subsidized rates. There is a separate window for senior citizens for priority in medical tests and other government works etc. Indian

Railways gives a concession of 40 percent to men above 60 years, and a 50 percent discount to women above 58 years, on tickets in all types of trains. Similarly, almost all airlines offer senior citizen discounts of up to 50 percent on domestic flights. The front two seats are reserved for senior citizens in roadways buses of all states. Legal disputes related to senior citizens are heard in the courts on a priority basis and efforts are

made to expedite the procedure.

In Himachal Pradesh, an old age pension is being given to citizens above 60 years of age. Earlier this pension was available only to those who attained the age of 70 years, which has now been reduced by ten years. The amount of monthly pension is Rs 1000 for the 60 to 69 years age category and Rs 1700 per month for those above 70 years. To avail of this pension, senior citizens need to apply in the office of the District Welfare Officer. Age is sure to grow with time and physical weakness is also to follow soon. How to age gracefully, happily and with dignity, depends on the individual. Some people consider old age to be a curse and they keep themselves and others unhappy. On the other hand, there are many senior citizens who spend this phase of life with laughter, joy and enthusiasm. Post-retirement life can be lived happily if preparation is done in advance for financial, mental and physical matters. This is the time when people can take a tour of the country, read books and can indulge in activities that require free time.

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



### BOOKS: REVIEW

## Book offers overview of today's pressing issues

**W**riter Renee Ranchan has come out with a collection of essays in which she touches upon a wide variety of subjects like education, politics, policing, showbiz, family matters and traditions.

In “Widescreen”, she also deals with related topics from the western society.

The collection comprises columns written between 2012 and 2014 that appeared in a biweekly magazine. These write-ups, however, seem still relevant as they deal with human nature and behaviour in the evolving scenario of the modern, rather emerging new world.

Ranchan’s aim is to “bring about an awareness of our failings, our shortcomings, our aspirations and choices, both at the individual, as well as at the societal level, and thereby recognising wide space for improvement”.

As the title suggests, the book presents a canvas whereupon the author tries to highlight the

reality of the present-day Indian society, which she says like the rest of the world has been bequeathed with the marvels of science, becoming unbelievably handy and domesticated.

The columns mirror an extensive overview of issues which in today’s fast changing society are people’s everyday live-in experience.

These write-ups emphasise on the changing mores and manners, social values in the backdrop of time ever on the run.

This collection presents, culturally speaking, an interesting study of the mores and manners of our society, while offering insightful observations regarding men and matters in the context of the varying values of our present day India.

These columns highlight the changing social norms of our Indian society, altering, as it does, with time ever on the run.

Now Time, being on fast-track, unimaginable technical feats, resulting from the discoveries of

**Ranchan’s aim is to “bring about an awareness of our failings, our shortcomings, our aspirations and choices, both at the individual, as well as at the societal level, and thereby recognising wide space for improvement”**

Science, as if magically, has provided us, one and all, with handy gadgets furnishing us ‘Masters’ as if with a ‘Genie’!

Ranchan’s, ‘WIDESCREEN’ presents an uncanny insight into our taking these miraculous gifts for granted, and misusing these to the exclusion of relational human connectivity with family and friends.

These columns, therefore, are



Widescreen  
By Renee Ranchan;  
BRONATO.com;  
277 pages Rs395

not meant to be criticism, for the sake of criticism, of the young in specific, and of our society in general. Ranchan’s purpose is to bring about an awareness of our failings, our shortcomings, our aspirations and choices, both at the individual, as well as at the societal level, and thereby recognising wide space for improvement.

These write-ups, though belonging to some years gone-by, are not dated, dealing as these do, with human nature and behaviour in the evolving scenario of the modern, rather ever emerging New World!

Her another book Untwine the Wind makes for an unusual reading and therefore calls for a perceptive response The Wind is not an abstraction in the poems but a vibrant being which caresses petals awakens mystical empathy

rattles windows blows off roofs and frightens the ego It is Lorca’s duende which never behaves the same way It is lawless power self-willed and untamable.

The imagery contemporary and surreal succeeds in capturing problematic emotive syndromes and states Untwine the Wind beats a new rhythm of clipped condensed resonance which reverberates and repercussions so very uniquely Renee Ranchan’s exposure to the West and the East has enriched her creative sensibility Having lived for many years in the West followed by frequent visits to America and Europe she has imbibed a cross-cultural vision which imparts complexity and intricacy to her perspective on contemporary culture

Coming from a family rooted in academics Renee has absorbed literary sensitivity and delicacy of emotion for the appreciation of art From early on having an eye for colour and contour texture and technique her personal engagement innately has been with visuals painting and the history of art In addition Renee over a long stretch of time has been a columnist and feature writer for various national dailies and magazines.



## CAIT urges financial support policies for small traders in Budget

**NEW DELHI:** Traders' body, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has urged the Union Finance Minister for financial support policies for small traders in the upcoming Budget.

The body suggested that besides advising the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to ensure smooth and easy access of finance to the trading community, the Finance Minister should spell out a policy in the budget to lay special emphasis on Non Banking Finance Companies & Micro Finance Institutions for lending to small businesses and the Banks and financial institutions should strengthen NBFCs and MFIs by providing requisite finance at a lower rate of interest so that both these lending institutions should provide finance to small businesses at a lower interest rate.



"Such a policy will greatly supplement the financial requirements of small businesses and will help the retail trade in exponentially utilising its capacities and capabilities," said CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal.

He said that the trading community has been grossly neglected by the successive governments post Independence and no support policies were ever made for the retail



trade of India.

"Absence of a policy and a separate Ministry for Internal Trade is an ample testimony of the apathy towards the trading community," CAIT said in a communication sent to Union Finance Minister Nirjala Sitharaman on Thursday.

The communication assumes much significance as it has been sent at a time when Union Budget is under preparation.

CAIT National President B.C. Bhartiya and Secretary General Khandelwal said that it is only at the initiative of CAIT and with holistic approach of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Department for Industry was added with Internal Trade and now the National Retail Policy is under draft stage in Ministry of Commerce.

However, there is an urgent need for immediate roll out of not only the National Retail Policy but an E-commerce policy which is also under draft stage and formation of an empowered Regulatory Authority.

In its communication to Sitharaman, CAIT while demanding support financial policies for the traders in the budget said that the business community of India is fac-

ing huge crunch of financial liquidity and during the last many decades, the RBI has failed to provide easy access to finances for the traders of the Country which in turn is causing under utilisation of capacities and capabilities of the business community of the turning into a total loss situation to the national economy.

The RBI has always put its prime focus on corporate sector only. "It does not deem fit to consult the trade association ever to understand their financial needs though the non corporate sector excluding agriculture is contributing magnificently to national exchequer and after agriculture, the largest employment provider in the country yet the retail trade could not find any place in financial policies," it said.

## Superfood valley launches its flagship product "good monk" in Bengaluru

**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Superfoods Valley, a Nutrition and Food-Techs startup based in Bangalore Launched its flagship product "Good Monk" a one of a kind nutrition mix, during the press conference and event attended by eminent members of scientific council. The company also unveiled a new app that helps educate users and creates transparency about nutritive value of the food we consume.

Present during press conference were Dr B Sesikeran, former director National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Sheela Krishnaswamy, Renowned Nutrition and wellness Expert, Dr shovan Ganguli, Food Researcher and Scientist, and Dr



P R Krishnaswamy, EX-Director and Founder, Protein Foods and Nutrition Development Association of India, who Highlighted the impotence and need of such production in the Indian market during the launch here.

Superfoods valley, founded by Amarpreet Singh Aanand and Sahiba Kaur, aims to bridge the nutrition gap and make nutrition easy and accessible for all. Good Monk is the first step in the direction. The product is scientifically

designed and tested and helps plug a family's daily nutrition gap without altering the colour, odour and taste of the good (NO COT).

Commenting on the Lunch, Amarpreet Singh Aanand, Founder of Superfoods Valley, said, "What's most worrisome is that the urban upper-middle-class households are suffering from lack of proper nutrition in significant way and it's not because they lack access to good food, but because of the modern lifestyle and eating habits.

