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GATHER FOR KHALSA SAJNA DIWAS, NOT FOR SARBAT KHALSA, SAYS JATHEDAR AKAL TAKHT



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SINGER HANSRAJ HANS'S NEW SONG AIRPORT PUT PARDESI RELEASED



Punjab registers a record increase of 2587 Cr in revenue from Excise

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Finance, Planning, Excise and Taxation Minister Advocate Harpal Singh Cheema on Thursday said that the Punjab Excise department has registered a historic Rs 2587 Cr (41.41 percent) increase in revenue during the financial year 2022-23 as compared to the financial year 2021-22. He said that Excise department collected revenue of Rs. 8841.4 Cr from sale of liquor during 2022-2023 against revenue of Rs. 6254.74 Crore during the financial year 2021-22.



Addressing the press conference here at Punjab Bhawan, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema dedicated the record Growth of 41.41 percent to the new Excise policy. He said that during the previous Govt regimes, the excise collections in the state registered very less growth in revenue and at times the state has witnessed even negative growth in the excise collections. Releasing the figures it was stated that there was a negative growth rate of -1.2 percent during FY

2022-23 with a collection of Rs 6254.74 crore as compared to the previous year. The year 2020-21 had an increase of 23.7% over the previous years with a figure of 6335 Cr. But there was negative growth of -0.7 percent in 2019-20 with collection of Rs 5117 Crores, a 0.33 percent increase was in 2018-19 with collection of Rs. 5155.86 Crores, 16.6 percent increase in 2017-18 with collection of 5139 Crores and again a negative -8.15 percent growth in 2016-17 with a col-

lection of 4406 Cr with respect to the previous years. Divulging further, Advocate Cheema said that the Excise department has also successfully completed the allotment of Retail Liquor Vends for the Year 2023-24. "The process of allotment of 171 Excise groups was started on March 11, 2023 which has been successfully completed on March 31 2023", said the Finance Minister while adding that the department has surpassed the set target of discovered License

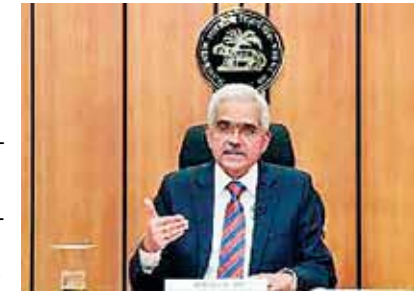
“The department has surpassed the set target of discovered License Fee of Rs.7989 Crores and has actually achieved the discovered License Fee Amount Rs.8007.45 Crores for the fiscal year 2023-24”

Fee of Rs.7989 Crores and has actually achieved the discovered License Fee Amount Rs.8007.45 Crores for the fiscal year 2023-24. He said that the Excise Department has set the total revenue collection target of Rs.9754 Crores for year 2023-24 but he is confident that the department would touch Rs. 10,000 crore figure.

Industry bodies welcome Repo rate hold by RBI

NEW DELHI: The Monetary Policy announced by Reserve Bank of India has maintained the Repo rates at 6.5.

As industries were fearing an increase in Repo rate and tightening of interest rates, RBI's maintaining the status quo has soothed the frayed nerves. Commenting on RBI maintaining the repo rate at 6.5 per cent, A Sakthivel, President, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said that it will further boost growth through increasing investment. While most Central banks have given more weightage to inflation as compared to growth, RBI stroke a nice balance between the two, giving primacy to growth, he



said. President FIEO said that the increasing investment will lead to further production and easing of supply thus reducing the inflation in next couple of months. Secretary General of Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises

(FISME) Anil Bhardwaj has welcomed the hold on the repo rates. "Further tightening of interest rates would have pared the economic growth especially in sectors dominated by MSMEs,"

Bhardwaj said. Subhrakant Panda, President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) said, "The pause in policy repo rate by RBI is a welcome move given the evolving macro-economic and financial markets scenario."

March sees second highest GST collection of ₹1, 60,122 lakh cr



NEW DELHI: The gross GST revenue collected in the month of March 2023 is Rs 1,60,122 crore of which CGST is Rs 29,546 crore, SGST is Rs 37,314 crore, IGST is Rs 82,907 crore (including Rs 42,503 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,355 crore (including Rs 960 crore collected on import of goods). It is for the fourth time, in the current financial year that the gross GST collection has crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore mark registering second highest collection since implementation of GST. This month witnessed the highest IGST collection ever.

The government has settled Rs 33,408 crore to CGST and Rs 28,187 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue of Centre and the States in the month of March 2023 after IGST settlement is Rs 62,954 crore for CGST and Rs 65,501 crore for the SGST.

The revenues for the month of March 2023 are 13% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year. During the month, revenues from import of goods was 8% higher and the revenues from domestic transaction (including import of services) are 14% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. The return filing during March 2023 has been highest ever. 93.2% of statement of invoices (in GSTR-1) and 91.4% of returns (in GSTR-3B) of February were filed till March 2023 as compared to 83.1% and 84.7%, respectively same month last year.

The total gross collection for 2022-23 stands at Rs 18.10 lakh crore and the average gross monthly collection for the full year is Rs 1.51 lakh crore. The gross revenues in 2022-23 were 22% higher than that last year. The average monthly gross GST collection for the last quarter of the FY 2022-23 has been Rs 1.55 lakh crore against the average monthly collection of Rs 1.51 lakh crore, Rs 1.46 lakh crore and Rs 1.49 lakh crore in the first, second and third quarters respectively. The chart below shows trends in monthly gross GST revenues during the current year. The table shows the state-wise figures of GST collected in each State during the month of March 2023 as compared to March 2022.

Rahul Gandhi mentor, Priyanka guide, says Navjot Singh Sidhu

NEWDELHI: Days after being released from jail after undergoing rigorous imprisonment in a 1988 road rage case, former Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu on Thursday called on party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadra here and described them as his mentor and guide, respectively. "Met my Mentor Rahul ji and Friend, Philosopher, Guide Priyanka ji in New Delhi Today," Sidhu said in a tweet. "You can jail me, intimidate me, block all my financial accounts but my commitment for Punjab and my leaders will neither flinch nor back an inch!" Sidhu was released prematurely on April 1, with a remission of 45 days in his prison term. This was Sidhu's first meeting with Rahul and Priyanka Vadra after his release from the Patiala jail. Sidhu was lodged in an ordinary barrack as the government has decided to do away with the special cells in jails for VIP prisoners.



World Bank lowers India's GDP growth forecast to 6.3% in FY24

NEW DELHI: India is expected to grow at moderate rate of 6.3 per cent in FY24, said the World Bank due to shrinkage in consumption on back of slower income. The international financial institution has lowered its prediction for India's GDP growth in the current fiscal year from 6.6 per cent.



To tame inflation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised interest rates by 250 basis points since May 2022. "Rising borrowing costs and slower income growth will weigh on private consumption growth," the World Bank said. Owing to the withdrawal of pandemic-related fiscal support measures government consumption is projected to grow at a slower pace," said the bank.

The World Bank estimated last fiscal year's growth at 6.9 per cent. It projected the current account deficit to narrow to 2.1 per cent of gross domestic product for the current fiscal year from an estimated 3 per cent in the previous year, on the back of robust service exports and a narrowing merchandise trade deficit. Spillover from recent turmoil in financial markets in the United States and Europe pose a risk to short-term investment flows to emerging markets, including India, said World Bank economist Dhruv Sharma.

SGPC objects to NCERT's misinterpretation of history

Misleading information about 'Sri Anandpur Sahib Resolution' should be removed immediately: Harjinder Singh Dhami

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has strongly objected to NCERT allegedly giving wrong information about Sikhs in its syllabus books.

SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhami in a statement issued here today said that NCERT is misrepresenting historical details related to Sikhs. He said that recently the NCERT has recorded misleading information about Sri Anandpur Sahib Resolution in Chapter 8 namely 'Regional Aspirations' of the Class XII Political Science subject book 'Politics in India since Independence', which has hurt the sentiments of the community. He said that while explaining Sri Anandpur Sahib Resolution, it is not at all justified to portray Sikhs as separatists, so the NCERT should remove such "highly objectionable mentions".



Harjinder Singh Dhami said that the communal aspect has been taken while removing some old information and adding some new details in the Class XII syllabus.

"It is sad that changes are being made according to what suits the incumbent Centre government. Curricula especially about minorities are being eliminated and arbitrary syllabus is being created. Accordingly, Sri Anandpur Sahib Resolution has been wrongly interpreted in the book 'Politics in India Since Independence', said Dhami. SGPC President said that Sri Anandpur Sahib Resolution is a historical document that does not contain anything wrong. He said this resolution talked about the states' rights and strengthening the federal structure of the states and it is a matter of sadness that the situation is similar even today. The rights and interests of the

“It seems that the speakers of the language of Hindu Rashtra are being deliberately favoured, while on the other hand, instead of resolving the issues of minorities”

states are being ignored, he said. Dhami said, "It seems that the speakers of the language of Hindu Rashtra are being deliberately favoured, while on the other hand, instead of resolving the issues of minorities, the narrative is being spread against them by creating misconceptions. The spirit of communalism visible in the syllabus is not in line with the interests of the country."

Terror group threatens 30 RSS leaders In J&K

FW DESK
The Resistance Front (TRF), considered a front for Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba has issued threats to thirty members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Jammu and Kashmir. The TRF has threatened largely Muslim leaders who are supposedly associated with RSS. These RSS members are in-charge of areas in South and North Kashmir and Jammu region in the union territory, according to an official. The list does not include any big name. The threat letter has come at time, when Kashmir Valley has been by and large peaceful. An all-party delegation, on invitation of National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, is slated to visit Kashmir probably later this month to assess the ground situation. Leaders of as many as 13 opposition parties had met in Delhi and submitted a memorandum to Election Commission to start process of election in the union territory.



Home Ministry recommends CBI probe against Oxfam India



NEW DELHI: The Union Home Ministry recommended a CBI probe into the affairs of the Indian arm of the global NGO Oxfam for alleged violation of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, sources said. The home ministry found that Oxfam India continued to transfer foreign contributions to various entities, including other NGOs, even after registering under the FCRA, which prohibits such transfers after an amendment that came into force on September 29, 2020, sources said.

Opposition parties show unity, slam govt for washout of Budget session's 2nd half

NEW DELHI: Opposition parties, including the Congress, TMC, BRS and Samajwadi Party, came together in a show of unity on Thursday and accused the Modi government of getting the second half of the budget session "washed out", while asserting that if this attitude continues, the country will move towards "dictatorship".

With the tricolour in hand, several Opposition MPs marched from Parliament to Vijay Chowk and then representatives of 19 parties held a press conference at the Constitution Club where Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge



and other leaders resolved to take the Opposition unity further. Kharge accused the Narendra Modi government of not walking the talk on democratic

principles and causing disruptions in Parliament to divert attention from the Opposition's demand for a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue.

Two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants escape from police custody in Kashmir

FW DESK
Two militants, who were involved in a grenade attack on a wine shop in North Kashmir town of Baramulla on May 17 last year, have escaped from police custody. Officials said on Wednesday. The militants have been identified as Maroof Nazir and Shahid Showkat, both members of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). They were arrested on May 19 last year and were lodged in the Baramulla police station. According to an official, the militants escaped during Sehri time, and security forces have launched a massive search operation to apprehend them.

Punjab's Pollution Pandemic – The Dastardly Devastation of Derabassi

FW INVESTIGATION DESK

Derabassi, a small town in Punjab, has become a hotbed of industrial activity in recent years. With paper mills, stone crushers, and chemical factories setting up shop in the area, there has been a rapid increase in industrialization, and with it, an alarming rise in water and air pollution. The industrial activities in Derabassi have been identified as a major contributor to the pollution of water and air in the region. These factories discharge a significant amount of chemical waste into the environment and nearby farmlands, contaminating the water bodies and the air around them. The discharge of untreated and poisonous wastewater

into nearby water bodies and farmlands, especially by some huge paper mills has led to the deterioration of water quality in the area. The chemicals present in the water can harm aquatic life in the adjoining Ghagghar river and seep into the ground, contaminating groundwater sources. The discharge of these chemicals into the water bodies also contributes to the accumulation of toxins in the food chain, leading to serious health issues in humans and animals. Air pollution is another major concern in Derabassi. The factories emit toxic gases and particulate matter, leading to poor air quality in the surrounding areas. This can have serious consequences for the health of residents, especially those living in close proximity to the factories.



The authorities have been slow to respond to the growing problem of pollution in Derabassi. The lack of enforcement of environmental regulations has allowed factories to continue their activities without proper

oversight, leading to further deterioration of the environment. The residents of Derabassi have been forced to endure the effects of pollution caused by industrial activities in the area. Despite numerous complaints

and pleas for action, the government has shown little interest in addressing the issue, leaving residents feeling helpless and abandoned. Many have reported health issues such as respiratory prob-



lems, skin irritation, and even cancer. The pollution has also affected the local economy, with

farmers reporting a decline in crop yields due to the contamination of soil and water. Despite these concerns, the government has failed to take any meaningful action to address the pollution. The lack of enforcement of environmental regulations has allowed factories to continue their activities without proper oversight, leading to further deterioration of the environment. Derabassi's MLA, Kuljeet Singh Randhawa was not available to meet or comment despite repeated requests from the FW team. Some villagers claim Mr. Randhawa knows the sad state of his constituency but is yet to do anything meaningful towards containing the pollution or punishing the polluting industries. The villagers also said on the condition of anonymity

that MLA Randhawa travels throughout the constituency and knows the sad state of affairs in Derabassi. Then how can he remain quiet as if nothing ever happened. However, SAS Nagar District Commissioner, Ashika Jain, a dynamic IAS officer proactively promised full cooperation with FW's investigative reporter and assured of the strictest actions against offenders as per the law of the land. She said nobody would escape punishment, no matter how influential or powerful the accused is. Some locals believe that a change is only possible if the authorities, industries and the community work together to reduce pollution and ensure a safe and healthy environment for the people of Derabassi.

Honest Government results in facilities to public with increase in revenue : CM Mann

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday said that due to strenuous efforts of the Aam Aadmi government the state has been transformed from 'fiscal deficit' to 'fiscal profit' state by massive generation of revenue.

Interacting with the media persons here at Punjab Bhawan, the Chief Minister said that though the previous governments had always thought of their own vested interests his Government has pulled all plugs to enhance the revenue in state. He said that these efforts have produced desired results as the state has been able to generate maximum revenue. Bhagwant Mann said that the honest government in state has changed the direction of fund flow from private houses of leaders to government exchequer.

The Chief Minister said that though the state government had launched the Excise policy by delay of three months but it has fetched revenue worth Rs 8841 crore in the state. He said that this is Rs 2587 crore more than last year which was roughly an increase of 41.41%. Bhagwant Mann said that the target for next financial year is Rs 9754 crore adding that this will also be achieved.

The Chief Minister said that



the state government has for the first time presented a zero tax budget in the state. He said that this is first of its kind pro-people initiative which will go a long way in ensuring the welfare of people. Bhagwant Mann envisioned that no stone will be left unturned for the holistic development of the state and prosperity of its people.

Dwelling on another agenda, the Chief Minister said that the state has witnessed massive increase in the GST collection. He said that earlier the state was worst performing in GST collection but now with a hike of 16.6% Punjab is one of the top most performing state in GST collection. Bhagwant Mann said that the collection of last fiscal was Rs 18126 crore as compared to Rs 15542 crore of its previous year.

