

REGION

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DELHI-MEERUT RRTS, FIRST RAPID RAIL NAMED RAPIDX

Education can alleviate poverty from society: Delhi CM Kejriwal

FW DESK
New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said good education for children can create an impact that can help alleviate poverty.

Addressing a gathering at a function at the Civic Centre — the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) headquarters — here on the birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar, he said teachers, sanitation workers and other employees will “work magic” in the next couple of years to improve the system like their counterparts in the Delhi government have done in the past few years.

The AAP governs both the Delhi government and the MCD.

In his address, he extolled Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, for laying out a vision for equality and egalitarianism in society and hailed his pursuit of higher education during the British era when not many Indians



thought about getting degrees from institutions such as the Columbia University and the London School of Economics.

Ambedkar knew the value of education and its role in lifting society from poverty and bringing equality among people, the chief minister said.

He also placed a floral tribute at the statue of Ambedkar on the Civic Centre premises. Earlier in the day, Kejriwal paid homage to Ambedkar in a tweet. “Tribute to revered Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar ji on his anniversary. Let’s come together

to create an India where all children in the country will get a better education, the country will progress and become number one in the world,” he tweeted in Hindi.

In his address at the MCD event, he also announced that the AAP-led dispensation plans to bring “healthy competition” to improve civic affairs in the city. “A ‘model RWA award’ has been proposed by Saurabh Bharadwaj so that one RWA (Residents’ Welfare Association) can be picked as the best RWA every year. Then we can

have ‘best park’, ‘best sanitation worker’, ‘best sanitary inspector’, among other awards, in each ward so that people give their best,” Kejriwal said.

He cited the example of Delhi government schools and said when he was working with his NGO before joining politics, people used to “criticise Delhi government schools” and “look down upon its schoolteachers.”

“Then, after we came to power, we worked on our schools and created a positive environment for teachers and others. And those same teachers who earlier drew flak from the people have now brought a change in the education ethos at Delhi government schools,” the chief minister claimed. Children from poor economic backgrounds are now going to good institutions and bringing change in the lives of their families after getting jobs.

He shared the example of a Delhi school student whose father is a plumber, and who secured admission to IIT-Roorkee in computer science.

BANKING & FINANCE

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INDIA COMMITTED TO REFORMS AGENDA, HAS INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES: NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

CBI summons Kejriwal in excise policy scam case; AAP alleges conspiracy

YOGESH KANT
New Delhi

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.

POTPOURRI

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POOJA HEGDE IS SET TO SHARE THE SCREEN WITH SALMAN KHAN IN ‘KISI KA BHI KISI KI JAAN’

AAP recognised as national party by EC, 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 Pawar’s NCP and Mamata Banerjee’s Trinamool Congress lost their national party status along with Communist Party of India (CPI).

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 in Mizoram.

The Commission said that the AAP has been nominated as a national party according 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 political parties would be withdrawn. The BJP, the Congress, the CPI-M, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the National People’s Party (NPP) and the AAP are now the main national parties.

The EC also announced that the NCP and the Trinamool will be recognised as state parties in Nagaland and Meghalaya, respectively based on their performance in the recently concluded Assembly elections.

It also granted “recognised state political party” status to the Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas in Nagaland, the Voice of the People Party in Meghalaya, and the Tipra Motha in Tripura.

Delhi braces for heatwave as temperatures soar to season’s highest at 39.4 degrees



NEW DELHI: Heatwave conditions are likely in some isolated places in Delhi on Saturday as the maximum temperature in the national capital increased to 39.4 degrees Celsius a day earlier, three notches above normal.

This was the highest maximum temperature recorded so far this season. According

to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Sports Complex near Akshardham was the hottest station at 41.9 degrees Celsius. Pitampura and Faridabad followed with maximum temperatures settling at 41.4 and 41.3 degrees Celsius, respectively. “Najafgarh and Ridge recorded 40.8 degrees Celsius and Pusa saw 40.3 degrees Celsius. Lodhi Road, Ayanagar, and Palam reported 39.4, 39.1, and 39 degrees Celsius, respectively,” according to IMD. The IMD has issued a ‘yellow’ alert for Saturday. While the maximum temperature at the Safdarjung Observatory is expected to be around 41 degrees Celsius for the next three days, it may touch 42-43 degrees Celsius in other stations.

Despite cutting India’s GDP growth to 5.9%, IMF calls its bright spot in global economy

NEW DELHI: International 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 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 historical revisions,” said Leigh.

Leigh added that 2020-2021 has been actually a lot better than we thought, so there’s less



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.

The IMF projects India’s inflation to slow to 4.9 per cent in the current year and further

to 4.4 per cent next fiscal year.

Its growth forecast is lower than the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) projection. The central bank predicted 7 per cent GDP growth for FY 2022-23 and 6.4 per cent in the ongoing fiscal that started on April 1.

Meanwhile, the international lender flagged concerns about 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 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 stay elevated at 7 per cent for the rest of the year, before declining to 4.9 per cent next year.

