

REGION

2

PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER IS INTERFERING IN SIKH AFFAIRS TO FULFILL HIS POLITICAL INTERESTS: HARJINDER SINGH DHAMI



CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

5

GE AEROSPACE SIGNS MOU WITH HINDUSTAN AERONAUTICS LTD TO PRODUCE FIGHTER JET ENGINES FOR INDIAN AIR FORCE



POTPOURRI

8

RAPPER YO YO HONEY SINGH APPROACHES POLICE OVER DEATH THREATS FROM GANGSTER



PM's visit to US 'pathbreaking', says Foreign Secretary

NEW DELHI: Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra has described Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the US as "pathbreaking".

He said that technological cooperation was among the key points of discussion between India and US, describing it as one of the most substantive outcomes of the Prime Minister's "pathbreaking" state visit to the US.

"Technology, in particular advanced technology, across all domains ranging from defence to space and energy is one of the most important substantive outcomes," he told reporters during a media briefing on Thursday evening (US time).

He elaborated that technological cooperation across the ecosystem was discussed prominently during bilateral discussions between Modi and US president Joe Biden.

"This included technology



transfer, services and working together in research among other domains," the foreign secretary elaborated.

Kwatra said that sentiment of exceptional warmth and hospitality ran through the Prime Minister's visit, which was extended to him by the US president and first lady Jill Biden.

Meanwhile, the foreign secretary further elaborated that the visit has been "extremely rich in form and equally, if not more, rich in substance,"

Punjab CM vows to ensure supply of canal water at the tail end of the last field in the state

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday reiterated the firm commitment of his government to ensure canal water at the tail end of the last field in the state.

In a statement issued here today, the Chief Minister said that the state government is duty bound for this noble cause. He said already due to strenuous efforts of the state government water has reached the far flung areas of Fazilka districts. Bhagwant Mann said that the state government had delivered a promise made to cotton cultivators of the state that canal water will reach their fields from April 1.

Expressing deep concern over the gravity of the emerging situation due to the fast depleting water table, the Chief Minister



said almost all the blocks in the state are in the dark zone as far as the groundwater is concerned. Bhagwant Mann said that it has happened due to reckless pumping of water in fields adding that the trend needs to be checked immediately so that our future generations do not have to strive for water. He said that optimum

utilisation of canal water can reduce the burden on ground water thereby checking its depletion.

The Chief Minister said that the state government is taking massive steps for optimum utilisation of the canal water to save the groundwater. He said that at present Punjab is using only 33%-34% of its canal

“The state govt had delivered a promise made to cotton cultivators of the state that canal water will reach their fields from April 1”

India's forex reserves rise to \$596.098 billion



NEW DELHI: India's foreign exchange reserves rose marginally by \$2.350 billion in the week ending June 16 to reach \$596.098 billion, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The forex reserves had fallen \$1.318 billion in the previous week.

Also in the week ending June 16, foreign currency assets rose by \$2.578 billion to \$527.651 billion.

During the week ending June 9, foreign currency assets had dipped by \$1.128 billion.

No survivors after Titanic sub wreckage found on ocean floor



The five people aboard a missing submersible died in a "catastrophic" event, a Coast Guard official said on Thursday, bringing a grim end to the massive search for the vessel that was lost during a voyage to the Titanic. "These men were true explorers who shared a distinct spirit of adventure, and a deep passion for exploring and protecting the world's oceans," OceanGate Expeditions said in a statement. "Our hearts are with these five souls and every member of their families during this tragic time."

Opposition unanimously decided to fight 2024 Lok Sabha election together: Nitish

PATNA: All opposition parties in the country are united and will fight together against the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections next year, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said on Friday.

Targeting the Narendra Modi-led Central government, he said that they are not working in the interest of the country and they are just trying to change the history of the country.

"Every opposition party leader has put their points in the meeting and unanimously decided to work together and fight the election with unity. Another meeting will be held in the next few days to decide the



future plan of action. The next meeting will take place under the chairmanship of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge in Shimla where we will take the final decision.

"We will decide in the meeting who will contest the election from which place. We would

short out problems if any arise in future," Nitish Kumar said. "Those who are in power are not working in the interest of the country. They are changing the history and freedom struggle of the country. We are concerned about it and hence decided to unite together," he added.

SGPC delegation meets Governor of Punjab, demands to nullify Sikh Gurdwaras (Amendment) Bill, 2023

CHANDIGARH: A high-level delegation led by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhimi today met Punjab Governor Banwari Lal Purohit and demanded from him to nullify the Sikh Gurdwaras (Amendment) Bill, 2023, passed by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the state Assembly.

The memorandum stated that the interference made by the Punjab government headed by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 and the provisions of the SGPC is unconstitutional, which should not be allowed.



Talking to the media after meeting with the Governor, SGPC chief Harjinder Singh Dhimi said the government is going beyond its jurisdiction and complicating

Sikh affairs. The government has interfered in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, by making an issue of Gurbani broadcast in the Legislative Assembly, he stated.

This step is a direct violation of the constitution as any amendment in the Sikh Gurdwara Act can be done only by the Centre government with the recommendations of the SGPC, added Dhimi. He said that the Punjab government has no right to interfere in the management of the SGPC.

Dhimi said the matter of Gurbani broadcast is completely administrative, which AAP government is using for its political interests. He said the aim of Bhagwant Mann government is to weaken the SGPC, but the Sikh community will not allow this to happen.

PSPCL meets record 15151 MW demand without any power cut

With hot and humid weather and 8 hour power supply for the agriculture sector, PSPCL today on Thursday met an all time record demand of 15151 MW without any cut. This is 6.6 per cent higher than the peak demand of 14207 MW during the paddy season.

Punjab was drawing 8826 MW from the northern grid and the state's own gross generation was 6205 MW at the time of maximum demand. All the seven available thermal units in the state sector are running and all the private sector thermal units are also operating. Three out of four Ranjit Sagar units were running at the time of maximum demand.

Power demand has been rising continuously and PSPCL has been able to meet the demand. Punjab power demand reached 14962 MW

on Wednesday with a supply of 3331 lakh units. PSPCL purchased 214 lakh units to meet the power demand. Even during evening peak the demand was 14377 MW.

The coal stock at Lehra Mohabbat and Ropar thermal plants are for 25 and 43 days respectively. The coal stock in private sector thermal plants Rajpura has 35 days, Talwandi Sabo 7 days and GVK

only 3.4 days. The water level in the hydro plants reservoir is in better position than last year's level on the same day. The water level in Bhakra reservoir is 1577 feet which is 19.5 feet more than last year's level of 1567.5 feet on the corresponding day. At Ranjit Sagar water level is 511.97 which is more than 6.7 meters higher from last year's level of 505.2 meters.

J&K watchdog conducts raids over alleged misuse of social media



FW DESK

Jammu and Kashmir State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Tuesday conducted pre-dawn raids at six locations across Kashmir, including districts of Kupwara, Anantnag, Pulwama, and Srinagar. The raids were carried out as part of an ongoing investigation into the alleged misuse of social media platforms for unlawful and secessionist activities. The SIA aims to uncover individuals and groups involved in propagating secessionist and anti-India sentiments through various social media channels.

Opposition Unite in Patna to Oust BJP

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

All opposition parties meet in Patna on June 23 to plan a strategy for the forthcoming Lok Sabha Elections and Fight against BJP jointly. The Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD Chief Laloou Prasad Yadav have been at the forefront of endeavors to unite all opposition parties in Patna

against the BJP government. With an objective of forming a Non-NDA government at the Centre in 2024, Nitish Kumar invited all big leaders of the opposition parties like NCP President Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray, Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge,

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, CPI leader D Raja, CPM leader Sitaram Yechuri and Dipankar Bhattacharya of CPI (M-L). The RJD Chief Laloou Prasad Yadav who was not in the background for so many years due to health issues will also be attending the meet. Senior JD(U) leader Vijay Kumar told the reporters that "Lalujiaayeenge... lalujikoana hi hai" He is also a member of the organizing

committee. In Fact RJD and JD(U) are jointly organizing this meet in Patna. RJD spokesperson, Shakti Singh Yadav said Laloouji's presence will boost the morale of the opposition. According to some political Analyst "it is because of the joint efforts of Laloou Prasad and Nitish Kumar that so many big leaders of the opposition parties are gathering together.

J&K completes five years under central rule

FW DESK

It was on June 19, 2018, that the BJP withdrew support to the J&K coalition government headed by the then Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, paving the way for Governor's rule in the then state. Later, former J&K Governor, Satya Pal Malik, dissolved the assembly in November.



Over five years have passed since then, and there are no signs of the long-awaited assembly elections. J&K has been

under direct central rule for eight times since 1977.

Following the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5, 2019, the region was downgraded to a union territory. The position of the Governor was reduced to that of Lieutenant Governor. However, despite the subsequent delimitation of seats the union territory is still awaiting Assembly polls.

Arvind Kejriwal urges Oppn leaders to ensure defeat of Centre's ordinance in Parliament

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the meeting of opposition parties in Patna on June 23, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has called upon the Opposition leaders to prioritise discussions on defeating the Centre's ordinance in Parliament.

Expressing his concerns in a letter, the Chief Minister said Delhi's ordinance was an "experiment" and if successful, the central government might replicate it to curtail the rights of non-BJP state governments through similar ordinances.

"The day is not far when the Prime Minister will govern all state governments through 33 Governors and Lieutenant Governors," alleged Kejriwal.

He also sought clarity from the Congress regarding their stance on this matter. "I hope that the Congress will clearly state its position, as the other political parties attending the meeting will inquire about it. The first topic for discussion will be the Delhi ordinance. I will explain the risks of this ordinance to every party present at the meeting."



US-India collaboration on DPIs will make us a global digital innovation hub: Nasscom

The partnership between the US and India to enable development and deployment of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in developing countries will provide India with an opportunity to solidify its position as a global digital innovation hub, setting an exemplary model for other nations to follow, Nasscom has said. US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi intend to work together to provide global leadership for the implementation of DPI to promote inclusive development, competitive markets, and protect individual rights.

"The partnership focuses on fostering open and inclusive

digital economies through the development and deployment of DPIs in developing countries, leveraging India's successful implementation," Nasscom said in a statement. The US and India will explore how to partner together and align efforts to advance the development and deployment of robust DPIs, including appropriate safeguards to protect privacy, data security and intellectual property. The Indian IT industry's apex body said that both the countries will work towards responsible AI, aiming to advance AI education, foster commercial opportunities, and address concerns related to discrimination and bias.

Manipur Crisis Continues, Congress demands serious intervention from the Govt

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

"I Express my condolences to all those people of Manipur who have lost their loved ones. I am deeply saddened to see people forced to flee the only place they call home and leave behind all that they build over a lifetime", Former Congress President Sonia Gandhi extended condolences to the families killed in Manipur clashes through a video message. Leaders of 10 like-minded opposition parties of Manipur have also submitted the three page memorandum to the Prime Minister's office seeking appointment to meet the PM, in which they have also questioned PM's silence. The Congress party demands serious intervention from the Union Government.



Manipur has been under violence from last 50 days now and normalcy does not appear to return soon as the state is still witnessing mob attacks. All opposition parties have been raising questions on Centre and State government inability to normalize the situation in the State. It's been 50 days of violence and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have not

uttered a word on Manipur, the leaders of the opposition demand an answer from him. Now an All party meeting has been called by the Home Minister Amit Shah on 24 June, of which senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi have raised objections of conducting a meeting when Prime Minister is not in the country. Congress General Secretary K. C Venugopal has

also taken a dig saying after 50 days of death and destruction, Home Minister Amit Shah has now called an All Party Meeting. This was after Sonia Gandhi address to the people of Manipur, Venugopal said. The Home Minister has already visited the State and done his exercise now what is the need of All Party meeting... At least Prime Minister should have addressed a meeting, he added.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh who has been slamming the government from last 15 days for "maximum violence and Minimum Governance" in the State also hit out at the RSS for issuing an appeal for peace in Manipur after 45 days and asked whether PM Narendra Modi has outsourced the appeal to the organization that moulded him. Another senior Congress leader P Chidambaram from his twitter handle suggest

Prime Minister Modi to make a unscheduled stop at Imphal on the way to Washington, to visit Manipur, he can effectively silence the opposition," he said.

Around 100 have died 50,000 forced to live in relief camps following the violent clashes in Manipur since 3 May. The State is still witnessing incidents like mob attacks and arson, the State government have extended the ban on the internet till 25 June with immediate effect in an order to prevent further destruction in the state. Violence gripped in Manipur on 3 May, after clashes erupted during a rally organized by All Tribals Students Union (ATSU) to protest the demand for the inclusion of Meiteis in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list. Now the question is When will the North East State Manipur attain normalcy?

Punjab Chief Minister is interfering in Sikh affairs to fulfill his political interests: Harjinder Singh Dhama

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), President Harjinder Singh Dhama strongly condemned the announcement made by Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Bhagwant Singh Mann about adding a new clause in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925.

Talking to the media at the SGPC office, Dhama made it clear to the CM that any amendment in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 can only be done by the Government of India through the Parliament of the country as per the recommendations of the General House of the SGPC.

He said that Bhagwant Singh Mann wants to please his masters in Delhi by giving a politi-

cal color to the religious affairs of the Sikhs. Such thinking of CM Mann is a big attack on the Sikh organization. He said that Bhagwant Singh Mann should talk about the development of the state as the CM of Punjab instead of being the Subedar of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.

