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CHANDIGARH • NEW DELHI • WEEKLY • SATURDAY • APRIL 15, 2023 • VOLUME 23, ISSUE 3 • Rs 5

#### REGION



NATIONAL INTEGRATED MEDICAL ASSOCIATION THANKS HEALTH MINISTER FOR APPROVING AYUSH MEDICAL **REIMBURSEMENT POLICY IN HARYANA** 



L&T IS 3D CONCRETE **PRINTING INDIA'S FIRST POST OFFICE BUILDING IN BENGALURU** 

#### POTPOURRI



**AYUSHMANN KHURRANA IS SET TO PERFORM LIVE IN CONCERT IN CHANDIGARH** AND DUBAI

as a witness, they said.

vicinity remain closed.

into custody.

The CBI is bracing for an

elaborate security arrangement

around its headquarters and

hence kept the questioning day

on Sunday, when offices in the

The agency had adopted the

same strategy when Sisodia was

called at the agency headquar-

ters, where he was grilled for

eight hours before being taken

The allegations revolve

#### **CBI summons Kejriwal in excise policy** First time in history crop in fields, money scam case; AAP alleges conspiracy in accounts of farmers: Punjab CM **YOGESH KANT** As of now, the chief minister is expected to answer questions New Delhi

**ABOHAR**: Giving a healing touch to the farmers who had suffered huge loss due to heavy rains across the state, the Puniab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday started the process to disburse compensation to the farmers with the state government distributing Rs 40 crore on its maiden day.

Addressing the gathering after kicking off the campaign to disburse the compensation for crop loss and damage to houses due incessant rains, the Chief Minister said that he had himself distributed Rs 6 crore out of the total Rs 12.94 crore as compensation for 362 villages of Fazilka. Bhagwant Mann said that this is not a day of happiness because he is here to compensate the farmers for the loss inflicted due to nature's fury. However, he said this reflects the firm commitment of his government to bail out the people especially the food growers in this hour of crisis

The Chief Minister said that after the incessant rains he had



want Mann said that he was peeved to note the colossal loss suffered by the farmers due to the inclement weather condition. He said that immediately after that the state government has ordered a comprehensive special Girdawari to ascertain the loss suffered by the people. The Chief Minister said that

**NEW DELHI:** Exceeding the

export target of USD 750 billion,

India has clocked in exports

worth USD 778 billion in the

financial year 2022-2023, an-

nounced the Commerce Min-

India's trade deficit increased

by 46.05 per cent y-o-y in last

FY, the ministry said. While

overall import is estimated to

have exhibited a growth of 17.38

per cent to USD 892.18 billion,

said the official statement. Pe-

troleum exports grew by USD

27 billion y-o-y whereas the

export of engineering goods saw

a y-o-y fall of USD 5.12 billion

istry on Thursday.

this special Girdawari was a paradigm shift as compared



extensively toured the affected to the previous government areas to take stock of the situa- as earlier only lip service was tion at the ground level. Bhag- made and no compensation was given to the people. He said that during those regimes Girdawaris were done only on the basis of political affiliation and no genuine beneficiary was helped. Bhagwant Mann said that instead of fields such Girdawaris were done only in the houses of the affluent people. However, the Chief Minister

said that this time a complete transparent mechanism has

India's exports beat \$750 bn target in FY23;

trade deficit expands: Commerce Ministry

been adopted for conducting the Girdawari in an efficient manner. Bhagwant Mann said that he had promised that before Baisakhi the process to start compensation would start adding that it is a matter of great pride and satisfaction that this campaign has started today. He said that the sole aim is to benefit the food growers of the country who have played a vanguard role in making the country self-reliant in food production.

The Chief Minister said that his government has made 25% upward revision in the compensation for the crop loss to the farmers adding that in case the loss is more than 75% then the state government is compensating the farmers with Rs 15, 000 per acre. Likewise, he said that if the loss is between 33% to 75% then the farmers are getting compensation worth Rs 6800 per acre. Similarly, Bhagwant Mann said that the farm labourers are also being duly compensated for the loss so that they do not

face any problem in life adding that compensation to full house damage minor damage to houses is also being given.

The Chief Minister said that for the first time in the history of the state the drive to disburse compensation has been started within 20 days of loss as none of the earlier governments had ever bothered about it. He quipped that during the previous regimes the compensation was so much delayed that most of the Ministers and MLAs used to forget which cheques of compensation they were disbursing. Bhagwant Mann said that however in the present government the 'crops are still standing in fields but the compensation is in the bank accounts'. The Chief Minister said that the state government is fully with the beleaguered peasantry in this hour of deep crisis. He further said that in a major pro-farmer initiative, the state government has decided to freeze repayment

of loans taken by the farmers

from Primary Agricultural cooperative Societies.

The CBI on Friday summoned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on April 16 in connection with the excise policy scam case, in which his former deputy Manish Sisodia was arrested last month.

According to the notice issued by the CBI, Kejriwal has been called to appear at the agency headquarters at 11 AM on Sunday to answer queries of the investigating team as a witness in the case, officials said.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) called it a conspiracy and confirmed that Kejriwal will appear before the agency on Sunday.

There are allegations that money raised from tweaking the policy in favour of certain liquor dealers and the South lobby was suspected to be pumped in for election purposes by the AAP, which is under the probe as part of the money trail, agency sources said.



They said the process of policy formulation and influence of South lobby, besides changes in the draft stages, was in the know of the chief minister, which makes it necessary to put questions to him.

Kejriwal may also be asked about an "untraceable" file containing details of the expert committee and public comments when the policy was at a nascent stage of formulation and referral of the issue to Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Sisodia; besides his possible conversation with suspects in the case, they said.

Sources have stated that the final role of Kejriwal, whether as a witness or an accused, will be decided while filing a charge sheet in the case after considering multiple factors.

around the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22, which is accused of granting licences to liquor traders who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge strongly refuted by the AAP. The policy was later scrapped. "It was further alleged that irregularities were committed, including modifications in excise policy, extending undue favours to the licensees, waiver/reduc-

tion in license fee, the extension of L-1 licence without approval, etc.," said a CBI spokesperson after the FIR was filed on August 17, 2022.

#### **Repeal repressive** black law: Sukhbir badal writes to PM



CHANDIGARH: Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) president Sukhbir Singh Badal sought a repeal of all anti democratic and repressive Black Laws such as NSA and UAPA and called for an immediate stoppage of their rampant and brazen abuse by the AAP govt in in last fiscal.

Punjab pending the repeal. The overall export growth r the fiscal ur izes th communal hatred of AAP's national leaders against the patriotic Sikhs. It is also an attempt to distract attention of the people from the brazen incompetence and failures of the ruling party to honour its commitments to Punjabis, <sup>2</sup> said Mr Badal. The Akali chief shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention for repeal of these black laws in the light of experience and their adverse impact on the country's image as the world's largest democracy. Mr Badal came down heavily against AAP govt in Punjab, saying that it had" turned these repressive Black Laws into weapons of mass witch hunt against members of the Khalsa Panth, especially the this matter. innocent Sikh youth. Even innocent members of Sikh families, including the elderly, the women and children are being subjected to repression.



ties showed positive growth in exports in value and volume in the last financial year. On the other hand during the fiscal merchandise imports witnessed an annual rise of USD 111 billion. Gold imports dropped by 11.15 per cent during the year while there was a 47 jump in ndia UK E round nine of

Monetary Fund division chief Daniel Leigh on Tuesday said that India is one of the bright spots in the global economy right now with a high growth rate. Although IMF lowered its growth projection for 2023-24

petroleum imports. Meanwhile, historical revisions,» said Leigh. Leigh added that 2020-202

#### Despite cutting India's GDP growth to 5.9%, AAP recognised as national party by EC, IMF calls its bright spot in global economy **NEW DELHI:** International to 4.4 per cent next fiscal year.

to 5.9 per cent from 6.1.

«Yes, we have a growth rate for India which is 6.8 in 2022. Let>s not forget this is one of the bright spots in the global economy right now. Such a high growth rate and it is moderating down to 5.9 with a -.2 revision compared to January, what>s happening here is also a set of



room for catching up. "And that pent-up demand from consumers that were

informing our previous forecast is therefore going to be less because they>ve already had more catching up before. So that>s why there>s a downward revision this year," he said. He pointed out that the

Indian economy is expected to grow 6.3 next year again. he IMF projects India

2023. IMF projects growth to bottom out at 2.8 per cent in 2023, picking up to 3 per cent in 2024. Inflation is expected to in Mizoram. stay elevated at 7 per cent for the rest of the year, before declining to 4.9 per cent next year.

NCP alleges BJP 'erasing'

from history as he was a

Maulana Azad's name

Muslim

inflation, debt and risks to the

financial sector from rising

interest rates. It warned that

if banks cut lending further,

the global output will reduce by

another 0.3 percentage point in

Trinamool, NCP, CPI lose their status NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was on Monday accorded the status of a national party by the Election Commission, even as Sharad

(RBI) projection. The central bank predicted 7 per cent GDP Pawar's NCP and Mamata Bagrowth for FY 2022-23 and nerjee's Trinamool Congress 6.4 per cent in the ongoing lost their national party status fiscal that started on April 1. along with Communist Party Meanwhile, the international of India (CPI). lender flagged concerns about

In an order issued on Monday, the ECI also withdrew the state party status given to late Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) in Uttar Pradesh, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Andhra Pradesh, the PDA in Manipur, the PMK in Puducherry, the RSP in West Bengal, and the MPC

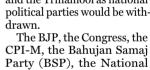
The Comm



to its electoral performance in four states namely Delhi, Goa, Punjab and Gujarat. The Arvind Kejriwal-led party is in power in Delhi and Punjab.

The poll panel said that the status of the NCP, the CPI. and the Trinamool as national

The BJP, the Congress, the CPI-M, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the National People's Party (N the AAP has been nominated the AAP are now the main



It's growth forecast is lower than the Reserve Bank of India

13.84 per cent Y-o-y. Also, as negotiations is scheduled from many as 45 principal commodi- April 24 to 28.

# Another Army man dies in 'accidental firing' at Bathinda military station

BATHINDA: Hours after to a bullet injury after his service weapon went off accidentally, police said on day about the accidental death of army man Laghu Raj Shankar and the police have started a probe into The jawan, who was on

a search team has located the killing of four army men the INSAS rifle along with inside the Bathinda military the magazine involved in station in Punjab, another the killing. However, it jawan reportedly died due said no individual has been detained. "The Army and police joint teams will now be undertaking foren-Thursday. A police station sic analysis of the weapon in the cantonment received for ascertaining further a complaint on Wednes- details, " it said in a bulletin on Wednesday evening. Two unidentified persons in civil dress opened fire at Army personnel sleeping in barracks early Wednesday, killing four men, the Super-

duty, died due to a bullet intendent of Police (Invesinjury in the head, a po- tigation), Ajay Gandhi had lice official told to media said, adding 19 empty shells After the killing of the four men, the Indian Army said of an INSAS rifle were re-covered from the spot. has been actually a lot better inflation to slow to 4.9 per cent than we thought, so there>s less

in the current year and further

Home minister Ami Shah to chair a high-level security review meeting on Jammu and Kashmir



#### FW DESK

The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, is set to chair a high-level meeting on Thursday to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting follows the killing of four jawans on Wednesday morning at the Bathinda Military Station in Punjab.

The home minister will be given a detailed presentation on the prevailing law and order situation in J&K by security officials of the central government and the union territory administration.

ed by senior officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Central Armed Police Forces, including the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha. The main agenda of the meeting is to review the functioning of the security grid and the policy of zero tolerance against terrorism. Matters related to various developmental works being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir will also be discussed. The Home Minister

The meeting will be attend-

as a national party according national parties.

## 12 passengers dead as bus plunges into gorge on Mumbai-Pune highway

NEW DEL-HI: At least

MUMBAI: The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Thursday 12 passenaccused the Bharatiya Janata gers were Party (BJP) of attempting to killed and 'erase' the name of Indias first Ed-28 others inucation Minister and Bharat Ratjured when na, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a private from history because he was a bus plunged Muslim. NCP national spokesinto a gorge

person Clyde Crasto said that the BJP-led government at the Centre is using the NCERT

(National Council of Educational Research and Training) to wipe out Maulana Azad's identity and his glorious contributions from India's education system. Citing instances, he said a para in the first chapter of the old Class XI NCERT politi-cal science textbook said: "The Constituent Assembly had eight major Committees on different subjects. Usually, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad or Ambedkar chaired these Committees." on the Mum-

bai-Pune highway on Saturday, officials said here.

The accident occurred at Mumbai arm of the highway and the bus reportedly fell into the ravine at least 50 meters below, near the treacherous Borghat stretch. At that early hour, there was limited traffic on the highway but some people managed to rush to the accident spot, summoned the Raigad Police, Fire Brigade and local trek-

kers groups for help. A massive rescue operation was immediately launched with ropes and

climbers going down to help the victims below, numbering around 40-45 including around 4 a.m. on the Pune- the bus driver, said the locals. According to the district authorities, the injured persons were rushed to the Khopoli Civil Hospital and the Jakotia Hospital, and the private MGM Hospital in Navi Mumbai for treatment.

A Raigad Police official said that a majority of the passengers were members of the Baji Prabhu Music Group, Goregaon, and were returning home after performing at a programme in Pune on Friday.

# 4 Army jawans killed in firing incident inside Bathinda Military Station

HQ South Western Command of the Army said that the area was cordoned off and sealed and investigations were on to 'establish the facts of the case'.

Four Army jawans were killed in a firing incident reported inside Bathinda Military Station in Punjab early on Wednesday. The area was sealed off and "joint investigations with Punjab Police are being coordinated to establish the facts

of the case", the Army said. "It has been ascertained that in the unfortunate incident, four Army jawans of an artillery unit succumbed to gunshot injuries sustained during the incident. No other injuries to personnel or loss/damage to property have been reported," the HQ South



Western Command of the Army service hexacopters and drones said in a statement. "All aspects to locate the assailants who killed including the possible case of the jawans, sources said. A corinvolvement of an INSAS rifle don and search operation is along with 28 rounds reported underway at the station and a missing two days back are being total clampdown on unnecessary ascertained," the statement addmovement of residents has been ed. The Army has pressed into imposed, sources added.

'Social stigma may continue' : SC on pleas for extending reservation benefits to Dalit converts

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday orally observed that social stigma and religious stigma are two different things, and social stigma may continue after conversion while hearing a batch of petitions seeking extending of benefits of reservation to Dalits who converted to Christianity and Islam.

Additional Solicitor General K.M. Nataraj, representing the Centre, submitted before

a bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and comprising Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Aravind Kumar that Justice Ranganath Misra Commission report of 2007, which recommended for recognising Dalits in Christianity and Islam, had not gone into all aspects: it did not conduct field study, did not do comparative analysis etc., while defending Centre's decision to not accept the report.

visited the Union Territory

in October last year.



The Centre had maintained that it had appointed former Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan to head a commission to examine the claims and the

court should wait for its report.

During the hearing, the bench orally observed how many commissions of inquiry may sit on the matter, and if tomorrow there is a different political dispensation, they will sav that "we do not accept that inquiry commissions" report, therefore there is some kind of a colour to this dispute".

On the Centre's criticism of Justice Ranganath Misra Commission report, the bench

queried Nataraj: "Are you sure you should probably recheck the report, it is not that perfunctory and it is a too generalised statement ... It is a generalised

comment on the report." The bench said it is flagging the issue, whether it will be in the domain of the court to look into the material of the report, and also whether there can be a writ issued to include in the Presidential order any community for reservation.



# REGION

# Punjab CM mourns death of pilgrims killed in two mishaps near Khuralgarh

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday expressed deep shock and anguish over two tragic accidents in which 10 people were killed and 20 were injured in a road mishap near Khuralgarh near Garhshankar on Wednesday and Thursday.