Another Army man dies in ‘accidental firing’ at Bathinda military station

BATHINDA: Hours after the killing of four army men inside the Bathinda military station in Punjab, another jawan reportedly died due to a bullet injury after his service weapon went off accidentally, police said on Thursday.

A police station in the cantonment received a complaint on Wednesday about the accidental death of army man Laghu Raj Shankar and the police have started a probe into this matter.

The jawan, who was on duty, died due to a bullet injury in the head, a police official told to media.

After the killing of the four men, the Indian Army

said a search team has located the INSAS rifle along with the magazine involved in the killing. However, it said no individual has been detained.

“The Army and police joint teams will now be undertaking forensic analysis of the weapon for ascertaining further 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 Superintendent of Police (Investigation), Ajay Gandhi had said, adding 19 empty shells of an INSAS rifle were recovered from the spot.

India’s exports beat \$750 bn target in FY23; trade deficit expands: Commerce Ministry



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, announced the Commerce Ministry on Thursday.

India’s trade deficit in-

creased 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.

Petroleum 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 in last fiscal.

The overall export growth for the fiscal under review was 13.84 per cent Y-o-y. Also, as many as 45 principal commodities 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 petroleum imports.

Meanwhile, India UK FTA’s round nine of negotiations is scheduled from April 24 to 28.

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.

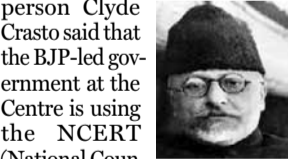
The meeting follows the killing of four jawans on Wednesday morning at the Bathinda Military Station in Punjab.

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.

The meeting will be attended 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 visited the Union Territory in October last year.

NCP alleges BJP ‘erasing’ Maulana Azad’s name from history as he was a Muslim

MUMBAI: The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Thursday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of attempting to ‘erase’ the name of India’s first Education Minister and Bharat Ratna, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, from history because he was a Muslim. NCP national spokesperson 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 political 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.”



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

NEW DELHI: At least 12 passengers were killed and 28 others injured when a private bus plunged into a gorge on the Mumbai-Pune highway on Saturday, officials said here.

The accident occurred at around 4 a.m. on the Pune-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 trekkers 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 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 Bajji 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 said in a statement. “All aspects including the possible case of involvement of an INSAS rifle along with 28 rounds reported missing two days back are being ascertained,” the statement added. The Army has pressed into

service hexacopters and drones to locate the assailants who killed the jawans, sources said. A cordon and search operation is underway at the station and a total clampdown on unnecessary movement of residents has been 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 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 Arvind 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 do comparative analysis etc., while defending Centre’s decision to not accept the report.



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 say 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.

Delhi-Meerut RRTS, First Rapid rail named RAPIDX

FW CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) on Tuesday announced that the country's first semi-high-speed regional rail services will be named 'RAPIDX'. These services will run on the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridors, being implemented to connect key urban nodes across the National Capital Region (NCR).

In many languages, the brand name RAPIDX is easy to read and pronounce. In both Hindi and English, the term



"RAPID" has already been selected and appreciated by the locals as their preferred transit system whereas, to signify speed and progress, X in the

name denotes next-generation technology and the new-age mobility solution. It also represents youth, optimism, and energy. The brand's dedica-

tion to decarbonization which includes using green energy as well as decongesting the NCR and fewer vehicles on the road is symbolized by the green leaf and NCRTC was tapping green energy by installing solar panels on stations and depots and planned to be increased progressively by using blended power in traction.

People who decide to stay in their hometowns in the NCR will be able to access the national capital thanks to RAPIDX, a cutting-edge, first-rate, sustainable, practical, quick, safe, and comfortable mode of transportation. RAPIDX will

make it simpler and quicker for young people in NCR to access a range of options that will help them achieve their goals. The RAPIDX will serve this 82-km long corridor and greatly reduce the travel time between Delhi and Meerut on the first RRTS corridor, Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut.

NCRTC is targeting commissioning the entire Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor for the public by 2025. However, before that, A 17-km long Priority Section will operationalize before the scheduled time between Sahibabad and Duhai in 2023.

National Integrated Medical Association thanks Health Minister for approving AYUSH Medical Reimbursement Policy in Haryana

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 while 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 country's 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.

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 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. Few Yoga and Naturopathy procedures will also be reimbursed during outdoor treatment of chronic disease patients since there are no medicines prescribed for outdoor patients while getting treatment in yoga and naturopathy hospitals.

As per the Policy, all Government AYUSH Institutions, Pri-

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. Deepthi 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 amount not paid.

During preliminary investigation arrested accused admitted that he had demanded ransom amount from Honeypreet in order to clear the amount of debts on him. Deepthi Garg ASP told that during investigation alleged accuse Pradeep running a grocery shop had named Mohit working in Dera Sacha Sauda management involved in this crime due to a personal rivalry and had demanded ransom amount from the complainant since he was having loan worth Rs seven lakh in his business as such planned the conspiracy. A case was registered against him at Sadar police station after he was arrested by the CIA Staff.