The Chief Minister said that in a landmark initiative the state government has taken a new experiment on giving an exemption of 2.25% on stamp duty for land registration. He said that due to this in month of March revenue collection has enhanced from Rs 339 crore in February to Rs 658.68 crore. Bhagwant Mann said that as per the feedback of people the exemption has now been extended to April 30.

previous governments and the state government has is also repaying the inherited loan through instalments worth Rs 1894 crore. Bhagwant Mann said that the state government has so far provided 3538 jobs to the youth in the power sector.

The Chief Minister said that due to strenuous efforts of the state government the power generation in state has enhanced manifolds. He said that already smooth and hassle free supply of coal has started from Jharkhand coal mine. Bhagwant Mann said that the state is heading towards becoming a power surplus state in the country.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the state government is exploring the possibility of moving to the court for seeking pending funds under the Rural Development Fund from the centre. He said that the Union government is unnecessarily harassing the state by stalling funds worth Rs 30000 crore under the RDF. Bhagwant Mann said that while the state government has completed all the formalities but then also the centre government has deliberately stalled the legitimate funds of the state which is sheer injustice with the state.

Listing the pro-people initiatives taken by the state government, the Chief Minister said that Punjab Government has so far given more than 28, 000 jobs to youth across the state adding that the sole criteria for selection in this entire recruitment process is merit and the entire procedure is being followed in a transparent manner. He said that now these youth have become integral part of the socio-economic growth of state. Bhagwant Mann said that such a whopping number of jobs in merely one year reflect the commitment of the state government to ensure the well being of youth and opening new avenues of employment for them.

Gather for Khalsa Sajna Diwas, not for Sarbat Khalsa: Jathedar Akal Takht

CHANDIGARH: The head of the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of Sikhism, Giani Harpreet Singh on Friday appealed to the Sikhs to gather in crowds at Talwandi Sabo, the home to one of the five temporal seats Sri Damdama Sahib, to celebrate 'Khalsa Sajna Diwas' on Baisakhi (April 14).

At the same time, he clarified this appeal should not be mistaken as a call for Sarbat Khalsa, meaning an assembly of all factions of Sikhs, that has been given by self-styled Sikh preacher and 'Waris Punjab De' chief Amritpal Singh, who has been on the run since March 18. "This Khalsa Sajna Diwas is to show that Sikhs are not scared of anything," Giani Harpreet Singh said while addressing a gathering of Sikh journalists on media censorship at Talwandi Sabo in Bathinda district.

Amritpal Singh had asked the Akal Takht Jathedar to call the Sarbat Khalsa on Baisakhi Day at the Takht Sri Damdama Sahib. Amid rumours that Amritpal Singh might surrender before police on this day in Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, the security was beefed up. The head of the Akal Takht, who had recently given an ultimatum to the state government to release all Sikhs



arrested in the crackdown against Amritpal Singh, announced a new platform to track and bust "anti-Sikh" content being circulated online. He said budding journalists would be roped in for tracking and even busting the hateful content against the Sikhs.

Without naming the BJP-led Central government, he said judiciary and executive are under constant "threat" of the government. "Concerted efforts were being made to malign the Punjabis and a section of media is being abused for it." He slammed the state government for spreading panic among masses by running stories of Amritpal Singh's possible surrender at Talwandi Sabo. The jathedar also expressed annoyance over the failure of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) to initiate legal action against police officials who allegedly wrongly identified a Sikh religious flag as those of Khalistan.

Five drug smugglers arrested with 5 kg opium and over 1 kg charas in 24 hours



SATISH HANDA Ambala

Crime Investigation Agency -II of Ambala police on a clue that two drug smugglers from Punjab carrying opium are at Ambala Cantt searching for the drug suppliers started search for them having police barriers at different places in the town and in due course of time saw a 'Bareja' car having Punjab registration number parked near Shahpur railway gate near flyover on NH-44 late night. Police team during search recovered four kg opium lying under the driver's seat and arrested two persons identified as Baljinder Singh alias Lucky and Raghubir Singh alias Ramu both residents of Barnala in Punjab, addressing media person SP AMBALA Jashandeep Singh Randhawa said.

He disclosed that both arrested drug smugglers were produced in the court after Parao police Station Ambala Cantt registered a case against them under NDPS Act and remanded them to police custody for eight days. The arrested accused were found having number of criminal cases registered against them in Punjab. Randhawa told that in another case Narcotic Control Bureau team during checking at a police barrier during mid night of April 5 and 6 arrested two persons near Dhanoura T- point travelling in the car and after search police recovered 1 kg 50 gm Charas under the driver seat. The arrested accused were identified as Sanjiv Kumar resident of sector 13 and Vinod Kumar resident of sector 6 Naraingarh in Ambala district and a case was registered against both under NDPS Act and both were produced in the court on April 6 and remanded to police custody for five days.

Ticket machines on the main entrance door of Jallianwalla Bagh removed : Dr. Surinder Kawal



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) Punjab media team member Dr. Surinder Kawal here today informed that Ticket coupon machines which were installed on the main entrance gate of historic Jallaiwalla Bagh has been removed.

In a statement to media she said that earlier she had sent the request letter to the prime minister for the removal of un-operational Ticket coupon machines as it was hurting the sentiments of martyr's family all over India. She said that there was severe resentment from various corners to charge tickets from the visitors to Jallaiwalla Bagh memorial. She said that people come here to pay tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation.

Confirming the development, Secretary Jallaiwalla Bagh, S.K. Mukerjee said that ticket coupon machines were uninstalled on Tuesday.

KCET now the Nodal Centre of Virtual Labs in association with IIT, Rorkee



FW DESK Amritsar

Taking another academic leap, Khalsa college of Engineering and Technology (KCET), Amritsar successfully established the Nodal Centre of Virtual Labs in association with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee under the Ministry of Education, under the National Mission of Education Scheme through ICT. Dr. Manju Bala (Director) officially inaugurated the Nodal Centre of Virtual Labs and said that this will definitely help students to learn complex concepts in easier way. She said that under this collaboration with IIT Roorkee, students of the college will be the part of Internship facility provided by IIT Roorkee during which the students will be trained to develop the virtual labs. She said that this collaboration will also enhance the placement scenario of the institute.

She informed that soon Khalsa College of Engineering and Tech-

nology will be declared as Regional Nodal Centre for Virtual Labs which will be the first of its kind in the state of Punjab. Also during the establishment of the nodal center a Two Days Workshop for Faculty and students on how to use and perform Virtual Lab Experiments. Resource Persons of the workshop were Dr. Amit Kumar Sharma and Er. Jasbir Singh (Project Associated, IIT Roorkee). Dr. Bala presented a token of gratitude to both the resource persons. Also, she appreciated the coordinator of the event, Er. Maneet Kaur (Deputy Dean, Training and Placement) and her team for putting in the efforts for the establishment of Nodal Centre.

Rajinder Mohan Singh Chhina (Hon. Sec. Khalsa College Charitable Society) lauded the efforts of director, Dr. Manu Bala and her team for the collaboration with IIT Roorkee. He said that establishment of nodal centre for virtual labs will definitely help students to learn uin flexible ways and prepare them adequately.

Amritpal Singh: UP Gurudwara under scanner after footage found 'missing'

PILIBHIT: The Mohanapur Gurudwara in Pilibhit is now under police scanner after it was found that CCTV footage up to the evening of March 25 "had gone missing".

The police team investigating the case related to absconding 'Waris Punjab De' leader Amritpal Singh and his aide Papalpreet Singh, reached Pilibhit on Sunday to investigate the matter. Joga Singh, a karsevak (volunteer) at the gurdwara, was arrested by the Punjab Police in Ludhiana on March 30 after the recovery of an abandoned vehicle found near Phagwara in Punjab on March 28. Police had arrested the driver, Gurwant Singh, from Hoshiarpur on March 29.



Akal Thakht Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh addressing a gathering during the meeting with media persons at Takht Sri Damdama Sahib in Talwandi Sabo in Bathinda on Friday. Agenda of meeting was to discuss the role of Sikh and Punjabi journalism, Sikh media's contribution and challenges ahead in context of the situation in Punjab.

Defence Secretary Inaugurates HAL's Third LCA Production Line, Hands Over 100th Su-30 MKI ROH aircraft to IAF

ARUN KUMAR RAO Nashik/Bengaluru

The Defence Secretary, Giridhar Aramane inaugurated the third LCA production line and also handed over 100th Sukhoi-30 MKI ROH aircraft to Air Vice Marshal Sarin, VSM, Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Eng A), Indian Air Force in a programme at HAL's Nashik Division, HAL statement issued here today. The Signal Out Certificate (SOC) of the 100th ROH aircraft was handed over by Saket Chaturvedi, CEO (MiG Complex) to Air

Vice Marshal Sarin, VSM in the presence of HAL CMD, Mr. C.B.Ananthkrishnan and other senior officials.

The Defence Secretary lauded HAL's efforts in taking up the challenge of setting up an ROH facility for Su-30 MKI and also establishing a new production line for LCA manufacturing. He remarked that HAL has been fulfilling the needs of the country's security. He said, "The Government has come out with several 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' policies, and that puts HAL in a very important position.



HAL will be producing more in the coming years. Build more systems, come out with new concepts, new platforms for future growth," he added.

He also urged HAL to take up new initiatives to aggres-

sively compete in the defence market and look into new areas like unmanned vehicles as the country is in need of these advanced systems. He emphasized on Initiatives, Innovation and Excellence and focus on performance. He visited the LCA Assembly Complex, Su-30 ROH Flight Hangar and Final Assembly Hangar.

C. B. Ananthkrishnan, CMD, HAL said, "The new production line will enable the Company to enhance LCA MKIA production capacity from 16 to 24 aircraft per year. HAL's Nashik Division has achieved peak overhaul capacity of 20 Su-30 aircraft per year despite having supply chain issues in current geopolitical situations." HAL has already set up two LCA manufacturing facilities in Bengaluru.

Haryana CM slams Congress leaders for undue criticism

SATISH HANDA

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar while interacting media persons strongly condemned saying that it was unfortunate said that during present crisis Congress political leaders are busy in unnecessarily criticism in ruling the state government's decisions and policies instead of extending cooperating to the ruling government in implementing schemes beneficial for people in the state especially by former HPCC president in the state Kumari shelja and Randeep Singh Surjewala for making unjustified criticism and playing politics. Slamming Congress leaders for questioning the decisions taken in recent cabinet meeting Congress leaders were busy in unnecessarily politics the state government's decision blaming high level corruption in the state, whereas corruption exists in the blood as well as nerves in the body of Congress political leaders. He said, Congress leaders may impose blames of ruling BJP appreciating corruption free and transparent government.

Pointing at the recent an-



nouncements by former Haryana minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda that in case Congress comes to power in Haryana state after 2024 Vidhan Sabha polls will implement old pension scheme, finish e-tendering system as well as Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) scheme introduced by the ruling government in the state, which clearly indicates Congress leaders attitude who never wanted a corruption-free and transparent government. CM said that Congress leaders have lost conscious due to present ruling government in Haryana has closed down all routes to corruption by Congress leaders enjoyed while ruling in the state in past and are now making baseless announcements to befool people in the state who are now well aware of them.

While talking to media, khattar clarified that the state

government has accepted the demands of protesting Sarpanchs in the state against e-tendering system and have increase the limit procurement for developmental works from Rs 2 to 5 lakh, besides increasing the monthly emoluments of Sarpanchs and Panches as such large number of protestors are now satisfied with state government's decision. He clarified that right to recall law introduced by the government for Sarpanchs and the future course of action will be decided after the meeting.

Talking to mediapersons today, Anil Vij said that we are keeping a close watch on the cases of Corona and we have complete preparations to deal with it. The meeting has been called only to take stock of it.

Responding to a question on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's demand for Prime Minister's degree despite being fined by the court, the Home Minister said that "Kejriwal neither believes in any court nor the Constitution, he has nothing left to say and everything has come out". Vij said that "he had thought that Kejriwal was busy taking out the dirt with a broomstick, but he collected all the dirt outside and

Instead of sweeping out the dirt with a broomstick, Kejriwal put all the dirt inside: Anil Vij

SATISH HANDA Ambala

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij said that a meeting of health department officers/officials has been called on Monday afternoon to take stock of the Corona cases and the future course of action will be decided after the meeting.

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put it inside". Taking a jibe at Kejriwal, he said that "his people are in jail and they are doing all kinds of work".

In response to a question asked by the Congress on calling Rahul Gandhi a revolutionary, Home Minister Anil Vij said, "The punishment meted out to Rahul Gandhi was not done by us, nor by any SP-DC. It was done by the court and Rahul Gandhi was also given a chance to speak his mind". Attacking the Congress, he said that "now they (Congress) are doing demonstrations, it simply means that they are protesting

against the court, which is contempt of court". He said, "Why does Rahul Gandhi forget that during the Emergency, the Congress party had jailed 1,10,876 people for no fault of theirs, dragged people away and forced sterilized". Raising the question, he said that "what right do such people have to speak about the constitution, let alone follow the orders of the court".

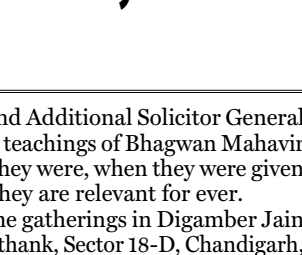
In response to a question regarding the verbal statement given by Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu against the Central Government as soon as he was released from jail, Minister Anil Vij react on that "Navjot Sidhu was in jail for eight-nine months and his (tongue) was stuck, now after coming out of jail it was removed and Navjot Sidhu has nothing but rhetoric". Impressed by the working style of Home and Health Minister Anil Vij, young singer Anas Sabri narrated a song dedicated to him. Home Minister Anil Vij and all others praised this song. It is noteworthy that this song has been written by famous poet Bilal Saharanpuri.

Teachings of Lord Mahavir are relevant for ever :Satya Pal Jain

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

Satya Pal Jain, Ex-MP and Additional Solicitor General of India has said that the teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir are as relevant today as they were, when they were given thousands years back. They are relevant for ever.

Jain was addressing the gatherings in Digambar Jain Temple 27-B and Jain Sathank, Sector 18-D, Chandigarh, as Chief Guest, in connection with Mahavir Jayanti celebrations. Satya Pal Jain said that in today's world, various countries have made extremely dangerous Nuclear weapons which are sufficient to destroy the whole world. He said that because of a small mischief on the part of a Mad Dictator of any country, the very existence of the Humanity can be put at stake. In such a situation only the teachings of Lord Mahavir of Live and Let live, World Peace, Mutual tolerance and respect of for each other, can save the world from such dangers. Jain said that as a matter of fact all the teachings of all Great Men and Great Saints were for the entire humanity but, because of our narrow and petty personnel interests, we have divided them also in deficient religions, communities and castes. Jain said that Jain religion expects from you to strictly follow the principals of your own religion but at the same time, respect those of other religions also. He whole heartedly appreciated the Jain Saints for their lives of great sacrifice and simplicity.



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PM inaugurates diamond jubilee celebrations of Central Bureau of Investigation

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi today. CBI was established by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India dated 1st April 1963.

