

REGION **2**

BUDGET SESSION : DELHI LG LISTS OUT GOVT ACHIEVEMENTS, SPEECH INTERRUPTED BY SLOGAN SHOUTING



BANKING & FINANCE **6**

BRING BACK YOUR MONEY, NEW SILICON VALLEY BANK CEO URGES DEPOSITORS



POTPOURRI **8**

'DELHI CRIME', 'FABULOUS LIVES OF BOLLYWOOD WIVES' AMONG POPULAR SHOWS 'RENEWED' FOR SEASON 3



Excise Policy Case: Delhi court extends Sisodia's ED custody by five days

NEW DELHI: A Delhi Court on Friday extended Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister's Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody for further five days in connection with the now-scrapped excise policy case.

After the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on February 26 arrested him, the ED, on March 9, also arrested Sisodia in the same case.

Special judge M.K. Nagpal of the Rouse Avenue Court was told by the ED that important details have come up during Sisodia's custody and he had to be confronted with other accused persons.

The probe agency informed the court that voluminous data from Sisodia's email and mobile, etc. is also being forensically analysed.

Sisodia's counsel, however, opposed the central agency's remand plea saying that there is not a whisper from the agency regarding the proceeds of the crime, which is fundamental to the case.

His lawyer further contended that there was no justification in seeking extension of custody and that Sisodia was confronted only with four people during his earlier cus-



tody of seven days. On March 10, the court had sent Sisodia to ED custody, which ended on Friday. The court had deferred hearing in Sisodia's bail application for March 21, in the same case being probed by the CBI. During the hearing, the ED had sought his 10-day custody saying that they need to unearth the modus operandi, the entire scam and confront Sisodia with some other people. ED's counsel Zohab Hossain, while claiming that Sisodia was

part of the "money laundering nexus" had said that the movement of tainted money through hawala channels was also being probed. Hossain had submitted that the policy was formulated to ensure that certain private entities got huge benefits and that one of the biggest cartels was made to operate 30 per cent of liquor business in Delhi. Referring to the meetings between restaurants association and Sisodia, ED alleged that relaxations were afforded to

the restaurants in excise policy like reducing the legal age of drinking and other things. The central agency had argued that Sisodia had destroyed the evidence. "Within a span of one year, 14 phones have been destroyed and changed," the agency had claimed. "Sisodia has used phones purchased by others and SIM cards that are not in his name so that he can use it as a defence later. Even the phone used by him is not in his name," the ED

Sisodia has used phones purchased by others and SIM cards that are not in his name so that he can use it as a defence later. Even the phone used by him is not in his name"

counsel had submitted. He (Sisodia) has been evasive from the start, the ED had alleged. There was a conspiracy behind framing the excise policy. The conspiracy was coordinated by Vijay Nair, along with others and the excise policy was brought out for extraordinary profit margin for wholesalers, the ED had argued in the court. On March 6, Judge Nagpal sent Sisodia to 14-day judicial custody in the CBI case, and he was lodged in the national capital's Tihar jail. The CBI was given his remand for seven days before the judge sent him to judicial custody till March 20.

UER-II will reduce traffic and pollution; also boost connectivity to western range of Delhi

YOGESH KANT
New Delhi

Lessening the travel duration from 2 hours to 20-30 minutes from Alipur to IGI Airport, with 27 flyover, 26 smaller bridges and 17 pedestrian subways, this six-lane Urban Extension Road (UER) II is going to be the capitals' third Ring Road, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said. It will also be among the first national highways to be an e-highway, on e-buses, e-trolleys and e-cars on the route, cables and other equipment will also be installed along the service lanes.

The 75 KM long road will connect NH-1 to Dwarka and Bahadurgarh along the western range, it will pave through the Kanjhawala, Nangloi, Najafgarh,



Dwarka Sector 24, Bawana and Sonapat Bypass area after starting at the NH1 interchange. Moreover, a section of the road will link the Bahadurgarh bypass and Dhichaoon Kalan to the national highway. Urban Extension Road Project (UER-II), being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 7,716 crore as part of the Delhi decongestion plan, will be completed and inaugurated by September this year, Union Minister Nitin

Gadkari said on Thursday. The national capital's third ring road is proposed to be developed in five packages. Gadkari inspected the progress of the Urban Extension Road Project (UER-II) with Lt Governor of Delhi Vinai Kumar Saxena, Member of Parliament Hans Raj Hans, Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma and other higher officials. "We are developing UER-II as a component of the Delhi Decongestion Plan.

CRISIL forecasts modest 6% GDP growth of Indian economy in FY24

NEW DELHI: In the next fiscal year the Indian economy is expected to witness 6 per cent growth, said Crisil on Thursday stating that it is in with consensus estimates, driven by an increased capex by the private sector. The private sector capex is expected to deliver double-digit revenue growth for the second year on the trot, it added. For the current financial year, the rating agency



has projected the economy to grow 7 per cent. But many private forecasters have a lower outlook, ranging from 6.5 to 6.9 per cent. The agency also sees the economy

averaging 6.8 per cent growth over the next five fiscals. While the corporate revenue to log in a double-digit rise again next fiscal, expects Crisil. In its annual growth forecast, Crisil Chief Economist DK Joshi said a complex interplay of geopolitical events, stubbornly high inflation, and sharp rate hikes to counter that have turned the global environment gloomier.

Yogi govt to release booklet highlighting achievements on March 25

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh government will be releasing booklets, highlighting its achievements on the Yogi Adityanath government which completes the first year of its second term on March 25.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will release one booklet in Lucknow which will cover work done across the state, but separate booklets are being prepared for each Assembly constituency, highlighting works done there.

Short films of two to three minutes on various subjects like women empowerment, farmers, law and order in the state, industrialization, etc., are also being put together. These will be shown on March 25.

"The films will be shown on display screens and LED screens across the state. Most of these screens are located in large cities, including Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Agra, Varanasi and Prayagraj. The films will be screened all day.

"The chief minister will hold a press conference in Lucknow, where he will recount the works done by the



government in the past six years and especially over the last one year and this will be telecast live across the state and on social media," said an official in the chief minister's secretariat.

The booklets will be made available at all gram panchayats, libraries and government offices.

"The book will have two sections, one on achievements of the past six years and the other on achievements of past one year. Works done by each department in all the Assembly constituencies are being put together. It will also focus on BJP's Sankalp Patra issued before the Assembly elections and how many of those promises have been fulfilled," the official said.

G20 Seminar on Strengthening Research and Promoting Innovation through richer Collaboration held at Khalsa College, Amritsar

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

India's G20 Presidency took center stage at Khalsa College, Amritsar, where IIT Ropar under Ministry of Education hosted a seminar on 'Strengthening Research and Promoting Innovation through Richer Collaboration.' The event brought together delegates from the G20 Education Working Group to discuss the future of work and innovation, with a focus on building bridges across nations for equitable development.

Prof. Rajeev Ahuja, Director

of IIT Ropar, welcomed the participants and highlighted India's opportunity to establish itself as a leader in research and innovation globally.

K. Sanjay Murthy, Secretary, Higher Education, also attended the event. Prof. Govind Rangarajan, Director, IISC shared enlightening thoughts on interdependency of domains and interdisciplinary action for solving problems. He also highlighted India's frugal innovations, which have the potential to solve problems of the developed world, and the need to acknowledge and use grassroots

innovation. Prof. Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad, stressed on the need of synergy between government-academia-industry to find solutions to pressing world problems. He highlighted that the National Education Policy 2020 has brought in path breaking reforms in education in India, and various programmes are helping promote cross-institutional collaboration in the country such as I-STEM portal, IITenTive IIT-R&D fair etc.

The first panel titled 'Research in Emerging and Disruptive Technologies, Industry -4.0' moderated by Prof. Anil Gupta and chaired



by Prof. Rajeev Ahuja brought together panelists from Australia, France, India and UK who shared pertinent insights on the role of various stakeholders to promote research on the emerging innovations, their impact on education

systems and society in general. The second panel on 'Research in Sustainable Development Goals' chaired by Prof. Shalini Bharat with panelists representing China, Oman, South Africa, UAE and UNICEF laid importance on enhancing the capacities of universities being the core of research. One of the panelists, Alison Dell, Assistant Secretary, Australian Government Department of Education, discussed about the National Collaborative Infrastructure scheme in her country and what her government has been doing in moving towards applied research.

No question of apology: Kharage defends Rahul



NEW DELHI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday defended Rahul Gandhi and said there was no question of apology for his UK statement. Kharge said that Gandhi did not say anything wrong and only spoke about democracy, "whereas the Prime Minister spoke at many places in foreign lands and insulted the country". Amid the uproar over Rahul Gandhi's statement has tried to make it clear that the party is not going to yield on the subject and will be offensive on the issue and press its demand of JPC in Hindenburg-Adani row. Hitting out at PM Modi, Congress chief and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge had tweeted: "I want to remind you of your statement made in China. You said - 'Earlier, you felt ashamed of being born Indian. Now you feel proud to represent the country'". Was this not an insult to India and Indians? Tell your Ministers to refresh their memories!

Arvind Kejriwal questions PM Modi's patriotism

BHOPAL: Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal raised questions on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's patriotism, arguing that "he wouldn't have sent the person who brought revolution in Delhi's education system to jail if he would have been a real patriot".

Kejriwal along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant

Mann was on a day-long tour in Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal on Tuesday, which was also his maiden visit to the poll-bound state.

"The day PM Modi sent Delhi's former Education Minister Manish Sisodia into jail, I realised, the country needs an educated Prime Minister. If he (Modi) could have understood the meaning of education, he



would not have sent Manish Sisodia to jail... If PM Modi was a real patriot, he would not

send the person who brought revolution in Delhi's education system to jail," Kejriwal said while addressing public gathering in Bhopal.

Hitting out at the BJP, the AAP leader said that in the last 20 years of the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh, "people have seen one after another scam - Vyapam, e-tendering, paper leaks. This what the BJP has

done in Madhya Pradesh during its 20 years of rule." "Not even a single BJP MLA has been sent to jail despite so much corruption taking place in the state during the last 20 years," Kejriwal asserted, adding that the people of the state are "fed up with so-called 'mama' (Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan) and now they also want a change here like in Delhi and Punjab".

Iran pushes for faster execution of Chabahar port project and oil exports to India



NEW DELHI: Iran has strongly proposed for a quicker implementation of the Chabahar port project and has asked for resumption of export of crude oil to India. It has also urged for faster use of the facility by India to send various shipments saying the key transit hub will benefit both the countries. Iranian Ambassador Iradj Elahi cited New Delhi not succumbing under pressure by the Western powers to not continue procurement of petroleum products from Russia following the Ukraine crisis. Elahi hence also sought resumption of import of crude oil by India from Iran. India stopped procurement of crude oil from Iran after the US did not continue with sanction waivers to India and several other countries.

Second Education Working Group (EdWG) meeting concludes in Amritsar Punjab

BROAD CONSENSUS ON KEY AREAS SUCH AS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COLLABORATION, FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

The three days the G20 EdWG meeting which held its deliberations in Amritsar, Punjab from 15th March-17th March, focussed on 'Strengthening research and promoting innovation through richer collaborations' along with exhaustive discussions on the other 3 priority areas of Building Capacities, Promoting Life-long learning in context of Future of work, 'Ensuring Foundational Literacy and Numeracy especially in the context of blended learning' and 'Making Tech-enabled learning more inclusive, qualitative and collaborative at every level'. The Indian Chair of the G20 Ed-



ucation Working Group (EdWG) and Union Secretary, Higher Education, K. Sanjay Murthy during closing remarks highlighted the importance of community's involvement in student education and urgency of greater collaboration and partnership. G20 platform must create new relations beyond bilateral and think multilaterally. He said "India aims to take the documentation of this Education Working Group Meetings to all Higher Education Institutions to ensure that best practices are implemented at the administrative level and the final compendium brings a great impact on all institutions". Talking to Media after the conclusion of the three day 2nd EdWG meeting in which 58 delegates from 28 member & invitee countries and international organizations participated, K. Sanjay Murthy said "We have high hopes for faster collaboration across higher education institutions to create workable solutions to meet the Sustainable Development Goals." Alternate India Chair, Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, School Education said that "Every participating nation in the discussion forum is on the same page for leveraging technology and joyful approach for achieving Foundational learning and Numeracy."

Opposition -govt logjam over Rahul vs Adani likely to continue in Parliament

NEW DELHI: The opposition will on Friday press for the demand of a JPC in the Adani-Hindenburg row while the BJP is demanding an apology from the former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on his remarks in London.



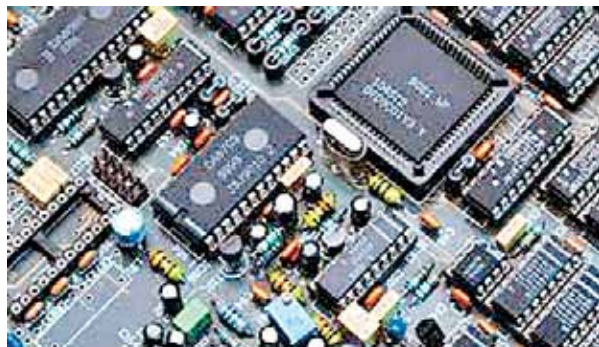
The opposition MPs have moved suspension of business notices in the Rajya Sabha under rule 267 and adjournment notice in the Lok Sabha. The Congress-led opposition is trying to corner the government. The BJP is also not letting the issue to die down, and the treasury benches have been questioning Rahul Gandhi over his London speech and demanding an apology. Jairam Ramesh, the Congress General In-charge said, "opposition is united on the demand of JPC and anything contrary to this is incorrect."

India requires 13,000 talent resources for chip manufacturing by 2027

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Rural Development on Thursday signed an MoU to transform the rural youth into economically independent and globally relevant workforce.

The MoU was signed at Transport Bhawan by Manoj Nesari, Advisor, Ministry of Ayush, and Karma Zimpa Bhutia, Joint Secretary, Rural Skills, Ministry of Rural Development in the presence of Union Minister of Ayush Sarbananda Sonowal and Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Panchayati Raj.