## Lexicon MILE recognised among the top 100 institutes in India for Digital Distinction Technology Conference to NEP



**FW DESK**

The Lexicon Group of Institutes, a renowned education hub in Pune, has been driving academic excellence for the last 16 years and establishing benchmarks in the field of education. With an emphasis on quality and inclusive education for all, they take pride in achieving their goals of transforming young students into responsible global citizens and successful future leaders. Lexicon MILE is known for its robust and dynamic curriculum created to transform its students into Day Zero Professionals par excellence. They have now achieved another milestone. Lexicon MILE recently received recognition on the national level for its successful use and implementation of technology on campus to deliver elevated learning experiences for students. Lexicon MILE was awarded the Certificate of Excellence for placing among the Top 100 Institutes in India for Digital Distinction: Technology Conformance to NEP by The ASSOCHAM National Council on Education during the Higher EduTech 100 Summit.

## Wipro lays off over 400 freshers for poor performance



IT giant Wipro has laid off more than 400 fresher employees for poor performance in internal assessment tests. The company has issued termination letters to all the affected employees and stated that despite adequate training, they have failed to perform. Sources explained the termination letter maintained that the employees were liable to pay Rs 75, 000 of the training cost which company has spent on them. But, the amount is being waived off.

"We wish to inform you that the training cost of Rs 75, 000 which you are liable to pay, will be waived off," the letter reads.

## Pravin 36-year-old with severe head injury following bike accident in US, a miraculous recovery in Sakra world hospital Bengaluru



**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Not all hopes die if you know the way out and believe in miracles. When 36-year-old Pravin Raj Radha met with a fatal accident in the US after he fell from his bicycle in May 2022, he suffered severe brain, facial and eye injuries which resulted in leaving him at a comatose state and losing all hopes of his survival. His condition was treated immediately in one of the top hospitals in the US, undergoing intensive care where the US doctors estimated less than 1% chance of survival. Pravin shared his story of getting a new lease of life during the press conference in the presence of Yuchi Nagao, MD, Naoya Matsumi, DMD and Dr Maheshwarappa B M, Head and Senior Consultant for Neuro Rehabilitation at Sakra World Hospital as well as Pravin's treating doc-

tor in India.

Despite being on a ventilator in the ICU in the US for 3-4 weeks, Pravin's health never improved. Rather than giving up and taking Pravin off the ventilator, he was flown carefully to India by chartered flight with ICU team and equipment. After consulting in other hospitals, Pravin was referred to Dr. Maheshwarappa B M, Head and Senior Consultant for Neuro Rehabilitation at Sakra World Hospital, one of the top hospitals in Bangalore. He immediately assessed Pravin's complex traumatic brain injury, severity of disability and medical challenges, loss of cognitive and behavioral skills and immobility. Following his recommendations for rigorous and comprehensive neuro rehabilitation using advanced technologies, a miraculous recovery and successful discharge took place five months later.

## Axtria Earns 2022 Great Place to Work Certification

Axtria's India Operations Has Earned the Prestigious Recognition for 5th Consecutive Year

New Delhi: Axtria Inc., a global leader of award-winning cloud software and data analytics for the life sciences industry, announced that it once again received a Great Place To Work Certified™ designation in 2022 from the Great Place To Work, an internationally-recognized authority on workplace culture. Axtria's recognition marks the fifth year in a row its India operations and offices have received the acknowledgment as an employee-validated great workplace.

The Certification is recognized worldwide by employers and employees and is considered the gold standard in identifying and recognizing great workplace cultures. More than 10,000 organizations across 60 countries submit applications annually for the Great Place To Work Certified designation.

"These year-after-year recognitions for Axtria continue to validate that we as an organization are dedicated to nurturing quality relationships with our employees and

our efforts in fostering trust and respect, enabling an environment where great work gets done," said Jaswinder Chadha, Axtria co-founder and CEO. "Our people are our differentiators, and we believe in individuality, the potential for collaboration, and celebrating diversity



and learning from everyone across our organization. We are committed to building an inclusive, diversified, open culture that enables our people and partners to work towards our larger vision of touching patients' lives."

The Great Place To Work Certified designation is one of the most prestigious achievements for any organization across the globe. This year, a record 97% of Axtria employees completed the survey—one of the highest response rates amongst participating companies. For an organization to become certified, 70% or more of its employees should positively rate it as a great workplace.

Axtria employees surveyed said they enjoy their jobs because they feel respected and valued regardless of their sexual orientation, age, caste, or gender. Furthermore, they enjoy great camaraderie with their peers and take pride in their work.

"In the past year, we grew our global workforce by 35%, expanded into new geographies, and like many other companies, adjusted to evolving work styles post-COVID," added Manish Mittal, Head of Global Delivery at Axtria. "This certification is a testimony that every voice matters to us, and every Axtria employee is immensely valued. It also provides us an opportunity to get insights into how we can continue to improve."

Great Place To Work is the global authority on workplace culture. Since 1992, they have surveyed more than 100 million employees worldwide and used those deep insights to define what makes a great workplace: trust. Their employee survey platform empowers leaders with the feedback, real-time reporting, and insights they need to make strategic people decisions.

## IDSA recommends exemption under section 194R

**FW DESK**  
New Delhi

The Government of India in the Budget for 2022 introduced a new section 194R—"Deduction of tax or perquisite in respect of business or profession." Which became applicable from July 01, 2022.

In accordance with the provisions of this new section, a person (or corporate entity) who is responsible for providing any benefit or perquisite to a resident, should deduct tax at source @ 10% of the value or aggregate of value of such benefit or perquisite before providing such benefit or perquisite in cash or in kind.

One of the business activities that get impacted due to these new provisions is the national and international trips or events that are organised by business entities to motivate or felicitate their employees or associates.

While we appreciate the rationale behind introducing this new provision however, we would like to request the following amendment in the same - As per the newly inserted provision, all events where the recipients or the beneficiaries are provided free participation or where their trips are sponsored, shall now come under the purview of TDS deduction.

In our opinion, considering the fact that Covid-19 pandemic created havoc on the Indian hospitality sector, the Government of India should encourage organizing of domestic events and trips.



This would result in increase in revenue of our domestic players and to the revival of the hospitality sector.

In order to achieve the same, one initiative could be to provide an exemption under Section 194R only to those events or trips that are organized within India. In the present scenario where both national and international events or trips are being brought under the purview of Section 194R at the same rate, corporate entities shall not find any merit in organizing such events of trips within India as organizing the same in a foreign country adds aspirational value to it.

If an exemption is provided for events and trips within India, the corporate entities shall feel encouraged to organise the same within India which'll add to the revenue of the domestic hospitality players thereby increasing the tax contribution by the sector.

We sincerely believe that the above suggestion shall be given due consideration by the officials and we look forward to discussing the same in detail, if required.

## Fortis successfully completes 500 Robotic Aided Urology procedures via Da Vinci surgical system, Bengaluru

**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road announced the successful completion of 500 Robotic aided Urology procedures in an event held and press-conference in Bengaluru today. The urology team at Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru led by Dr. Mohan Keshavamurthy, has completed 500 robotic surgeries in 53 months of the installation of Da Vinci surgical system at Fortis Bannerghatta. The 500 robot-aided surgeries include complex robotic procedures encompassing the entire gamut of Uro-Oncology, Uro-Gynaecology, Reconstructive Urology, Kidney Transplant etc. The hospital also announced the launch of BK ultrasound MRI Fusion Biopsy solution, a game changer in Prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Robot-aided surgery is a minimally invasive procedure



which allows surgeons to have better vision, precision, and control while performing the surgeries. Other benefits include decreased pain, fewer post-operative infections and less scarring. Recovery is rapid, with minimal hospital stay, faster mobilisation and rehabilitation. Reducing the chance of infection makes it an ideal procedure for people with diabetes and other co-morbidities.

On the other hand, BK Fusion is a fast, flexible, and effective MRI-ultrasound fusion prostate biopsy solution.

It fuses real-time ultrasound with MRI images of the prostate to provide urologists with clear visualization to help them accurately target lesions identified on the MRI, potentially reducing the risk of missing high-grade tumors or understaging tumors for active surveillance. According to a recent report, bkFusion has an 84% positive detection rate for prostate cancer and bkFusion biopsies have been recorded to be as fast as seven minutes.