During the programme, an Investiture Ceremony for recipients of the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and Gold Medal for Best Investigating Officers of CBI was also held wherein the Prime Minister conferred medals to the awardees. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed office complexes of CBI at Shillong, Pune and Nagpur. He released a Postage Stamp and Commemorative Coin marking the Diamond Jubilee Celebration year of CBI and also launched the Twitter handle of CBI. He also released the updated Administration Manual of CBI, an Almanac on Bank Frauds - case studies and learning, a hand book titled 'In Pursuit of Justice - Supreme

Court Judgements in CBI Cases and a handbook on International Police Cooperation for exchange of foreign located intelligence & evidence.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister congratulated everyone on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of CBI and said that the organization has completed a journey of 60 years as the premier investigating agency of the country. Noting that these six decades have marked many achievements for the organization, the Prime Minister emphasized that a collection of Supreme Court judgements for matters relating to CBI has also been launched today which gives us a glimpse of the history of CBI. In some cities, the Prime Minister said, be it new offices, the Twitter handle or other facilities launched today will play a key role in strengthening CBI. "Through its work and skills, CBI has instilled trust among the common citizens of the country", the Prime Minister said. He noted that even today when



an unsolvable case comes, a common echo emerges asking for the case to be handed over to CBI. Giving examples, the Prime Minister mentioned that at times protests erupt in cities for a case to be handed over to CBI. Even at the Panchayat level when a matter arises, the Prime Minister said, a mutual voice amongst the citizens demands a CBI inquiry. "CBI's name is on everyone's lips. It is like a brand for truth and justice", the Prime Minister remarked underlining the extraordinary

feat of winning the trust of the common populace. The Prime Minister congratulated everyone who has been associated with CBI in this journey of 60 years.

The Prime Minister congratulated the awardees and asked the Bureau to keep upgrading themselves. He said that the proposed Chintan Shivir should learn from the past and plan for the future keeping in mind the momentous time of Amrit Kaal during which crores of Indians have taken a pledge to achieve a Viksit

Bharat. The Prime Minister stressed that a Viksit Bharat is not possible without professional and efficient institutions and this puts a huge responsibility on CBI.

Prime Minister Modi complimented CBI for earning an image of multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary investigative agency and mentioned its expanded sphere. The Prime Minister emphasized that mainly, CBI's chief responsibility is to rid the country of corruption. "Corruption is not an ordinary crime, it snatches the rights of the poor, it begets many other crimes, corruption is the biggest obstacle in the path of justice and democracy", he said. He said corruption in the government system hampers democracy and the first casualty are the dreams of the youth as in such circumstances a certain type of ecosystem flourishes killing talent. Corruption, the Prime Minister continued, promotes nepotism and a dynastic system which erodes the nation's strength, seriously hampering development.

Azad is 'Ghulam', says Congress after former leader attacks Rahul

NEW DELHI: Congress on Wednesday attacked former party leader Ghulam Nabi Azad for his comments against party leadership in his upcoming autobiography and in media statements.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera accused Azad of exchanging his loyalty in lieu of a 'Lutyens' Bungalow', noting that it was the Congress which gave him all the posts to emerge as a big leader. "The politician, who was supported by the Congress party, given almost all the top posts of the party, is speaking against that party... he broke the trust of the party and when he left the party last year, he said 'I am free now', but after listening to his comments, it feels that he is (still a) Ghulam," he added. Azad, in his statement praised Prime Minister Narendra



Modi for his generosity and targeted Rahul Gandhi over the fate and the shrinking base of the Congress.

The Democratic Progressive Azad Party Chairman is set to release his memoirs "Azaad: An Autobiography". In the book, Azad,

who was then the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, has mentioned promptly the issue of abrogation of Article 370 and targeted his former Congress colleague Jairam Ramesh for not joining the protest in the Parliament.

BSF seized drug consignments over 12 kilogram from two different locations of Amritsar and Tarn Taran districts



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Border Security Force (BSF) have seized over 12 kilogram drug (heroin) consignment from two different locations of Amritsar and Tarn Taran border belts.

In an official statement issued here today, BSF said that on 04th Apr 2023 at about 0850 PM, BSF deployed at the border, heard a buzzing sound of a drone entering from Pakistan into Indian territory in the area near Village - Dhanoe Kalan in District - Amritsar. As per the laid down drill, troops immediately reacted to intercept the drone by firing.

During subsequent searches of the area, BSF troops recovered three big sized and nine small packets wrapped in yellow adhesive tape from the wheat fields of Village - Bachwind, Amritsar. On opening of the recovered packets of contraband Heroin (Gross weight - 9.5 Kgs) were found.

In another incident, on April 5, on specific information, BSF troops recovered 05 bottles filled with Heroin, concealed in the wheat fields, in a scattered manner, on own side of a fence near Village - Mehandipur in District - Tarn Taran. The gross weight of the recovered 05 bottles containing narcotics substance came out around 2.638 Kg.

Seven tourists killed in massive avalanche near China border in Sikkim

GANGTOK: Seven tourists were killed as a massive avalanche hit Sikkim's Nathu La area on Tuesday morning, burying their vehicles under the snow, officials said.

The avalanche hit the arterial Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, which connects Gangtok to Nathu La at the China border, around 11.30 am, trapping five-six vehicles with around 30 people under the snow, the Army said in a statement. Till 4 pm, seven bodies were brought out of the snow and 23 people were rescued alive, including six tourists from a deep valley, a state government official said, quoting reports from the Army.

Among those dead are a woman and a child, he said. Search operations in the area are underway by the Army, state disaster management teams



and police to find if any other person is trapped, officials said. Those injured were admitted to different hospitals in Gangtok, around 55 km away, they said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Centre was closely monitoring the situation, and the teams of the NDRF will reach the area -- between Milestones 13 and 17 -- soon. "My sincerest condolences to the families of those who have lost

their lives in the tragic avalanche in Sikkim. We are closely monitoring the situation and the teams of NDRF will reach the affected area soon. I pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," he tweeted.

Nathu La, situated at 14,450 feet above the sea level, is one of the three open trading border posts between India and China. It is a major tourist destination because of its scenic beauty.

PM Modi calls for integrated response for mitigating disasters' impact

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for an integrated response for mitigating disasters' impact.

In his opening remarks while addressing the fifth edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, ICRI-2023, Modi said: "Disasters in one region can have a big impact on a completely different region. Therefore, our response has to be integrated, not isolated."

"As we discuss infrastructure, some priorities have to be remembered. The theme for this year's conference is related to 'Delivering Resilient



and Inclusive Infrastructure'. Infrastructure is not only about returns but also about reach and resilience. Infrastructure must leave none behind and serve the people even during times of crisis.

"Further, a holistic view of infrastructure is needed. Social and digital infrastructure

are as important as transport infrastructure."

The Prime Minister emphasised on evolving local knowledge related to infrastructure which can withstand disasters.

"Each nation and region faces disasters of different kinds. Societies evolve local knowledge related to infrastructure that can withstand disasters. While modernising infrastructure, such knowledge needs to be used intelligently. Modern technology with local insights can be great for resilience. Further, if documented well, local knowledge may become a global best practice," he pointed out.

Treasury benches did not allow debate on budget: Chidambaram

NEW DELHI: Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Wednesday said that the treasury benches did not allow debate in Parliament on the budget. Chidambaram statement comes after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the discussion on budget did not happen.

Chidambaram said, "Who was responsible for the Budget being passed without debate? It is for the first time in Indian parliamentary history that the Treasury Benches started the din and disruption and forestalled

debate." He further said according to the World Bank, the five year average growth of the Modi government (2019-2024) will be 4.08 per cent and even the sequential annual growth rates after the Corona-affected year show a declining trend "The only one boasting about the growth rate is the Government" he added. A World Bank report released on Tuesday said India's GDP is expected to slide down to 6.3 per cent in 2023-24 as against its earlier estimate of 6.6 per cent, mainly due to consumption falling



owing to higher borrowing costs.

Since May last year, the Reserve Bank of India has been hiking interest rates to control inflation. In its 'India Development Update', the World Bank said that economic growth is likely

to be impacted due to sluggish consumption growth, coupled with challenging external factors. "Rising borrowing costs and slower income growth will weigh on private consumption growth and government consumption is projected to grow at a slower pace due to the withdrawal of pandemic-related fiscal support measures," it said.

According to the report, India's current account deficit is also likely to come down to 2.1 per cent in 2023-24, as against 3 per cent in 2022-23.

Religious leaders jointly appeal for peace, amity

NEW DELHI: Strongly condemning the incidents of violence and riots on the occasion of the Ram Navami festival, representatives of different faiths have issued a joint appeal to the people to maintain peace, amity and harmony.

Demanding immediate action against those responsible for inciting communal violence, religious leaders in a statement have termed these trends of communal incidents and the mindset of people be-



hind it as a big challenge for the country and society.

Calling it a matter of serious concern, inter-faith leaders cautioned that the incidents of violence were damaging mutual love and harmony and

weakening the society and the country.

The joint statement said, "It is clearly visible through various videos and clips of the violence that rioters and anti-social elements were fearlessly and openly desecrating and vandalizing religious places while the police and administration seemed to be silent spectators. These incidents of violence have not erupted spontaneously but they seem to be pre-planned."

Rahul does not have any respect for judicial system: BJP

KOLKATA: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi does not have any respect towards the judicial system of the country, BJP's national spokesman Sambit Patra said in Kolkata on Monday.

"My question is why Rahul Gandhi does not have any regard for the judicial system of the country. Why did he not apologize after issuing insulting statements about the other backward class community? He had the scope to that within the court," Patra said at a press conference at BJP's newly-opened office at Salt Lake in the northern outskirts of Kolkata this



morning. His comments come on a day when Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra are going to Surat to file an appeal in the court challenging his convictions for making a derogatory statement attacking the surname of Modi.

He also questioned why the Congress leadership had not displayed similar proactive steps when the party's Karnataka chief D.K. Shivakumar was arrested.

He also claimed that the Congress leadership always becomes hyperactive when the issue is concerning Rahul Gandhi. Speaking on the occasion, Sambit Patra also launched a scathing attack against All Indian Trinamool Congress's national president and the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and accused her of double-standards in pursuing her political lines. "I wonder whether at all she is supporting the Congress. In the evening the chief minister speaks exactly the opposite of what she said in the morning," Patra said.

Whose Rs 20,000 cr is in Adani shell companies: Rahul

NEW DELHI: A day after his bail was extended by sessions court in Surat, Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday questioned the money trail in Adani companies. Gandhi arrived at the Congress office here for the central election committee (CEC) meeting, which will finalise the remaining 100 candidates for Karnataka Assembly elections. When asked about the BJP's allegation of

pressing the judiciary, he responded, "why do you ask what BJP says... the only question is whose Rs 20,000 crore money is in Adani shell companies." Gandhi, who was on Monday given bail in a criminal defamation case, where he has been convicted and sentenced, said that "truth" is his "weapon in this struggle". In a series of tweets in Hindi, Gandhi said that it was "a fight to save democracy" and against "mitra kaal", and "in this struggle, truth is my weapon and truth is my shelter".

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Odisha sheds backward tag, takes big economic strides

ARABINDA MOHAPATRA
Bhubaneswar

Despite being at the receiving end of natural calamities like cyclones and floods Odisha's economy continues to grow at a fast clip. According to the latest Economic Survey report, the state's per capita income rose to Rs 150,676 at current prices from Rs 1,27,383. Odisha's economy is projected to grow by 7.8 % in real terms during 2022-23 against 7 % at all-India level as per the advance estimates.

In the last 7 years, the state has successively reduced the gap between Odisha's per capita income and per capita income at the all-India level from 31.6 % in 2015-16 to 12 % in 2022-23. The services sector grew at 8.79 % in 2022-23, accounting for 36.2 % of Gross State Value Added (GSVA). The services sector, which accounted for 24.7 percent of total workforce in 2020-21, is gradually moving towards pre-pandemic levels. Trade, repair, hotels & restaurants accounted for the highest

share within the services sector in the state.

Though hotels, restaurants and air transport were affected largely due to COVID-19 induced lockdown, these services subsectors have recovered immensely since then. In 2022-23, hotels and restaurants grew at 37.1 %. These are remarkable achievements when viewed against the backdrop of the 1999 super-cyclone that had dealt a crippling blow to the state's economy. Odisha back then was among the poorest states in the country and struggled even to pay the salaries to its employees. While the super-cyclone exposed the state's vulnerability to violent natural disasters, Odisha's poor financial health delayed restoration and rehabilitation work.

But the state has witnessed a remarkable turnaround since then. Having learnt from experience Odisha has not only emerged as a leader in disaster management across but also marshalled its resources carefully and cut down on wasteful expenditure to achieve financial stabil-

ity. A strict governance approach since 2000 when chief Naveen Patnaik took charge of the state in the wake of the super-cyclone saw the abolition of unnecessary posts and loss making public enterprises. Downsizing of the work force and rationalization of expenditure yielded results and the state's economy began to recover and get back into shape.

Things have been consistently improving for the state and today the industrial sector which is the key growth driver of Odisha constituting nearly 41.3 % of GSVA has clocked a growth rate of 6.05 % in 2022-23 in real terms. The key growth driver within industry was the manufacturing sector which although grew at 5.2 % in 2022-23, has grown at 9.1 % since 2012-13 on an annual average basis.

According to the latest Economic Survey report the agriculture sector constituting 22.5 % of GSVA in 2022-23 was estimated to grow at 6 % in 2022-23 in real terms, higher than the growth experienced at the all-India level (3.5 %). Nearly 46.8 percent



of the workforce of the state is employed in the agriculture and allied sector. The report also pointed out that Capital Outlay as a percent of GSDP in Odisha was one of the highest among the major states of the country creating a solid ground for the private sector to flourish and boost economic activity.

Odisha's fiscal management is among the most prudent in the country and has enabled the state to bring down its poverty levels drastically while creating work opportunities in various sectors including agriculture, industry and service sector. The improve-

ment in the economy has also helped sustain a raft of pro-poor schemes launched by the state government. Initiatives such as Odisha Skill Development Authority, Odisha Livelihood Mission, Mission Jeevika and Mission Shakti are contributing effectively to ensure the participation of more labour force in various sectors including manufacturing and service sectors like health, education, tourism, IT and financial services.

The poverty intensity in the state is low compared to all-India level. This has been possible due to the implementation of several

proactive and path-breaking schemes like KALIA, MAMATA, BSKY, Odisha Millet Mission, Mission Shakti, and subsidized food grains to the poor. While KALIA provides financial assistance to farmers at all levels, MAMATA offers partial wage compensation for pregnant and nursing mothers so that they are able to rest adequately during their pregnancy and after delivery. As a result of such schemes both child and mother mortality rate in the state has come down significantly. The Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) has been catering to the health needs of the poor.

Another important factor contributing to the state's economic growth is the concept of transformative governance which has found expression through initiatives such as Mo Sarkar, an attempt to bring the government closer to the people and ensure transparency in the working of different departments. With improvement in governance and a stepped up drive against corruption the level

of bureaucratic efficiency has gone up and this has paved the way for economic growth.

The improvement in the economy was visible in the budget recently presented in the state assembly by finance minister Niranjan Pujari. The Rs. 2,30,000 crore State Budget for 2023-24 marked an increase of about 15 per cent on the Rs 2 lakh crore budget for 2022-23. In the latest budget the allocation for the health budget crossed Rs 16,000 crore, an increase of 27% compared to 2022-23. The highest increase of 34% was seen in Sports and development of other infrastructure facilities like roads, bridges, airports and railways. The budget earmarked Rs 30,030 crore for education and skills and Rs 6,224 crore for Mission Shakti which aims at the economic empowerment of women by organising them into self-help groups engaged in economic activities.