Minister of State for Ayush, Munjapara Mahendrabhai Kalubhai, Secretary Ayush, Rajesh Kotecha, Pramod Kumar Pathak, Special Secretary Ministry of Ayush and Shailesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Prof. (Dr) Tanuja Manoj Nesari, Chairperson of Ayush Sub Sector Skill Council and Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda were also present at the occa-



sion. Sarbananda Sonowal welcomed the Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh and said that both the ministries will collaborate in boosting the spirit of self-employment. Singh in his speech praised the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ayush Ministry for the growth seen in the Ayush sector, which scaled from \$3 billion in 2014 to \$19 billion in the year 2022. The minister also thanked PM Modi for scaling and giving the opportunity. Talking about DDU-GKY

(Deen Dayal Upadhyay-Grameen Kaushal Yojana, he said that he would empower self help groups of women and the collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush will help the achieving growth in self-employment and skill development. Speaking on the occasion, Director of All India Institute of Ayurveda Prof (Dr) Tanuja Manoj Nesari said that the collaboration between both the ministries will play an important role in enhancing the skill and service sector related to Ayurveda.

Budget Session : Delhi LG lists out government achievements, speech interrupted by slogan shouting

FW DESK
New Delhi

The budget session of the Delhi Assembly commenced on Friday with the maiden address of Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, who listed out various achievements of the government and hoped that the national capital becomes a progressive global city one day.

His address was interrupted as BJP legislators raised slogans demanding Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's resignation over alleged corruption in the now-scrapped excise policy and AAP legislators opposing them.

To bring order to the house, Speaker Ram Niwas Goel marshalled out three BJP MLAs for interrupting the LG. Other party legislators too walked out of the assembly shortly after.

"Delhi being a national capital attends to people from all parts of the country and from all walks of life, coming to work and making Delhi their home. My government seeks to fulfil their aspirations, through sincere responsiveness and efforts. I am sure that with the help and cooperation of the members of this august house we shall over-

come challenges and transform Delhi into a modern, progressive and global city," he said.

The LG said quality education supported by complementary infrastructure has been the professed goal of the government. "As a result of the government's focused attention on improving the quality of education, the students of Delhi have done exceedingly well in the sphere of education. Government schools recorded pass percentage of 98 per cent and 97 per cent at classes 12th and 10th level respectively, during the academic session 2021-22," he said.

Listing out other education initiatives, he said the Delhi Board of School Education has started functioning in 41 schools of the Delhi government. In next few years, the scope of coverage will be extended to the willing private schools also, he said.

To equip children of Class 3-9 with basic reading and writing skills, 'Mission Buniyaad' programme was conducted and is still continuing to fill the learning gap and to recover the learning loss due to Covid-19, he said.

He also spoke about a "hap-



piness curriculum" and the government's vision to convert all classrooms into digital classrooms within five years. 'Project Voices' is being launched in all schools for students of Class 3-12 for sharing thoughts through speaking while the government has decided to setup a boarding school for underprivi-

leged children, he said.

Sharing the initiatives in the sector of higher education, he said the Delhi Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research University has added a centre of excellence 'Centre for Precision Medicine' with ultra-modern facilities. It will help in research in RT-PCR, genome study etc.

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic adversely impacted the demand and supply of goods and services in the economy, he said that Delhi has remained an island of robust economic fundamentals. The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Delhi at current prices increased from Rs 6,16,085 crores in 2016-17 to Rs 9,23,967 crores during 2021-22, registering a growth of 50 per cent.

"The contribution of Delhi to national GDP (at current prices) is 4.22 per cent as compared to its share of 1.52 per cent in the total population of the country. The per capita income of Delhi at current prices is estimated at Rs 4,01,982 during 2021-22 registering an increase of 16.81 per cent as compared to Rs 3,44,136 during 2020-21," he said.

Listing out the government's initiatives in the direction of providing social security, he said that an MoU has been signed with UN Women to provide technical support to the city government to strengthen the government's ongoing efforts on eliminating violence and discrimination against women. Under Jai Bhim Mukhya-

mantri Pratibha Vikas Yojana 38 more coaching institutes have been taken on panel of Delhi Government, he said. While talking about infrastructure developments, he said 1.35 lakh CCTV cameras have been installed throughout Delhi and approximately 20,000 classrooms have been inaugurated, while sharing that all the future buildings will be net zero green building with zero waste.

Talking about health, which is one of the priority areas of the AAP dispensation, he said new hospitals at Jwalapuri, Siraspur, Madipur and Vikaspuri are being constructed while remodeling of 19 existing Hospitals has also been done. "Five new hospitals at Bindapur, Baprola, Deendarapur, Keshavpuram and Sangam Vihar are at planning stage. More than 16,000 beds will be added after completion of new hospitals and remodelling of the hospitals," he said.

The Health Information Management System (HIMS) project is in implementation phase, he said, adding that pilot project is being done in two hospitals and later the project will be scaled up to all hospitals and healthcare institutions.

BJP trying to topple Delhi government through no-confidence motion: AAP

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday alleged that Bharatiya Janata party is trying to topple its government through bringing a motion of no-confidence in the Delhi Assembly.

Addressing the media, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha said that the BJP was trying to topple the AAP government in Delhi by introducing a no-confidence motion.

"The BJP wants to topple Delhi's Kejriwal government by bringing in a no-confidence motion in the Delhi Assembly. BJP is now luring and threatening AAP MLAs to join their party. BJP has also approached several AAP MLAs to support the no-confidence motion," he claimed.

The AAP leader further claimed that the BJP is giving two options to the MLAs -- either join the party or probe agency ED and CBI will get after them.

"BJP is giving these two options to many of our MLAs and is clearly luring them to leave Arvind Kejriwal and join the BJP so that they can defeat Kejriwal's government with the help of this no-confidence motion," Chadha claimed.

While speaking on the recent arrest of Kiran Patel, who was impersonating as the additional director of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), AAP leader said,



"A normal party worker from BJP's Gujarat unit, Kiranbhai Patel, had identified himself as the additional director of the PMO and had been staying in Kashmir for last six months...He had been calling meeting of the security departments, transferring IAS officers...If you (BJP) want to investigate then probe this type of snooping."

While responding to the latest FIR filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against Sisodia for allegedly keeping tabs on the opposition parties and the government officials among others. The CBI has accused Sisodia of collecting 'political intelligence' through the Delhi government department's 'Feedback Unit' that was allegedly set up in 2015.

Chadha said that the BJP and central government should orient their probe agency's focus on those who are misusing the central agencies, security forces and police in the name of the central government rather than Sisodia and others.

Ambala police nabbed three drugs smuggler, seized 4 kg opium



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

CIA Staff-I of Ambala police on a secret clue that a group of drug smugglers carrying stocks was in the town for supply of drugs. Addressing media persons SP Ambala Jashandeep Singh Arandhawa said that police arrested three persons Santosh Kumar, rajesh Kumar and Sonu Kumar all hailing from Bihar and during search recovered 4 kg opium from the during raid at T-point of the officer of Divisional Railway Offices on National Highway No. 44. SP said that arrested accused were produced in the court today and remanded to police custody for six days. The arrested accused admitted that they had drugs opium from Bihar for supply in the town. He said that since January 01 this year Ambala police have arrested 40 drug suppliers and registered 27 cases.

Amritsar hosts the 2nd meeting of the G20 Education Working Group under India's G20 Presidency

CONSENSUS REGARDING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COLLABORATION, FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY & NUMERACY AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WERE ACHIEVED

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Day two of the three-day G20 EdWG event at Amritsar was centred around the priority areas 'Strengthening research and promoting innovation through collaboration', 'Building Capacities, Promoting Life-long learning in context of Future of work' and 'Ensuring Foundational Literacy and Numeracy especially in the context of blended learning'.

The meeting was chaired by India Chair K. Sanjay Murthy, Secretary Higher Education, with Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, School Education and Literacy, and Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship as Alternate Chairs. The meeting also included presentations from Research Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNICEF.

The event brought together all G20 member countries, in-



cluded countries and international organisations to discuss the importance of knowledge sharing and collaboration to generate solutions to common global challenges. The G20 countries emphasized on identifying and addressing problems that inhibit effective academic research collaborations. It was also acknowledged that, in order to create a multiplier effect for a larger and more inclusive global advantage of our accumulated knowledge and innovation skills, there is now a need for stronger collaboration among countries in research and innovation. Some of the topics covered included developing a framework for joint collaboration for the exchange of researchers and students, international research, data privacy, and other ethical concerns. During the meeting, the delegates also em-

phasised gender equality and gender inclusion in research arena, as well as improved grassroots participation, in order to bridge the gap between academia, the private sector, and society.

Additionally, in the second and third sessions, the discussion centred around use of Blended learning to achieve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, the importance of Teacher Training to induce creativity in classroom teaching by designing learning materials and development of skill development frameworks. Collaboration was again a key point of the session with discussions revolving around building partnerships with wider stakeholders including industry to create opportunities for vocational learning for students to bridge the skill gaps and imbalances across G20 nations.

Four Bambiha gang shooters planning to kill 2 Punjabi singers arrested



SATISH HANDA

The operations cell of Chandigarh Police arrested four members of the Davinder Bambiha gang also working on the tips of few gangsters in Jammu-Kashmir to spread terrorism during preliminary police investigation admitted that they were planning to kill two Punjabi singers Babbu Maan and Mankirat Aulakh to avenge killing of singer Sidhu Moosewala who was shot dead on May 29 last year at Mansa in Punjab. The four arrested shooters were identified as Mannu Batta (29) a resident of Budail in Chandigarh, Aman Kumar alias Vikki (29) a resident of Barwala in Panchkula district, Sanjiv alias Sanju (23) a resident of village Maloya in Chandigarh and Kamaldeep alias Kimmi (26). They told police that they were in touch with a gang operating in Jammu-Kashmir to get a long range weapon AK-47 rifle for killing both Punjabi singers Maan and Aulakh. The four arrested accused during police remand also admitted their involvement in several extortion cases threatening hotel owners, running night clubs, property dealers and businessmen to collect ransom amount.

During police interrogation, the arrested accused revealed that they were also working for the gangster Lucky Patial and had fired a gun shot at Punjab singer Parmish Verma in April 2018, as such police registered a case against all four arrested accused under sections 384 (extortion), 386 (fear of death) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) besides a case under Arms Act was registered against them by Chandigarh police. The police also recovered four 0.32-bore sophisticated pistols, 23 live cartridges, three magazines and a Skoda car from the arrested accused. Investigation also revealed that Batta is running the private finance business and the remaining three arrested accused are running a Cafe in TDI Mall at Kharar.

Ketan Bansal SP and Mridul SP Operation told media persons that Police Inspector Amanjit Singh had received a secret information about the accused and arrested Mannu Batta, and recovered from him a -32 bore pistol and six live cartridges and a car. During police remand, arrested accused Aman alias Vikki disclosed that Prince Kurali presently living in Canada and Lalli presently residing in Malaysia are operating a gangster network in India while sitting abroad through WhatsApp and other social media platforms. He said that they had already arranged AK 47 rifles to kill both Punjabi singers Maan and Aulakh and were asked to collect the weapon from a Srinagar based gangster.

GNDU welcomes international, national speakers and delegates of Youth (Y-20) Consultation Summit

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Various international and national speakers will reach in the Guru Nanak Dev University tomorrow i.e. on March 14 to participate in Youth 20 (Y-20) Consultation Summit which is a platform for discussion on the theme of Future of Work: Industry 4.0 Innovation and 21st Century Skills. Some of the panelists have already reached the University campus.

In a statement issued here today, stated that agritech and food security, Emerging Global Job Opportunities through International Relations, Research in Nanotechnology, Material Science on Industry 4.0 and Creation of Skilled Workforce for Sustainable Built Environment in Real Estate Market will be the key points to be discussed by the experts during this summit, said Prof. Hardeep Singh, Nodel Officer.

During this mega event there would be different panels where panelists of national and international fame will interact with youth with their expertise views during March 14, 15 and 16 in the various venues of the



Guru Nanak Dev University. The main event would be held in the newly built state of art Golden Jubilee Convention Centre of the University, constructed recently under the visionary supervision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Jaspal Singh Sandhu.

The first panel discussion will be on Agritech and food security. Similarly, Second panel discussion will focus on Emerging Global Job Opportunities through International Relations. The Third panel discussion will focus on Research in Nanotechnology, Material Science on Industry 4.0 and the fourth panel discussion will be focused on Creation of Skilled Workforce for a Sustainable Built Environment in the Real Estate Market.

Prof. Jaspal Singh Sandhu will welcome the national and international panelists, guests and delegates in the Inaugural session which will be held in Golden Jubilee Convention Centre of the University.

7 directors of company booked allegedly cheated hundreds investors assuring heavy profits

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Barara police station in Ambala district registered a cheating case against a firm developing commercial as well as residential complexes in highly advertised for a new project to develop Dholera Smart City in Gujarat state in media as well as holding seminars which also opened an office at Barara in Ambala district having large number of ex-army persons and retired government employees. The managing director of the firm introduced himself



as an army serviceman attempted to attract investors mostly retired from army as well as government services trying to invest their money to get heavy returns were much impressed by making investment in this proposed Dholera a \$3 billion, 10-year project designed to be the

world's first completely sustainable smart city a safe, clean and high-tech living environment project providing all facilities in old age, besides an attractive proposal for the investors.

SHO Barara police station told media persons that a case was reg-

istered against seven directors of the firm Nexa Evergreen Private Limited on the complaint of Diler Singh a resident of Barara who invested huge amount of money on the assurance of heavy return on his investment, followed by the police station Barara received large number of complaints from different persons invested in this project who told that the firms had assured them double money on their investment in a short period by holding several seminars in the area and even took investors to the site of proposed complex in Gujarat free of cost.

Bandi Sikhs; Prisoners of Politics or Prisoners of Perception

RAVINDER SINGH

What is being heralded as the biggest travesty of justice in modern history of Punjab, the issue of release of Bandi Singhs has once again stirred a storm of emotions in minds of Punjabis.

In recent times, Punjab has witnessed emotionally charged protests demanding the release of Bandi Singhs or Sikh Prisoners in various jails of the country. These prisoners have been languishing in these jails of the country for three decades despite having served their full sentences. Many argue that thirty years in prison is good enough time to render anyone mentally, physically and emotionally unfit and unstable. The contention among supporters of the release of Bandi Sikhs is

that they had been purposely incarcerated by the Central Government. However, time and again various agencies have reiterated that the release of these prisoners would threaten the law and order of Punjab and the country as a whole.