Clarifying about the broadcast of Gurbani from Sachkhand Sri Harmandar Sahib, the SGPC President said that the worldwide broadcast of Gurbani is already going on, with which the Sangat (community) of the country and abroad are satisfied and no money is taken from the Sangat. He also said that after the rights of Gurbani broadcast with G-Next Media (PTC Channel) are over in the month of July this year, the SGPC sub-committee on this subject is working in



this regard for the next arrangement, the meaningful results of which will be out soon. Dhama questioned Punjab CM to tell if his announcement to amend the Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 is not a direct interference in the religious affairs of the Sikhs?

He asked Punjab CM that instead of misleading the Sangat in the matter of Gurbani broadcast, he should pay attention to the

maintenance, and cleanliness of the roads and surroundings of Sri Darbar Sahib and increase the facilities of the Sangat, which is work of the government.

He said that Aam Aadmi Party's Punjab government is directly interfering in the religious affairs of the Sikhs for its political interests and is taking the matter of Gurbani broadcasting without jurisdiction to the state assembly, while the state government of Punjab has no right of making amendment in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925.

Dhama said that a petition was filed against the SGPC by an organization called Guru Nanak Dev Universal Brotherhood Society in the Punjab and Haryana High Court regarding the issue of Gurbani broadcast, which was dismissed by the honorable

court considering the SGPC as a competent organization. He said that earlier also a resolution was passed in the legislative assembly of Punjab regarding the rights to broadcast Gurbani and now again, Bhagwant Singh Mann is doing this act.

The SGPC President said that in the 103-year history of the organization, many governments have come and gone, and those who interfered in the work of the organization had backed off.

He asked Bhagwant Singh Mann to refrain from complicating the religious affairs of the Sikhs. He said the Sikh community would never tolerate such direct interference. He also thanked the leaders who rose above party ideologies against this thinking of Bhagwant Singh Mann.

SGPC rejects Punjab Government's Sikh Gurdwara (Amendment) Bill

Punjab government's interference in Sikh affairs: Dhama

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has rejected the Sikh Gurdwara (Amendment) Bill, 2023 passed by the Punjab government in the Vidhan Sabha.

Addressing the press conference here, SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhama said that this day will be remembered in black letters in the 103-year long history of SGPC, when the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of Punjab passed an unconstitutional bill by directly interfering in the Gurdwara managements. This will not be allowed to be implemented at any cost, he said. He said that the Sikh community will never forget this attack on the Sikh organization SGPC by the Punjab government in the independent India.

This anti-Sikh move by the Punjab government led by Bhagwant Singh Mann will be answered at all levels, for which, a special general session of the SGPC has been called on June



26 at Teja Singh Samari Hall to decide the outline.

The SGPC President said that the community has never tolerated and will not tolerate government interference in Sikh religion and Sikh institutions.

With reference to history, he said that even at the time of establishment of the SGPC, the British government had set up a government committee, which the Sikhs rejected and set up own committee of the community. He said now Punjab government led by Bhagwant Singh is walking on the same path. Dhama said that if Mann government tries to implement this black law, then the Sikh community knows how to deal with it strictly.

He reiterated that the state government cannot make any

amendment in the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 on its own, as it can only be done with the recommendations of the SGPC's General House.

Dhama said that the Punjab government is weakening the Sikh organization by making Gurbani broadcast an issue.

He said that the SGPC is already working through a sub-committee in the matter of Gurbani broadcast. In this regard, the future priorities have been determined to a large extent in two meetings of the sub-committee and this is being done as per the orders of Sri Akal Takht Sahib.

Keeping this development in view, Bhagwant Singh Mann's government is deliberately confusing this issue just to gain popularity.

Haryana government to replace vehicles older than 15 years



SATISH HANDA
Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Secretary Sanjiv Kaushal while talking to media persons told that decision has been taken by state government to replace all government vehicles older than 15 years as scrap vehicles since old vehicles being used in the state are not environment friendly spreading not only pollution but also need frequent repairs, thus requiring frequent huge amount on the repairs as well as their maintenance after reached 15 years lifespan. He said, information has already been sent to Additional Chief Secretaries, chief Administrators of Corporations, Managing Directors of Boards, Deputy Commissioners and Registrar of Universities to provide information as regard vehicles 15 years old now need retirement in their department in the state, since such vehicles need lot of expenses on their maintenance.

Sanjiv Kaushal told that Finance Department has been advised to sanction fundes for purchase of new vehicles by various departments at an early. He said that Road Transport Corporation has been requested not to permit renewal of the registration of all such vehicle which are 15 years old as per Central Motor Vehicle Act 1950 after 1st April 2023 and if need arises the registration of all such vehicles which are of age above 15 years will be cancelled in Haryana state as in case of NCR where the management in Gurugram district cancelled registration of thousands of vehicles above 15 years old plying on roads.

Ambala Central Jail warder attacked, injured by gangsters group



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Ramesh Singh a warder in Ambala Central Jail, one of the biggest jail in the state accommodation several high profile persons, government officers, gangsters and hard core criminals was attacked by the group of gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi, Kala Rana and his brother Surya Partap Rana alias Noni while he was on duty during afternoon while he was having attendance of the prisoners in a barack. A group of nearly 10 gangsters all of sudden attacked him stabbing with sharp edged instruments including screw drivers when he started bleeding from different parts of his body and warder raised alarm for help when several members of security staff from adjoining barracks arrived at the spot and saved him, applying force on prisoners to overpower in which several prisoners also sustained injuries.

Will not use govt helicopter till I am in Punjab: Governor

CHANDIGARH: In a war of words between Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the former on Wednesday hit back at the latter on the official use of government helicopter, saying he would not use it.

"I will not use helicopter till I am in Punjab," the Governor told the media here.

"I have been given a helicopter. I used it for official duty and not for personal use and visited the border area in which Punjab officials also accompanied me. Now, I have announced that as long as I am in Punjab, I will not use the Punjab government's helicopter," Purohit said in a specially organised press briefing.

Justifying his decision, Purohit said that the Chief Minister mocked him in the Assembly and said that the governor "is writing so many love letters".

"These are the words of a CM.



The Governor has the right to seek information from the CM regarding the affairs of the state. I have not asked for his personal details. He has to reply to all my letters as per the Constitution and the Supreme Court order," the Governor added.

A day earlier, the Assembly unanimously passed the Punjab University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2023, vesting the powers of the Chancellor of state universities with the Chief Minister.

Summarising the debate on the floor of the House, the Chief Minister said the state had its own rich culture, traditions and heritage which need to be perpetuated among the younger generations. For this, the educational institutions, especially the universities, could play a vital role. Mann also recalled how the universities had produced great intellectuals, artists and other eminent people in various fields.

The Chief Minister said that to carry forward the legacy, men of high integrity, prudence and repute need to be appointed in the universities as Vice-Chancellors. However, he bemoaned that the Governor, who is not from the state and "not aware of its history and culture, created unnecessary hurdles" in it.

Mann further said it was surprising that the Governor "knew nothing about the state, but was empowered to appoint the Vice-Chancellors, which was unfair".

Purohit and Mann have been at loggerheads for several months now.

Last week, the governor wrote to Mann asking him to respond to multiple letters that he had written seeking information on various issues, including on the appointment of Vice-Chancellors for various universities.

In his letter, Purohit told Mann that the Supreme Court had made it clear that the Governor was well within his rights to seek information from the Chief Minister and that by not doing so, Mann would be failing in fulfilling his constitutional duty.

Mann replied to him through a tweet in which he claimed that it was the Governor who "failed to do his constitutional duty when he refused to refer" to his government as "my government" during his address to the Punjab Assembly on the first day of the budget session.

Seminar organized on Comply, reply and avoid the notice of section 148 of Income Tax



KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

Chandigarh Branch of the Institute of Chartered Accountants India organized a seminar on Comply reply and avoid notices under Section 148 of Income Tax.

Chandigarh Branch Chairman Vishal Puri said that the chief guest of the seminar was Sunita Bainsla DJ HD New Delhi and Amarpal Das was the guest of honour. In today's seminar, the chief

guest answered the questions of about 200 Chartered Accountants of Chandigarh regarding the notice of section 148 due to e-verification and advised them to warn the taxpayers to keep watching the intimation of the notice on their email and post regularly. The chief guest said that by easily complying and replying to the intimation of e-verification received from the Income Tax Department, the matter can be resolved and notices can be avoided.

Nearly 7.72 lakh unemployed youths left hope to get permanent jobs in Haryana



SATISH HANDA

Nearly 7.72 lakh unemployed youths in Haryana state are registered with Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam unable to get permanent government jobs are now willing to join temporary jobs and a study reveals that among them include nearly 373 PhD, 45,343 post graduates having, degree in M.Sc MBA M.Com and M.Tech, 133480 graduates in Arts as well as Science B.Tech BBA B.Com and equivalent qualification, 9216 youths are having technical qualification from a polytechnic or ITI, 233072 unemployed youths studied class XII and 241866 matriculates.

Information also reveals that the state government is going to fill up vacancies for permanent class III and IV employees in government offices, Boards and Corporations in the state for 60000 posts shortly for which nearly 10 lakh unemployed youths have already applied. Similarly, for the recruitment of temporary employees in government offices the selection is being made through Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam which have already recruited nearly a lakh unemployed youths in recent past sometime, which include most of the youths which were already working in government departments on the basis of outsourcing system on contract basis.

Recently, state government Haryana has made an agreement with private sector organizations supplying them with a skilled or unskilled workforce. State government has constituted clusters under Padma Yozna scheme offering handsome attractions to those MSME units employing such a work force arranged by the state government. According to information there are 14000 Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSME) units in Haryana state which are likely to provide employment to 3.5 lakh unemployed youths in the state. State government has decided to offer temporary jobs to youths belonging to families below poverty line and on the basis of Parivar Pehchan Patran scheme launched in the state there are early 13 lakh such families identified in the state which have annual income less than Rs One lakh and nearly 29 lakh families are having annual income less than Rs 1.80 lakh in the state. According to a government spokesperson special weightage will be given to youths belonging to such families for these contract jobs.

'Primary Safe Navy Campaign' under Special Preschool Camp

GULSHAN KUMAR
Yamunanagar

A special antenatal check-up camp was organized at Mukand Lal Civil Hospital, Yamunanagar under Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign. In which free check-up of pregnant women was done and all the pregnant women who came to the camp were provided good-gram in the form of nutritious food.

This antenatal check-up camp was started by Dr. Divya Mangala, Chief Medical Officer of Mukand Lal District Civil Hospital, Yamuna Nagar. According to the requirement of all the pregnant women who came to this camp, ultrasound and all kinds of laboratory tests were done free of cost.

All the pregnant women were given iron, folic acid and calcium tablets for one



month and T.T. Vaccines were imposed. During the check-up camp, Dr. Divya Mangala told that earlier on the 9th of every month special antenatal checkup camps were organized at all the health centers of the district under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan. But now these camps are organized thrice a month on 09th, 10th and 23rd, so that pregnant women can be prepared for safe delivery.

Along with this, if there is any high risk, then after ex-

Racket of 4 robbed 24 ATM counters in Haryana & Punjab arrested



SATISH HANDA

Panipat police busted a gang of four persons involved in robbing as many as 24 ATM booths of different banks which included 12 booths in Haryana, 7 booths in Punjab and remaining located in NCR. All arrested members of gang were residents of Patiala district, identified as the kingpin in the gang Sukhvinder Singh alias Sukha of age 43 earlier arrested in the gang Sukhvinder Singh alias Raju of age 37. The mastermind in the gang Sukhvinder used to get 50% share of robbed money and the balance amount was being shared among rest three members in the gang, which earned amount worth crores of rupees in ATM robberies.

Ajit Singh Shekhawat SP addressing media persons told that police recovered a Fortune Car, a Maruti car, a revolver, two pistols, a gun, a motorcycle, a tractor, 71 live cartridges, huge quantity of gold jewellery and currency notes from the kingpin during raid t his residence after the arrest of all gang members. All arrested were produced in the court and remanded to police custody for six days. During preliminary investigation they admitted all ATM robberies conducted seven at Panipat, five at Karnal, three at Kaithal and one each at Sonipat, Ambala and Kurukshetra in Haryana state.

He informed that the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Haryana has witnessed remarkable growth, with a staggering 2,81,024 new MSME manufacturing units registered in the past five years alone. "This has created more than 15 lakh jobs and has propelled Haryana to the top ranking among all northern states, contributing significantly to the state's GDP and employment," he pointed out.

Will allocate Rs 100 crores to nurture entrepreneurship: Haryana Dy.CM

Gurugram/Chandigarh : Haryana will be allocating around Rs 100 crores in their upcoming state budget as a part of new innovative incentives, setting up incubation centres, and assistance for loans, all aimed at fostering balanced regional development and nurturing entrepreneurship among youth in the state, stated Dushyant Chautala, the honourable Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana at the 3rd ASSOCHAM Haryana MSME Samvaad.

Speaking at the event, Chautala informed that the state government's vision is to build Haryana as the competitive and most favoured investment destination. He motivated ASSOCHAM Haryana Council to organise the MSME Summit not annually but Quarterly to leverage the benefit for the MSME community. "Haryana MSME sector also has to attract investment of over Rs 1 lakh crore and generate 5 lakh jobs in the state and to reach this target and lay the foundation of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'," he said.

He informed that the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Haryana has witnessed remarkable growth, with a staggering 2,81,024 new MSME manufacturing units registered in the past five years alone. "This has created more than 15 lakh jobs and has propelled Haryana to the top ranking among all northern states, contributing significantly to the state's GDP and employment," he pointed out.