Among the new initiatives under the budget Rs 2,000 crore has been allotted to a revolving fund for paddy procurement

to help farmers, Rs 139 crore for Chief Minister's awards for education, Rs 120 crore for Mukhyamantri Janajati Jeebika Mission which will create livelihood options for tribals and Rs 50 crore for Mukhyamantri Kendu Leaf Welfare Fund which will benefit thousands of kendu pluckers.

The budget has also proposed an Rs 1879 crore outlay for the farmer-specific KALIA scheme, Rs 2380 crore for BSKY and Rs 1035 crore for Re 1/kg rice, the government's flagship poverty alleviation scheme. These schemes, made possible by consistent improvement in the state's economy, have not only improved the lives of common people, especially people below poverty line, but also added to the popularity of the Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government. While he holds the record for being the longest serving chief minister of Odisha (and perhaps the country), the BJD has emerged as the most successful regional party in the history of the state.

Innovative solutions needed to deal with rare diseases

The state must maintain continuous vigilance and strive to address public welfare concerns. A prime example is the Centre's announcement of full exemption from basic customs duty for all drugs and food imported for the treatment of rare diseases listed under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) and anti-cancer drug Pembrolizumab. This builds upon the benefits previously included in the policy, finalized almost a year ago. To qualify for this exemption, individual importers need to obtain a certificate from specified authorities. Generally, medicines attract a 10% basic customs duty, but certain lifesaving drugs and vaccines receive concessions or exemptions. Exemptions already exist for specific drugs treating Spinal Muscular Atrophy or Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Rare diseases are characterized by their low occurrence rate, often resulting in limited drug availability due to insufficient demand. Treatment can be expensive and inaccessible for many patients, with the NPRD estimating annual treatment costs for some rare diseases ranging from Rs 10 lakh to over Rs 1 crore per year for a 10 kg child. Costs typically increase with age and weight, and treatment is often lifelong. Duty exemption will lead to significant savings for patients. Support organizations for patients with rare diseases applaud the move, providing relief and hope to patients and their families in an otherwise challenging treatment landscape. Although rare diseases are defined by their infrequent occurrence, the sheer number of conditions (estimated between 7,000-8,000, with 450 reported in India) and the total affected population (approximately 100 million in India) make it a pressing issue. The NPRD highlights the problem's magnitude and emphasizes the judicious use of scarce resources. The government must ensure its directives are fully implemented while pursuing innovative solutions for this patient group, remaining committed to the goal of affordable healthcare.

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ARUL GEORGE SCARIA ASKS SHOULD COPYRIGHT LAW PROTECT PUBLIC INTERESTS OR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS OF ITS HOLDERS?

The controlled digital lending

An ongoing legal tussle in the United States between four major publishers and the Internet Archive (IA), which is a not-for-profit organisation trying to build a globally accessible digital library, has, once again, posed a fundamental question about the interface of copyright law and technological advancements — should copyright law protect the broader public interests or the commercial interests of the copyright holders?

The IA has archived more than 735 billion web pages, 41 million books and texts, 14.7 million audio recordings, 8.4 million videos, 4.4 million images, and 890,000 software programs. Within a short span of time, the IA has become a truly global digital library to access information, particularly for persons with disabilities. A substantial portion of the books digitised by IA are outside copyright protection and are accessible without restrictions.

Publishers have alleged that around 3.6 million books, which have also been available to borrow under some conditions, are actually copyrighted. They have been particularly upset by the 'National Emergency Library' that the IA set up at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein the IA relaxed the conditions for lending.

The publishers have argued that the IA thus violated the diverse rights provided under copyright law for 127 titles published by them. The IA rebutted by arguing that books under copyright protection are lent only in a regulated manner, through 'Controlled Digital Lending' (CDL), and should, therefore, be considered to be 'fair use' under United States copyright law.

Understanding Controlled Digital Lending

The IA's CDL model follows the lending approach generally seen in physical libraries, where if one copy is owned, that



copy can be loaned to one person at a time. So, the IA avails one digital copy of each non-circulating print book it has stored.

Also, irrespective of the number of physical copies of that book that libraries participating in the IA's digitisation project own, for the purpose of digital lending it counts as only one additional copy per library. For example, if libraries of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, the Indian Institute of Science, and the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) were partners in the IA's digitisation project and each of these institutions had six physical copies of a particular book on health law, the CDL model would ensure that readers could borrow no more than three copies of that book at a time.

But in a decision that can have far-reaching consequences for the future of CDL, the district court for the Southern District of New York (SDNY) has ruled in the motions for summary judgments that the IA's activities violated various rights vested on publishers under copyright law, and that the activities do not constitute 'fair use' under the same law.

CDL and the public interest

Conversations with librarians indicate

that lending physical copies of books from libraries, including at India's leading universities in India, has been on the decline. But that does not mean the demand for reading books is going down so much as that people's reading habits are changing. Closing physical libraries at the height of the pandemic may have just accelerated this shift. Today, many people prefer to read books on devices such as their smartphones and tablets.

The CDL is a positive response to this trend; it also helps bridge the gap between urban and rural, and the privileged and unprivileged, readers vis-à-vis access to books, because it allows even people in the remotest villages to access books from libraries that are far away. It is also evident that CDL initiatives ease access to many books that may have gone out of print or may not be available to access in many physical libraries.

By making books accessible to readers, the CDL invokes enormous public benefits for education, research, and cultural participation. However, the court concluded that the public benefits highlighted by the IA "cannot outweigh the market harm to the publishers". In this regard, the court overlooked some

of the evidence the IA produced with regard to the works in the suit, which indicated that even when the IA was engaging in CDL, the sales of print and electronic copies of these titles from the publisher's preferred platforms were not affected.

While assessing the public benefits vis-à-vis potential economic losses for copyright holders, the court also ignored the insights of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Google LLC vs Oracle America, Inc.*, (2021). In that landmark decision, the court suggested that when determining the potential market effects as part of the 'fair use' analysis, one would have to also weigh the public benefits of copying against potential financial losses for copyright holders.

India and CDL

Though India is yet to have a major CDL initiative, some universities such as the NLSIU have initiated major digitisation projects that can facilitate CDL in future. The outcome in the IA litigation will in turn have considerable ramifications for such initiatives, in India and elsewhere. In addition, even current lending practices in physical libraries could be threatened if other courts followed the SDNY district court's logic, in prioritising the economic interests of just one of the stakeholders over the broader public interest.

It is high time to remind ourselves that the copyright system is not just about protecting the interests of copyright holders, but, equally, about protecting the rights of the users of copyrighted works, and thus the broader public interest.

Arul George Scaria is an associate professor at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU). Views are personal



VINOD THOMAS BELIEVES CARBON TAX CAN PAVE WAY FOR DECARBONISATION AS A WINNING DEVELOPMENT FORMULA

It's time to put a price on carbon emissions

In the absence of a price for the use of natural resources such as air and forests, environmental destruction has been part of every country's recipe for boosting GDP growth. But the consequence of this approach has been the relentless emission of carbon, causing runaway climate change. It is time, starting with the biggest economies of the G-20, to agree on valuing nature, including by pricing carbon effluents. India can take the lead, as president of the G-20 this year, in carbon pricing, which will open unexpected avenues of decarbonisation.

Ways of pricing

Three ways of pricing carbon are: the establishment of a carbon tax domestically, as in Korea and Singapore; the use of an emissions trading system (ETS), as in the European Union (EU) and China; and the application of an import tariff on the carbon content, as the EU is proposing. Some 46 countries price carbon, although covering only 30% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and at an average price of only \$6 a ton of carbon, a fraction of the estimated harm from the pollution. The International Monetary Fund has proposed price floors of \$75, \$50, and \$25 a ton of carbon for the United States, China, and India, respectively. It believes this could help achieve a 23% reduction in global emissions by 2030.

The economy-wide benefits of carbon pricing in terms of damages avoided (plus revenue generation) generally outweighed the cost it imposed on individual industries in the EU, British Columbia, Canada, and Sweden. A key dynamic is that carbon pricing,



by signalling a price for cleaner air, makes investment in renewable energy such as solar and wind, which has huge prospects in India, more attractive.

Impact on India

Among the three ways of pricing, India could find a carbon tax appealing as it can directly discourage fossil fuels, while raising revenues which can be invested in cleaner sources of energy or used to protect vulnerable consumers. It could replace the more inefficient scheme of petroleum taxes which are not directly aimed at emissions. By the way, Saudi Arabia and Russia are at the low end of gasoline prices (including taxes and subsidies), China and India in the mid-range, and Germany and France at the high end. In most countries, including India, fiscal policy has set in place the basic structures needed to implement a carbon tax. For example, they can be woven into road-fuel taxes, which are established in most places, and extended to industry and agriculture. Policymakers have to choose the

tax rate, which varies widely from Japan's \$2.65 a ton of CO₂ to Denmark's \$165 a ton set for 2030.

India could start with the IMF figure of \$25 a ton. The main obstacle is the argument by industrial firms about losing their competitive advantage to exporters from countries with a lower carbon price. It would stand to reason, therefore, for all high, middle and low-income countries to set the same rate within each bracket.

It might also make sense to allow companies to use high-quality international carbon credits to offset up to a certain percentage of their taxable emissions. The EU excludes transport, where higher costs would have been passed on to consumers directly. Singapore provides vouchers for consumers hit by utility price rise, and California uses proceeds from the sales of carbon permits partly to subsidise purchases of electric cars. Some make a case for exempting "emission intensive trade exposed" enterprises from the carbon tax, but output-based rebates would be superior ways of doing the same.

Communication is important

All said, any type of carbon pricing faces stiff political opposition. When a new, conservative government took office, Australia repealed the 2012 tax just two years after it was instituted. Recent months have revealed the political pressures on decarbonisation: soaring energy prices led the EU to sell millions of emission permits, causing a 10% drop in carbon prices. Sweden may have handled some of these political constraints as well as any by presenting the carbon tax as part of a bigger fiscal package that lowers other taxes and includes new social safety nets. Communicating the idea of wins at the societal level, even in the presence of some individual producers' losses, is vital.

A high enough carbon tax across China, the U.S., India, Russia, and Japan alone (more than 60% of global effluents), with complementary actions, could have a notable effect on global effluents and warming; it could also pave the way to seeing decarbonisation as a winning development formula. As carbon pricing gains acceptance, the first movers will be the most competitive. India, as president at the G-20 summit this September, can play a lead role by tabling global carbon pricing in the existential fight against climate change.

Vinod Thomas is the author of a new book, 'Risk and Resilience in the Era of Climate Change'. This article draws on work with the Centre for Social and Economic Progress. Views are personal



BOOKS: REVIEW

Enlightening corporate lessons meet engaging storytelling

“Connecting Fables with the Corporate World” by Dr. A. E. Kumar is a captivating book that merges valuable corporate lessons with enthralling storytelling, making it an excellent choice for anyone seeking insights into the business realm. As a graduate of IIM Ahmedabad (1990-92), Dr. Kumar utilizes his extensive corporate experience to present readers with informative examples and insightful lessons.

This engaging book is composed of 54 stories, which Dr. Kumar has thoughtfully arranged into five distinct sections: Self, Peers, Boss, Work Environment, and Entrepreneurship. These sections provide a comprehensive view of various aspects of the corporate world. Each chapter begins with an intriguing story and proceeds with an account from Dr. Kumar's own corporate life, illustrating

the lesson he learned from the story. To conclude each chapter, there is a section dedicated to self-reflection, prompting readers to consider the morals of the story and how they might apply to their own professional lives. This interactive format fosters a deep connection and engagement with the book from start to finish.

For example, in the chapter titled "Merchant Sleeping Under a Banyan Tree," Dr. Kumar underscores the importance of accepting management's decisions. He recalls his initial disappointment upon receiving a Jeep from the administration instead of a more luxurious car. However, a month later, the Jeep was involved in an accident, which left all three occupants with serious injuries but alive. An insurance surveyor commented that if it had been a car, all three passengers would have likely died. This experience

We can easily connect our experiences with the stories and the way it has given the exposure of corporate world

taught Dr. Kumar not to be overly critical of management's decisions and to recognize that events often unfold for a reason.

Dr. Kumar's talent for narrating stories and connecting them with incidents from his corporate journey makes the content highly accessible and enjoyable, ensuring readers remain engrossed. The book's relatability and applicability to various industries allow readers from diverse backgrounds to either acquire new knowledge or reflect on their own experiences. "Connecting Fables with the Corporate



Connecting Fables with the Corporate World
By Dr. A. E. Kumar
Clever Fox Publishing
278 pages; Rs349

World" is a must-read for both executives seeking fresh insights and MBA students aiming to enhance their understanding of the corporate landscape.

In summary, "Connecting Fables with the Corporate World" by Dr. A. E. Kumar is a unique and engaging book that combines enlightening corporate lessons with gripping storytelling. With 54 stories organized into five sections addressing different aspects of the corporate world, Dr. Kumar offers readers an all-encompassing perspective. The book's format encourages readers to reflect on the morals of each story and relate them to their own careers, fostering a deep connection with the content. Dr. Kumar's ability

to present stories and incidents from his corporate life in an easily understandable manner captivates readers, making this book suitable for individuals from various industries. Whether you are an executive seeking new insights or an MBA student wanting to delve deeper into the corporate world, "Connecting Fables with the Corporate World" is a highly recommended read.

"Selection of fables, narration of experiences is engrossing. We can easily connect our experiences with the stories and the way it has given the exposure of corporate world. The author has given the details of his journey, ups and downs of career, lessons in a hard way, working with different leaders, his involvement while working with farmers, workers, traders and many of his colleagues," wrote a reader on Amazon.

"One can easily relate it to own voyage and can put oneself in his shoes. The insights, moral and incidents bring us closer to the author's experiences. The language is lucid and stories are fabulous," added the reader.

Affordable Generic medicines to reach rural Last-mile soon Davaindia

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

All rural areas of India and the poor will soon be deriving the benefits of "high-quality yet affordable" generic medicines, as Zota Healthcare Ltd envisions "redefining the Indian retail pharmacy landscape" in this regard.

Dr Sujit Paul, Group CEO of Zota Healthcare Ltd, said here recently that Davaindia's mission is bringing about a +sea change+ in the health sector through making "affordable, high-quality generic medicines accessible to all citizens of India including in remote areas, especially amid the daily rising costs of the Indian healthcare sector and branded medicines."

Highlighting the company's "DavaIndia" vision and milestones for achievement in 2023 through redefining India's retail pharmacy landscape, Dr Paul



lamented the fact that Indian awareness of generic medicine remains low.

"As awareness of generic drugs increases, Davaindia the largest private generic pharmacy chain - has a substantial competitive advantage. Also, the comparative cost savings of upto 90% on medicine bills provided by Davaindia will be a significant factor," he said.

Focusing on the role of Zota Healthcare Ltd and Davaindia mission in the evolution

of healthcare over the years, he also noted the rising costs due to inflation, changing facets and need for awareness about healthcare including generic medicines in India.

Replying to media questions, Paul said generic medicines manufacture and quality control adheres to WHO-mandated, built-in Q.C processes while still giving the price benefit to the customer at a very little profit margin to its manufacturers.

"There is no compromise in our quality control, even though we operate on a very thin profit line yet through an AI module where profits can be managed," he reiterated. Noting that Davaindia is the only private generic manufacturer in India that has its "own store" suppliers, he said the company's 99-plus stores and 500 franchisees are meeting the consumers' needs even as it continues expansion into A, B, C cities and rural areas.