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 Shatrughit Kapoor said that on the directions by Haryana 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 and Jails. Anti-corruption Chief told that among those arrested while taking bribe and facing corruption cases registered against them include several senior officers accepted bribe worth lakhs of 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 with 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 charges against them in the courts causing heavy loss to the government since most of the projects are left in-between incomplete due to the reason the cases against such corrupt contractors are yet under trial in courts. Information reveals that Haryana state government taking stern action against such contractors.

Haryana state government 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 Home Minister claims 657 immigration agents in 484 cases arrested in past 3 years

SATISH HANDA
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 three-member SIT has been constituted under the direction of IG, Ambala Police Range Sibas Kabiraj in which Ambala SP Jashandeep Singh Randhawa and Kaithal SP Abhishek Jorwal have been included. Home Minister Anil Vij said that the SIT will 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.

CM Flying Squad seized 1500 fake NCERT books in raids at Haryana

SATISH HANDA



CM Flying Squad in Haryana state on the complaints that fake, pirated NCERT books are being sold by the publishers as well as few schools across the state and started conducting raids at various towns including Rohtak, Jhajjar, Hisar, Bahadurgarh, Gurugram and Faridabad and during raid recovered large number of fake NCERT text books and registered cases against 12 book sellers under piracy Act as per sections 63 and, 420 of IPC. Talking to media persons CID Chief Alok Mittal said that recently CM Flying Squad team led by Gokharpur Rana DSP conducted raids at two book stores at Tohana and seized 1500 books and the owners of both book stores were arrested and sent to

jail. Meanwhile State education minister Kanwar Pal Gurjar has warned that the educational schools encouraging sale of fake NCERT books, school uniform and stationery products at much higher than the price of NCERT books for their self vested interest putting additional financial burden on parents will not be spared and have to face strict action against them, and the state education department Haryana will not hesitate even to cancel their registration. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Rajesh Kumar said a raid was conducted following complaints that certain shops are selling fake NCERT books at a price nearly three times higher than the prescribed rates by the Abhibhaw Ekta Manch, a parents body at Balabgarh causing irregularities in the sale of books, stationery and school uniform in alliance with certain schools when the CM Flying Squadraiding team comprising the Sub-inspector of the CM's flying squad along with the Block Education Officer, Balabgarh found that some of the books neither had the NCERT logo nor the watermark and the team seized 24 such books to check for their authenticity. ACP told that a case will be registered against the shop owner and other accused, if any, if the complaint is found to be true.

Dr Farooq Abdullah slams govt for disallowing Friday prayers at Srinagar's grand mosque

SRINAGAR: Former Jammu 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 high-handedness and condemned the measure as a clear violation and interference with the religious rights of the people. "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," Dr Abdullah said.

The former chief minister also expressed his concern about the continued detention of Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar



Farooq, which he deemed a violation of basic human rights. Mirwaiz who would lead the congregational prayers at the Masjid, has been under detention since August 5, 2019, when the Indian government abrogated the special status of the erstwhile state and bifurcated it into two federally administered union territories.

The administration has disallowed congregational Friday prayers at Jamia Masjid in Srinagar, which is the central mosque and an epicenter of faith for millions of Muslims across the region.

We brought positive politics in the country: AAP

NEW DELHI: Amit Palekar President AAP-Goa on Wednesday said that his party has brought positive politics in the country even as political rivals tried to derail them. Addressing a press conference in Panaji, Amit Palekar said: "Despite all attempts by political rivals to derail the AAP, it has brought out positive politics in the country."

"Due to the heightened responsibility that came with gaining national status, we will now focus on fortifying our party in order to provide the people of Goa with a better future. Arvind Kejriwal, the national convener of the AAP, frequently compares corruption to cancer. AAP Goa has consistently opposed corruption in the state of Goa, and we will do so in the future," Palekar said.

AAP leader Deepak Singla while expressing his gratitude to supporters and volunteers said: "AAP has achieved national status in such a short period, which proves that the 'Kejriwal Model' is the future of governance in India.

A Large Group of Sikh pilgrims departs for Pakistan to celebrate Vaisakhi

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 Delhi Sikh Gurdwara 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 Bhalaiapur 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 obeisance at Gurdwara Sacha Sauda Sahib, Mandi Chuharkana on April 10, it will return to Nankana Sahib. The jatha will reach Gurdwara Sri Panja Sahib on April 12, and participate 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 Kartapur Sahib on April 16. After staying at Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, Lahore on April 17, the Sikh jatha will return to India on April 18.

On Khalsa Sajna Diwas, unnecessary interference of police in Gurdwaras cannot be tolerated: Harjinder Singh Dhani



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 Dhani 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. Dhani said when the Sikh

community is celebrating Khalsa Sajna Diwas as per the Panthic traditions, there is resentment in Sangat (community + congregation) due to unnecessary interference in the Gurdwaras by the Punjab government and the police administration. He said arbitrary restrictions are being imposed on the Sangat by the police administration, about which information is being received by the SGPC.