He explained that in line with the state's focus on bolstering the MSME ecosystem, the PADMA scheme, or the Programme to Accelerate Development for MSME Advancement, was introduced. This comprehensive program aims to establish dynamic and self-sustainable industrial in-



frastructure at the cluster level, facilitating local product promotion and generating employment opportunities for the youth and Antyodaya families. The PADMA scheme includes a venture capital fund of Rs 200 Crore to support the growth of MSMEs, encourage entrepreneurship, and foster start-up development, he said.

Recognising the potential of the textile industry, the Haryana AtmaNirbhar Textile Policy has positioned the state as a key player in the sector.

Shri Chautala explained that through a robust package of incentives, infrastructure support, and skill development programs, the policy has stimulated investment, innovation, and employment generation in the textile sector.

K'taka CM meets Shah over rice issue, says assured of help

NEW DELHI: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured him to speak to the concerned Union minister over the issue of supply of rice to the state from the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

Speaking to reporters at the Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi, Siddaramaiah said that he had requested Amit Shah "not to play politics or carry out politics of hatred with regards to the supply of rice to the poor in Karnataka". "The matter of FCI giving a commitment letter to supply rice and the act of cancelling it the very next day has been brought to his notice. Amit Shah has assured that he would speak to the concerned minister," Siddaramaiah stated. Siddaramaiah also said that



the state has been provided with two battalions of Indian Reserve Police (IRP) and it has been requested to provide two more battalions. The Chief Minister also discussed how the policy of the central government was affecting the poor masses

and told Amit Shah that the policy of the Centre was against the Food Security Act and it will directly impact the poor

Siddaramaiah had earlier charged that the Centre was carrying out politics in connection with the free rice distribu-

tion scheme. "It was agreed to provide 2, 08, 425 metric tonnes of rice to Karnataka. But, they have written a letter on June 13 saying that the states can't be provided wheat and rice under the Open Market Sales Scheme (OMSS). The central government has taken a political decision deciding not to give rice for Karnataka state only to bring bad name to the Congress government," Siddaramaiah had said. "The centre is carrying out a conspiracy to ensure that the free rice scheme is not implemented in the state," Siddaramaiah had charged.

The Congress government in Karnataka is planning to provide 10 kg free rice to all BPL card holders' families under the Anna Bhagya scheme. It announced the launch of the scheme on July 1.

NIA on the lookout for Khalistani supporter Gurpatwant Singh Pannu

NEW DELHI: After the deaths of two pro-Khalistani, Avtar Singh Khanda and Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the entire focus of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has now shifted to Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, a Khalistani supporter and Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) Chief, who is said to be hiding in the US.

The report says that Pannu is missing, and there have been no reports of him for two days. Following this, the entire focus of the NIA is now on Pannu.

During the farmers' protest, Pannu released a number of videos asking people to attack the Indian government buildings, including the Red Fort. Pannu, who runs the SFJ movement, has spread terrorism in India. In one week, two deaths of Khalistani operatives have been reported. Avtar Singh Khanda died in the UK, and then Hardeep Singh Nijjar was killed in Canada. These two deaths have shaken the entire network of Khalistani groups. At present, Amritpal Singh Dibrukhad, a supporter of the Khalistani movement in Punjab, is lodged in the Dibrugarh jail.

Nijjar was a close aide of Pannu. He was also an accused in a case of the NIA and



posted hate speech videos on social media. Nijjar was also a top leader of the Khalistani Tiger Force (KTF). In January, the Special Cell of the Delhi government had arrested two alleged Khalistani supporters for writing pro-Khalistani graffiti at the behest of SFJ. Both were in touch with Pannu. The Khalistani movement in Punjab has been gaining momentum for some time now, but now it has gone down. The sources have claimed that the NIA has prepared a list of 54 terrorists, of which 11 are Khalistani. Pannu is among the shortlisted 11 terrorists of Khalistani groups. The government has also prioritised the apprehension of the SFJ Chief. "Lakbir Singh Rode, Ranjit Singh Neeta, Bhupinder Singh Bhinda, Gurmeet Singh Bagga, Paramjit Singh Pamma,

and Arshdeep Singh Gill Arsh Dalla" are the names that are on the radar of the NIA. Four names on this list, namely Paramjit Singh Panjwar, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, and Harvinder Singh Rinda, have been killed. Arsh Dalla is believed to be residing in Pakistan. The sources have suggested that due to conflicts and deaths, Khalistani extremist organisations have lost their roots in the UK and Canada. It has become a top priority for the government to apprehend Pannu, the leader of the SFJ, along with legal advisors and another Khalistani group. As per media reports the NIA went to the UK where they gathered information regarding Khalistani groups based in the UK. India has also raised the issue of Khalistani groups in Canada, the UK and the US.

India's Human Resource Potential Key to Global Competitiveness: Doval

NEW DELHI: "Netaji had great faith in the capabilities of the people. Today, our priority should be empowering our 1.4 billion citizens and making them internationally competitive," stated Ajit Doval, KC, National Security Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, at the



Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture organised by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). He called for continuous improvement in all aspects of life, stating, "Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, do it better than yesterday." Doval acknowledged India's immense human resource potential, stating, "Our biggest strength is our human resource—a highly motivated and committed workforce. We need to develop their skills to make them globally competitive." He highlighted the contributions of Indian workers abroad, stating, "Workers in the Middle East alone have contributed over a hundred billion dollars to our economy." Encouraging entrepreneurs and businesses, Doval stressed the need to become globally competitive, stating, "Our companies and people should strive to be innovative and cost-effective. Let us embrace critical and emerging technologies to secure a prominent position in the global market." "The country needs inspiring personalities who can transcend personal interests and engage in actions that go beyond business and industry. It is the sense of dedication to the nation that truly matters."

U.S. Chamber Partners with U.S. Department of Defense, Indian Ministry of Defense to Boost U.S.-India Defense Partnership

WASHINGTON, D.C.: In partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense and India's Ministry of Defense, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-India Business Council hosted the inaugural INDUS X Summit and a startup-focused defense exhibition, "Catalyzing Indo-U.S. Defense Innovation" at the U.S. Chamber headquarters June 20-21.

The INDUS X Summit is a key deliverable of the U.S.-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), which held its industry track discussions at the U.S. Chamber this January. A major opportunity to accelerate U.S.-India defense co-devel-



opment and co-production, the INDUS X Summit and startup exhibition have the potential to be catalysts for India to achieve its target of \$5 billion in defense exports by 2025, and for India to diversify its defense supply chain via U.S. partnership. Over two days of speeches, panels, open and closed-door discussions,

speakers and participants included the U.S. Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti, India's Ambassador to the U.S. Sri Priya Ranganathan Sri Priya Ranganathan, U.S. Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, and Congressman Ro Khanna (CA-17).

U.S. Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said, "We're thrilled to

see INDUS X working for peace and preparing coordination in a way that we've never experienced between India and the United States."

"This launch is just the beginning. Expect to see opportunities for startup companies to participate in government sponsored joint challenges [and] find technological solutions to our most pressing problems. Expect opportunities for startups to partner with established defense industry leads. I'm so excited in the coming months to work with folks both in India and here to have a mechanism to matchmake those startups."

Opposition meet in Patna is for 'Congress mukt Bharat', claims Sushil Modi

BJP senior leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sushil Kumar Modi on Wednesday claimed that the Opposition meeting on Friday in Patna is taking place for a "Congress mukt Bharat" (Congress-free India).

Addressing reporters here, he said: "I want to make a point here that Mamata Benerjee does not want to contest the Lok Sabha elections with the Con-



gress party. If the Trinamool Congress will contest only in West Bengal then the Congress will be wiped out from there. Similarly, Arvind Kejriwal has been asked by the Congress not to contest in Delhi and Punjab. "KCR is saying the same thing for Telangana. Akhilesh Yadav is saying

the same in Uttar Pradesh. So, Friday's meeting is not taking place for a 'BJP mukt' country but the regional parties are trying to make a 'Congress mukt Bharat'. A total of 17 opposition parties have given their consent to participate in the meeting. Mamata Banerjee, Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Maan are expected to reach Patna on Thursday.

Two J&K doctors dismissed for 'fabricating' evidence in 2009 'Shopian rape' case

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has terminated the services of two doctors on allegations of actively working with Pakistan-based groups and fabricating evidence in the infamous 2009 "Shopian rape" case. The doctors, identified as Dr. Bilal Ahmad Dalal and Dr. Nighat Shaheen Chilloo, were found to have collaborated with Pakistan and its assets within Kashmir to falsify the post-mortem report of the victims, Asiya and Neelofar, who were found dead in a stream in Shopian on May 30, 2009. The incident had sparked widespread protests and brought the region to a standstill for 42 days, with allegations that the women had been raped and murdered by security personnel.

UNESCO with Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham launch Menstrual Health and Hygiene Campaign in Bengaluru

ARUNKUMAR RAO Bengaluru

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham Collaborates with UNESCO to launch Menstrual Health and Hygiene Campaign in Bengaluru. Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, one of India's top ten universities and UNESCO India have joined forces to launch a campaign aimed at raising awareness about menstrual health and hygiene management, particularly among women, including young girls attending school Bengaluru. Introducing five teaching-learning modules developed by UNESCO India with Procter & Gamble, Whisper, the campaign was nationally



inaugurated at Amrita Hospital, Faridabad on the 8th of June 2023. These modules address the various challenges associated with menstrual health and hygiene management, such as disability, gender, educators, young adults, and nutrition. #KEEPGIRLSINSCHOOL

Campaign initiative-Titled "Spotlight Red," the teaching-learning modules offer comprehensive resources and strategies for learners, educators, menstruators, and community leaders. Their purpose is to enhance understanding and skills related to menstruation management

while fostering awareness about its societal impact. The modules aim to empower adolescents from diverse backgrounds, including girls with disabilities, by providing them with access to period and puberty education. Moreover, they seek to create a supportive environment through interventions at the school, state, and national levels, enabling these adolescents to continue their education.

During the event, renowned Indian television actress, Mrs. Rupali Ganguli, said, "Today, 1 in 5 girls drop out of school due to a lack of menstruation education and products. Shockingly, 70% of girls are unaware of periods when they first experience them.

BJP playing politics on foodgrains for poor, says CM Siddaramaiah

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched a fresh attack on the state and central BJP leadership after the Centre discontinued the sale of wheat and rice from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) warehouses to state governments, saying that they were trying to "scuttle" the Anna Bhagya Scheme and playing politics on foodgrains for the poor.

The Siddaramaiah government plans to roll out its second guarantee, the Anna Bhagya scheme providing 10 kg foodgrains per person per month to all BPL families in the state from July 1.

"We are honestly trying to implement the Anna Bhagya Scheme by July 1 despite politics and roadblocks," the



Chief Minister said on Monday. "Do the BJP leaders have any respect, honour? They are not providing rice even as we are paying money. They are anti-poor. They are ready to sell rice for private players. They refuse to sell it to us. What does it indicate?" the CM said. Speaking to the reporters at his home office, Krishna, in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah maintained that the central government was doing politics in providing rice to the poor. "Will the central government grow rice? Do they own paddy

fields? The rice is purchased from the states. Prime Minister Narendra Modi talks about cooperative federalism. We are in a federal structure. We should be in terms of cooperation. From where does the Centre get taxes? It gets it from the states, then they should cooperate," he underlined. "Andhra Pradesh, Telangana have said that there is no stock of rice. Chhattisgarh has 1.5 lakh tonnes of rice and it will provide for only one month. The requirement is 2.28 lakh metric tonnes for the state. The rice is not available in Punjab as well. The FCI had stated on June 7th that it will provide rice. On 12th they agreed to provide 7 lakh tonnes of rice.

Are Socio-economic policies of Rajasthan for electoral benefits?

DR. P.S. VOHRA

The socio-economic welfare policies of Rajasthan are being discussed all over the country, these days. Is this an electoral politics of the Gehlot government? Has this caused a setback to the economic development of Rajasthan? Many such questions are constantly in discussion. In any democracy, the main responsibility of the government is to take the society towards economic prosperity, while there is also the economic welfare of the deprived class from the mainstream. It is a quandary in which drawing the right line is a very difficult task as both economic prosperity and social welfare are opposite to each other. It is an imaginary ideology that everyone will achieve 100% economic prosperity, therefore, under the democratic system, responsible attitude can be adopted only with the thought that backward and poor sections should always get priority in economic policies. Surely, the government itself takes the initiative to create and develop resources for economic prosperity and there are equal opportunities for the private sector as well. This aspect of economic policies gives rise to capitalist ideology. This is also true that economic prosperity ultimately gives birth to economic inequality. However,

from a positive perspective, if we think about it, this is also a context where whoever has transformed opportunities into profitability and has undoubtedly taken risks as well. For this reason, in this era of globalization, it has become an established belief that economic prosperity should be handed over to the private sector, and the responsibility of social welfare, which is actually the economic development of the poor and marginalized sections of society, has to be shouldered by the government.