Quality wires, cables highlighted by R R Kabel in Fire safety

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Fire Safety is the new mantra in Maharashtra after awareness about fires in dwelling structures using low-quality power cables that often cause short-circuit was noted and the Maharashtra Government recently passed a Bill mandating stringent regulations for fire safety in residential and industrial buildings.

Increasing fire incidents and related tragedies witnessed the Government ushering in the "Fire Safety Bill" for 22-plus flooded buildings including residential and industrial structures with hazardous activities that mandated appointing a fire safety officer along with setting up an IOT fire safety mechanism for 24/7 monitoring of potential fire incidents.

The Bill has also mandated a



"bi-annual fire safety audit" to assess preparedness with violators facing upto three months imprisonment and penalty of Rs 1 lakh.

Dr. P S Rahangdale, Retired Deputy Municipal Commissioner - Disaster Management (MCGM), Ex-Chief Fire Officer (Maharashtra fire Service said "ASCI data noted that around 73% of all human fatalities in past 10 years were caused by electrocution due to electrical fires, while human error not the electricity was the culprit."

"However, a lesser known truth is that during a fire break-out, smoke inhalation kills more

people than the fire itself, and though the new Bill highlights fire safety guidelines, the emphasis should be on addressing the underlying issue of using "appropriate wire, cable and electrical fixtures" in residential and commercial property."

"During a fire, the Chimney effect boosts fire smoke and impairs visibility alongside depleting oxygen, which impacts the affected person's decision-making process," he said while noting that the fire audit of buildings needed to be strictly carried out, besides also having the proper fire safety mechanisms.

Tanishq unveils 'Celeste X Sachin Tendulkar' diamond solitaire collection

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

It was a "match" made on earth of "brilliant" diamonds and "sparkling" cricketing wit, that met on green turf amidst the cool sea breeze off Bandra coastline in North-west Mumbai recently.

The occasion was the launch of the 100 'Celeste X Sachin Tendulkar' limited edition, rare, design-crafted with multitude of sparkling nano-facets, "diamond solitaire" collection titled "Celeste" by Tanishq at the hands of Indian cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar.

The collection, handcrafted with utmost care, precision and perfection, paid tribute to Tendulkar's remarkable achievements, including celebrating the "Master Blaster's" 100 international centuries during his 50th birthday year of 2023.



Noting that the "Celeste diamond" highlighted sparkling "golden memories" of India's 'World Cup' victory in 2011, Sachin Tendulkar told media said the +Tanishq Celeste+ represented a carefully curated innovative collection that celebrated the unifying spirit of cricket as well.

The cricketer's wit came to the fore at the Celeste 'precious stones' launch, when it was recalled how he blew away his critics by simply stating "Turn Thrown Stones Into +MILESTONES+."

Mykare health bags KMA excellence 2023 award in the best IT startup of the year category



FW DESK

Mykare Health has been awarded the prestigious KMA Excellence 2023 Award in the 'Best IT Startup Of The Year' category. The award ceremony was held on March 17, 2023 in Kochi, India. Mr. Srinivas V Dempo, Chairman (House of Dempo, Goa) & President (All India Management Association) and Rekha Sethi, Director General (AIMA) handed over the award to the zealous, young team of Mykare Health. The KMA Excellence Award is considered one of the most distinguished and respected accolades for Indian startups. The award recognises and honours startups that have displayed exceptional growth, innovation, and sustainability in their respective fields.

HÜBNER opens new plant in India

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

HUBNER opens new plant near Bengaluru, the HÜBNER Group is strengthening its presence in India and significantly expanding its production capacities for the mobility markets in the Asia-Pacific region. Together with business partners and other guests of honor, company owner Reinhard Hübner, Managing Director Kai Mentel and Site Manager Uwe Sperber took part in the official inauguration ceremonies for the "Namma Factory".

Kai Mentel, Managing Di-



rector of the HÜBNER Group said, "The new 'Namma Factory' makes it possible for HÜBNER to operate more effectively, more flexibly and with shorter delivery routes in India's growing market. "With local production at the new location, we are not only meeting localization requirements and reliably serving the needs of our customers,

we are also strengthening the entire global production network of the HÜBNER Group."

Kai Mentel said, for HÜBNER, India is a location with great manufacturing potential for the mobility markets in India itself as well as in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. "In line with our strategy, we are also focusing on proximity to our customers in India," emphasizes Kai Mentel. "We want to manufacture in India for India. And, as the HÜBNER Group, we aim to strengthen local know-how and to expand local engineering expertise."

In "Namma Factory", HÜBNER will primarily produce gangway systems for rail vehicles. With its products, HÜBNER is represented in renowned projects throughout the subcontinent. Ongoing major projects include the metros in the Indian capital Delhi and in the financial metropolis of Mumbai, as well as the metro in the Australian city of Sydney. Another HÜBNER India customer is the local manufacturer BEML, which will purchase a total of 800 gangway systems for metro lines 2 and 7 in Mumbai by 2025.

CM Naveen Patnaik invites Japanese investors to Odisha

MANPREET SINGH
Bhubaneswar

The Government of Odisha, India in association with the Indian Embassy in Japan, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), hosted the Odisha Business Meet Tokyo 2023 on 5th April 2023. Mr Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr Kazuya Nakajo, Executive Vice-President, JETRO, and Senior Officials from the Government of Odisha, IPICOL & FICCI were present in the meeting, which was attended by over 200 delegates, representing various industries from across Japan.

Pradeep Kumar Jena, Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha, welcomed the august gathering and shed light on how Odisha has been one of the major breakout states in the country in terms of development, registering impressive GSDP growth rates year-after-year and industrializing at break-neck speed under the leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Kazuya Nakajo, Executive



Vice-President, JETRO, highlighted the emerging business opportunities between Japan and India. He termed the partnership between the two countries more as a "Familial Bond" rather than a "Business Relationship". Nakajo spoke about the various upcoming measures being taken by the Government of India including the creation of large-scale industrial infrastructure across the country and urged his Japanese friends to seriously consider major investments in India. He also highlighted Odisha's strategic location and natural resource advantage as a key to Odisha being an attractive investment destination for Japanese investors.

Mayank Joshi (IFS), Deputy Head of Mission, Indian Embassy of Japan, highlighted the ease of doing business reforms carried out by India and its impact in making a robust industrial ecosystem across states.

Modicare Limited amongst India's Best Workplaces Building a Culture of Innovation by All 2023

FW DESK
New Delhi

Modicare Limited, one of India's leading direct-selling companies, has been recognized by Great Place To Work® India among - India's Best Workplaces™ Building a Culture of Innovation by All 2023. The recognition is a testament to the exemplary culture the organization has fostered by placing priority on its key ethos and values such as respect, transparency, collaboration, and empowerment. As the global authority on workplace culture, Great Place To Work brings 30 years of groundbreaking research and data to help every place become a great place to work for all. Their proprietary platform and For All™ Model helps companies evaluate the experience of every employee, with exemplary workplaces becoming Great Place To Work Certified™ or receiving recognition on a coveted Best Workplaces List. In this year for India, based on a rigorous evaluation methodology, 75 organizations among India's Best Workplaces Building a Culture of Innovation by All 2023 have been recognized. These organizations among other practices particularly excel both in people practices that they have crafted for their employees and proactively acting on the feedback to create a High Trust Culture.

Scandron and CriticalLog India Collaborate to provide drone-based logistics solutions across 160 cities in India

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Scandron Pvt. Ltd, the manufacturing logistic drones in India, and CriticalLog India Pvt. Ltd, a technology-driven premium logistics company, announced a strategic partnership to provide drone-based logistics solutions during the press conference held in Bengaluru. The partnership is valued at 500-600 crores and will



cover hub-to-hub drone deliveries across 160 cities Pan India. Under this innovative partnership, CriticalLog will handle

all customer-facing operations and Scandron will manage all drone-related operations. Drone deliveries would be used for both internal logistics and for third-party customer requirements. This marks a first-of-its-kind alliance in India, highlighting the importance of leveraging drone technology to meet the growing demand for critical and time-sensitive logistics requirements in the B2B segment.

Demand for Tax Professionals saw 47% growth: Justdial

MUMBAI: Justdial, India's No.1 hyperlocal search engine, has reported a significant surge in demand for chartered accountants and income tax consultants in FY-2023. The report highlights that the first quarter of FY 2023 saw a 47% growth in demand, as compared to the same quarter of FY 2022. The non-metro like Indore (72%), Chandigarh (71%) and Lucknow (59%) witnessed the highest ever growth in the same period.

According to the report, the demand for finance professionals is driven by the resumption of economic activities post-COVID, and the critical time for tax returns is from January to June. While the government is simplifying the taxation regime, the option of two tax regimes and intricate details of the taxation laws, necessitates expert guidance while tax filing.

As expected, the report observed growth in searches from Q3-FY 2023 to Q4-FY 2023, especially in non-metro cities like Karnal (36%), Mangalore (22%) and Surat (15%). Among Tier-1 cities, Chennai witnessed a 12% growth, while Ahmedabad saw a spike of 10%.

Scholarships Eliminating Braindrain amidst virtual 'Indian Silicon Valley for Medicos'

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Eliminating Braindrain alongside creating a symbolic 'Indian Silicon Valley' for medicos in India seems to be heading for reality, even as many as 250 Pan-India medical students (final year MBBS and MD/DNB) won scholarship grants totaling Rs 1.7 crores un-



der the Metropolis' MedEngage Scholarship Program 2023 to follow their visionary dreams in the field of medicine. Dr Sushil Shah, Chairman, Metropolis, said here

recently that while the scholarships were given through the Metropolis Foundation in recognition of the students' achievements in academic scores, extra-curricular activities and research papers/thesis presentations, while about 50% of them were women in the program, which witnessed the related registrations coming from 516 cities in 29 states of India.

Impact of Climate Change in India

SATISH SINGH

The climate is gradually getting warmer, that is, the temperature is increasing, for which there are many reasons, but pollution can be considered as its biggest factor. According to an estimate, within 10 to 15 years, the global temperature may increase by 1.5 °C, while by the year 2060 it may increase by 2 °C.

71 percent of the Earth's surface is water and 29 percent is land. There are two ice sheets on Earth. The first covers most of Greenland, the world's largest island, while the second covers the Antarctic continent. The ice sheet in the Antarctic covers about 14 million square kilometres. In other words, its area is equal to the combined area of the United States of America and Mexico. In such a situation, if the temperature of the earth increases, then the ice will melt and the sea level will rise, due to which many cities located in the coastal areas will be drowned. Due to this, many

other side effects will also come to the fore, due to which there will be economic loss as well as there will be many dangers for human existence.

Overall impact on India

Today the negative effects of climate change are being seen in almost all parts of the country. Himalayas and coastal areas in the north and east, coastal areas in the south and west and all parts of central India are affected by it. According to the latest report of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IPCC) of the United Nations, due to climate change, problems like increase in rainfall, floods, droughts, landslides, and land erosion will arise here due to India's climate being monsoon. Weather patterns will also change. There will be a feeling of cold in summer and of heat in winter.

Increase in flood frequency

According to an estimate, in the coming decades, about 35 million people living in coastal areas in India will have to face floods. The population living on the banks of both the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers may



have to face more floods. Other cities situated on the banks of the river will also be affected by this. We have been battling this problem for years. According to the Central Water Commission, from 1953 to 2017, more than 1 lakh people have died in India only due to floods. Due to floods, the quality of water will also decline and there will be a huge shortage in potable water.

Diseases will increase

Many people will die due to diseases like cholera, gastroenteritis and hepatitis in areas affected by excessive rains or floods. According to a World Bank report, 20 percent of the deaths due to floods and flood-

borne diseases in the world occur only in India.

Water crisis will deepen

40 percent of India's population will face water crisis by 2050. This estimate is not at all exaggerated, because at present about 33 percent of the people in the country are facing the problem of water crisis. According to the United Nations, by the year 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will face the problem of water crisis. Due to lack of water, by the year 2045, about 13 crore people will have to leave their homes and villages. According to the international organization "Water Aid", by the year 2030, water

will be finished in 21 cities of the world. By the year 2040, there will be no drinking water in 33 countries of the world including India.

Reduction in crop production

The consequences of climate change are being seen in India for the past several years. Every year, due to climate change, either crops are not produced in lakhs of hectares of land, or the expected crops are not produced, due to which there is a shortage of food grains in the country. On one hand, there is economic loss due to reduction in the yield of crops and on the other hand, due to not getting enough food, the government has to spend huge amount on the treatment of sick people and people are also becoming victims of death.

According to the data available on the website of the National Disaster Management Authority, due to climate change, farming could not be done or expected production not seen on 47.13 lakh hectares of land in the financial year (FY) 2009-10. Similarly, in the FY 2010-11, farming could not be

done or expected production not seen on 47.13 lakh hectares of land. In the financial year, 2016-17, it was 25.49 lakh hectare land, whereas in FY 2017-18, it was 47.44 lakh hectare land and in FY 2018-19, it was 17.01 lakh hectare land. In an average, the quantity of land is mounting.

Due to the reduction in crop production, there is a possibility of a huge increase in the price of cereals, which can have a negative impact on food security and economic growth. In the coming years, due to the increase in sea level and water crisis, the agricultural sector will be adversely affected. The production of wheat, pulses, coarse grains etc., in the country may decrease by about 9 percent by 2050. The increase in carbon emissions could reduce maize production in southern India by up to 17 percent.

Monetary Loss

We cannot quantify exact monetary loss due to climate change. However, we can draw roughly sketch of it. Agriculture in India is still dependent on the monsoon. Therefore, due to climate change, when there will be flood or drought or if

the production of crops will be adversely affected due to changing weather, then they will have a direct impact on agriculture. About 70 percent of the country's population still lives in villages and the agriculture sector contributes about 14 percent to India's gross domestic product (GDP). Of India's approximately 121 crore population, 83.3 crore live in rural areas, while 37.7 crore live in urban areas. In such a situation, the rural economy can be destroyed by climate change. Some big industries also get their raw material from agriculture. Like jute, sugarcane, mustard, potato etc. In such a situation, it would be appropriate to say that the development of the country can get a big blow due to climate change.

Who is responsible?

The question is bound to arise, when all countries know that climate change can wipe out human existence. Therefore, it is the collective responsibility of all countries to work together to reduce this menace. The countries which are leading in spreading pollution should take further action with

responsibility in this regard. India was ranked 8th in the Climate Change Performance Index in the year 2023, while other developed countries including China were far ahead in carbon emissions.

Initiative for solution

Recently, in the Russian city of Glasgow, India urged the developed countries of the world to create a special fund to deal with the effects of climate change, but the expected progress could not be made in the matter.

Conclusion

To solve the problem, India has taken the initiative to create a global fund, which can be considered very important, because this danger can be reduced to some extent only by reducing carbon emissions and with the help of money. Since the developed countries are also rich and technically capable, therefore, they should play an effective role in dealing with this problem.

Satish Singh, Mumbai
Based Senior Columnist,
views are personal

HDFC Bank garners record Rs 1.5 tn deposits in a quarter

MUMBAI: HDFC Bank has exceeded its target of garnering Rs 1 trillion in deposits during a quarter for the first time since it announced its merger with HDFC Ltd in April last year.

During the January–March quarter (Q4) of FY23, the country's largest private sector lender mopped up over Rs 1.5 trillion in deposits. This is a record for the bank, which saw its deposit base touch Rs 18.88 trillion.