Dr Mohan Keshavamurthy, Director, Urology, Uro-oncol-

ogy, Uro-gynaecology, Andrology, Transplant and Robotic Surgery, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru, and Chairman, Renal Sciences Specialty Council, Fortis Hospitals, India said, "We have been employing Da Vinci Robotic Surgical platform provided by Intuitive, the latest frontier in the world of surgery since many years. Our urology team with great expertise in the related domain has in fact successfully carried out 500 robotic urology in 53 months, despite 2 years of COVID disruption. As part of our endeavor to provide latest technological innovations and advanced systems of care for enhanced patient experience, we have now introduced the latest and most promising advancement, BK ultrasound MRI Fusion Biopsy solution, to improve the early detection of clinically significant prostate cancer that has not been diagnosed by the standard technique of prostate biopsy."

## IoTechWorld Avigation inks MoU with Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri to develop RPTO and promote agri-drones



**GURUGRAM:** Leading agri-drone manufacturer IoTechWorld Avigation announced it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth (Agriculture University), Rahuri, Maharashtra to promote the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to boost farm productivity in the country.

The MoU was signed by Dr. P N Rasal, Dean (F/A) & Director of Instructions, on behalf of the university, while Mr Anoop Kumar Upadhyay, Co-Founder & Director signed on the behalf of IoTechWorld Avigation.

Through this partnership, IoTechWorld Avigation and MPKV aim to work collectively in science and technology and promote the use of drones in agriculture. Anoop Kumar Upadhyay said his company and the university will also work on joint educational and Research and Development projects to build a modern and sustainable smart agricultural system. The two sides will also develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for crop spraying using Drones.

IoTechWorld will be the technical partner in setting up of Remote Pilot Training Organization (RPTO) for Agricultural Drones with MPKV, which in turn will help reduce drone pilot shortage in the country, he added. As per Government estimates India will require at least 1 lakh drone pilots by next year. Commenting on the MoU with the agriculture university, Anoop Kumar Upadhyay & Deepak Bhardwaj, directors of IoTechWorld said, "The tie-up with an institution like MPKV will help us promote research activities promotion of drones in agriculture."

## Happiest Health Launches Exciting New Services in Health & wellness Space



**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Health and wellness knowledge enterprise, "Happiest Health" launched India's first Health and Wellness Lifestyle Print Magazine, which will offer credible knowledge on health and wellness-related topics and Mobile App during press conference in Bengaluru.

Also Launched Mobile App during event will be one-of-a-kind in producing knowledge on early diagnosis, gentler therapies, the latest developments from the intersection of health and technology... and much more! Happiest Health is also introducing an array of wellness programmes, to enhance physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental wellness. Finally, there is also a Metaverse Platform that will help users experience health and wellness knowledge in virtual space.

Talking of the new services, Ashok Soota, Chairman, Happiest Health said, "These complement our digital offering and will make Happiest Health a unique health & wellness enterprise." Ashok Soota added

that Happiest Health had built the nation's strongest team for content creation in the health & wellness space. "The print magazine will help us to leverage this capability to address an even wider audience. Our first issue's theme is Women's Health. The issue has inspiring and uplifting stories for women of all ages. It includes stories on people who have battled health issues and are leading better and healthier lives," he further said.

Chief Executive Officer & President, Anindya Chowdhury said, "To keep up with the rapid pace of growth in digital services, Happiest Health has introduced a more immersive and engaging experience by launching a metaverse platform that enables users to access health and wellness knowledge in the virtual space. He also said "We are starting our metaverse journey with knowledge of diabetes. It will explain how blood sugar spikes affect our brain when we consume different kinds of food. You can keep track of your blood sugar levels, find information and management support, to name a few utilities.

## ChatGPT demand on Google hits a record high, China takes top interest

**NEW DELHI:** The search for text-based artificial intelligence tool called ChatGPT on Google has hit a record high and China is leading in the demand, despite reports indicating that local tech giants have expressed opposition to the tool.

Social media giant Tencent opted to remove ChatGPT-related programmes from the WeChat platform. It's worth mentioning that ChatGPT has yet to be officially available in the country. According to data acquired by Finbold, global Google searches for the word aChatGPT" have spiked to hit a popularity score of 92. "The score peaked at 100 for the week ending January 11. Notably, the term recorded



a score of less than 1 as of November 30, 2022, when the tool was launched," the report mentioned.

Regarding regional breakdown, China ranks top with a peak score of 100 as of January

13, followed by Nepal at 35, while Norway is third with a score of 28. With a score of 27, Singapore is in the fourth spot, while Israel is in the fifth position at 26. Notably, the US States has failed to feature

among countries recording increased demand for ChatGPT, the report informed.

The high demand in China can be attributed to various factors like users opting to leverage virtual private networks (VPNs). At the same time, users are likely to establish mirror sites to access the tool. In general, there is a likelihood that local Chinese tech giants will be unveiling similar products, the report mentioned.

The AI chatbot, developed by Microsoft-owned OpenAI, is able to understand and give feedback on diverse human inputs that have elevated ChatGPT to handle different tasks, such as writing code, and generating content, among others. The tool can also be lever-

aged in the financial markets for tasks such as offering trading insights.

"In this line, the tool can also be used to offer price projections of different financial assets such as stocks and cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin (BTC) for the end of 2023 and beyond," the report noted.

Despite the initial success of ChatGPT, the technology still needs to overcome several headwinds on its path to growth and adoption.

"For example, ChatGPT needs more information on current events as its knowledge is limited up to 2021. Consequently, search engines have the upper hand over the ability to offer real-time information," the report said.



# Three times increase in on-line frauds reported in past five years

SATISH HANDA

According to National Consumer Helpline (NCH) recent report, three times increase in on-line frauds has been identified in past five years in the country, most of these cyber crime cheatings have been found due to on-line purchases and miscellaneous business transactions through bank. Information reveals that during year 2018 there were nearly 60000 on-line fraud cases reported to police in the country which have now been increased to 184000 complaints reported to police stations during year 2022, on an average nearly 15320 on-line fraud cases were registered by police every month in the country, which include maximum number of on-line fraud cases reported in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Bihar, Haryana and Himachal states. Although, the population of Delhi is much lesser as



compared to other state yet it ranks at the third position in the country as regard on-line frauds.

According to NCH report, on-line fraud cases reported at the police stations is being forwarded to police Cyber Crime Cell operating in the district for investigation and action against cheats. Information also reveals that large numbers of such on-line fraud cases are not being reported to police stations by the victims in the country and

in maximum number of such complaints cyber cell generally remains unsuccessful to trace out accused. However, there are few states in the country in which on-line frauds have been controlled to large extent due to awareness campaigns launched by the state governments which include Maharashtra state, whereas in Bihar state on-line frauds have witnessed six times increase and in Uttar Pradesh state the number of such on-line frauds has become

double in past five years. According to Haryana state police record large number of rackets running fake call centers involved in cheating people were busted in the state most of these functioning at Gurugram and Faridabad during year 2022.

According to National crime Report Bureau information state wise growth in on-line frauds in past five years with effect from 2018 to 2022 has been recorded as from 7076 cases to 25484 cases in Uttar Pradesh, from 7704 cases to 14661 cases in Delhi, 3618 cases to 9371 cases in Haryana, 1414 cases to 3972 cases in Punjab, 588 cases to 1534 cases in Jammu-Kashmir, 399 cases to 1281 cases in Himachal and 270 cases to 588 cases in Chandigarh. Report also revealed that most of the victims suffering on-line frauds have been found educated persons usually involved in banks as well as commercial transactions.

## Former RBI Governor advises India to use G20 presidency for openness towards service exports



**NEW DELHI:** India should take advantage of its G20 presidency to strive for opening its service exports to the world, said Raghuram Rajan, the former Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Rajan is of the opinion that excessive investment is going towards chip making globally which he warns could lead to

a surplus.

"Opening up of China could also pose some risks towards the Indian economy," he said in a television interview during the ongoing World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting at Davos. India is doing well in service export, the former RBI Governor said.

## WPI Inflation declines to 4.95% in Dec due to fall in prices of food articles and crude petroleum

**NEW DELHI:** The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation declined to 4.95 per cent in December, mainly on the back of fall in prices of food articles and crude petroleum, according to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry statement.