Expressing profound grief and sorrow over this disastrous accident, the Chief Minister shared his heartfelt sympathies with the members of the bereaved families and prayed to the Almighty to give them courage to bear this irreparable

#### One arrested for Rs 50 lakh ransom demand from Dera Sacha Sauda's Honeypreet



SATISH HANDA Sirsa

Sirsa police in Haryana arrested a youth Pradeep for allegedly demanding ransom from Honeypreet the vice patron of Dera Sacha Sauda at Sirsa who is also an adopted daughter of dera head Gurmeet Ram Rahim presently undergoing imprisonment in jail. According to information she lodged a complaint with police that a caller had demanded Rs 50 lakh ransom amount from her on WhatsApp. The police, after investigation, arrested the accused within days identified as Pradeep a resident of Dabwali. Deepti Garg ASP Sirsa told media persons that the caller had identified himself as a henchman of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi on April 5 threatening to kill her in case the ransom amonm amount not paid.



loss in the hour of crisis and grant peace to the departed souls. Meanwhile, Bhagwant Mann also announced an Ex Gratia grant of Rs. 2 lakh each to the next of kin of the de-

ceased and Rs 1 lakh to the injured from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He had already directed district administration to provide free treatment to all the injured.

# **Over Rs.500 Cr released directly** into bank accounts of farmers in a single day: Kataruchak

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Government led by the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann stands fully committed to ensure that the farmers face no difficulty in the mandis across the State during the current Rabi Marketing Season (RMS)

As proof of this, full amount of MSP at the rate of Rs 2125 per quintal, totaling Rs. 502.93 crore has been released directly into the bank accounts of 19642 farmers in a single day, disclosed the Food. Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Lal Chand Kataruchak in a statement adding that no value cut has been imposed on farmers while releasing the payments of MSP. He also added that till April 14th, 8

the government since most

the projects are left in-between

incomplete due to the reason

the cases against such corrupt

contractors are vet under trial

in courts. Information reveals

that Harvana state government

taking stern action against

has also launched a massive

drive against increasing drug

smuggling and sale in the state

as such has demolished large

number of properties of such

drug smugglers in recent past

some time, besides attached

the properties of value worth

Rs 38 crore belonging to the

drug smugglers. There are still

large numbers of such illegal

buildings constructed by the

drug smugglers on encroached

land which are on the radar

of State Narcotic Control

Bureau in the state yet to be

demolished or attached by the

government

Haryana state government

such contractors.



Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) of wheat has been procured by Govt. Procurement Agencies Robust arrangements to ensure smooth Procurement operations at all the mandis have been put in place at all the mandis with the directions to procure every single grain of foodgrain produced so laboriously by the farming community, added Kataruchak.

#### Haryana Home Minister claims 657 immigration agents in 484 cases arrested in past 3 years Ambala

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij while addressing media persons here at his camp office said that Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted in the state to check the cases of fraud (kabutarbaaji) in the state. He said, a threemember SIT has been constituted under the direction of IG, Ambala Police Range Sibas Kabiraj in which Ambala SP Jashnadeep Singh Randhawa and Kaithal SP Abhishek Jor-

wal have been included. Home Minister Anil Vij said that the SIT would investigate the cases of fraud (kabutarbaaji), who cheated the youths of the state and sent them illegally to foreign countries by taking lakhs of rupees. The team has been given directions by Home Minister to strictly deal with these matters. Information reveals that large

number of youths went abroad by delivering fake Visa documents were arrested in other countries and many of them are still under trial in courts in other countries. It may be noted that a few years ago, Home Minister Anil Vij had also constituted an SIT under the direction of the then IG of Karnal range Bharti Arora in which the police captains of different districts were included.

#### SATISH HANDA Ambala

With the efforts of Haryana AYUSH Minister. Anil Vij, the AYUSH Medical Reimbursement Policy has been approved in Haryana, under which the state government employees, pensioners and their dependents will be able to get treatment and reimbursement of medicines through AYUSH system. This was stated by the doctors of National Integrated Medical Association (NIMA) to the AYUSH Minister Anil Vij, who reached Ambala Cantonment from various districts of the state on Sunday.

The office bearers of the association whilke talking to media persons at Health Minister's Ambala camp office said that under the visionary vision of AYUSH Minister Anil Vij, this policy will benefit the employees and along with this the AYUSH system will also be promoted. He expressed heartfelt thanks to Minister for passing this proposal in the cabinet meeting. They said Anil Vij has strongly promoted the countrys AYUSH system of medicine during his tenure and today the world>s first AYUSH University is being established in Haryana. At the same time, AYUSH Minister Vij said that Ayurveda is our ancient science and work is being done



to promote it so that we can get its full benefits.

National Integrated Medical Association thanks Health Minister

On this occasion, President of National Integrated Medical Association Dr. Aditya Garg, Dr. KC Sharma, Dr. Gulshan Rai Sharma, Dr. Dinesh Agarwal, Dr. N Sharma, Dr. Sudhir Gupta, Dr. Adarsh Agarwal, Dr. Anil Loginya, Dr. Anil Dureja, Dr. Ved Prakash, Dr. Trehan, Dr. Manoj Sharma, Dr. Pramod Mittal, Dr. Subhash Mittal were also present. The government employees, pensioners and their dependents, the Haryana Government has drafted the Ayush Medical Reimbursement Policy. The Policy also aims to uplift AYUSH System through its reach to all Haryana Government beneficiaries. As the vast majority of these beneficiaries are getting themselves treated under the AYUSH System of Medicine but due to no empanelled AYUSH Hospitals they were facing difficulty in getting their bills reimbursed. In view of the difficulties, AYUSH Medical Reimbursement Policy is drafted.

As per the Policy, all Government AYUSH Institutions, Private AYUSH Hospitals having NABH certificates and Entry level NABH certificates will get empanelled under this policy. This will give a boost to AYUSH private Practitioners as they can et their hospitals empanelled. The Haryana Government employees, Pensioners and their dependents can avail the benefit of getting their illness treated through Indoor admission in AYUSH empanelled Hospitals under the State Government. Chronic disease Patients

who were getting their outdoor charges reimbursed through Allopathy will now get an opportunity of getting themselves treated for the same disease through the AYUSH System and their charges reimbursed.

# North Zone National IMA-AMS Medical Specialist Conference held at Chandigarh

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

National, North Zone Conference of IMA-AMS was organised at IMA Complex Sector 35 Chandigarh. Highlight was concern over the falling level of relation between patient and doctor, misuse of antibiotics and steroids and use of latest technology in the medical field.

Doctors from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Jammu-Kashmir, UP, MP, Uttarakhand and Delhi participated in this conference. National Council meeting of National IMA-AMS was also held. In the presence of Dr. RS Bedi and Dr. Pawan Gupta, Dr. Neeraj Kumar, Senior Consultant Pediatrician and former head of IMA Chandigarh, kept his views on the



new advancements on vaccination, Dr. Jagdish Chandra, former Head and Professor, Department of Microbiology, GMCH Sector 32, gave his views on the use of antibiotics in common infections.

Professor M Sendhil Kumaran Department of Dermatology PGI delivered a special lecture on Misuse of Topical Steroids in the presence of Professor Bhushan Kumar and Dr Anil Kumar. Dr. Neeraj Nagpal Senior Medico Legal Consultant delivered his lec-

Sauda Sahib, Mandi Chuhar-

kana on April 10, it will return

to Nankana Sahib. The jatha

will reach Gurdwara Sri Panja

Sahib on April 12, and partici-

pate in the main congregation

on April 14. On April 15, the

jatha of Sikh pilgrims will reach

Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, Lahore

and visit Gurdwara Rori Sahib,

Eminabad and Gurdwara Sri

ture on the falling level of patient doctor relationship in the presence of Dr. Mahendra Kaushal and Dr. Rameshwar Gupta.

Dr. RS Bedi, Dr. Ramneek Sharma and Dr. Vivek Malhotra who were responsible for the sec retariat of today's conference, told that in the IMAAMS conference, the subject experts updated all the IMA members about the advance ment related to the medical world lot of discussion was done and discussed about the use of latest technology in Medical field. Dr R S Bedi was felicitated by IMA Chandigarh on his nomination as municipal councillor, while honouring him Dr Ramneek IMA president said that medical fraternity now has someone own in the Government to look after our issues and grievances

# On Khalsa Sajna Diwas, unnecessary interference of police A Large Group of Sikh pilgrims departs

# Action against government employees, contractors and drugs smugglers to make Haryana corruption, crime free

SATISH HANDA

Talking to media persons Chief, Anti-corruption Bureau (ACB) Haryana Shatrujit Kapoor said that on the directions by Harvana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khatter action has been taken against all government employees including officers involved in corruption and during recent past sometime trapped as many as 68 employees including

few senior officers while accepting bribe and registered 46 cases against them which include maximum number of 13 cases of corruption against employees of police department in the state.

Among other government employees arrested while accepting bribe include 4 cases registered against employees of state Revenue Department, 3 employees each from the departments of Urban Local Body, Haryana State Electricity Board, Public Health, 2 employees arrested each while accepting bribe from the department of Haryana State Industrial Development Corporation, Food & Supply, Consumer Affairs, Education, Haryana Agriculture Board, Haryana Urban Development Authority, Excise & Taxation, Home Guard, Forests



rupees and maximum number of them were police officers, Patwaris and clerical staff working in government offices. There was a long list of corrupt government employees along wth their names provided by the Anti-corruption Bureau which is, however, not being released here.

Past scenario also reveals that large number of contractors engaged by the department of PWD (B&R) to complete development of large number of projects in the state used sub-standard construction material or collected amount of their bills without making supplies are also facing corruption and Jails. Anti-corruption charges against them in the Chief told that among those courts causing heavy loss to

# in Gurdwaras cannot be tolerated: Harjinder Singh Dhami for Pakistan to celebrate Vaisakhi

#### Punjab government & police administration should refrain from creating an atmosphere of terror in Sangat

#### **JAGMOHAN SINGH** Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami has asked the Punjab government and the police administration to stop unnecessary interference in the arrangements of Gurdwara Sahibs on the occasion of Khalsa Sajna Diwas (birth anniversary of Khalsa) and to stay within their regulations.

Ďhami said when the Sikh community is celebrating Khalsa Sajna Diwas as per the Panthic traditions, there is resentment in Sangat (com-

munity + congregation) due bad, that cannot be tolerto unnecessary interference in the Gurdwaras by the Punjab government and the police administration. He said arbitrary restrictions are being community, a large number

imposed on the Sangat by the police administration, about which information is being received by the SGPC. Harjinder Singh Dhami

said that this action of the government is extremely



ated. He said that because the Khalsa Sajna Diwas is very important and the occasion of devotion for the Sikh of Sangat gather at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib and Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, but they are facing inconvenience due to the unnecessary interference of the police.

The SGPC President said

and terror is being deliberately created in the Sikh Sangat, the policemen deputed at the Gurdwaras are also pressuring the managers to follow instructions as per their wishes, which is an unacceptable action and like a direct challenge to Maryada (code of conduct) by the police. He said that these reports are also being received from the SGPC employees that the police present in the civil dress without identification inside the Gurdwaras are harassing the Sangat by keeping an eye on them, to which the Sangat is raising strong objections. arjinder Singh Dhami said

that for these actions Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's Punjab government is under direct questioning, for which it has to be held accountable.

#### that an atmosphere of fear JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) today sent a jatha (group) of Sikh pilgrims to participate in the religious congregation to be organised on the occasion of Khalsa Sajna Diwas (Vaisakhi) at Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib in Pakistan.

Besides, SGPC, the Sikh Devotees sponsored by Haryana Gurdwara Management and DelhiSikhGurdwara Management Committee also crossed over to Pakistan today through the Joint Check post of Attari border (JCP). The total strength of Sikh pilgrims who crossed over to Pakistan were 2500.

Sikh jatha (group) leader and SGPC member Amarjit Singh Bhalaipur said that several Sikh shrines are situated in Pakistan and the community longs to see



them and pay obeisance there, therefore, the governments of both nations should grant visas with an open heart.

SGPC secretary Partap Singh informed that this jatha has departed to participate in the main congregation of Khalsa Sajna Diwas Vaisakhi to be organised at Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib. He said the jatha will reach Gurdwara Sri Nankana Sahib on April 9, and after paying Kartapur Sahib on April 16. Af-

ter staying at Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, Lahore on April 17, the Sikh jatha will return to India on April 18.

Singh said that the SGPC has sent holy Gutka Sahibs of Gurbani, kanghas (combs), karhas (iron bracelets), Kirpans, shawls, tea, with the atha. He said on the day of the main congregation on Vaisakhi, Amrit Sanchar (initiation ceremony) will be organised at Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib.

Secretary Pratap Singh said that for the convenience of the pilgrims, the SGPC provided the facility to fill the entry forms, etc. at the Attari border and special buses were arranged for transportation of the pilgrims. He said that the SGPC also arranged langar and tea and water for the pilgrims at Wagah border on the Pakistan side.

#### Dr Farooq Abdullah slams govt for disallowing My only aim is not even a single patient from Haryana should Friday prayers at Srinagar's grand mosque go to any other state or city for his medical treatment Vij



**SRINAGAR**: Former Jammu interference with the religious and Kashmir Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah has strongly criticized the disallowing of Jumat-ul-Vida prayers at the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar

In a statement, he called out the administration's highhandedness and condemned the measure as a clear violation and



rights of the people.

'Such unwarranted curbs hurt the religious sentiments of millions and are unsuited to the country's democratic, secuhuman rights. lar moorings besides debunking

the claims of the government on changed ground situation across Kashmir," Dr Abdullah said. The former chief minister

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Such unwarranted curbs hurt the religious sentiments of millions and are unsuited to the country's democratic, secular moorings besides debunking the claims of the government on changed ground situation across Kashmir

also expressed his concern gated the special status of the about the continuous detenerstwhile state and bifurcated it tion of Kashmir's chief cleric into two federally administered union territories.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, which he deemed a violation of basic The administration has disallowed congregational Friday Mirwaiz who would lead the prayers at Jamia Masjid in congregational prayers at the Srinagar, which is the central Masjid, has been under detenmosque and an epicenter of tion since August 5, 2019, when faith for millions of Muslims the Indian government abroacross the region.

#### SATISH HANDA Ambala

Haryana Health and Family Welfare Minister Anil Vij said that Harvana would be the first state in the country where all the hospitals/ medical centers even at the village level would have ECG facility. He said that we are going to provide an ECG facility in all our primary health centers so that the primary symptoms of the patient can be

detected there itself. Vij was addressing the doctors and other people including media persons as the chief guest on the inauguration of the Complex PCI Cardiac Workshop under the aegis of MEDITRINA at Civil Hospital, Ambala Cantonment. Inauguration of PCI Complex Cardiac

state only.



ister said that most of the people Workshop, apart from Vij, Chairman of MEDITRINA Hospital, go to big hospitals for heart treat-Dr. N. Pratap Kumar, Dr. Imad ment and get worried while some Shaiban, Senior Cardiologist from people do not even have some Italy.Vij said that his only aim is heart disease, so ECG facility is there in every PHC of the state to that not even a single patient from his state should go to any other check their symptoms. The Health state or city for his treatment and Minister said that "I have only one should be provided facilities in our target that not a single patient from my state should go outside On this occasion, Health Mintreatment and should be provided all kinds of facilities in our state". He said that we are running a heart, cancer, dialysis center here in Ambala and he wants to do the same in Haryana so that patients do not have to go outside. -

Vij said that in order to provide better health facilities in the state, a study is being conducted as per the guidelines of WHO as to where and what capacity health services are required. He said that a company has been given the task for this study, which will prepare a report and give us where and what health facilities like doctors, paramedical staff, equipment etc. are needed. He said that in this way we will be able to provide better health services in all areas.

to any other state or city for his

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# NATION

# BJP's first list in Karnataka assembly polls, rebellion, resignation and tears

#### **ARUN KUMAR RAO** Bengaluru

A day after BJP announced the first list of 189 candidates for the May 10 assembly polls, BJP in Karnataka was confronted with emotionally charged rebellion with two MLCs quitting the party and six time MLA announcing retirement from electoral politics, saying there "was no value for honesty". Couple of MLA's sobbed before media, saying there was "lack of grace' in how things were handled. Former Dy CM Laxman

Savadi who was denied ticket from Athani quits Party MLC Post and all set to quit party as per his statements to party workers said "Shameless to go with a begging bowl for seat". Former CM Jagadish Shettar, whose name didn't figure in the list, meets top

#### B S Yeddiyurappa said shettar will get a ticket

Seven MLA's including Madal Virupakshappa, were denied ticket .However, BJP's lists for Karnataka indicates the leadership has been circumspect. Although it has fielded 52 new faces and may still drop another five incum-

brass in Delhi, in other hand bent MLAs with new comers in the 2022.

