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Modi's Mother Heeraben Modi cremated in Gandhinagar, PM Performs last rites



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Heeraben Modi, who dies early this morning, has been cremated in Gandhinagar. PM Modi, who reached Gujarat early this morning, performed the last rites. Heeraben Modi was 99. "Smt Heeraben Modi passed away on 30/12/2022, at 3:39 am (early morning, during the treatment at UN Mehta Heart Hospital," the hospital where

she had been admitted since Wednesday said in a statement. Informing about her death, the Prime Minister posted a heartfelt tweet early this morning, "A glorious century rests at the feet of God... In Ma, I have always felt that trinity, which contains the journey of an ascetic, the symbol of a selfless Karmayogi and a life committed to values."

PM Modi, who was scheduled to launch the developmental projects in West Bengal, may join the events through video conferencing. Heeraben Modi lived with PM Modi's younger brother Pankaj Modi at Raysan village near Gandhinagar. The Prime Minister would regularly visit Raysan and spend time with his mother during most of his Gujarat visits. PM Modi leaves the crematorium after performing the last rites of his mother Heeraben

Modi, who died early this morning. Heeraben Modi was 99. A host of development programmes, including a Namami Gange meeting and the inauguration of the Vande Bharat train, scheduled to be attended in West Bengal by PM Modi on Friday will be held as per plan, the PMO confirmed in a tweet, adding that he will participate via video-conferencing. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief at the death and said that "the death of a mother is an unbearable and irreparable loss". "Saddened by the passing away of Hira Ben, mother of Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The death of a mother is an unbearable and irreparable loss. No one in the world can take the place of mother," Nitish Kumar tweeted. "I pray to God to grant eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his family members to bear patience in this hour of grief," he added.

Fast track courts for NRI Punjabis would established in the state to address their issues: Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar
Punjab NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal said that Punjab Government would soon set up fast track courts in the state to facilitate Punjabi NRIs in addressing their issues in a short span of time. Presiding over Fifth 'Punjabi NRIs Naal Milni' held here the Cabinet Minister Dhaliwal said that the state government was committed to prompt resolution of their grievances by taking the initiative of such meets. He said that this endeavour of the state government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will go a long way bringing positive results. The Minister in a statement issued here today said that these courts would be functioning dedicatedly for the speedy redressal of Non Resident Indians' (NRIs) issues pertaining to civil cases.



He added that the proceedings will be initiated soon to establish courts to deal civil cases of NRIs so that their precious energy, time and money could be saved. Expressing satisfaction over the enthusiastic response of the Punjabi Diaspora towards the Milni initiative, Dhaliwal said that the NRIs would be made active partners in the state's progress. He also lauded the contribution being made by NRI Punjabis in the

development of villages and cities. He further pointed out that nodal officers are being deputed in the districts, who would get the issues of NRIs done at the earliest without any delay. In the presence of civil and police department officials, the NRI Affairs Minister heard the problems of NRIs from districts Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Pathankot and Tarn Taran and directed that these complaints should be resolved immedi-

ately. He released what's app number 9056009884 for NRIs complaints. During the meeting with the NRI Punjabis, district war counters were established for the convenience of the NRIs from different districts where civil and police administration officials were listening to their issues. A total of 103 cases were heard during today's event. Prominent amongst those present on the occasion included MLAs Kashmir Singh Sohal, MLA Dalbir Singh Tong, MLA Jeevanjot Kaur, MLA Amarपाल Singh, MLA Sarvan Singh Dhun, ADGP (NRI) Praveen Kumar Sinha, Commissioner Gurpreet Kaur Sapra, Special Secretary (NRI Affairs) Kanwalpreet Kaur Brar, Police Commissioner Jaskaran Singh, Deputy Commissioner and SSP of Amritsar, Tarntaran, Gurdaspur and Pathankot along with senior officials of various departments were present.

Now, post-mortems allowed even after sunset: Delhi Government



YOGESH KANT New Delhi
In a significant decision, the Delhi government has now allowed authorities to conduct post-mortems even after sunset, according to an official statement. «Enabling a landmark reform in the national capital, the Delhi Government has made the post-mortem of dead bodies possible even after sunset in Delhi,» the release stated. According to the statement, the move will be a big help for relatives of the deceased, who often have to wait long hours to receive their dead. It will also encourage and facilitate organ donation and transplantation. However, a provision has been made to only examine the dead bodies during the day in cases where there is a suspicion of murder, suicide, rape, or foul play, he added. On Tuesday, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia directed Health department officials to conduct post-mortems even at night in hospitals with adequate facilities.

76 per cent of Electors of Punjab furnished their Aadhaar details to link voter ID cards voluntarily

CHANDIGARH: The drive commenced on the directions of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to submit the Aadhaar details for linking with voter ID cards voluntarily received a positive response, as over 76 per cent of electors in the state have already furnished their Aadhaar details. Divulging details, officiating Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Punjab B Srinivasan said that of a total of 2.12 crore registered electors in the state, 1.61 crore electors have already submitted Form 6B. Notably, a new Form 6B, which came into force on August 1, 2022, was introduced by

the ECI to collect the Aadhaar numbers of the existing electors in a time-bound manner. Form 6B was introduced with a provision to submit a copy of any of the 11 alternative documents, in case any elector is unable to furnish the Aadhaar details. Officiating CEO B Srinivasan emphasized that submission of Aadhaar by electors is voluntary and in

case the elector does not have the Aadhaar number, he/she can submit a copy of any of the 11 alternative documents, mentioned in Form 6B. The officiating CEO also clarified that there will be no deletion of any entry in the electoral roll on the ground of inability on the part of any existing elector to furnish Aadhaar details and no official can deny any new voter for non-submission of Aadhaar. Meanwhile, Electors can submit form 6B Form online via Voter Helpline App or they can also submit Form 6B at their Booth Level Officer (BLO).



BJP turned terrorism-hit Kashmir into tourism capital: Tarun Chug

FW DESK
Tarun Chug, national general secretary of the BJP, said on Saturday that his organisation has transformed Kashmir from a centre of terrorism into a tourist destination. The BJP, he continued, "won't let the Abdullahs, Muftis, and Gandhis take Kashmir back to the 1990s." "The BJP turned J&K from a hub of terrorism into a tourist destination," Chugh, told a news conference in Srinagar. "This year, millions of visitors visited Kashmir. In J&K, vikas (progress) is happening in all areas." New Delhi, according to the BJP leader, was making every effort to bring prosperity, peace, and development to Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP leader reaffirmed that elections would soon be held in Jammu and Kashmir. "We hope Assembly polls will be held soon," he said adding that the polls might be held by May of the following year. "The Election Commission has already started the preparations."

Sexual harassment charges against Haryana Sports Minister by female coach

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh
A junior athletics female coach in Haryana sports department also a National Athlete and a member of Rio Olympics Indian Women 400m squad accused State Sports Minister Sandeep Singh also the Olympian and former Captain of Indian Hockey Team allegedly sexually harassing her. Denying allegations Sandeep Singh termed the framed charges as a political stunt by the political leaders of opposition to defame him demanding an independent investigation in this matter. The woman, an international level athlete was recruited as junior coach under outstanding sports person scheme few months ago while addressing media persons at the residence of INLD General Secretary Abhey Singh Chautala said that she does not have the record of messages as the minister sent these undesired messages in disappearing mode. While leveling the allegations the female coach said that she



was disturbed by the actions on the part of Sports Minister Sandeep Singh and action taken against the minister delayed because she was having training at Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula and her injury, however she met him a couple of times at the gym and also he contacted her through Instagram asking to meet him at the Lake Club during evening hours.. The coach further said that Sandeep Singh told me on Instagram that my service forms are not filled up as such meet him when she went to his residence with all documents he attempted to touch her inappropriately manner when she resisted

and rushed out and informed police who took no action on her complaint and she reached her residence disappointed. She said that when complaint was made to higher police authorities no action was taken and she was advised not to take any action against the minister, she alleged. Meanwhile, State Women Commission Chairperson Renu Bhatia said that in case victim female coach makes complaint against Sports Minister Sandeep Singh the Commission will investigate the matter thoroughly to bring justice to victim and taking up matter with concerned minister for his comments.

Mehbooba, Abdullah to join Rahul Gandhi's yatra in Kashmir



FW DESK New Delhi
PDP president Mehbooba Mufti will join the Kashmir leg of the "Bharat Jodo Yatra" spearheaded by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, she said on Tuesday. National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah is also expected to take part in the yatra when it enters Jammu and Kashmir next month. "I've been formally invited to join @RahulGandhi ji for his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Kashmir today. Salute his indomitable courage and I believe it is my duty to stand with someone who has the courage to challenge fascist forces. Will be joining him in his march towards a better India," the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said in a tweet.

Rahul Gandhi himself 'violated' security protocol 113 times: Govt officials on Cong's security concerns

FW DESK New Delhi
"Full" security arrangements were made for Rahul Gandhi in accordance with laid-down guidelines but he himself "violated" security protocols 113 times since 2020, government officials said Thursday, a day after the Congress alleged security breaches during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in the national capital. The Congress on Wednesday wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, alleging security breaches during the yatra in the city and demanded immediate steps to ensure the security of Gandhi and others taking part in the march. "The security arrangements have been fully made for Rahul Gandhi as per the guidelines," the officials said. Dismissing the allegations,



the officials said the security arrangements made for the protectee works fine when the protectee himself adheres to the laid down security guidelines. However, the officials alleged that on several occasions, violations of laid-down guidelines on the part of Rahul Gandhi have been observed and this fact has been communicated to him from time to time. For instance, since 2020, there have been 113 "violations" observed and duly communicated, the officials said. Besides, they said, during the Delhi leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Gandhi "violated" security guidelines and the CRPF, which provides his inner cordon of the Z-plus category security, will be taking up this matter separately. During the travel of the protectee, the required security arrangements are made by the CRPF in coordination with the state police and the security agencies in accordance with guidelines.

Fresh cold wave conditions likely to continue in January: IMD



NEW DELHI: The northern parts of the country will witness fresh cold wave conditions from December 31 onwards, said India Meteorological Department (IMD). R.K. Jenamani, senior scientist at the IMD, said cold days and severe cold days are mainly over south Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh. "The cold to severe cold wave is expected to continue over Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan and Delhi. Dense to very dense fog will continue to prevail in the belt. From December 28, there will be improvement due to western disturbance and on December 29, fresh snowfall is expected in Jammu & Kashmir, Leh and some parts of Himachal Pradesh," said Jenamani. Drizzle can be expected in parts of Punjab on December 29, said the IMD.

Delhiites woke up to a chilly morning on Tuesday and dense fog lowered visibility in some areas of the city, affecting road and rail traffic. "A minimum temperature of 7 degree Celsius was recorded in Delhi," said the Meteorological (MeT) office. The MeT office said that a layer of dense fog and moderate icy cold winds from the North were responsible for this steep fall in temperature. "Northwesterly dry and cold winds will continue over North-west India. However, intensity of fog may decrease leading to marginal increase in day temperatures and abatement of cold wave from parts of West Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Haryana. Minimum temperature may also increase marginally," said the MeT office.

Good bye to King of Football



NEW DELHI: Elon Musk on Saturday announced that new navigation features will arrive on Twitter in the New Year, as he aims to rejig the whole experience to make the platform faster. "Twitter navigation coming in January that allows swiping to the side to switch between recommended & followed tweets, trends, topics, etc," he said in a tweet. "Until then, tap the star icon on the upper right of the home screen to switch," he added. Musk said that it is good to switch back and forth. "As we improve Twitter AI, recommended tweets, lists and topics will become awesome," he noted. On swiping across Lists on Twitter, Musk said that that will also happen. A user asked him if they can also sort people they follow by categories. Musk was yet to reply to that. As promised by the Twitter CEO, the "view counts for tweets" feature has become a hit among users. Twitter has also updated the list of features for its Blue service, which mentioned that subscribers paying for the \$8 per month service will now get "prioritised rankings in conversations."

Amritsar MP blamed police for helping hotels around Golden Temple to continue ill doings

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Amritsar Member Parliament Gurjit Singh Aujla in a letter written to Chief Minister Punjab has blamed the Punjab police in his district as well as administration for miserably failed to guard vicinity of Golden Temple as prostitution and all kinds of ill doings allegedly continue to develop near the holiest of the Sikh Shrines.

Aujla said that in the latest viral video doing rounds on social media, a hotel agent is seen trying hard to provide women to the man (a You-Tuber) after he turns down his hotel booking offer. This video has spread wildly and has upset a lot of people on and off social media tarnishing the holy name of the city.

However, Police has arrested the hotel agent, staff members and owner of the hotel for their



alleged illegal and illegitimate activities and produced them in the court today. Aujla said that the accused hotel agent was arrested and police was per-

forming the procedural duty. However, prostitution, gambling, drug abuse in hotels couldn't happen without the involvement of political

junta and police personnel. It is not a hidden fact that a few police personnel and politically connected people are equally involved in this menace, as they are usually seen partying at these hotels and accepting goodies from such hotel owners, alleged Aujla.

Asking Bhagwant Mann, "After you assumed the office of Chief Minister not only me but the President of SGPC had also pointed out this issue in writing along with flourishing gambling/satta addas in slum areas, illicit liquor and narco trafficking mafias, heritage street encroachments etc., however due to some kind of the political and bureaucratic ill will no action was taken in this matter. These hotels have nurtured the growth of gangsters who use such hotels for gambling, drug abuse, and prostitution and for alluring youth into their nefarious cob-

web", he quipped.

"I request your good self to consider resolving issues of the holy city with religious fervour and constitute a team of handpicked police personnel to act as tourist police to gather intelligence and sanitize the holy city of such menaces. It has also been reported with certain hoteliers and is that a high ranking police official is hand in glove with certain hoteliers and facilitating all the ills. A high power committee under sitting judge must be constituted to find and penalise such black sheep. Such acts in the vicinity of religious places usually do not go unnoticed by the religious bodies who in reaction act in their own ways to discipline the miscreants, causing issues for the state of law and order I hope the Chief Minister will act with the spirit of 'sewa' and save the sanctity of the holy cities, he urged.

Nearly 5000 persons die in every year in road accidents in Haryana

SATISH HANDA
Bahadurgarh & Sirsa

Information reveals, nearly 5000 persons die in road accidents every year in Haryana state and life of between 80-90% accident victims can be saved in case immediate medical aid is provided to accident victims. As usually seen, over 40% accident victims succumb to their injuries unable to get first aid and timely treatment after the mishap. There are 12 Trauma Centers in Haryana state set up by state health department in districts to provide immediate treatment to accident victims which include eight Trauma Centers located in district civil hospitals at Ambala City, Karnal, Yamunanagar, Panipat, Sonapat and Rewari apart from other districts Gurugram, Hisar and Palwal functioning in private hospitals authorized by the state government.