Harjinder Singh Dhani said that this action of the government is extremely bad, that cannot be tolerated. He said that because the Khalsa Sajna Diwas is very important and the occasion of devotion for the Sikh community, a large number 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 that an atmosphere of fear 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.

SATISH HANDA
Faridabad

Cyber Cell crime branch Sector 47 Faridabad succeeded in busting a gang arrested three persons including two Nigerians all residents of Uttam Nagar Delhi identified as Anthony Obyora, Obinna Ujine and Rahul Narang. The gang including two Nigerian national staying in Delhi running a network was arrested on the charge of cheating large number of Indian women mostly widow and divorce women and duping them of huge amount of money worth lakhs of rupees on the pretext of arranging NRI grooms for marriage mostly in service and business in abroad an official



Pooja Vashishat DCP said that during preliminary investigation the arrested accused admitted cheated about 70 females willing to marry NRIs amount worth crores of rupees by putting their profiles and photographs of men on a marriage site on internet. In-charge, Cyber Cell Satich

Kumar told media persons that a complaint was lodged by a female resident of Faridabad allegedly cheated by the gang amount worth over Rs 10 lakh when a youth willing to marry her was invited and the proposal was seen merely a fraud and acase was registered against the gang when

during investigation police reached up to the criminals through mobile phone calls and arrested three. Investigation revealed that there is possibility of several other persons involved in this gang usually arranging youths willing to marry Indian girls as well as Indian females mostly widows and divorcees willing to marry NRIs and settle abroad usually through matrimonial website having links in countries Canada, Australia, UK and USA. It was observed that the accused befriended women through social media introducing as a non-resident Indian settled in abroad. DCP told that the men eventually gained confidence of females and made emotional

appeals in transferring money in their various bank accounts before she realized the fraud. During preliminary investigation alleged accused admitted more than 70 such fraud cases in which women were targeted in past sometime and told that on social media and matrimonial websites, they used profile pictures of smart-looking men including in lucrative jobs and flourishing business in order to dupe women. An FIR was lodged against the arrested accused under Indian Penal Code 406 (criminal breach of trust), 419 (cheating by impersonation) and Sections 420 (cheating), and under provisions of the Information Technology Inspector Satish said.

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 MLAs 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



brass in Delhi, in other hand B S Yeddyurappa 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-

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

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

While BJP has never secured even a simple majority in the 224 member assembly, it formed the government through either coalitions or by getting 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



"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"

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

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 high-level 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 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 deactivation.

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.

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



NEWDELHI: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who met Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi, as well as his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal and other opposition leaders is working with the plan to unite the opposition to challenge the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, his JD-U said.

"The Nitish formula for 2024 for opposition unity is One Seat One Candidate (OSOC). It has come into effect in the country. The discussions with all opposition parties are completed now and its result will be visible soon," senior JD-U leader K.C. Tyagi said on Thursday. "Some issues coming into the media about what happened to Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal and K Chandrashekhara Rao, and these will be addressed soon. Arvind

Kejriwal has already given full support to the initiative of Nitish Kumar," he added.

Bihar Finance Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, who is considered one of closest to Nitish Kumar, said: "Media always asks about who would be the PM face of the opposition parties? The idea behind this question is to derail the initiative. BJP always claimed that there is no vacancy for Prime Minister in the country... we will assure them that we will create a vacancy of the same."

The BJP, over the years, is ruling in the country only with 37 per cent of votes, due to division of votes as opposition parties are contesting against each other. Now the one seat, one candidate formula, if implemented, could reduce the division of anti-BJP votes in the country.

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

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off poll-bound 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



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

"The situation took 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" and Telangana respectively. All

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 9,500 crore this year.

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 tourism industry of Rajasthan, as it will facilitate faster access to places of faith like Theerthraj Pushkar and Ajmer Sharif.

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 Chhabbi, 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 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



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

team of Punjab police left for Dibrugarh Jail in Assam to shift arrested accused Papalpreet Singh there. Papalpreet Singh was shifted to Dibrugarh 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.

Editors Guild conclave on Media Controls

FW DESK

The Editors Guild of India, 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 Legal issues. Those participating are



Mrinal Pande, Sankarshan 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 Paranjy Guha Thakurta and T.N. Ninan. The session will be moderated by Anant Nath.

Speakers on the session on films include Mayank Shekhar,

Shobhaa De and Anuradha Ramnan. This session will be moderated by Nandini Ramnath.

In the session on legal reporting we will hear Sanjay Hegde and Samanwaya Rautray. This session will be moderated by KV Prasad.

The Guild welcomed wider participation and those wishing 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 Dhama said that following the order of Jathedar, Sri Akal Takht Sahib, the cases of youths imprisoned under the National Security Act (NSA) at Dibrugarh, are 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 in Dibrugarh jail are in high spirit. He said the District

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 be continued.

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 new 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 spanned 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.