The social welfare policies of the current Gehlot government in Rajasthan gained more attention when they reversed the central government's new pension scheme, which had been in effect since 2004, in the 2021-22 financial budget. They reinstated the old pension scheme for government employees in Rajasthan. Under the new pension scheme, government employees were required to contribute 10% of their salary, which will no longer be the case in Rajasthan. Furthermore, by passing the Right to Health Bill related to the right to health, the government faced opposition from private hospital owners, doctors, and employees for an extended period. Rajasthan's Chief Minister's Chiranjivi Health Insurance Scheme also received significant attention, under which the government provided facilities for medical tests and free treatment, and in the current financial year's



budget, the government increased the insurance amount per family in this scheme from 10 lakh rupees to 25 lakh rupees. Undoubtedly, these social welfare schemes of the Gehlot government have imposed a greater financial burden on the state. Criticism is also being raised that due to these economic policies of social welfare, the state will face financial difficulties in the future.

Despite all this, the figures of Rajasthan's economy indicate a different state of economic development. If we talk about fiscal deficit, then in the last 5 years, it has increased by only .03 percent. The maximum deficit was 5.9 per cent in the year 2020-21 affected by the Corona epidemic, which was more than the average fiscal deficit of all the states of India. On the other hand the maximum fiscal deficit during the tenure of the previous government was 9.2 per cent. It is also important to mention here that after Corona, the fiscal deficit in all other states has come

down to less than 0.6 percent, while in Rajasthan it has come down to less than 1.9 percent. This proves that Rajasthan has made a remarkable economic recovery after Corona. In terms of revenue generated from its own sources, the state has recorded an average GDP growth of 14.7 percent in the past 5 years, and from 2018-19 to 2022-23, it has experienced a growth rate of 1.5 percent. On the other hand, during the previous government's tenure of 5 years, this growth was only 0.08 percent. It is noteworthy that during both the previous governments' terms, Rajasthan has consistently been ahead in terms of its own sources of revenue generation in the country. Rajasthan has witnessed an increase in the revenue generated through its own sources of taxation in the past 5 years. In 2017-18, these taxes accounted for 62 percent of the state's GDP, which has now increased to 67 percent in the year 2023. This fact proves that Rajasthan is progressing towards

self-sufficiency in tax collection from its own income sources. Despite these achievements, there have been two negative aspects regarding the economic development of the state. First, the state's capital expenditure is comparatively lower than that of other states. Second, there is higher expenditure on various types of subsidies compared to other states. However, based on the current figures related to these two aspects, Rajasthan has been making efforts to improve its relative position in the past few years. For instance, in the year 2018-19, the state's subsidy bill accounted for 12.9 percent of the GDP, while the average for all other states was 7.1 percent. By the year 2021-22, this percentage decreased to 10.5 percent in Rajasthan, whereas the average for other states increased to 9.7 percent. This analysis also suggests that in the year following the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsidy burden has decreased to less than 0.04 percent on average for all other states, while Rajasthan's subsidy bill has increased to 2.2 percent. This increase is clearly influenced by the political dynamics of Rajasthan's election year. In terms of capital expenditure for economic development, in the year 2022-23, Rajasthan's GDP allocation was 15 percent, while the average for all other states remained at 20 percent. This is not ideal for Rajasthan's economic development as lower investment in capital expendi-

ture leads to a decrease in the creation of new assets. However, it is important to note that in comparison to the past 7 years, Rajasthan has the highest capital expenditure. Furthermore, since the percentage of taxes generated from the state's own sources is consistently increasing, it is certain that Rajasthan's investment in capital expenditure will also increase in the coming years.

Investment in education is a gateway to economic prosperity. In relation to the state of Rajasthan, it is crucial to note that there has been significant investment in the field of education compared to all other states and centrally governed territories of India over the past 5 years. The confirmation of this fact can be seen in the various financial budgets undertaken by the Rajasthan government, which clearly prioritize the expansion of school education and higher education, aiming to make Rajasthan a central hub for education in the future. In terms of health-care facilities as well, Rajasthan has consistently seen higher financial investments compared to all other states and centrally governed territories in India. The conclusion drawn from all these observations emphasizes the need to integrate economic policies with the goal of providing individuals with high-quality essential amenities, thereby contributing to the state's exemplary economic model.

Nilekani gifts IIT-B Rs 315 cr, Says 'I am what I am because of IIT'



ARUNKUMAR RAO Bengaluru

Nandan Nilekani, Co-founder and Chairman donated Rs 315 crore to his alma mater-IIT Bombay to mark 50 years of his association with the premier technology institute. In year 1973 Nilekani had joined technology institute for a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. Nilekani signed the MoU in Bengaluru in the presence of Prof Subhasis Chaudhuri, Director, IIT Bombay and three other former directors. Nilekani has left it to the discretion of IIT Bombay to spend the funds. "It's as united as possible for them to identify key areas of development." He said.

The endowment is one of the largest donations made by an alumnus in India. Taking Nilekani's cumulative contribution to IIT-B 400 Crore as earlier Nilekani has donated Rs 85 Crore, which was partly used to build hostel facilities. According to IIT Bombay, part of the funds donated by Nilekani will be pumped to boost existing

infrastructure. Explaining the reason behind his donation, Nilekani said it isn't fair to expect the government pay for future growth of institutes such as the IITs. "First-gen IITs must look at their alumni and their firms, going forward. They have thousands of graduates and many are successful. They must start giving back. We wanted Subhasis to have something in his hand so that he can tell those chaps sitting in Silicon Valley, Who are making billions, that it's pay back time." Over the last 50 years, Nilekani has stayed connected with the institute in multiple roles. He has served on the board of the IIT Bombay Heritage Foundation, from 1999-2009, and was on the Board of Governors from 2005-2011. Nilekani has become the anchor donor as the institute plans to raise \$500 million (Rs 4,200 crore) by 2030. The funds would be deployed to accelerate R & D efforts and upgrade infrastructure. In the last financial year, IIT Bombay has raised Rs 180 crore from donors.



For pharma firms, safety must trump profits

The recent incidents of Indian-made drugs causing significant harm and even death to patients worldwide are distressing and demand serious introspection. Two patients in Sri Lanka recently died due to the administration of Indian-manufactured anaesthetic drugs, a first of its kind incident. Last month, Indian-made eye drops led to eye infections in approximately 30 patients and caused blindness in 10, again in Sri Lanka. Earlier this year, similar products caused infections and blindness in the US. These alarming incidents began last year when the WHO associated the deaths of over 70 children in Gambia with Indian-made cough syrups containing lethal chemicals used as cheaper substitutes for propylene glycol. These substances, diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, should never be present in any medicinal product. Despite WHO's warnings and independent investigations confirming the link between the deaths and the toxic substances, the Indian drug regulator's response has been deeply concerning. Rather than acknowledging the gravity of the situation and taking stringent action against the errant company, it has instead gone on the offensive, defending the company and questioning the findings of the global health body. Such an approach does not inspire confidence or trust. The Indian regulator's failure to put effective measures in place to ensure the safety of drugs produced in India, whether for export or domestic use, is disconcerting. Inspections alone cannot guarantee safety; a systematic and rigorous regulatory framework that prioritizes patient safety over industry facilitation is required. India, often referred to as the 'pharmacy of the global south', can only continue to uphold this title if its drug regulator prioritizes its role as a watchdog. Ensuring drug safety should be its paramount concern, not acting as a facilitator for the pharmaceutical industry. The lives of millions of patients worldwide depend on it. It's high time that India's drug regulator rises to the occasion and fulfills its mandate.

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TALMIZ AHMAD ANALYZES TEHRAN'S SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENT'S LONGEVITY POST-BIDEN

US-Iran nuke deal imminent



Hints of interactions between American and Iranian diplomats over the last few months finally became public on June 14 when the Foreign Minister of the Sultanate of Oman, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, told the media that Iran and the United States were finalising a deal on the release of American prisoners in Iran, and that there was "seriousness" on the part of the two countries to come to a fresh deal on the nuclear issue. An Iranian spokesperson also confirmed that indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran had taken place in Muscat. U.S. interactions with Iran began last year when the U.S. Special Envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, met the Iranian Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. After that, the White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, Brett McGurk, visited Oman in February, March and May, where he met Iran's chief nuclear negotiator on the nuclear issue, Ali Bagheri-Kani, in "proximity" talks.

What the nuclear arrangement entails

Following Mr. McGurk's last visit in May, the Omani ruler, Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, visited Tehran on May 28-29. He was perhaps carrying a message from the U.S. on a new agreement on the nuclear issue for Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. This was in line with the earlier role played by Oman in the run-up to the nuclear agreement in 2015. Ayatollah Khamenei then addressed this matter publicly on June 11. He did not call for the revival of the earlier agreement but sought a new one which would ensure that Iran's nuclear infrastructure remained in place; he affirmed that Iran had no interest in a nuclear weapon and would cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors. According to media reports, the pro-



posed agreement, expected to be finalised in a few weeks, will be informal and unwritten — Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called it a "mini-agreement", while Iranian officials see it as a "political ceasefire". Under the arrangement, Iran will freeze its nuclear enrichment at 60%; it will not attack U.S. military contractors in Syria and Iraq, will improve cooperation with the IAEA's inspectors, and will not provide ballistic missiles to Russia. Iran will also release the three U.S. citizens in its custody.

In return, the U.S. has pledged to avoid new harsh sanctions on Iran, not to seize oil tankers in the Gulf waters, and not pursue anti-Iran resolutions in the United Nations. The U.S. is also expected to defreeze Iran's bank accounts of about \$80 billion in various banks outside the country, and will immediately allow the release of \$7 billion in South Korea and \$2.7 billion in Iraq.

American interests

Since this is an unwritten agreement, the Joe Biden administration will not have to

seek Congressional approval. And, since it does not call for easing of existing U.S. sanctions, the Republicans will find it difficult to attack the deal in the forthcoming presidential campaign. The U.S. has long recognised that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the Iran nuclear deal) in its original form could not be revived. In the U.S., there were now demands for a broader agreement that would address Iran's development of ballistic missiles, its "malign" role in the region and support for terrorism, matters on which there would be no headway with Iran. U.S. officials had also recognised that sanctions were no longer effective in influencing Iran's responses to American pressures.

Thus, what the proposed arrangement focuses on are widespread concerns relating to Iran's uranium enrichment programme that had reached 84% and its stockpile of thousands of installed centrifuges. The U.S. military had estimated that Iran was just "several months" from a weapon, while Israeli sources thought it was one to two years away. Iran's progress towards a weapon had led to real concerns

about a region-wide conflagration as Israel, with or without the Americans, was expected to take pre-emptive military action. Another positive implication from the U.S. and Israeli perspective is that the deal with Iran could end Saudi Arabia's own nuclear aspirations.

What could happen on the ground

Mr. Netanyahu has said that Israel will not be bound by this arrangement. This could be posturing; with their anti-democratic initiatives, both the Prime Minister and his government have much reduced clout in Washington today and are unlikely to garner backing to overturn the deal. Iran is entering into the arrangement with no illusion that it will have a long-term value; at best, it will survive the present Biden administration. But it will help to release billions of dollars that Iran could use to ameliorate the dire living conditions of millions of its citizens. It will also enable it to continue selling some of its oil in world markets; the U.S. has so far turned a blind eye to these sales to moderate oil prices to the extent possible.

Regionally, the arrangement will facilitate further improvement in Iran's ties with Saudi Arabia, with the prospect of the kingdom's normalisation of relations with Israel being placed firmly on the back burner. Iran also retains the option of continuing to expand its political and economic ties with Russia and China.

A piquant thought: if the "good faith" arrangement holds through this administration, it could prepare the ground for serious U.S.-Iran engagement on other matters of common concern in Mr. Biden's second term — assuming, of course, that Donald Trump is not then residing in the White House.

Talmiz Ahmad is a former diplomat. Views are personal.



RKVJ CRITICISES THE LAW PANEL'S DECISION TO RETAIN CONTROVERSIAL SECTION 124A IPC, CITES SUPREME COURT ORDERS

It's time to rethink the retention of sedition



The Law Commission of India in its 279th report, released in April 2023, has recommended retaining one of the most controversial sections of recent times i.e., Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) on 'sedition'. The Supreme Court of India, in S.G. Vombakere v. Union of India on May 11, 2022, had directed all State governments and the central government to keep in abeyance all pending trials, appeals, and proceedings with regard to Section 124A IPC, as prima facie it felt that this Section was not in tune with the current social milieu. The Law Commission, however, concluded that it was necessary to retain it as it was useful in countering the threat to India's internal security. The Commission also felt that the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, does not cover all elements of the offence envisaged under Section 124A IPC. The Commission also recommended certain procedural guidelines to prevent the misuse of Section 124A IPC.

The Law Commission elaborated on the violence perpetrated by the Maoists under Chapter 6 of the report pertaining to 'Threats to India's Internal Security'. The Ministry of Home Affairs data, quoted in the report, show that the number of Maoist incidents ranged from 1,533 in 2004 to 509 in 2021 and the fatality varied from 566 to 147 in the same period. It is also undisputed that the central agenda of the Maoists is to capture political power by overthrowing the democratically elected government through a protracted armed struggle and they need to be tackled stringently.

Despite a dip in the overall Maoist violence over the years, Chhattisgarh still reports the maximum number of Maoist incidents. While the number of Maoist incidents registered in

the State varied from 445 in 2014 to 253 in 2021, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data show that the number of cases registered (only) under Section 124A IPC was zero in the years 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2020, and varied from one to a maximum of three in the remaining years between 2014 and 2021. Even the cases registered under the UAPA were close to three per year in the same period. Thus, it is clear that the use of Section 124A IPC in fighting Maoism has been negligible. As the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and resorting to ambush attacks remain the most potent weapons in the hands of Maoists, the most frequently used provisions are sections under the Explosive Substances Act and the IPC. In some cases, the specially enacted State law, the Chhattisgarh Vishesh Jan Suraksha Adhiniyam (Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Act), 2005, is applied to curb unlawful activities by the Maoists.