It is important to recognize here that these Sikh prisoners were convicted for their supposed involvement in militancy in Punjab. According to activist, Jaspal Singh Manjhpur, 20 Bandi Sikhs are still in jail. In recent times, various political parties have rattled sabres with each other on this issue. However, every party seems to be beating around the same old rhetoric of being sympathetic with the prisoners and the issue, so as to not upset the influential Sikh voter bank across Punjab



and elsewhere in the country.

Not to forget that a sizeable support for the movement also seems to be trickling down from a large chunk of non-resident Indian Sikhs based in countries such as Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and various parts of Europe.

In November 2022, The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee or (SGPC)

launched a massive signature campaign to gather support for the release of the Bandi Sikh prisoners, which continues even to this date. On the international arena, while Sikhs have lobbied hard to gather more support for the movement, there have also been major setbacks to the momentum and the image of Sikhs due to adverse comments made by a handful of promi-

nent international statesmen and politicians. Former British Home Secretary Priti Patel annoyed millions of Sikhs worldwide when she said that Sikh separatist extremism had caused considerable tensions in recent years.

The Sikh federation of UK immediately demanded an apology from Patel for her unsubstantiated statement saying Sikhs were a role model community in the UK and had made a massive positive contribution to Britain especially during the pandemic. Moreover, the federation insisted that Patel either be sacked or resign since her fondness for India's ruling party BJP and her connections to it, were openly known to all. The BJP and various Sikh organizations have been at loggerheads

with each other on numerous issues such as the Farmer's act introduced by the government.

Meanwhile, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee has already pledged to take the issue of the imprisoned Bandi Sikhs to the UNO and International Court of Justice, some believe that the fight is not going to be fraught with challenges. The release of convicted rapist and self-styled Guru and chief of the Dera Sacha Sauda, Ram Rahim Singh who has numerous criminal cases registered against him including that of murder and parole, and who has been granted parole by Indian courts, has further fueled unrest and mistrust among the Sikh community that has been labouring hard for the release of Bandi Sikh prisoners.

Be 'Ambassadors of Glorious Heritage, peace, progress and prosperity' of the state across the Globe: Punjab CM to delegates of G-20 summit

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday exhorted the visiting delegates of G-20 summit to be the 'ambassadors of glorious heritage, peace, progress and prosperity' of the state across the globe.

The Chief Minister, who hosted the dinner for the delegates in the precincts of Gobindgarh Fort, said that Punjab was fortunate to have got the opportunity to host these dignitaries in the state during the G-20 summit. He expressed hope that the visiting dignitaries had a comfortable stay in the state during their visit and had enjoyed the warm hospitality of the state. Bhagwant Mann urged the dignitaries to be the 'ambassadors of glori-



ous heritage, peace, progress and prosperity' of the state in every nook and corner of the world.

He said that Punjab is the sacred land of great Gurus, saints, seers and prophets. Bhagwant Mann said that ever since inception Punjab had remained the cradle

of Indian civilization and culture. He said that right from heralding an era of 'green revolution' to safeguarding the frontiers of the country valiantly, the Punjabis have left no stone unturned to serve the country in their own humble way. The Chief Minister apprised

the delegates that this blessed land has produced several sons of soil who by their sheer dint of hard work and dedication have carved a niche for themselves in every sphere. He said that besides being the nation's food bowl Punjab also has a distinction of producing several renowned entrepreneurs and industrialists. Mann said that it is a matter of great pride and honor for us that hardworking Punjabis who are known across the globe for their enterprising skill, resilience and acumen since long have made enormous contribution towards the socio economic development not only in their state, country but also globally adding that the visiting dignitaries should showcase the immense contribution of Punjabis across the globe.

NIA conducts raids across Kashmir related to a militancy case



FW DESK

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) searched a number of places in Kashmir on Tuesday as part of an investigation into a case involving terrorist activity, according to officials.

The searches were conducted in Srinagar and the south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, and Kulgam.

"Searches were carried out in a case registered by NIA in Jammu last year," they claimed.

The case relates to a criminal conspiracy for carrying out terrorist and subversive actions that was hatched by the cadres, OGWs, and affiliates of numerous organisations that are outlawed, as well as their offshoots that operate under various aliases at the direction of their Pakistani masters.

Two pilots die after Army helicopter crashes in Arunachal Pradesh



ITANAGAR: Two pilots on board a Cheetah helicopter of the Army were killed when it crashed near Mandala in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday morning, a defence spokesperson said.

The deceased officers have been identified as Lt Colonel VVB Reddy and his co-pilot Major Jayanth A, he said. Defence spokesperson Lt Colonel Mahendra Rawat said in Guwahati that the helicopter was on an operational sortie from Missamari in Assam's Sonitpur district to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.

The flight encountered "inconducive weather" and was returning to Missamari when it crashed, he said. "The helicopter lost contact with Air Traffic Control (ATC) around 9.15 am. Five search parties of the Indian Army, SSB and ITBP were immediately launched. The wreckage of the aircraft was found near Banglajap east village of Mandala," Rawat said. "A Court of Inquiry is ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident," he added. Rohit Rajbir Singh, the superintendent of police, Special Investigation Cell (SIC), said villagers had found the crashed chopper ablaze in Dirang, and informed district officials. "Villagers from Banglajap at Dirang located the chopper around 12.30 pm," Singh said. The area has no mobile connectivity and the weather is extremely foggy with visibility as low as five meters, he said to media.

G-20 summit: Amritsar commissionerate police impose ban on flying drones, unmanned aerial vehicles

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Keeping in view of the ongoing G-20 Summit, the Amritsar Commissionerate Police on Wednesday banned flying drones and unmanned aerial vehicles in the entire Commissionerate area from March 14 to March 21, 2023. The ban also includes the venues of G-20 Education Working Group meetings, the places where the delegates are staying and the routes. Notably, Punjab is hosting the second Education Working



Group (Ed WG) from March 15-17 and 28 G-20 member

countries, guest countries and invited organisations (OECD,

BJP, Congress intensify Campaign before Karnataka polls

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bangalore

As assembly polls expected to be declared within a fortnight, both the governing BJP and principal opposition congress have intensified efforts to build perceptions, ahead of the poll battle, both are claiming success in their endeavours.

Meantime former BJP MLC Mohan Limbikai who once served as legal advisor to former chief minister B S Yediyurappa joined congress. While parties have much to do before the actual battle, including selection of candidates they are vying to construct narratives around issues that they think will catch voters attention. Yattras, which all three parties, are holding are efforts in this direction.

Prime Minister Modi has visited Karnataka six times since January and will lead rally in Davanagere on March 25, where the on going Janasankalpa Yatra will culmi-



nate. Putting up a spirited pre-poll campaign led by PM Modi, BJP is going all out by touting benefits of its 'double engine government' (same party ruling at the Centre and state) and is trying to give a glimpse of development that state can dream of with back-to-back inaugurations of infrastructure projects throughout the state.

As per BJP sources "Going by perceptions, we are far ahead of other parties as the charismatic

presence of Modi and Union Home minister Amit Shah has added to the flavour of the election season". However, Congress refused to concede, While the party is claiming that the announcement of three poll promises—200 units of free electricity Rs 2,000 in cash to home makers, and 10kg of free rice—have given it a head-start, functionaries insist that their campaign against corruption has struck a chord with voters.

SC notice to MP govt on bail plea of woman with PFI links arrested for filming Indore court proceedings

The Supreme Court sought the Madhya Pradesh government's response on a bail plea of a 30-year-old woman who was arrested for filming the proceedings of a court during a hearing in Indore district. Police officials have alleged the woman has links with the banned group Popular Front of India (PFI). A bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M Trivedi issued notice to the state government on Sonu Mansuri's plea.

At the outset, the bench expressed disinclination to entertain the matter and asked the lawyer appearing for the petitioner to approach the Madhya Pradesh High Court. "This business of getting everything transferred to Delhi should stop. Why don't you go to the high court," the bench said. Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that the accused was in custody for over two months and no lawyer is being allowed to appear for her. Dave said the top court has a duty to intervene when the fundamental right of a citizen is violated.

The apex court then issued notice in the matter and posted the case for hearing on March 20. Mansuri, who was arrested on January 28, had told the police that an advocate had asked her to make the video to be sent to the Islamic group PFI and she was given Rs 3 lakh for the work. During the hearing of a case related to Bajrang Dal leader Tanu Sharma, his advocates Amit Pandey and Sunil Vishwakarma noticed the woman shooting the video in court room no. 42 of Indore district court, police had said.

Mansuri, a resident of Indore, claimed before the police that senior advocate Noorjahan Khan had given her the task of making the video to be sent across to the PFI, the official had said. The woman also told the police that she was given Rs 3 lakh for this work, the police official had said, adding the money has been recovered. The Centre had in September 2022 banned the PFI and several of its associates for five years under a stringent anti-terror law, accusing them of having "links" with global terror groups like ISIS and trying to spread communal hatred in the country.

People must raise voice against those who defame India: Rijiju attacks Rahul



DELHI: Union Law minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his London speech, and said that people must raise their voice against those who defame India.

Speaking to the media, Rijiju said, "Rahul Gandhi must apologise for what he said in his London seminar. He has insulted our democracy, judiciary & nation. We must raise our voice against those who speak against our nation."

He further said, "If Rahul Gandhi says something and Congress gets into trouble because of that, we have nothing to do with it. But if he defames our country, then as the citizens of this country, we can't be quiet."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, while addressing a lecture at Cambridge

University in London recently, said, "Everybody knows and it's been in the news a lot that Indian democracy is under pressure and under attack. I am an Opposition leader in India, we are navigating that (Opposition) space. The institutional framework which is required for a democratic Parliament, free press, the judiciary, just the idea of mobilisation, moving around all are getting constrained. So, we are facing an attack on the basic structure of Indian democracy."

Amid the controversy, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will attend Parliament on Thursday and is likely to address the controversy over his comments in London. The Congress has rejected the ruling BJP's call for an apology by Rahul Gandhi.

Rahul has become a permanent part of anti-nationalist toolkit: JP Nadda

DELHI: Intensifying the attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his statement at Cambridge University about India, BJP National President J.P. Nadda said that Rahul Gandhi has become "a permanent part of this anti-nationalist toolkit."

Addressing media this morning, Nadda said: "It's unfortunate that the Congress party is indulging in anti-national activities. After being repeatedly rejected by the nation, Rahul Gandhi has now become a permanent part of this anti-nationalist toolkit."

He further said: "At a time when India is becoming the 5th



largest economy in the world and G20 meetings are being held here, Rahul Gandhi on foreign soil is insulting the nation and the Parliament."

He also called out on Rahul Gandhi for insulting the government of majority and 130 crore

people of India. He said: "Rahul Gandhi is also insulting the elected majority government and 130 crore Indians. What is this if not strengthening the traitors? Rahul Gandhi on foreign soil said that democracy is finished in India and Europe and US should intervene. What could be more shameful than this?"

Seeking Rahul's apology, Nadda said: "Rahul Gandhi must apologise...In India's history since Independence, even in most difficult times, none of India's leaders ever appealed to foreign powers to act against the Indian government. This is a very

UNESCO, and UNICEF) will be participating in the 3-day event consisting of seminar/exhibition and working group meetings. The L20 meeting on labour is scheduled to be held on March 19-20.

Commissioner of Police (CP) Amritsar Naunihal Singh said that the venues of meetings, the places of stay and routes have been declared red zones and flying of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles have been prohibited to beef up the security and to prevent any untoward incident from Airborne entities.

serious matter in independent India's history."

BJP has been targeting Rahul Gandhi ever since he made statements in London about India and its democracy. BJP is also demanding his apology and warned that if Rahul doesn't apologise, BJP will run a nationwide campaign against him.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, while giving a lecture at Cambridge University in the U.K. recently, said: "Everybody knows and it's been in the news a lot that Indian democracy is under pressure and under attack.

Significant rise in number of EVM's ballot units, control units

NEW DELHI: The total number of control units and ballot units has increased significantly since 2014. Control Units and Ballot units are constituents of electronic voting machines (EVM).

Currently there are 31.03 lakh ballot units (BU) and 22.15 control units (CU) available in the country. While the number of BUs and CUs in 2014 was 3.82 lakh and 2.50 lakh it increased to 13.95 BUs and 10.56 CUs in

2018. There are 13.26 lakh BUs and 9.09 lakh CUs which are new procurement or under production. The above information was given by the Ministry of Law and Justice in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has informed that EVMs and VVPATs are designed and manufactured indigenously by Bharat Electronic Limited (M/s. BEL) (PSU under the Ministry of Defence,



Govt. of India) and Electronic Corporation of India Limited (M/s. ECIL) (PSU under the Department of Atomic Energy, Govt. of India). Paper Roll of

the VVPAT is procured by the States/UTs from the manufacturers including M/s. BEL and M/s. ECIL, said the reply.

The ECI has informed that presently, it is using the M-3 Model of EVMs and VVPATs.

In an election petition filed in Karnataka High Court in the matter of Michael B. Fernandes vs. C.K. Jaffer Sharief, 2004 SCC online Kar 72, the Hon'ble Court had observed that EVMs are tamper proof and there is

no possibility of manipulation of mischief at the instance of anyone, added the reply.

As per the Election Commission, an EVM is designed with two units, the control unit and the balloting unit. These units are joined together by a cable. The control unit of the EVM is kept with the presiding officer or the polling officer. The balloting unit is kept within the voting compartment for electors to cast their votes.

ACREX India 2023 highlighting Cool eco-Solutions amidst Climate Change

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

While Climate Change is rocking the world through unexplained heat waves, wildfires, rising oceans and land submergence, environmentally-sustainable technologies and efforts are being rushed in to fill the breach in ensuring human comfort globally.

One such effort is "ACREX India" whose 22nd edition three-day event - themed "Engineering Towards Net Zero" - began in Mumbai recently bringing together participation of over 450 global exhibitors and 40 countries, besides over 35,000 visitors. N S Chandrasekhar, National President, ISHRAE, said that this two-year-Covid-delayed exhibition would witness products, system solutions and innovations by startups with the commitment to share greater awareness about energy conservation, artificial intelligence and IOT with the Indian HVAC industry.