The WPI based inflation was 5.85 per cent in November 2022 and 14.27 per cent in December 2021. The month over month change in WPI for the month of December stood at (-) 1.12% as compared to November. The decline in rate of inflation is primarily contributed by fall in prices of food articles, mineral oils, crude petroleum & natural gas, food products, textiles and chemicals & chemical products, it said. As per the official data, the Inflation in food articles was (-) 1.25 per cent, while in fuel and power it was 18.09 per cent during December 2022.



The Inflation in manufactured products was 3.37% during the month, the statement added. "The increase in price is mainly contributed by other manufacturing; printing and reproduction of recorded media; electrical equipment; other non-metallic mineral products; furniture and beverages etc. Some of the groups that have witnessed decrease in prices are food products; textiles; chemicals and chemical products; basic metals; paper and paper products; motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers etc. in December, 2022 as compared to November, 2022," the ministry said.

## Discord acquires compliments-based app Gas



**NEW DELHI:** Chat platform Discord has announced that it is acquiring Gas, a poll-based social application that allows users to share compliments with one another. Gas is all about encouraging and empowering each other through positive affirmations, Discord said in a blogpost on Tuesday.

Its success demonstrates the potential for developing a fun environment with a meaningful place for teenagers.

The chat platform is hoping to take things to the next level by working with Gas' team as the social app's founders have a proven track record of creating exciting applications and experiences. "At this time, Gas will continue as its own standalone app and the Gas team will be joining Discord to help our efforts to continue to grow across new and core audiences," Discord said.

"We're always working to create an inclusive world where no one feels like an outsider and we're excited to welcome Gas to the Discord community as our next step to fulfilling that vision," it added.

The Gas application was launched back in August last year and was oriented towards high schoolers.

## FICCI demands higher import duty on aluminium, aluminium products in Union Budget 2023-24



**NEW DELHI:** The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry has urged the government to increase the import duty on aluminium and aluminium products from 10 per cent to at least 12.5 per cent in the upcoming Union Budget 2023-24.

This will help in curbing the dumping of aluminium products and encourage growth of the domestic manufacturing and recycling, it said in a statement.

The Indian aluminium industry has been struggling with a slump in global demand, rising production and logistic costs, a deluge of imports, and declining market share.

## Reliance Industrial Infra logs Rs 190.43 Lakh net for Q3



**NEW DELHI:** Reliance Industrial Infrastructure Limited on Friday said it logged a net profit of Rs 190.43 lakh for the third quarter of FY23.

The company in a statement issued said for the period ended December 31, 2022 its total income stood at Rs 2,060.14 lakh (Q3FY22 Rs 2,040.67 lakh) and the net profit at Rs 190.43 lakh (Rs 199.36 lakh). The company said it con-

tinues to provide infrastructure support services, namely transportation of petroleum products and raw water through pipelines, construction machinery on hire, and other support services to Reliance Industries Group, with a substantial portion provided to Reliance Industries Limited. The company presently does not have any expansion plans on the anvil, the statement said.

## Telangana attracted Rs 21,000 cr investment during Davos meet

**NEW DELHI:** Telangana attracted investments worth Rs 21,000 crore during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting at Davos where the state delegation was headed by state minister for information technology and industries, K.T. Rama Rao. This was the fifth visit of Minister KTR to Davos, and like in the past his efforts to bring investments to the state have yielded fruitful results, claimed the government.

Presenting the growth story of Telangana and pitching for investments, KTR has participated in meetings with leaders of top global organisations, attended round tables and spoken at panel discussions and shared his thoughts on a wide array of subjects in the four-day trip. In addition to this, the minister also interacted with the Indian diaspora in Zurich and highlighted the

progress of Telangana to the NRIs in Switzerland.

At a juncture where the global economy is on the brink of recession, Telangana managed to bag some big-ticket investments. The Telangana delegation was successful in showcasing the state as a global investment destination and gateway to India.

The Telangana pavilion grabbed the attention of many top companies with representatives of several global organisations visiting the stall. Telangana pavilion presented information regarding Telangana's geography, investments it attracted in the last eight years and initiatives of IT and Industry departments such as T-Hub and T-Works. Videos of various government programmes, policies and projects like Kaleshwaram played at the pavilion were a special attraction.



Sharing his experience of the visit, Minister KTR observed that the WEF is the right platform to introduce Telangana, a progressive state which has exceptional industrial policies and infrastructure and said that Telangana is strengthening its ties with companies on the WEF platform.

"All the meetings at the WEF were highly productive and we were able to attract

Rs 21,000 crore at the meet," said KTR.

He said that bringing huge investments to the state and thereby creating employment is the driving force. "I believe that all the new investments and meetings regarding prospective investments will yield favourable outcomes," added KTR.

The big draw of this edition of Davos trip was the WEF

coming forward to establish its first Indian centre in Hyderabad. This thematic centre will focus on life sciences and health care. This announcement further consolidates the city's position as the hub for life sciences and pharmaceuticals.

Microsoft announced to set up three more data centres in Hyderabad with an investment of Rs 16,000 crore. Bharti Airtel Group said it would set up a large Hyperscale Data Centre in Hyderabad with Rs 2,000 crore.

Eurofins, a global leader in the pharma sector, announced the establishment of a state-of-the-art laboratory campus in Genome Valley with an outlay of Rs 1,000 crore. Other global companies such as PyxisCo, P&G, Allox, Apollo Tyres Ltd, WebPPT, and Inspire Brands came forward with investments worth Rs 2,000 crore.

## Coal Ministry offers relaxation in Revision of Performance Bank Guarantee

**NEW DELHI:** Coal Ministry Offered relaxation in Revision of Performance Bank Guarantee and extended Bid due date for Commercial Coal Block auction upto January 30.

The Ministry of Coal had launched the sixth round and second attempt of fifth round of commercial coal mines' auction on November 3, 2022 for 141 coal mines. Considering the demand from the industry and to promote Ease of Doing Business (EoDB), the Ministry has decided that going forward the first revision in the Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) would be done upon grant of mine opening permission for the respective coal mines.

As per the provisions of the tender document, the Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) to be submitted for each successfully auctioned coal mine is to be revised annually based on the National Coal Index (NCI) for the month of April in the beginning of the year. Since NCI has become double since the launch of first commercial



coal mine auctions in 2020, several representations were received from the industry for relaxation in PBG revision provisions.

It was requested that unprecedented increase in NCI has led to significant financial burden on successful bidders, whose mines are in the pre-operationalisation stage, impacting fund availability for mine operationalisation activities, said officials.

Officials said that this ini-

tiative is expected to reduce the financial burden on the bidders during the process of operationalisation of the coal mines and is expected to enhance participation from the bidders in the commercial coal mines' auctions. In lieu of the same and to effectuate this amendment in the ongoing round of auction, the Ministry has extended the auction bid due date to January 30, 2023 from its earlier bid due date of January 13.

## Asset quality of Indian banks will be stable in 2023: Moody's



The asset quality of Indian banks and those in Southeast Asian countries will be stable in 2023, said Moody's Investors Service in its latest report on the banking sector in emerging markets.

Indian banks will benefit from a stable operating environment and significant improvements in their solvency metrics, the report notes.

According to Moody's, the rising interest rates amid high inflation will lead to gradual increases in margins, supporting banks' revenue.

On the other hand, higher debt-servicing costs and slowing economic growth pose asset risks for banks, although they are well positioned to

cope with potential growth in problem loans thanks to prudent underwriting standards and ample reserves.

Inflation rates will fall but remain high in 2023 while economic slowdown is likely to be moderate, the report notes. According to Moody's capital inflows support funding and liquidity of the banks in emerging markets.

During the first nine months of 2022, capital inflows into India stood at over 2 per cent of its gross domestic product.

The credit rating agency also said, the emerging markets face the double whammy of inflation and currency depreciation.

## RBL Bank's ex-assistant V-P arrested in Rs 19cr cheating scam

**NEW DELHI:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested a former assistant vice president of the RBL bank for allegedly transferring Rs 19.80 crore from bank's two accounts to his own accounts in other banks.

The accused, identified as Nagendra Kumar (39), had also resigned from the bank after committing the crime in August 2020, and he was evading arrest.