Second, 'unlawful activity' defined under Section 2(1)(o) of the UAPA includes 'any action taken by such individual or association which causes or is intended to cause

disaffection against India'. The punishment prescribed is imprisonment for up to seven years and a fine. The only difference between Section 124A IPC and this provision of the UAPA is that in place of the words 'Government established by law in India', the word 'India' is used in the UAPA. As the Supreme Court, in a catena of cases, has held that 'criticising government' does not fall within the ambit of sedition, the 'unlawful activity' as defined in the UAPA seems more objective and less problematic. Any hurdle before any such prosecution under the UAPA that requires central government sanction can be removed by tweaking Section 45 of the UAPA to authorise State governments to act as well as grant sanction for prosecution.

As mentioned by the Commission, the United Kingdom abolished the law on sedition by an Act of 2009 citing two reasons: the first being that there are 'sufficient range of other offences' and the second reason being the political nature of the offence. The Indian case is hardly any different from the U.K. one.

Third, the procedural guidelines for con-

ducting a preliminary inquiry to check... whether prima facie a case is made out and some cogent evidence exists' (as recommended by the Law Commission) are in conflict with established jurisprudence of writing the First Information Report (FIR), and settled by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in Lalita Kumari v. Govt. of Uttar Pradesh and others (2014). So, if information given to a police station discloses the commission of a cognisable offence, the officer-in-charge has to register an FIR and commence investigation. A preliminary inquiry is permissible only in cases (for example, commercial, matrimonial, related to medical negligence or corruption) that do not disclose the basis of a cognisable offence. Even if it is assumed that a case of sedition could fall under such a category, the purpose of such an inquiry cannot be to ensure whether cogent evidence exists to support the allegations. If such a provision is inserted by an amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) (as suggested by the Law Commission), there is every likelihood of such an amendment being hit by Article 14 of the Constitution and declared arbitrary by the Supreme Court. Similar could be the fate of the provision to mandatorily seek permission from the central or the State government before registering an FIR.

Therefore, it would be more democratic if all State governments and political parties deliberate on the Law Commission's report, and public opinion sought to arrive at a more participative (if not unanimous) and agreeable decision.

R.K. Vij is a former Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

Engaging exploration of philosophical evolution

In "Man is the Measure of All Things: The Evolution of Humanistic Thought", Sarah Bakewell offers an illuminating, comprehensive exploration of humanism's rich and complex history. Protagoras' famous declaration sets the stage for the book's central inquiry: what, exactly, is the measure of Man?

Bakewell weaves a compelling narrative, meticulously untangling the intricate strands that have come to define humanism over the past seven centuries. She successfully demystifies this nebulous term, providing clarity through a careful examination of the influences, affiliations, and cross-cultural connections that have shaped humanistic thought. The book is a testament to her impressive command of the subject and her exceptional ability to distill complex ideas into accessible, engaging prose.

Bakewell's narrative primarily revolves around European thinkers, but she is acutely aware of the broader context in which these humanists operated. She underscores the Eastern origins of many cherished Renaissance ideas, tracing their journey across cultural and linguistic boundaries to their eventual place in European discourse. Readers are encouraged to appreciate the intellectual links between disparate philosophies, such as Charvaka and Democritus, and the African concept of ubuntu and Confucianism's ren.

The book also presents humanists as figures of dissent who dared to challenge conventional notions of morality and what it means to be human. Although many stopped short of outright defiance against Church, King, and God, their subtle subversion was enough to rouse ire and provoke retaliation, particularly with the emergence of Deism.

The book also presents humanists as figures of dissent who dared to challenge conventional notions of morality and what it means to be human

Bakewell details the various strategies employed by these thinkers to evade persecution, making the book a fascinating account of forbidden, censored, and incendiary texts that ultimately became the bedrock of humanities.

Moreover, the book resonates with contemporary concerns, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed deep-seated economic inequalities and



Humanly Possible: Seven Hundred Years of Humanist Freethinking, Inquiry, and Hope
By Sarah Bakewell
Penguin
464 pages, Rs 2,301

prompted introspection about our understanding of 'humanity'. Bakewell explores these tensions, raising pertinent questions about human nature and our capacity for good and evil.

While positioning 'free thinking' as humanity's savior, Bakewell doesn't shy away from exposing humanists' blind spots. She critiques figures like Hume, Rousseau, and Voltaire for their regressive views on race and gender, thereby demonstrating that humanism, like any philosophical movement, is not without its flaws.

The book concludes with an exploration of meliorism and its discontents, namely Antihumanists and Transhumanists, who argue

for a radical rethinking of human centrality. While the future remains uncertain, Bakewell makes a persuasive case for understanding our past to navigate our present and future.

In summary, "Man is the Measure of All Things" is a significant contribution to the study of humanism. Its strength lies in Bakewell's ability to traverse centuries and philosophies with ease, providing a lucid, comprehensive account of humanism's evolution. It is an essential read for anyone interested in understanding the origins, complexities, and enduring relevance of humanistic thought.

Bakewell's meticulous research is evident throughout the book. She marries historical fact with philosophical insight, crafting a narrative that is both enlightening and captivating. Aided by her lucid prose, she navigates the labyrinthine history of humanism with a deftness that allows readers to delve into the complexities of this philosophical tradition without feeling overwhelmed. The use of personal anecdotes and profiles of key figures adds a human touch, making the abstract concepts more relatable and engaging.

GE Aerospace signs MOU with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd to produce fighter jet engines for Indian Air Force

ARUNKUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

GE Aerospace announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to produce fighter jet engines for the Indian Air Force, a major milestone amidst Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official state visit to the United States and a key element in strengthening defense cooperation between the two countries, company statement said here today.

The agreement includes the potential joint production of GE Aerospace's F414 engines in India, and GE Aerospace continues to work with the U.S. government to receive the necessary export authorization for this. The effort is part of the Indian Air Force's Light Combat Aircraft Mk2 program.

"This is a historic agreement made possible by our longstanding partnership with India and HAL," said H. Lawrence Culp, Jr., Chairman and



Chief Executive Officer of GE and CEO of GE Aerospace. "We are proud to play a role in advancing President Biden and Prime Minister Modi's vision of closer coordination between the two nations. Our F414 engines are unmatched and will offer important economic and national security benefits for both countries as we help our customers produce the highest quality engines to meet the needs of their military fleet."

GE Aerospace has operated in India for more than four de-

CADES with wide engagement in the industry including engines, avionics, services, engineering, manufacturing, and local sourcing. In addition to potential new work in India, a number of U.S. facilities that currently support work on the F414 engine will see additional volume as a result of today's announcement.

In 1986, GE began working with the Aeronautical Development Agency and HAL to support the development of India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) with F404 engines.

“Our F414 engines are unmatched and will offer important economic and national security benefits for both countries as we help our customers produce the highest quality engines to meet the needs of their military fleet”

Subsequently GE Aerospace's F404 and F414 have been part of development and production programs of LCA Mk1 and LCA Mk2 programs. In total, 75 F404 engines have been delivered and another 99 are on order for LCA Mk1A. Eight F414 engines have been delivered as part of an ongoing development program for LCA Mk2.

Today's agreement will advance GE Aerospace's earlier commitment to build 99 engines for the Indian Air Force

as part of the LCA Mk2 program. It puts the company in a strong position to create a family of products in India, including the F404 engine that currently powers the LCA Mk1 and LCA Mk1A aircraft and GE Aerospace's selection for the prototype development, testing and certification of the AMCA program with our F414-INS6 engine. In addition, GE will continue to collaborate with Indian government on the AMCA Mk2 engine program. With more than five million flight hours and eight nations with F414-powered aircraft in operation or on order, the F414 continues to exceed goals for reliability and time on wing. To date, more than 1,600 F414 engines have been delivered globally.

GE's presence in India includes its research and technology centre, the John F Welch Technology Centre at Bengaluru, which opened in 2000 and its Multi-modal Factory at Pune, which opened in 2015.

India's IndiGo places record order for 500 A320 Family aircraft

ARUNKUMAR RAO
Paris

IndiGo, India's largest airline by market share, has placed a firm order for 500 A320 Family aircraft, setting the record for the biggest single purchase agreement in the history of commercial aviation. The latest agreement takes the total number of Airbus aircraft on order by IndiGo to 1,330, establishing its position as the world's biggest A320 Family customer. The press release from company here said.

The historic purchase agreement was signed by Rahul Bhatia, Promoter & Managing Director of IndiGo, Dr. Venkataramani Sumantran, Chairman and Non-Executive Independent Director of IndiGo, Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo, Guillaume Faury, Airbus CEO, and Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International, at the Paris Air Show 2023.

Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo, said, "It is difficult to overstate the significance of IndiGo's new historic order for 500 Airbus A320 Family aircraft. An order book now of almost 1000 aircraft well into the next decade, enables IndiGo to fulfil its mission to continue to boost economic growth, social cohesion and mobility in India. At IndiGo, we take pride in being India's preferred airline for connectivity in and with India; and by doing so, being one of the leading airlines in the world. This order strongly reaffirms IndiGo's belief in the growth of India, in the A320 Family and in our strategic partnership with Airbus."

"This landmark order



marks a new chapter in Airbus and IndiGo's relationship that is democratising affordable air travel for millions of people in the world's fastest growing aviation market. It is also a resounding endorsement of the A320 Family's best-in-class operating economics that have been powering IndiGo's growth for almost two decades. We cherish our long-standing relationship with IndiGo and are proud of our success together. We look forward to contributing to the growth of India's air connectivity in its domestic network and into international markets through the expansion of this formidable partnership," said Christian Scherer, Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International at Airbus.

New Delhi-headquartered IndiGo is among the fastest growing carriers in the world. Since its first A320neo aircraft was delivered in March 2016, its fleet of A320neo Family has grown into one of the world's largest with 264 aircraft in operation (162 A320neo, 79 A321neo, 21

A320ceo and 2 A321 freighters). IndiGo placed its first order with Airbus in 2005 (100 A320 Family) and again in 2011 (180 A320 Family including the NEO), in 2014 (250neo Family), and in 2019 (300 A320neo Family) taking its previous total order book to 830 A320 Family aircraft.

Over the last two decades, the A320neo has been instrumental in democratising air travel in India as an expanding economy and rising disposable incomes continue to add millions of first-time flyers to a booming aviation market.

Worldwide, the A320 Family is the undisputed leader in the single-aisle aircraft category. The aircraft has the widest single-aisle cabin in the sky that incorporates the very latest technologies. It features enhanced aerodynamics and the latest-generation jet engines, resulting in significant reductions in fuel consumption and lower emissions. With more than 8,700 orders from over 130 customers, the A320neo Family is the aircraft family of choice for airlines around the world across all business models.

Infineon's HYPERRAMTM 3.0 memory & Autotalks' 3rd generation chipset drive next-generation automotive V2X applications

ARUNKUMAR RAO
Munich (Germany)

Infineon Technologies AG (FSE: IFX/OTCQX: IFNNY) and Autotalks announced today that the two companies are collaborating to deliver solutions for next-generation V2X (Vehicle-to-Everything communication) applications. In this collaboration, Infineon provides its automotive-grade HYPERRAMTM 3.0 memory to support Autotalks' TEK-TON3 and SECTON3 V2X reference designs, company

statement said.

TEKTON3 is a fully-integrated V2X system-on-chip (SoC) specifically designed for driving actions by connectivity. V2X enables vehicles to communicate with one another and their environment, ultimately leading to improved road safety. Concurrent dual-radio and full V2X software implementations typically require external memory to manage modem and application requirements. HYPERRAM is the memory-of-choice that meets the cost, density and



performance requirements for external memories.

With HYPERRAM 3.0, Infineon extends the throughput of its HYPERRAM family to achieve 800 MBps (mega

bytes per second) via a x16 HYPERBUS interface. HYPERRAM 3.0 devices are automotive qualified and are the ideal expansion memory solution to complement TEK-TON3's processing needs.

"Infineon's HYPERRAM and NOR flash memories are ideal pairings for our latest generation of V2X SoCs," said Amos Freund, Autotalks' Vice President R&D. "We are excited to team with Infineon, a memory and automotive leader, in order to realize our cutting-edge V2X offering,

enabling OEMs to create targeted V2X solutions."

"With the global V2X market expected to grow at a CAGR over 30 percent in the next five years, this collaboration with Autotalks comes at an ideal time," said Patrick Le Bihan, Senior Director of Ecosystem Marketing at Infineon. "Our HYPERRAM and NOR Flash memories work seamlessly with Autotalks' SoCs to deliver a low-cost, high-performance solution to customers in an energy-efficient manner."

Paris Air Show: HAL and FAdA of Argentina Sign MoU



ARUNKUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

HAL and Fabrica Argentina de Aviones (FAdA), Argentina signed a MoU during the ongoing Paris Air show 2023 towards exploring the possibilities of collaboration in the field of MRO and to meet any offset requirements in case of probable sale of HAL made platforms in LATAM region. HAL statement said here today. A Media release from HAL here said.

Statement also said that Similar to HAL, FAdA is an Argentinian state owned Aerospace company under the administrative supervision of Ministry of Defence involved in design, manufacture and maintenance of civil and military aircraft.

Uber lays off 200 employees in recruitment division to cut costs

Ride-hailing major Uber is laying off 200 employees within its recruitment division as another measure to streamline costs.