It has been observed that these Trauma Centers are functioning merely as referral centers since most of the serious accident victims brought to these Trauma Centers are referred to PGI at Chandigarh or Rohtak or General Hospital Chandigarh after first aid, since these Trauma centers are unable to treat serious patients struggling for life after sustained serious injuries in road mishaps because of non-



availability of senior doctors as well as surgical instruments in these Trauma centers as a result large number of accident victims die on the way. Information also reveals that in 30-40% cases the patients are not provided even first aid and blood oozing from injuries on the ways causes death due to excessive bleeding from the body. It is usually seen that most of the Trauma Centers are situated at a distant place from highways and seriously injured accident victim on way to nearby Trauma Center succumbs to their injuries before reaching destination generally due to excessive bleeding or lot of time taken to complete formalities while carrying patients to referred hospital.

Information reveals, on an average 5000 persons die in road

mishaps every year in Haryana and in case timely treatment is provided to accident victims their lives can be saved. According to information, ambulance service to reach at the accident spot immediately on dialing Toll Free number 1033 is available in every 60 kilometer distance on the highways as well as prominent roads in the state likely to reach at the accident spot within 10 to 15 minutes. According to available data as regard number of road accidents reported in Haryana state, injured victims referred by Trauma centers and reported died in the mishaps in past five years has been identified as 10939 road mishaps reported in the state in which 5120 persons died and 8164 accident victims were referred for treatment in year 2017.

TV Star Feroz Khan appreciates the working style of Haryana Home-Health Minister Anil Vij



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Haryana Home & Health Minister Anil Vij welcomed his old friend TV Star Feroz Khan played role key role of Arjun in famous TV serial Mahabharat when he arrived at his resident at Ambala. Feroz Khan highly appreciated the working style as well as her performance as minister in the state. He said that he has come from Mumbai to Ambala especially to meet him as impressed by his way of working as country needs such type of sincere political leaders and told that he is known for his work even in Maharashtra state. Feroz Khan also shared his experiences while working in key role in Mahabharat serial and also invited Vij to visit Mimmbai. Feroz Khan has visited Ambala a couple of time earlier also and met Vij since both are having close friendly relations since a long time

Action against nearly 3000 unrecognized schools in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Haryana state government is going to take action and lodge FIRs against nearly 3000 unrecognized schools in Haryana state allegedly functioning without having recognition from state education department. The organizers as well as owners of such schools in-spite of directions by the government to get approved their schools, most of these located in thickly populated residential areas without following norms prescribed by the government has now decided to take legal action against such 1338 schools in the state functioning without having extension so far as such nearly 60000 students studying in these schools will not be able to appear in Class X and Class XII examinations.

While addressing media persons Kulbhushan Sharma National President of Independent School Alliance (NISA) as well as state President of Federation of Private Schools Welfare Association Haryana has demanded that old schools running in the state since decades should be given relaxation in rules and provide them temporary extension as well approval to run the school. He said, as a result of wrong government policies



nearly 500 private schools in the state will be closed down adversely affecting the future of nearly five lakh students having education in these schools.

Kulbhushan Sharma said that in as many as 13% government schools in Haryana state there is no provision for electricity, no provision for internet in 20% government schools and only nearly 41.3% government schools in the state are having provision computers to provide computer education, whereas on the other hand hundred percent private schools in the state are having facilities like electricity, internet and computer education and still the organizers of these private schools are compelled to run from one table to another being harassed in government offices to get recognition of their schools. NISA National President said, according to RTI information nearly 200

government schools which include 102 Senior Secondary Schools, 80 High Schools and 8 Middle Schools in the state have been identified having shortage of rooms to conduct independent classes and students of different classes are compelled to sit in a single room to have education.

Raising question over the government Kulbhushan Sharma said when government have been unsuccessful to provide required infrastructure including even room to sit while having education, how expecting a 20 years old private school providing education to the students successfully since years to arrange additional place as such Haryana government, too, should provide recognition to such old educational schools as in case of Delhi state government providing relaxation to private schools functioning since past many years.

Railway police in Haryana arrested 33 drug smugglers in 2022



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Teams of GRP and CIA staff of police arrested a drug smuggler Pancharam Yadav hailing from Jharkhand and a drug supplier Babu Khan a resident of Ambala district carrying 2 kg 700 gm opium at old reservation counter near Ambala Cantt railway station on Thursday and a case under NDPS Act was registered against both by GRP police station at the railway station. Both were produced in the court on Friday and remanded to police custody for eight days. Dheeraj Kumar DSP told that during remand police will try to find out the detail of drug smugglers and the customers to whom both were supplying drugs. He said, a police team along with drug smuggler youth Pancharam is being sent to Jharkhand to find out the main supplier of drugs. He said, police will also try to arrest another local drug supplier who was to collect drugs from Pancharam Yadav but didn't arrive.

Woman along with two others held in honey trap case at Karnal

SATISH HANDA
Karnal

Team of Ram Nagar police station Karnal arrested three members of a racket, including a married woman allegedly involved in a honey trap case. The prime accuse woman and her husband were blackmailing a man from Rajound in the Kaithal district. They were caught red-handed while accepting Rs 50,000 from the complainant identified as Rajinder. The suspects arrested during police raid were identified as Vikas, Monu, and prime accuse woman Simran all residents of Karnal, whereas paramour of the woman managed to flee, Jagbir Singh, SHO, Ram Nagar police station said.

The police had received complaint from Rajinder a resident of Rajound in Kaithal district stating that he



was introduced to Simran a resident of Shiv Colony Karnal through Face Book seeking friendship when both started chatting on mobile phone frequently when he was invited by his Face Book friend to meet her personally and invited him to her residence in Karnal where three youths including Simran's husband were already present. According to complainant they thrashed him started beating him when he objected to remove his cloth and make him made nude and started making his objectionable video viral. They also took money he was carrying at the time of incident.

Adequate arrangements to prevent corona in Haryana, It seems Rahul Gandhi's spectacles are out of order: Health Minister

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij said that adequate arrangements are in Haryana to prevent corona where also instructed to the medical staff to wear gloves and masks have been made. Vij made an appeal to people in the state to follow the preventive measures to avoid corona with their own inspiration.

While talking to the media persons at his camp office Ambala Health Minister Vij said that we have complete arrangements in Haryana and have sufficient amount of oxygen while taking experience from previous corona waves. He said that PSA plants have been installed in hospitals having more than 50 beds in the state.

24 ton drugs seized, smugglers properties worth Rs 31.45 cr attached during 2022 in Haryana: DGP

SATISH HANDA

Addressing media at Chandigarh P.K. Aggarwal, Director General Police Haryana told that under special campaign launched against drug smugglers during year 2022 Haryana police has achieved satisfactory results in which 24 ton drugs were recovered from the drug smugglers, besides illegal properties of value worth Rs 31.45 crore were attached by the government. State government also demolished illegal properties of large number of drug smugglers in the state in order to wipe out drugs from the



state completely. He disclosed that 3626 cases under NDPS Act were registered by various police stations across the state which include maximum number of 587 cases were registered in Sirsa district, followed by 349

cases registered in Faridabad district, 273 cases registered in Karnal district, 240 cases registered in Fatehabad district, 220 cases registered in Kurukshetra district and remaining in other districts. He disclosed that during year 2021 police in the state had registered 2583 cases under NDPS Act. He said process to attach illegal properties of value worth Rs 12.23 crore owned by drug smugglers is under process.

DGP Haryana told that Narcotics Control Bureau has been constituted in Haryana state to control drug smuggling as well as drug addiction among people in

the state, which is a serious issue at present since large number of youths residing in urban as well as rural areas are being addicted to drugs in the state. He said, Special Task Force will assist Narcotics Control Bureau to wipe out drug smuggling from the state completely. He made an appeal to residents of Haryana to cooperate police in order to wipe out drugs, save young generation in the state and forward all related information in this regard at mobile number 7087089947 or at landline number 01733-253023 or Toll Free Number 1800-180-1314.

Properties of 128 drug smugglers including 3 women to be attached in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Haryana state government has prepared a list of properties of value worth over Rs 50 crore owned by nearly 128 drug smugglers, suppliers including three women in the state. Talking to the Chief of Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau (HSNCB) Shrikant Jaghav also holding the charge of ADGP Ambala police range said that initially State Action Plan prepared by the state government has been launched in three districts Sirsa, Ambala and Panchkula neighboring Rajasthan and Punjab states known as Hot spots for drugs smuggling and addiction in the country. A meeting in this regard was held recently at CDhandigarh in which Haryana Chief Secretary, Director General Police Haryana and senior police Bureaucrats were present.

HSNCB Chief Shrikant Jaghav said that on the order of State Home Minister Anil



Vij strict action is being taken against drug smugglers and suppliers as per State Action Plan and a list of 128 smugglers including three women against whom cases under NDPS Act have already been registered in past has been prepared whose properties of value over Rs 50 crore will be attached by the state government similar to bulldozer campaign in which large number of properties of

drug smugglers built illegally in the state were demolished in past sometime. Jaghav said that there are still large number of illegal properties constructed by drug smugglers, suppliers and hard core criminals on encroached government land likely to be demolished in future also. Information also reveals that there are as many as 18 drug smugglers in the list having 93 cases registered against them

under NDPS Act in different police stations in the state.

A survey conducted by HSNCB reveals that seven districts in Haryana state have been identified in which maximum number of drug smugglers and suppliers are active which include Gurugram, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Faridabad, Fatehabad, Hisar and Hansi have large numbers of illegal properties which are likely to be attached by the state government or demolished under bulldozer scheme. According to data prepared by HSNCB, there are six properties of value worth Rs 4 crore at Faridabad, seven properties of value worth Rs 5 crore at Sirsa, seven properties each of value worth about Rs 50 lakh at Fatehabad, seven properties each of value worth about Rs 10 lakh at Kurukshetra owned by drug smugglers likely to be attached by the state government shortly.

Most pharmaceutical industries in Himachal sick, on verge of closure

SATISH HANDA
Kala Amb/ Baddi

Himachal Pradesh known as hub for pharmaceutical manufacturing industries have 618 units which include nearly 90% micro and small units involved in manufacturing Pharmaceuticals products holding nearly 35% share in the country. The Financial World correspondent had a talk with the entrepreneurs of large number of pharmaceuticals producing units at Kala Amb and Baddi area near Chandigarh who told that the industries in Himachal need to inject energy in their arms since most of the units especially micro and small manufacturers in the area are on the verge of closure in the absence of government support blaming hostile government policies act as hurdles and with no cure coming by sickness grips the industry. The entrepreneurs in this sector feel neglected and now look forward to the coming budget to remain alive.



The General Secretary of Himachal Pharmaceutical Industries Association Maneesh Thakur told that micro and small pharmaceutical industrial units in the state are facing severe financial crisis and over 50% of these have become sick and few have been closed down unable to meet tough competition among manufacturers, unable to get raw material and some other reasons. He said, most of the units were set up in the state due to tax rebates in Himachal state which have now been withdrawn by the government after GST was introduced.

Thakur said, among other major reasons for the sickness of pharmaceutical industry in the state, especially in Kala Amb and Baddi area include shortage as well as costly labour, less amenities available to industry, no connectivity with any highway, non-availability of transport in few areas including Kala Amb and Baddi having maximum number of pharmaceutical manufacturing units, tough competition among manufactures, no research and development centre related to industry in the area and above all lack of support by the government.

Punjab Industry department offers last opportunity to the industrial units

CHANDIGARH: The Industry department has offered last opportunity to Industrial units for disbursement of Investment Incentive/Capital Subsidy sanctioned to the General Category Industrial Units. Divulging the details, spokesman of the state government said that guidelines for disbursement of Investment Incentive/Capital Subsidy sanctioned to the General Category Industrial Units from time to time under various industrial policies i.e 1978, 1987, 1989, 1992, 1996 & 2003, had been issued by Punjab Government. He said that these guidelines are available on the website (www.pbindustries.gov.in) of the Industries department. In this regard, last opportunity to the industrial units, which found themselves eligible and entitled as per the said Guidelines, sanctioned under the old industrial policies is given, so they can submit their request through departmental e-mail (br.incentive@gmail.com) or through the concerned General Manager, District Industries Center.

Punjab police arrests 2 kingpins of trans-border narcotic smuggling cartel; 10kg heroin, hi-tech drone recovered

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Striking a major blow to the trans-border narcotic smuggling networks amidst the ongoing war against, Punjab Police have busted an elaborated drug smuggling cartel with the arrest of its two kingpins after recovering 10kg heroin and one sophisticated drone from their possession, said Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav in a statement issued here on Dec 25.

The arrested smugglers identified as Dalbir and Jagdish, both residents of Gharinda



in Amritsar, were engaged in drug trafficking for the last three years and have no criminal case registered against them.

DGP Gaurav Yadav said that the Amritsar Rural Police led by SSP Swapan Sharma in an intelligence-based operation has successfully busted this drug smuggling cartel, which had been smuggling contraband to states including Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh after importing them from cross-border using drones.

He said that the USA made sophisticated drone recovered from the duo smugglers, is a DJI series drone, worth Rs 20 lakhs, having hi-tech features including long-lasting battery back up and infrared-based night vision camera.

PM takes part in programme marking 'Veer Bal Diwas' Gadkari inaugurates Phase I of New Zuari Bridge in Goa

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took part in 'Veer Bal Diwas', a programme organised in the remembrance of Sahibzadas, sons of Guru Nanak Dev, at Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Modi participated in a 'Shabad Kiritan' performed by 300 'Baal Kiritanis' approximately. He is also scheduled to flag off a march-past led by 3,000 children.

On the historic occasion, the Centre has organised an interactive and participative programmes all over the country to inform and educate the citizens, especially the young children, about the story of exemplary courage of the Sahibzadas. Prime Minister tweeted, "On



Veer Bal Diwas, we recall the courage of the Sahibzadas and Mata Gujri Ji. We also remember

the courage of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji". Essay writing, quiz competitions and other activities

have been organised in schools and colleges across the country to mark the day. Digital exhibitions

have also been set up at public places like railway stations, petrol pumps, airports, among others. Programmes have been organised across the country where dignitaries will narrate the life story and sacrifice of the Sahibzadas.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister had declared that 26th December shall, henceforth, be marked as "Veer Bal Diwas" to pay homage to the courage of the "Sahibzadas", four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the last Sikh guru.