According to the bank's disclosure to the exchanges, its deposits grew by 21 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in Q4, a multi-quarter high. Sequentially also, deposits saw a growth — of 8.7 per cent. HDFC Bank's quarterly growth is much higher than the industry, which is growing around 10 per cent.

However, the bank has fallen short of its yearly target of Rs 4 trillion for deposits in a financial year. In FY23, the bank mopped up Rs 3.24 trillion, up 45 per cent compared to last year (FY22). It had earlier garnered over Rs 1 trillion in deposits in a quarter only once since 2015.



In Q4 of FY22, deposit mobilisation by the bank was Rs 1.13 trillion. "QoQ (quarter-on-quarter) deposit accretion was Rs 1.5 trillion, taking the full-year deposit accretion to Rs 3.2 trillion, which is encouraging in our view. As of March 2023, system deposit growth was 10.3 per cent. While we don't have March 31, 2023, system deposit growth numbers — considering that nine-month YTD (year-to-date) incremental market share was 19 per cent — HDFC Bank could have ended FY23 with an incremental market share of 20 per cent in our view. This is very encouraging," said Suresh Ganapathy, associate director, Macquarie Capital, in a note.

"The over 1,500 branches likely to be added in FY23 will further give impetus to deposit mobilisation in FY24. For a Rs 4-trillion deposit mobilisation

target in FY24E, HDFC Bank needs to achieve 25 per cent YoY growth in incremental deposits for FY24E. This is achievable in our view," he added. The bank set itself a target of mobilising Rs 1 trillion in deposits every quarter, aggregating to Rs 4 trillion in a financial year. This is because it would need approximately Rs 3.5 trillion in deposits to maintain the 18–20 per cent growth it has sustained over the last few years on the asset sides. Around Rs 5–6 trillion of HDFC Ltd assets will also get added to the bank's existing assets when the merger takes place.

"For many years now, the bank has been growing at 18–20 per cent. Currently, the bank has about Rs 14 trillion worth of advances. There will be about Rs 5–6 trillion worth of HDFC Ltd advances. If the bank keeps growing at 18–20 per cent, the balance sheet will double automatically. Assuming, the bank has Rs 19 trillion on the day of merger, and it grows at 18 per cent, then it will need approximately Rs 3.5 trillion in deposits (per year)," said a source.

Paytm boosts offline payments leadership with 6.8 mn devices, GMV grows 40 pc

NEW DELHI: Leading payments and financial services company Paytm on Wednesday said it has achieved a new milestone in offline payments with 6.8 million devices deployed, while consumer engagement is the highest on the Paytm Super App at 90 million average monthly transacting users.

The merchant gross merchandise value (GMV) for the quarter (for three months ended March 2023) grew 40 per cent YoY to Rs 3.62 lakh crore (\$44 billion). Loan distribution, in partnership with top financial institutions, continues to gain scale. The total number of loans disbursed surged 82 per cent YoY to 11.9 million in the quarter with 4.1 million loans (63 per cent growth YoY) disbursed in the month of March 2023 through the Paytm platform. "Our payments consumer and merchant base offers a large addressable market, thereby providing a long runway for growth. We continue to work with our partners to remain focused on the quality of the book," the company said.

The company said in its stock exchange filing that "With our subscription as a service model, the strong adoption of devices drives subscription revenues and higher payment

volumes, while increasing the funnel for our merchant loan distribution." The Paytm Super App continues to drive higher user engagement for the company's comprehensive payment services. The average monthly transacting users (MTU) for the quarter at 90 million, registering a growth of 27 per cent YoY, reflects a continued expansion of Paytm's consumer base.

Paytm's loan distribution business, in partnership with top financial institutions, continues to gain scale. The total number of loans disbursed surged 82 per cent YoY to 11.9 million in the quarter with 4.1 million loans (63 per cent growth YoY) disbursed in the month of March 2023 through the Paytm platform. "Our payments consumer and merchant base offers a large addressable market, thereby providing a long runway for growth. We continue to work with our partners to remain focused on the quality of the book," the company said.



RBI pause to policy rate hike is prudent, India remains cushioned against global headwinds: ASSOCHAM

NEW DELHI: ASSOCHAM today welcomed the RBI decision to pause the rate hike cycle, retaining the benchmark REPO rate at 6.5 per cent, stating the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has taken a prudent stance in the wake of high level of volatility in the global financial markets and geo-political events.

"Even as the RBI's MPC was reviewing the credit policy for the last few days, ASSOCHAM had made out a strong case for a halt to the rate hike cycle. We must thank Governor Shaktikanta Das and other members of the MPC for responding to our call. In a way, the decision not to go in for any more rate increase would have surprised many as a larger expectation was on 25 basis points rise in the policy rates even as ASSOCHAM remained confident about the RBI striking a balance between reining in inflation and growth," ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said.

He said the policy statement has made a correct reading of the global economy and its possible impact on India which has done well in terms of growth, billed as



the fastest amongst the major economies without losing sight of the inflationary risks.

"RBI's growth projection of 6.5 per cent for FY24 as stated in the policy document, is in complete alignment with ASSOCHAM assessment. Our forecast of 6.5 per cent, as released in our media interaction on April 4, was undaunted by somewhat lower projections of 6.3 per cent of the World Bank".

While the fingerprint of the RBI policy statement is tilted in favour of further leash on inflation, it is understandable in the face of continuing volatility in the global markets. "Even though Indian banks stand in good stead

without the kind of risks faced by banks in the US or Europe, RBI has cautioned them about any unforeseen spillovers. The peremptory measures speak about the agility of the Indian banking regulator. Besides, our foreign exchange reserves are back to USD 600 billion plus, giving us more cushion to deal with any headwind which may flow eastward", said Sood.

ASSOCHAM also welcomed enabling loan accounts of the merchants with the all-pervasive UPI, stating "India is emerging as a champion in financial technologies that would help millions of MSMEs to better manage their trade finance".

Rise in PMI to 56.4 in March indicates expansion in manufacturing activity



NEW DELHI: S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) in March was recorded at 56.4 which is an increase from February's 55.3 marking a continued expansion in India's manufacturing sector activity. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in activity, while a sub-50 print is a sign of contraction. The March PMI print is at a three-month high which is the 21st consecutive 50-plus print for India's manufacturing PMI.

"India's manufacturing sector posted a remarkable performance at the end of the final fiscal quarter, as growth of factory orders and production quickened to the strongest in three months," S&P Global releasing the data. "Firms suggested that marketing efforts bore fruit. Demand resilience and competitive pricing were also cited as growth drivers," it added. With new export orders rising in March foreign demand for Indian goods increased too. However, compared to historical levels, the rise in new export orders was subdued. The improvement in manufacturing activity will brighten the mood of policymakers who have seen the sector take a backseat in recent months while services activity has hit new highs, it said.

Digitalization : A sui generis catalyst of Indian economy



DR. SAURABH GARG, CEO, UIDAI
Indispensability of digitalization as a foundational rail to almost every activity in an economy is well acknowledged. Growing internet penetration, affordable data, technological innovations, and above all, the government's thrust on building digital infrastructure is ensuring faster delivery, better targeting, and improved accountability.

The Digital Impact During the period 2014–2019, India's core digital economy increased from 5.4% to 8.5% of GVA. The digital economy grew 2.4 times faster than the overall economy during the same period. The digitally dependent economy accounted for around 22% of the total economy in 2019, as per an RBI bulletin recently published.

- Ensures public availability of digital components for more participative service delivery systems,
- Triggers market-led innovations,
- Facilitate more affordable & faster on-boarding of services
- Ensures development of more transparent systems and thus increased user trust.

The cascading effect of Digital India geared towards improving accessibility, affordability, connectivity, and inclusivity is now visible across India. Aadhaar, a key component of digital infrastructure, through its inherent virtue of uniqueness has become an important tool of digital governance in the country. Nearly 1700 welfare and good-governance schemes of the central and state governments using Aadhaar is a testimony to that. Use of Aadhaar has ensured benefits reaching the intended beneficiaries without leakages. For example in PDS, significant reduction in diversion of grains owing to computerized supply chain management, removal of nearly 47 mn fake/duplicate ration cards after Aadhaar seeding of 750 mn PDS beneficiary data and automation of fair price shops resulted into savings worth USD 12 bn. Similarly, in cooking gas subsidy scheme (PAHAL), savings worth USD 8.5 bn and under farmer support scheme, a reduction of 12 mn metric tons of fertilizer sale to retailers resulting into a saving of USD 1.2 bn have been recorded.

Increasing Digital Penetration
The country currently having more than 1.17 bn mobile telecom subscribers, over 600 mn smart-phone users and 840 mn internet connections, a 200 percent increase in rural internet subscriptions between

2015 and 2021 as against 158% increase in urban areas, covering all villages with at least 4G mobile services is set to further reduce the rural-urban digital divide. Efforts are also underway to make the low-cost feature mobile phones even more powerful capability-wise; thus, making the digital economy more inclusive.

The recently launched 'Digital India BHASHINI' project seeks to enable easy access to the internet and digital services in regional languages, including voice-based access, is poised to take care of the diversity of languages with aim to provide for solutions in a medium that people can intuitively relate to.

Digital Inclusion driving Formalization
Digitalization accelerates economic growth through higher financial inclusion, greater formalization, increased efficiencies and enhanced opportunities. Some of the successful digital public infrastructure supporting this



endeavour include Aadhaar, UPI, Co-Win, DigiLocker, Diksha etc. In terms of the scale achieved, more than 94.5% of country's population now have Aadhaar; and more than 2.2 bn Aadhaar authentications is happening per month. Similarly 5.5 bn UPI-based payment transactions with a 75-fold increase in last 5 years are made every month; 1.1 bn CoWin registrations; 140 mn users with a DigiLocker account and 5.6 bn official digital documents available in the DigiLocker repository; registration of 286.5 mn unorganized workers on e-shram portal, 4.4 mn street vendors on PM-SVANidhi and 12.7 mn enterprises on Udyam portal; increase in GST payers base from 7 mn to 14 mn during 2017 to 2022 etc. are indicative of how things are shaping up.

Open and Participative Digital Innovations
In India, the supportive environment for innovation by both, government and private

players is driving innovations in the digital space. In the domain of new-age technologies such as AI/ML, India is a top contributor to open-source AI projects. For instance, AI publications from India are growing at 18%, faster than the US, China, EU and the UK. A higher percentage of IT workers in India possess AI skills than any other G20 country.

The government, on its part, is also actively collaborating with industry for designing and testing newer applications/use-cases through a stream of their own captive sandboxes and test-beds. The role of iSpirt for IndiaStack open public platforms, NPCI for fast digital payments, ONDC for open digital commerce, the user entities in the UIDAI ecosystem are some of the examples of the PPP model is speeding up digitalization.

India has realized the imperative of using, to the extent possible, standards, technologies and tools that are essentially open-source thus avoiding vendor lock-in and high costs associated with use of proprietary technologies. At the same time, this strategy is also encouraging interoperability among and scalability of, various solutions built on top of open tools, while enabling affordability.

Dr. Saurabh Garg, CEO, UIDAI, views are personal

Rs 27K cr IRB Infrastructure Trust listed on NSE



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

IRB Infrastructure Trust was listed here today on the National Stock Exchange as the "1st Private InvIT" listed on the NSE, following SEBI guidelines — on listing framework for the non-listed Infrastructure Investment Trusts — that came into force few months ago.

IRB Infrastructure Trust — a privately-placed InvIT sponsored by India's largest integrated highways infrastructure developer IRB Infrastructure Developers Limited with investment from the GIC Affiliates, a Sovereign Wealth Fund of Singapore — is the 3rd Entity in the IRB Infra Group to get listed, where IRB is the Sponsor and Project Manager of this Trust. Virendra D Mhaikar, Chairman of IRB Infrastructure Trust and CMD of the Sponsors IRB Infrastructure Developers Limited, said, "The idea behind presenting this future ready trust to public markets today — which is the third listing from IRB group — was to have better disclosure

norms and bring in more transparency." "The last four years witnessed the project portfolio of the Trust making stupendous progress in achieving a size of almost 27,000 Crores Enterprise Value with balance concession life of 18+ years," he said, adding, "This development platform of IRB with marquee investor like GIC — sovereign wealth fund of Singapore, will create immense value for the whole IRB group and provide strong growth potential going forward."

The valuation of the Trust units was determined basis third party evaluation and further endorsed by Trusts' investors as well. The value ascertained comes to around 16 times FY24 revenue, which will further keep appreciating with more projects coming in. The Sponsor of IRB Infrastructure Trust, IRB Infrastructure Developers Limited is India's "largest integrated, multi-national infrastructure developer with the largest project portfolio of 23 highway projects comprising around 16,000 lane Kms and enterprise value of Rs 62,000 Crores.

Stock market priority instead of bank



DR PS VOHRA
If we look at the data of economic savings in the Indian economy from the point of view of analysis, then we will find that the period from 2004 to 2010 can be identified as a golden time because during that period the percentage of economic savings and GDP continued to increase year after year.

In the year 2010, the economic savings was at the level of 36.9 percent, which is the highest level till date, because during that time the growth rate of the Indian economy was also increasing rapidly every year. Since the year 2011, there has been a decrease in the figures of economic savings and the reasons behind this are the decrease in the rate of economic growth, inflation going to the upper level and the feeling of dissatisfaction with the political power of the country in the first few years. In the meantime, the Corona epidemic also knocked in the form of a global crisis, which suddenly created uncertain physical crises as well as economic problems for the entire society. 2020–21, which was the starting year of Corona, during that time the economic savings in the Indian economy was 28 percent of GDP because a large number of people lost their jobs during the lockdown, yet the positive trend is evident from the fact that the year 2021–22,



Economic savings remained above 30 percent of GDP in . That is, the behaviour of financial savings is continuously intact among Indians.

Significantly, for the last few years, the banking sector has not been the center of main attraction, but the domestic savings of Indians are continuously increasing. Therefore, it is self-evident that many other sources of economic investment are getting included in the priorities of the people. For example, the prevalence of insurance increased very rapidly during the Corona epidemic. It is also necessary to clarify here that life insurance in India has always been a main source of financial investment along with banks. Every Indian receives the treatment of financial investment in life insurance as a family approach. During the Corona epidemic, since physical crises were very sudden and uncertain, the practice of medical insurance suddenly increased rapidly in the society during that time, but this practice could not take a permanent form and

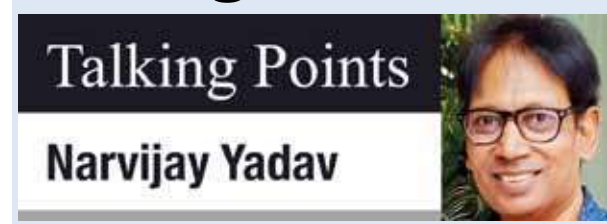
it saw a rapid decrease in the next financial year itself. This is a matter of great concern for the insurance business as to why insurance penetration is still very low in India today? During the year of Corona Pandemic, it had increased from 3.8 percent to 4.2 percent all of a sudden. It should be known that the global average figure of insurance is 7 percent and in many developed countries including America, Britain etc. it remains above 10 percent. Insurance companies must think in this regard whether the cost of premium in Indian society is not high in this context?