Sources say the leadership desisted from a complete overhaul as they feared widespread rebellion may dent its prospects, The high command is learnt to have decided to tread cautiously and deployed seniors to negotiate with MLAs like former chief minister Jagdish shettar and

भारतीय जनता पार्टी

Eshwarappa, who were asked to may way for new faces.

壘

While BJP has never secured even a simple majority in the 224 member assembly, it formed the government through either coalitions or by ge3tting MLAs from other parties to defect through an exercise called 'Operation Lotus'. Its best performance was 110 seats in 2008.

# If BJP bags 35 LS seats of Bengal, Trinamool regime will collapse: Amit Shah

KOLKATA: Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday claimed if the BJP manages to win 35 of 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal in the next year's general elections, the Trinamool Congress government in the state will collapse much before its term (till 2026).

"If the people of West Bengal gift BJP 35 seats in 2024, then they will not have to wait even till 2026. Mamata Banerjee's government will collapse even before that, " Shah said at a public rally at Suri in Birbhum district of West Bengal.

However, during his 20-minute speech, the Home Minister did not utter a single word about the forthcoming polls for the three-tier panchayat system in West Bengal which is scheduled in 2023 only. Political observers feel that from his speech it is clear that just like in other states, the BJP has set the tone for 2024 Lok Sabha polls for West Bengal as well. During the speech, his attack



against Trinamool Congress and the state government were mainly on two points, namely the incidents of scams, especially in recruitments and the recent clashes over Ram Navami processions in the state.

The Union Home Minister even went to the extent of claiming that the high-handed approach of the chief minister had resulted in several Trinamool Congress leaders going

behind bars. "It is just because of the 'Didi's Dadagiri' that so many leaders

of the ruling Trinamool Congress are currently behind bars. However, the chief minister may wish, but she would not be able to see her nephew (Abhishek Banerjee) as the next chief minister. Someone from the BJP would be the next chief minister of West Bengal, "Shah said.

Commenting on the recent

returns as the Prime Minister for the third term in 2024, no one will dare anywhere in the country to stop Ram Navami processions"

If Narendra Modi

clashes in Howrah and Hooghly districts over Ram Navami processions, Shah said the clashes were the result of the appeasement politics of Trinamool Congress and CM Mamata Banerjee.

"If Narendra Modi returns as the Prime Minister for the third term in 2024, no one will dare anywhere in the country to stop Ram Navami processions, " said the Home Minister.

#### Nitin Gadkari reaches Kashmir's Sonamarg to inspect Z-Morh tunnel



#### **FW DESK**

The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, visited the site of the Zojila Tunnel on the Srinagar-Leh highway in Sonamarg with J&K Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha and members of Parliament. The tunnel, which will connect Ladakh with the rest of India and remain open year-round, is expected to be completed by 2026.

Gadkari also held a highlevel meeting to review the progress of road works in Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir and briefed the Parliamentary Consultative Committee members on MORTH's projects in the region. On April 11, Gadkari and the Union Minister of State in the PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh will inspect the Banihal-Ramban stretch of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and the site for

# 'Nitish's formula of opposition unity is one seat, one candidate'

**NEWDELHI**: Bihar Chief Min-Kejriwal has already given full

ister Nitish Kumar, who met support to the initiative of Nitish Congress President Mallikarjun Kumar, "he added. Kharge and senior leader Rahul

Bihar Finance Minister Vi-Gandhi, as well as his Delhi jay Kumar Chaudhary, who counterpart Arvind Kejriwal is considered one of closest to and other opposition leaders is Nitish Kumar, said: "Media alworking with the plan to unite the opposition to challenge the ways asks about who would be the PM face of the opposition BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha parties? The idea behind this question is to derail the initia-"The Nitish formula for 2024 tive. BJP always claimed that for opposition unity is One Seat there is no vacancy for Prime One Candidate (OSOC). It has Minister in the country... we come into effect in the country. will assure them that we will

The discussions with all opposicreate a vacancy of the same." tion parties are completed now The BJP, over the years, is ruland its result will be visible soon, ing in the country only with 37 'senior JD-U leader K.C. Tyagi per cent of votes, due to division said on Thursday. "Some issues of votes as opposition parties are coming into the media about contesting against each other. Now the one seat, one candidate what happened to Mamata Benerjee, Arvind Kejriwal and K formula, if implemented, could reduce the division of anti-BJP Chandrashekhar Rao, and these will be addressed soon. Arvind votes in the country.

PM flags off poll-bound Rajasthan's first Vande Bharat train

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off pollbound Rajasthan's first Vande Bharat express on Wednesday. While launching the train

between Ajmer and Delhi Cantonment through video conferencing, the Prime Minister lamented that "an important and basic need of the citizens like railways was turned into an arena of politics for a long time".

PM Modi said, "India inherited a fairly big railway network at the time of Independence, but political interest dominated the need for modernisation in the years after independence".

"Politics was evident in the selection of railway minister, announcement of trains and even in recruitments. Land acquisition was done under the false pretense of railway jobs and many unmanned crossings continued for a very long time and cleanliness and safety took a back seat, "he said while alluding to the land for job scam, in which former railway minister Lalu Prasad Yadav and his family members are being probed.

"The situation took a turn



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for the better after 2014 when people elected a stable govern-ment with full majority, when the pressure of political give and take receded, railway heaved a sigh of relief and sprinted to new heights, "Modi said. This is the sixth Vande Bharat train in the last two months to have been flagged off by the Prime Minister. Incidentally, all the three trains --Ajmer-Delhi Cantonment Vande Bharat express, Rani

Kamlapati-Hazrat Nizammuddin Vande Bharat express and Secunderabad-Tirupati Vande Bharat express -- cater to the needs of three poll-bound states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh

a turn for the better after 2014 when people elected a stable government with full majority, when the pressure of political give and take receded, railway heaved a sigh of relief and sprinted to new heights"

The situation took

and Telangana respectively. All Pushkar and Ajmer Sharif.

The Editors Guild of India,

FW DESK

#### **BJP releases 2nd list** of 23 candidates for K'taka polls, candidate for Jalandhar LS bypoll

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has released the second list of 23 candidates for the Karnataka Assembly election. Earlier on Tuesday, the saffron party had announced the names of 189 candidates in its first list. The party has also announced candidates for the by-elections to be held in the Jalandhar Lok Sabha constituency in Punjab and the Jharsuguda Assembly by-election in Odisha.

The party has declared Sardar Inder Iqbal Singh Atwal as its candidate for the Jalandhar Lok Sabha bypoll and Tankadhar Tripathi for the Jharsuguda Assembly bypoll. In the second list of candidates for the Karnataka Assembly election, the saffron party has fielded Nagaraj Chabbi, who recently quit the Congress, as its candidate from Kalghatgi Assembly constituency. However, BJP has not given a ticket to former Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar in its second list as well. Unable to get a ticket, Shettar had also met the party's National President J.P. Nadda in Delhi on Wednesday, urging him to give the ticket.

# Punjab police shifts Papalpreet

# **Editors Guild conclave on Media Controls**

the three states are scheduled

to witness Assembly elections

later this year. Meanwhile, Modi

remarked that the railway budget

for Rajasthan has been increased

14 times since 2014, from Rs 700

crore in 2014 to more than Rs 9,

Addressing the gathering,

Modi congratulated the land of

valour Rajasthan for getting its

first Vande Bharat Train, which

he said, will not only ease the

travel between Jaipur Delhi but

will also give a push to the tour-

ism industry of Rajasthan, as

it will facilitate faster access to

places of faith like Theerthraj

500 crore this year.

the construction of an Intermodal Station at Katra in Reasi district, as well as the Katra-Delhi Expressway. Gadkari will return to New Delhi later that day.

#### No mechanism available to deactivate Aadhaar of deceased persons: Govt



**NEW DELHI:** The government has mulled over the possibility of deactivating Aadhaar of deceased persons. However, no mechanism is currently available to do it, sources aware of the development have said. "At present, there is

no mechanism to receive the Aadhaar of deceased persons from the registrars appointed by state governments and to deactivate them, " a source in the ministry for electronics and IT said.

However, the Registrar General of India had sought suggestions of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on draft amendments to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, regarding capturing of Aadhaar of a deceased person while issuing the death certificate, for its subsequent deactiva-

However, no further development has taken place after that, sources said.

Registrars appointed by states under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, register births and deaths in their respective local areas.

# Singh to Dibrugarh Jail in Assam

Papalpreet's arrest comes days after **CCTV** footage made the rounds on social media in which he could be seen at a 'dera' (place for religious congregation) in a village in Hoshiarpur JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

election, his JD-U said.

A five member team led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Sanjiv Kumar today left the city along with arrested

accused Papalpreet Singh for



Dibrugarh Jail in Assam. Satinder Singh told media that SSP Amritsar (Rural) Mr. today early in the morning a

team of Punjab police left for Dibrugah Jail in Assam to shift arrested accused Papalpreet Singh there. Papalpreet Singh was being shifted to Dibrugah jail by air as a reason they took flight in the morning from Shri Guru Ramdas International Airport here today, said SSP.

However, Radical preacher Amritpal Singh's close aide Papalpreet Singh was arrested from Kathunangal village of Amritsar under NSA on Monday. Papalpreet's arrest comes days after CCTV footage made the rounds on social media in which he could be seen at a 'dera' (place for religious congregation) in a village in Hoshiarpur.

an organisation dedicated to protect freedom of press and raising the standard of editorial leadership of newspapers and magazines, has organised a conclave on 'Media Controls: Regulations, Denial of Access & Curbs on Press Freedom'. Scheduled for Friday, April 14 the Conclave take place via Zoom, according to a press release.

There will be five sessions one each and eminent journalists, editors and writers will discuss regulations and controls in different areas of reporting namely Politics, Sports, Business, Films and egal issues.

Those participating are



Mrinal Pande.Sankarshan Shobhaa De and Anuradha Ra-Thakur,Umakant Lakhera in the political segment while on challenges in reporting on Ayaz Memon, Chandra Shekhar Luthra and Sharda Ugra. will share their views. The session will be moderated by Pradeep Magazine.

Those speaking on constraints in Business reporting are Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and T.N. Ninan. The session will be moderated by Anant Nath.

Speakers on the session on films include Mayank Shekhar,

porting we will hear Sanjay Hegde and Samanwaya Rautray. This session will be moderated by KV Prasad. The Guild welcomed wider participation and those wish-

man. This session will be Mod-

erated by Nandini Ramnath.

In the session on legal re-

ing to attend the Conclave can write to the Editors Guild of India on info@editorsguild.in for Zoom link or can join live proceedings at organisations Facebook page – Facebook. Editors Guild.

# SGPC legal delegation meets detained Punjab youths at Dibrugarh

#### **JAGMOHAN SINGH** Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has started pursuing the cases of youths who were arrested from Punjab and imprisoned in Dibrugarh, Assam in the recent past. In this regard, SGPC lawyers who reached Dibrugarh met eight youths in the jail on Monday, while the necessary documents regarding their cases have also been obtained from the jail administration.

SGPC member and senior advocate Bhagwant Singh Sialka led a delegation which went to Assam including Advocate Mandeep Singh Sidhu and Advocate Rohit Sharma.

Sharing information to the media at the SGPC office, SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhami said that following the order of Jathedar, Sri Akal Takht Sahib, the

cases of youths imprisoned under the National Security being pursued. He said that



the legal experts of the SGPC have started their work after visiting the ground level. He informed that eight youths are detained at Dibrugarh, who are being provided legal aid. He further said that the legal team of SGPC has prepared for further action after meeting the arrested youths and the Dibrugarh jail administration.

Meanwhile, sharing information from Assam, Advocate Sialka said that eight youths Act (NSA) at Dibrugarh, are in Dibrugarh jail are in high spirit. He said the District be continued.

Legal Services Authority and Dibrugarh Bar Association along with local lawyers have supported the SGPC legal team in submitting an application to the Dibrugarh jail administration to meet the eight detained youths. Advocate Mandeep Singh said that the detention orders of the detained youths and other necessary documents have been provided to the SGPC legal team by jail administration, following which further legal proceedings will

# India sees surge in Covid cases; virus moving towards endemic stage

**NEW DELHI:** India is witnessing a surge in Covid-19 cases with 7,830 news infections recorded on Wednesday, the highest in over seven months, as per the Union Ministry of Health and Family Affairs data.

However, top officials in the health ministry say that the virus is moving towards an endemic stage, which means that it will be consistently present but limited to a particular region, making it more

predictable and manageable. Officials have noted that while cases may continue to rise over the next 10-12 days, hospitalisations remain low. The virus becoming endemic is likely to generate a large number of variants, according to them.

Since its detection in 2021, Omicron has spawned more than 1, 000 sub-lineages, including XBB. 1. 16 and XBB. 1. 5, according to Dr N.K Arora,



co-chair of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG)

While XBB. 1. 16 has been identified as the cause of a surge in cases, Dr Arora stated that hospitalisations haven't increased, and most deaths attributed to the disease are among individuals with serious comorbidities. However, he added that the biological behavior of the virus cannot be predicted and that con-

tinued surveillance of hospitalisations due to Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) is necessary.

India is ramping up its vaccination drive and promoting adherence to Covid-19 protocols such as wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands frequently. With the emergence of new sub-lineages of Omicron, officials are urging the public to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to prevent the

The situation is still evolving, and experts are closely monitoring the virus's behavior to develop effective strategies to combat it"

"

spread of the virus.

The situation is still evolving, and experts are closely monitoring the virus's behavior to develop effective strategies to combat it, " said an official.

With ongoing surveillance and efforts to control the spread of the virus, officials hope to mitigate its impact and protect public health.

# Addressing stress signs crucial for minimising damage

he World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) recently presented their regional economic outlook for 2023, revising down their projections for India's growth prospects. The World Bank reduced its real GDP growth forecast for India to 6.3% from 6.6%, and from the 7% projection made in October 2022. It cited rising borrowing costs affecting consumption demand, a likely contraction in government consumption, and a decline in services sector growth to a three-year low of 6.7% from 9.5% in 2022-23 as reasons for the downgrade. Similarly, the ADB reduced India's 2023-24 GDP growth forecast from 7.2% to 6.4%, attributing the cut to tight monetary conditions and waning optimism on business conditions, leading to lower growth in private investments. Despite the downgrades, both institutions acknowledged China's rebound and India's healthy domestic demand as factors lifting Asia's overall growth prospects. They also cited challenges in the global economy, such as bank failures in the developed world and concerns about rising oil prices due to production cuts, as contributing factors. The Indian government, which presented its Union Budget after the previous 7%-plus growth forecasts, had not expressed such high expectations for this year. The Economic Survey projected 2023-24 growth at 6.5%, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) estimated it at 6.4%. India's current growth estimate for last year is 7%, with the World Bank and ADB expecting slightly lower figures at 6.9% and 6.8%, respectively. A clearer picture of the base for calculating this year's growth will emerge by the end of May when the first estimates for the last quarter of 2022-23 will be released. By then, the 2023-24 forecasts will likely be revised. However, policymakers should not be overly concerned with these fluctuating numbers but should pay attention to the stress signs being highlighted and proac-

E.

e World Water Conference that was convened by the United Nations (March 22-24 2023) was the first UN conference on freshwater in almost 50 years. It was held in the context of serious environmental issues - flooding, drought, a severity of climate change and a looming food crisis. The conference also marked a mid-term review of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 (to advance the water agenda by energising existing programmes and projects, and inspiring water action to achieve the 2030 Agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which envisages the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

The central outcome of the conference was the international Water Action Agenda, to which governments, multilateral institutions, businesses, and non-governmental organisations submitted over 670 commitments to address water security issues. Nearly 164 governments and 75 multilateral organisations have made commitments. While the commitments embodied in the Water Action Agenda are voluntary and, therefore, legally non-binding, the voluntary commitments are expected to inspire the collective political will, which is needed to address the many water challenges.