While all four were martyred, the date has been chosen as it was the day observed as the martyrdom day of the Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were killed at the tender age of six and nine in Sirhind (Punjab) by Mughal forces.

INDIA'S ROAD QUALITY TO BE AT PAR WITH WORLD'S BEST BY 2024

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Panjim

The recent pace of construction of the new 13.20 kms-long Zuari Bridge in Goa is a testament to the new technology that the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is using to build bridges across the country. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, said while inaugurating phase I of this Rs 2,530-crore bridge in Goa on December 29.



The Zuari Bridge, which is located on the Zuari river at Cortalim village on the Margao-Panaji National Highway, has been built to ease the traffic woes of the state. While this project consists of the new bridge and the approaches from Bambolim to Verna, the 1st Phase comprises the 4-Lane, Right-Hand Side Corridor of the 8-Lane Stayed Cable bridge. Expressing joy at being present on an occasion where a grand and ambitious project becomes a reality, Gadkari credited the late Goa Chief Minister and Union Minister Manohar Parrikar as being one of the architects of both the Mandovi bridge and the new stayed cable bridge over the Zuari river.

He also emphasized that the Goa-Mumbai Highway would be completed within the next 7 to 8 months. The Minister reiterated both the Union and State Governments' determination to ensure that the planned 'Revolving Restaurant' on the New Zuari

Bridge becomes a reality. "With Goa being a beautiful state that attracts tourists from all over the world, it is only fitting that such a bridge should have an additional 'first-of-its-kind' feature," he said. Highlighting the Union Government's commitment to seeing radical improvements in the quality of road infrastructure in the country, Gadkari said that by 2024, the quality of roads in India would be at par with the very best in the world.

Union Minister of State for Tourism and Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shripad Naik stated that both the Union and State Governments are working to ensure the holistic development of the state of Goa. The New Zuari Bridge will go a long way towards addressing the traffic woes of ordinary Goans, he added.

Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant thanked Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for guiding the state into improved National Highway connectivity and port connectivity. While the bridge - with a first of its kind revolving restaurant - will be a tourist attraction on its own, it will ensure smooth flow of traffic between North and South Goa, Sawant said while also suggesting about a "Light and Sound" show around the bridge as well as a circular road connecting Port, Airport and Railways in the State.

The event also witnessed the launch of a Mobile Application for Integrated Operations Management of the Public Works Department. The Application aims to integrate many operations, starting with acting as a portal for registering complaints on potholes.

The eminent dignitaries present on the occasion included: Goa Public Works Department Minister Nilesh Cabral, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Vinay Tendulkar and Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Francisco Sardinha.

Is Ghulam Nabi Azad coming home to Congress?



NEW DELHI: Former Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who quit the party and had attacked the party leadership, may return to party as veteran Congress leaders are working behind the scenes for an amicable formula for his return to the party. However, neither sources within Azad camp nor in Congress have confirmed the development. But sources claim that the change of guard in the party and recent win in Himachal Pradesh have made both the factions to rethink their stance. Ahead of the Assembly polls in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, Azad had said that only Congress could fight BJP, not AAP, and then Digvijaya Singh had even invited him to join the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Recently, Azad had expressed differences with the BJP over the issue of Kashmiri Pandits. Azad has formed his own party and is on tour in his home state. As the Bharat Jodo Yatra is about to enter his state Kashmir, if things were favourable, he may join the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Except Azad, G-23 leaders Anand Sharma, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Manish Tewari are still in the party and have been given prominence in the party. Sharma, Hooda and Tewari had proposed Mallikarjun Kharge and had even voted in his favour when he fought party's Presidential polls. Azad had resigned in August following his differences with the party high command and had targeted Rahul Gandhi and his coterie. He joined the Congress in the mid 1970s and has held many important positions both in the party and the government. He was a minister in the Central cabinet headed by Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P.V. Narsimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh. Since 1980, Azad was the general secretary of AICC under every party president during that period.

Congress demands white paper on farmers' income in 2004, 2014, 2022

NEW DELHI: Amid the demand for an MSP Law, the Congress on Thursday sought white paper on farmers' income in 2004, 2014, 2022 on the same parameters.

Addressing a press conference here, Sukhpal Singh Khaira, chairman of farmers' cell of the Congress, said, "In February 2016, PM Modi had promised the doubling of farmers income in the year 2022. What to speak of doubling their income, if inflation is accounted for, the farmers' income has actually reduced during these years.

"It was actually the Congress-led UPA government between 2004 and 2014 which had more than doubled the farmers' income," said Khaira.

He pointed out that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) is one of the basic parameters of determining the income of farmers. He said the UPA



government had doubled the MSP of wheat and paddy, two main crops, within eight years of coming to power.

Giving official figures of MSP, the Kisan Congress chairman said, in 2004 when the UPA led by Dr Manmohan Singh took over, the MSP for wheat was Rs 640 per quintal and it went up to Rs 1,285 per quintal in 2011-2012 and Rs 1,400 per quintal for 2013-14 season. Similarly, the MSP for paddy in 2004 was Rs 560 per quintal, which went to Rs 1,310 per quintal in 2013-14.

"In strong contrast", Khaira said, "from the BJP government's own admission, the MSP for both paddy and wheat did not increase by more than 50 per cent during their regime. After independence, the Modi government was the first Government of India, which imposed GST on pesticides, fertilisers and farm appliances. Who actually doubled the farmers' income?" he asked, while remarking, "doubling the farmers' income was another epic 'jumlai' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi".

The farmers leader said, "The farmers also faced the double whammy in terms of increase in input costs like diesel. Substantiating his charge, he pointed out, the prices of diesel in May 2014 were Rs 55.48 per litre while in December 2022 these were Rs 89.62 per litre which means the diesel prices have

increased to about 61 per cent. This was despite the crude oil prices falling substantially in the international market.

"On May 26, 2014, when the Congress was voted out of power and the Modi government came, the price of crude oil was USD 108 per barrel, in December 2022, the average is \$77.99 per barrel which is about 28 per cent lower as compared to May 2014 prices," he said, adding, "but the government is not passing on the benefit to the farmers and common man".

"The Government of India constituted a Doubling of Farmers' Income Committee (DFIC) in 2016 which submitted its report in 2018 and that report is still gathering dust in the corridors of power", he disclosed, while alleging that the government had no intention of doubling the farmers income and only wanted to fool people.

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI CASE

SIAs raids multiple locations in central, south Kashmir

FW DESK

The State Investigation Agency (SIA) conducted raids at numerous places in central and south Kashmir on Saturday morning, as part of its investigation in a case registered against Jamat-e-Islami "to choke the availability of funds for secessionist activities and to dismantle the ecosystem of anti-national elements & terror networks hostile to India's sovereignty."

"Today on 24.12.2022 in District Pulwama, Kulgam, Budgam and Srinagar, properties at a dozen locations worth INR 122.89 crores approximately after being notified by concerned DMs on the recommendation of SIA J&K, have been barred with restrictions

on usage and entry," a press release issued by the SIA said.

The sleuths of the investigating agency with the assistance of the local police and the CRPF carried out raids at many locations in Srinagar



and Pulwama. The SIA also raided the property of late Syed Ali Shah Geelani at Bulbul Bagh, Barzulla in Srinagar. The property was attached as per the orders of the District Magistrate, reports said.

Similarly, the team at Mazhama installed the restriction notice on the non-functional Darasgah of Jamaat consisting of two rooms with 6 malras of land. Similarly, the property belonging to the organization at Ompora Budgam was also attached. Reports said that search-

es were conducted in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. They said that at least nineteen properties are being attached, today by the 11 teams of SIA.

"The action would uproot the menace of terror funding to a great extent in UT of J&K besides being a stepping stone in ensuring rule of law & a society without fear," the SIA press release said. "Pertinently, SIA has identified as many as 188 JeI properties across the UT of J&K which have either been notified or are under the process of being notified for further legal action."

NEW YEAR and COVID FEAR

MAHIE JK

New Year is round the corner and the cases of Corona virus has also started emerging in the country. The Medical experts and the doctors are advising people to take precautionary measures. The Government is also appealing the citizens to follow the Covid protocols. But the question is, whether there is any need to get panic?

Currently the new coronavirus variant which is detected in some countries has ignited fear and chaos in the country. After China and South Korea, the BF-7 variant of the new virus has also arrived in India now. But as the year is coming to an end most of the people in India have planned New Year parties. Some are going to the Pubs, Clubs etc while some are parting with their friends and family at home. But due to rise in the cases, people are worried as to whether they should continue with the party or postpone it. Gaurav Shukla, an employ of an advertising company in Gurgaon had planned a New year party in a pub on 31st night, but now he feels that he should drop this idea as cases are increasing day by day. The Experts of the Medical



fraternity feel that people should not fear but must follow the Covid protocol. According to the Professors of AIIMS, if one is suffering from cold or cough, or facing some allergy problem for them the idea of party is not good. If your health is good and you have taken the vaccines you can enjoy the New-year party by following Covid appropriate behavior. The precautions to be taken are

- Wear proper face mask
- Properly Vaccinated
- Social Distancing
- Using Hand Sanitizers
- Parting in an open area.

"It's always better to plan a party at home rather than to go outside", I feel safe at home says Shubhi Mishra a student of Jaypee Institute Noida. Yes we can organize a party at home,

wear fashionable clothes, arrange delicious food and enjoy melodious music, rather than to go outside and face a risk of infection, says Rieyanshi, a student of Engineering College. The government has set an alert in other states also. It is not that the risk of infections is limited to metro cities. The other State governments are also taking precautionary measures in the New Year. The Chief Ministers of Goa, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh Delhi and West Bengal, etc. have also appealed tourists to get a booster dose done, before coming to their states. They have appealed people to wear mask, avoid crowded places, and maintain social distancing. So they can enjoy the New Year evening without any fear.

PM Modi announces relief for victims of Andhra stampede



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the PM Relief Fund (PMNRF) to the kin of the seven people who died after falling in a drainage canal in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district during former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's roadshow. "Pained by the mishap at a public meeting in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon. An ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased and the injured would be given Rs 50,000," Modi tweeted on Thursday. During the incident on Wednesday in Kandukur town which took place soon after the TDP chief arrived to address the roadshow, eight people were also injured.

NCB refusal to provide information on complaints received against Deputy Director General Dyaneshwar Singh



FW DESK

NCB has refused to disclose the complaints received against NCB Deputy Director General Dyaneshwar Singh, who came into limelight due to the Aryan Khan drug case. The NCB has denied information to RTI activist Anil Galgali citing Section 24 of the Right to Information Act, 2005. RTI activist Anil Galgali had applied to the NCB seeking the action taken report on various complaints received against Deputy Director General Dyaneshwar Singh as well as the current status of various complaints. The NCB has denied the information under Section 24 of the Right to Information Act, 2005. First appeal has been filed against Anil Galgali.

Sikh world should not mark Sahibzadas' martyrdom as Veer Bal Diwas but as 'Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas': Harjinder Singh Dhami

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami rejecting Veer Bal Diwas being observed by the Government of India, appealed to the Sangat (community) to be aware of the alleged government's conspiracy of undermining Sikh history.

In a statement issued on Sunday, SGPC President said that the Government of India is on the path of concocting Sikh history and it is unfortunate that the president of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) was supporting this. He said that going against the traditions of the Sikh community, observing the martyrdom day of Sahibzadas as Veer Bal Diwas by the Government of India is a mischievous conspiracy to undermine the greatest martyrdom and valuable heritage in the world's religious



history. Dhami questioned that if the government really wants to pay homage and respect to Sahibzadas, then what is the problem in observing this day as Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas? He said that history is a witness that the martyrdom of Sahibzadas was important in uprooting the Mughals from this region, but the way the government is insisting on marking the martyrdom day of Sahibzadas as Veer Bal Diwas, it is

clear that the government was playing politics at the behest of anti-Sikh forces.

Targeting DSGMC President Harmeet Singh Kalka, Dhami said that even though the name Veer Bal Diwas was not accepted by the community, Kalka was allegedly working as a mouthpiece of the Union government. He questioned Kalka whether this act of his is not a refusal to obey the orders of Sri Akal Takht Sahib?

Dhami said that on the order of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, a committee of Sikh scholars has suggested the name Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas instead of Veer Bal Diwas and in this regard, a letter was sent to the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Culture by the SGPC. "But still the government did not change the name and DSGMC President Harmeet Singh Kalka being a part of government functions is painful for the community. Harmeet Singh Kalka must clarify his involvement in the government's conspiracy to distort Sikh history", said Dhami. He appealed to the office-bearers and all the members of the DSGMC to protect the Sikh ideology. SGPC President said that the Sikh community will never let the originality and importance of its history diminish and will pay respect and reverence to the Sahibzadas as per the spirit of its history.

Researcher Ajay to present paper in Nagpur on flaws in 336 years old Newton's 3rd law

FW DESK

Prominent researcher Ajay Sharma will highlight the limitations of 336 Year old Newton's Third Law of motion Indian Science Congress 2023 at R.T.M. University, Nagpur. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the event on January 3 next year.

The Indian Science Congress 2023 (ISC) will take place at R.T.M. University, Nagpur from January 3 to 7, 2023. In this paper, Sharma modified Newton's third law of motion, as the law neglects the shape of the body. For final confirmation of the modification of the law, scientists suggest some specific experiments be conducted. According to a press release the editor of the Physical Sciences Section of ISC 2023, has accepted the paper and the same will be published in the proceedings. This event will be funded by the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the mega-event on 3rd January 2023. Ajay Sharma had also presented a similar paper on Newton's third law at the American Association of Physics Teachers, Washington conference. This presentation not only



strengthened the scientific claim of Ajay Sharma but also boosted his confidence. Ajay retired as Deputy Director, Education from Himachal Pradesh recently. Many other scientists and research institutes have theoretically found Sharma's thesis correct and original. But for final confirmation of Newton's third law, some specific experiments must be conducted with the utmost sensitive equipment.

Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research after instructions from the Prime Minister of India and evaluation of Sharma's paper, constituted a five-member committee for further carrying out experimental work. The committee has asked Sharma for the required equipment and detailed methodology of the experiments. Sharma submitted the same in November 2022.

3,15,962 posts lying vacant in Railways, reveals RTI query



BHOPAL: At present, 3,15,962 posts are vacant in the Railways, which has been revealed under the Right To Information. RTI activist Chandrashekhar Gaur of Neemuch district in Madhya Pradesh sought information about the vacant posts, by submitting an application in the Ministry of Railways. According to the information provided to Gaur by the Ministry, 3,12,944 posts were vacant in Group C of the Railways till November 1 (Provisional). Similarly, in another reply received on December 27, the Ministry apprised that 2,092 posts of Group A, 926 of Group B were vacant as of September 15, 2022. The country has been struggling with an increase in unemployment, which makes the fact of lakhs of government jobs in the Railways lying vacant, quite surprising.