"While the world is witnessing global warming and climate change, the HVAC industry is working towards ensuring that it does not go into the era of non-sustainability," he said, adding that ISHRAE is focusing on

new innovations through its numerous chapters in India, Bangladesh, UAE and Qatar.

Noting that barely 4% of the residential sector is using air-conditioning, the percentage of usage is expected to grow due to India's rapid urbanization and growing incomes alongside even factory workers now demanding its usage, he said while reiterating that ISHRAE highlighted the HVAC industry's responsibility in achieving a "decarbonized India by 2070" clarion call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Noting that ISHRAE has adopted "Prithvi Paryavaran Parivartan" towards caring for the environment, he said its focus would steer towards - besides business - the green commitments for the future of this industry. "We are bound by the Montreal Protocol and the R2 refrigerant is on its way out with December 31 being the final date," he said.

While the HVAC industry's mantra is "energy-efficient products," it is emphasizing on sustainable buildings and greater innovation in the industry's product portfolio since buildings are contributing to 40% of energy-guzzling. Describing ACREX as the



largest HVAC&R industry show in South Asia and 6th largest in the world, Amitabha Sur, Chair, ACREX National Steering Committee, said that this industry is poised to grow by 6 times its current size in the next decade. "India is committed to achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2070 and the HVAC&R industry will play an important role in reducing its carbon footprint," he said.

Noting that the post-COVID era is witnessing buildings becoming more health-conscious alongside also being energy-efficient, he said ACREX 2023 provided the perfect platform for emerging technologies in this

industry based on the relevant market trends, which is foreseeing growth of residential air-conditioning from 4% to 14%.

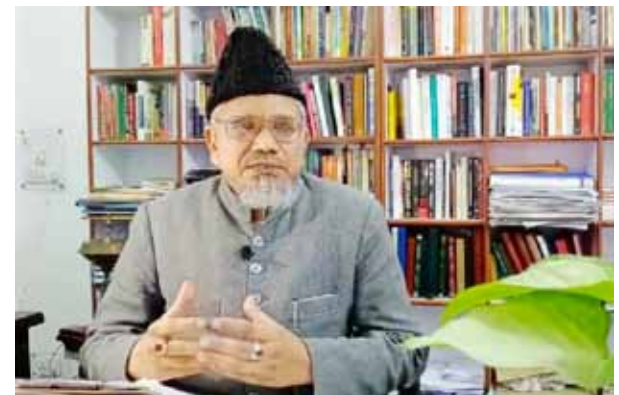
Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India, noted that ACREX India's potential to positively boost the industry highlighted the US\$ 1.45 Trillion government investment in infra projects over the next five years being harnessed through this buyer-seller platform. "More than business, ACREX India 2023 is bringing together various JVAC industry stakeholders, organizing conferences by industry stalwarts, "Acex Awards of Excellence"

and "ACREX Hall of Fame" to inspire and build India's sustainable future.

ACREX 2023 will be featuring insightful workshops, seminars for the industry to carve out a medium-to-long term blueprint for the HVAC stakeholders and identify various growth drivers and inhibitors within it, besides conferences with panel discussion and presentations on topic like "Engineering Towards Zero," "Role of HVAC in Net Zero Plan of India," "Design Challenges for Large-Scale Residential," "Making Commercial Buildings Carbon Neutral the IOT Way."

One seminar witnessed discussions by eminent speakers on an important topic: "Landscape of current refrigerant use and disposal in India, barriers and priorities." One of the recurrent concerns for the consumer durables industry is that the vast potential of creating demand for these goods has not been fully realized in India. While the Union Budget announcement of a 33% expansion of the capital expenditure is a welcome change for unlocking this industry's potential, an initiative like ACREX is providing a one-stop platform for a much-needed boost.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind opposes same-sex marriages



NEW DELHI: Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has (JIH) expressed its opposition to same-sex marriages.

In a media statement, JIH Vice-President Prof. Salim Engineer said, "the JIH is opposed to same-sex marriages. We feel that the correct and universally accepted meaning of marriage refers to the marriage between a man and a woman. Any tampering therein would go against our civilizational values as well as disturb the many personal laws of the country." He held that the JIH was also opposed to the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the IPC, which permitted the gay sex among consenting adults.

Agreeing with the government's position regarding same-sex marriages as expressed in its affidavit in the Supreme Court of India, in response to the petitions seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages, Prof. Salim has asserted that JIH firmly believes in the fundamental rights of all citizens and is a strong advocate of freedom and minority rights. However, he added, "we wish to remind fellow citizens that with freedom comes moral responsibility, and no society can accept crimes,

The JIH is opposed to same-sex marriages. We feel that the correct and universally accepted meaning of marriage refers to the marriage between a man and a woman"

and anarchy in the name of freedom and personal liberty. We feel that allowing and promoting same-sex marriages will pose a great danger to the well-entrenched family system in society. It will violate the rights of men and women and damage the moral fibre of society."

The JIH Vice-President has appealed to the citizens, the government and all political parties to save the country from falling into sexual anarchy, perversion, and deviation.

Recession risks loom as exports decline again

India's merchandise exports declined for the third time in five months during February, causing concerns for the country's economy. The fall in exports by 8.8% from a year ago, amounting to \$33.8 billion, was primarily due to a 29% collapse in oil exports and a decline in chemical and engineering goods outflows. This decline was more significant than the one recorded in October 2022, which is alarming for India, given the present scenario of a recessionary trend in major parts of the world. Apart from the decline in oil and chemical shipments, 13 more of India's top 30 export items also experienced a downturn, indicating the impact of global demand on the Indian economy. Furthermore, the drop in imports by 8.2% in February and the lowest import bill in almost a year (\$51.3 billion) does not bode well for domestic demand, which was expected to insulate the economy from global shocks. Although the government is looking to control inessential imports, this may not be enough to tackle the issue at hand. Instead, policymakers must support exporters to tap new markets and respond more quickly to fast-changing dynamics in key markets. It is crucial to avoid any missteps that could restrict consumer and investor choices. The present scenario of declining exports is especially concerning because of the sustained shrinkage of manufacturing for two quarters. A prolonged spell of reduced shipments could result in job losses in the factory and affect consumption. Therefore, the government must act promptly to address the issue before it spirals out of control. India's export decline in February should not be taken lightly, as it could have significant implications for the country's economy. The government must take immediate steps to support exporters, encourage the creation of new markets, and respond to rapidly changing dynamics in global markets. Delaying the rejig of the 2015-20 foreign trade policy any further could prove to be a costly mistake.

LETTERBOX

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Whenever you feel down and discouraged,
Just tell yourself
that things
will get better.
Keep Believing in Yourself!

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DR. HARVINDER KAUR

Promotion of Millet (Shree Ann) production in Haryana



At the request of the government of India, the United Nations is celebrating 2023 as the International Millet year and the government of India are actively promoting the production of millet. 72 countries supported the proposal of India and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Now, the Government of India has decided to celebrate IYOM, 2023 to make it a people's movement so that Indian millets, recipes, and value-added products are accepted globally. The govt's action plan focuses on strategies to enhance millet production, consumption, export, and branding. Millets are a group of small-seeded grasses that are widely grown as food crops in various parts of the world. In recent years, millets have gained popularity due to their nutritional value, especially in areas where people have limited access to food. Recently honourable P.M. has given it the name "Shree Ann".

Haryana is one of the states in India where millet is grown, and the government has taken several measures to promote its production. Haryana is primarily an agricultural state, and its economy is heavily dependent on the agriculture sector. Millets are grown in various parts of the state, including the districts of Karnal, Panipat, Jind, and Kaithal. MILLETS, including bajra and jowar, are among the theKhariff crops grown in dry and semi-dry areas of Mahendragarh, Bhiwani, Gurgaon, Hisar, Rohtak, Jhajjar, and Rewari districts of Haryana. A project of Rs 27 crore is being prepared to promote the cultivation of millets in Haryana in 2023.

According to Agriculture Department figures, Haryana has 483.1 hectares under

bajra during 2021-22. Jowar is sown mainly as fodder for cattle. A report by Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU), Hisar, mentions that the area under bajra has shown a decreasing trend even though its productivity has improved with the adoption of hybrid seeds. Bajra production fluctuates, depending upon the quantum of precipitation as large areas are confined to rainfed conditions. The HAU report states that bajra's average net returns in Haryana are Rs 1,336 per acre. millets were traditionally consumed across India, but due to the push given to food security during the Green Revolution in the 1960s, these were rendered 'orphaned crops'. Before the Green Revolution, millets made up around 40% of all cultivated grains; this share has dropped to around 20% over the years, compromising agricultural, nutritional, and environmental concerns. Its consumption and sowing area have declined, with farmers shifting to commercial crops, oilseeds, pulses, and maize. These crops are profitable and their production is supported by several policies through subsidized inputs, incentivized procurement, and inclusion in the public

distribution system. This has resulted in changes in dietary patterns with preferential consumption towards calorie-rich cereals, adding that due to reduced focus, millets suffered on the R&D front. The government of Haryana has taken several measures to promote the production of millet in the state. The government provides subsidies to farmers for the purchase of millet seeds, fertilizers, and machinery. This helps to reduce the cost of cultivation and encourages farmers to grow more millets. The government conducts training programs for farmers to educate them about the benefits of growing millets and the latest cultivation techniques. These programs are aimed at improving the productivity and quality of millet crops. The government provides financial assistance to farmers who grow millets under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and the National Food Security Mission (NFSM). This helps to promote the production of millet and improve the livelihoods of farmers. The government is promoting the use of millet in various food products, including biscuits, bread, and porridge. This helps to create a market for millets and increases

their demand. The government is setting up millet clusters in various parts of the state to promote the production of millet. These clusters provide farmers with access to seeds, machinery, and other inputs, as well as markets for their produce.

Millets are rich in nutrients and can help to address malnutrition and food insecurity in the state. The promotion of millet production can help to improve the nutritional status of the population, especially in rural Haryana. Millets are drought-resistant crops and are well-suited to the semi-arid climate of Haryana. The promotion of millet production can help to increase the resilience of the agriculture sector to climate change and drought. The promotion of millet production can help to generate income for farmers, especially in areas where other crops are not viable. Millets can be grown on marginal lands and require less water and fertilizer. According to data from the Directorate of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Haryana, the production of millet in the state has been on the rise in recent years.

The production of millet, especially pearl millet, has been increasing steadily in Haryana. The government's efforts to promote millet production through subsidies, training programs, financial assistance, and promotion of millet-based products seem to be paying off. Millets are an essential crop for Haryana's agricultural economy, and their products can help improve the population's nutritional status and generate income for farmers. We need to make people aware of the nutritional richness of millet. Their consumption can be increased by setting up processing units at the village level.

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



RK RAGHAVAN BELIEVES THOSE WITHIN THE SYSTEM HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO UPHOLD SOBRIETY AND OBJECTIVITY

To arrest or not to arrest?

The arrest of the former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia, by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently has once again created a debate about the fundamentals of law enforcement. Many have criticised the CBI's move as unwarranted — one that was actuated by political considerations. Unfortunately, only a few seem to understand the intricacies of the underlying provisions of the law on arrests. No premier investigating agency would dare resort to peremptory action such as an arrest of a prominent public figure without preparing the ground in the form of the evidence available in documents and oral statements. It is an entirely different matter to allege that the CBI does not proceed with the same zeal evident in the Sisodia case against many other public figures who also face serious corruption charges. It is also preposterous to believe that an agency such as the CBI will be totally free of bias or selectivity. However, to view every arrest of a political personality as malicious is illogical and difficult to substantiate.

Arrests involve a grave human rights issue, often ignored by many law enforcement officials. The debate on the rightness or otherwise of an arrest will remain unresolved. This writer faced the dilemma when he was heading the CBI more than two decades ago. A majority of his deputies fell in line with him whenever he advocated moderation, and advised that arrests should be made only when absolutely warranted. Even then the number of arrests was substantial causing him a lot of anguish. There were a few hawks in his team who disagreed with what they considered was his soft approach. They believed that an arrest was the only deterrent to dishonesty in public life, particularly when court processes were exasperatingly slow and more often than not, courts tended to be too liberal and unreason-



ably swift to give the benefit of doubt to an accused even if there were minor infirmities in the prosecution story. This writer recalls the statement of an English judge who, while acquitting an accused charged with murder, said: "I know it was you who committed the murder (of a TV celebrity), but I have no evidence to prove your guilt." This is the huge shortcoming in the law which demands absolute proof of crime and nothing less. Therefore, the question that many law enforcement officials ask is when the dice is loaded against enforcement officials, why cannot they use the only weapon (arrest) available to them without any dictates of law? Ask the most profound of jurists and the most sober and balanced crime investigators on whether any solid guidelines could be drawn to regulate arrest. In reply, they will hum and haw but not give a formula. The truth is it will be preposterous to attempt a prescription that fits every case. Taking advantage of this lacuna, many accused persons, when arrested, knock on the doors of the judiciary immediately after their arrest, seeking court intervention and clemency. A few judges at the lower echelons are taken in by the emotional-laden arguments of the defence lawyer and grant bail to the accused even when produced for the first time after an arrest. The Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 lays down the procedure to effect an arrest. Section 41 debunks the commonly held belief

that a police officer must necessarily obtain a warrant from a magistrate before making an arrest. Arrests can be made without a warrant provided the officer making it is convinced that there was no time to obtain one, and records the reasons in the general diary of the police station or the police branch (notified as a police station within the meaning of the Cr.P.C) concerned for not obtaining a warrant prior to the arrest.

The main stipulation of the law and judicially accepted norms are that the officer should not use any force to effect an arrest unless the accused himself chooses to be violent. There is also the constitutional provision (Article 22) that a detained person should be apprised of the grounds of arrest as soon as possible and be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours (excluding travel time) of taking him into custody. It is also incumbent on the official concerned to keep the closest relative of the accused informed that the person is in custody at a specified place.

Beyond these safeguards there is nothing in the Criminal Procedure Code that reduces the discretion of the police or law enforcement officials in making an arrest decision. This is where the shoe pinches. The investigator enjoys absolute freedom in opting for an arrest. It is his judgement alone that influences a decision. In the oft-quoted D.K. Basu vs State of West Bengal also, while the top court laid down the detailed procedures for an arrest, it did not in any way dilute the discretion of a law enforcement agency in making arrests.