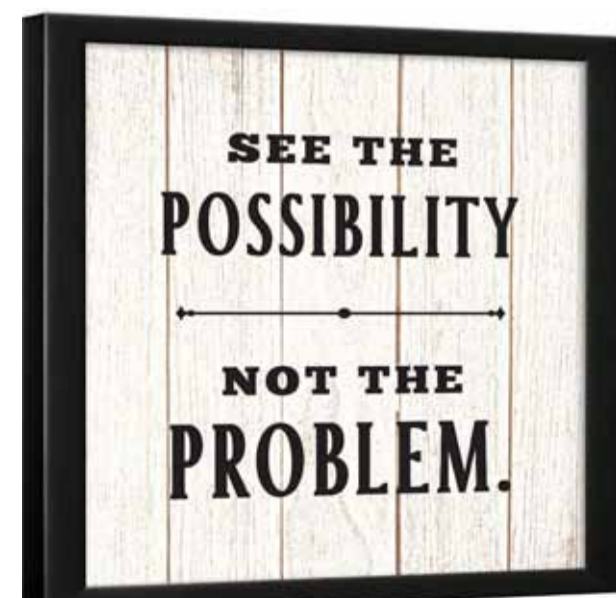
With ongoing surveillance and efforts to control the spread of the virus, officials hope to mitigate its impact and protect public health.

Addressing stress signs crucial for minimising damage

The 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 proactively address potential issues to minimize any impending damage.

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THE FINANCIAL WORLD

RNI NO. DELENG/2011/38860
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY SWINDER BAJWA
ON BEHALF OF FW MEDIA
PRINTED AT JAGJIT PUBLISHING CO. PVT LTD
D-12, INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-1, MOHALI,
PUNJAB 160059
PRINTER & PUBLISHER SWINDER BAJWA
OWNER : FW MEDIA
PUBLISHED AT: BUILDING NO-23, NEHRU PLACE
NEW DELHI 110019; PHONE: 9888040061
EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY
(*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)



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

The water conference takeaways

The 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



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'.

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

The 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 tortured for keeping their establishment open 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 long-standing, 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-



cal torture in public view is another instance that has shocked the average American. In this case, the victim, accused of having failed to pay for what he bought at a convenience 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.

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

the near future. This is largely due to corruption among public servants which has burgeoned in recent times. If there is no public outrage against corruption it is because the personal 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

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 probability, this was a case of overzealousness gone 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 IGP 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.

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

BOOKS: REVIEW

Book gives insightful glimpse into the life of BR Ambedkar

In 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-

als applied the intellectual tools of observation and extensive reading of scriptures to their respective religious beliefs, but reached vastly different conclusions.

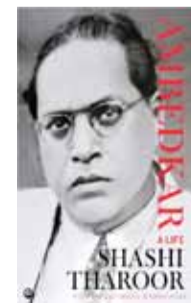
Tharoor's biography is split into two parts. In the first half, he recounts the significant moments of Ambedkar's challenging life, including the humiliations, poverty, and personal tragedies he faced, as well as the courage, defiance, and determination he demonstrated. The second half focuses on Ambedkar's 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

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



Ambedkar: A Life
By Shashi Tharoor;
Aleph;
240 pages;
Rs 599

Constitution. Similarly, Tharoor's presentation of Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism lacks the broader context of caste and the master-slave relationship.

Isabel Wilkerson, in her book "Caste: The Lies That Divide Us," advocates for 'radical empathy' among privileged groups who consider themselves allies of the oppressed. Radical empathy involves understanding another's experience from their perspective, not simply imagining how one would feel in their place. This concept may be the missing element in Tharoor's otherwise engaging introduction to Ambedkar's life and legacy. By employing radical empathy, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives

that shaped B.R. Ambedkar and his lasting impact on Indian society.

In "Ambedkar: A Life," Tharoor 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.

Tharoor also discusses Ambedkar's contributions to the field of economics. Ambedkar, who obtained a doctorate in economics from Columbia University, was a visionary economist who advocated for state intervention in industry, agriculture, and public utilities. He was also a proponent of land reforms and social security measures, which were aimed at uplifting the economically marginalized sections of society. Tharoor's account highlights the relevance of Ambedkar's economic ideas, even in contemporary times.

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.



ing has the potential to transform construction practices by quickening the construction process 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.

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's primary 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 innovative technology," he added.

Advantages of 3D Concrete Printing:

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 consumption.

Digital Workflow: Digital workflow of drawings [Design (3D AutoCAD) à Printer (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 Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation (MCC) and UBE Corporation and is a group company of The Mitsubishi 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 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.

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

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

NEW DELHI: Cosmo Films, a global leader in specialty 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 industry-leading 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."

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 extremely 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.

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

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-and-mortar Store is now right in their backyard.

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 Apple-branded 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.

The tech giant aligns design and construction criteria to industry-recognised best practices for green buildings, promoting water conservation, energy efficiency, and responsible material sourcing.

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.

India's electronics sector exports cross Rs 1,85K crore, mobiles alone surpass Rs 90K crore

NEW DELHI: Led by locally-manufactured 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 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, surpassing the previous estimate of Rs



75,000 crore. Mobile phone exports now account for 46 per cent of the overall electronic goods exports, underlining the vital role of this sector in India's electronics export market.