According to Jitendra Kumar Singh, Additional Commissioner of Police (EOW), a complaint was filed by the vigilance department of the RBL bank wherein it was stated that Nagendra, was posted at RBL Bank at Barakhamba Road as Assistant Vice President, Implementation & Client Support - Transaction Banking.

"On August 7, 2020, two account holders of the bank disputed some debit trans-



actions from their accounts through the Cash Management portal of the bank. On further enquiry, the bank came to know that Nagendra transferred Rs 19.80 crore from two bank accounts to his own accounts with ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank. The RBL

Bank contacted ICICI Bank Ltd and HDFC Bank Ltd and returned the cheated amount to the victims accounts," said the official.

However, a case was registered under relevant sections of the law and a manhunt was initiated to nab Nagendra, who

was on the run.

"Several efforts were made to trace the accused. Based on technical surveillance, Nagendra was apprehended on Friday from Vasant Kunj," said the Additional CP.

Police said that Nagendra had permissions to read

and write in the host to host banking system (Secure File Transfer Protocol) of the bank regarding bank accounts from which the money was transferred.

On August 7, 2020 at about 05.18 p.m., Nagendra created two funds transfer files having eight transactions and uploaded them to the folder of these companies in a host to host banking system (Secure File Transfer Protocol).

"After that the cash management system of the bank automatically sent these files for payment, Rs 6.9 crore was transferred to the account of Nagendra but the same was returned by ICICI bank on the request of the bank while Rs 10 crore was not accepted by HDFC bank as the beneficiary name mismatched while Rs 2.90 crore was not transferred as the daily limit was breached," said the official.

## Gold prices are expected to touch Rs 60,000/10 grams 24-carat shortly with the rates



**NEW DELHI:** Gold prices are expected to touch Rs 60,000/10 grams 24-carat shortly with the rates touching Rs 58,550 on Monday, a top official of Madras Jewellers and Diamond Merchants Association said.

Buyers are continuing to buy now as gold will reach further up if the Russia-Ukraine war turns further serious and the inflation continues upwards, coupled with recession, the official said.

"The price of 24 carat gold is expected to touch Rs 60,000/10 grams in couple of days. On Monday, the price was Rs 58,550/24 carat 10 grams including taxes," Madras Jewellers and Diamond Merchants Association President and Challani Jewellery Mart partner Jayantilal Chalani told IANS.

According to Emkay Global Financial Services, the recession fear in the West and the geo-political tensions will keep gold in focus.

"Gold has been trading in a range of \$1,800-1,880 in the last one month. The cues from the US Fed on likely slowdown in rate tightening has helped gold prices rally from levels of \$1,680-1,730 to \$1,850-1,880 currently," Emkay Global said.

"In India, the prices are trading near an all-time high aided by the marriage season demand. Globally, it is trading 5-6 per cent lower than the all-time high level recorded in September 2022," the company said.

According to Emkay Glob-

al, a major reason for the rally in the prices of gold has been the cues from the US Fed. After a relentless tightening on the rate as well as liquidity front, the central bank has indicated a slowdown in the pace of rate hikes as key economic indicators, and inflation has stabilised.

A slower rate hike of 25 bps going forward has softened the US dollar, leading to a rally in gold prices. Gold is an international commodity, priced in US dollars - so a softness in the greenback lifts the prices of the yellow metal. The US dollar index, from its high of 114 level witnessed in September, has softened to 103 levels. Gold is considered a safe haven and often attracts investments in times of uncertainty and slowdown, recession in the economy. In addition, institutional buyers like the cCentral banks bought a net 50 ton of gold in November, up 47 per cent month-on-month, Emkay Global said.

"This led to a rise in demand for the yellow metal, perhaps this offset the selling by ETFs. A consistent rise in yields and expectations of Fed rate hikes will keep gold prices in focus. Policy changes, if any, will be at least two quarters away given the persistence of inflation as also target levels being quite far away from the current inflation reading. Gold is poised to move up with the right indications in interest rates, especially US rates," Emkay Global added.



## Chris Hipkins set to replace Jacinda Ardern as New Zealand Prime Minister

**WELLINGTON:** Chris Hipkins, who played a significant role in New Zealand's response to the covid-19 pandemic, is set to replace Jacinda Ardern as prime minister after emerging on Saturday as the only candidate to lead the ruling Labour Party.

Hipkins, 44, is expected to be confirmed as the new leader at a meeting of Labour's 64 lawmakers, or Caucus, on Sunday.

"I think we're an incredibly strong team," Hipkins told a news conference after the party announced him as the sole candidate.



"We've gone through this process with unity and we'll continue to do that. I'm feeling really fortunate to be working with such an amazing group of people who have a real com-

mitment to the service of the people of New Zealand."

Hipkins would not be drawn on his policy plans. A cabinet reshuffle proposed by Ardern would go ahead, but Finance Minister Grant Robertson was likely to continue in the role, he said.

He said he had spoken to Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who tweeted the two had had "a warm discussion".

In a surprise announcement on Thursday, Ardern said she had "no more in the tank" to lead the country and would step down.

## German inflation reaches record 7.9 pc in 2022



Driven by rising energy and food prices in particular, inflation in Germany slowed at the end of 2022 but reached a record high of 7.9% for the year as a whole, the Federal Statistical Office.

Crisis-related effects, such as supply bottlenecks and significant price increases at economic upstream stages, were "characteristic of the entire year", Destatis President Ruth Brand said in a statement.

Energy prices rose 34.7 per cent year-on-year, with prices for heating oil and natural gas even soaring 87.0 per cent and 64.8 per cent, respectively, according to Destatis.

Prices for food also outgrew overall inflation and were up 13.4 per cent, reports Xinhua news agency.

Excluding energy and food prices, Germany's annual inflation rate in 2022 would have been around half as high at 4 per cent, according to Destatis.

To ease inflationary pressure on consumers and businesses, the German government set up relief packages totaling 95 billion euros (\$102 billion).

Among the measures were a fuel discount and regular social benefits increase.

In addition, a "protective umbrella" worth 200 billion euros was set up to finance a cap on electricity and gas prices that took effect at the beginning of the year.

For the month of December last year, the state even covered consumers' heating bills in full.

High inflation was "partly mitigated" through the government's relief measures, Brand stressed.

Leading economic institutes expect inflation in Germany to decline to around 6 per cent in 2023.

"Domestic inflationary pressure will remain high for some time," the ifo Institute for economic research said in its latest forecast.

## Scot Airline: 32 Passengers missed flight due to sudden change in scheduled timing



**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**

Passengers at Shri Guru Ramdas Ji International Airport Amritsar left high and dry when a Singapore bound flight took off hours ahead of scheduled timing due to sudden change in its departure timing, leaving high and dry behind 32 passengers on.

The Scoot Airline flight was scheduled to depart at 7.55 pm but it took off at 4 pm on Wednesday according to Airport Authority by saying that all the passengers were communicated well in advance through their emails by the booking agents concerned.

Talking to *The Financial World* correspondent here

today, Director Airport Shri Guru Ramdas ji International Airport V.K. Seth said, "All the booking agents were informed well in time who further informed their clients subsequently to them. But only one agent couldn't inform his clients (passengers) the reason best known to him. Moreover, 263 passengers who boarded the flight had reported well in time at Airport. If we talk about the change of timing of flight, a proper procedure was followed as it was with the prior clearance from the Airport Authority of India besides all authorities concerned. These only 32 passengers missed the flight due to lapse on the part of their booking agent".

## Ukraine sets to get 3 bn euros from EU this week: PM

Ukraine is set to receive 3 billion euros (about \$3.25 billion) from the European Union (EU) this week as a part of fresh financial aid, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal has said. Shmyhal wrote on Telegram that Ukraine and the EU signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the macro-financial program for Kiev worth 18 billion euros (about \$19.5 billion), Xinhua news agency reported. The funds will help Ukraine to maintain macroeconomic stability and cover all critical expenses this year amid the ongoing war with Russia, Shmyhal said.

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## UK passports to become more expensive from Feb-2023

For the first time in five years, the UK government is set to introduce new passport fees for all applications starting February 2023. The price changes, which will come into effect on February 2, will affect those who are renewing or applying for a new passport. The fee for a standard online application made from within the UK will rise from 75.50 pounds to 82.50 pounds for adults and 49 pounds to 53.50 pounds for children.