Capital spending, credit flow must stay supportive

The Reserve Bank of India's 'Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India', paints a picture of credit growth having rebounded smartly, with the consolidated balance sheets of Indian commercial banks showing double-digit expansion after a seven-year gap. While at first flush this would be reason for cheer, this growth came on the back of the pandemic-hit year, when economic activity including demand for loans was depressed. However, credit momentum seems to be sustaining in the current fiscal year too with loan growth logging a decade high in the first half. And in the fortnight to December 2, credit expanded 17.5% from a year earlier. Still, disappointingly, deposit growth lagged behind, increasing by only 9.9% in the period. With retail inflation and concerns about price stability eroding savers' real returns as well as confidence to save, banks have found themselves needing to redouble efforts to shore up deposits to help fund credit demand. Banks' due diligence on borrowers and solid credit appraisal will help keep NPAs under control even while credit growth helps fund capital expenditure (capex). The Chief Economic Adviser had noted this month that private capex had touched Rs 3 lakh crore in the first half of the year and if the same pace were maintained, full-year figures would be the highest in the last few years. Worryingly, he had also hinted that government capex need not continue to maintain the pace so as to allow private players the space to borrow and invest. However, even given the constraints of fiscal discipline, the Government should keep the tempo up on capex as it may take a while for private capex growth to find consistency. With industrial production still on a bumpy ride, having contracted in two of the seven months, policy-makers must ensure credit flow and all-round capital spending stay supportive.

LETTERBOX

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RISE UP
START FRESH
SEE THE BRIGHT
OPPORTUNITY
IN EACH
NEW DAY

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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DR. HARVINDER KAUR

The world is rapidly ageing, but India is still young. In the next few decades, India will be a talent powerhouse and the largest contributor to the global workforce. According to a CII report, if India's demographic dividend is productively employed, growth prospects will brighten, helping it to jump its GDP from the current \$3 trillion to \$9 trillion by 2030 and \$40 trillion by 2047. India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023. The report of The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) warns, that if India does not create enough jobs and its workers are not adequately prepared for those jobs, its demographic dividend may turn into a liability. Education and skill development will be the biggest stimulants for reaping this dividend.

The report points out that India will add another 183 million people to the working age group of 15-64 years between 2020-50 as per the UN Population Statistics database. Thus, a huge 22 per cent of the incremental global workforce over the next three decades will come from India.

Although investment, reforms and infrastructure are likely drivers of India's economic growth, no growth driver is as certain as the availability of people in India's working age group. According to Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, India's young population, its demographic dividend, gives India the potential to become a global production hub as well as a large consumer of goods and services.

The period of 2020-50 provides India with a short window of opportunity to harness its demographic dividend. However, India does not have much time to utilise this dividend.

The report said that high quality school education, relevant higher education and skill development aligned to industry needs are some of the pre-requisites, if India is to become an economic powerhouse which not only creates good quality jobs for its youth, but also services the rest of

How To Reap Demographic Dividends



the world.

The report analyses India's labour market imbalances, and highlights how the skill mismatch and shortage can impact productivity growth, which is critical for India to enhance its long-term growth. In 2019-20, only 73 million of India's 542 million strong workforce received any form of vocational training (whether formal or informal). To put it in global context, the proportion of formally skilled workers as a percentage of total workforce stands at 24 per cent in China, 52 per cent in USA, 68 per cent in UK and 80 per cent in Japan, against a paltry 3 per cent in India, the report stated. In 2019-20, only 73 million of India's 542 million strong workforce received any form of vocational training (whether formal or informal). To put it in global context, the proportion of formally skilled workers as a percentage of total workforce stands at 24% in China, 52% in USA, 68% in UK and 80% in Japan, against a paltry 3% in India. To overcome such challenges, the report suggests that youth may be offered skill tickets and scholarships which can be linked to the national skill qualification framework.

Forward-looking policies

Countries like Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea have already shown us how demographic dividends can be reaped to achieve incredible economic growth by

adopting forward-looking policies and programmes to empower the youth in terms of their education, skills and health choices. There are important lessons from these countries for India.

The first is to undertake an updated National Transfer Accounts (NTA) assessment. A child in India consumes around 60% of the consumption by an adult aged between 20 and 64, while a child in China consumes about 85% of a prime-age adult's consumption. The NTA data for India needs to be updated to capture the progress made on such investments since 2011-12. State-specific NTAs need to be calculated every year and States need to be ranked for investing in the youth.

The second is to invest more in children and adolescents. India ranks poorly in Asia in terms of private and public human capital spending. It needs to invest more in children and adolescents, particularly in nutrition and learning during early childhood. Given that India's workforce starts at a younger age, a greater focus needs to be on transitioning from secondary education to universal skilling and entrepreneurship, as done in South Korea.

The third is to make health investments. Health spending has not kept pace with India's economic growth. The public spending on health has remained flat at around 1% of GDP. Evidence

suggests that better health facilitates improved economic production. Hence, it is important to draft policies to promote health during the demographic dividend. We need more finance for health as well as better health facilities from the available funding.

Fifth, education is an enabler to bridge gender differentials. Gender inequality in education is a concern. In India, boys are more likely to be enrolled in secondary and tertiary school than girls. In the Philippines, China and Thailand, it is the reverse. In Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia, gender differences are rather minimal. This needs to be reversed.

Sixth, India needs to increase female workforce participation in the economy. As of 2019, 20.3% of women were working or looking for work, down from 34.1% in 2003-04. New skills and opportunities for women and girls befitting their participation in a \$3 trillion economy is urgently needed. For example, a girl who passes Class 10 needs more choices to learn skills that will help her find appropriate work. She will need safe transport to travel to work. Finding work will likely delay her age of marriage and make her participate in the economy more productively, as also exercise her rights and choices. South Korea's female workforce participation rate is 50%. It is predicted that if all women engaged in domestic duties in India who are willing to work had a job, female labour force participation would increase by about 20%.

Seventh, a new federal approach to governance reforms for the demographic dividend will need to be put in place for policy coordination between States on various emerging population issues such as migration, ageing, skilling, female workforce participation and urbanisation. Inter-ministerial coordination for strategic planning, investment, monitoring and course correction should be an important feature of this governance arrangement.

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

TANU M. GOYAL EXPLAINS HOW THE BLOC CAN SET THE AGENDA FOR GLOBAL PEACE AND HARMONY



How the G20 evolved

India's assumption of the 18th G20 (Group of Twenty) presidency underpins a new epoch for the grouping. For the first time, the 'Troika' will be comprised of three emerging market economies — Indonesia, India, and Brazil. The G20 chair is part of a rotating three-member group of immediate past, current, and succeeding presidencies, referred to as the Troika to ensure continuity in the agenda as there is no permanent G20 secretariat. The G20 summits are convened under a system of rotational presidencies and are selected from a different regional grouping of countries. In fact, South Africa's elevation to the G20 presidency in 2025 will not only consolidate the voice of the Global South but will also mark the completion of one full circle for rotational presidencies among member countries. India has planned to hold the Summit in New Delhi on September 9-10, 2023.

India has taken over the G20 presidency on the occasion of the country completing 75 years of its independence and becoming the fifth-largest economy in the world. Thus, with an avowed objective of showcasing its rich cultural heritage and economic prowess to the outside world, it is setting unique precedence by holding more than 200 meetings in over 50 cities spread across country and not confining to a select few large cities.

The run-up to the Summit entails a preparatory process with several ministerial and working group meetings and discussions channelled on two tracks — the Finance Track and the Sherpa Track. In the Finance Track, discussions are centered on building consensus on attendant issues related to fiscal and monetary policies, macroeco-



nom coordination, financial inclusion, international taxation, and investment. The deliberations under the Sherpa Track are both complementary and supplementary to those undertaken in the Finance Track as the scope of discussions expands to subjects like digital economy, trade, and investment, anti-corruption, agriculture, health, energy and environment, among others. Inception of G20: rise of emerging markets in the multilateral order With the G20 becoming a subject of intense debate and discussion in India, it is important to reflect on its history and evolution.

To those unfamiliar with the G20 process, it is less well-known that the G20 was conceived in 1999 in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis to discuss matters related to international economic and financial stability and align policies among the most significant and relevant industrialized and developing economies. Until then, the group of advanced countries — the Group of Seven (G7) — was the main forum that discussed international issues

ranging from global financial governance to anti-corruption and terror financing, with the view to build consensus and policy response among developed countries. However, the Asian financial crisis brought to the fore the criticality and centrality of developing countries to maintain the multilateral order owing to their deep integration into the global economic systems and cross-border capital flows. Since the immediate context was to mitigate the ill effects of the contagion caused by the Asian financial crisis, the beginning of the G20 (with the addition of 12 economies to the G7 countries) was underpinned by the coming together of their Finance Ministers and central bank governors to discuss how a coordinated response to the emergent crisis and future crises could be made.

Evolution of the G20

Since then, the G20 has seen several points of inflection. The first happened in 2008 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis that emerged in the U.S. when the forum was elevated to the summit level with the participation of heads of state or government. The initial summits, held in the U.S., the U.K., and Canada focused on developing a coordinated response to the financial crisis and the consequent economic slowdown, including discussions on monetary and fiscal policy measures, preventing a reversion to protectionist policies and reforming of the Bretton Woods institutions. Other issues such as strengthening trade and investments were discussed in the larger context of their impact on ensuring financial stability and economic growth. Issues like food security which were

discussed at the G7 level till then also found their way in the G20 agenda.

The next pivotal moment was during the South Korean presidency in 2010 when development issues were introduced as a priority in the G20 agenda. In the subsequent years, as the effects of the global financial crisis waned and financial sector stability was restored to an extent, the mandate of the Sherpa Track expanded. Many new working groups were added to reflect the widened ambit. Successive presidencies — France, Mexico, Russia, Australia, Turkey, and China — focused on various issues reflecting their respective priorities and relevance to the G20 community.

In 2017, amidst the U.S.-China trade war and divergence of opinion on multiple issues including climate change, the G20 weathered the storm by following a majority over unanimity. For the first time, the G20 recorded a Leader's Declaration with 19 members supporting the agenda, alongside the dissent of one. While failure to build consensus may have set a bad precedent, from a global governance perspective it exemplified the point that no one nation is superior in the grouping. In that way, the German presidency in 2017 can also be regarded as critical for the G20. The Argentinian and Japanese presidencies also witnessed turbulent times and widened the scope of the G20 agenda to reflect on new issues like the future of work, which had gained prominence and cast a long shadow on international policymaking.

Tanu M. Goyal is Senior Fellow at Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). Views expressed are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

New book claims to decode how the human mind works

Bestselling author and life coach Gaur Gopal Das' new book "Energize Your Mind" will hit the stands on January 1, 2023.

The book, which claims to decode how the mind works, will see the author combining his anecdotal style with analytical research to teach readers how to discipline their mind for a greater well-being.

It is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).

"Spiritual communities sometimes get trapped in putting their leaders on a pedestal they cannot come down from... I want to try and come down from my 'monk' pedestal and be open about my experiences.

"I hope that by doing so in this book, you will feel free to let go

of your false conceptions about yourself and take the lessons that I learnt for your journey," said Das in its introduction of the book.

It comprises four sections — 'Me and my mind', 'Others and my mind', 'Me and the mind of others' and 'The Universe in my mind' — and 15 chapters in total.

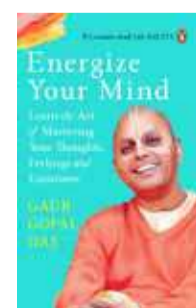
According to the publishers, the book is an "essential read" for anyone who wants to work towards a better, more fulfilling future for themselves.

"This book has been 2-3 years in the making because the author wanted to ensure that his readers and followers have a complete guide to understanding the mechanism of the mind so that it works for their betterment and happiness. We hope that it will provide the positive mental boost

'This book has been 2-3 years in the making because the author wanted to ensure that his readers and followers have a complete guide to understanding the mechanism of the mind so that it works for their betterment and happiness'

that we all need in the beginning of the New Year," said Vaishali Mathur, publisher (Indian languages) at PRHI.

Das' debut book, "Life's Amazing Secrets", which has sold over five lakh copies, has been translated into several international



Energize Your Mind: Learn the Art of Mastering Your Thoughts, Feelings and Emotions By Gaur Gopal Das Penguin Random House India 256 pages, Rs299

and national languages.

After studying electrical engineering at the College of Engineering, Pune and a brief stint with Hewlett-Packard, Das decided to live life as a monk in an ashram in downtown Mumbai. He has been conferred with several honours, including the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Award and an honorary doctorate (DLitt) by KIIT University.

Gaur Gopal Das studied electrical engineering at the College of Engineering, Pune. After a brief stint with Hewlett-Packard, he decided to live life as a

monk in an ashram in downtown Mumbai.

He has remained there for twenty-six years, learning the antiquity of ancient philosophy and the modernity of contemporary psychology, to become a life coach to thousands in the city.

Gaur Gopal Das has been travelling the world for over two decades, sharing his wisdom with corporate executives, universities and charities, and has also spoken at the United Nations. In 2016, his global popularity exploded as he took his message online.

With over one billion views on his videos on social media, he now leads a movement to help others achieve happiness and purpose in their lives.

Now one of the most famous monks in the world, Gaur Gopal Das has been conferred with several honours, including the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Award and an honorary doctorate (DLitt) by KIIT University.

Industry owners say complete ban over imports from China will make hundreds units closed

SATISH HANDA

After the recent clash between India and China army men at Twang border the industry owners have been advised to stop imports from China completely. Earlier, about 30 months ago during clash with Chinese army men at Galwan border decision was taken to ban imports from China but could not be implemented, rather imports from China witnessed increase. According to industrial experts the situation can only be tackled in case industry entrepreneurs of our country come forward, meet the challenge and develop such products being imported from China in the country.

The *Financial World* when talked to large number of industry entrepreneurs in the country, they opined that complete ban on imports from China is not possible at this stage since most of the manufacturers especially in Pharmaceutical, chemical and electronic sectors are dependent on China to procure raw material and unless manufacturers in the



country start developing these products locally, which are being imported from China at present but it is possible only if these manufacturers in the country are provided full support by the government. Information reveals, Modi government in the country has already introduced production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for over a dozen products mainly in Pharmaceutical, electronics and fertilizer manufacturing sectors for which domestic manufacturers are fully dependent on China as such after PLI scheme has been introduced in the country nearly 33% fall in imports has been recorded in pharmaceutical sector and 23%

fall in imports has been recorded in electronics and electrical sector. Information reveals, during month October 2022 goods of value worth 7.85 Arab Dollar has been imported from China as compared to month October in 2021 recording 9.73% fall in imports from China.