The commitments made at the conference must be scrutinised to see whether they will yield universal, safe, affordable and equitable access to water that is consistent with SDG 6. Meeting this target by 2030 (as envisioned by the SDG) will incur capital expenditures of \$114 billion per year. The World Bank estimates recurring operations and maintenance for basic water and sanitation service (WASH) costs to rise from about \$4 billion to over \$30 billion per year by 2030, which is far more than the capital costs for basic WASH services. The World Resources Institute (WRI) is of the view that the commitments made by the states reflected rigour, scope, and ambition but



ANWAR SADAT EXPLORES HOW UNIVERSAL, SAFE, AFFORDABLE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER CAN BE ENSURED

The water conference takeaways

they lacked proper finance and targets that are quantifiable in nature. Investment of this range would require valuing water, which in turn requires robust water measurement and accounting. There are 'serious limitations in our knowledge about the volume, flux and quality of water in lakes, rivers, soils and aquifers. There are huge gaps in water usage data. The metering of water has triggered resistance from India to Ireland because of concerns about equitable access and affordability of water services'.

Funding from regional, national, and international sources prioritises new water infrastructure rather than on water maintenance services (World Bank study). It results in decreased service for water customers. World Bank estimates project recurring operations and maintenance service (WASH) costs to rise from about \$4 billion to over \$30 billion per year by 2030, which is far more than the capital costs for basic WASH services. Water does not qualify to be a global public goods as it is not considered to be an area of urgent funding as compared to climate change. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the only international funding mechanism that has been able to

cover more than 300 watersheds and an even greater number of aquifers across the political boundaries of two or more states with its grant and concessional loan.

#### India at the conference

India's commitments at the conference were: an investment of \$240 billion in the water sector and efforts to restore groundwater level. A 2021 CAG report says that groundwater extraction in India increased from 58% to 63% between 2004-17. This has been further exacerbated by climate change resulting in intermittent rainfall, which further undermines the recharge potential. The revised Groundwater Bill 2017 vests State groundwater boards with creating laws, managing water allocation and other relevant issues. The State boards are understaffed, and lack in expertise and prioritising socio-political conflicts over groundwater resources.

In international law, 'states possess the authority to make voluntary commitments to address issues of global concern. These commitments are distinguished from other legal forms because they are not made pursuant to a consensus instrument to which

the parties have agreed. They are generally independent of the commitments of other parties'.

**EDITORIAL** 

**COPINION** 

Efforts to 'tackle climate change and to promote environmental sustainability have led states to make voluntary commitments to curb greenhouse gases and to take measures to promote sustainability, even in the absence of a legally non-binding instrument. The commitments of states after the Climate Conference in Denmark (December 2009). underline this. But in the case of climate change, these voluntary commitments take place within a broader context of binding agreements: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement'.

The 2023 Water Conference takes place within the context of SDG 6, and not within the context of the UN Water Convention 1997 and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Water Convention 1992, the two legally binding legal instruments on regulation of trans-boundary river water courses. But the target embodied in 6.5 of the SDG 6 focusing on 'implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate' is a common thread between the Water Conference and the two conventions.

Voluntary commitments are becoming an important feature in the environmental law vista, but they raise difficult issues of accountability. Commitments made by the states with different formats and with different content pose challenges in terms of monitoring compliance with each commitment. Voluntary commitments are perhaps just a necessary step in the face of inaction.

Anwar Sadat is a Senior Assistant Professor in international law, specialising in environmental law, at the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. Views are personal

# R.K. RAGHAVAN ON WHY POLITICIANS BELIEVE THAT LAW AND ORDER CAN'T BE MAINTAINED WITHOUT PHYSICAL FORCE Key obstacles against humane policing

e serious complaint of human rights violation recently against an IPS officer in Ambasamudram in south Tamil Nadu should greatly embarrass the State government and the police hierarchy. The officer has been suspended from service and his alleged misconduct is being probed. The Chief Minister must be complimented for his swift action against the offending official. This should send a strong message to the police force in the State that no illegal physical treatment of crime suspects will be tolerated and that such behaviour will be subjected to a clinical and credible enquiry by an independent authority. The case revives memories from June 2020 when a father and son from Sathankulam in Thoothukudi District in Tamil Nadu were eening their beyond permitted hours. The two subsequently died and the policemen concerned are on trial. The history of policing in many countries is pockmarked by episodes of excesses. The U.S. is one country which has had far too many instances of police torture. The Rodney King incident of 1991 in Los Angeles is a watershed in policing. In this incident, the police stopped an African-American motorist to check his credentials. Upon resisting, he was severely beaten up by a group of uniformed patrolmen. The assault was caught on camera and circulated. leading to widespread outrage and disturbance of public peace. The incident acquired racist overtones and added credibility to the longstanding, strident charge that the American police – dominated by the White male – was always looking for African-American targets. The more recent death (May 25, 2020) of 46-year-old George Floyd, again an African-American, in Minneapolis following gory physi-

**BOOKS: REVIEW** 



that has shocked the average American. In among public servants which has burgeoned this case, the victim, accused of having failed in recent times. If there is no public outrage to pay for what he bought at a con store, was pushed to the ground and held by his neck until he suffocated to death. This led to vandalism by the African-American community not only in Minnesota but in the northeast of the country as well. In contrast, police handling of the public is more civilised in most of Europe, including the U.K. Against the known instances of police brutality across the globe, we can safely assume that a large number of cases of torture have also gone unreported. This largely constitutes assaults on women. Only about 10% of complaints are believed to have been registered. Also, only a small percentage of the offenders have been convicted.

cal torture in public view is another instance the near future. This is largely due to corruption

to spread the message that technology and ethics should go hand in hand.

It is sad and equally true that many in the political firmament subscribe to the philosophy that without physical force on misbehaving citizens, the quality of policing cannot improve and law and order cannot be maintained. Taking a cue from some 'tough' Chief Ministers the police leadership has succumbed to the lure of human rights transgressions. They have unabashedly preached the use of third-degree and extra-legal methods to the problem of solving crime. The consequence is incidents like Ambasamudram and Sattankulam.

In the former case, the officer involved hails from outside Tamil Nadu and no personal grudge could be attributed to him. In all problity, this was a case of overze astray. The question that is often asked of me is whether solid training in ethics at the time of induction could smoothen the rough edges of a recruit. This applies equally to everyone from a highly placed IPS officer to a constable at the grassroots. It is preposterous to believe that inputs in ethics during training will last long. The pressures in the field are so enormous that the impact of ethics evaporates quickly. It is here that the DGPs and IGPs have a crucial role in indoctrinating young recruits on the value of sticking to the law and civilised behaviour. If these leaders themselves are votaries of lawless policing, only the Almighty can save the law-abiding citizens from an unprincipled police force.

tively address potential issues to minimize any impending damage.

#### LETTERBOX

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#### **THE FINANCIAL WORLD**

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#### EDITOR\* ABDUL WASEY

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

#### Road ahead

Many citizens ask me as to whether we can expect more humane and civilised police conduct in India in the years to come. I offer no guarantee that police brutality will vanish in

costs involved for crusaders are increasing by the day. In the same manner, police excesses will continue to rise because the stress that an average policeman is subjected to from his higher-ups has not abated. The pressure to produce results has been on the rise. Our country has large police forces. To disseminate the message of ethics to the bottom of such large outfits is a gargantuan task

There is huge criticism of the Indian Police Service (IPS) which was created immediately after the Independence with great expectations. But these have been only partially fulfilled. However, the IPS has done remarkably well in introducing science and technology. There are now many officers in the IPS who have graduated from IITs and IIMs before being appointed. They have done a lot to make those in the lower echelons understand the value of technology in policing. This is good so far as it goes. But these achievements have done little

R.K. Raghavan is a former CBI Director who now teaches Criminal Justice and Policing at the Jindal Global University, Sonepat, in Haryana. Views are personal.

# Book gives insightful glimpse into the life of BR Ambedkar

n his latest book, "Ambedkar: A Life," Shashi Tharoor delves into the multifaceted life of B.R. Ambedkar, a pivotal figure in Indian history. Ambedkar's roles as a Dalit emancipator, constitutionalist, economist, historian, labor rights activist, water management expert, and critic of Hinduism are just a few of the many aspects of his legacy. Each retelling of Ambedkar's story can shed light on different aspects of his life, which is essential for understanding his contributions.

Tharoor, however, begins with an apprehension that some may object to his book as he is not a Dalit. Despite this concern, the real contradiction between the biographer and his subject lies in their views on Hinduism. While Ambedkar famously declared he would not die a Hindu and eventually converted to Buddhism, Tharoor maintains his faith in Hinduism. Both individu-

observation and extensive reading of scriptures to their respective religious beliefs, but reached vastly different conclusions.

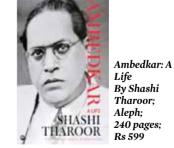
Tharoor's biography is split into two parts. In the first half, he recounts the significant moments of Ambedkar's challenging life, including the humiliations, poverty, and personal tragedies he faced, as well as the courage, defiance, and determination he demonstrated. The second half focuses on Ambedkar's legacy, including the impact of his ideas abroad, his concept of 'constitutional morality,' and his symbolic appropriation by political parties he would have considered opponents.

Tharoor also examines what he calls 'Ambedkar's Four Flaws': his patronizing attitude toward Adivasis, his denigration of Hinduism, his ungraciousness in disagreements with Gandhi, and his

#### als applied the intellectual tools of **Radical empathy** involves understanding another's experience from their perspective, not simply imagining how one would feel in their place

unwavering faith in the state as an instrument of societal transformation. However, Tharoor's analysis of these flaws lacks necessary context and can appear selective at times.

For instance, Tharoor does not explore the contemporary discourse on indigenous peoples when discussing Ambedkar's views on Adivasis. Nor does he consider Ambedkar's actions in drafting the Sixth Schedule of the Indian



Constitution. Similarly, Tharoor's

presentation of Ambedkar's criti-

cism of Hinduism lacks the broader

context of caste and the master-

slave relationship.

that shaped B.R. Ambedkar and his lasting impact on Indian society. In "Ambedkar: A Life," Thar-

oor offers valuable insights into Ambedkar's role as a constitutionalist. As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar was instrumental in incorporating provisions for social justice, equality, and protection of minority rights. Tharoor delves into how Ambedkar's experiences of discrimination and marginalization shaped his views on the importance of constitutional safeguards for the most vulnerable sections of society.

Isabel Wilkerson, in her book Tharoor also discusses Ambed-"Caste: The Lies That Divide Us," kar's contributions to the field of advocates for 'radical empathy' economics. Ambedkar, who obamong privileged groups who contained a doctorate in economics sider themselves allies of the opfrom Columbia University, was a pressed. Radical empathy involves visionary economist who advocated understanding another's experience for state intervention in industry, from their perspective, not simply agriculture, and public utilities. He was also a proponent of land reforms and social security meaimagining how one would feel in their place. This concept may be the missing element in Tharoor's sures, which were aimed at upliftotherwise engaging introduction ing the economically marginalized to Ambedkar's life and legacy. By sections of society. Tharoor's account highlights the relevance of employing radical empathy, readers can gain a deeper understanding Ambedkar's economic ideas, even of the experiences and perspectives in contemporary times.

# CORPORATE **GINDUSTRY**

# L&T is 3D concrete printing India's first Post Office Building in Bengaluru

#### **ARUNKUMAR RAO** Bengaluru

Larsen and Toubro (L&T) Construction is 3D concrete printing India's first post office building in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The project is to design and build the 1000 sq. feet Halasuru Post Office (India Post, Karnataka circle) using 3D Concrete Printing Technology within 45 days. The project scope involves structure, MEP, and finishes. While the technology has been approved by the Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC), the structural design of the post office has been validated by IIT Madras. The 3D printing of the post office building is cast in Situ' at the job site in an 'open to sky' environment, using a fully automated 3D printer.L and T arranged media visit at the construction site at halasuru bengaluru.

Officials said, An emerging technology, 3D concrete print-



ing has the potential to transform construction practices by quickening the construction ocess and enhancing overall build quality. Using a robotic printer, 3D printing technology deposits concrete layer-by-layer in accordance with the 3D model drawing input. The process requires a delicate balance of concrete properties, including flow ability, quick hardening for load-bearing capacity, green concrete status for inter-layer bonding, and sufficient strength to ensure successful printing.



crore, mobiles alone surpass Rs 90K crore

M.V. Satish, Whole-time Director and Senior Executive Vice President, L&T Construction (Buildings) said, "The post office is Karnataka's first public structure being built using 3D technology. The project is progressing at a brisk pace and once completed, the building will be a mini landmark for Bengaluru. L&T Construction>sprimary focus for 3D printing technology includes affordable housing up to G+3 floors, villas, military barracks, and single-floor schools, post offices, and factories. We are actively

seeking to expand our portfolio of 3D printed structures in various sectors and are positioned well to capitalize on the benefits of this nnovative technology," he added. Advantages of 3D Concrete

**AUTOMATION:** Fully automated construction ensures excellent build quality and safe work environment.

Design Freedom: Without a formwork system, innovative and non-geometrical building shapes can be constructed to enhance aesthetics & convenience and optimize overall cost.

Sustainable Construction: Elimination of timber and aluminum formwork; use of supplementary materials to optimize CO2 emission; less material wastages; less electrical energy onsumption

Digital Workflow: Digital workflow of drawings [Design (3D AutoCAD)àPrinter (3D AutoCAD to gCode)] eliminates manual errors and costly rework

# Neogen tie-up with Japan's MU Ionic Solutions for Electrolytes

#### DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

Neogen Chemicals Limited - a leading Indian manufacturer of Bromine-based and Lithium-based specialty chemicals-signed an agreement here recently with MU Ionic Solution Corporation, Japan to acquire manufacturing technology licence for electrolytes in India. MU Ionic Solutions is a JV

between Mitsubhishi Chemical Corporation (MCC) and UBE Corporation and is a group company of The Mitsubhishi Chemical Group - a Japanese conglomerate - that has 5 electrolyte manufacturing plants in Japan, USA, UK and China. Dr Harin Kanani, managing

director, Neogen Chemicals, said that under the agreement, Neogen will obtain a licence from MUIS for manufacturing technology in making its electrolyte solutions at its Indian manufacturing facility with planned max installed capacity of upto 30,000 MT per annum, to meet the growing demand of lithium-ion cell manufacturers



of India. "Commercial production of electrolytic materials is expected to begin in 2025 and is targeted to meet the growing demand of lithium Ion battery manufacturers in India." Noting that the agreement will allow Neogen to ensure stringent global standards for its manufacturing plant, he said that it will also help the company to greatly reduce approval times with Lithium Ion battery makers, while also further enhancing confidence of Indian customers.