Postal applications will increase from 85 pounds to 93 pounds for adults and 58.50 pounds to 64 pounds for children. The UK Home Office said in a statement that it "does not make any profit from the cost of passport applications", adding that the changes are subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. "The new fees will help the Home Office move towards a system that meets its costs through those who use it, reducing reliance on funding from general taxation."

The fees will also contribute to the cost of processing passport applications, consular support overseas, including for lost or stolen passports, and the cost of processing British citizens at UK borders, the Home Office statement read.

The minister also mentioned about the reduction in security deposit amount from 5 per cent to 1 per cent, extending a benefit of around Rs 400 crore to ethanol suppliers for 'ease of doing business', along with reduction of GST on bio-fuel from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

The minister said the government is setting up five 2G ethanol bio-refineries at Panipat in Hary-

## Biden to deliver his State of the Union address on Feb 7



**WASHINGTON:** US President Joe Biden will deliver his State of the Union address to a joint session of the Congress on February 7, the White House said. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters that Biden had accepted House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's invitation to address a joint session of Congress on February 7, Xinhua news agency reported. This would be Biden's second State of the Union speech and the first before a divided Congress with Republicans taking control of the House of Representatives and Democrats still running the Senate.

## Nepal Plane Crash: Yeti Airlines ATR-72 aircraft was piloted by Senior Captain Kamal KC and Manju was the co-pilot

She lost her pilot husband in a 2006 plane crash and now she has also met the same fate. This tragic coincidence happened to Manju Khatiwada, 44, the co-pilot of the ill-fated Yeti Airlines plane, who died on Sunday when the plane crashed in Pokhara, Nepal.

Her husband Dipak Pokharel died in 2006 in a plane crash in the Jumla district. Seventeen years after the death of her husband, Manju also lost her life in a plane crash on Sunday. According to the Kantipur national daily, after the death of her pilot husband, her father Govinda was



planning to send her to India to study nursing but she refused and went to the US to do a pilot training course to fulfil the dream

of her first husband. She was supposed to be promoted to pilot after some more flights, according to the news report.

## India progressing fast on energy transition

**NEW DELHI:** As the entire world is trying hard to find solutions to mitigate climate change, India is putting its plans together faster to conserve energy and move towards alternative ones. "India is the front-runner in mitigating climate change globally and is progressing fast on its energy transition agenda.

Today's event marks the extent to which India is willing to innovate to keep its pledge of protecting the environment while simultaneously addressing the growing demand for energy," said Hardeep S. Puri, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Talking about the progress made by India in terms of ethanol blending, the minister said, "We have increased ethanol blending in petrol from 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 10.17 per cent in 2022, which was well ahead of the November 2022 deadline, and have advanced its target to achieve 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol from 2030 to 2025-26."

Puri said that this has resulted not only in augmenting the country's energy security, but also translated into a forex savings of over Rs 41, 500 crore, reduced GHG emissions of 27 lakh MT and has benefitted farmers with expeditious payment of over Rs 40, 600 crore made to them.

The minister also mentioned about the reduction in security deposit amount from 5 per cent to 1 per cent, extending a benefit of around Rs 400 crore to ethanol suppliers for 'ease of doing business', along with reduction of GST on bio-fuel from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

The minister said the government is setting up five 2G ethanol bio-refineries at Panipat in Hary-



ana, Bathinda in Punjab, Bargarh in Odisha, Numaligarh in Assam and Devangere in Karnataka.

"We are also launching a Global Alliance on biofuels, along with USA and Brazil during India's Presidency of G20," he said.

The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and the US Grains Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support higher ethanol blending in India at the Auto Expo 2023.

SIAM is the apex industry body for the Indian automobile industry and the US Grains Council (USGC) is a US-based not-for-profit organisation developing export markets for ethanol globally.

The SIAM and USGC will work to create ethanol awareness, increase production capacity and efficiency and advocate for ethanol's wide adoption. The MOU was signed by Vinod Agarwal, President, SIAM, and Josh Miller, Chairman, USGC, in the presence of Puri, and Gloria Berbena, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission and Counsellor, Embassy of the US, New Delhi.

Ethanol is a renewable and clean fuel, which benefits the environment, health, and economy. In June 2022, India had achieved the target of supplying 10 per cent ethanol-blended petrol, five months ahead of schedule, up from 0.67 per cent blending in 2012.

## UN calls on Pak to curb forced marriages of teenage girls from minority sects

Pakistan has been made to realise its consistent failure in ensuring religious security to minorities with the United Nations (UN) calling for immediately curbing coerced religious conversions, child marriages, kidnapping of teenage girls and their forced conversions and marriage to men twice their age.

In an appeal to Pakistan, the UN has urged the authorities to "stop the alleged abuse and kidnapping of teenagers, who are trafficked far from their homes and made to marry men sometimes twice their age". Rights experts, while reporting to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), presented many reports, giving clear indications of outright involvement of religious authorities and the complicity of security forces and the justice system, in cases of kidnapping, forced conversions and child marriages.

Despite the fact that Pakistan has made efforts to pass legislations prohibiting such illegal practices, rights

experts have called on the Pakistan government to take tangible and on ground steps to curb the consistently increasing injustice to minorities. "We urge the government to take immediate steps to prevent and thoroughly investigate these acts objectively and in line with domestic legislations and international human rights commitments. The perpetrators must be held fully accountable," the experts said.

"Pakistan's courts have enabled the perpetrators by accepting fraudulent evidence from them, regarding the age of the victims and their willingness to marry and convert to Islam," a group of



independent experts and special rapporteurs of the UN emphasised, putting significant focus on upholding the rights of women and children. Criticising the justice system being manipulatively flawed in such matters, the rights experts said that the Pakistani courts have also "misused interpretations of religious laws to justify victims remaining with their abusers".

"The police had also failed the victims' families by refusing to register abductions, or dismissing them as love marriages," they maintained. "We are very concerned that marriages and conversions have taken place under the threat of violence to these girls, women or their families. The abductors force their victims to sign documents, which falsely attest to their being of legal age for marriage as well as marrying and converting of free will. These documents are cited by the police as evidence that no crime has occurred," the rights experts said.

"Pakistan's courts have enabled the perpetrators by accepting fraudulent evidence from them, regarding the age of the victims and their willingness to marry and convert to Islam," a group of

## US releases strategy to uplift Asians, other communities

The White House has released its first-ever national strategy to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) communities.

Senior Biden-Harris administration officials outlined the details of an action plan made by 32 federal agencies to promote safety and equity for Asian Americans, including Indians, and NHPIs at a virtual event on Tuesday, the White House said. Community leaders also discussed additional steps the



federal government can take to address critical priorities for AA and NHPI communities, including data disaggregation, language access, and combating anti-Asian hate.

One in five incidents involve language scapegoating of Asian-Americans, including Indians, by wrongly blaming them for Covid, espionage or economic insecurity, an October 2022

## US arrests Russian crypto exchange founder in \$700 mn fraud

**WASHINGTON:** US authorities have arrested Anatoly Legkodymov, founder and majority owner of cryptocurrency exchange Bitzlat, for allegedly processing \$700 million in illicit funds.

He was arrested from the state of Miami for an alleged operation of a money transmitting business that transported and transmitted illicit funds and that failed to meet US regulatory safeguards, including anti-money laundering requirements.

"The actions send the clear message: whether you break our laws from China or Europe -- or abuse our financial system from a tropical island -- you can expect to answer for your crimes inside a US courtroom," said Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco from the US Department of Justice.

The US Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)



has identified Bitzlat as a "primary money laundering concern" in connection with the Russian government.

"Bitzlat has repeatedly facilitated transactions for Russian-affiliated ransomware groups, including Conti, a Ransomware-as-a-Service group that has links to the Russian government and to Russian-connected darknet markets," said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, Wally Adeyemo.

According to court documents, Legkodymov is a senior executive and the majority shareholder of Bitzlat, a Hong Kong-registered cryptocurrency exchange that operates globally.

## Indian-American councillor faces heat from anti-drag protesters

Indian-American New York City Councillor Shekar Krishnan is facing the ire of protesters for supporting drag queens reading out to children in public libraries.