According to Foreign Trade Directorate information, since past four months there is continuous drop in imports from China identified as 10.2 Arab Dollar during month July this year, 9.4 Arab Dollar during month August this year, 8.4 Arab Dollar during month September this year and 7.85 Arab Dollar during month October this year.

According to prominent industry owners in Haryana state it is not possible to stop imports from China completely at this stage when most of the industry in our country is dependent on imports of raw materials from China and in case imports from China are completely banned hundreds of industrial units in the country will have to close down their shutters. The entrepreneurs told that import of raw material from other countries like Germany is also possible but their prices are too high as compared to prices in China as such production cost will rise too much. Sources reveal, our government is seriously working on the issue of developing large number of raw materials in the country and has already started producing raw material used in pharmaceutical products under PLI scheme thus reducing imports from China as well as other countries.

Having a look at the exports from China in past eight years Modi government rule in the country it has been recorded dur-

ing year 2014-15 as 60.41 Arab Dollar, during year 2015-16 as 61.70 Arab Dollar, during year 2016-17 as 61.28 Arab Dollar, during year 2017-18 as 76.38 Arab Dollar, during year 2018-19 as 70.31 Arab Dollar, during year 2019-20 as 65.26 Arab Dollar, during year 2020-21 as 65.21 Arab Dollar, during year 2021-22 as 94.57 Arab Dollar. Due to Corona epidemic outbreak spread in China presently possibility of shortage of raw materials is suspected in the near future as such pharmaceutical and chemical industry in our country importing raw material too is worried. Former Chairman of Federation of Indian Export Organizations Sharad Kumar Saraf told that industry in China is presently in the grip of severe epidemic outbreak facing severe labour problem since most of the workers are in the grip of fever and most of the industrial units in China are working at 40-50% production as such Indian manufacturers will have to import raw material from other countries at higher prices.

Maha CM highlights coop sector role in State Development

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

The cooperative sector contributes in a huge way in development of the State including Solapur district, which is a "sugar" belt and water lift irrigation schemes for this crop will be finalised on priority basis, said Chief Minister Eknath Shinde during inauguration of the 27th sugarcane crushing season in Solapur amidst state ministers and officials.

Around 2.5 lakh hectares of land has been brought under irrigation alongside these schemes and the water conservation department will be meeting to resolve the Ritewadi lift irrigation scheme in Karmala taluka here where development projects will be completed with priority, he said.

Highlighting Maharashtra's revenue and health departments' implementation of innovative schemes for public welfare, Shinde said that 4.5 crore women are being attended to through health tests under the "Mata Surakshit Tar Ghar Surakshit" (If Mother is secure, then home is secure) scheme.

The Chief Minister - while



noting that a review of the "Genome Sequencing" system is being done - also urged Guardian Ministers in the State to make ready health facilities in view of the worsening global Covid situation, and also maintain vigilance while preventing panic in this regard.

There are presently 2216 Covid-treatment hospitals with 1.34 lakh isolation beds in Maharashtra and all concerned officials have been directed by him to implement the Central Government's advisory for Testing, Tracking, Treatment, Vaccination, and observing Covid protocols against the Corona Virus, Shinde said.

The Maharashtra Government will work with total transparency alongside making the State corruption-free, and veteran social activist Anna

Hazare's demands in this regard are being translated into reality now as this government is a "pro-people" one, he added.

Helping farmers in distress is another governmental effort for which Rs 4,800 crores - out of the approved Rs 19,000 crores - has been distributed, besides Rs 2,500 crores being deposited in the accounts of 6.90 lakh farmers under the loan-waiver encouragement grant, Shinde said.

In view of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's advice, the Maharashtra Government has reinstated all State government schemes and facilities for people residing along the disputed Maharashtra-Karnataka border, including expansion of the Rs 2,000-crore Mhaial Scheme for potable and irrigation water to 48 villages in Jat Taluka, the Chief Minister added.

SEBI: Many Mumbai IT defaulters operated from dingy 'chawls'

MUMBAI: In a curious revelation, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has found that several 'missing' Income Tax defaulters were operating from dingy chawls.

In a new announcement, the SEBI has published a black-list of 'untraceable defaulters', some who are missing since 2014, and hence it has been unable to serve them the Notices of Demand. A few of the SEBI listers operating from tenements are: Prakash Gaurishankar Joshi, from Dilkush Chawl No. 3 in Borivali east, untraceable since August 2018; Ashok Bhagat of H-19 Ramji Gupta Chawl in Santacruz west, unavailable since June 2014 and for another demand notice since August 2019. There is also Mahesh Mistry with an address at No. 1 Manraj Driver Chawl in Andheri east, and other addresses at Marine Lines, Fort, Vile Parle and in Thane, out of bounds since July 2014, August 2018 and May 2019 for multiple demand notices that remain unserved.

One Jayesh Shah has given an address at 82, Kishan Chawl in Borivali east, a commercial premise at Crystal Plaza in Andheri west, a building in Bhayander town of Thane, but since he is not traceable, his demand notices of July 2014 and December 2017, could not be served.

Vinod Patel of Patel Building in Fort is 'missing' since December 2017; Kina Dilip Mewada of Naigaon in Mumbai and BP Road in Thane are not traceable since August 2018, according to SEBI.

The list has one Sunil D. Ingawale of Jain Nagar in Bhayander east, not available since August 2018; Pankaj Saraiya with addresses of Andheri west and Vile Parle west, apparently gone 'missing' since June 2021; and the most recent addition, Hussain Sattaf of Cuffie Parade,



who is not traceable since March 2022.

These defaulters -- who have to cough out unspecified amounts of dues -- are missing for the past between eight years to eight months, from one or multiple addresses that are available with the market regulator.

Admitting to the 'untraceable defaulters', the SEBI said that it has not been able to serve the Notice of Demands on them "at their last known address".

The SEBI Recovery Officer Suchishmita Sahoo has called upon these 'untraceable' nine defaulters and members of the public who have any information on them, to send letters or emails by January 14, 2023, though again, no telephone or WhatsApp number is provided.

A couple of days ago, the SEBI had published a list of nine companies in Mumbai and neighbourhood which have been similarly 'untraceable' for over two years.

A banking expert and Trade Unions Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) Convenor Vishwas Utagi termed it as "a serious matter" that such defaulter companies and individuals have disappeared off the radar and sought a probe, while welcoming the SEBI's pro-active year-end moves.

He pointed out that these defaulters are liable to pay up their dues and various government taxes, but if they fail to come forward, the SEBI and other agencies can invoke relevant laws to attach and sell off their assets to recover the outstanding amounts.

Centre amends rules to ensure transparency in sale, purchase of registered vehicles via dealers

NEW DELHI: Aiming to ensure transparency in the sale and purchase of registered vehicles through dealers, the Centre has amended Chapter III of Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 to build a comprehensive regulatory ecosystem for the pre-owned car market.

According to changes proposed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), an authorisation certificate for the dealers of registered vehicles has been introduced to identify the authenticity of a dealer.

Further, the procedure for intimation of delivery of vehicle between the registered owner



and the dealer has been detailed.

The powers and responsibilities of a dealer in possession of registered vehicles have also been clarified.

Dealers have been empowered to apply for renewal of registration certificate and renewal

of certificate of fitness, duplicate registration certificate, NOC, transfer of ownership, of motor vehicles in their possession.

As a regulatory measure, maintenance of an electronic vehicle trip register has been mandated which would contain

details of the trip undertaken related to trip purpose, driver, time, mileage etc.

These rules will help in recognising and empowering intermediaries and dealers of registered vehicles as well as providing adequate safeguards against fraudulent activities to the selling or purchasing of such vehicles, official sources said.

The changes have been proposed keeping in mind the fact that in the current ecosystem, many issues are being faced during transfer of vehicle to subsequent transferee, disputes related to third party damage liabilities and difficulty in determination of defaulter.

Worst months for layoffs arrive as thousands brace for job losses

NEW DELHI: After a holiday lull, more layoffs are around the corner and several companies across the spectrum, led by tech firms, are set to layoff thousands of employees, starting January.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the US, January is the highest month for layoff and discharges.

"Business leaders want to set up finances for success in 2023. It's a good bet that tech companies that haven't yet laid off employees are carefully considering whether or not to do so," according to J.P. Gownder, vice president and principal analyst for advisory firm Forrester Research.

"It wouldn't be surprising to see more layoffs in the next few weeks," he told Wall Street Journal.

December marks the end of the fiscal year for many companies, making January an ideal month for "organisational realignment and adjustment".

Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon has warned employees that job cuts are coming in



the New Year and headcount reduction will take place in the first half of January. The investment bank's CEO warned in his annual year-end memo to staff that mass layoffs will begin in the next few weeks, reports The New York Post.

"We are conducting a careful review and while discussions are still ongoing, we anticipate our headcount reduction will take place in the first half of January," Solomon said.

Google and Amazon are set to lay off thousands of employees in early 2023.

Google is already evaluating employees with its per-

formance rating system called Google Reviews and Development (GRAD).

Under the new system, Google is expected to lay off about 6 per cent of full-time employees.

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

Some Google employees are interpreting recent management decisions as warning signs that the company may be planning broader layoffs.

Enjoy exiting offers on various items like two-wheelers on carnival offer: bajaj mall



NEW DELHI: Book two-wheelers online on the Bajaj Mall and get cashback offers of up to Rs. 5,000. Pune, Maharashtra, India (NewsVoor) Bajaj Mall brings to you the December Carnival Sale. Book your two-wheeler on the Bajaj Mall between 23rd to 31st December 2022 and get exciting cashback offers of up to Rs. 5,000 on your two-wheeler.

Be it a bike, scooter, or electric scooter, Bajaj Mall gives you the option to choose a two-wheeler that best suits your requirements and pay at the lowest EMIs. It offers a wide range of two-wheelers, from affordable scooters to premium and powerful motorcycles. So, whether you are looking for a budget-friendly commute option or a bike for long drives - Bajaj Mall have them all. Moreover, it is highly convenient to book a two-wheeler on this platform and get an easy financing option to pay for your purchase.

Samsung to unveil new refrigerator with larger screen at CES 2023



NEW DELHI: Samsung Electronics on Thursday introduced a new 'Bespoke Refrigerator Family Hub Plus', equipped with a large touch screen, which it will unveil at CES 2023, the world's largest home appliance exhibition to be held in the US Las Vegas from January 5.

At 32 inches, it features a much larger display than the 21.5-inch screen found on previous generations of Samsung Family Hub refrigerators.

The new Family Hub has been enhanced to allow users to enjoy the "Samsung TV Plus" service, which allows users to watch approximately 190 US TV channels and approximately 80 Korean TV channels for free in "PIP (Picture in Picture) mode", according to the company.

"Samsung Electronics newly introduced Bespoke Refrigerator Family Hub provides a vastly expanded experience as much as the larger screen. We will lead

the innovation and evolution of refrigerators by reflecting style trends," Junhwa Lee, vice president of Samsung Electronics home appliance division, said in a statement. The integrated SmartThings hub controls and monitors multiple SmartThings devices and supports six SmartThings Home Life services -- Air Care, Home Care, Pet Care, Clothing Care, Energy, and Cooking, said the company.

The Amazon Your Essentials service is also supported by the new refrigerator, allowing users to order frequently purchased products and groceries via a widget on its touchscreen display. Since the SmartThings hub is built-in, users can use the refrigerator as a home IoT hub by controlling lights, blinds, switches, motion detection sensors, and door open sensors from various companies with the Family Hub, the company added.

Global smart home devices market to shrink 2.6% in 2022



NEW DELHI: Worldwide shipments of smart home devices are expected to decline 2.6 per cent in 2022 to 874 million units with smart speakers and video entertainment devices such as TV and streaming devices facing the brunt of the decline.

Worsening macroeconomic conditions have led to a reduction in the outlook for global smart home device shipments, according to the International Data Corporation's (IDC) 'Worldwide Quarterly Smart Home Device Tracker'.

"Shipments of smart home devices have been impacted significantly by ongoing supply chain disruptions," said Adam Wright, senior research manager, Smart Home and Office Devices.

"Moreover, we're witnessing downward pressure on demand in 2022 as inflation continues to squeeze consumers' wallets. Looking ahead, we expect volatility will continue to inhibit the market's growth in 2023 and beyond," he mentioned.

Though the global market is

forecast to return to growth in 2023, it will remain relatively low at 4.6 per cent with most of the growth coming from emerging markets as well as China.

"Though smart speakers arguably helped launch the smart home category, the shine of these products has largely worn off for consumers in developed markets such as the US and China with shipments expected to decline in the long run," said Jitesh Ubrani, research manager for IDC's Mobility and Consumer Device Trackers.

Smart speakers will now rely on emerging markets and places like Europe where language and lack of services have been a barrier to adoption in the past," Urban added.

Among the other form factors, home monitoring/security products such as cameras, doorbells, or door locks, as well as smart lighting and video entertainment products will continue to inhibit the market's growth for the largest share and experience the highest growth rates within the smart home market, the report mentioned.

Reliance Jio suffers major outage



NEW DELHI: Reliance Jio went down in some parts of India on Wednesday as users reported facing issues with the network. According to Down Detector, 56 per cent of users reported that they are facing issues with mobile internet, 35 per cent reported with no signal issues and 9 per cent mentioned issues with their mobile phone. Users across the country went to social media platforms complaining they were unable to access the Jio network. "@JioCare internet not working since yesterday night. Not able to register a complaint on Jio Application nor customer care responding. Application states no outage," a user tweeted. "@jio @jioecare in jio network I am facing issue since 1 week. no network, call drop, no voice After receiving call" a user said.