This is why this writer is often exercised over some judges questioning the investigating officer over why an accused was arrested. In spite of this clear legal position, there are a few cases where the trial judges concerned questioned the prosecution as to why 'A' was arrested and why 'B' was not. In raising such a query, this writer believes that courts over-

step their authority. This is because in cases where they suspect that an arrest decision was mala fide, they (judges/magistrates) have the authority to initiate action against an investigating officer who they believe had definitely acted out of malice. This is the deterrent built into the system against arbitrary arrests and is the rationale behind a court-monitored investigation.

Given this scenario, how do we ensure that arrests are made in the most scrupulous manner? When the law is silent in the matter it is the basic responsibility of senior law enforcement officers, at the Centre and in the States to ensure sobriety and objectivity. This is difficult in a politically charged ambience where many governments bring enormous pressure on senior officers to dramatise the opportunity and make vindictive arrests to settle personal scores and influence public opinion. Officers investigating sensational cases involving high personages require protection and guidance by the higher echelons. If the latter fail to stand up to unethical pressure nothing can save us from blatantly unjust arrests. Senior officers will have to explain to those in government baying for dramatic action that an arrest will be made at the appropriate stage of the investigation after the gathering of solid evidence, and only on grounds of collecting further evidence through personal custodial interrogation endorsed by the competent judge. An arrest in any other circumstance will be subject to scrutiny by courts. And, where bias is writ large the latter will come down heavily on the investigating officer, with legal action taken against him if need be.

R.K. Raghavan is a former Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He is currently Professor of Criminal Justice and Policing at the Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana. Views are personal

BOOKS: REVIEW

New book delves into tensions, tussles and misunderstanding

The Laughter is a thought-provoking and challenging work of fiction that grapples with complex issues of power, identity, and privilege. Sonora Jha's writing is sharp, insightful, and unflinching in its examination of the ways in which individuals and institutions can perpetuate harmful and oppressive ideologies.

At its core, The Laughter is a character study of Dr. Oliver Harding, a man whose privilege and sense of entitlement blind him to the ways in which his actions and beliefs are shaped by systems of oppression. Jha deftly portrays the nuances of Oliver's character, from his initial fascination with Ruhaba and Adil to his growing sense of resentment and paranoia as the world around him changes. Through Oliver's perspective, Jha explores the intersections of race, gender, class, and reli-

gion, and the ways in which these identities shape our experiences of power and oppression. She also highlights the dangers of unchecked privilege, and the devastating consequences that can arise when individuals refuse to acknowledge their own complicity in systems of oppression.

Overall, The Laughter is a challenging and thought-provoking work of fiction that offers a searing critique of modern academia and the societal structures that shape our lives. It is a must-read for anyone interested in issues of power, privilege, and social justice, and a testament to the power of literature to spark important conversations and drive social change.

In the book written by Sonora Jha, Dr. Oliver Harding, a white male English professor, becomes fixated on his Pakistani Muslim colleague, Ruhaba Khan, after her arrival at their university. When

The Laughter is a challenging and thought-provoking work of fiction that offers a searing critique of modern academia and the societal structures that shape our lives

Ruhaba's nephew, Adil Alam, comes to stay with her, Oliver's attraction to them becomes an obsession. As protests for diversity on campus break out, Oliver's past begins to catch up with him, revealing the complexities behind his beliefs. "The Laughter" is a sharp exploration of privilege, radicalization, and modern academia, which challenges readers' assumptions. Celeste Ng, the New York Times bestselling author of "Our



The Laughter by Sonora Jha
By Sonora Jha
HarperVia
320 pages;
Rs2,462

Missing Hearts," describes the novel as "a deliciously sharp, mercilessly perceptive exploration of power" that "explores how 'otherness' is both fetishized and demonized, and what it means to love something—a person, a country—that does not love you back." Meanwhile, Omar El Akkad, the author of "American War" and "What Strange Paradise," calls it a "brilliant, dangerous novel," praising Jha's creation of "one of the most infuriating, compelling, and complex characters" he has read in a long time.

Kirkus Reviews gives "The Laughter" a starred review, describing it as a "powerful and darkly funny campus novel with an unexpected narrative perspec-

tive." Booklist also gives the book a starred review, calling it a "masterfully told, thrilling investigation of privilege, heritage and exoticization set against the backdrop of the American college campus." Publishers Weekly praises it as a "tense and propulsive tale of race and power," while Shelf Awareness calls it "astutely provoking, deeply disturbing and unexpectedly delightful." Finally, the New York Times Book Review describes it as a "smart and hilarious book not just for anyone who wants to laugh at the absurdity of academia, but for anyone who wants to become a better person by doing it."

In the Sonora Jha's novel, the hijab becomes a powerful symbol that seduces and repels in equal measure, creating an almost unbearable tension in the mind of the charmingly literate but lonely middle-aged professor named Oliver Harding. Set in the corridors of American academia, Jha's novel explores issues of lust, retribution, and changing demographic patterns that are unsettling the hitherto calm environs of Seattle.

Honda launches “SHINE 100” Motorcycle in Indian Market

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSL) launched its most affordable and fuel-efficient mass motorcycle — the SHINE 100 — in Mumbai recently.

The SHINE 100 — with a new 100cc OBD2-compliant PGM-FI eco-friendly engine powered by eSP (Enhanced Smart power) — has been priced at Rs 64,900 (ex-showroom, Maharashtra) with a special 6-year warranty package and in 5 colour options.

Describing the company as an “Innovation in Market leader” with the SHINE 100 being developed with as many as 12 patents for enhancement of reliability, Atsushi Ogata, Managing Director, President & CEO, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said this motorcycle represented Honda’s next big leap to make mobility more accessible and affordable for



people across India.

Yogesh Mathur, Operating Officer, Sales and Marketing, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said Honda’s popularity could be gauged from the fact that it added 43,000 customers in a single day. “While 1/3rd of the total two-wheeler market

remains untapped, Honda’s SHINE brand has crossed 1.15 crore in sales,” he noted.

Meanwhile, the bookings for the SHINE 100 would begin from today with the product delivery scheduled from next month, he said. Replying to questions, Mathur said the mo-

torcycle has been priced low amidst competition because the customer is price-conscious and the company is ready for expanding its volumes in view of the 5% industry growth that has occurred for this specific 100 cc segment.

“SHINE 125 is the highest-

selling motorcycle for Honda and in keeping with the same legacy, we continued by adding the SHINE 100 which we are highlighting through our 6,000 Indian touchpoints catering to our customers,” he said, adding that Honda products market share is 65% in the rural market and 3.1% pan-India.

Highlighting details of the newly-launched motorcycle, he said the SHINE 100 has a Programmed Fuel Injection (PGM-FI) that uses onboard sensors for constantly injecting optimum fuel and air mixture for consistent power output, high fuel efficiency and less emissions.

The piston-cooling jet reduces friction and maintains optimum engine temperature, while the offset cylinder and use of rocket roller arm further reduce the frictional loss, thus helping in smooth and better output alongside improved fuel efficiency.

Maiden Forgings Limited highlights Rs 24 crore IPO launch March 22

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Maiden Forgings Limited is launching their IPO from March 22 to 24 in a bid to raise Rs 24 crores towards utilization as part of their focus on expansion into a specialized steel company.

Nishant Garg, Managing Director and promoter of the IPO, described the Steel manufacturing sector as an unorganised one that comprises mainly between 5 to 10 major related companies Pan-India.

Highlighting the company’s rise from carrying out ‘job-works’ to presently handling bigger production through their manufacturing plant with about 15 containers, he said a target has been set for 12 containers for which the company has a market in Europe.

“We started 17 years ago and have maintained a zero +Red Flag+ status due to our financial discipline,” he said, adding that “The stakes are high and the company is working with a combination of strate-



gies including this IPO towards meeting the production needs for this market.”

“While we are supplying our products to companies having special applications including the automobile sector and the home durables consumer segment, the bottom-line is our focus to grow our company,” he said, adding “We are looking at increasing our base in the next 2-3 years as steel is always used in applications across a vast spectrum and is lucrative,

besides being a basic requirement for people.”

The company’s financial expert Vikas said that the company highlighted good revenue and EBITDA margin of 8-9%. “Our company is moving from low margin to high margin products and we have invested Rs 8.5 crore in our new plant, besides having Rs 106 crores of Total Assets,” he said while noting that the present IPO is being highlighted primarily for the company’s expansion.

Lexicon Academy for Personal & Fitness Training collaborates with ACE to be an ACE International Education Partner



FW DESK

With an aim to get people moving worldwide, the ACE (American Council on Exercise) a leading non-profit organization certifies health coaches and fitness professionals which sets high standards and elevates their careers as health coaches. The Lexicon Academy for Personal & Fitness Training has entered into an agreement with ACE to become their International Education Partner.

With the agreement tenure that begun on 25th January 2023 to 30th June 2024, The Lexicon Fitness Academy is facilitating the delivery of ACE-approved courses and curriculum, preparing professionals on the technical front to take up the examinations by ACE that would certify them as Health and Fitness professionals.

“In today’s times Fitness is the biggest virtue and in this fast-paced world, it is much important that one should remain fit. The Lexicon Academy for Personal & Fitness Training partners with ACE, a non-profit organization to certify exercise Professionals from our iconic and scientifically sound institution according to standards that make them the best in the fitness industry. If individuals need help being fit, they should reach out to Certified Professionals,” says Fauzan Shaikh, Manager - Program Development and Student Acquisition.

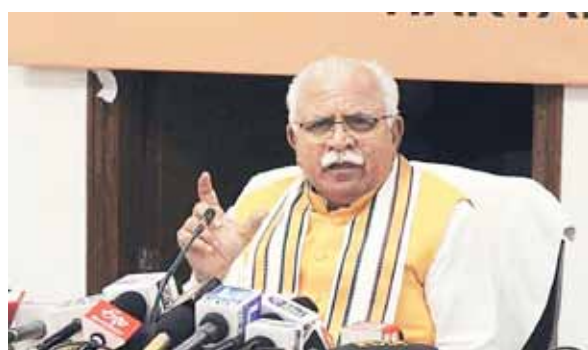
The ACE training comprises of classroom and online programs for the courses based on the curriculum that helps the trainers prepare for the ACE examination. The Lexicon Academy for Personal & Fitness training is responsible for ensuring that the ACE certification exam registrants meet the eligibility prerequisites for the exams. The Academy will also be maintaining a database that has all registration details and maintain the ACE code of conduct. The content delivered by the Academy will be ACE-approved. The master trainers at the Lexicon Academy for Personal & Fitness Training are highly qualified to deliver the ACE courses and have a Bachelor’s degree in Exercise Sciences, good verbal and written communication skills, current ACE certification, knowledge about the fitness industry, and a 3-year teaching experience in a fitness setting. The trainers would also be able to present workshops and seminars in a professional setting. Advantages of being ACE Certified Trainer The NCCA (National Council for Certifying Agencies) has accredited ACE as a recognized fitness certification program that is accepted for fitness jobs around the globe.

Khattar assures Haryana industry entrepreneurs to resolve their problems

SATISH HANDA

Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar while having meeting with industry entrepreneurs at village Pattikalyan near Samalkha assured them to resolve all problems faced by them. The meeting was arranged by Sanjay Bhatia MP of the area in which several industry owners from Panipat and IMT Samalkha were present to have review meeting with the chief minister after declaration of Haryana budget recently. Maruti Udyog’s new plant is also being set up at Samalkha industrial area as such large number of industrial units manufacturing automobile spare parts and accessories are arriving in this area. Chief Minister said that he will issue directions to Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) departments to review the suggestions made by them and extend full cooperation to industrialists in the area and resolve their problems immediately.

Chief Minister also addressed media persons after a meeting with the industrialists at Panipat regarding discussion on the budget. He said that the state government is serious about the



“The state government is serious about the issues of the industrialists who are backbone for the prosperity of the state”

issues of the industrialists who are backbone for the prosperity of the state and will issue instructions to HSIIDC and MSME department to review the suggestions made by them and solve the problems faced by them, Supporting the industry owners, the MP at Karnal Sanjay Bhatia said that

the industrialists from Panipat as well as Karnal are contributing major role in the industrial development of the state.

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was on visit to Samalkha to convey shock on the death of the father of a BJP leader in the area Shashikant Kaushik at village Chulkana when Sanjay Bhatia MP arranged CM’s meeting with the industry entrepreneurs of the area extended him warm welcome. Among others present at the occasion were Krishan Panwar Rajya Sabha member, Mahipal Dhanda Rural MLA, Parmod Vij MLA, Dr Archana Gupta BJP District President, Ravinder Machhroli former MLA, Sushil Sarwan DC, Shank Sawan SP and Krishan Kiwana BJP District General Secretary.

Syngenta showcases biodiversity sensor, technology for farmers at the G20 Education Working Group Summit

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Syngenta in partnership with IIT Ropar has displayed its biodiversity sensor project at the G20 Education Working Group Summit at Khalsa college Amritsar on Wednesday.

The company is also showcasing the deployment of drones for use in spraying crop protection solutions and how it is empowering farmers by helping them save money, labour cost and time to enhance their income eventually.

Talking to media here today, Tehseen Zaidi, Head Communications Syngenta India said, “Punjab CM Bhagwant Singh Mann witnessed Syngenta’s farmer centric tech solutions and complimented the biodiversity sensor initiative which is key to understand and monitor biodiversity in Punjab farms. Biodiversity sensor project is Syngenta, IIT Ropar and Fraunhofer joint initiative”.

The low-cost, solar-powered Biodiversity Sensor features continuous biodiversity monitoring that automatically, autonomously, and reliably identifies most insect species. This data will give researchers,



policy makers and farmers the information they need to help biodiversity thrive, she said.

The first Biodiversity Sensor prototype was launched last year. Through 2023, Syngenta will develop more prototypes and continue refining the sensor’s artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms.

“Our tech-led collaborations with experts and creation of a farmer-centric ecosystem are key to address challenges faced by farmers to feed a growing population,” said Susheel Kumar, MD & Country Head, Syngenta India.

“By collecting and analysing this information across geographies, we can create a common language for fact-based discussions

among various stakeholders and enable organizations to develop game-changing innovations,” said Pushpendra P Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Physics, IIT Ropar.