Krishnan, who is the Council Member for District 25, came home last week to find anti-drag protesters shouting slurs and vandalising the sidewalk outside his home in Jackson Heights.

"...after a meaningful day of reflection on Dr (Martin Luther) King, I came home to homophobic and transphobic protesters outside my door, again, vandalising the sidewalk & shouting slurs with my children inside," Krishnan wrote on his Twitter handle.

The protesters screamed "Shekar is a pedophile, he is a groomer" when his wife and children were inside the house. "This disgusting behaviour is another reminder of the work ahead of us," Krishnan, the first Indian-American ever elected to the City Council in history, tweeted.

A civil rights lawyer and a long-time community activist, he stated that the New York City Council is committed to Drag Story Hour and to LG-BTQIA+ communities across the city. "This @NYCCouncil is committed to Drag Story Hour. With every display of hate, our commitment to love and inclusivity only grows," Shekar wrote in his tweet.

## Russia hints headway in TAPI gas pipeline project after Putin key aide visits Kabul

**KABUL:** A week after Russian President Vladimir Putin's Special Envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov returned home from another trip to Kabul, Moscow has indicated that the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, which has been facing an uncertain future after the return of Taliban in Afghanistan, could finally see some progress in the coming months.

Even though the new regime in the Afghan capital gave signals that it remains keen to continue the work on TAPI project, which has already seen more lows than highs since the first TAPI Summit held in Ashgabat in December 2010, no efforts were made to show any progress on the ground.

However, Kabulov's two-day visit to Kabul last week has fuelled a renewed push to revive the stalled project.

"As the situation in Afghanistan stabilises, the participation

of domestic economic operators in the construction and operation of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is possible," the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Thursday while detailing the outcomes of high-ranking diplomat's January 12-13 visit to Kabul.

Kabulov held consultations with Afghanistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Motaki and other representatives of the Taliban leadership on an entire range of issues of bilateral relations, with an emphasis on the development of trade, economic, cultural, educational and humanitarian ties.

"The focus is on mutually beneficial cooperation in such sectors as energy, agriculture, transport, infrastructure, industry, mining, in particular the organisation of regular commercial deliveries of Russian fuel and agricultural products to Afghan companies," stated



the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Moscow maintained that the leadership of Afghanistan highly appreciates its efforts to assist the Afghan people in building a peaceful, independent and economically self-sufficient state.

Taliban, meanwhile, asserts that it remains firm on Afghanistan's ambition of developing an energy partnership with Russia

at a time when its energy giants like Gazprom have been hit by sanctions from the Western countries.

With a total length of approximately 1814 km - 214 km of which falls in Turkmenistan, 774 km through Afghanistan, and 826 km in the territory of Pakistan before reaching Fazilka in India's Punjab - the mega TAPI gas pipeline project would connect Turkmenistan, one of

the largest energy suppliers in the world, with the South Asian countries.

However, as reported by IndiaNarrative.com last year, India has made it clear that it is not just because of a "difficult neighbourhood" that work on the massive pipeline, which will have the capacity to transfer 33 billion cubic meters of gas per year, has been stalled.

"It is on record that India has some concerns about the commercial or the business aspect of the TAPI pipeline, and that is being discussed. GAIL is a stakeholder. So, let me simply put it that we have some concerns on the business principles, on the commercial side, apart from the logistical challenges which are very apparent," Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, said just ahead of then President Ram Nath Kovind's visit to Turkmenistan in April 2022.

Earlier this week, the CEO of the TAPI gas pipeline project Muhammetmyrat Amanov and Turkmenistan Ambassador to Kabul Khoja Ovezov held a series of meetings in Kabul with the representatives of the Taliban government's Ministry of Interior Affairs, National Defence, and the Directorate General of Intelligence on security concept for the first phase of the project in Afghanistan.

They also met with the Afghan Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum Shaikh Shahabuddin Delawar to discuss the commencement of the land acquisition process and development of gas distribution system in Herat province which will be the first phase of the TAPI project in Afghanistan.

The Taliban government reportedly assured the officials of TAPI project that it will do its best to ensure the full security of the project in the country.





## A Woman with Wings

MAHIE JK

"I have never decided to be a pilot officer, it was unplanned". This is Shivani Kalra a young pilot officer for you. Shivani was a part of "Operation Ganga", that evacuated students from Ukraine last year. With her motto "duty - first" she proudly partook the activity and flew to war zone area evacuating the stranded students in Ukraine. Undoubtedly, she has broken all barriers and have made her mark in a men's field. Operation Ganga was aimed to bring back thousands of students from Ukraine trapped in war zone.

Addressing the Students of Delhi University in a Youth Conclave, at PGDAV College Delhi, Shivani said women are multi-tasker. They can do several things at a same time. Recollecting her experience she shared few things with the students, she is happy that she was a part of "Operation Ganga" that evacuated 249 Indian students from Budapest, Romania. Students at Ukraine were eagerly waiting for us and their scared faces tuned into smile when they saw us. Initially my family was worried for me, but they did not stop me. When I came back from Ukraine, my parents said they

are proud of me, added Kalra. A women with wings and courage, also asked the students to raise their hands if they have decided a carrier option for them, to which many students replied by lifting their hands, the undecided students failed to raise the hands, to them Shivani said, "I was one among you". It is okay if you have not decided yet, you still have time. Even I had no plans to join the Aviation Industry earlier, she added. One of the student during the event, raised a question "You have faced a lot of criticism mam were you ever been demotivated?" And how

did you deal with it, To this she replied " Demotivated word does not exist in my dictionary" I have faced a lot of criticism in my life, I was rejected many times but I never lose faith in myself. Even after facing lot of criticism, I stood focused and continued working hard and I had faith in the Almighty. If you are determined no body can stop you, added Kalra. Coming up from an orthodox family of Haryana where society is inclined towards marriage of girls at a early age, it was very difficult for to convince her friends and family. On being asked about

her decision to chose Aviation Industry as her career, Shivani replied her parents have always supported her, especially her father who not only encouraged her but also stood by her throughout the journey. She guided the young girls at the college to never lose hope and stay focused on whatever they choose for them. It is the determination and dedication that will cater us success, she added. Shivani Kalra is an Airline Captain at Air India limited. She began flying for Air India since 2018 and had never stopped yet.



## POTPOURRI

# Shah Rukh Khan's return to the silver screen after four years of long break: John Abraham



**MUMBAI:** Bollywood actor John Abraham, who will be soon seen as an antagonist in the upcoming spy-thriller film 'Pathaan', has shared that the whole world is waiting for Shah Rukh Khan's return to the silver screen. The film is SRK's first in four years with his last release being the ambitious Aanand L. Rai directorial, 'Zero'.

In a video released by the makers of 'Pathaan', John said, "I don't think just the entire nation, I think the entire world wants to see Shah Rukh Khan on screen, including myself, and I think he more than delivered the goods because he's fantastic in this film." John plays the arch-

**"JIM IS COOL. JIM IS DANGEROUS AND JIM BRINGS BACK THE OLD JOHN ABRAHAM FROM DHOOM! I TOTALLY LOVE THE ACTION SEQUENCES OF 'PATAHAN' BECAUSE MOST OF THEM ARE MOBILE**

with his bad boy on bike image. Talking about his character in the film, John shared, "Jim is cool. Jim is dangerous and Jim brings back the old John Abraham from Dhoom! I totally love the action sequences of 'Pathaan' because most of them are mobile."

He added, "One sequence was of course on motorcycles in the snow, one was on a truck so again we were moving, the third is in the air which is wow, fantastic. So, each one was in movement and they were fantastic."

'Pathaan', a YRF production which also stars Deepika Padukone as an agent, is set to hit the screens on January 25 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

## Kareena Kapoor drops a major hint about her new project



**MUMBAI:** Bollywood diva Kareena Kapoor Khan has shared an action-filled post hinting at her new project. Kareena, who will next be seen next in Hansal Mehta's untitled film, and Sujoy Ghosh's 'The Devotion Of Suspect X', shared a short video on Instagram while hinting at something new which she will announce on January 27. In the clip, Kareena is seen dressed in black as she lands on the ground like lightning. She captioned the video and wrote: "It's not such a big secret, all you have to do is ask nicely. Landing on 27.01.2023 - Stay Tuned. Any guesses."