Videotex International has become a strategic ODM Partner for webOS Hub

NEW DELHI: Videotex International, one of the largest Television ODM and OEM players in India, is the first company in India to become webOS Hub ODM in 2021, with the introduction of webOS Hub 2.0; Videotex has now become the strategic ODM partner of webOS Hub. Videotex has already onboarded over 15 leading smart TV brands which includes Lloyd, BPL, Hyundai, Akai, Vise, Daiwa, Compaq and others for manufacturing TVs operated with webOS Hub. Since the time, Videotex began manufacturing webOS solution; the OS has been a game changer in the Indian television industry. The company started ODM solutions for one brand in India and successfully onboarded over 15 brands today. Videotex has manufactured over half a million webOS Hub operated TVs at its high-end facility in Greater Noida, which has a production

capacity of more than 1.4 million TVs per year and is being expanded with their new unit, which has a production capacity of more than 1.8 million TVs per year, for a total manufacturing capacity of 3.2 million. Videotex has R&D facilities in both India and China. Videotex has consistently worked to bring cutting-edge solutions to the Indian smart TV industry by offering a complete range of 32 to 65-inch smart TVs in the new webOS Hub 2.0 solutions, available in HD, full HD, and 4K. Chris Jo, Senior Vice President, Head of LG HE Platform Biz Division said, "At LG, we are committed to refining and expanding our webOS Hub ecosystem, which continues to introduce more and more consumers to the unparalleled user experience of LG webOS Hub. With this, we are pleased to expand our collaboration with Videotex,

TV experience. The most recent addition demonstrates Videotex's commitment to continuous innovation and providing excellence in cutting-edge technologies to new-age users. This development will also strengthen the company's position as a market leader in India, giving its partners more reasons to choose Videotex as a manufacturer over other brands when considering Make in India Smart TVs."



which has been at the forefront of India's smart TV ecosystem." Mr. Arjun Bajaj, Director of Videotex, commented on the development, said, "Following the success of webOS Hub 1.0, we are excited to transition to webOS Hub 2.0, which is smarter, and interactive & provides users with an advanced Smart

controller for other devices, such as soundbars, AV receivers, and others. The LG ThinQ app also allows users to control their TVs from their smartphones. Furthermore, a strong emphasis is placed on gaming, with a new gaming dashboard and specific modes available for gamers to personalize their gaming experience based on the genre. The Smart TV has an upgraded Realtek Chipset that improves picture quality by optimizing sharpness and contrast using depth analytics extraction by an AI engine. For a more theatrical viewing experience, it supports HDR formats such as HLG for OLED/UHD, HDR10, and to 4K upscaling. The TV also supports advanced Dolby audio and a clear voice algorithm, which increases the size of extracted voice components (vocal sound) while decreasing background noise.

The remote can also be a universal

Centre launches City Finance Rankings 2022, City Beauty Competition

NEW DELHI: The Central government on Wednesday launched two major initiatives aimed at incentivising urban local bodies for improving cities' public infrastructure and strengthening them on basis of key financial parameters.

The City Finance Rankings 2022 and City Beauty Competition are the two initiatives which were launched by Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri.



While the City Finance Rankings has been launched to evaluate, recognise, and reward urban local bodies on the basis of their strength across key financial parameters, the City Beauty Competition aims to encourage and recognise the transformational efforts made

by cities and wards in India to create beautiful, innovative and inclusive public spaces.

City Finance Rankings aim to motivate city and state officials and decision makers, to implement municipal finance reforms. The participating urban local bodies will be evalu-

ated on 15 indicators across three key municipal finance assessment parameters like resource mobilisation, expenditure performance, and fiscal governance.

The cities will be ranked at the national level on the basis of their scores under

any one of the following four population categories: above 40 lakh, between 10-40 lakh, 1 lakh to 10 lakh and less than one lakh.

The top three cities in each population category will be recognised and rewarded at the national level as well as within each state and state cluster, official sources said.

Under the City Beauty Competition, wards and public places of cities would be judged against the five broad pillars of accessibility, amenities, activities, aesthetics and ecology.

The competition would felicitate most beautiful wards and beautiful public places at the city level. While selected wards would be felicitated at

the city and state levels, at the city level, most beautiful public places in cities like waterfronts, green spaces, tourist and heritage spaces and market and commercial places would be awarded first at the state and then shortlisted for an award at the national level.

About the idea behind the initiatives, Puri said that the thought came from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when he met the Chief Secretaries of all the states in June this year.

At that time, the Prime Minister had outlined a vision of a pan India ranking of the cities to foster a healthy competition among the municipal bodies in the matter of finances, Puri added.

PAN not linked with Aadhaar by end of March 2023 to be rendered inoperative: I-T Dept

NEW DELHI: The Income Tax department Saturday issued an advisory that those permanent account numbers (PAN) which are not linked with Aadhaar by the end of March next year will be rendered "inoperative".

"What is mandatory, is necessary. Don't delay, link it today!" the department said in a public advisory. The Income Tax department Saturday issued an advisory that those permanent account numbers (PAN) which are not linked with Aadhaar by the end of March next year will be rendered "inoperative".

"What is mandatory, is necessary. Don't delay, link it today!" the department said in a public advisory. "As per Income-tax Act, 1961, it is mandatory for all PAN holders, who do not fall under the exempt category, to link their PAN with Aadhaar be-



fore 31.3.2023. From 1.04.2023, the unlinked PAN shall become inoperative," it said.

The 'exempt category', according to a notification issued by the Union Finance Ministry in May 2017, are those individuals residing in the states of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya; a non-resident as per the Income-tax Act, 1961; of the age of 80 years or more at any time during the previous year and a person not a citizen of India. A circular issued by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on March 30 said once a PAN becomes inoperative, an

individual shall be liable to all the consequences under the I-T Act and will have to suffer a number of implications.

The person shall not be able to file I-T return using the inoperative PAN; pending returns will not be processed; pending refunds cannot be issued to inoperative PANs; pending proceedings as in the case of defective returns cannot be completed once the PAN is inoperative and tax will be required to be deducted at a higher rate.

"In addition to the above, the taxpayer might face difficulty at various other fora like banks and other financial portals as PAN is one of the important KYC (know your customer) criterion for all kinds of financial transaction," the circular said. The CBDT frames policy for the Income Tax department.

IMF advises India to be cautious with interest rate hikes



NEW DELHI: Flagging headwinds, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Friday that India should be carefully while consider its future interest rate hikes. It has recommended India to cautiously calibrate its intervention in the foreign exchange market should be limited to managing volatility.

Since May, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised its key policy rate by 225 basis points, taking the rate to the highest in over three years. IMF in its annual consultation report said that inflation pressures have led to an appropriate shift towards policy tightening. "Additional tightening should be carefully calibrated and communicated," it added. The IMF projected inflation at 6.9 per cent for the current fiscal year that ends on March 31, 2023 and said price gains would moderate gradually.

Credit offtake in elevated levels: CARE Ratings

NEW DELHI: The credit offtake in India remained at elevated levels of 17.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY), reporting robust growth for the fortnight ended December 2, said credit rating agency CARE Ratings.

According to CARE Ratings report, the growth is driven by a low base, non-banking finance companies (NBFC), retail credit, higher working capital demand driven by inflation and improvement in capacity utilisation ratio, and rising demand for fresh capex.

The benefit of a lower base is expected to ease in the next few fortnights, optically leading to lower growth rates. CARE Ratings said.

With a large base, deposits saw a slower growth at 9.9 per cent y-o-y compared to credit growth of 17.5 per cent for the fortnight ended December 2.

The credit offtake expanded by over 1,000 bps due to a low base, retail credit, inflation-led working capital requirement and MSMEs. It also increased sequentially by 1.2 per cent from the immediate fortnight (ended November 18), CARE Ratings said.



Deposits rates are expected to go up further due to rising policy rates driven by higher inflation, intense competition between banks for sourcing deposits to meet strong credit demand, widening credit deposit gap, and lower liquidity in the market, said CARE Ratings.

Over the last couple of years, (i.e., from February 28, 2020) credit offtake has mostly overcome the Covid induced lag and has grown by around 29.7 per cent to almost catch up with deposit growth of 31.4 per cent over the period, the credit rating agency said.

In absolute terms, credit outstanding stood at Rs 131 lakh crore as of December 2, rising by Rs 19.5 lakh crore over the last 12 months.

According to CARE Ratings, the credit offtake is anticipated to remain resilient in FY23, while the benefit of lower base will ease out in the next few fortnights, optically leading to lower growth rates.

A slowdown in global growth due to elevated interest rates, interminable pandemic restrictions in China, and multiple rate hikes in India could impact credit growth, the CARE Ratings report said.

Agricultural & processed food products exports up by 16% to USD 17.43 billion for period April-Nov FY 22-23 compared to same period last year

NEW DELHI: The exports of agricultural and processed food products rose by 16 percent in the eight months (April-November) of the current Financial Year 2022-23 in comparison to the corresponding period of FY 2021-22.

According to the provisional data by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), the overall export of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) products increased by 16 percent growth in terms of USD during April-November 2022 to USD 17.43 billion from USD 15.07 billion over the same period of the last fiscal.

The initiatives taken by the APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) that works under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have helped the country in achieving 74 percent of its total export target for the year 2022-23 in eight months of



the current fiscal.

For the year 2022-23, an export target of USD 23.56 billion has been fixed for the agricultural and processed food products basket and an export of USD 17.435 billion has already been achieved in eight months of the current fiscal.

As per the DGCI&S provisional data, processed fruits and vegetables recorded a growth of 32.60 percent (April-November 2022), while fresh fruits registered four percent growth in com-

pare to corresponding months of the previous year.

Also, processed food products like cereals and miscellaneous processed items reported a growth of 28.29 percent in compare to the first eight months of the previous year.

In April-November, 2021, fresh fruits were exported to the tune of USD 954 million that increased to USD 991 million in the corresponding months of the current fiscal. Exports of processed F&V jumped to USD 1310 million in eight months of the current fiscal from USD 988 million in the corresponding months of the previous year.

The export of pulses has witnessed an increase of 90.49 percent in eight months of the current fiscal in compare to the same months of the last fiscal as the export of lentils increased from USD 206 million (April-November 2021-22) to USD 392 million (April-November 2022-23).

Basmati Rice exports witnessed a growth of 39.26 percent in eight months of FY 2022-23 as its export increased from USD 2063 million (April-November 2021) to USD 2873 million (April-November 2022), while the export of non-Basmati rice registered a growth of 5 percent in eight months of current fiscal. Non-basmati rice export increased to USD 4109 million in eight months of the current fiscal from USD 3930 million in the corresponding months of the previous year.

CBI arrests IFA of South Western Command, 6 others in bribe case

NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday arrested an Integrated Financial Advisor (IDAS-98), an Accounts Officer, Junior Translator working in South Western Command, Jaipur and four others on the allegations of bribery.

The CBI also conducted searches at nine different places, including Jaipur, Jind, Bathinda, Ganga Nagar which led to recovery of Rs 40 lakh in cash, various property documents relating to public servants and incriminating documents.

A senior CBI official said that a case was lodged against Uma Shankar Prasad Kushwaha, IFA South Western Command, Jaipur, accounts official Ram Roop Meena, Junior Translator, Vijay Nama, and Sunil Kumar, of Hitech Security Services Pvt Ltd, Jind (Haryana), Prabhinder Singh Brar of EES PEE Traders, Sri Ganganagar (Rajasthan), Dinesh Kumar Jindal, of D.K. Enterprises, Bhatinda



(Punjab), Rajendra Singh, of Tanushree Services, Jhotwara (Jaipur) on the allegations of bribery.

The accused of three private firms entered into a conspiracy and were obtaining all works related to outsourcing of conservancy services for various locations in South Western Command.

It was further alleged that the said IFA in connivance with Accounts Officer, Junior Translator, PCDA, South Western Command as well as a private person of a Jaipur based company (who was acting as the middlemen for the public servants), were demanding and obtaining illegal gratification from the private contractors. The arrested accused will be produced before the Competent Court in Panchkula later in the day.

November records \$32 bn exports; trade deficit expands to \$23.8 bn

NEW DELHI: India's merchandise exports in the month of November 2022 stood at USD 31.99 billion and the trade deficit widened to USD 23.89 billion during the month, said the Ministry of Commerce on Thursday. As per the data released by the Ministry late in the evening, it stated that the imports rose by 5.37 per cent to USD 55.88 billion in November as compared to USD 53.03 billion in the corresponding month a year ago. During April-November 2022, exports rose by 11 per cent to USD 295.26 billion as against USD 265.77 billion in the same month last year. However, imports rose by 29.5 per cent to USD 493.61 billion during the eight months period of this fiscal. It was USD 381.17 billion during April-November 2021, as per the data. Non-petroleum and non-gems & jewellery exports in November 2022 were USD 24.09 billion, compared to USD 23.91 billion in November 2021 while its imports were USD 34.45, compared to USD 32.33 billion in November 2021.

Mumbai Customs destroys seized drugs worth Rs. 538 crores in illicit market



MUMBAI: Mumbai Customs, Zone-III today, destroyed drugs weighing 140.57 kg at the incineration facility of M/s Mumbai Waste Management Limited (MWML) located at Talaja in Navi Mumbai. The drugs seized are valued at Rs. 538 Crore in the international illicit market.

Providing details of the seizure, Principal Commissioner, Zone III, Rajesh Sanan stated that the drugs destroyed were seized by three commissionerates under Zone III.

offence under Section 8 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 and are liable to punishment under section 21, section 23 and section 29 of NDPS Act 1985, read along with provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

According to Custom officials, drug seizure data at the Mumbai International Airport shows that the drugs smuggling is done predominantly by nationals from countries like Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Drug smuggling is undertaken by concealing the drugs in special false cavities made in baggage. Carriers have been found carrying drugs in ingested form as well. Mumbai Airport Customs has effectively used sniffer dogs for detecting cases. Incineration of such seized items which are hazardous to nature if released otherwise are required to be done in incinerators fitted with Standardized Pollution Control Devices.

56.06 kg Heroin & 33.81 Kg Hashish seized by the Mumbai Airport Commissionerate across 14 cases.

21.70 kg Hashish seized in a case booked at the Air Cargo Export Commissionerate

29 kg Heroin seized in a case by DRI, however the destruction was carried out by the Preventive Commissionerate of the Mumbai Customs Zone-III

Persons carrying banned narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are guilty of the

Core industries production index up by 5.4% in Nov 2022 against last year



NEW DELHI: The combined Index of Eight Core Industries increased by 5.4 % (provisional) in November 2022 as compared to the Index of November 2021, said the Ministry of Commerce & Industry on Friday.

The production of Cement, Coal, Electricity, Steel and Fertilizers increased in November 2022 over the corresponding month of last year.

ICI measures combined and individual performance of production of eight core industries viz. Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity.

The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Final growth rate of Index of Eight Core Industries for August 2022 is revised to 4.2% from its provisional level 3.3%.

The cumulative growth rate of ICI during April-November 2022 was 8.0% (provisional) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Coal production (weight: 10.33 per cent) increased by 12.3 per cent and Crude Oil production (weight: 8.98 per cent) declined by 1.1 per cent in November, 2022 over November, 2021.