This is being confirmed with great prominence these days that now the economic savings of Indians are rapidly moving towards the Indian capital market. According to statistics, in the year 2021–22, one million new investors associated with the Indian capital market, who made financial investments through SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) in mutual funds. In this, more than 4 percent trend of domestic

savings has been seen towards the Indian capital market during one year itself. In this, both direct investment in equity and mutual funds have emerged as a major option. It would also be appropriate to mention here that in the last financial year, the option of investing in a large number of IPOs was also available for economic investment in the capital market, through which companies raised a large amount of capital from the Indian society. LIC's IPO was the most talked about. Among new-age startups, the IPOs of Paytm and Zomato also created a lot of buzz. Perhaps this was the main reason that even when there was a period of economic recession during the Corona epidemic, the Indian capital market continued to grow during that time because a large number of new investors joined the Indian capital market at that time. However, during that time the first priority of global investors remained India instead of China. It has also been seen that the tendency of Indians to invest in pension and provident fund has also increased a lot. However, these days the withdrawal of the old pension scheme is a political issue, due to which there may be a change in the attitude of the investors under the new pension scheme in the coming future.

Dr. P.S. Vohra, Academician, Financial Thinker & Newspaper Columnist, Views are personal

Gold glitters amid fears of recession



Talking Points Narvijay Yadav
The first week of April witnessed gold prices crossing the Rs 61,000 mark. After facing a highly volatile year in 2022, gold may also touch an all-time high mark of Rs 65,000 in the coming months. The investment demand is likely to gain pace as investors will buy gold as store value amid rising fears of recession.

NARVIJAY YADAV
Gold has always held a special place in the hearts of Indians. It is not only considered a symbol of wealth and prosperity but also has cultural and religious significance. In India, gold is an integral part of weddings and festivals, and it is customary for families to gift gold jewelry to their loved ones. Hence, gold prices in India have always been a matter of interest and concern. India is one of the largest consumers of gold globally, accounting for more than 20% of the total global demand. This demand is primarily driven by the country's cultural and religious traditions, as well as its large population. The demand for gold in India is not limited to jewellery, as people also invest in gold coins and bars as a hedge

against inflation and market uncertainties. The first week of April witnessed gold prices crossing the Rs 61,000 mark. After facing a highly volatile year in 2022, gold may also touch an all-time high mark of Rs 65,000 in the coming months. Gold prices in India are affected by various factors, such as global economic conditions, geopolitical tensions, currency exchange rates, and local demand and supply dynamics. International gold prices

are denominated in US dollars, and any fluctuations in the value of the dollar can have a significant impact on gold prices in India. A weak dollar tends to increase the demand for gold as it becomes relatively cheaper for buyers in countries with other currencies. Conversely, a strong dollar tends to reduce the demand for gold as it becomes relatively more expensive.

Another important factor that affects gold prices in India is the local demand and supply dynamics. Gold prices in India are largely influenced by the import duties, which are imposed by the government to regulate the inflow of gold into the country. The higher the import duty, the higher the gold prices in India. The demand for gold in India is also influenced by factors such as wedding season, festivals, and crop harvests, which tend to increase the disposable income of people and hence their ability to buy gold.

Gold prices are likely to rise mainly on the back of weakness in the dollar as the US Federal Reserve is likely to pause on rate hikes early next year and may even cut rates in Q4 2023. Due to the IMF's revised global GDP prediction, reducing inflation, the halt in interest rate hikes, the weakening dollar,

and China's reopening, the global commodities market is anticipated to exhibit a mixed trend in 2023 and the global economy is currently experiencing a slowdown. This is likely to have a mixed effect on the commodities market.

Global gold prices in 2022 had steadily declined despite rising inflation and geopolitical crisis. After hitting the all-time high point of above \$2,000 an ounce in March 2022, gold prices have constantly struggled. The prices have been fluctuating ever since US Fed started its hawkish interest rate hikes. Since then, gold prices have fluctuated globally amid the ever-rising US dollar and surging bond yields. In general, the rising rate of the US dollar and bonds is a distraction for gold investors as it is considered a non-yielding asset. In 2023, the investment demand is likely to gain pace as investors will buy gold as store value amid rising fears of recession. Global central banks purchased more than 400 tonnes of gold in Q3 of 2022, the largest single quarter of demand in the last few years. Looking at the current situation and recession fears, the central bank will continue to add gold to its reserves.

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

India's world class digital infra worth emulating by many nations: IMF

NEW DELHI: India has built a world-class digital public infrastructure which is transforming lives and economy and can be a lesson for many countries to follow, an IMF Working Paper said.

India Stack is the collective name of a set of commonly used digital public infrastructure (DPIs) in India. It consists of three different layers — unique identity (Aadhaar), complimentary payments systems (Unified Payments Interface, Aadhaar Payments Bridge, Aadhaar Enabled Payment Service), and data exchange (DigiLocker and Account Aggregator). Together they enable online, paperless, cashless, and privacy-respecting digital access to a variety of public and private services, a working paper titled 'Stacking up the Benefits: Lessons from India's Digital Journey' said.

The benefit of this investment is felt across the country and served India well during the pandemic, it said, adding, Aadhaar, helped facilitate the transfer of social safety net payments directly from the government treasury's accounts to beneficiaries' bank accounts, helping to reduce leakages, curb corruption and providing a tool to effectively reach households to increase



coverage. The government of India estimates that, up to March 2021, about 1.1 per cent of GDP in expenditure was saved due to the digital infrastructure and other governance reforms. "Using this digital infrastructure India was able to quickly provide support to an impressive share of poor households during the pandemic. In the first months of the pandemic about 87 per cent of poor households received at least one benefit," it said.

India Stack has been used as a platform to foster innovation and competition; expand markets; close gaps in financial inclusion; boost government revenue collection; and improve public expenditure efficiency.

Digital payments are now ubiquitous, UPI accounts for

68 per cent of all payment transactions by volume. The use of digital payments has expanded the customer base of smaller merchants, documenting their cash flow and improving access to finance. Roughly 4.5 million individuals and companies have benefited from easier access to financial services through the Account Aggregator, since it was first launched in August 2021, and adoption is increasing rapidly, it said. Digitalization has also supported formalization of the economy, as around 8.8 million new taxpayers registered for the GST between July 2017 and March 2022, contributing to buoyant government revenues in recent years.

The government service provision is streamlined; for example,

citizens can access documents issued by state and central government through one platform. Similarly, the India Stack has digitized and simplified Know Your Customer procedures, lowering costs; banks that use e-KYC lowered their cost of compliance from USD 12 to USD 6 cents, it said. The decrease in costs made lower income clients more attractive to service and generated profits to develop new products, it said. Citing an example of financial inclusion, the paper said, there was a push by the government in 2014 to provide access to a no-frills, low-cost bank account, that doubled the coverage of individuals with bank accounts. The Jandhan scheme targeted the financially underserved, especially rural women. Under this initiative 462.5 million bank accounts were opened in both urban and rural areas as of August 2022.

Using a digital backbone allowed India to scale its vaccine delivery quickly and overcome challenges such as large-scale internal migration, it said, adding, the technology underlying CoWIN has been deployed in Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Jamaica to help facilitate their vaccination programs.

Indian-American prof receives Young Urologist of the Year award

An Indian-American Associate Professor at New York-based Albert Einstein College of Medicine has been honored with the Young Urologist Award in recognition of her efforts and commitment to advance the development of fellow young urologists.

Dr Nitya Abraham, Program Director for the Montefiore Urology residency program, has mentored countless students, residents, fellows and junior faculty both at her institution and others in the New York region. "I'm grateful to my mentors over the years, my chair at Montefiore Medical Center, and of course, my parents and supportive husband, for molding and equipping me to



win this award," Abraham said in a statement. "At a time when rates of physician burnout are increasing, it is wonderful that the American Urological Association and its leaders are recognising the hard work of many young urologists across the country," she added.

According to the American Urological Association (AUA), a 'young' urologist is defined as someone (who has completed training) who has been in practice for 10 years or less. Abraham is also the Chair of the Executive Curriculum Committee for Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and has served the

AUA as an Oral Board Review Course faculty member. She is a member of the Society for Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine, and Urogenital Reconstruction (SUFU) Young Urologists Committee and social media committee. The awards committee described Abraham as a prolific researcher with a clinical research focus on the impact of social determinants of health on pelvic floor health.

She has received funding from the US Department of Defence for urinary diagnostic markers of interstitial cystitis, and is also a co-author of the AUA White Paper on Rationale and Strategies for Reducing Urologic Post-Operative Opioid Prescribing, a statement released by AUA said.

General Bajwa put pressure on me to restore ties with India: Imran Khan



NEW DELHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has said former army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa had pressured him to restore friendship with India, the media reported. Bajwa wanted friendship with India and put pressure on him for this, Khan was quoted as saying by The News. Bajwa said something one day and retracted it the next day. His accountability should be initiated within the army, he said. Answering a question about the general elections, the PTI chairman said if the elections were not held in 90 days, there would be no Constitution left in the country and then he would take direct action.

Canadian merchandise exports and imports decreased

Following strong increases in January, Canadian merchandise exports and imports decreased in February, according to the national statistical agency. Statistics Canada said on Wednesday that after increasing 3.5 per cent in January, total exports fell 2.4 per cent to C\$65 billion (\$48.1 billion) in February, reports Xinhua news agency. In real, or volume terms, total exports decreased 0.9 per cent, following a 4.8 per cent increase in January. After increasing 3.6 per cent in January, total imports fell 1.3 per cent to C\$64.6 billion in February. In real, or volume terms, total imports were down 0.8 per cent. In February, monthly service exports were down 1.3 per cent to C\$14 billion.

German economy to grow 0.3% in 2023 : Report

Germany's economy is recovering faster than previously expected, with GDP set to grow by 0.3 per cent in 2023, according to a joint forecast published by the country's leading economic institutes.

Supply-side disruptions that had weighed on Europe's largest economy were easing, according to the RWI --Leibniz Institute for Economic Research, the Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH), the Kiel Institute for the World



Economy and the ifo Institute on Wednesday.

Germany's manufacturing sector is expected to support economic activity in the coming quarters, "benefiting directly

from the easing of supply bottlenecks and cheaper energy," the institutes said. Back in the autumn of 2022, the institutes had still predicted a mild recession of 0.4 per cent.

"As real wages pick up again, private consumption will also contribute to the overall economic expansion in the further course," the institutes added. Germany's construction sector, on the other hand, is expected to slow the economy, Xinhua news agency reported.

SBI records steepest market cap fall in Asia Pacific during Jan-Mar quarter: S&P Global Market Intelligence

NEW DELHI: State Bank of India, India's biggest lender by assets, recorded the largest decline in market capitalization among the top 20 banks in the Asia Pacific region in the first quarter of 2023 (January-March), according to data compiled by S&P Global Market Intelligence.

The analysis produced by global financial market information and analytics services



provider showed SBI ranked at 14th, down three notches from the prior quarter, after its market cap fell about 14.7 per cent to USD 56.92 billion. In the year-

to-date of 2023, the shares of SBI fell about 14 per cent, data showed. Notably, according to the analysis, more than two-thirds of the largest 20 banks in the Asia Pacific region logged a decline in their market capitalization during the said quarter.

Besides SBI, Japan's Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group was the only major bank in the region that also logged a double-

digit decline in market capitalization during the quarter. Still, it managed to retain its eighth slot on the list with a market cap of USD 75.58 billion as of March 31. Among other major banks in the region which saw a decline in market cap are China Merchants Bank Co Ltd, Postal Savings Bank of China Co Ltd, National Australia Bank Ltd, and Westpac Banking Corp.

Indian national jailed in Singapore for drunk-driving, dozing off at wheel

A 45-year-old Indian national was sentenced to 10 months jail in Singapore after he drove a cement mixer under the influence of alcohol and dozed off at the wheel causing a collision in May last year, which left several people injured.

Sowrirajulu Karunakaran, who was working for Infinite Logistics and Trading, pleaded guilty for causing grievous hurt while driving under the influence of alcohol without due care or reasonable consideration,



The Straits Times reported. Karunakaran will also be disqualified from driving for 14 years after his release, according to the report. Deputy Public Prosecutor Nicolle Ng said Ka-

runakaran had had alcohol, and was driving the cement mixer along Yishun Avenue 8 when he fell asleep. When he woke up, Karunakaran realised the traffic light ahead was red and jammed on the brakes, but was unable to stop in time. As a result, the cement mixer collided into the rear of a lorry and caused a chain collision involving four vehicles. Sowrirajulu, who failed the breathalyser test, was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

ChatGPT takes the World by Storm, time for institutions to cautiously design adoption policies

DIVYANSH JUNEJA

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been a topic of discussion for several decades, but until recently, its potential impact on our daily lives was not fully realized. However, the public release of ChatGPT on November 30, 2022 by openAI, changed the game in an unprecedented way. This innovative technology has taken the world by storm, with a level of adoption and usage that far surpasses that of any previous innovations. ChatGPT has quickly become an invaluable tool for human progress and technological advancement, as individuals and organizations alike recognize the immense potential it offers.

Until recently, interacting with large datasets required specialized technical skills, making it inaccessible to many people. However, with the emergence of AI tools like ChatGPT, this

is no longer the case. ChatGPT is a computer program that has been specifically designed



to understand and respond to human language. This means that anyone with access to the internet can use ChatGPT to ask questions and receive answers in a way that feels natural and intuitive.

ChatGPT offers a unique advantage by providing access to vast datasets for individuals who

were previously unable to do so, opening up new opportunities for learning and innovation.

It's genuinely remarkable as students can now ask complex questions about a specific subject and receive detailed answers in real-time. Not only that, but researchers and scientists can also utilize ChatGPT to analyze vast amounts of data and uncover hidden patterns that may have gone unnoticed be-

fore, enabling them to make groundbreaking discoveries in various fields.

Despite its many benefits, ChatGPT and other AI tools are taking the world by surprise, and institutions and governments must adapt to the AI revolution immediately.

One of the biggest challenges facing institutions and governments is the need to navigate the complexities of AI regulation and ethical considerations. The development of AI and other advanced technologies is moving at a breakneck pace, and institutions and governments must stay up to date with the latest trends and best practices to fully leverage the benefits of these technologies while mitigating potential risks.

Another major challenge is the need for skilled workers who can help develop and implement AI tools effectively. The AI industry is highly specialized and

requires workers with a unique skill set that is often in short supply. Institutions and governments must invest in training programs and initiatives that can help prepare workers for the challenges and opportunities of the AI revolution.

To navigate these challenges successfully, institutions and governments must embrace a range of strategies and approaches. This includes investing in research and development, fostering collaboration between different stakeholders, and prioritizing transparency and ethical considerations in the development and deployment of AI tools.

At the same time, it's essential to consider the potential for chatbots and AI to reinforce and amplify existing social and economic disparities. Institutions and governments must acknowledge these risks and take proactive steps to miti-

gate them, ensuring that the AI revolution benefits all members of society, not just a privileged few. It's essential to approach this technology with confidence, foresight, and a commitment to ethical and responsible deployment.

In conclusion, the adoption of AI is crucial for businesses, institutions, and governments to stay competitive and address major societal challenges. ChatGPT and other AI tools offer immense potential to enhance human capabilities and productivity, but this must be accompanied by a commitment to ethical and responsible deployment. By prioritizing a sense of urgency towards better adoption policies, we can ensure that AI is used to benefit humanity in a way that is sustainable and equitable.

Divyansh Juneja, The writer is the CEO of Stabwart Integrals, view are personal.

Artificial Intelligence to impact 300 million jobs globally



KAVITA SHARMA

Artificial Intelligence has become an important part of our life. This fast growing technology is increasing in every sector. As many as 18% of Global jobs could be automated due to rise of Artificial Intelligence platforms, expected to impact advanced economies. The Goldman Sachs report predicts that 300 million jobs will be lost by Artificial intelligence. The workforce worldwide would be upended.