The video reminded many fans of Kareena's popular superhero movie 'Ra. One' alongside superstar Shah Rukh Khan. Talking about her work, Kareena will be seen next in Hansal Mehta's untitled film, and Sujoy Ghosh's adaptation of the Japanese novel, 'The Devotion Of Suspect X'.

## Akshay Kumar and Emraan Hashmi posts first upcoming movie 'Selfie'



**MUMBAI:** The motion poster of the Akshay Kumar and Emraan Hashmi-starrer upcoming film 'Selfie' was unveiled on Sunday. Akshay took to his Instagram to share the motion poster on his feed which shows him standing face-to-face with Emraan's character of a cop in the film. The superstar captioned the video: "Fans make a star."

Fans can also break a star! Find out what happens when a fan turns against his Idol. Watch #Selfie in cinemas on Feb 24th.

Karan Johar mentioned in his caption: "Superstar aur Superfan ki aisi kahaani, aap ne suni naa hogi kahan! Dekhiye #Selfie in cinemas on Feb 24th (An unheard tale of a superstar and a superfan)."

'Selfie' is a remake of the 2019 Malayalam comedy-drama 'Driving Licence'. The original Malayalam movie was directed by Lal Jr from a script by Sachy. It revolved around a superstar (Prithviraj Sukumaran) famous for his driving skills who loses his licence. The matter spins out of control after he locks horns with a motor inspector (Suraj Venjaramoodu), who happens to be a fan of the actor.

As soon as the makers posted the video on social media, a section of the audience outright bashed them. One social media user wrote: "Sunni bhi and dekh li ... remake hai (have heard it and seen it, duh, it's a remake)."

Another wrote: "Another successful remake from Malayalam movie ... only way Akshay Kumar can survive in Bollywood is either make patriotism movie or copy from South Indian movie."

## As China lifts ban on Marvel, 'Black Panther 2' and 'Ant-Man and The Wasp' to release



China has lifted its unofficial ban on Marvel titles, setting release dates for two major superhero tentpoles, 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' and 'Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania'.

'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever', which was released everywhere else in the world last November, will open in China on February 7. Shortly after, 'Ant-Man and The

Wasp: Quantumania' will be released on February 17, the same day the sequel touches down in the U.S. and the U.K. The dates were released via Marvel's Chinese social media accounts.

Those movies will be the first Marvel adventures to play in China since 2019's 'Avengers: Endgame' (which made a staggering \$632 million in the territory) and

'Spider-Man: Far From Home' (which brought in \$198 million in the territory). In the past, Marvel movies have been extremely popular in China, with 'Black Panther' grossing \$105 million and 'Ant-Man and the Wasp' earning \$121 million in the country.

It's not just Marvel that's been getting the cold shoulder from Disney. Very few Hollywood movies have gotten access to screen in Chinese movie theatres in the pandemic era. The thaw towards Disney films in the Middle Kingdom began late in 2022 with James Cameron's magnum opus 'Avatar: The Way of Water', which got permission to play in the country from China's Film Bureau.

So far, the science-fiction tentpole has earned some \$220 million in the territory.

## MC Stan, Shalin Bhanot, and Shiv Thakare can be seen criticizing Priyanka Chahar Choudhary: BB16



Bigg Boss 16' housemates MC Stan, Shalin Bhanot, and Shiv Thakare can be seen criticizing Priyanka Chahar Choudhary and sharing with Bigg Boss what they all think about her game plan.

Bigg Boss also asks MC Stan and Shiv on who is the happiest with the exit of Sajid Khan and they say Shalin and Priyanka.

Later, they both talk about Priyanka and Shiv says: "She considers herself to be the winner and feels that she only will get the trophy. She can't change and after the exit of Ankit, she is unable to grab the eyeballs and the way she used to fight, even that is not there. She has turned into a big zero". While Shalin adds: "I never like her logic. She is in the habit of poking her nose in other's matters and she likes to degrade others."

## Actor Rajkumar Rao and model Nora Fatehi seen in the track 'Achha Sila Diya'

**NEW DELHI:** Bollywood actor Rajkumar Rao talks about his first ever single, 'Achha Sila Diya', and shares his working experience with actress, dancer and model Nora Fatehi in the track. The song is a remake of 90s popular track 'Achha Sila Diya Tune Mere Pyaar Ka', sung

by Sonu Nigam from the 1995 film 'Bewafa Sanam'. Rajkumar says: "This is my first ever single and that too with Nora who is an amazing person to work with. I was really excited when I came to know I will be working on this song by B Praak and Jaani, as I really love their work.



The song is melancholic yet you

cannot stop listening to it and I am very glad to be a part of it." The track is a reflection of love and deception and what happens when one of the partners cheat on the other. In the track, Rajkumar is seen getting betrayed by Nora and how she makes a plan to get him murdered by her

boyfriend. While there are emotional moments, the audience also sees the dance moves by Nora. Nora, who played the female lead in the song adds: "Shooting for the music video was a whole new experience as my role had a strong element of intensity in it. Working with Raj-

kumar once again, but this time for a completely different genre, was really good fun." 'Achha Sila Diya' is sung by B Praak and the music is also given by him and it is composed and written by Jaani.

B Praak calls shooting for the song a wonderful experience and

shares: "It was a wonderful experience working on this song. This is a heartbreak song which is extremely beautiful and you can just hear it on loop. Rajkumar and Nora looked marvelous in the music video and Arvind Khaira has told the story in an amazing manner."

## Today I am alive because of my wife and kids: Anu Malik



**MUMBAI:** Music composer Anu Malik said that his pillar of support are his wife and his daughters on the singing reality show 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'.

As the show will be having a family special, a lovely message from judge Anu Malik's family was played where they mentioned how he is the strongest person and despite witnessing the toughest time in his life, he never gave up.

Anu said: "I would like to say thank you to the Zee team for this VT, it was an absolute

surprise for me. I have seen tough times in my life, but I must say that today I am because of my wife and kids."

He added: "Like we always say, the elder one is the pillar of the family, but according to me, the pillar of my family, the pillar of my strength, is my wife and my daughters. In fact, today I am alive just because of these three women in my life. Moreover, I believe that if your family is on your side, then you can achieve anything in your life."

## When Kristin Chenoweth was 'practically killed' in a set accident



Actress Kristin Chenoweth has opened up about "long-standing injuries" that she received on the production of 'The Good Wife' in 2012. Chenoweth's comments came during an interview on 'Watch What Happens Live With Andy Cohen' on Monday. The actor joined the programme to promote her new book, 'I'm No Philosopher, But I Got Thought', in which she details the 'The Good Wife' incident and its immediate aftermath, reports Variety. Speaking with Cohen, Chenoweth detailed her mindset in the following months, voicing regrets that she took no legal action against the network. "I didn't do it out of fear and anxiety. Don't ever let fear rule your life," Chenoweth said. "I have long-standing injuries from that. I wish I had listened to my dad. He said, 'You're going to want to do this.' We're not the 'suing family,' but when you're practically killed."

## 'The Night Manager' trailer promises taut spy-thriller with action peppered generously



**MUMBAI:** The trailer of the upcoming spy-thriller series 'The Night Manager', which stars Bollywood actors Anil Kapoor and Aditya Roy Kapur, was unveiled on Friday. It starts off with Aditya's titular character struggling in the thick cover of snow and then quickly changes the imagery to reveal Anil's character of Shelly Rungta as an arms dealer, who makes money off conflicts.

Aditya's character is made to infiltrate Shelly's system by actress Tillotama Shome's character of a RAW agent, Lipika. Lipika aims to dismantle Shelly's unholy alliance between the intelligence community and the secret arms trade along with Shelly's partners in crime BJ (played by Saswata

Chatterjee) and Jayu (played by Ravi Behl).

Anil Kapoor said, "Spy thrillers are all about the twists and revelations, with The Night Manager the audience will experience the unexpected. Shelly Rungta is the evil in plain sight, you can never anticipate what his next move is going to be or he is the man behind the menace. But the twist is that he meets his match and where the show goes from there will keep the audience on the edge of their seats."

The trailer, which is over 2 minutes in length, shows Lipika making Aditya's character pose as a night manager to guard Shelly's empire. But, works beneath the surface to provide necessary information about Shelly and his business to Lipika.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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