Natural Gas production (weight: 6.88 per cent) declined by 0.7 per cent and Petroleum Refinery production (weight: 28.04 per cent) declined by 9.3 per cent in the given period.

Whereas Fertilizers production (weight: 2.63 per cent) increased by 6.4 per cent and Steel production (weight: 17.92 per cent) also increased by 10.8 per cent in November, 2022 over November, 2021.

In view of Cement production (weight: 5.37 per cent) it hiked by 28.6 per cent and Electricity generation (weight: 19.85 per cent) increased by 12.1 per cent in November, 2022 over November, 2021.

BJP received highest donations from electoral trusts in 2021-22, TRS 2nd: ADR

New Delhi: The Bharatiya-Janata Party (BJP) received the highest amount of donations from electoral trusts (ETs) in fiscal year 2021-22, at Rs 351.50 crore making up 72.17 per cent of the total donations received by all parties, as per a detailed report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The Prudent ET donated the highest amount (Rs 336.50 crore) to the BJP, against Rs 209 crore contributed in FY 2020-21. AB General ET and Samaj ET donated Rs 10 crore and Rs 5 crore to the BJP in FY 2021-22, respectively.

After BJP, the Telangana-RashtraSamithi (TRS) received the second highest amount of Rs 40 crore, with Prudent ET being the only donor.

The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have received a total of Rs 18.43

crore and Rs 21.12 crore from ETs, respectively.

While there is only Rs 0.19 crore difference in the donations made by the Prudent ET to both parties, Independent ET donated Rs 4.81 crore to the AAP, making AAP the bigger receiver compared to Congress. Small Donations ET donated only Rs 1.9351 cr to the Congress.

Moreover, the Prudent ET donated to nine political parties, including the TRS, the Samajwadi Party, the YSR Congress, the ShiromaniAkali Dal, the Punjab Lok Congress Party, and the Goa Forward Party.

Six ETs, that have declared receiving contributions from different corporates and individuals during FY 2021-22, received a total amount of Rs 487.0856 crore and distributed Rs 487.0551 crore (99.994 per



cent) to various political parties.

However, details of donors to these six ETs remain unknown, thereby leading to speculation on whether donations to these trusts were only a means of getting tax exemption or a way to convert black money stashed in tax havens to white money in India, the ADR said.

According to the ADR, details of donors to these ETs, which were formed before the Central Board of Direct Taxes rules came into existence, should also be disclosed.

In FY 21-22, 89 corporate/business houses contributed Rs 475.8021 crore to ETs out of which 62 contributed Rs 456.30 crore to Prudent ET, two contributed Rs 10 crore to AB General ET, three contributed Rs 5 crore to Samaj ET, and 15 contributed Rs 2.20 crore to Independent ET.

As many as 40 individuals have contributed to ETs in FY 2021-22. Prudent ET has received the highest contribution compared to Independent ET and Small Donation ET. Top 10 donors have donated Rs 331 crore to ETs, which forms 67.96 per cent of the total donations received by the trusts during FY 2021-22.

Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India Ltd contributed the highest amount, Rs 70 crore amongst all donors of the ETs, followed by Arcelor

Mittal Design and Engg Centre Pvt Ltd with Rs 60 crore, and BhartiAirtel Ltd which contributed Rs 51 crore, to various Trusts.

Furthermore, the ADR has observed that 10 (62.50 per cent) of the 16 ETs that submitted their annual reports for FY 2021-22 declared that they received nil contributions in that year.

"This raises a question on the continuation of the registration of such electoral trusts that fail to fulfill their primary objective of distributing contributions received by them to the political parties concerned," it said.

According to the ADR, the contribution reports for FY 2021-22 of seven out of 23 registered ETs are not available on the website of the Election Commission, even after two months since the deadline.

INTERNATIONAL

US winter storm death toll reaches 62

At least 62 people have died in the US due to the catastrophic winter storm that continues to wreak havoc across the country since it started on December 22, officials said.

Erie County in New York has reported the 37 deaths, the highest in the country as crews continue to clear roads and first responders are checking on people they couldn't reach days ago, reports CNN.

The remaining 25 fatalities were reported across 11 states.

"It's a horrible storm with too many deaths," Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said at a news conference on Wednesday as he praised first responders, without whom "more people would have died". "We are fearful that there are individuals who may have perished living alone or people who were not doing well in an establishment, especially those that still don't



have power," he added.

The storm buried the city of Buffalo in Erie County in nearly 52 inches of snow, trapping residents at home, many without heat as the Christmas weekend blizzard took out power lines.

Also on Wednesday, Buffalo Police Commissioner Joseph A. Gramaglia told CNN that he expects rising temperatures in the coming days will melt the snow and uncover more storm

victims. In a statement, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown said: "People got stranded in their vehicles and passed away in their cars. We have people that were walking during blizzard conditions and passed away on the street, passed away in snowbanks." "And we have people that were found that passed away in their homes."

Elsewhere in the US, more than 70,000 customers were

without power in Washington and Oregon as of Wednesday afternoon, according to outage tracker PowerOutage.us.

The storm is expected to "linger into the upcoming weekend", the Weather Prediction Center said, adding that some areas could get up to six inches of rainfall.

A surge of heavy rain or mountain snow is also expected on the west and the US south on Thursday and could continue through the end of the week, according to the Center.

In Canada, some residents are still battling power cuts as a result of the storm, including about 19,000 customers in the province of Quebec, public utility provider Hydro-Quebec said on Wednesday.

In Ontario, more than 10,000 customers were still without power, according to power supplier Hydro One.

About 24 mn people over age 60 yet to receive 1st Covid jab in China

Nearly 23.8 million people over the age of 60 in China are yet to receive their first shot of Covid-19 vaccine as the country goes through a massive surge in infections, the media reported on Monday.

According to the South China Morning Post, as China eased its zero-Covid policy, the country doubled down on vaccination drives but the vaccination rate for the elderly is worryingly low. The vaccination figure fell to "just 42.4 per cent for those aged 80 and over", the report mentioned.

The elderly, most of whom have other ailments, are most concerned about the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines.

Vaccination seemed less urgent for many elderly people, especially those in the country's vast hinterland, and



they lacked the motivation to get jabs. "Some villagers complained of bad coughs, headaches and sore arms after being forced to accept their first shot, and after browsing alarmist posts about vaccine risks on social media platforms were more reluctant to get jabbed again," the report mentioned. China has now rolled out a second Covid booster

drive for high-risk groups including those aged 60 and over or with weak immune systems. Chinese officials estimate about 250 million people (18 per cent of the population) were infected with Covid-19 in the first 20 days of December, as Beijing abruptly dismantled restrictions that had contained the disease for almost three years.

Friends, kin mourn loss of Sikh man who died in Canada bus accident



Friends and relatives of Karanjot Singh Sodhi, who died in a Christmas Eve bus crash in Canada, have mourned his loss describing him as a kind, hard-working and a cheerful person.

Sodhi, 41, was from Amritsar and had only recently entered Canada on a work permit in September 2022.

"I'm very hurt for the last two days (sic)," Kalwinder Singh, Sodhi's cousin, told CBC News.

Singh, who described Sodhi as kind and hard-working, said he was looking forward to celebrating the holidays with him.

Anshul Thakur, who worked with Sodhi described him as an "upbeat person who almost never had a bad day." "He always had a cheerful smile," Thakur said.

Sodhi, who was employed as a chef in a restaurant of an Okanagan winery, is survived by his mother, wife and a six-year-old son and two-year-old daughter back home in Butala, Amritsar.

"(Sodhi's) wife is in a very bad shape after hearing the news. His mother, too," Singh told CBC News.

A GoFundMe page has been started to arrange for his funeral and support his family. The bus crashed around 6 pm on Highway 97C east of Merritt, about 170 miles northeast of Vancouver killing four people and injuring many others. The British Columbia Royal Canadian Mounted Police said in a statement that "extremely icy" road conditions along the highway caused the bus rollover. However, they added that a probe into the exact cause of the accident has been launched and that the bus driver is assisting the police.

Indian student wins top UK univ scholarship worth 5,000 pounds



An Indian student from Bengaluru has won a prestigious scholarship worth 5,000 pounds, which is awarded to an undergraduate pursuing any of the 24 subjects offered at the University of Dundee, UK.

Rajvir Singh, 18, who studies Psychology and French at the University of Dundee, will receive the 2022 Jai Dass Sagar Memorial Scholarship for Excellence, which supports a student who aims to give back to their community.

The award which is given to one aspiring student from India each year, honours Scotland's first non-white elected politician and doctor Jai Dass Sagar, who travelled all the way from Punjab to study at the University over 100 years ago.

Sagar went on to use his medical education to help transform the lives of people living in the city of Dundee, and served as the city councillor for 18 years until his death in 1954.

Singh, who was "grateful" to have been awarded the scholarship, said that his personal experiences with mental health lay behind his choice of course.

"I wanted to study psychology because, like many others, I have struggled with mental health. Even though support is available in India, there's a lot of social stigma around it... I'm very grateful to have been awarded the Sagar Scholarship," Singh said in a statement. "My hope is to use my education to become a therapist, so I can be the kind of support for others that I didn't always get," he added.

NZ logs 32,010 new Covid community cases, 78 deaths in a week



New Zealand recorded 32,010 new community cases of Covid-19 and 78 deaths in the week ending December 25, the Ministry of Health said on Wednesday.

On average, new cases per day reached 4,565 in the last week, reports Xinhua news agency.

With the fresh cases, New Zealand has reported 2,094,354 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 2,331 deaths since the pandemic hit the country in early 2020, the Ministry said.

Currently, 413 infected patients are being treated in hospitals in the country, including 15 in intensive care units or high dependency units, showed official data.

Global gas demand expected to decline by 65 bn cubic metre in 2022: Gazprom



NEW DELHI: The world's demand for gas is expected to decrease by 65 billion cubic metre in 2022, with 55 billion cubic metre falling on the 27 European Union countries, head of Russian gas giant Gazprom Alexei Miller said.

According to preliminary estimates, the decline in global gas demand in 2022 is equal to 65 billion cubic metre, and "55 billion cubic metre from these 65 billion fall on the 27 European countries," Gazprom said in a statement, citing Miller as speaking at a year-end meeting on Wednesday.

Miller said 2022 turned out to be very difficult, with energy markets experiencing great changes, noting that at the start of the year, such changes could be described as extreme volatility, and by the end of the year, it became clear that the markets were undergoing turbulence, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to preliminary long-term forecasts, global gas consumption would grow by 20 per cent over the next 20 years, he said, adding that in this context, Gazprom is reflecting on the future, the company's new projects and energy security in general.

Chinese spy reportedly present during Dalai Lama's sermon in Bodh Gaya



PATNA: Security agencies are on high alert after reports of a woman Chinese spy in Bihar's Bodh Gaya.

Sources said that the alleged spy, named Sang Zeolone, was present during the sermon of the Dalai Lama during the Kaal Chakra Puja in Gaya a few days ago and has now disappeared.

Gaya police issued her sketch, apart from passport and visa numbers which are EH2722976 and 901BAA2L, respectively. Shockingly, the alleged Chinese spy was staying in various places in the country, especially in Gaya for the last 2 years but her travel history and purpose of visit in India are not available with the foreign section. Gaya police also described her as slim and having short hair.

The police said that the alleged Chinese spy made several

hideouts in and around Bodh Gaya probably to keep a tab on the activities of the Dalai Lama.

"We have an input about a Chinese woman in Bodh Gaya. Accordingly, we have alerted every hotel, lodge, guest house, and Buddhist monastery to inform the Gaya police if she is found anywhere. We have also released a phone number 9431822208 for any information. We are also searching for her but have not located so far," said Gaya SSP Harpreet Kaur.

"We have enhanced the security around the Dalai Lama. The numbers of CCTV cameras are also increasing. People are allowed in Kaal Chakra ground only with proper documents and identity verification," Kaur said.

The Dalai Lama arrived in Bodh Gaya on December 23 and will stay here for one month.

Youth suicide rate in S.Korea up amid Covid

The youth suicide rate in South Korea increased in 2021 amid the Covid-19 pandemic to remain as their No. 1 cause of death, in yet another sign of a chronic problem that has plagued the country for years, data showed on Tuesday.

The suicide rate per 100,000 people aged 17 and below reached 2.7 in 2021, up from 2.5 a year earlier, revealed the latest report by Statistics Korea showed.

The rate for the age group from 15 to 17 reached 9.5, slightly down from 9.9 tallied in 2020, the data showed. In contrast, suicides among those aged 12 to 14 shot up 1.8 on-year to reach five in 2021, reports Yonhap News Agency.

The rate for the age group from 15 to 17, meanwhile, ear-



lier soared on-year to 9.9 in 2020, compared to 8.3 tallied in 2019.

The data also showed that 6.5 per cent of children aged from 1 to 9 years old suffered nutritional deficiency in 2020, when schools were closed due

to the pandemic, sharply up from 3.4 per cent tallied in 2019.

The nutritional deficiency among those aged 10 to 18 also reached 23.4 per cent in 2020, jumping from 16.7 per cent posted a year earlier.

More South Korean students, meanwhile, were attending cram schools or other after-school education programs, with the participation rate reaching 75.5 per cent in 2021, up from 67.1 per cent posted in 2020.

For elementary school students, the rate reached 82 per cent.

The number of youth aged 17 and below, meanwhile, accounted for 14.1 per cent of the total population in 2022 by reaching 7.25 million, down from 14.8 per cent tallied in 2020, the data showed.

The agency said the age group is anticipated to take up only 10.2 per cent of the population in 2040, marking a drastic decrease from 25.7 per cent posted in 2000.

Taliban says 'No' to Women

MAHIE JK

After Taliban took over Afghanistan on August 15, 2021 the country and its citizens are facing many stringent restrictions, specially women who are facing restrictions on their basic rights of Education. Taliban have been seen increasing the curbs on women time and gain. Recently, the Taliban banned women from Universities in Afghanistan. Not only women but girls are also restricted from schools. Many women protesters from Afghanistan Women's Unity and Solidarity group raised their voices against these restrictions imposed by Taliban but soon these demonstrations were shut down by Taliban officials. "They destroyed my future" said a Kabul University student. The United Nations has also raised serious objections to Taliban policies.

In September 2021, The Taliban's said that the women can attend Universities but will only be allowed to be taught by the professors of same sex



or elderly people. After few months, they shut down the Secondary Schools education for girls. Due to these restrictions many school going girls got disappointed as they were being deprived of their basic rights. "I want to study and make my career in Medicine but they have ordered us to stay home," said Zaiba a school going girl.