Meanwhile at the meeting, Syngenta also highlighted its drone program. Syngenta was the first private company to get approval from Central Insecticides Board, Government of India to use drones for spraying of its product Amistar on paddy to protect the crops against fungal infections, Blast & Sheath Blight. “Encouraged by this along with the policy push by Government of India and the state government, Syngenta has organised a unique, first-of-its-kind drone yatra,

under which a drone awareness van moved across 17,000 km in 13 states reaching out to 15,000 farmers and giving them demos on drone spraying,” informed Susheel.

However, Syngenta is one of the world’s leading agriculture companies, comprising Syngenta Crop Protection and Syngenta Seeds. Our ambition is to help safely feed the world while taking care of the planet. We aim to improve the sustainability, quality and safety of agriculture with world class science and innovative crop solutions. Our technologies enable millions of farmers around the world to make better use of limited agricultural resources. Syngenta Crop Protection and Syngenta Seeds are part of Syngenta Group. In more than 100 countries we are working to transform how crops are grown. Through partnerships, collaboration and The Good Growth Plan we are committed to accelerating innovation for farmers and nature, striving for regenerative agriculture, helping people stay safe and healthy and partnering for impact, said Tehseen Zaidi, Head Communications Syngenta India.

iCubesWire expands its Rich Media Studio ahead of IPL

FW DESK
New Delhi

iCubesWire, a leading Global Ad-tech Digital Conglomerate, has announced the expansion of its Rich Media Studio with IPL-based rich media innovations. In addition, the company has launched a set of customized technology based rich media formats for brands across industries, including Fantasy Gaming, apparels, beverages, and more.

These one-of-a-kind rich media formats have been designed to offer a more engaging and interactive experience for consumers. By using customized and technology-driven rich media formats, brands can create engaging and interactive campaigns to capture the attention of consumers and leave a lasting impression. In addition, with iCubesWire’s IPL-based rich media innovations, brands can leverage the excitement of the event to maximize their visibility and reach a wider audience.

Sahil Chopra, Founder & CEO, iCubesWire, said, “We are very excited to launch customized ad formats with tech innovations for our valued brands. The IPL is a highly anticipated event that attracts a large audience, making it an ideal platform for brands to reach a vast and engaged audience. These innovative solutions will increase brand awareness and provide a unique

and memorable experience for the audience, resulting in better engagement and recall.”

These unique and creative rich media solutions are set to give brands a competitive edge, with technology at the back, the brands can capture user data and also offer customised rich media innovations based on those logics and data points.

iCubesWire’s commitment to innovation and excellence in ad tech has been demonstrated through this expansion of its Rich Media Studio. In addition, their continued focus on delivering cutting-edge solutions to their clients sets them apart as a leader in the industry.

About iCubesWire: iCubesWire, founded in 2010, is amongst the leading Digital Marketing Agencies in India, offering 360° concepts to over 250+ clients across e-Commerce, Automobile, Technology, Finance, Travel, Hospitality and more, having its presence across the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Carving a niche for themselves in the marketing space, iCubesWire has been consistently investing in R&D and business expansion. Moreover, with an aim to amplify the growth of digital startups, iCubesWire has earmarked \$3 million into its ‘Digital Innovation Fund’, for which the company was recognised and lauded globally.

ICUBESWIRE

BYD India Inaugurates its 3rd passenger Vehicle Showroom in Bengaluru

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

The leading new energy vehicle manufacturer BYD opened on its third Passengers Vehicle showroom in Bengaluru. It is run and managed by the VST Group.

VST-BYD, located in Cunningham Road of Central Bengaluru, will provide access to BYD’s pure electric vehicles with high-quality services for its consumers in Karnataka. With over eight decades of experience in the automobile

industry, the VST Group has extensive reach with its business covering the state of Karnataka. It is one of South India’s leading private automobile business groups, BYD statement said.

Sanjay Gopalakrishnan, Senior Vice President of Electric Passenger Vehicle Business, BYD India, who inaugurated the show room said, “We are delighted to inaugurate our third passenger car dealership in Bengaluru with the VST Group, which will help us to



reach a wider target audience in Karnataka. With more citizens opting for electric vehicles, Bengaluru has seen an escalation in demand for public EV charging points in the recent past. The opening of the third

dealership in the city within a short span of time resonates our commitment to our customers and contributes towards a Zero-pollution environment for the future generation.”

Arun Surendra, MD, VST Group, said, during the inauguration of show room “We are thrilled to associate with BYD India and extend our association in Karnataka with our first BYD showroom launch in Bengaluru. We have been witnessing an overwhelming response for the

electric vehicles in the city and are sure to make an impact with BYD’s increasing presence in the state. Also, we always strive to shadow our customers opting for a sustainable drive towards a better world for tomorrow.”

BYD India aims to expand to 53-plus showrooms by the end of 2023. BYD will continue to leverage technological innovations for a better life, promote sustainable development of society, and implement its “Cool the Earth by 1°C” initiative, he said.

New wave of start-ups is a testimony to entrepreneurial temperament of the youth, says Ashwini Vaishnav

FW DESK
New Delhi

PHDCCI conducted “Bharat Startup Summit, 2023” The conclave through discussions aimed to collaborate, connect and bring together the Startup community, aiming to build a strong Startup ecosystem.

Carrying the theme of “Innovate, Accelerate and Grow,” the event brought together the entrepreneurs, prominent industry leaders, and investors to share their ideas; and featured keynote speeches, interactive sessions, and an expert panel discussion.

Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology; Railways, and Communications, Govt of India, in his note of address appreciated PHDCCI for its growth to becoming a national-level entity and praised the 1.5 lakh member community of PHDCCI for their integral role in Nation building. The minis-



ter called the organization the backbone of Indian economy and its effective contribution to the economy all through its 118 yrs old journey.

While appreciating the new wave/yug of startups, Vaishnav said that nobody can stop the inert strength and power of tech innovation. He also praised the industry for its synergizing efforts with govt ministries and stakeholders for a common objective of helping the economy of India. Vaishnav emphasized the

further need to transform and talked about the importance of a methodical, process-driven, and thoughtful approach to aid the success of the ecosystem. We are now a USD 3 and half trillion economy and an effective change in the system towards the transformation of a 5 trillion economy.

Laying emphasis on training, process driven business environment and a thoughtful approach as the key to making a successful business, the Hon’ble

Minster quoted the words of Warren Buffet ‘Business is too important an activity to be left in the hand of the untrained’ and mentioned that transformation is the key to making India the global super power in the near future. Praising the nation, he said “No power can stop the enthusiasm, energy, fire that we have in India’s entrepreneurship” and expressed his desire to make India the top economy of the globe. Vaishnav aspires to see India as a fully developed futuristic, empowered, advanced in technology, that can be achieved through profound collaboration between the government, industry stakeholder and India’s Youth.

Appreciating the Hon’ble PM’s laser sharp vision towards placing India in the list of countries providing end to end solution in the telecom technology sector, Vaishnav stated that India takes pride in being the 6th country to be added to the list of only 5 countries, which

existed till now, in providing an end to end solution in the telecom sector.

Under the visionary leadership of our Hon’ble Prime Minister, India aspires to reach the goal of constituting 25% of the World’s total GDP, a share which India possessed at the start of the British colonization in India during the 17th century, when our countries GDP stood between 25 - 35% of the World’s total GDP, added Vaishnav He mentioned how 10yrs back, we used to import 99% of mobile phones and now 99% are made in India. Citing wall street journals published report Vaishnav informed that the 6G rollout in India is the world’s fastest. He added that we started in Oct last year and ahead of the deadline of 31st march, 2023, we have rolled out 397, which is many times beyond the target we had set for ourselves.” He further added, “Besides the complexities, we have achieved 100 patents so far.”

US banking collapse not a cause of worry for India

FW DESK

When US President Joe Biden declared that the US banking system was "safe" and vowed stiffer bank regulation, after U.S. regulators were forced to step in with a series of measures after Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank collapse, threatening to trigger a broader crisis, the message was clear that it was a desperate bid to boost about the stability and credibility of the American banking system.



Experts say that the crisis is a glaring example of the limitless pursuit of greed and over-indulgence at the expense of caution and due diligence. US banks reportedly flouted financial rules and a huge crisis was generated by overheating of the markets, excessive leveraging of debt, credit booms, miscalculation of risks, off-balance sheet operations by the banks. Not following the regulation, risk-prone monetary policy to mitigate taming inflation were the

culprits. Biden has said, "Americans can have confidence that the banking system is safe. Your deposits will be there when you need them." Biden has stated that he is 'firmly committed to holding those responsible for this mess fully accountable and to continuing our efforts to strengthen oversight of larger banks so that we are not in this position again.' "I'm going to ask the banking regulators to strengthen the rules for banks to make it less likely this kind of

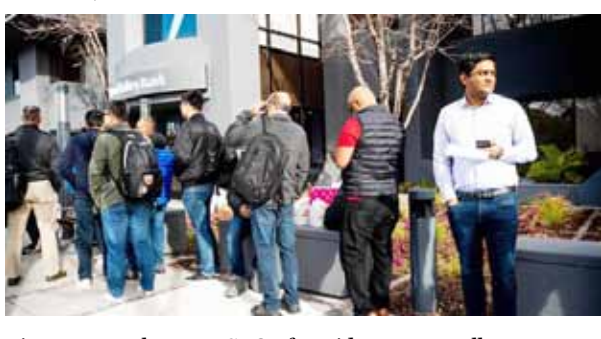


bank failure will happen again, and to protect American jobs as well as a small business," he said. Now it is for other countries like India to assess how it will impact them. Silicon Valley Bank was among the top 20 American commercial banks till last year. It is the largest bank to be shut down in the US since the 2008 financial crisis that crippled economy.

Impact on India: According to Moody's Investor Service the failures of Signature Bank and Silicon Valley Bank in the U.S. which were major lenders to the crypto sector, was likely to have a limited impact on India and Asia-Pacific because of structural factors. However, in an increasingly interdependent financial world, the global financial crisis may have a cascading effect on economies and finances across the nations. With the advent of globalisation and the Indian corporate sector's access to external funding, it may be hit by the crisis. The crisis may have a minor

impact on the Indian economy when compared to the US and other developed nations. The Indian banking system has no direct exposure of sub-prime mortgage assets or failed institutions. It has very limited off balance sheet exposure. India's growth is driven predominantly by domestic consumption and investments. The Indian financial system might largely escape unhurt with the intervention of the Reserve Bank of India. Banking system is safe and resilient, thanks to higher capitalisation and shrinking inter-bank linkages, but the only cause of worry is the non-performing assets (NPA). Overall, the Indian banking and non-banking financial sectors have displayed resilience to several shocks, facilitated effective delivery of post-pandemic public policy measures to targeted sectors of the economy, and preserved financial soundness while supporting a broad-based recovery of the Indian economy. The RBI in its report has observed that the current wave of technological innovations in the field of finance and new growth opportunities arising from global rebalancing of supply chains and domestic support to fourteen industries under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme opens new business avenues, it is important to be mindful of emerging risks from tech-led complex networks, alternative finance options and geopolitical developments.

Bring back you money, new Silicon Valley Bank CEO urges depositors



Tim Mayopoulos, new CEO of collapsed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), has urged depositors to return with their money to help the bank survive. In a Zoom meeting with select investors and limited partners (LPs), he also asked for new deposits, saying that both existing and new deposits will be protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), reports TechCrunch.

"There's no safer place in the United States, or any bank in the United States, for deposits and the newly-formed SVB Bridge Bank is "not even subject to the typical legal limit of \$250,000 of the account". He asked customers to return deposits to the institution. "That's the single most important thing you can do to ensure that Silicon Valley Bank survives," Mayopoulos said on Zoom call.

Long-awaited Foreign Trade Policy likely to be announced by March last week



NEW DELHI: India's Foreign Trade Policy whose revision has been pending for three years is expected to be announced by the end of this month, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told the media on Wednesday.

The 'Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20' was extended by six more months till March 31, 2023 last September when the Commerce Ministry had planned to announce a new trade policy but abandoned those plans. "During these six months, we have looked at various aspects of that policy and undertaken a visioning exercise, keeping our aspirations to achieve USD 1 trillion of merchandise and services exports each," Barthwal said. "So within that framework, we have worked out the Foreign Trade Policy and we are expecting that it would be released by the end of the month," he added.

Abu Dhabi Investment Authority invests \$500 mn in eyewear unicorn Lenskart



Omnichannel eyewear unicorn Lenskart has signed a definitive agreement with Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) to raise \$500 million from the authority. The investment is an extension to last year's funding round, helping Lenskart maintain its \$4.5 billion valuation. The company said that the capital will be deployed to deepen its presence in Asia and the Middle East. ADIA's investment includes some secondary purchase of shares from some early backers of Lenskart. The eyewear company has so far raised \$1.5 billion in primary and secondary rounds, according to reports. Founded in 2010, Lenskart ships over 10 million pairs of eyewear every year and has over

20 million app downloads, 300 home eye test representatives as well as over 1,100 stores across India, Singapore, and Dubai, the company said last year. Lenskart is backed by Falcon Edge Capital, SoftBank, KKR, Temasek, Premji Invest and Kedaara Capital, among others. In June last year, the eyewear unicorn took a majority stake in Japanese eyewear brand Own-days in a deal that was reportedly around \$400 million. This took the merged firm to reach 13 markets in Asia including India, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan. The company said it will continue its rapid expansion in India and South East Asia to serve the mass to mid-premium segments.