This growth has been primarily driven by the Apple ecosystem,

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 juggernaut 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 industry 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.

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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

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India's e-commerce logistics industry to cross 10 bn shipments by FY28

NEW DELHI: India's e-commerce logistics industry saw total shipments reaching to 4 billion in FY23, riding on new categories, direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands along with continued growth in smaller cities, a report showed on Tuesday.

India's e-commerce logistics space is on track to comfortably 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.

"Despite funding headwinds in e-commerce/internet sectors, there are multiple pockets of high growth and high yield opportunities available for e-logistics players, be in



D2C or large goods or non-commerce segments," said Mrigank Gutgutia, Partner, Redseer Strategy Consultants. D2C brands across channels are expected to grow overall GMV at 35 per cent in next few years, with brand.com accounting for a significant share of this growth.

A total of \$33 billion of GMV is expected to be generated from D2C brands across all channels by CY27.

Logistics players with rel-

evant and customised offerings for D2C brands are well-positioned to capture market share in this high growth segment as well as have a stronger yield profile going forward, the report said.

"Players who build robust capabilities and offerings to serve this demand effectively will fundamentally be more resilient in these challenging times and will be better positioned for long term market share and yield leadership," Gutgutia noted.

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, Sandeep Bhandari on this occasion. Vice President Jagdish Dhankar 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 Lalit Gandhi called on Vice President His Excellency Jagdish Dhankar in New Delhi. MP Darishil Mane, Sandeep Bhandari on this occasion.

India's hard truth of soft skills

SOURAV ROY India witnesses 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 238 million of them, the total 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 per cent 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 per cent of the population with a job.

Adding to the complexity is India's growing population rate which continues to move upward at 1.1 per cent 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 English-speaking 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 youth 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

and electric cars

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 aspires 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.

Sourav Roy, Professor of Practice, Chitkara University, India views are personal

Talking Points Narvijay Yadav



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.

In the midst of poll preparations in Karnataka, the controversy of Amul and Nandini milk brands created a stir raising the temperature of the campaigning. As soon as Amul announced the online delivery of its milk in Bangalore, opposition parties including the Congress and Janata Dal (S) accused the ruling BJP in the state that the Gujarat-based Amul was challenging Karnataka's very own Nandini brand. Opposition parties also feared that the Rs 21,000-crore Nandini brand could be merged with Amul. An announcement made on social media heated up the politics of Karnataka. Actually, Union Home Minister Amit Shah in December observed that cooperation between the umbrella brands of Gujarat Cooperative Milk

Marketing Federation and Karnataka Milk Federation could do wonders.

The truth is that Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation's Amul brand has been supplying pouch milk and fresh products in two districts of Karnataka – Hubballi and Belgaum since 2015. Even the Amul ice cream is prepared with Nandini milk. Its intention was to make Amul milk and curd available only through e-commerce in Bangalore. Moreover, Amul milk is costlier than Karnataka's homegrown Nandini brand, so the question of competition between the two does not arise. The Government of Karnataka provides subsidies to dairy farmers for Nandini milk, hence the rate of Nandini milk is Rs 39 per liter in the state, while Amul milk is

Restricting a brand in a state is suicidal



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.

51% growth when compared to 2014-15. The source of the data is the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Government of India. But recently there has been a slight decrease in milk production. The share of milk cooperatives and private players in the milk market is expected to reach 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 politics will only harm the farmers.

sold at Rs 54 per liter. The milk controversy forced Amul managing director Jayen Mehta to clarify that 'there is no question of competition' between Amul and Nandini. However, this kind of controversy can be detrimental to many other desi brands that 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 production of 220.78 million tonnes in 2021-22. The country is contributing a quarter of global milk production. It is a

India committed to reforms agenda, has investment opportunities, says Nirmala Sitharaman



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.

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.

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 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 emphasised that despite the reality of reset across the globe and the challenges posed by Coronavirus pandemic, India's 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.

Cryptocurrencies important part of discussion under India's G20 presidency: Sitharaman



NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said that cryptocurrencies 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 for the Indian economy to support growth at its full potential.

"Free trade agreements are 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 adaptation rate resulting in a host of opportunities for investment. Sitharaman exhorted the participants to become part of India's exciting transformation journey towards greater prosperity, better standards of living for its citizens and higher returns for investors.

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



NEW DELHI: Net direct tax collections have risen by a huge 160 per cent to Rs 16,61,428 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.

Gold prices inch up

MUMBAI: Gold prices inched 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 yellow metal prices hovered around psychological level of \$2,000 per ounce as traders await more US 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.

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

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. Additionally, the bank introduced other products such as E-Marketplace and Instant QR on Mobile Banking App PNB One, PABL (Pre-approved business loan), Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), Digital KCC through JanSamarth Portal, Current Account opening through TAB and Video-KYC, PNB eSWAR and PNB Metaverse.