Replying to questions, he said that it is difficult to import electrolytes and hence the focus on manufacturing it in India

# through this agreement. "We

have signed an MOU with the Gujarat Government and are seeking a new 'greenfield' site from them, while our future focus is on looking at exports in electrolytes made here." "We are working with 15-18 Indian cell manufacturers by sharing our samples with them. The recent Lithium reserves discovery in India will help do away dependence presently on imports from Chile, Argentina and Australia, though it will take time for India to develop its lithium mines," he said. "Lithium metal is slightly explosive, though electrolytes salts are not, but maintaining very low 'moisture' and impurities in that is a 'must," he added.

He said Neogen achieved Rs 487 crores revenue in December 2022 with Net worth for FY22 being Rs 439.3 crores, five-year Revenue CAGR being 34% and 5-year PAT CAGR (41%).

The lithium battery sector is highlighting strong opportunities including the government focus on +Atmanirbhar+ PLI scheme, which is expected to accelerate EV adoption.

Cosmo Films Set to Exhibit its Product Range at Four **Major Trade Shows** 



NEW DELHI: Cosmo Films,

global leader in speciality films has announced its participation in four prominent trade shows in the label and packaging industry. The company will exhibit at LabelExpo Mexico from 26-28 April 2023, Visual Impact from 3-5 May 2023, Interpack from 4-10 May 2023 and FESPA from 23-26 May 2023 highlighting its latest product offerings and industryeading innovations. Sharing his thoughts on the same, Pankaj Poddar, Group CEO, Cosmo First Limited said, "Being innovation-led, we have developed superior-quality and innovative films that fulfill the evolving needs of our clients. Participating in LabelExpo Mexico, Visual Impact, Interpack, and FESPA is of immense importance to us, as it enables us to engage with customers and industry experts in these regions.

Millions of Indians to finally cherish an Apple personalised retail experience



**MUMBAI**: As Apple gears up to throw open the gates of its first branded retail store in India this month, its physical stores have left an indelible impression on millions worldwide. For millions of Indians, the wholesome experience of visiting an iconic Apple brick-andmortar Store is now right in

their backvard. The first Apple India retail store at Jio World Drive Mall in Mumbai -- called Apple BKC -- is inspired by the iconic 'Kaali Peeli' taxi art unique to the financial capital of the country. Next on the anvil is another Applebranded retail store in New Delhi. At Apple, every new store or facility is designed to reflect its values -- from creativity and innovation to respect for the environment.

tinued growth in smaller cities, a report showed on Tuesday. The tech giant aligns design and construction criteria try-recognised best practices for green buildings, promoting water conservation, energy efficiency, and responsible material sourcing.

#### NEW DELHI: Led by locallymanufactured mobile phones, India's electronics industry saw a record exports of electronic goods at an estimated Rs 1,85,000 crore in FY22-23A - compared to Rs 1,16,936 crore in FY21-22 - marking a whopping 58 per cent increase, the the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA)

said on Wednesday. The mobile phone exports made history by crossing the \$10 billion threshold for the first time in any fiscal year, reaching an estimated \$ 11.12 billion (over Rs 90,000 crore) in FY23.

Mobile phone exports rose from Rs 45,000 crore in FY 21-22 to Rs 90,000 crore, surpass-

NEW DELHI: India's e-com-

merce logistics industry saw

total shipments reaching to 4

billion in FY23, riding on new

categories, direct-to-consumer

(D2C) brands along with con-

India's e-commerce logistics

ace is on track to com



overall electronic goods exports, underlining the vital role of this sector in India's electronics export market This growth has been primar-

ing the previous estimate of Rs ily driven by the Apple ecosystem,

to cross 10 bn shipments by FY28

of this growth.

by CY27.

which alone crossed a record \$5 billion in exports from India in FY23.

Top exporting destinations for mobile phones include the UAE, the US, the Netherlands, the UK, and Italy.

"The mobile phone export jug-gernaut continues. It is extremely satisfying that we have crossed the targeted figure of 75,000 crores for the year. Industry and government in partnership are strenuously working on replicating this in other verticals, " said Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, ICEA.

"We must remain focused on the road ahead and continue to push the boundaries of what we can accomplish in the future.

he added. The outstanding performance of the performance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for mobile phones serves as an inspiration for other electronic segments to emulate this success in increasing manufacturing and exports. "By fostering a collaborative environment between the in-

dustry and the government, we can create new opportunities for growth and innovation, ultimately fulfilling the ambitious vision of \$300 billion for the electronics sector by 2025-26, ' said Mohindroo.

Mobile phones alone are anticipated to contribute more than \$50 billion worth of exports by 2025 - 26

India's e-commerce logistics industry **Contribution of Maharashtra** Chamber in industrial and commercial development of Maharashtra commendable: Vice President Jagdish Dhankar MANMOHAN SINGH NAULA New Delhi

> Maharashtra chambers of commerce, Industry and Agriculture's President Lalit Gandhi called on Vice President His Excellency Jagdish Dhankar in New Delhi. MP Darishil Mane, ep Bhandari on this occasi Vice President Jagdish Dhankad concluded that the contribution of Maharashtra Chamber in industrial trade development of Maharashtra is glorious. Along with that, he accepted the invitation extended to him for the Golden Jubilee Ceremony of North Maharashtra Divisional Office of Maharashtra Chamber, Nashik. President of Maharashtra chambers of commerce, Industry and Agriculture's President Mr I alit Gandhi called on Vice President His

> > Excellency Jagdish Dhankar in New

# India's electronics sector exports cross Rs 1,85K Lexicon Centre of MSME Excellence organized a training program for the Kasar Community in Pune

FW DESK New Delhi

The Lexicon Centre of MSME Excellence has recently conducted a training program named " or «One Step towards Self Sufficiency», for the Kasar Community. The Kasar Community, known for its exceptional skills in traditional bangle selling and creating copper metal vessels, has been given an opportunity to learn new techniques and practices to improve its businesses.

The workshop was organized with the aim to provide the Kasar Community members with practical knowledge on various aspects of business management. The tasks were planned to enhance the productivity of individuals work-



ing in a private setup or involved in their own businesses.

The training program was conducted by Dr. Raju Varghese, Director of IQAC & Global Program, Lexicon MILE. He addressed the importance of changes in habits and conditioning to be more goal effective. Dr. Swati Yeole, Associate Professor, Lexicon MILE

focused on games to improve team spirit, efficiency, and mutual understanding and respect in a family. This was followed by an interaction with Ms. Reshma Mulla, MD of Mahek Industries.

Mr. Nasir Shaikh, Group CEO of The Lexicon Group of Institutes. MultiFit&EduCrack. and Associate Editor of Pune Times Mirror and Civic Mirror is exremely proud of the efforts taken by Lexicon Centre of MSME Excellence. He says, "We all know the potential of Indian MSMEs and their growing contributions to the economy of India. Through Lexicon MSME, we take thorough efforts to bring entrepreneurs together and enhance their contributions to building their growth and efficiency in the market.

# India's hard truth of soft skills

#### SOURAV ROY

India witnesse almost 5 million students graduating from various academic streams and trade every year. For a country that boasts of the world's largest youth population aged between 15 and 24, and that's



Like all Apple facilities, the stores run on 100 per cent renewable energy.

"We've focused on historical sites that can be reimagined to revitalise locations and the surrounding communities. We aim to reflect the surroundings by incorporating elements from the local landscape and ecosystem, " according to Apple.

exceed 10 billion shipments by FY28 at a minimum compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20 per cent, according to the latest report by Redseer Strategy Consultants. Despite intensifying competition threats, Delhivery remains the largest player in the e-logistics space by a comfortable margin.

in e-commerce/internet sec-

"Despite funding headwinds

tors, there are multiple pockets of high growth and high yield opportunities available for e-logistics players, be in



D2C or large goods or nonevant and customised offerings ecommerce segments, " said for D2C brands are well-posi-Mrigank Gutgutia, Partner, tioned to capture market share in this high growth segment Redseer Strategy Consultants. as well as have a stronger yield D2C brands across channels profile going forward, the reare expected to grow overall GMV at 35 per cent in next port said. "Players who build robust cafew years, with brand.com ac-

counting for a significant share pabilities and offerings to serve this demand effectively will fundamentally be more resilient in A total of \$33 billion of GMV is expected to be generated from these challenging times and will D2C brands across all channels be better positioned for long term market share and yield

Logistics players with relleadership, "Gutgutia noted.

Delhi. MP Darishil Mane, Sandeep Bhandari on this occasion.

# Restricting a brand in a state is suicidal

A single tweet from Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation stirred the pot of milk in poll-bound Karnataka when it announced that the milk and curd of the Amul brand will be supplied soon in Bangalore.

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav

In the midst of poll prepara- Marketing Federation and tions in Karnataka, the controversy of Amul and Nandini milk brands created a stir raising the temperature of Cooperative Milk Marketing the campaigning. As soon as Amul announced the online been supplying pouch milk delivery of its milk in Ban- and fresh products in two disgalore, opposition parties tricts of Karnataka - Hubballi including the Congress and and Belgaum since 2015. Even Janata Dal (S) accused the the Amul ice cream is preruling BJP in the state that the Gujarat-based Amul was challenging Karnataka>s very milk and curd available only own Nandini brand. Opposition parties also feared that galore. Moreover, Amul milk the Rs 21,000-crore Nandini brand could be merged with Amul. An announcement so the question of competimade on social media heated tion between the two does up the politics of Karnataka. not arise. The Government of Actually, Union Home Min- Karnataka provides subsidies ister Amit Shah in December to dairy farmers for Nandini observed that cooperation milk, hence the rate of Nanbetween the umbrella brands dini milk is Rs 39 per liter in of Gujarat Cooperative Milk the state, while Amul milk is

Karnataka Milk Federation could do wonders.

The truth is that Gujarat Federation>s Amul brand has pared with Nandini milk. Its intention was to make Amul through e-commerce in Banis costlier than Karnataka's homegrown Nandini brand,

production of 220.78 million try is contributing a quarter of



sold at Rs 54 per liter. The 51% growth when compared to milk controversy forced Amul 2014-15. The source of the data managing director Javen is the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy-Mehta to clarify that 'there is no question of competition' ing, Government of India. But between Amul and Nandini. recently there has been a slight However, this kind of controdecrease in milk production. versy can be detrimental to The share of milk cooperatives many other desi brands that and private players in the milk market is expected to reach have pan-India aspirations. Every brand and company should be free to market and distribute its products anywhere in the country. India is the largest milk producer in the world with a

54% by 2026. Dairying is often the primary source of income for many landless families and marginal farmers. Therefore, it is in their interest that successful brands like Amul and Nandini buy and sell in the markets. Dragging milk into tonnes in 2021-22. The counpolitics will only harm the global milk production. It is a farmers.

The Indian dairy industry is facing several challenges. The average milk production per animal in India is relatively low as compared to other countries. Inadequate nutrition, deficiencies in breeding practices, and lack of modern techniques can be some of the primary reasons behind this. The lack of proper infrastructure for milk collection, processing, and distribution affects the

quality of milk. This often results in milk spoilage, weakened supply chains, and increased costs for farmers and consumers. The Indian dairy industry is predominantly unorganized, consisting mostly of small-scale farmers. This makes marketing and branding of dairy products difficult. Climate change is a new concern, which can affect the health and productivity of livestock. The lumpy disease in cows also impacted milk production to a great extent in the northern states of India during the second half of the previous year.

238 million of them. number of graduates is still not that extraordinary.

India's youth population is projected to remain the largest in the world until 2030 and is estimated to reach 365 million by then. That would then account for 20 percent of the country's population.

However, as the country struggles to provide education. employment and business opportunities to this demographic, the need to upskill Indian youth has become yet more pressing and serious than ever.

According to International Labour Organization's 2020 data, 495 million people were employed in India out of a total population of 1.38 billion. That accounted for just 36 percent of the population with a job. Adding to the complexity

is India's growing population rate which continues to move upward at 1.1 percent over a five-year period. That puts a cracking pressure on essential resources such as land, water, energy, food and healthcare, and makes searching for a job tougher for the Indian youth than finding an imaginary pot of gold in a barn full of unicorns.

India's growing rate of unemployment is an emerging cause of concern for the youth as well. According to the World Bank, the pre-covid unemployment rate in India stood at 5.78% in 2019 and per latest CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy) data, unemployment in India prevails at 7.8% as of March-end this year.

As with any other global economy Covid-19 destabilized the spine of the Indian economy. India's GDP contracted by 7.7% and it is estimated that the Asian giant lost between \$1.5 to \$2 trillion. The country is still trying to revive from the massive setback and the ever-dwindling job opportunities for the youth is a sign that things are not really all that hunky dory.

The question that arises now is how will India's hundreds of millions of emerging youth survive, what many believe, to be the toughest years ahead?

According to the World Bank, for every 100 people in India in 2020, there were only 34 jobs available. This data included both formal and informal employment across the country.

Add to that the fixation of Indian companies and headhunters to recruit an Englishspeaking workforce, despite the country legitimately recognizing 21 other official business languages.

As functional and practical as it may be for commercial purposes, only 20 % of Indian vouth speak business English, as per British Council's 2020 data. However, the total number of English speakers in India stands at 125 million people which is 10% of the total population of the country and understandably one of the highest in the world.

Despite the preference for English over any other Indian language, headhunters find it tough to scout for the right talent since many Indian youth lack soft and essential business communication skills in English, a language that is not native to any population group in India.

The inability of million of graduating engineers, architects, marketing, and sales professionals to communicate effectively and proficiently in business English, leaves a huge blackhole in the job market. Just being able to read, write and speak English in a text bookish manner is not good enough for these youth to bring back home a coveted sales or marketing job, especially if they were trained in English skills in rural India or small cities. Corporate organizations and multinationals based out of India want no less than David Attenboroughs and Naomi Kleins to sell their soda

Finally, the lopsided focus and concentration across many higher academic institutions in India on hardcore technical skills such as engineering and management, and the complete disregard of soft personal and professional communication skills, is a major impediment in the path of employment for Indian youth.

Countless Indian techies, engineers, programmers, developers, coders, proudly show off near perfect technical scores but are afraid to open their mouths during interviews, for fear of being judged due to poor communication skills. In team settings, many are unable to build strong relationships, resolve conflicts with empathy and achieve common goals. The lack of these intangible yet highly valuable skills, which are in demand by employers have a debilitating impact on the career success of many Indian youth.

For Indian youth to be Work Ready, World Ready, it is imperative that they proactively upskill themselves and given the already existing challenging conditions of the Indian economy, focus more on honing their soft skills along with their hard skills. And if India as a nation as-

pires to see its youth in global leadership and business positions, then it's about time that the country invests its resources and finance heavily and vigorously on upskilling millions of bright Indian youths with essential soft skills, to build the next generation of business leaders. After all, Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Shantanu Narayen and Indira Nooyi are not just top CEOs of global organizations but perhaps some of the most empathetic communicators and storytellers. Sourav Roy, Professor of

Practice, Chitkara University, India views are personal

# BANKING **S**FINANCE

# India committed to reforms agenda, has investment under India's G20 presidency: Sitharaman opportunities, says Nirmala Sitharaman "Free trade agreements are



WASHINGTON: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has reiterated that the India is committed to pursuing the reform agenda for building a stronger and more dynamic country, to provide plenty of opportunities for collaboration and investments

Participating in a roundtable meeting on "Investing in the India Decade" organised by industry body FICCI and US India Strategic Partnership Forum in Washington D.C. on the sidelines

of Spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank, Sitharaman on Tuesday underlined the reality of a global acknowledgement of a "New India" and the renewed role India is poised to play in global economic order, besides India as an investment destination.