The Atrocities of Taliban's did not stop here, after some time the girls and women's were prohibited from entering public places like parks, gyms and malls. Women were also forced to cover themselves in

public places. They have to cover themselves completely including their faces. In the series of bans recently Taliban guards stopped hundreds of young girls also from entering the college campus. They suspended the education of women till further orders.

United Nations has also raised objections on Taliban's restrictions on women. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres decried increasing restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan, urging the country's Taliban rulers to reverse them immediately. United Nations Secretary

Council reiterated its deep concern of the suspension of schools beyond the sixth grade. The Equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in Afghanistan is needed," it said in a press release.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement issued in Geneva that no country can develop or prosper if one section of the population will be excluded. Everybody should be treated equally, he said that he fears that this will pose risk beyond Afghanistan borders.

They also urged to reopen schools and allow women to go for work. The UN also said that no country can develop and survive if human rights are violated. These restrictions will only increase the sufferings of Afghanistan. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk also said that banning women from working in NGOs would only decrease the income of Afghan people. "Women and girls cannot be denied from their basic rights" added Turk.

British-Indian in Dubai to be extradited to Denmark for \$1.7 bn tax fraud



DUBAI PUBLIC PROSECUTION SUBMITTED TO THE COURT OF APPEAL ALL PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE DANISH AUTHORITIES AGAINST SHAH, WHICH SHOWED HIS INVOLVEMENT IN FRAUD AND MONEY LAUNDERING, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT

A British citizen of Indian-origin, accused of money laundering and committing tax fraud to the tune of \$1.7 billion, will be extradited to Denmark, a Dubai court ruled.

Sanjay Shah, 52, a British hedge-fund trader, is accused of masterminding a scam, which ran for three years since 2012, has been described as one of the largest fraud cases in Denmark's history.

Shah's fraud scheme involved submitting thousands of applications to the Danish Treasury on behalf of investors and companies from several countries around the world in order to receive dividend tax refunds, the Dubai Police said in a statement.

Essam Issa Al Humaidan, Attorney General of Dubai, to the Dubai Court of Cassation, against a previous ruling of the Dubai Court of Appeal rejecting a request for Shah's extradition, according to a media statement released on Thursday.

The Court of Cassation decided to return the case to the Court of Appeal for reconsideration by a different judicial body.

This Court ruled to extradite him to the Danish authorities.

Dubai Public Prosecution submitted to the Court of Appeal all papers and documents submitted by the Danish authorities against Shah, which showed his involvement in fraud and money laundering, according to the statement.

Shah, who lived on The Palm Jumeirah in Dubai, was arrested earlier this year following an extradition request from Danish authorities.

His lawyer Ali Al Zarouni said his client will appeal against the extradition ruling made by Dubai Court of Appeal.

The arrest and ruling align with Dubai's commitment to combat illegal financial activities, including money laundering.

Shehbaz Sharif defies critics, hangs on, but 2023 is going to be tougher

Shehbaz Sharif, the current sitting Prime Minister of Pakistan is well known as "Shehbaz Speed" for his standout development work in the country's largest province Punjab, during his multiple tenures as Chief Minister.

But the year 2022 became the year of forward movement in politics from provincial setup to a federal setup for Shehbaz Sharif, who, after being elected as Member of the National Assembly (MNA) during the 2018 general elections, became the leader of the opposition benches against the Imran Khan regime.

Shehbaz Sharif, who comes from the political family of the Sharifs, whose elder brother and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif led his political party, the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) to historical victories in elections and became the Prime Minister, remained as the second in command to Nawaz Sharif, which many believe was the power behind the Sharif politics.

After Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to jail on corruption references and removed from



premiership and as PML-N's head, it was Shehbaz Sharif who took over as the President of the party.

Shehbaz Sharif's entry into the federal setup as opposition leader was the first step towards the pathway for the ruling premiership as after ousting Imran Khan through the no-confidence vote in the parliament, which was again headed by Shehbaz Sharif along with other coalition political parties; Shehbaz Sharif was made the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

While for many, Shehbaz Sharif's premiership was supposed to be shortlived as the Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDM) the 13-party anti-Imran Khan alliance took

power with an agenda to hold early elections in the country; Imran Khan's uproar among the masses against his ouster gave way to Shehbaz Sharif's time in office to complete its constitutional term.

Shehbaz Sharif's year 2022 has been a mixed experience of financial challenges, climate change catastrophe and a daunting political rivalry of Imran Khan, who has kept the government on its toes in every possible way.

From being forced to take immediate steps to contain inflation, which has risen to alarmingly high levels, revive the stalled International Monetary Fund (IMF) Extended Funding Facility (EFF) to Pakistan, confront a climate change

catastrophe, triggering heavy extended rain, flash floods and destruction, drowning one-third of the country, destroying hundreds of thousands of acres of agricultural land and affecting more than 35 million people, Shehbaz Sharif has had to manage the challenges effectively, despite the looming dark clouds of uncertainty about his time in office and the free-fall of the country's economy.

The year 2022 does not hold any success story for the premier, but it certainly enforces major challenges for him as the burden and onus of financial constraints left ignored by Imran Khan's government, came down falling onto the shoulders of Shehbaz Sharif with questions being raised over the reasons why Imran Khan's government was ousted if inflation, bankruptcy, price hikes and overall management of the country's crippling and cash-strapped economy were not planned.

On the political grounds, Shehbaz Sharif faces a massive challenge from the "roaring" Imran Khan, who demands early elections in the country and accuses the Shehbaz Sharif coalition government as a bank of thieves.



GURUPURAB

Sikh devotees carry the Guru Granth Sahib in a palanquin during a religious procession on Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh. A Sikh warrior is silhouetted as he performs a Sikh martial art called 'Gatka' and fireworks display at the illuminated Sri Harmandir Sahib.

PHOTOS: PRABHJOT LILL



Vijayendra Kumaria says Aamir was his inspiration for Angad makeover



MUMBAI: TV actor Vijayendra Kumaria shared how he drew inspiration from Bollywood actor Aamir Khan for his role of Angad in the new show 'Teri Meri Doriyaan'. He said: "Aamir Khan sir was my inspiration for transforming into Angad. When I saw him grow his hair for his character, I gave it a thought and decided to give it a try so that I can also perfect my look for the character." The actor is known for TV shows such as 'Shastri Sisters',

'Udaan', 'Naagin 4', 'Moh Sey Chhal Kiye Jaaye', and 'Aapki Nazron Ne Samjha'. While sharing about his role and how he transformed into his on-screen character, Angad Singh Brar, Vijayendra shared: "I have seen a lot of actors going way ahead to try something new for achieving the perfection in the look of their character. I have also grown my hair to give a certain feel to the character that is needed for me to fully merge into it." He added that as an actor, he believes in giving his best for his role: "I always value putting my best in any character I am playing and I want people to register the effort that I am putting into it and it also helps me to get into the skin of the character." 'Teri Meri Doriyaan' is starting from January 4 on Star Plus.

'Bigg Boss 16': Salman slams Archana severely for her mean remarks



In the upcoming weekend episode of 'Bigg Boss 16', show's host Salman Khan will be seen reprimanding Archana Gautam over her behaviour this week. Archana was seen making some lewd remarks against Vikkas Manakata and Shalin Bhanot in a fight. This did not go down well with Salman, who even threatened to throw Archana out of the show. For the unversed, Shalin had called Archana 'do kaudi ki aurat' in a fight, the latter had asked him if he is saying that to his ex-wife. She also made a nasty comment against Vikkas that he couldn't become a father. Moments before the fight, Vikkas spoke to Archana about his wife suffering a miscarriage. In a promo shared by the channel, Salman is seen schooling

Archana about how she drags housemate's family members like mother, sister, father into her fights and makes below the belt comments. In her defence, Archana says that people purposely provoke her. Salman doesn't stop here and informs her that because of her statements she has ruined her image in the outside world. He then tells her that if he has the authority to bring her back in the show against everyone's will, he can throw her out whenever he wants. Salman also questions and calls out Shalin Bhanot for calling Archana Gautam 'do kaudi ki aurat'. The star also slams him for breaking the house's property and Shalin says that he can't take things against someone who is extremely special to him.

Shah Rukh Khan hugs Salman on his 57th birthday bash, fans impressed

MUMBAI: Fans of Bollywood superstars Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan can now proudly say "Karan-Arjun aa gaye (Karan-Arjun are here finally)". Salman was greeted by the 'Pathaan' star on his 57th birthday bash. Shah Rukh Khan hugged Salman Khan at his 57th birthday bash, as he hosted a joint party with his sister Arpita Khan, whose daughter Ayat Sharma, who shares her birthday with the actor, turned three on Tuesday. Among the host of celebs, including Pooja Hegde, Kartik Aaryan, Suniel Shetty, Tabu, Sangeeta Bihrani, Shah Rukh Khan grabbed the most attention. The videos of the two superstars sharing a sweet moment in embrace are doing rounds on the Internet. The fans were left in awe as the two shared the frames together. A netizen wrote about Salman and Shah Rukh Khan's bond,



"The best, most intimate and close friendship in Bollywood." Another fan on Instagram also said the moment reminded him of Shah Rukh and Salman attending politician Baba Siddique's Iftaar party in 2013, where they ended their years-long cold war by giving each other a warm hug. Shah Rukh Khan hugged Salman and wishes him a 57th birthday and remembers friendship has stood the test of time despite two major fights between the two - One during the making of 'Chalte Chalte' when Salman regularly showed up on sets and created ruckus over his girlfriend Aishwarya Rai which resulted in the actress getting ousted from the film and replaced by Rani Mukerji.

Uorfi backs Sheezan Khan: Cannot blame him for Tunisha's death



'Bigg Boss OTT' fame Uorfi Javed has come out in support of Sheezan Khan, who has been accused in television actress Tunisha Sharma's suicide case. Uorfi took to Instagram, where she penned a note saying that Sheezan cannot be blamed for the death of the 20-year-old actress. She wrote: "My 2 cents on Tunisha's case, yes he might be wrong, he might have cheated on her but we cannot blame him for her death. You absolutely cannot make someone stay with you who doesn't want to stay." Uorfi added: "Girls no one I REPEAT NO ONE, is worth giving up your precious life for. Sometimes it might just seem like the end of the world but trust me it's not. Think about the people who love you or just try loving yourself a bit harder. Be your own hero." "Please give time some

time. Even after suicide the suffering doesn't end, the ones that are left behind suffer even more." On December 24, actress Tunisha Sharma, who was on the cast of 'Ali Baba: Dastaan-E-Kabul', was found dead on the sets of a TV serial in Vasai, Mumbai. She had committed suicide by hanging. Tunisha started her career with 'Bharat Ka Veer Putra - Maharana Pratap' and later featured in shows such as 'Chakravartin Ashoka Samrat', 'Gabbard Poonchhwa', 'Sher-e-Punjab: Maharaja Ranjit Singh', 'Internet Wala Love' and 'Ishq Subhan Allah'. The young actress had featured in films like 'Fitoo', 'Baar Baar Dekho', 'Kahaani 2: Durga Rani Singh', and 'Dabangg 3'. She has also appeared in several music videos, notably 'Pyaar Ho Jaayega', 'Nainon Ka Ye Rona' and 'Tu Baithe Mere Samne'.

The year 2022 proved the most eventful year for LPU

JALANDHAR: The year 2022 has again proved to be a very successful year for Lovely Professional University (LPU). On a personal note, LPU Chancellor Dr Ashok Kumar Mittal became the Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), while the university and its students further ascended new heights in various domains. From illustrious global rankings, record-breaking placements, India's largest number of patents filed, and working on various innovation & start-up ideas; there has been growth in each area



of operation of the university. On the placement front, LPU achieved record-breaking placement with a recent engineering graduate placed at Rs 3 crore annual salary. For the 2022

batch, the highest package for engineering stood at 64 lakhs. Despite a difficult market scenario, the 2022 highest package marks a 50% increase from the previous year's highest of Rs 42 lakh. Setting yet another benchmark; 8400+ offers are extended to students of various programs of the 2022 batch, where 5000+ offers are extended by Fortune 500 companies. LPU students leveraged an unbeatable placement support system at the university and bagged dream packages in the world's leading companies.



Arshdeep Singh nominated for ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of the Year Award

Tunisha Sharma leaves behind property worth Rs 15 crore for her mother



MUMBAI: Late TV actress Tunisha Sharma, who took her own life on December 24, was working since the age of 13 and she leaves behind the



legacy of her hard work in the form of property worth Rs 15 crore, including as apartment in Bhayandar (East), which will all now go to her mother.

Tunisha, who was consigned to the flames on Tuesday, had a very busy calendar till the end and worked in several TV shows, movies and music videos, which helped her become independently wealthy. Her funeral in Mumbai was attended by a number of television celebrities and the mother and sister of her ex-boyfriend and 'Ali Baba: Dastaan-e-Kabul' co-star, Sheezan Khan, who stands accused of abetment of suicide on the basis of a police complaint filed by Tunisha's mother.

When everything went wrong in Jasbir Jassi's first ever English interview in US

MUMBAI: Popular singer Jasbir Jassi recounted the first interview he gave in English during an international tour and how he misunderstood the questions and gave utterly wrong answers. He said: "During my initial days when we went for one of our first show tours in California it was for the first Lady, Hillary Clinton. We had to do a fundraising show for her. There was a journo over there who approached me for an interview and I told him clearly that I am not at all good in English. However, he insisted and asked me to do a rehearsal before



starting the interview so that it would be easy for me but when they came and started briefing me I was like it is too easy, and can

do it easily without any problem." The 'Dil Le Gayee Kudi' singer goes on to share how he translated his popular Punjabi track into

English for them. "While having a conversation with them, I was making sure that my Punjabi accent doesn't come in while I am talking in English. He asked me a question in English and I translated 'Dil Le Gayee Kudi' lyrics into English. By now he somehow had an idea about my relationship with the language." Jasbir went on about how he misunderstood the questions asked by the journo and he shared: "He further asked me, 'we know you are going to perform at the First Lady's birthday. I was so confused about what he was

asking and who is this first lady that I responded to him saying my birth date is February 7 and I was born in Punjab. Till then I exhausted all my English and he understood the same as well." Jasbir Jassi is coming as part of the New Year special episode on 'The Kapil Sharma Show' as a celebrity guest along with Richa Sharma and comedians like Anubhav Singh Bassi, Abhishek Upmanyu, Zakir Khan, and Kusha Kapila. "The Kapil Sharma Show" airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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