The latest job cuts target 35 per cent of Uber's recruiting team, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal.

The company slashed 150 jobs in its freight services division earlier this year.

In May, the company announced it would maintain a flat workforce. Uber has expressed confidence in achieving operating income profitability by the end of 2023.

The company has reduced its workforce by at least 17 per cent since the pandemic began.

In 2020, Uber laid off around 6,700 jobs in two big job cut rounds.

After it laid off 3,500 of its workforce via a Zoom call, the ride-sharing firm in May 2020 announced it was cutting 3,000 more jobs in its second round of layoffs.

In the first quarter this year, the ride-hailing major Uber reported a 24 per cent increase



in trips to 2.1 billion, or approximately 24 million trips per day on average.

According to Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi, the company significantly accelerated Q1 trip growth to 24 per cent from 19 per cent last quarter, with "mobility trip growth of 32 per cent as a result of improved earnings and consumer engagement".

"Looking ahead, we are focused on extending our product, scale and platform advantages to sustain market-leading top and bottom-line growth beyond 2023," he said during the company's quarterly earnings call.

For Q2 2023, Uber anticipates gross bookings of \$33 billion to \$34 billion and adjusted EBITDA of \$800 million to \$850 million.

Indian MSMEs, start-ups lack access to EU: French Consultant

HYDERABAD: In comparison to big companies, India's startups and MSMEs are few in numbers that have entered the European Union (EU) market, said a French consulting firm.

Mathieu Lebeurre, Partner, TNP-Industry, Data Science and Analytics, TNP India and Guillaume Kerbrat, Director Associate-Automotive and New Mobility, TNP Consultants France said that around 130 Indian companies have their facilities in France, however MSMEs and start-ups are few in numbers with insufficient access to the bloc. This was discussed at a session organised by the Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI) on 'Market entry to France for understanding how Indian companies can enter the French market'. The event was held on Tuesday in Hyderabad, in collaboration with TNP India, a French Consulting firm and World Trade Center Shamshabad. "Bharat Biotech



from Hyderabad is one of the successful Indian companies present in France. But, we have seen that the number of start-ups and MSMEs lag behind in getting access to the EU. If an enterprise serving under B2C enters the EU, it will have access to more than 500 million customers with good spending power," Lebeurre said.

Europe is supposed to be the largest consumer market, bigger than that of the US and China, he claimed. According to the official, the enterprises working in the defence sector

would have to partner with local companies in France so as to not endure the regulations in place, but companies in sustainability, smart energy, information technology (IT), pharma and even food processing will have faster access to the market.

He further said, "France has a dense start-up ecosystem. The country has invested heavily into research and development creating a favourable environment for Indian companies involved in tech driven industries such as IT, biotech, renewable energy and aerospace."

Air India firms up order for 250 Airbus aircraft, selects new services



ARUNKUMAR RAO
Paris

Air India has firmed up its order for 250 Airbus aircraft and selected an Airbus maintenance and digital package to power the airline's transformation and growth strategy. The company Press Release said.

The aircraft order includes 140 A320neo and 70 A321neo single-aisle aircraft as well as 34 A350-1000 and six A350-900 wide-body jets. The airline had signed a Letter of Intent to acquire these aircraft in February 2023. Air India will also be counting on Airbus to help ensure the highest level of fleet availability with the Integrated Materials Solutions (IMS) from Satair, an Airbus company. The Airbus-powered maintenance solution will ensure that every time the airline needs a rotatable or a consumable part, it is readily available and stocks are automatically replenished. And in its transformation and digitalisation journey, Air India will be the launch customer for Airbus' Skywise Core X3, the latest and most advanced aviation analytics platform.

This once again demonstrates the avant-garde cooperation between Airbus and Air India. The purchase agreements for the aircraft as well as the Letters of Intent for maintenance and digital services were signed in the presence of N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons and Air India, Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD of Air India, Guillaume Faury, Airbus CEO, Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International, and Rémi Maillard, President and Managing Director, Airbus India and South Asia at the Paris Air Show 2023. Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD, Air India, said:

"Our ambitious fleet renewal and expansion programme will see Air India operate the most advanced and fuel-efficient aircraft across our route network within five years. We are proud to be working with all our partners, including Airbus, in this journey to rebuild a global airline which reflects India taking a more confident posture around the world."

"We are excited to be a key partner in the renaissance of the Flying Maharaja. Under the leadership of the Tata Group and a focussed new management, this is one of the most ambitious projects in the airline business today. We are proud that the efficiencies, comfort and range capability offered by our latest generation aircraft will contribute to the process, as Air India reclaims its rightful position as a world-class premium carrier. The Airbus services package is a perfect future-oriented choice that will form a core element of Air India's transformation," said Christian Scherer, Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International at Airbus.

The historic Air India order marks the entry into service of the A350 in India, the world's fastest growing aviation market. The all-new, long-range aircraft will help unlock the pent-up potential of India's long-haul market, its technology, reach and second-to-none comfort enabling new routes and passenger experience with better economics and enhanced sustainability. Alongside the A350s, the A320 Family fleets will be the efficient, versatile asset to continue democratising and decarbonising air travel in India - from domestic, regional, up to international levels. Deliveries are set to commence with the first A350-900 before the end of 2023.

Despite imposition of stock limit, wheat prices see percentage rise



NEW DELHI: Despite the Centre having imposed stock limit on wheat to control its price rise earlier this month, there has been a percentage increase in its prices in the last 10 days, which may make common man's meal costlier. The Central government had imposed a stock limit on wheat on June 12, however its efforts don't seem to have borne much fruit. On June 7, wheat was being sold at Rs 2,302 per quintal, however, after stock limit was imposed on June 12, its prices had come down by two per cent. On June 14, wheat was being sold at Rs 2,268 per quintal, but on June 22, its price rose sharply to Rs 2,340 per quintal.

Kia to launch all-electric EV9 SUV that gives 501 kms on single charge

Kia, South Korea's second-biggest carmaker, said on June 18, it will launch its all-electric EV9 flagship SUV in the domestic market this week as part of its electrification efforts.

The three-row seater is Kia's second model equipped with Hyundai Motor Group's dedicated electric vehicle platform, called E-GMP, after the EV6 SUV launched in 2021. The two-wheel-drive EV9 comes with a 99.8 kilowatt-hour battery and can travel 501 kms on a single charge. An all-wheel-drive model is also available, the company said in a statement. The model - set to be launched on Monday - is priced at 73 million won-82 million won (\$7,000-\$64,000), depending on options. Kia plans to gradually launch the EV9 in Europe, the United States and other markets in the second half, reports Yonhap news agency.

Kia plans to produce about 100,000 units a year of the new model at the Kia Autoland



Gwangmyeong plant, just south of Seoul, for global sales. The maker of K5 sedans and Sorento SUVs aims to sell 1 million EVs in 2026 and gradually fill its EV lineup with 15 models by 2027.

The company plans to add the EV9 GT-line and the performance EV9 GT models to beef up its EV lineup in the third quarter. The GT-line model adopts the design of the performance GT model to meet

satisfied. At Level 5, a vehicle's automated driving features can drive under any conditions.

The EV9 has been developed under Kia's new design philosophy, "Opposites United," which embodies its shifting focus toward electrification. It comes with a sleek and bold exterior design, and its flat-floor EV architecture offers an interior space with third-row seating and enhanced comfort. The Kia Connect Store enables customers to keep their EV9 constantly updated by upgrading the SUV's digital features and services without taking the vehicle to a dealership, it said.

With the swivel seat option, the second-row seats swivel 180 degrees to allow conversations with passengers in the third row. It also boasts numerous safety features, such as blind-spot collision-avoidance assist, navigation-based smart cruise control and parking collision-avoidance assist systems.

diverse customer demands. It will introduce Level 3 autonomous driving technology through the Highway Driving Pilot programme in the GT-line model. A Level 3 car allows lane changes and other autonomous driving functions to work without intervention by the driver. At Level 4, a vehicle can drive itself under limited conditions and will not operate if all required conditions are not

Chingari lays off 20% of workforce amid restructuring

NEW DELHI: Homegrown short-video making platform Chingari has laid off 20% of its workforce as part of organisational restructuring.

In a statement media, the company spokesperson said that it was "one of the toughest decisions for our management and we understand the impact they have on our employees".

"We are recognising the contribution and dedication of the affected employees by offering a severance package equal to two months' salary to assist them during this transition," said the spokesperson. Additionally, "we will make sure they have three more months of health insurance coverage".

The company said that it will support impacted employees by providing all-encompassing support, such as career counselling and job placement assistance.

U GRO Capital gets Rs 240 cr investment from Danish finance institute to fund MSMEs adopt green practices



NEW DELHI: UGRO Capital Limited, a data tech lending platform raised Rs 240 crore from Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU), a Danish development finance institution for providing green finance to MSMEs.

The investment is made on behalf of the Danish SDG Investment Fund, which is backed by large Danish pension funds and private investors. With this U GRO will be able to fund businesses that seek to transition into green-

month to augment our capital and grow our business. We disburse around Rs 500-600 crore loans per month," said Nath.

The investment in U GRO is in line with the green strategic partnership between India and Denmark that was signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen two years ago.

"IFU has invested in more than 100 companies in India, and we have a prioritised sector approach towards renewable energy and green infrastructure, financial services, healthcare as well as sustainable food with current investments representing all sectors in India. India is expected to continue being a significant investment destination for IFU in the coming years," said Deepa Hingorani, Senior Vice President, IFU.

IFU has received additional funds to invest in climate-related and green projects in India. Vice Chairman and Managing Director, U GRO Capital told FE Aspire that this Rs 240 crore equity funding has already been disbursed as U GRO is also into green financing and sustainability lending. "The IFU funding came last

Direct tax collection rises 11% to Rs 3,79,760 crore



NEW DELHI: Direct tax collections for 2023-24, as on June 17, stood at Rs 3,79,760 crore, compared to Rs 3,41,568 crore in the corresponding period of the last fiscal, representing an increase of 11.18 per cent.

The net direct tax collections of Rs 3,79,760 crore included corporation tax (CIT) at Rs 1,56,949 crore (net of refund) and personal income tax (PIT) including securities transaction tax (STT) at Rs 2,22,196 crore (net of refund).

The gross collection of

direct taxes (before adjusting for refunds) for 2023-24 stands at Rs 4,19,338 crore as compared to Rs 3,71,982 crore in the corresponding period of last fiscal, registering a growth of 12.73 per cent over collections of 2022-23.

The advance tax collections for the first quarter of 2023-24 stand at Rs 1,16,776 crore as on June 17, against advance tax collections of Rs 1,02,707 crore for the corresponding period of the immediately preceding fiscal i.e. 2022-23, showing a growth of 13.70 per cent.

Nirmala Sitharaman highlights reforms undertaken for financial institutions under India's G20 presidency



NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday participated in a roundtable on "Evolving the model of MDBs to address 21st century challenges" in Paris, where she highlighted the contribution of India's G20 presidency on capital adequacy framework (CAF) reforms and on strengthening multilateral development banks (MDBs). She discussed G20 efforts

to strengthen MDBs to address the global challenges of 21st century. "Work on CAF recommendations will enable MDBs to utilise their existing resources more effectively," she said during the event.

Sitharaman shared that the Paris summit front-runs the G20 New Delhi summit, which will take place in September this year. "The momentum will fuel ongoing efforts in address-

ing development and trans-boundary challenges faced by humanity," she added.

Sitharaman reached Paris, France on June 21 to participate in the Summit for the New Global Financing Pact scheduled during June 22-23.

During her official visit, Sitharaman will have multilateral and bilateral engagements with her counterparts, official sources said.

FinMin calls for strengthening GST registration process using technology



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) registration process may be further strengthened by using technology to curb the entry of fake entities into the GST ecosystem.

The minister also called for a nation-wide campaign to explain the objectives of the special drive to weed out the fake entities.

Nirmala Sitharaman was chairing a review meeting of the ongoing drive against fake billing for GST evasion. The minister was informed that 11,140 fake registrations have already been detected and action has been initiated against them.

Sitharaman was also apprised of the methods being adopted such as identity theft of people, along with the actions being taken against fake registrations.

She also took note of the existing measures being undertaken by the Finance Ministry such as OTP-based verification of Aadhaar and pilot of biometric-based Aadhaar authentication at the time of registration in high-risk cases.

Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra and CBIC Chairman Vivek Johri apprised Sitharaman that Artificial Intelligence tools are being extensively used to identify the possible fake networks.

Public steel firms clear Rs 692 cr payments of MSMEs in May

NEW DELHI: Public steel companies have paid Rs 692.36 crore to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in May, 2023.

This is 35.6 per cent higher than the payment made in the same month last year.

During April-May 2023, steel Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) have made payment of Rs 1,321.32 crore to MSMEs, which is 23.8 per cent higher than Rs 1,067.53 crore made during the corresponding period of FY23.

The status of pending payments to MSMEs by CPSEs of the steel ministry is being monitored on a weekly basis. It is being observed to ensure that dues are cleared within the 45-day deadline.

Retail business exhibits average growth of 7% in May

NEW DELHI: Retail sales in May 2023 showed a moderate growth of 7% as compared to the sales levels during the same period in May 2022, as per the 40th edition of the Retail Business Survey.

The survey was revealed by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) on Monday.

Speaking about the findings, Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India (RAI), said, "Retailers witnessed a modest growth of 7% in the month of May 2023. Jewellery and apparel showed moderate growth at 9% while

sportswear has shown a 2% growth, which is the lowest growth since the pandemic."