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 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 May 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 Jewellery 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



The term "Tiger Economy" 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 development in such an economy, that 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.

noteworthy that the GDP growth rate went into minus during the pandemic. In the year 1992, India'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 per cent on an average during the financial year 1980-81 to the financial year 1991-92, which increased to an average level of 3.7 per cent 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 increase.

to 1991 was 4.34 percent, which increased to 6.24 percent during 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 10000 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 that the risks associated with

the Indian economy and Indian banks are coming down.

Mounting Exports

India's exports in the FY 2022-23 registered a growth of 6 per cent 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 per cent to \$ 714 billion in the FY 2022-23, which was \$ 613 billion in the FY 2021-22. Exports of goods & services are set to increase by 14 per cent 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 per cent 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 per cent 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.

The global dominance of the US dollar is fading

DR P.S. VOHRA



There is an intense discussion in the economic 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 can be said that many countries around the world no longer seem to be serious about the reserve of dollars. In this context, according to 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.

main reason behind it. Both Russia and China want to respond strongly to the US stance on the global stage in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine for the last one year. As a result of this, 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. According to the latest IMF report, 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 is second with about 4 tril-

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. Under the 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 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 becoming 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 Charter."

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 Teixeira, 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 exports 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 a private conversation between

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 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 per cent 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.

However, getting inflation the rest of the way back to



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 2.5 per cent in 2025.

VCI Global Limited "VCI" Closes its 1st Day of Trading on Nasdaq Capital Market

FW DESK
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

VCI Global Limited (NASDAQ: 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 Malaysia, but also serves some clients from China, Singapore, and the US.

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 sentence given, which provides a clear message that Thames Valley Police will not tolerate behaviour like that of Amrik Singh," Investigating officer 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 'Choor' and 'Chaar' that Amrik used," ACDA said in a statement.

GreyOrange Co-founder Akash Gupta Announced as New CEO

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 customers, from Fortune 500 giants to



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 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™, a fulfillment orchestration platform that assigns work to job-specific robots—from any vendor—based on near-real-time information, fulfilling the founders' long-term vision of an end-to-end orchestration and intelligence platform.

India, Japan and France announce launch of Sri Lanka's debt restructuring negotiations

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

Participating in a high-level 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



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

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 Minister participated virtually in the event.

Bangladesh: Increasing intimidation and harassment of Prothom Alo signals deepening crisis of press freedom in the country

DHAKA: Prothom Alo, Bangladesh's largest daily newspaper is the latest media platform to come under increasing attack including intimidation, harassment and arrest of journalists signalling a deepening crisis of 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 the DSA and named as the main accused in one of the two cases against Shams.

Hours after the Prime Minister's statement, a group of individuals barged into Prothom 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 policies it promotes is a restriction of the right to freedom of expression that can never be justified. The attacks on Prothom Alo which has



the largest daily circulation 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 journalists and attacks on some of the largest news publications in the country together indicate a worrying trend towards repression and a downward spiral of the right to freedom of expression in Bangladesh."

Two police officers were shot dead in a shooting during a traffic stop in the village of 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.

Two cops killed in US traffic stop shooting



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

Two Indian-American executives of a Chicago-based health 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-on-investment 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 Kathryn 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

Maryland 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 Maryland 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 is confident in Barve's ability to bolster his administration's commitment to environmental stewardship while ensuring rate payers are protected.

The Public Service Commission regulates public utilities

and certain passenger transportation companies doing business in Maryland.

The Commission's jurisdiction extends to taxicabs operating in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Cumberland 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 Science in accounting from Georgetown University. In 2017, he was awarded the League of Conservation Voters Legislator of the Year. He also received India Abroad Lifetime Service Award in 2013, followed by Tech Council of Maryland Technology Advocate of the Year in 2008 and 2006.

Pooja Hegde is set to share the screen with Salman Khan in 'KISI KA BHAII 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'.

The actress will play the romantic interest of Salman's character and her character serves as a pivot to the film's story as all the action and drama unfolds when fellow southern star Jagapathi Babu's villain goes in hot pursuit of

her brother, played by Dagubati Venkatesh, the Telugu star who's garnering eyeballs with the streaming show 'Rana Naidu', and Bhumiika 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 Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' was an absolute blast for me.

My character is very special to me. She's super fun and full of life, and I hope people will enjoy my performance."

She added: "I can't wait for my fans, friends and family to watch the trailer and get to see for themselves glimpses of the excitement and emotions we've poured into this film. What you have seen in the trailer is just a fun glimpse of the entire film."

Scheduled to hit the big screen on April 21, coinciding with Eid, 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' is a Hindi action drama directed by Farhad Samji and produced by Salman Khan Films. It features Salman Khan and Telugu stars Venkatesh, Pooja Hegde and Jagapathi Babu in the lead roles with an ensemble supporting cast, extending from 'Bigg Boss' alumni Shehnaaz Gill and Abdu Rozik to Salman's 'Maine Pyar Kiya' co-star Bhagyashree.

The film will also see cameos by 'RRR' star Ram Charan and rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh.



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

Jeremy Renner made his first late-night appearance since his snow plough accident

Hollywood star Jeremy Renner made his first late-night appearance since his snow plough accident, guesting on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' to discuss the traumatic incident and his forthcoming series 'Rennerations'.



shut him down quickly, retorting "Scarlett Johansson." Renner offered a detailed account of his accident in an interview with ABC News' Diane Sawyer last week.