Goldman Sachs predicts that the growth in AI is increasing fast. Just as the world went from main computers to modern day technology, there will be a fast growth in Artificial intelligence also and it will play a vital role in reshaping the world. AI will score brilliantly in every sector, it added. According to Stanford's AI Index Report the investments in AI has nearly crossed \$94 billion in two years. If it continues AI could add 1% to the U.S. GDP by 2030. The Goldman Report also predicts that the legal, Engineering, business, Sales, Healthcare, Architecture, Management, and art and designs are some of the sectors mainly impacted by it, so the jobs here will be at risk. White collar jobs will face more automation than manual labor, as it is not possible to computerize manual labor. The labor market could face significant disruption, the report added.

Before we proceed further, it is important to understand what Generative Artificial Intelligence actually is? It is actually designed to create content like images, text, music and entire videos without actually being programmed to do so. This type of AI is dependent on deep learning algorithms and can be trained to produce original content. AI can also be used in Creative as well as practical fields, it can also give new compositions to old songs. It can also create images that do not exist in this real world.

It is also important to understand what other organizations are saying about AI. According to a report The World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2020, "A new generation of smart machines fueled by AI and robotics can replace large proportion of existing human jobs" Robotics and AI will cause a double disruption, it said. The PriceWaterhouseCoopers reported that AI and Robotics have the potential to bring great economic benefits, contributing to \$15 trillion to global GDP by 2030, but will come at a high human cost. Though AI proponents believe there is nothing to worry as they have successfully dealt with technologies in the past. Millions of workers in China, US, Japan, Germany and other countries have to retool their workers.

As per the Goldman Sachs report the United States, Europe, Hong Kong, Japan, Sweden are likely to be most affected. But countries like India, Kenya, China, Nigeria, Vietnam will be least affected by automation.

Generative AI is the technology that powers ChatGPT.

Artificial Intelligence: Boom or Doom for employment generation

ROMANCHIT Patiala

With fears of recession looming large, the employment scenario is feeling the heat not just only limited to the IT sector but financials, retail, energy, healthcare etc. To add to the woes, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we work and live, and it is having a significant impact on employment. In fact, the effects of AI on employment are complex and multifaceted, with both positive and negative implications for workers and employers alike.

One of the most significant effects of AI on employment is the displacement of jobs that can be automated. Jobs that involve routine and repetitive tasks, such as data entry, assembly line work, and customer service, are particularly vulnerable to automation. As AI becomes more sophisticated and capable, it is increasingly able to perform tasks that were once thought to require human intelligence and skills.

While the displacement of jobs due to AI can be unsettling for workers, it is also creating new opportunities for those who can

adapt to the changing landscape. As some jobs become obsolete, new ones are emerging that require skills and expertise in AI, data science, and other cutting-edge fields. This is leading to a growing demand for workers with advanced technical skills and expertise in AI and related fields.

Another impact of AI on employment is the increased use of AI-based tools to augment and enhance human productivity. For example, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants are becoming increasingly common in customer service and support roles, freeing up human workers to focus on more complex and high-value tasks. Similarly, AI-powered predictive analytics tools are helping businesses to make better decisions by providing insights into customer behavior and market trends.

Job losses

However, the growing reliance on AI and automation also raises concerns about the future of work and the role of human workers. Some experts predict that AI will lead to significant job losses, particularly in industries such as manufacturing, transportation,



and logistics. Others argue that the impact of AI on employment will be more nuanced, with the technology creating new opportunities for workers while also reshaping the nature of work and the skills required to succeed in the workforce.

Ultimately, the effects of AI on employment will depend on a range of factors, including the speed of technological progress, the rate of adoption of AI-based tools and systems, and the ability of workers and employers to adapt to the changing landscape. As AI continues to evolve and mature, it is likely that we will see both positive and negative effects on employ-

ment, and it will be important for policymakers, businesses, and workers to work together to ensure that the benefits of AI are shared equitably and that workers are able to thrive in the new economy.

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Displacement of jobs

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The Writer Romanchit is a student of Journalism and Mass Communication currently pursuing MA from Punjabi University, Patiala.



SINGER Hansraj Hans's new song Airport Put Pardesi released



KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

To fulfill the needs of the country, one has to go abroad and the airport becomes the only mean, when we go to the airport to receive our loved

ones, then the heart turns into a garden, but when a mother leaves her young child at the airport, The pain of getting away from her makes the mother shiver for a long time, but because the question is related to the life of the son,

the mother bids him farewell after drinking a bitter sip.

Bhatti Bhariwala has put some such words in the song, these words have been sung by Padam Shri Raj singer Member of Parliament Hans Raj Hans, the song has been composed by Shiromani singer Surinder Shinda, music

has been given by Lali Dhaliwal, direction has been given Bobby Bajwa and Present by Gurtej Sandhu; Song Airport released at Sector 7 Dhaba under Easy Way Entertainment banner, Sunita Dhir and Malkeet Rauni have played lead roles in the video of the song.

TAAPSEE PANNU

lands in controversy for wearing Goddess Lakshmi necklace

“ WE RECEIVED A COMPLAINT FROM EKLAVYA GAUR (SON OF BJP MLA MALINI GAUR) AGAINST ACTOR TAAPSEE PANNU FOR HURTING RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS AND IMAGE OF 'SANATAN DHARMA' BY WEARING A LOCKET HAVING 'GODDESS LAXMI' WITH REVEALING DRESS DURING RAMP WALK AT LAKME FASHION WEEK HELD ON MARCH 12 IN MUMBAI ”

MUMBAI: In past, many actors have come under the radar of hurting religious sentiments and has been accused on many occasions by religious and political leaders, this time around, it is Taapsee Pannu who has been accused of the same. The actress' recent appearance at the Lakme India Fashion Week in Mumbai has triggered a controversy where a man named Eklavya Singh, who is a member of the Hind Rakshak Sangathan and son of BJP MLA Malini Gaur, has filed a complaint against the actress for her look at the prestigious fashion show. In the complaint, Singh has alleged that Taapsee Pannu wore a revealing outfit while adorning temple jewellery with Goddess Laxmi's statue in the locket. An official was quoted in media reports, opening up about the complaint registered against the actress saying, "We received a complaint from Eklavya Gaur (son of BJP MLA Malini Gaur) against actor Taapsee Pannu for hurting religious sentiments and image of 'Sanatan Dharma' by wearing a locket having 'Goddess Laxmi' with revealing dress during ramp walk at Lakme Fashion Week held on March 12 in Mumbai." The officials have asserted that investigation of the matter is currently in process.



POTPOURRI

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Zeenat Aman remembers Parveen Babi on her birthday

NEW DELHI: Veteran actress Zeenat Aman recalled the late actress Parveen Babi on her birthday and called her "the most gorgeous, glamorous and talented actress". She also talked about the similarity between them observed by the people in the 70s. Parveen was born on April 4, 1954 and she started her career in the showbiz with modelling. She made her acting debut in 1973 with 'Charitra'. However, she was recognised for her acting skills in 'Majboor' and became successful with movies like 'Deewar', 'Amar Akbar Anthony', and 'Namak Halaal'.

Parveen had been in a relationship with Danny Denzongpa and later with Kabir Bedi, and then Mahesh Bhatt. She was found dead in her apartment on January 20,

2005 in Juhu, Mumbai. Parveen and Zeenat were considered to be the most stylishly dressed actresses of the 1970s and 80s. They worked together in 'Ashanti' and 'Mahaan'. Zeenat, who gave several hits such as 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram', 'Hare Rama Hare Krishna', 'Qurbani', 'Dhund', 'Don', 'Manoranjan' and 'Yaadon Ki Baaraat', shared a throwback picture with Parveen and wrote a heartfelt message for her.

Taking to Instagram, she shared the note and wrote about the resemblance between the two: "I'd like to remember and honour Parveen today, on her birthday. Parveen was gorgeous, glamorous and talented. Back in the 70s, we wore our hair in a similar manner and enjoyed Western fashion. Though neither of us saw it, we



were told we had an uncanny resemblance. It must have been true, because as recently as last year I was approached in Dubai as 'Parveen ma'am'." Zeenat said: "Naturally, the media at the time spun tales of competition and rivalry between us, but in reality we were always warm towards

each other. Not best friends, but contemporaries, colleagues and well wishers. We worked together on Ashanti and Mahaan."

Talking about the struggle and Parveen's mental illness, she said: "Parveen's struggle with mental illness came at a time when the country was still so insensitive

and ignorant on these matters. After her death, I often ruminated on how she was remembered. The tabloids focused on her romantic relationships and 'episodes', but Parveen was much more than who she dated or what she said when she was unwell. I feel she never truly got the chance to say her piece." Talking about her achievements, Zeenat said: "She was intelligent and hardworking and creative. She loved reading, and I remember her curled up with a book in between shots on sets. She achieved incredible success as an actor, even featuring on the cover of Time Magazine."

The actress further wrote: "Parveen was remarkable in many ways, and I hope she will be remembered for the effervescent person she was."

Raghav Chandha & Parineeti Chopra rumors about their wedding have been rife



NEW DELHI: Ever since Aam Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chandha and actress Parineeti Chopra have been seen together, rumors about their wedding have been rife. However, according to several media reports, a source which could not be verified has claimed that the politician and the actress will soon make their relationship official by an intimate engagement ceremony in the capital in the first week of April. According to the report, Parineeti has already reached New Delhi. The source also shared that the ceremony will be graced by family members including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Nick Jonas and Meera Chopra and the duo's close friends. Dating rumours between Raghav and Parineeti began last month when the two were pictured together in London and then in Mumbai.

Actor Jr NTR signed for the spy action-thriller, 'War 2' with Hrithik Roshan

MUMBAI: Actor Jr NTR, who has been swaying the audience - both Indian and international - with 'RRR', has been signed for the spy action-thriller, 'War 2' - a sequel to the 2019 blockbuster. Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan, who played the role of Kabir in 'War', will be seen taking on Jr NTR in a bloody battle that will be an adrenaline-pumping action extravaganza. Recently, it was also revealed that the event film is being directed by Ayan Mukerji, who has a history of delivering some of the biggest blockbusters in Bollywood including his last release 'Brahmastra'.

A veteran trade source confirmed on condition of anonymity that Jr NTR will be locking horns with Hrithik in 'War 2', "Their battle of wits and their fierce showdown will definitely be an action spectacle to remember on the big screen. 'War' is now a true-blue pan Indian film. This move by Aditya Chopra enables 'War 2' to have the widest audience appeal for a Hindi film and it also widens the box office potential of the film. South India should come alive and connect at a more emotional level with the film because of the presence of their beloved superstar". The source further mentioned Jr NTR is one of the most respected and followed icons from South India and is said to be extremely choosy about his films. "If he has given the film a nod, it means War 2 is eclipsing the first film in terms of plot as well as scale. Hrithik Roshan vs Jr NTR will be a fight to remember. Jr NTR's inclusion has made this proposition extremely delicious for audiences".



Are wedding bells ringing for Badshah and Isha Rikhi?

MUMBAI: Rapper Badshah, whose real name is Aditya Prateek Singh Sisodia, is said to await his wedding with his longtime girlfriend and Punjabi actress Isha Rikhi whom he met at a party of a common friend. As per the media reports, the couple



is planning a Gurdwara wedding

in north India this month which will be attended by close family members and friends.

However, neither Badshah nor Rikhi has commented anything about their wedding plans. Badshah was rumoured to be dating her since last year

after they met at a party and shared similar interests. Badshah was married to Jasmine Masih in 2012 and in 2017, the two became parents to their daughter Jessemy Grace Masih Singh. However, they separated in 2020.

Actor Jay Bhanushali and Tina Datta in a new television show 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum'

MUMBAI: Actors Jay Bhanushali, Tina Datta and Kitu Gidwani are coming in a new television show 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum', which explores the human tendency to resist change. The show follows the journeys of Damayanti, the principled traditionalist matriarch of the royal Barot family based in Ranak and Surilii, a modern thinking young girl. 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum' focusses on the human nature to resist change as it tends to create fear and the usual reac-



tions to it are to either fight, or flight. This close-to-life yet inspirational saga sees Kitu Gidwani playing Damayanti Barot, Tina Datta essaying the role of Surilii Ahluwalia and Jay Bhanushali portraying the

character of Shivendra Barot. 'Hum Rahe Na Rahe Hum' is a remake of the popular Turkish drama Istanbulu Gelin (Bride of Istanbul) that will air on Sony Entertainment Television from April 10.

Dimple Kapadia and Radhika Madan soon-to-release series 'Saas, Bahu aur Flamingo'

MUMBAI: The soon-to-release streaming series 'Saas, Bahu aur Flamingo', which aims to redefine the perception of 'saas-bahu' relationship will feature the terrific line-up of Dimple Kapadia, Radhika Madan, Angira Dhar, Isha Talwar, Deepak Dobriyal and Monica Dogra.

Talking about the series, Dimple Kapadia said: "Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo is a story of what makes ordinary people extraordinary in a world full of passion and chaos. It's a bunch of bad-ass women telling a narrative which is often played only by male characters and believe me, it's got some of the most colourful characters you'll



ever see. The show is as wild as my crazy Director, Homi Adajania's mind. He has flipped a family drama on it's head giving us such a captivating binge-watch."

The series will tell the story of a mother-in-law who is unapologetically hardcore, and daughters-in-law who are steadfast and formidable.

“ Women are the evolved half of our messed up species and Saas Bahu aur Flamingo is to date the maddest world that I have created”

Director and Creator Homi Adajania said in a statement, "You remember the line 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned'? When

the world has scorned these women and turned its back on them, they learn to thrive by creating their own system of morality in a bold and lawless place that they inhabit. Women are the evolved half of our messed up species and Saas Bahu aur Flamingo is to date the maddest world that I have created."

He further mentioned: "Its characters are so beautifully complex and conflicting, navigating their way through a world of passion, manipulation and chaos. You're going to have to switch on Disney-Hotstar, buckle up tight and be ready for the roller coaster of your life."

Grammy-nominated Raja Kumari to release her album titled 'The Bridge' on April 28



MUMBAI: Grammy-nominated hip-hop artist Raja Kumari, who is known for hit tracks like 'City Slums', 'Husn Parcham', 'Manifest' and several others, is set to release her album titled 'The Bridge' on April 28, 2023.

The rapper took to her social media to share the news with her fans. Sharing the cover image of her album, she wrote in the caption: "From ANCIENT to FUTURE from WEST back to EAST, MUSIC is the BRIDGE between US & GOD. THE BRIDGE. APRIL 28, 2023 (sic)."

The album includes nine songs that she recorded during the pandemic in different countries. Raja Kumari was recently in the news for delivering a smashing performance in Mumbai and Delhi along with 'All of Me' hitmaker John Legend.

The album will be released under Raja Kumari's label Godmother Records which she created to provide a platform for diverse voices and promote underrepresented artists in the industry. Under her label, she is committed to creating a space where artists can thrive and express themselves authentically.

Raja Kumari also represented India on the main stage at Dubai's first-ever Wireless Festival Middle East alongside performers like Travis Scott and M.I.A.



Christian devotees reenact the crucifixion of Jesus Christ during a procession to mark Good Friday in Amritsar. Christians all over the world attend mock crucifixions and passion plays that mark the day Jesus was crucified, known to Christians as Good Friday. PHOTOS:PRABHJOT GILL

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