"As consumers are now getting into their normal business routines, we are witnessing moderate growth over previous year. However, we are also aware that April and May months in 2022 witnessed extra ordinary growth at 23% and 24% respectively compared to pre-pandemic period (April 2019 and May 2019)," he added.

Rajagopalan further said, "We will have to wait and watch how the next three months pan



out to draw a proper conclusion."

Retail businesses across regions have indicated growth in sales as compared to May 2022 sales level with East India signalling growth of 8%, while South India and West India indicate a growth of 7% and 6% respectively followed by North India at 5%, as per the survey.

In categories, jewellery and apparel reported a growth of 9% followed by Food & Grocery at 8% and Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) at 7% as compared to sales levels in May 2022.

Union Bank & IIT Varanasi set-up Incubation Centre to support self-employment

HYDERABAD: Union Bank of India and IIT (BHU) Varanasi signed a MoU for setting up a joint incubation centre (JIC) to provide all kinds of financial backing to the youth for self-employment.

IIT (BHU) Varanasi Dean (R&D) Vikas Kumar Dubey and Union Bank Zonal Head, Varanasi, Girish Joshi signed the MoU in the presence of Director of IIT (BHU) Varanasi, Pramod Kumar Jain.

The name of this incubation centre will be 'IIT (BHU) Varanasi-Union Bank of India Incubation Centre', as per the press release. The JIC is being set up with financial support from Union Bank of India and the operations will be managed by IIT (BHU) Varanasi.

Union Bank of India aims to



serve the society and the customers of the Bank by financing technological advancements in both manufacturing and services in line with the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The Director of IIT (BHU)

Varanasi also welcomed the proposal to initiate technological advancement research program based on the feedback of the entrepreneurs who are customers of Union Bank of India

BEL recives order worth Rs 5900 cr

ARUNKUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has received Orders worth Rs. 5900 Crore as of today in the financial year 2023-24. BEL received order for 2 Regiments of Improved Akash Weapon System (AWS) with upgrades from BDL for a value of Rs. 3914 Crore, according to company press statement issued here.

Statement also said, Akash is an all-weather, point/area air-defence weapon system intended for defending vulnerable points/areas against threats emanating from low, medium and high altitudes. The system uses high mobility vehicles for mobile application. The improvements incorporated include high altitude opera-



tion, simultaneous engagement of multiple threats over 360 degrees, missiles fitted with RF Seeker and reduced foot print.

Other significant orders received inter-alia include orders for Shakti EW & Sanket MK III (Naval Systems), GBMES & GBVU Com Jammers systems, MKBT systems, IFF-MK-XII Crypto Modules & Up gradation of SDP & Display of Rohini Radar, Training system for CMS P15B & CAMC of CMS for P 28 etc.

Low inflation will pave the way for development

SATISH SINGH

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, consumer price index (CPI) based inflation stood at 4.25 per cent in May 2023. In the month of April, it was at the level of 4.7 percent, while in May 2022 it was 7.04 percent. Earlier in April 2021, the retail inflation was 4.23 percent. This is the fourth consecutive month when retail inflation has come down. At the same time, this is the third month in a row, when retail inflation is less than 6 percent, the maximum limit set for inflation by the Reserve Bank of India. It may be noted that the retail inflation was 6.44 per cent in the month of February 2023, while it was 6.52 per cent in the month of January 2023.

The analysis shows that inflation has moderated due to lower food and fuel prices. Food inflation was 2.91 per cent in May, compared to 3.84 per cent in April. At the same time, fuel inflation stood at 4.64 per cent in May, compared to 5.52 per cent in April.

Inflation is directly related to the purchasing power of a person. For example, if the inflation rate is 10 per cent, then out of your Rs.100 earning, you will have to spend Rs.10 more just because of the increased cost of commodities and food items.

The positive result of reduction in inflation is visible on industrial production. Industrial production in the month of April has been 4.2 percent, while the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has increased by 6.7 percent in the month of April. According to data from the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector grew by 4.9 per cent and mining by 5.1 per cent in April. At the same time, a decline of 1.1 percent has been recorded in electricity production. Reduction in electricity production is not good for growth, because by the help of electricity, any kind of production including industrial production may be feasible. Despite, decline of 1.1 percent is nominal, its negative impact will not reflect much more.

Due to the softening of inflation, the central bank has



kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 percent in the latest monetary review, while the Reserve Bank has increased the repo rate by 250 basis points since May last year. Prior to this, the Reserve Bank had increased the repo rate for 6 consecutive times. This decision of the Reserve Bank is being considered unexpected, because recently all the central banks of the world including the Federal Reserve, European Central Bank, Bank of England had increased the policy interest rates. Though, in my opinion, the decision of keeping repo rate unchanged is wise decision of Reserve Bank, because, in India inflation is low, but in developed

countries, inflation is still high & there is direct link between inflation & repo rate.

Keeping the repo rate unchanged will provide relief to the borrowers on the one hand and on the other hand the pace of development will accelerate. The Reserve Bank wants the recovery of the economy to accelerate further. Due to not increasing the repo rate by the Reserve Bank, there has been a rise in the shares of banks in the stock market. At the same time, the rupee has depreciated against the US dollar. The rupee depreciated from 81.88 to 82.06, but the fall in the value of the rupee is minimal and its negative impact on the economy is al-

most negligible. Last year, the rupee recorded less volatility compared to Asian currencies.

The Reserve Bank tries to fight inflation mainly by increasing the repo rate. When the repo rate is high, banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a costlier rate, due to which banks also give loans to customers at a costlier rate. By doing this, the liquidity of money in the economy decreases and due to lack of money in the pockets of people, the demand for goods decreases. Similarly, due to higher price of goods and products, their sales decrease, which leads to inflation.

Similarly, to speed up the developmental works when the economy is soft, efforts are made to increase the liquidity of the currency in the market and for this also the repo rate is cut, so that the banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a cheaper rate. After getting the loan at the cheaper rate, the bank should also give loan to the customers at a cheaper rate.

Right now, the aim of the Reserve Bank is to strike a balance between growth and inflation,

so that the common man does not suffer, and the pace of development accelerates. According to Reserve Bank Governor Shri Shaktikanta Das, banking and non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs) remain strong in India despite the corona pandemic, geo-political crisis, inflation, slowdown in the global economy.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stood at 6.1 percent due to a significant reduction in inflation in the past months, while in December 2022 the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) projected GDP to be 4.2 percent in the last quarter of the financial year 2022-23. Due to the improvement in the GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2022-23, the growth rate of the entire financial year has also been improved. In the first financial year 2022-23, the MPC had estimated 6.8 percent of GDP, which was 7.2 percent.

In the financial year 2022-23, the growth rate in the agriculture sector was recorded at 5.5 percent, in the hotel industry at 9.1 percent and in the construction sector at 10.4

percent. These three sectors have made special contribution in improving the growth rate of GDP. Along with the increase in GDP, investment and consumption are also seeing a boom. In the first quarter of the year 2023, an increase of 18.3 percent in investment rate and 13.4 percent in consumption was recorded. The main reason for the increase in investment is the "Production-Linked Incentives" (PLI) scheme of the government. Due to this scheme, businessmen got special help to get out of difficult times during the Corona period.

It is clear from the available facts, due to inflation, there is a negative impact on the GDP growth rate. Inflation had remained at a high level continuously for the past years, but now inflation is coming down. Therefore, speculations are being made that in the coming months India's growth rate will accelerate further and the economy will also become stronger gradually.

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

INTERNATIONAL

Modi meets intellectuals, business leaders, health experts in US

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has met a parade of intellectuals, business leaders and health experts, making a pitch for investments in India and discussing a range of subjects from economic development and space exploration to Buddhism and the "scientific temperament" on the first day of his visit to the US.

The meeting that drew the most attention was with Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk.

Musk, who also owns Twitter, said after the meeting that he was a "fan" of Modi and that he would bring the electric vehicle and battery maker to India as soon as it was "humanly possible".

Modi tweeted: "Great meeting you today @elonmusk! We had multifaceted conversations on issues ranging from energy to spirituality."

At his meeting with hedge fund founder, investor and author Ray Dalio, Modi "highlighted reforms undertaken by the government to foster economic growth, including reduction of compliances and decriminalisation of large number of legal provisions", and invited him to invest in India, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

After meeting Nicholas Nassim Talib, the thinker who is known for explaining how quirks of history impact man-



kind, Modi tweeted that he "has interesting perspectives on many issues and I had the opportunity to hear them on some of those subjects".

"He was greatly interested in India's development strides. I emphasised on how we are nurturing a spirit of enterprise and risk-taking among our youth," he added.

Taleb tweeted that they discussed risks, reaction to Covid, how successful interventions like controlling the virus that averted catastrophes look excessive in hindsight and "repeated small losses vs. blowup risk".

Modi's meeting with Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Romer touched on "India's digital journey", including the use of the biometric identification system Aadhaar and Digilocker, which enables universal paperless access to government documents, according to Bagchi.

"Talks also covered various initiatives being undertaken by India for urban development," he added.

With Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist who popularises science, Modi discussed "inculcating scientific temperament among youth" and India's space exploration missions", Bagchi tweeted.

Modi and Buddhist scholar Robert Thurman spoke about "how Buddhist values can act as guiding light for finding solutions to global challenges" and India's efforts to preserve that religion's heritage, according to Bagchi.

Modi tweeted that he admires "his passion towards research and scholarship" on Buddhism.

The Prime Minister met with the Grammy-winning musician A Falguni Shah, better known as Falu Shah whose song, "Abundance in Millets" raises awareness of healthy and environment-friendly millets, Bagchi tweeted.

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Modi "appreciated her for bringing the people of India and USA together through her music", he said.

She tweeted that the song was inspired by Modi's "proposition to the @UN to declare 2023 as the International Year of Millets".

Besides the one-on-one meetings, Bagchi tweeted that Modi met with a group of eminent US academics from diverse fields of agriculture, marketing, engineering, health, science and technology.

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Another such meeting was

with a group of health experts. They discussed the use of digital technologies for quality healthcare, greater focus on integrative medicine and better healthcare preparedness, according to Bagchi.

On Wednesday, Modi will lead the 9th International Yoga Day celebrations at the UN with General Assembly President Csaba Korosi and Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed.

Later, he will travel to Washington for a private meeting with President Joe Biden.

On Thursday, his state visit to the US will start formally at a White House ceremony.

Congress has invited him to address a joint session.

When he arrived by India's, the VVIP Boeing 777, at JFK Airport he was welcomed by Ruchira Kamboj, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, and Taranjit Singh Sandhu, New Delhi's Ambassador to Washington, and by a crowd of supporters.

When he came to the Lotte Palace Hotel in midtown Manhattan, he flouted security to greet supporters deliriously chanting his name and dancing, while worried Secret Service agents and security personnel tried to put him in a tight physical cordon.

More supporters waited for him in the hotel lobby where he autographed pictures of him.

Jet engines, armed drones for India in Modi-Biden talks



The US has cleared the joint production of GE's F 414 jet engines in India giving a "new" direction to ties between the two countries, a senior US White House official told reporters on the eve of President Joe Biden's official state dinner for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India will announce the purchase of MQ 9B armed Sea Guardians, the official said, marking the end of protracted negotiations that lasted almost seven years.

"The nature, the depth and breadth of our deliverables for this is unprecedented," said one of the officials who previewed the meeting for reporters.

"I think the Indians, to be honest, have been surprised and thrilled by the steps that we've been able to take to remove bureaucratic roadblocks from achieving this goal. So I think we fully recognise that it's going to be necessary to follow through," one of the senior administration officials said.

India will use these jet engines for its second generation of Tejas fighter jets. The current aircraft use GE's F404 engines, which are assembled in the India. The F414s will be co-produced in India by GE with India's Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). These engines are being used by US American F/A-18 Super Hornets.

The MQ-9 Sea Guardian drones by General Atomics have been on India's wishlist for years and the Indian Navy has since 2020 been using two MQ-9A drones in a company-owned and company-operated lease agreement since 2020.

The joint statement that will be issued by the two sides is also likely to include the reinstatement of preferential trading benefits for Indian exports to the US under a scheme called the Generalized System of Preferences, which was suspended

by the Trump administration in 2019, after it could not extract market access concessions from India. Under this scheme, certain Indian goods enter the US without tariff and at the time of suspension these US imports from India were worth over \$6 billion.

The two sides are expected to announce a slew of joint initiatives and agreements after Biden's meeting with Modi Thursday morning, in a new spirit of cooperation between the two sides that was described by officials who were part of the negotiations as "mature".

The two leaders are also expected to announce a master ship repair agreement in which US navy ships will go for repairs to Indian shipyards.

The US is looking to wean India from Russia military supplies. "India is actively engaged in diversifying away from Russian military equipment ... It is not just the United States that is engaged in that effort of diversification. It's our allies and partners in France, in Great Britain and Israel and elsewhere that are actively supporting efforts to secure India's defence capabilities more generally," one of the senior administration officials said.

A slew of collaborations in the field of technology are expected including strengthening critical minerals supply chains, advancing telecommunication capabilities and AI.

Other agreements will include space. NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will work together on human spaceflight.

Prime Minister Modi had a private dinner with President Joe Biden at the White House on Wednesday night, ahead of their meetings on Thursday. Modi was accompanied by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra.