She highlighted that India is adapting at twice the rate at which technology and digitisation tools are being adopted by people around the world, effectively making their life far more easier. The Finance Minister

India concerned about global economic outlook: FinMin

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that despite this year's projected growth rate of over 6 per cent for the Indian economy, it remains concerned about the global economic outlook and geopolitical environment. She made the remarks on Wednesday while attending the Development Committee meeting of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meeting 2023 in Washington D.C. Sitharaman mentioned that the World Bank should continue to work for its vision of a 'World Free of Poverty' and achieve its mission of 'ending extreme poverty' and 'promoting shared prosperity' in a manner that is inclusive, resilient and sustainable. During her intervention, Sitharaman suggested that the global public goods should also be brought into the focus as the third goal. The Finance Minister further mentioned that the "Evolution of the World Bank Group -A Report to Governors" provides a historic opportunity to think collectively on the evolution of the World Bank Group.

also informed the roundtable participants that local languages are onboarded in the digitisation drive, as most of the Constitutional languages now have access to India's digital public infrastructure platform, increasing reach, creating impact and exploring potential. Sitharaman further empha-

sised that despite the reality of reset across the globe and the challenges posed by Coronavirus pandemic, Indiaas reform momentum remains unabated. She also elaborated on a host of structural and governance reforms that the Centre has laid down through the Union Budget 2023 - 24



rencies are a very important part of the discussion under India's G20 presidency.

"Given so many collapses and shocks in cryptocurrencies. We seek to develop a common framework for all countries to deal with this matter, "she said in Washington while participating in a roundtable meeting on the theme 'Investment opportunities for the long term: India on the Rise' with business leaders and investors

It was hosted by industry body CII, US India Business Council and US Chamber.

The roundtable was attended by a diverse set of investors, including senior executives, private sector business leaders. venture capitalists, institutional investors, and representatives of pension and endowment funds. Sitharaman apprised the group of the journey of India's conscious policy choices and structural and governance reforms that laid the foundation

#### Net direct tax collections rose 160% to Rs 16.6 lakh crore in 2022-23

being signed in a much faster way nowadays. We've just concluded one with Australia. Earlier we concluded with UAE, Mauritius and with ASEAN. We have extended the quota-free and tariff-free regime to least developed countries, "she said.

The finance minister also highlighted India's robust digital public infrastructure such as Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and Account Aggregator platform, which have enabled small entrepreneurs to access credit and other digital services

In a world full of post-pandemic challenges, she said that India offers policy certainty, skilled manpower, high digital tech adaption rate resulting in a host of opportunities for investment.

Sitharaman exhorted the participants to become part of India's exciting transformational journey towards greater prosperity, better standards of for the Indian economy to supliving for its citizens and higher port growth at its full potential. returns for investors



crore in 2022-23 from Rs 6, 38, 596 crore in 2013-14, according to time series data released by the Finance Ministry on Thursday.

As per the data, gross direct tax collections also witnessed a massive 173 per cent rise to Rs 19, 68, 780 crore in 2022-23 from Rs 7, 21, 604 crore in 2013-14

Direct tax buoyancy, at 2.52 in 2021-22, was the highest ever recorded over the last 15 years. official sources said, adding that direct tax to GDP ratio increased from 5.62 per cent in 2013-14 to 5.97 per cent in 2021-22.

Cost of collections though has come down from 0.57 per cent of total collections in 2013-14 to 0.53 per cent of total collection in 2021-22, the data indicated.

# PNB launches new toll-free number and digital offers on its 129th foundation day

Gold prices inch up

up on April 11 and at Comex, the metal changed hands at a slightly higher rate, said analysts. "Gold prices traded up on April 11, with spot gold prices at Comex were trading higher by 0.74 per cent at \$2, 006.0 per

ounce. Gold June future contract at MCX were trading up by 0.80 per cent at Rs 60, 580 per 10 grams by noon session. " said Saumil

Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities, HDFC Securities According to Gandhi, the yel-

low metal prices hovered around psychological level of \$2,000 per ounce as traders await more US

MUMBAI: Gold prices inched macro data for clues on Federal reserve policy path. Recently gold prices got support from strong investment demand, and exchange traded funds added 3, 488 troy ounces of gold to their holdings in the last trading session.

Comex spot gold likely to fluctuate within range of \$1, 987 to \$2, 010 per ounce in short term. Comex spot gold has support

at \$1, 987/\$1, 980 per ounce and resistance at \$2, 010/\$2019 per ounce for day. MCX Gold June futures have support at Rs 60, 080 per 10 gram and resistance at Rs 60, 870 per 10 grams, Gandhi added.

Customers can now also avail digital services such as E-Market place, Instant QR, Metaverse to count a few

#### FW DESK New Delhi

Punjab National Bank, nation's leading public sector bank, announced the launch of its new customer care numbers 1800-1800 & 1800-2021 on the occasion of the bank's 129th Foundation Day. The new easy-to-recall toll-free number aims to provide PNB customers with a seamless and hassle-free experience whenever they reach out to the customer care team. Addition-



As a part of the 129th Foundaproducts such as E-Marketplace tion Day celebrations at the PNB and Instant QR on Mobile Bankhead office, the new offerings ing App PNB One, PABL (Prewere launched by Atul Kumar approved business loan), Central Goel, MD & CEO and Executive Directors, Shri Vijay Dube, Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), Digital KCC through JanSamarth Kalyan Kumar, Binod Kumar and Portal, Current Account opening M.Paramasivam in the presence through TAB and Video-KYC, of esteemed customers, senior PNB eSWAR and PNB Metaofficials and PNB employees.

Kumar Goel, MD & CEO, said, "As we commemorate 128 years of service to the nation, we recommit to the eternal vision of our founder, Punjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai to providing our customers with the best possible banking experience. Hence, these new offerings are significant and innovative steps in this direction."

The new customer care numbers 1800-1800 & 1800-2021 will be available 24x7 and will offer support in multiple languages. Customers can use this number to get information on their account balance, and past transactions, issue/block debit cards, and avail other key services provided by the bank. They can also register their complaints and queries with Speaking on the launch, Atul the bank>s customer care team.

# Investment and speculative demand take silver prices higher

**NEW DELHI:** Increased investment and speculative demand are the reasons for silver's price increase and it is expected to continue, said an analyst. "Silver has outperformed gold in the last three weeks. Higher investment and speculative demand are the reasons for the price increase, "Saumil Gandhi,

Senior Analyst - Commodities, HDFC Securities told to media. He said the Mav futures price at MCX India was Rs 77, 010/kg. "Silver is giving better returns than gold and hence investors



are putting their money on this metal. Though 70 per cent of silver is used in industrial production, still the returns are good, "Jayantilal Challani, President, Madras Jewellers and Diamond Merchants Association and a partner in Challani Jewellry Mart told to media. Challani said the silver price was Rs 77 per gram on Thursday and Rs 79 on Friday. The retail price will be about Rs 83/gram.

# Not easy for India to become a Tiger Economy

SATISH SINGH he term Tiger Econo-

mv" is commonly used to refer to the growing economies in Southeast Asia. Countries with tiger economies include Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, etc. Export is the basis of developi an economy, t



the Indian economy and Indian banks are coming down.

#### **Mounting Exports**

verse.

India's exports in the FY 2022-23 registered a growth of 6 percent to reach the level of \$ 447 billion, while in the FY 2021-22 the exports were \$ 422 billion. At the same time, imports increased by 16.5 percent to \$ 714 billion in the FY 2022-23, which was lion in the FY

# The global dominance of the US dollar is fading



tense world these days that, the global dominance of the US currency dollar will fade in the coming time. In this discussion, the currencies of many other countries are being projected as the global currency. The name of China's currency Yuan is coming out prominently. On the other hand, it is also believed that in the meeting of BRICS countries in August, there will definitely be a new currency against the dollar. The discussion started when it was observed that the collection of US currency dollars in the global collection of all foreign currencies has been declining rapidly for the last few years. In nutshell, it cies of all countries and due can be said that many countries around the world no longer seem to be serious about the reserve of dollars. In this context, according markets very fast. It is reto a report published by the IMF recently, the share of the US dollar in the global currency reserve has come down from more than 70 per cent in 1999 to 59 per cent in 2022. Euro is the second largest reserve after the dollar. If we talk about some other countries, then the Japanese yen and the British pound have a good reputation among all the currencies. If the global dominance of the US currency dollar reduces or the currency of another country is recognized globally as an alternative to it, then it will surely be a huge decline in America's global credibility in the last century. Here it is also very important to understand behind the atmosphere that is being created against America, American economic policies are clearly responsible. In this era of globalization, where every country is dependent on each



lion US dollars and Russia is around 1.7 trillion US dollars. There is no doubt that India will never accept youth as an alternative to the dollar in BRICS as there are various economic and political reasons behind it. I analysis of BRICS countries, it will also be necessary to understand that India is the main target behind the close friendship of China and Russia, while other economic issues are in Brazil's priority, on the other hand, South Africa is a very small economic country at the global level. Therefore, it is almost clear that China's currency under BRICS is hardly seen as an

is, such countries maintain the pace of development with the help of exports. Countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan etc. adopted export and free trade policies and were successful in maintaining the flow of development. Even though India has become the fifth largest economy in the world by surpassing England and now only the United States, China, Japan, and Germany have bigger economies than it, but there are other factors behind India's growth than exports. The pace of exports in India is slowly picking up, but that is not satisfactory. The Indian market is still not fully opened to the world for business. Both public and private sector are working together in the country, but the participation of private sector is still less

#### The journey of the Indian Economy since Independence

When India became independent, India's gross domestic product (GDP) was Rs.2.7 lakh crore, which increased to Rs.135.13 lakh crore in the financial year (FY) 2020-21. The first five-year plan started in the year 1951, but it was not very successful in strengthening the economy. The subsequent fiveyear plans also could not yield the expected results. However, from the year 1961, growth in the Indian economy started becoming visible. From the year 1950 to the year 1979, the country's GDP was growing at an average rate of 3.5 percent, which was called "Hindu Growth Rate" in the Indian economy, whereas from the year 1950 to the year 2020, India's GDP growth rate was at an average rate of 6.15 percent.

The GDP reached the highest level of 11.40 percent in the first quarter of 2010, however, the corona period saw an even better GDP growth rate due to the base effect, while it recorded the lowest growth of 5.20 percent in the fourth quarter of 1979. It is



rate went into minus during the dia's per capita income was US \$ 81.3, which increased to US \$ 7332.9 in April 2021.

The annual growth rate of per capita income in the country was 3.1 percent on an average during the financial year 1980-81 to the financial year 1991-92, which increased to an average level of 3.7 percent during the financial year 1992-93 to the financial year 2002-03, which again doubled during the financial year 2003-2004 to the level of 7.2 per year on an average during the financial year 2007-2008. In the subsequent years also, it saw a gradual

#### Good Number of GDP Despite the Pandemic

increase.

During the December quarter of FY 2021-22, the GDP stood at 5.4 per cent and in the third and fourth quarter as well, a decrease in GDP growth rate was recorded, but overall, during FY 2021, an impressive growth of 8.7 per cent was recorded in GDP. Not only this, a significant increase in GPP was also recorded during the fourth quarter of FY 2021 and the first quarter of FY 2022, but in FY 2022 the GDP declined to 4.1 percent. Factors of reduction in GDP were pandemic, geopolitical crisis, ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, high rate of inflation etc. However, India's GDP growth rate during this period was better than many developed countries.

Economic Reforms

From the year 1991, the Government of India started economic reforms, which is still going on today. In the year 1991, many measures were taken to bring positive changes in the areas of foreign trade, tax reforms, foreign investment etc., which helped the Indian economy to move forward. The average growth rate of

noteworthy that the GDP growth to 1991 was 4.34 percent, which increased to 6.24 percent during pandemic. In the year 1960, In- 1991 to 2011, The Indian economy crossed US\$ 2 trillion in the year 2015 and India's GDP is expected to grow to \$3.1 trillion in the

year 2021 as per the World Bank. After the process of liberalization started in the country, the private sector grew rapidly, but still the Indian economy remains mixed, that is, the private and public sectors are working together in the country. However, the private sector is still far behind in strengthening the infrastructure.

#### Share Market

For the first time in the eighties, the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) index crossed the 1000 marks in the financial year 1989-90. In the year 2006, the BSE index crossed the 10000 marks. Then it crossed 30000 marks in FY 2014-15 and 40000 marks in FY 2018-19, crossing the record 60000 marks in 2021. The Nifty index also crossed the record 18000 marks in the year 2021. In the year 2023 also, both these indices are hovering around 60000 and 18000 marks, which shows the strength of the companies listed in both the indices.

#### Rating Upgradation of Banks and India

Global rating agency Moody's has upgraded the ratings of 9 Indian private and public sector banks to stable from negative outlook. The banks whose ratings have been upgraded by Moody's include private sector Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and public sector banks include Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, Exim Bank and Union Bank of India, Apart from banks, Moody's has also upgraded India's rating from sovereign negative to stable. India's rating is currently Baa3. The rating upgrade of India and Indian banks by Moody's means GDP at factor cost during 1951 that the risks associated with

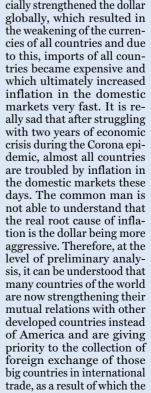
Exports of goods & services are set to increase by 14 percent to \$770 billion in FY 2022-23, from \$676 billion in the FY 2021-22, while it was \$500 billion in FY 2020. At the same time, only service exports increased by 27.16 percent to \$323 billion in the FY 2022-23, from \$ 254 billion in the FY 2021-22.

#### Conclusion

Today the developed countries of the world are on the verge of recession, but the Indian economy remains strong. India is in a better position than the developed countries of the world in terms of major factors of recession, GDP, unemployment, inflation etc. At present, there is an outcry due to inflation in Europe and America, including all neighboring countries of India, but inflation in India has come down to a 15-month low of 5.66 percent in March 2023. Here, the currencies of European countries have become weak against the dollar, but the position of the rupee is better than them and recently there has been a weakness seen in the dollar compared to the rupee.

It is clear from the investigation, India is still far behind in terms of exports, the main parameter of the tiger economy and the Indian market is also not fully opened to the world, due to which the current growth rate is not picking up. In such a situation, until India is not able to fully realize the concept of "Make in India", India's dream of becoming a tiger economy cannot come true. When India becomes self-sufficient in the matter of production of all commodities, then it will automatically get freedom from imports. Hence, in the present context it would be fair to say that the Indian economy is not going to become a tiger economy any time soon.

Satish Singh, Mumbai based Senior Journalist, Views are personal.



amount of US dollar in the global collection of foreign exchange reserves is continuously decreasing.

In fact, this discussion is a part of international diplomacy and these days the ever-deepening friendship other, yet they are increasof Russia and China is also a is second with about 4 tril-

ing the ideologies of mutual main reason behind it. Both economic development, even Russia and China want to during that time all countries respond strongly to the US are always troubled by the stance on the global stage aggression of the US dollar. in the ongoing war between For example, these days, the Russia and Ukraine for the increase in interest rates by last one year. As a result of the US central bank artifithis, China was the first to convert its huge reserve of US dollars into its own currency yuan. After that, it was raised prominently by Russia at the global level that in the coming times, China's currency Yuan should replace the dollar. It is also necessary to clarify here that there is not much force in this claim of Russia because China's share in the total foreign exchange reserves of all countries globally is only around 5 per cent. Accord-Russia alone accounts for one-third of China's global currency reserves, equivalent to 336 billion, and the rest is from Brazil, Switzerland, Mexico, Israel, Chile and South Africa. Now, if we talk about

BRICS countries, which emerged in this century from the mutual alliance of countries with similar ideologies and similar development, the option of other currencies against the dollar must inevitably be discussed in their meeting in August. It is also necessary to clarify here that although the strongest economy under the BRICS

group is China, which is equivalent to about 17 trillion US dollars, then India

alternative to the dollar. Now if we talk about India's foreign exchange reserve, which is around 530 billion US dollars these days, then the largest share of it is in the US dollar. It has to be understood here that Indian economic policies are more inclined towards America. However, due to the aggressiveness of the US dollar, many times the Indian stock market suddenly comes down. Crude oil also has to be paid more, as a result of which every commodity in the domestic market becomes expensive for the common man. As for India's rupee being to the latest IMF report, coming an alternative to the dollar, this path is not easy at present. Significantly, the recognition of the currency of any country as a global currency is mainly seen as having a democratic system in that country and a progressive ideology in economic policies. India retains both these things and India is also the fifth largest economy in the world, but it still has a long economic journey to cover because India's export is very low. So it does not appear that India will extend its support to any other currency alternative to the dollar.