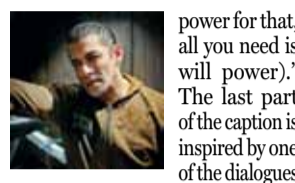
Renner explained that he and his 27-year-old nephew were attempting to tow a Ford Raptor out of the snow with his snow plough. After his nephew stepped out to chain

the two vehicles, the snow plough began to slide on the ice. Renner lost his footing as he stepped out of the plough to look back at his nephew, but neglected to set the parking brake. Attempting to re-enter the vehicle, Renner was run over.

"I got lucky in a lot of ways. I'm happy to be here," Renner told Kimmel. The actor gave a shout-out to his mother and the rest of his family, who joined the "Kimmel" crowd. Renner also shared a video that his 'Avengers' co-star Paul Rudd sent to him while he was recovering in intensive care.

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 live power nahi will power chaheyeh (you don't need power for that, all you 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' contestant Abdu Rozik took to the comment section and wrote: "Arey yaar mazaa agaya bro (loved it bro)."

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



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

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 the third installment in Vijan's horror-comedy universe.

11-Yr-Old Boy Reclaims Amputated Arm in a Most Complex Replantation Surgery

Surgeons Avert a lifetime disability Threat
ARUNKUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

A farming accident that could have resulted in a lifetime of disability was turned around by a team of experienced surgeons and doctors at Narayana Health Orthopaedics, Spine and Trauma Care. An 11-year-old boy, Charan, from Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh, accidentally amputated his upper forearm while trying to dislodge a wooden stick from a grass-cutting machine. However, thanks to the quick response from his parents and the team at



Narayana Health City, Charan was able to reclaim his amputated arm. After a life-threatening incident, Charan was taken to a local medical college, where he received primary treatment, and was then referred to Narayana Health City for further treatment. The team of doctors led by Dr Ravi D R, immediately conducted the replantation surgery. Despite the fact that Charan's ampu-

tated arm had been separated from his body for more than six hours, the experienced team of doctors responded quickly and successfully conducted the complex six-hour surgery, involving microsurgical repair of all injured structures of the hand to re-establish blood flow to amputated part. Dr Ravi D R, who led the surgical team, said, "Replantation of limbs has a higher rate of success when conducted within the golden period of 6 hours, however in Charan's case was particularly challenging due to the type of injury, a crush avulsion cut, and the young age of the boy along with the distance to travel, which makes the surgery even more difficult.

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

KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

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 Satyajeet Puri who has also played 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, there is a dance and when it comes to the dance in the film, there's a choreographer behind it. For



'Munda Rockstar' Raka took the responsibility to make the star cast groove. On the other hand, the Director of Photography was Parv Dandona.

Talking about the star cast 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, Nirbhava Dhalival, Ranveer Wadhawan, Sandy Sharma, Happy Bokolia, and Gopi Sidhu among others are also playing pivotal roles in the film.

Director Om Raut Meets UP CM Yogi Adityanath, Shares a Heartwarming Picture on Instagram



KULBIR SINGH KALSI
New Delhi

Renowned filmmaker Om Raut, known for his grand cinematic ventures like Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior and Adipurush, recently met the honorable Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath. Om Raut shared a heartwarming picture on his Instagram handle, where he can be seen handing Yogi a token of appreciation. In his caption, he emphasized the importance of culture and unity in our country saying, "The country is made of

culture. As a result of the virtues that Raj Mata Jijau gave to Bal Shivaji Raje in his childhood, he emerged as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the flag bearer of Hindavi Swaraj. I find it incredible to be presenting the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Raj Mata Jijau to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Mr. Yogi Adityanath. #HarHarMahadev". The picture has left the audience eagerly anticipating the release of Om Raut's upcoming magnum opus, Adipurush. The film is all set to hit the screens on 16th June 2023.

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 3.0'.

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,



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.

'Taneira' launches its Summer Wedding '23 campaign featuring Mrunal Thakur

FW DESK
New Delhi

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 its Lightweight Celebration Sarees for the wedding season, amidst the rising temperatures.

Weaving a beautiful story around "Shadi 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

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, she 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 statement with their choices, bridging the gap between the conventional and the contemporary."

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 lip-smacking, in the sense sab gazab hai (everything is top notch). 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

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 consume 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 is likely to be revived next year

SUNIL THAPLIYAL
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 January 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 one of my top priorities when I assumed office as president of Hockey India. "It (the league) will be a critical stepping stone for India and will revitalise not only hockey in India, but also bring fresh energy to the sport globally," said Dilip Tirkey, Hockey India president.



The league was primarily concerned with attracting elite talent from around the world, but it did not do enough to engage with local communities and supporters. This lack of engagement may have contributed to the league's inability to build a strong fan base and a sustainable revenue source. Some experts also believe that the league could not achieve

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 Indian team has been on a roller coaster of success.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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