Hyundai Motor considering buying GM India's Talegaon plant assets



DELHI: The Hyundai Motor India Ltd with a view to have a second automobile plant in India is considering to acquire land and building and some assets of General Motors India's Talegaon plant in Maharashtra. According to Hyundai Motor India, a Term Sheet has been signed for the potential acquisition of identified assets of the plant like land and building, certain machinery and equipment situated at the General Motors India's plant in Talegaon. The Hyundai Motor India said the proposed acquisition is subject to the signing of the 'Definitive Asset Purchase Agreement' and fulfillment of conditions precedent and receipt of regulatory approvals from relevant Government Authorities and all the

stakeholders related to the acquisition. The Indian subsidiary of the South Korea's Hyundai Motors has a big manufacturing facility in Irrungattukottai near here. The Hyundai Motor India has earlier announced its plans to get into electric vehicle manufacturing. Further another facility outside Tamil Nadu is a sort of derisking strategy and also being closer to other markets in the country. It should be noted Ford Motor Company had shuttered its Chennai plant operations sometime back. Hyundai Motor considering buying GM India's Talegaon plant assets The Hyundai Motor India Ltd with a view to have a second automobile plant in India is considering to acquire land

India to become 3rd largest economy by 2030: Principal Economic Advisor



MUMBAI: Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Advisor to the Government of India has said that India's economy will become the third largest economy in the world by the end of this decade. In an interview with The Hitavada, Sanyal shared his observations of the prevailing situation and also his ideas for making India economically even stronger. Elaborating on his statement that India would be the third largest economy in the world by the end of this decade, he said that India intended to become even larger part of the world economy during the 'Amrit Kaal' (25-year

period from 75th anniversary to centenary of India's Independence). He told The Hitavada that catching up with China and US will take some time. "But, during this period, we need to carry out major reforms in two sectors -- Legal and Administrative," he stressed. According to him, legal sector reforms are needed because enforcement of contracts is 'single biggest failure in our economic system today', and this needs to be solved. With regard to administrative reforms, he said that the current administrative framework was created for controlling the population and not for service delivery.

2.45 lakh loans sanctioned till March 1 under 59-minute loan scheme for MSMEs

NEW DELHI: Banks have sanctioned 2,45,065 loans involving Rs 83,938 crore as of March 1 under the government and SIDBI's 59-minute loan approval scheme for MSMEs. This is merely a 2.2 per cent growth from 2,39,751 loans involving Rs 81,141 crore sanctioned as of April 1 in FY23, as per data from MSME Ministry, reported Financial Express. While under the 59 minutes Public Sector Banks (PSB) loan scheme in 59 Minutes banks have sanctioned 5,314 loans in the current financial

year as of March 1, 2023, showed an analysis of the official data. In terms of disbursements, the scheme disbursed 4,089 loans with 1.83 per cent growth in loans disbursed to 2,26,778 loans involving Rs 67,847 crore till the beginning of March FY22. From 2,29,883 loans involving Rs 75,944 crore sanctioned as of March 31, 2021, the volume of loans sanctioned jumped 4.29 per cent to 2,39,751 loans involving Rs 81,141 crore as of April 1, 2022. In comparison, 9,868 loans involving Rs 5,197 crore were sanctioned during this year vis-a-vis 2,22,689 loans amounting to Rs 65,834 crores disbursed as of April 1 last year. In comparison, 9,868 loans involving Rs 5,197 crore were sanctioned during

WPI inflation drops to 3.85 per cent in February; records 25-month low



THE ANNUAL RATE OF INFLATION BASED ON ALL INDIA WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX (WPI) NUMBER IS 3.85 PER CENT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 2023 (OVER FEBRUARY, 2022) AGAINST 4.73 PER CENT RECORDED IN JANUARY, 2023

The annual rate of inflation based on all India Wholesale Price Index (WPI) number is 3.85 per cent for the month of February, 2023 (over February, 2022) against 4.73 per cent recorded in January, 2023, said the Ministry of Commerce on Tuesday. This decline in the rate of inflation in February, 2023 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of crude petroleum & natural gas, non-food articles, food products, minerals,

computer, electronic & optical products, chemicals & chemical products, electrical equipment and motor vehicles, trailers & semi-trailers, said the official statement. The month over month change in WPI for the month of February, 2023 stood at 0.20 per cent as compared to January, 2023. However, the inflation in food articles rose to 3.81 per cent in February, as against 2.38 per cent in January.

Inflation in pulses came in at 2.59 per cent, while in vegetables was (-) 21.53 per cent. Inflation in oil seeds was (-) 7.38 per cent, while in fruits was 7.02 per cent last month. Fuel and power basket inflation eased to 14.82 per cent, from 15.15 per cent in January 2023. In manufactured products, it was 1.94 per cent in February 2023 as compared to 2.99 per cent in January

Cabinet approves exemption to NTPC to invest in NTPC Green Energy



The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Friday granted exemption to NTPC Ltd for making investment in NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL), it's wholly-owned subsidiary. The CCEA also exempted NGEL's investment in NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NREL) and its other joint ventures and subsidiaries, subject to a ceiling of 15 per cent of its net worth beyond the monetary ceiling of Rs 5,000 crore, towards achieving a target of 60 GW renewable energy (RE) capacity by NTPC Ltd, official sources said. The exemption given to NTPC will help in improving India's global image as a green economy. It will also decrease India's dependency on conventional sources of energy by diversifying India's energy generation and will also decrease the country's coal import bills.

Hero Future Energies to invest Rs 30,000 cr to develop renewable energy capacity in Andhra Pradesh

AMRAVATI: The Hero Future Energies has inked an MoU with the Andhra Pradesh government for setting up renewable energy facilities in the state. Under this agreement, the Hero Future Energies will invest Rs 30,000 crore to develop renewable energy facilities and work closely with the state Government to catalyse economic growth in Andhra Pradesh, an official statement said. As per reports, the Renewable energy facilities are expected to generate em-

ployment for around 10,000 persons in the state. The MoU was signed on the side-lines of the Andhra Pradesh Global Investor Summit 2023 in the presence of K Vijayanand, Special Chief Secretary, Department of Energy, Govt of Andhra Pradesh and Arun Tripathi, Head - Energy Business, HFE. "We are extremely happy to partner with the Government of Andhra Pradesh in their sustainable growth journey. HFE plans to make the most of the conducive policy environment for the renewables sector in Andhra Pradesh and help the state emerge as a leading hub for renewables in the

country," Tripathi said. Established in 2012, Hero Future Energies is present across multiple states in India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Singapore, Ukraine and the UK. The company is an independent power producer (IPP) with about 1.6 GW of operating assets across utility and commercial & industrial sectors. It plans to invest progressively in grid-connected solar and wind, rooftop sectors, energy storage and green hydrogen over the next few years in India and internationally.



INTERNATIONAL

Indian Consulate in Brisbane briefly shut due to Khalistani menace

BRISBANE: The Indian Consulate in Brisbane was forced to close down temporarily today after Khalistani supporters blocked the entry raising slogans against the Hindus, days after Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese assured to curb anti-India elements in the country, a media report said.

According to The Australia Today, slogans were raised against Hindus calling them 'supremacists' at the Consulate, which is located on Swann Road in the Taringa suburb of Brisbane. The Queensland Police said it was an unauthorised gathering. "Indian Consulate was forced to close today due to safety concerns after Sikhs for Justice targeted them with their propaganda," Sarah L. Gates, Director of Hindu Human Rights, told The Australia Today. "They



have been shouting Khalistan Zindabad slogans," Gates said, adding that there is a heavy police presence in the area. "These thugs should not be allowed to dictate how

we live our life in Australia," Parvinder Singh, a resident of Queensland who took leave from work to attend an appointment at Indian Consulate, told The Australia Today.

The development comes just days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Albanese and conveyed India's concerns over vandalism of several Hindu temples allegedly by the ac-

tivists demanding Khalistan.

In response, Albanese said that Australia won't tolerate any extreme actions and attacks that took place in religious buildings, and there is no place for such action against Hindu temples while addressing a press meet in New Delhi.

Last month, Khalistani flags were found attached to the Indian Consulate in Brisbane, just days after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Australia.

Beginning 2023, Hindu temples in Australia have seen a spurt in vandal attacks by Khalistani elements defacing the walls with anti-India slogans and graffiti.

Indians in Australia said they are "angry, scared and dismayed by the blatant display of religious hatred towards the peaceful Hindu community by Khalistan supporters".



Delegates attend the second day of the 2nd G-20 Education Working Group meeting in Amritsar on Thursday. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT SINGH GILL

Indian-American nominated chair of S. Carolina's health, environment board

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster has nominated Indian-American Seema Shrivastava-Patel to be the next chair of the Board of Health and Environmental Control.



If confirmed, Shrivastava-Patel -- who has served on the Board since 2018 and has been its Vice-Chair since 2021 -- will become the first person of colour and the second woman to lead the Board. "Shrivastava-Patel is a highly respected member of the South Carolina Board of Health and Environmental Control. With this extensive knowledge of the agency and her experience as Vice-Chair, she is the best choice to lead a smooth transition that will propel the agency forward and advance South Carolina's public health and environmental missions," Governor McMaster said in a statement.

As a member of the Board, Shrivastava-Patel has helped navigate the agency through the Covid-19 pandemic, led the search for a new agency director, improved customer service, renewed a focus on recruitment and retention of staff, and emphasised the importance of measurable outcomes for the agency. She has an extensive business background that includes a 20-year career in the convenience and food service industry, and as president of the Carolina Convenience Corporation.

"I am grateful to Governor McMaster for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve as the next Chair and look forward to working with my colleagues, as well as a team of talented and dedicated employees, to continue to move the agency forward for the people of South Carolina"

Shrivastava-Patel is a University of South Carolina graduate and resides in Lexington with her husband and two children. She is a first-generation American of Indian heritage. The governor's appointment is subject to Senate approval.

New Zealand GDP down 0.6% in Q4

New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) fell 0.6 per cent in the December 2022 quarter, following a 1.7 per cent rise in the previous quarter, according to quarterly figures released by the statistics department on Thursday.

Nine of 16 industries experienced a decrease in activity compared with the September 2022 quarter, Stats NZ said.

It added that manufacturing was the biggest driver of the decrease, down 1.9 per cent, reports Xinhua news agency.

"A fall in transport equipment, machinery, and equipment manufacturing corresponded to lower investment in plant, machinery and equipment, while reduced output in food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing was reflected in a drop in dairy and meat exports," Stats NZ national accounts industry and production senior manager Ruvani



Ratnayake said. Other downwards drivers included the industries of retail trade and accommodation, arts, recreation, and other services, as well as transport, postal and warehousing, Ratnayake said.

"We would typically see higher activity in industries linked to tourism such as accommodation, retail and transport, in what is usually the beginning of New Zealand's peak tourist season." While the last of the travel

restrictions were lifted in August 2022, the number of overseas visitors in the December 2022 quarter was still below pre-Covid levels, statistics show.

Business services, which make up approximately one-tenth of the economy, were up 3.3 per cent, partially offsetting the falls in other parts of the economy. This was driven by rises in advertising and market research as well as computer system design and related services, Stats NZ said.

Household spending was flat, as decreased spending on durables, including audio visual equipment and furnishings, was offset by increased household spending on services, the statistics department said.

Other drivers of the 0.8 per cent decrease in expenditure on the GDP were investment, down 1.9 per cent, and government spending, down 2.4 per cent, Ratnayake said.

Lahore's Zaman Park under siege after clashes between police and Imran Khan's supporters

LAHORE: Tear gas shells, burnt tyres and vehicles litter the roads in Lahore's Zaman Park area which has turned into a battleground after supporters of Imran Khan engaged in pitched battles with police personnel to stop them from arresting the ousted Pakistan premier, resulting in injuries to dozens of policemen.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers and police clashed on Tuesday in Lahore's Zaman Park area after a contingent of the Islamabad police, along with armoured vehicles, reached party chief Khan's Lahore home to arrest him after a non-bailable warrant was issued in the ongoing Toshakhana (gift depository) case against him. "Clearly 'arrest' claim was



mere drama because real intent is to abduct & assassinate. From tear gas & water cannons, they have now resorted to live firing. I signed a surety

bond last evening, but the DIG refused to even entertain it. There is no doubt of their mala fide intent," Khan tweeted on Wednesday.

Japan egg prices surge amid record 16 million bird flu cullings



Egg prices are soaring in Japan as the current avian flu season sees a record 16 million birds marked for culling, local media reported on Saturday.

The current bird flu outbreak has spread at an unprecedented pace since the season began in October last year, with at least 80 cases at poultry farms in 26 of the country's 47 prefectures, Kyodo News reported, Xinhua quoted. As of March 2, the wholesale price of medium-size eggs was 335 yen (2.5 U.S. dollars) per kilogram in Tokyo, the highest ever since 1993 when data first became available, the report said citing data from local egg seller JA Z-Tamago.

Egg-laying hens account for more than 90 per cent of birds in the process of being culled, according to the agriculture ministry, limiting the supply of eggs and pushing up the price. Concerns about shortages are growing, with an increasing number of restaurants opting to suspend offering egg-based dishes, the report added. It is expected to take at least six months until egg availability recovers to former levels, it said.

An official from Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said that work to resume poultry farming is already under way and production should be active in early spring, noting that "but it will take some time for numbers to recover because farms won't return to 100 per cent capacity straight away," Xinhua reported.

US' Consumer Price Index rises 0.4 per cent in February



United States Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers rose 0.4 per cent in February, according to government data.

Over the past 12 months, the all items index increased 6 per cent before seasonal adjustment, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on Tuesday.

The index for shelter was the largest contributor to the monthly all items increase, accounting for more than 70 per cent of the increase, Xinhua news agency reported. The food index increased 0.4 per cent over the month with the food at home index rising 0.3 per cent. The energy index decreased 0.6 per cent over the month as the natural gas and fuel oil indexes both declined.

Kirpan-wielding Sikh says he was denied entry to NBA game in US

NEW YORK: A Sikh man has claimed that he was denied entry to a basketball match in the US because he was carrying a 'kirpan' -- a small dagger, which practising Sikhs are required to carry at all times along with other articles of faith.

Mandeep Singh had gone to watch a basketball match involving the NBA team Sacramento Kings in California.

Sharing his photos from outside the venue from his Twitter handle, Singh said he spoke to multiple people regarding the issue, which he called "religious discrimination", but to no avail.

"Unfortunate experiencing religious discrimination and being denied entry at the @SacramentoKings game tonight b/c I'm #Sikh. Wouldn't let me in bc of #kirpan. Spoke w/ multiple people up the security chain and none seem to understand. Been a fan since 96. Not so much anymore," he tweeted on Tuesday.