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

# **INTERNATIONAL**

# Guterres not surprised by US spying on him, denies being soft on Russia

WASHINGTON: United States spying on Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is no surprise to him but he is concerned about distorting private conversations and making them public, according to his Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

He pushed back on Thursday in suggestions in leaked US documents that Washington considers Guterres soft on Russia. The documents suggested that US officials' opinions about Guterres were based on communication intercepts or spying. Dujarric said, "The Secretary-General is not soft on any one country or another. On the conflict in Ukraine, he has been very clear about the violations of international law, very clear about the violations of the Chartera.

About the eavesdropping, he said that Guterres "has been in politics and a public figure for quite some time. So he's not surprised, I think, by the fact that people are spying on him and listening to his private conversations". "Unfortunately, either

for various reasons, it allows such private conversations to be distorted and made public", he added. The revelations about phone-tapping Guterres are among the latest to emerge from a slew of leaked documents that showed US spying on its allies

like Israel and South Korea. The secret US documents were posted on Twitter, Telegram and Discord, a social media for computer game enthusiasts. The alleged leaker, according to the Justice Department is 21-year-old Jack

Texeira, a member of the Massachusetts Air National Guard, an outfit equivalent to the Territorial Army in India. He was arrested on Thursday and Attorney General Merrick Garland said that he is to be charged under the Espionage Act with removing or transmitting classified defence information. According to media reports, the documents asserted that Guterres accorded priority to protecting the Black Sea grain agreement that the UN along with Turkey worked out



with Russia to allow foodgrain xports from Ukraine.

The deal was made to avert drastic food shortages in some developing countries that relied on Ukrainian foodgrain and stabilise international food prices. "Our efforts, his efforts, have been to mitigate the impact of the war on the world's poorest, and that means doing what we can to drive down the price of food and the price of grain and fertiliser worldwide". Dujarric said. According to media reports, one of the leaked documents revealed spying on

GreyOrange Co-founder Akash

Gupta Announced as New CEO

Guterres and Miguel Graca, the

director of his executive office. In that conversation, he reportedly expressed displeasure with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky's request to visit his country. But Dujarric said, "I think you all saw him and I was there with him (in Ukraine). He did go to Kyiv, and he had some very important meetings with President Zelensky".

Guterres visited Ukraine three times since the Russian invasion, most recently last month when he reiterated categorically, "The position of a private conversation between the United Nations, which I

have consistently expressed, is crystal clear: Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a violation of the UN Charter and international law"

In leaked documents, according to reports, US officials accused Guterres of "undermining broader efforts to hold Moscow accountable for its actions in Ukraine" and asserted that he told Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that the UN would back Moscow's efforts to export food grains even if Russian organisations or individuals under sanctions were involved. Dujarric said, "You know

what his position is on peace talks. You know what his position is on the Black Sea Grain Initiative. You know what his position is on the need to get Russian fertiliser and ammonia off. You know what his position

is on war" In addition to ensuring that foodgrains continue to reach the world markets and countries facing critical shortages, the UN wants Russia to be able to fertilisers and ammonia so that agriculture is not disrupted.

# Bank of Canada targets for the benchmark interest rate at 4.5%

**OTTAWA**: The Bank of Canada has held its target for the benchmark interest rate at 4.5 %

In a statement on Wednesday, the central bank said that its governing council continues to assess whether monetary policy is sufficiently restrictive to relieve price pressures and remains prepared to raise the policy rate further if needed to return inflation to the 2 percent target, Xinhua news agency. The bank said it is also continuing its policy of quantitative tightening to complement its restrictive stance. According to the bank, Canada's CPI inflation eased to 5.2 per cent in February and its preferred measures of core inflation were just under 5 per cent

The Bank of Canada said it expects CPI inflation to fall quickly to around 3 per cent in the middle of this year and then decline more gradually to the 2 per cent target by the end of 2024.

India, Japan and France announce launch of

Sri Lanka's debt restructuring negotiations

However, getting inflation the rest of the way back to 2.5 per cent in 2025.

#### VCI Global Limited "VCIG" Closes its 1st Day of Trading on Nasdag **Capital Market**

VCI Global Limited (NASDAQ:

FW DESK Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



2 per cent could prove to be more difficult because inflation expectations are coming down slowly, service price inflation and wage growth remain elevated, and corporate pricing behaviour has yet to normalise, the bank said. Economic growth in the

first quarter looks to be stronger than was projected in January, with a bounce in exports and solid consumption growth. It is projected to be weak through the remainder of this year before strengthening gradually next year, it added. According to the central bank, Canada's economy is projected to grow by 1.4 per cent this year and 1.3 per cent in 2024 before picking up to

#### VCIG) ("VCI Global", or the "Company") a multi-disciplinary consulting group with key advisory practices in the areas of business and technology, announced that its ordinary shares have commenced trading on The Nasdaq Capital Market today under the ticker symbol "VCIG." The shares closed their first day of trading above the offering price at \$4.25. On April 13, 2023, the Company priced its firm commitment underwritten public offering (the "Offering") of 1,280,000 shares of ordinary shares at a public offering price of \$4.00 per share. The gross proceeds to the Company were \$5,120,000 before deducting underwriting discounts, commissions and other Offering expenses. Boustead Securities, LLC and Sutter Securities, Inc. acted as the underwriters for the firm commitment Offering. A registration statement on Form F-1, as amended (File

No. 333-268109), filed by the Company with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), was declared effective on March 30, 2023. The Offering has been made only by means of a prospectus. This press release shall not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy these securities, nor shall there be any sale of these securities in any state or jurisdiction in which such offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful prior to registration or qualification under the securities laws of any such state or jurisdiction. VCI Global is a multi-disciplinary consulting group with key advisory practices in the areas of business and technology. The Company provides business and boardroom strategy services, investor relation services, and technology consultancy services. Its clients range from small-medium enterprises and government-linked agencies to publicly traded companies across a broad array of industries. VCI Global operates solely in Malaysia, with clients predominantly from

#### Indian sentenced in **UK for targeting Dalits** in offensive post



A 68-year-old Indian-origin in the UK has been prosecuted and sentenced to 18 weeks in jail for posting hate speech on social media targeting Dalit communities. Amrik Singh, 68, of Bowyer Drive, Slough, was sentenced to 18 weeks' imprisonment after pleading guilty to one count of sending offensive/indecent/ obscene/menacing message/ matter via public communication network, the Thames Valley Police said. On July 19, 2022, Amrik posted a video to TikTok "that was offensive to the Sikh community". He was arrested on July 22, 2022, and charged via postal requisition on March 2, 2023, a police statement read. "I am pleased with the sen-

**Bangladesh**: Increasing intimidation and harassment of Prothom tence given, which provides Alo signals deepening crisis of press freedom in the country a clear message that Thames Valley Police will not tolerate behaviour like that of Amrik DHAKA: Prothom Alo, Bangla-Investigating officer

#### Akash Gupta steps into the CEO role. Co-founder Samay Kohli transitions to the board of directors

ATLANTA: GreyOrange, Inc., a global leader in automated robotic fulfillment and inventory optimization software, today announced co-founder Akash Gupta as Chief Executive Officer. Gupta leads GreyOrange's seasoned senior executive team to advance the company's mission to be the world's leading

automation solutions platform. Gupta and co-founder Samay Kohli have worked closely together since GreyOrange's inception over a decade ago, guiding the growth of a premium brand that serves the exacting needs of global custom-



fast-growing startups. Kohli will continue to serve GreyOrange as a member of the company's board of directors

"From launching our first robotics hardware in 2012 to becoming a global leader in software, robotics and omnichannel retail management, I could not be prouder of our team's decade of pioneering accomplishments," said Akash Gupta, co-founder ers, from Fortune 500 giants to and CEO, GreyOrange. "Our

expanding portfolio of AI driven solutions enables our customers to solve their most critical challenges across their entire fulfillment network: from warehouses to retail stores and e-commerce."

Prior to his appointment as CEO, Gupta held executive roles at GreyOrange, including Chief Technology Officer and Chief Product Officer. He also played a key role in developing gStore, GreyOrange's innovative omnichannel retail management solution. Together with Kohli, Gupta was instrumental in bringing to market GreyMatter<sup>™</sup>, a fulfillment orchestration platform that assigns work to job-specific robots-from any vendor-based on near-realtime information, fulfilling the founders' long-term vision of an end-to-end orchestration and intelligence platform.

#### NEW DELHI: India, Japan and France on Friday announced the launch of the debt restructuring negotiation process on Sri Lanka.

Participating in a highlevel event on Sri Lankan debt issues on the sidelines of International Monetary Fund (IMF) - World Bank (WB) Spring Meetings in Washington, the three co-chairs India, Japan, and France agreed to lead coordinated debt restructuring of the island nation.

The purpose of the event was to demonstrate the multilateral cooperation regarding the debt restructuring process among the creditors, together with Sri Lanka. **Finance** minister Nirmala

Sitharaman, who participated in the event, expressed India's commitment to support Sri

Two cops killed in US

traffic stop shooting

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Lanka in dealing with its current economic crisis

She emphasised that a collaboration among creditors is important to ensure transparency and equality in treatment of all creditors in the debt restructuring discussions.

Japanese Finance Minister ally in the event.

Suzuki Shunichi, Emmanuel Moulin, director general of the treasury of France and Sri Lanka's state finance minister Shehan Semasinghe, were present in the meeting.

Sri Lankan president Ranil Wickremesinghe and Finance Malaysia, but also serves some Minister participated virtuclients from China, Singapore, and the US.

# Two Indian-American execs convicted in \$1 bn corporate fraud scheme

Two Indian-American execu-tives of a Chicago-based health





Sergeant Andrew Grant, based at Slough police station, said.

The UK-based Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), which was one of the key organisations to bring the Amrik's TikTok video to the attention of the police, said it "was highly toxic, racist and casteist in content", and targeted Dalit communities. "Amrik Singh threatened to rape women from the Dalit communities that he was insulting, and claimed to have raped their daughters, sisters and mothers in the past with impunity, "the ACDA said.

Welcoming the sentencing, ACDA said the jail-term reflects the severity of the harm Amrik's video caused the Dalit community. "We understand the conviction did not specifically refer to 'caste' because caste is not yet a protected characteristic in law. But the Crime Prosecution Service shared at the hearing today the derogatory words 'Choora' and 'Chaamar' that Amrik used, "ACDA said in a statement.

is the latest media platform to come under increasing attack including intimidation, harassment and arrest of journalists signalling a deepening crisis for press freedom in the country, said Amnesty International on April 12.

Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday called Prothom Alo'an enemy of the Awami League, democracy and the people of Bangladesh,' while speaking in Parliament, with reference to an article published by the media outlet on the Independence Day of the country, covering the cost of living in Bangladesh. The journalist who wrote the article, Shamsuzzaman Shams was arrested and

charged under the country's draconian Digital Security Act (DSA) and was later granted bail. The editor of Prothom Alo, Matiur Rahman was sued under accused in one of the two cases against Shams.



dividuals barged into Prothom the largest daily circulation Alo's office in the capital city of Dhaka, issued threats and vandalized its logo in the reception by writing boycott' over it.

"This is the latest in a series of attacks by the government of Bangladesh threatening press freedom in the country. Penalizing a media outlet, publisher or journalist solely for being critical of the government or the DSA and named as the main the policies it promotes is a restriction of the right to free-

Hours after the Prime Min- never be justified. The attacks ister's statement, a group of in- on Prothom Alo which has of expression in Bangladesh.'

come close on the heels of the closure of Daily Dinkal, the only newspaper belonging to the main opposition party last month," said Yamini Mishra, regional director for South Asia at Amnesty International. "The use of the draconian Digital Security Act on jour-

nalists and attacks on some of the largest news publications in the country together indicate a worrying trend towards dom of expression that can repression and a downward spiral of the right to freedom Two police officers were shot

dead in a shooting during a traffic stop in the village of Cameron in the northwestern US' Wisconsin state. The shooting occurred at around 3:38 p.m. on Saturday, Xinhua news agency reported, citing a statement by the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

Two officers were pronounced dead at the scene. The suspect, a motorist, was taken to a hospital and later died. Details about the incident are still being investigated, local media reported on Sunday. The Officer Down Memorial Page, an organisation that tracks police officer deaths in the line of duty across the US, shows that this incident marks the second and third officer deaths in the line of duty this year in Wisconsin.

technology startup have been convicted for their roles in a \$1 billion fraud scheme that targeted the company's clients, lenders, and investors.

Rishi Shah, 37, co-founder and former CEO. Shradha Agarwal, 37, former president, and Brad Purdy, 33, former chief operating officer, were convicted of defrauding Outcome Health's lenders and investors.

Shah was convicted of five counts of mail fraud, 10 counts of wire fraud, two counts of bank fraud, and two counts of money laundering, a Department of Justice release said.

While Agarwal was convicted of five counts of mail fraud, eight counts of wire fraud, and two counts of bank fraud, Purdy was convicted on five counts of mail fraud, five counts of wire fraud, two counts of bank fraud, and one count of false statements to a financial institution.

The defendants face a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison for each count of bank fraud and 20 years in prison for each count of wire fraud and mail fraud.

Purdy faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison for the count of false statements to a financial institution. Shah faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison for each count of money laundering. According to the Department of Justice release, Outcome installed television screens and tablets in doctors' offices around the US and then sold advertising space on those devices to clients, most of whom were pharmaceutical companies.

According to evidence presented at trial, Shah, Agarwal and Purdy sold advertising inventory the company did not have to Outcome's clients, then under-delivered on its advertising campaigns. Despite these under-deliveries,

Outcome installed television screens and tablets in doctors' offices around the US and then sold advertising space on those devices to clients, most of whom were pharmaceutical

"

companies" the company still invoiced its clients as if it had delivered in full. The trio lied or caused others to lie to conceal the under-deliveries from clients

and make it appear as if the company was delivering advertising content to the number of screens in the clients' contracts.

Purdy and others at Outcome also inflated metrics that purported to show how frequently patients engaged with the company's tablets installed in doctors' offices.

According to the trial evidence, the scheme targeting Outcome's clients began in 2011, lasted until 2017, and resulted in at least \$45 million of overbilled advertising services. The under-delivery to Outcome's advertising clients resulted in a material overstatement of Outcome's

revenue for the years 2015 and 2016. The company's outside auditor signed off on the 2015 and 2016 revenue numbers because Purdy caused others to fabricate data to conceal the under-deliveries from the auditor.

The trio then used the inflated revenue figures in Outcome's 2015 and 2016 audited financial statements to raise \$110 million in debt financing in April 2016, \$375 million in debt financing in December 2016, and \$487.5 million in equity financing in early 2017.

They lied to investors and lenders to conceal their ongoing under-delivery of advertising campaigns for clients. Shah and Purdy also misrepresented to investors the efficacy of Outcome's advertising campaigns by concealing the fact that it had failed to meet return-oninvestment commitments to clients. The \$110 million debt financing resulted in a \$30.2 million dividend to Shah and a \$7.5 million dividend to Agarwal; the \$487.5 million

in equity financing resulted in a \$225 million dividend to Shah and Agarwal. Three other former employees of Outcome pleaded guilty prior to trial.