In continuation of his tweet, he said he went because he received an email from Sacramento Kings last week inviting him to a game as "community ambassadors." "Working as a community organizer with the @SacramentoKings... ABtw, this is how your city treats its Sikh Community." Singh's tweet invited sharp reactions from the twitterati with one of the users saying: "It will never be our land and their rules will always stand." "I would hope the Kings

ambassadors." Flagging off Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, Sacramento council member Katie Valenzuela in his tweet, he said: "Not taking my kirpan off for the @SacramentoKings... ABtw, this is how your city treats its Sikh Community." Singh's tweet invited sharp reactions from the twitterati with one of the users saying: "It will never be our land and their rules will always stand." "I would hope the Kings

'Over 54K complaints from Indian diaspora between 2018-2022'

NEW DELHI: The government has received a total of 54,401 complaints from the Indian diaspora, Non-Resident Indians and Overseas Citizens of India during the last five years, out of which 54,081 complaints have been resolved.



On a question, whether the government is aware of the fact that the Indian diaspora is facing problems in the countries of their residence because of Indian identity, V. Muraleedharan, MoS, External Affairs, said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that the government accords the highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indians abroad.

"Our missions and posts abroad remain vigilant and closely monitor and actively follow up grievances of any nature received from the diaspora in foreign countries. Grievances are also responded through various channels like calls, walk-ins, e-mails, social media, 24x7 helplines and 'Open Houses'. To enable the diaspora to register their grievances, the government has provided online portals such as MADAD and e-Migrate," the Minister said.

As per the reply, total 54,401 complaints have been received on these portals between the years 2018 and 2022 out of which 54,081 complaints have been resolved. "Missions and Posts abroad take up these grievances with the host governments for action on priority basis. If the issue pertains to the state governments in India, then it is taken up with them for resolution. Financial and legal assistance to distressed Indians, if necessary, is provided through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF). These issues are also raised during meetings with the concerned countries, at appropriate level," said the reply.

Tweet on Canadian Sikh leader's turban draws sharp reactions

NEW DELHI: A tweet by a Toronto Sun journalist on the colour of a prominent Canadian Sikh leader's turban was deleted after it drew sharp reactions from the community, calling it "insensitive" and "inappropriate".



While MPs questioned grocery price inflation in the House of Commons last week, political columnist Brian Lilley tweeted a picture of New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh with the caption, "Jagmeet looks like he wore his No Name turban today just to grill Galen Weston at committee". Galen Weston is the CEO of George Weston Limited and executive chairman and president of Loblaw's. He had appeared in front of the parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture.

"I know he changes the colours for special days or occasion (sic) but didn't expect to see No Name yellow today. Is it on purpose or a coincidence?" Lilley said. Gurpreet Kaur Rai, a spokesperson for the World Sikh Organization, told Omni news channel that Lilley's comments were "extremely insensitive, inappropriate, and hurtful".

"I think there's no room in Canadian discourse for comments like that to be disseminated," she said, demanding an immediate action on the tweet and a public apology from Lilley and Toronto Sun. "Our turbans, irrespective of colour, are not 'No Name'," former Ontario MPP Guratran Singh tweeted. "Dear Toronto Sun, please come get your guy... This is beyond offensive!" Ravi Kahlon, British Columbia's Minister of Housing, wrote in a tweet.

Responding to Lilley's tweet, Jagmeet Singh wrote: "I've had lots of great conversations about why I wear a turban and what it means. But some people try to make us feel less than... I think of how that hurts kids especially."

While Lilley deleted the tweet and apologised, his responses to criticism of the tweet still remain.

"I have deleted a previous tweet that has caused controversy and been seen as insensitive. That was not the intent and I apologise to those who I offended. The tweet has therefore been deleted," he wrote. Responding to a Twitter user, he wrote: "Wanna explain what is racist about this? I'll guess you know zero Sikhs. How is noting the colour of his turban, which changes regularly, racist?" According to data released by Statistics Canada from the census data of 2021, there are over 7.71 lakh Sikhs in Canada.

Of these, over 2.36 lakh (30 per cent) are Canadian citizens by birth, over 4.15 lakh are immigrants (permanent residents) and over 1.19 lakh are non-permanent residents.

Between 2006 and 2016, the number of Punjabi-speaking citizens in Canada grew from 3.68 lakh to 5.02 lakh, a growth of 36.5 per cent.

Punjabi has for years been the third-most spoken language in Canada, after English and French.

Last year, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba passed the Turban Day Act, stating that April 13 will be celebrated as Turban Day across the province every year to spread awareness against racism that Sikhs face in the country due to their articles of faith.



'Delhi Crime', 'Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives' among popular shows 'renewed' for Season 3

DELHI: Brace yourself, some of the most loved streaming shows are getting renewed for their third seasons. Shows like 'Delhi Crime', 'Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives', 'Kota Factory', 'Mismatched', and 'She' are set to return with their new instalments.

'Delhi Crime' is an International Emmy nominated show and stars Shefali Shah as DCP Vartika Chaturvedi, Rajesh Tailang as Inspector Bhupendra Singh, Rasika Dugal as Neeti Singh IPS and Adil Hussain as Kumar Vijay.

While the first season of the show followed the story of the shocking 2012 Delhi gang-rape, the second season of the show told the story of Chaddi Baniyan Gang. The fans of the show are eagerly waiting to know what the third season will bring along.

Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi threatens Salman Khan again; seeks apology

JAIPUR: Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi who is currently lodged in Punjab's Bathinda Jail has issued a fresh threat to Bollywood actor Salman Khan, saying if the movie star does not apologise over the Chinkara hunting episode, "his ego will be smashed".

of 'Hum Saath Saath Hain', hunted Chinkara, which had upset the Bishnoi community.

Meanwhile, officials were unable to answer any questions about how the interview video of Lawrence Bishnoi that recently emerged was shot. In the interview, the gangster also claimed that gangster Goldie Brar got popular Punjab singer Sidhu Moosewala killed. Meanwhile, the jail officials in Bathinda submitted that jammers are installed in the cell where Bishnoi is lodged, and there is no connectivity.



G-20 summit delegates clicking selfies with newly unveiled G-20 logo during the second G20 Education Working Group meeting at Khalsa college in Amritsar on Wednesday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT SINGH GILL

Parineeti Chopra is very excited about her upcoming film Chamkila with Diljeet, directed by Imtiaz

MUMBAI: The recently concluded LFW X FCI event in Mumbai saw a lot of Bollywood glamour both on and off the runway. While many say it is a return to pre pandemic days, others say that fashion has gone back to a time in the business when stars overpowered fashion and collections were sidelined.



Be that as it may, from amongst the bevy of beauties at the event, we got a rare sighting of actress Parineeti Chopra who walked the runway for designer Ritika Mirchandani. Chopra was a picture of elegance when she

was a homage to joyful fashion at Lakme Fashion Week in partnership with FDCI. Parineeti speaks about her upcoming project to IANSLife: Talent or hard work, what do you think is stronger or more important?

CHOPRA: Neither of them can exist without the other, you could be very talented but if you don't put in the work it's going to take you nowhere and without talent sometimes you can work very hard and take yourself a long way, so I think they both are intervened and I always believe they go together.

Hip-hop artiste and rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh's life has been documented into a film



Yo Yo Honey Singh's life to be showcased in tell-all documentary. Hip-hop artiste and rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh's life has been documented into a film that will follow his meteoric rise in mainstream Bollywood music and his fall as the landscape eventually changed due to market dynamics.

'Zwigato': Kapil charms, Shahana shines in a powerful film

MUMBAI: New India is multi-faceted, multi-optional with many of the well-heeled being spoiled for choices while choosing a vocation. But despite all the so-called growth, several other categories of middle-class young men and women reel under pressure to find themselves age- and skill-appropriate employment.



For the Alpha generation, the e-commerce food delivery companies are a blessing, for they cater to the needs and orders of the customers who are more demanding and have more convenience and control over how and when they order their food. But that's for the customers; the employees of such businesses face the brunt of it.

EXPOSURE TO PIGEONS

Precarious to health

MAHIE JK

Union for Conservation of Nature, there are approximately 26 Crore pigeons in India. In India the cases of Asthmatic patients have increased due to the active exposure to pigeons. Hyderabad ranks the top most city to have the most populated pigeons. Pigeons are the carriers of these microbes. Dr Pratit Samdani, physician, Breach Candy Hospital, says that exposure to pigeon droppings is the cause for developing pneumonia. "Some patient even land up on ventilator support because of pneumonia which is caused by the exposure to such droppings," said Dr Samdani. The diseases mainly caused by them are Histoplasmosis, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome, Cryptococ-

Pigeon feeding is one of the most prevalent practices in India. But are people aware of the health problems being caused by exposure to pigeons. Pigeon Droppings have been reported as most hazardous to human health. Studies show that around 60 different diseases occur due to these droppings. According to various reports, people suffer most from Asthma, and breathing difficulty. Pigeons carry most of the fungus, and microbes of various diseases which get transferred from one place to another. These microbes are present in the air and inhaling it causes various health issues.

According to International

Various measures have been suggested by doctors to avoid the exposure to these pigeons and to decrease the risk of these diseases;

- Avoid pigeon feeding at public places.
- Avoid areas where pigeon feeding happens.
- Make pigeon net at your homes to avoid pigeons at home balcony.
- Avoid doing pigeon feeding



as pigeon feeding increases the population of pigeons. The best way to save oneself from these diseases is to use mask, wear gloves while cleaning their droppings, the people living in high rise apartments are facing this threat a lot, the balconies are filled with pigeons droppings, so it is better for them to moisten the droppings with water before cleaning. The droppings should be preserved in disposable bags when thrown.

Vidhut and Nandita were seen attending the haldi ceremony of Deanne Pandey's daughter

MUMBAI: Action star Vidhut Jammwal and fashion designer Nandita Mahtani have reportedly called it quits after being engaged for two years.



According to a source close to Media, Vidhut and Nandita were seen attending the haldi ceremony of Deanne Pandey's daughter on Wednesday, however the two were seen maintaining a distance from each other.

"Vidhut's reclusiveness in the social circuit is a reason behind their distance," said the source from the Haldi ceremony.

It was in 2021, when the two

got engaged at the Taj Mahal in Agra, and confirmed it on social media.

However, the source concluded that they are respectful towards each other, good friends and are there for each other.

Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management conducting workshop on food writing with association of FBAI

A BUZZING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL THOSE WHO HAVE A FLAIR FOR WRITING AND ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT IT

FW DESK

The food writing genre focuses on food and on the written works of chefs, historians, food critics, and journalists. Food writing is not just fictional writing, and so to help the food enthusiasts learn all the tips and tricks, The Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management and The Food Bloggers Association of India are conducting a workshop on the 18th of March at the Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management.



This four-hour workshop organized by Lexicon IHM and The FBAI will not only help food and writing enthusiasts learn all the tips and tricks of food writing but also help them identify their areas of expertise when it comes to the umbrella of food writing," says Sagar Chitre, Principal, Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management.

The workshop will also include an enhanced understanding of different genres that is best suited for each individual's own area of interest and would help them in working on the right tone, food vocabulary, and creative approach to write a variety of projects. Not only that, the workshop participants

will qualify for a longer and amplified workshop which will help in taking their own personal or professional writing projects ahead.

"Food writing is an art form that requires a deep understanding of not only the food itself but also the cultural and historical contexts surrounding it. This workshop by The Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management and The FBAI is an excellent platform for aspiring food writers to learn from experts and gain practical knowledge that they can apply to their own writing," says Sameer Malkani, Founder of The Food Bloggers Association of India.

The initiative by The Lexicon

Lexicon Institute of Hotel Management

Learn how to leverage your passion for food and writing at the

FOOD WRITING WORKSHOP

hosted by LEXICON IHM in association with THE FBAI

Date: 18th March
Time: 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Turn your passion into a profession!!

REGISTER TO KNOW MORE

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Trainer: **Gouri Dange**
Author, Columnist, Editor and Creative writing Guru

SCAN TO REGISTER

IHM Atelier X and The FBAI Creators Studio is an amazing learning playground. It's a place where culinary creativity is unleashed, and the possibilities are endless.

The workshop is open to ages 18 to 80 and will offer a toolkit for generating food-writing ideas and turning them into masterpieces. Food writing is a vast and expanding field, ranging from food blogs, vlogs, podcasts, cooking shows, cookbooks, writing for food companies, products, and services, restaurant reviews, or even bringing out family and community reviews. If someone loves food and has a thing for writing, this workshop can be a helpful event towards learning to write about food and can make one an accomplished writer.

India qualify for WTC final, won series

SUNIL THAPLIAL



India won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy on Monday after a tie in the fourth and final test match between India and Australia, securing a spot in the World Test Series final, which will be hosted in England in June this year.

The test match ended in a draw, but it went down in history as a magnificent example of cricket diplomacy, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcoming the Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to the Narendra Modi stadium in Ahmedabad on the first day of the fourth test. PM Modi proved to the world how cricket can be used to strengthen not only the sporting ties but also geopolitics. It was also the first time India went beyond Pakistan and its neighbours to engage with a first-world country such as Australia through cricket.

"Everything is well that ends well," as the proverb goes, and the Border Gavaskar series is a prime illustration of this. Prior to the commencement of the series, both cricket and media greats clashed, but both nations' heads of state turned this into a positive and utilised sport as a means to strengthen the bond between the two

great cricketing nations. Earlier, Australia scored 480 in the first innings after winning the toss. Usman Khawaja scored 180 runs, while Cameron Green also reached a Test century. India followed with a total of 571. Virat Kohli scored 186 and was the last man out. Shubman Gill added another Test century to his tally, giving India a 91-run advantage in the first innings. India won the series 2-1 and managed to retain the Border Gavaskar Trophy.

Even before the end of day five, India had advanced to

the WTC final because of New Zealand's stunning last-ball victory over Sri Lanka earlier in the day. It will be India's second consecutive WTC final, having lost the first one against New Zealand in 2021.

India won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the fourth time in a row, qualifying for the World Test Championship final against Australia at The Oval. Australia won the third test in Indore, but were unable to win the fourth. The visitors lost the series, but a win in the third test secured their position in the WTC final, where

they will meet Team India. Earlier, the Indian top order was underperforming at the start of this series, but towards the end, the top order batsmen, including Virat Kohli, Shubham Gill, Rohit Sharma, and Pujara, all got their forms in order and looked forward to breaking their ICC trophy drought of over a decade in Oval.

Though four test batsmen hit hundreds in the fourth match, Virat Kohli stole the show as he ended a 1205-day test century drought. In the final Test, Kohli hit 186 runs in India's first innings.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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