Ashik Desai, the former chief growth officer, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud: and Kathrvn Choi, a former senior analyst, and Oliver Han, a former analyst, both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

Desai, Choi, and Han will be sentenced at a later date.

# Indian-American named to Maryland Public Service Commission

Marvland Governor Wes Moore has announced that Indian-American delegate Kumar Barve will be appointed to the US state's Public Service Commission after the 2023 legislative session.

Barve is the first Indian-American elected to a state legislature in the US. He has been a member of the House of Delegates since January 1991.

"I am proud to announce the selection of Delegate Kumar Barve to serve on the Public Service Commission. He is a veteran of the Marvland House of Delegates and his leadership within the Environment and Transportation Committee makes him the ideal candidate for this role, "Moore said in a statement.



The Governor added that he and certain passenger transis confident in Barve's ability portation companies doing business in Maryland. to bolster his administration's commitment to environmental The Commission's juris-

stewardship while ensuring diction extends to taxicabs rate payers are protected. operating in Baltimore City, The Public Service Commis-Baltimore County, Cumbersion regulates public utilities land and Hagerstown.

While representing District 17 in Montgomery County, Barve served as Chair of the Environment and Transportation Committee since 2015. He also served as Democratic House Majority Leader from 2003-2015. His various policy accomplishments include economic development, environmental regulation, energy generation, energy conservation, greenhouse gas reduction and tax policy.

He sponsored several climate change laws, led Maryland's effort to promote high tech job creation, and was a central player in closing corporate tax loopholes and in transforming Maryland's tax code to be more progressive. Having more than 40

years of experience as an accountant, Barve has been the Chief Financial Officer of the Environmental Management Services. Inc since 1993. He was the Financial Manager of UNISYS Corporation from 1987 to 1990; and from 1981-1987, he was the Economic/ Proposal Manager of the Space Communications Corporation. Barve has a Bachelor of

Georgetown University.

Voters Legislator of the Year. Abroad Lifetime Service Award in 2013, followed by Tech Council of Maryland Technology Advocate of the Year in 2008 and 2006.

He also received India

Science in accounting from In 2017, he was awarded the League of Conservation

# **Teaser of Gippy Grewal-starrer JATTA 3'** realesed



The teaser of Gippy Grewalstarrer 'Carry on Jatta 3' released on Thursday. The first of the franchise, 'Carry on Jatta' which was released in 2012 captured the hearts of Punjabi audience across the globe and continues to be a cult favourite.

The third franchise is one of the most awaited Punjabi others. films this year. Seeing Gippy's popularity and with the film releasing across India and

globally, this one is touted to that promises to be an abso be a big release. lute riot. Along with Gippy Grewal, the

Written by Naresh Kathooria, star-studded cast includes Bin-'Carry on Jatta 3' is produced nu Dhillon, Gurpreet Ghuggi, by Humble Motion Pictures Jaswinder Bhalla, B.N. Sharma and it's worldwide distribution and Sonam Bajwa. The film will be done by OMJEE Group. also features Kavita Kaushik, According to the makers,

'Carry on Jatta 3' promises to Rupinder Rupi, Gippy Grewal's son Shinda Grewal and many be an unforgettable comedy ride that will have audiences Directed by the 'King of rolling with laughter from start Comedy' Smeep Kang, 'Carry to finish. The film is slated for on Jatta 3' is a family comedy a release on June 29.

star Jagapathi Babu's villain



#### Ayushmann Khurrana is set to perform live in concert in Chandigarh and Dubai

CHANDIGARH: Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who is known for films such as 'Vicky Donor', 'Article 15', 'Bareilly Ki Barfi' and 'Andhadhun', is also known for his singing prowess. Who could forget 'Paani Da Rang'? The actor is set to perform live in concert in his hometown Chandigarh, and Dubai.

The actor took to his Twitter handle on Thursday and shared two pictures from his jamroom session in which he can be seen rehearsing and having fun working along with his fellow musicians.

He wrote in his tweet, "Jam room. Two gigs lined up. 16th April in Chandigarh. 23rd April in Dubai (sic)" Ayushmann started his acting career in films with 'Vicky Donor' which became a surprise hit and made

him a breakout star. The film was directed by Shoojit Sircar, who is known for his work in films like 'October', 'Sardar Udham', 'Piku' and 'Madras Cafe'.

Meanwhile on the cinema front, the actor is currently busy with 'Dream Girl 2', which is set to bow in theatres on July 7, 2023.

# **POTPOURRI**

Students of Khalsa College perform traditional Punjabi folk dance "Bhangra" at a wheat field on eve of Vaisakhi festival, in Amritsar on Thursday PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

#### Salman Khan shared a picture with his signature one-line wisdom

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan will be back on the silver screen after 4 years with his theatrical film 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan'. As the film draws closer to its release, the actor on Wednesday took to his Instagram and shared a picture with his signature one-line wisdom.

Sharing a picture of himself from his gym, the actor wrote in the caption: "Gym n dining table, the fairest places ever . Uss ke liye power nahi will power chaheyeh (you

don't need power for that, all vou need is will power)." The last part of the caption is inspired by one of the dialogues from the film, a hint of which the viewers can see

in the trailer as well. Reacting to

Salman's post, 'Bigg Boss' contes-

tant Abdu Rozik took to the com-

ment section and wrote: "Arey yaar

Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', which has been directed by Farhad Samji, stars an ensemble cast of Venkatesh Daggubati, Pooja Hegde, Jagapathi Babu, Bhumika Chawla, Vijender Singh, Abhimanyu Singh, Raghav Juval, Siddharth Nigam, Jassie Gill, Shehnaaz Gill, Palak Tiwari and Vinali Bhatnagar. The film is all set to arrive in cinemas on April 21 on the occasion of Eid.

mazaa agaya bro (loved it bro)."

Meanwhile, Salman's 'Kisi Ka

# Pooja Hegde is set to share the screen with Salman Khan in 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan'



MUMBAI: Pooja Hegde, who was last seen in Ranveer Singh's theatrical dud 'Cirkus', is set to share the big screen with Salman Khan in 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan'.

er, played by Daggubati Venkatesh, the Telugu star who's garnering eyeballs with the streaming show 'Rana Naidu', and Bhumika Chawla. Pooja's chemistry with Salman is bound to stir up the audience's anticipation as the romance between her

and Salman's characters fills the screen with vibrancy. The actress said: "Working on Kisi The actress will play the Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' was an romantic interest of Salman's absolute blast for me. My character is very special to me. She's character and her character super fun and full of life, and I serves as a pivot to the film's story as all the action and drama hope people will enjoy my perunfolds when fellow southern formance.

# Yuvraaj Hans is all set to take you on musical ride with upcoming movie 'Munda Rockstar'

#### KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

goes in hot pursuit of her broth-Punjabi actor Yuvraaj Hans is all set to take you all on a musical ride with his upcoming drama film titled 'Munda Rockstar'. Yuvraaj Hans is known for his mesmerizing voice and amazing acting skills but this time he is going to show the combination of these two spells in the upcoming musical drama.

The film is being presented by Sanjay Jalan and Abhishek Jalan under the banner of India gold films. Produced by Sanjay Jalan and Abhishek Jalan, the film 'Munda Rockstar' is being helmed by Saty-ajeet Puri who has also played

MAAGAN

pivotal roles in the Bollywood film industry. After doing several roles in various films, Satyajeet Puri is now set to don the director's hat.

Meanwhile, the film 'Munda Rockstar' kicked off shooting with a 'Muhurat' shot. The film is all set to hit theatres this year and it is indeed going to touch the chord of hearts

Notably, the direction of the film's music is being taken care of by Jaidev Kumar while Lyricist Gopi Sidhu has written the soothing lyrics for the same. In the meanwhile, the men behind the story, screenplay, and dialogues of the film are Satyajeet Puri and Navdeep Moudgill.

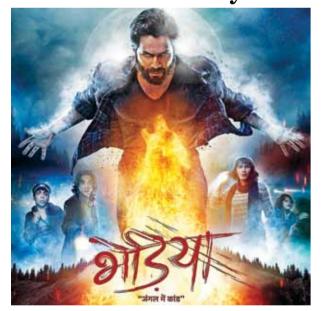


Where there is music, sibility to make the star cast there is a dance and when groove. On the other hand, the Director of Photography comes to the dance in the film, there's a choreographer was Parv Dandona. behind it. For 'Munda Rock-Talking about the star cast star' Raka took the respon- of the film, Yuvraaj Hans is

playing the lead role while Aditi Aarya, Mohd Nazim, Satyajeet Puri, Gurchet Chitarkar, Pritam Pyaare, Gama Sidhu, Guddu, Rajwinder Samrala, Nirbhai Dhaliwal, Ranveer Wadhawan, Sandy Sharma, Happy Bokolia, and Gopi Sidhu among others are also playing pivotal roles in the film.

It is pertinent to mention that the brain behind the action is Moses Fernandes while the Costume Designer Jyoti Madnani Singh took care of the costumes. Likewise, the film's Art Director is Shashi Bhardwaj while the PR and Marketing are being handled by Udaan Events and Entertainment.

# **Bollywood actor Varun** Dhawan shares poster of the film 'Bhediya 2



## Yo Yo Honey Singh shared that his new track titled 'Naagan'

Rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh, who is known for songs like 'Desi Kalakar', 'Brown Rang', 'Blue Eyes' and 'Love Dose', has shared that his new track titled 'Naagan' is his first pure Punjabi track unlike his other songs which had the elements of western urban music. The rapper describes it

as a hard core desi track which is high on its Punjabi richness, coupled with urban tribal hip hop. The track belongs to his album Honey

#### **FW DESK** New Delhi

# Taneira' launches it's Summer Wedding '23 campaign featuring Mrunal Thakur

Taneira, the ethnic wear brand from the House of Tata, adds joy and warmth to the season's wedding celebrations, with its latest Summer Wedding '23 campaign. Featuring the confident and elegant actress Mrunal Thakur, the brand has unveiled a TVC to launch it's Lightweight Celebration Sarees for the wedding season, amidst the rising tempratures.

ing a beautifu

campaign, Shalini Gupta, General Manager, Taneira said, "The campaign is a creative exemplification of the parallels between sarees and weddings. Weddings Like sarees, have undergone a remarkable transformation and today, harmoniously synchronise age-old traditions and new age creativity, to present a version whose appeal transcends generations, and occasions. And through this campaign, we are delighted to welcome Mrunal

Thakur into the Taneira family." Talking about the range, s further added, "Taneira's Summer Wedding '23 line has masterfully crafted sarees that are not only light and breezy but also versatile enough to transition seamlessly across all wedding functions perfectly suited for the summer. Brides and wedding guests also strive to blend fashion and style with practicality and comfort, creating a unique state-ment with their choices, bridging the gap between the conventional

Bollywood actor Varun Dhadoing during the promotions of 'Bhediya', which released wan has announced the second part of the horror-comedy film last year. 'Bhediya'

Varun made the announcement at the Jio Studios event on Wednesday. The actor went on stage, and a poster of the film 'Bhediya 2' was unveiled.

He was also seen making the wolf sound which he had been

# Badshah is all set to release his new song 'Sab Gazab'

Rapper Badshah, who is all set to release his new song 'Sab Gazab' on Wednesday, has shared that he made the song prior to making his runaway hit track 'Jugnu'. The new song also features actress Ileana D'Cruz of 'Barfi' fame and the musical duo Goldkartz.

Talking about how he came up with the song, Badshah told to media, "Sab Gazab' is actually a slang and quite colloquial in its usage. It's like you're in a restaurant and every delicacy is lipsmacking, in the sense sab gazab hai (everything is topnotch). It's a very minimalistic song, there's a drum line, one bassline and there's one lead. This is actually a very old song, much older than 'Jugnu', I made it before 'Jugnu'".

In recent years, the concept of music videos has really exploded catalysed by the rise of the Internet. When media asked Badshah as to how things will progress hereon with regards to music videos, he said that more than the

Talking about the song, Honey Singh said: "'Naagan' is unlike anything the audience has seen & heard before. Most of my songs in the past are more urban western, Naagan, however, is totally the opposite, it's very desi & Punjabi.' The video for the song

has been shot on a grand scale against the exotic backdrop of Tulum,

Details about the second installment are still under wraps.

Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon-starrer 'Bhediya' was directed by Amar Kaushik and produced by Dinesh Vijan. It is SUNIL THAPLIYAL the third installment in Vijan's horror-comedy universe

Mexico.

The rapper further mentioned: "I am humbled by the love and support I have received over the years from my fans. They are my strength, my extended family, as an artist it is my responsibility to entertain my fans with new music and sounds.

The track will hit the airwaves on April 15, 2023.

around 'Shaadi toh jaise ek beautiful si saree hai', the TVC masterfully showcases the six yards as an embodiment of the essence of current Indian weddings. Much like Indian Weddings, the saree as a garment has been imagined and reimagined time and time again, to find relevance in the ever evolving socio-cultural fabric of our society, both blending timeless traditions with contemporary connotations; representative of



a confluence of culture, creativity and community.

Designed to speak with the women of today, the film showcases a bride revelling in the joyous festivities of her wedding, swirling, dancing and prancing, making the most of the precious occasion today while creating priceless memories for tomor-

row without having to bother about the weight or work on her saree. The film ingeniously portrays the Summer Wedding saree as an ensemble that exquisitely caters to every member of the bride and groom's family, spanning across generations of women.

Sharing her thoughts on this

## Hockey India League is likely to be revived next year

# New Delhi

The Hockey India League will resume starting in 2024 for Indian hockey fans, giving them a reason to celebrate. Hockey India has signed up with several new partners to launch this league next year. The league was halted indefinitely in 2017 owing to financial concerns. The Hockey India League's first five seasons, from 2013 to 2017, were all played in Janu-

ary and February On Monday, the Hockey federation announced partners for all commercial and marketing operations relating to the Hockey India League (HIL). The format, dates and number of teams for the rebuilt hockey league will be announced later. "Hockey India League was

Hockey India president.

video, the audio content will see attaining greater heights.

He said, "More than videos, the streaming has moved towards audio now, videos are losing the charm because people are more inclined towards audio as they can't keep their eyes peeled to what's happening in the video while they're on the move, audio is comparatively easier to con-

sume say when you're commuting or working on something, you can still listen to the content and consume it unlike video content which you have to see to understand small details".



Hockey India League, from 2013 to 2017, were all contested in January and February. The Ranchi Rhinos, Delhi Waveriders, Ranchi Rays, and Punjab Warriors have won one championship. The Hockey India League

was effective in promoting hockey in India and drawing star players from across the one of my top priorities when I globe, but it was unable to assumed office as president of support itself owing to a mix Hockey India. "It (the league) of financial and administrawill be a critical stepping stone tive issues.

for India and will revitalise not The league was primarily only hockey in India, but also concerned with attracting elite bring fresh energy to the sport talent from around the world, globally," said Dilip Tirkey, but it did not do enough to engage with local communities Because there is no time and supporters. This lack of engagement may have contribuntil February, the league may take place in March of uted to the league's inability to the following year. If there isn't build a strong fan base and a sustainable revenue source. time in March, it can be held in the following months. The Some experts also believe that the league could not achieve previous five editions of the

the anticipated viewership and fan following since it competed with other sports leagues in India, such as the Indian Premier League (IPL), Indian Super League (ISL), and Pro Kabaddi League (PKL), which already had a large fan base.

Previously, the Hockey India League was instrumental in resurrecting Indian hockey after the national team failed to qualify for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Later, the team qualified for the London Olympics but finished 12th. But following the start of this league, Indian hockey players received the exposure they needed to compete against the best players in the league, which helped them not only develop their game but also their confidence so they could once again become world-beaters. Since then, the

coaster of success.



and the contemporary."