UK Home Secy urges police to 'ramp up' stop-and-search



In an effort to prevent more knife attacks and "save more lives", UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman has urged the police to "ramp up" the stop-and-search measure, the media reported. In England and Wales, police can stop and search an individual or vehicle if they have "reasonable grounds" to suspect the person is carrying a weapon, drugs, stolen property or something that could be used to commit a crime, the BBC reported. While critics opine the practice disproportionately targets those from ethnic minorities and can leave people feeling victimised, the government says that it is a "common sense policing tactic" and the Met Police has described it as a "hugely important power" for protecting the public. In a letter sent to all 43 forces in England and Wales, Braverman on Sunday said the "dangerous culture" of carrying weapons "must be brought to a stop". She also called on forces to publish bodycam footage quickly to stop police facing "trial by social media". "My first priority is to keep the public safe, and people who insist on carrying a weapon must know that there will be consequences. The police have my full support to ramp up the use of stop-and-search, wherever necessary, to prevent violence and save more lives," the BBC quoted Braverman as saying in the letter.

President Biden and Modi must address grave human rights concerns during summit

The United States and Indian governments must address the grave human rights issues in both countries during Prime Minister Modi's meeting with President Biden in Washington DC, said Amnesty International ahead of the state visit this week.

"Prime Minister Modi has presided over a period of rapid deterioration of human rights protections in India, including increasing violence against religious minorities, shrinking civil society space, and the criminalization of dissent. Meanwhile, President Biden's time in office has been concurrent to a devastating period of backsliding on reproductive rights and increases in vitriolic anti-LGBTQI+ attacks at the state level, all in a political climate informed by structural racism and socio-economic injustice,"



said Amanda Klasing, national director of government relations and advocacy at Amnesty International USA.

"These human rights concerns are not fringe issues. They are fundamental in determining how a government operates, who it serves, and who it leaves out. A crucial test of the India-US alliance is whether these two leaders can engage in meaningful discussions about these and

other concerning human rights failures of their governments."

During his first official state visit to the United States, the Indian Prime Minister has been invited to a state dinner along with an address to a Joint Session of the US Congress the week of June 22. "While the red carpet has been rolled out for Prime Minister Modi, people in India continue to experience grave human rights abuses. India and the

US are important partners and allies in various world forums, including the G20 and Quad. As leaders of countries seeking to advance or retain global leadership, Biden and Modi must hold each other to account for their human rights commitments, rather than sweep human rights issues in their respective countries under the rug," said Aakar Patel, chair of Board at Amnesty International India.

Amnesty International has documented how the Indian government's criminalization of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly has placed dangerous constraints on civil society. Human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, political opponents, peaceful protesters, academics and students all face arbitrary arrests and detention, unjust prosecutions and

other forms of harassment and intimidation. Financial and investigative agencies of the government have been weaponized to harass, silence, and criminalize independent critical voices, including media organizations such as the BBC and prominent non-governmental organizations including Greenpeace India, Oxfam India, Independent and Public-Spirited Media Foundation (IPSMF), Centre for Policy Research, Amnesty International India and several others "The Indian Government relies on an ever-growing toolbox of tactics to repress dissent, now targeting those online, censoring activists and journalists, placing them under surveillance. President Biden must call on Prime Minister Modi to end his government's abuse of laws to target civil society and free speech," said Aakar Patel.

Pro-Khalistan leader Nijjar's killing poses tricky questions for Canadian security

The targeted killing of pro-Khalistan leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the president of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara who was shot dead in Surrey, British Columbia, has thrown up many tricky questions for Canadian security agencies.

Nijjar, 45, who was designated as a terrorist by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) last year and carried a prize of Rs 10 lakhs on his head, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen while leaving the gurdwara at about 8.30 p.m. on Sunday. Nijjar, who came to Canada from Bhar Singh Pura village in Jalandhar in 1997, was also the main leader of the pro-Khalistan referendum in Canada along with New York-based



Sikhs for Justice leader Gurpant Singh Pannun. Just days before his murder, Nijjar told a local Punjabi channel that he had been informed by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) that there was a threat to his life. The Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT), which has taken over

the investigation, will have to unravel whether the killing of the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) leader was a result of local feuds or the handiwork of other elements.

In a media briefing on Monday, IHIT's Timothy Pierotti said: "We understand there is a lot of speculation regarding the motive of this homicide, but we are dedicated to learning the facts and letting the evidence lead our investigation." He said the investigation team would work with the country's spy agency to unravel the case. "We're working hard to speak to every person and collect the facts of this case. And we'll determine the motive that way."

Second accused charged for shooting Sikh man to death in Canada



A second accused has been charged with first-degree murder in a New Year's Day shooting that left a 51-year-old Sikh father dead and his 21-year-old daughter injured in Canada.

Daqwan Roshayne Howard Lee, 28, was arrested on Monday and charged with first-degree murder, aggravated assault and discharging a firearm with intent, Edmonton police said. Police said Barinder Singh and his daughter were "innocent victims of a wrongly targeted crime". Lee is the second person charged in the shooting, after Tevahn Orr, 31, who was wanted on a Canada-wide warrant, turned himself in to the Hamilton Police Service on March 21. Orr was also charged with first degree murder, aggravated assault and discharging a firearm with intent.

On January 1, patrol officers responded to the report of a disturbance at a residence in the area of 16A Avenue and 38 Street. Upon arrival, officers located an injured man and woman. EMS responded, treated and transported Singh to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. The 21-year-old woman was also taken to hospital with serious, non-life-threatening injuries and was later released. A week later, the Edmonton Medical Examiner completed an autopsy on Singh and determined the cause of death to be gunshot wounds.

Top 5 places to do business in 2023 : World Citizenship Report

LONDON: Access to opportunity is one of the most desirable qualities that any jurisdiction can offer. This year, the 2023 World Citizenship Report measured 188 countries in the world, looking at what these nations have to offer High Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and the mass affluent who are continually looking past their home borders for better opportunities. One key motivator that was measured in the report was Economic Opportunity, which measures the overall ability of a nation to extend wealth, material comfort, and other key benefits of a strong economy to all of its citizens.

Greater access to improved business environments and em-



ployment opportunities allows individuals to participate in the economy while achieving their goals of securing their financial futures and raising the standard of living for themselves and their families. But it doesn't end there. Apart from the supplementary benefits of social mobility, a reduction in income disparity, and greater capital formation, having the freedom to pursue key financial goals leads to significant investment in an

individual's own well-being, their families, and their communities, which, more often, is accompanied by a greater sense of purpose. Not only have global mass affluent individuals shown to be willing to travel to access more powerful economies globally, but they also desire supportive business environments which enable them to fully realise their entrepreneurial potential. A shift in economic growth from the West to emerging markets over the past few decades has led to new business hubs worldwide. Regions such as Asia, the Middle East, and South America have seen rapid economic growth, coupled with improved infrastructure and, in some cases, lighter regulation.

Goa G20 Meet Reaffirms Global Tourism Recovery Measures

DOMINICK RODRIGUES Panjim

The G20 Tourism Ministerial Meeting held here on June 21 "reaffirmed" the importance of working towards full recovery of tourism from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while also advancing the role of tourism in accelerating implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achievement of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Fourth Tourism Working Group G20 Meet with the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future" was held in Goa from June 19 to 21, 2023.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a video message, noted that tourism ministers are handling a sector worth over two trillion dollars globally, and India during its G20 presidency is organizing around



200 meetings in 100 different locations in India.

"Terrorism divides but Tourism unites" was the PM's message as he noted that a "first-of-its-kind+ G20 tourism dashboard is being developed in partnership with UNWTO as a platform bringing together best practices, case studies and inspiring stories."

The Ministers meet witnessed participation of Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and DoNER G. Kishan Reddy, Union Ministers of State for Tourism Shripad Yesso Naik and Ajay Bhatt, Ministers and delegates from G20 countries, invitee countries and interna-

tional organisations.

"Through our collective efforts, we can harness the power of tourism to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, ensuring that no one is left behind," said Kishan Reddy while welcoming the Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a vehicle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Ministers expressed support to five tourism priority areas identified by India's G20 Presidency for the Tourism Working Group for the development of a resilient and sustainable tourism sector including: Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs and Destination

Management.

While noting that the war in Ukraine had adversely impacted the global economy, most of the Members condemned the war while stressing its causing "immense human suffering" and exacerbating existing fragility in the global economy by constraining growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening energy and food insecurity and elevating financial stability risks.

"Today's era must not be of war" declared the Meeting. "We highlight the crucial role of tourism as a means for sustainable socioeconomic development and economic prosperity."

"We agree that transformation of this sector must be at forefront of tourism policies, which explicitly prioritize sustainability, inclusion and resilience in the spirit of India's G20 Presidency: One Earth, One Family, One Future."

Paris finance summit must deliver urgent assistance to states struggling with debt and climate crises

FW DESK Paris

World leaders attending a summit in Paris tomorrow must ensure that wealthier nations commit to comprehensive debt relief for lower-income nations, including the cancellation of loans and to the scaling up of international assistance to vulnerable states, Amnesty International said on June 21.

Amnesty International is calling on the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact (PACT) to ensure wealthier nations honour their previous financial pledges they have failed to meet and adopt new ones which guarantee the rights of people in lower-income countries. The rights to an adequate standard of living and to social security are enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been ratified by more than 170 coun-

tries. Article 2 of the ICESCR obliges states to take steps, including through international cooperation and assistance, to support other states to meet their economic and social rights obligations.

"Many vulnerable, lower-income states have been overwhelmed by economic shocks, debts they cannot pay, and the effects of climate change - a crisis to which they contributed very little, but which is costing people in these countries dearly. These are unprecedented chal-

lenges that require a rethink of how the world's financial architecture is set up," said Agnes Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General. "The rights of many people in vulnerable countries to access healthcare and social protection are not met at even the most basic level. There is a vital need to provide financial and technical assistance to these countries so that they can scale up social protection schemes to guarantee people's right to an adequate standard of living."



Rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh approaches police over death threats from gangster

NEW DELHI: Singer and rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh has filed a complaint with the Delhi Police after he allegedly received death threats from gangster Goldy Brar.

The singer also met Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora on Wednesday and sought security. It was learnt that the rapper had received threats over phone calls and voice notes.

"I have received phone calls from persons claiming to be Goldy Brar and his gang members. The calls were also received by my staff. I have requested Commissioner Saab to provide me security and investigate the matter," Singh told reporters.

"All the evidence and records regarding the calls and

threats have been submitted to the police," he said.

Punjab-origin Satinderjit Singh Brar, nicknamed as Goldy Brar, the alleged mastermind in the killing of famed singer Sidhu Moosewala and an affiliate of Lawrence Bishnoi's gang, has been listed among Canada's 25 most wanted fugitives in the country.

Wanted by Royal Canadian Mounted Police for murdering Brar, Brar's name figured in the 'Bolo (Be On the Lookout) Programme'. However, there is no reward on Brar.

He reached Canada on a student visa in 2017.



International Yoga Day : The Power of Yoga

KAVITA SHARMA

The International yoga day is round the corner with a message to spread awareness about the holistic nature of yoga and promote it for better mental and Physical health. International Yoga Day is observed on 21st June and it was proclaimed by The United Nations in 2014, following a proposal from PM Narendra Modi. The Global celebration of International day led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, while in India the celebrations will be led by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in Madhya Pradesh. The theme for this year of Yoga Day is "Yoga for Vasudhaiva kutumbakam" ie yoga for Humanity.

Yoga is a practice that makes your life disciplined. It can be called as Art and science of healthy living. Though Yoga originated thousands of years ago but still in this modern age people have faith in it as it has transformed their lives. To gather more information on this we spoke to few women of the society who are practicing yoga every day. According to Vandana Arora, a



wellness Expert and also a cancer survivor, Yoga has completely transformed her life, for her yoga has played a very important role in healing her mentally, physically and emotionally. After gaining faith in yoga she decided to get proper training of it and has now become a certified wellness Expert. As a Yoga instructor she had trained many women in Delhi and Noida now. According to her people should spare some time everyday from their busy schedule before going to the office or after coming back so that they can overcome or fight the disease like conditions. Body Stretching is a must for everyone esp. Talasana, Hastapadasana, Pawanmuktasana, Katichakrasana and Konaasana should be practiced

every day. Replying to our question on increase of Heart attack cases in Gyms etc, Vandana said people are not aware that after doing heavy exercises in Gyms it is important to bring the body to a normal temperature, because of which heart attack cases have increased. For which she suggests cooling Pranayam. Post Covid-19 and after vaccine also people have reported symptoms of fatigue, difficulty in breathing and shortness of Breath, Blood pressure issues etc and to overcome this one must start doing yoga immediately, she adds. Yoga can also help you burn calories, manage stress and improve your mood says Jasleen, a Maths Teacher, who is doing yoga from past four years. Manisha Sharma, a retired

teacher says that with Continuous practice, yoga can improve blood flow, prevent constipation and Bloating and help with the management of chronic conditions like bowl syndrome. She is 80 years old now but never forgets to practice Uttanasana and Marjaryasana for stomach. Same is the case with Shakuntala Sharma who does Anulom Vilom to get relief from stress and Anxiety.

Although, Yoga has its roots in Ancient India. It aims to bring harmony between the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional aspects of a person. According to Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev, if anyone is suffering from hypertension it can easily be controlled by Yoga and pranayam. He says pranayams like Kapalbhathi, Anulom Vilom, Bhramari, Shitali, Shikari, Udgeeth, Sukshma Vyayam, Bhastrika and Asanas like Bhujangasana, Mandukasana, Ardhalasana are best to control hypertension. The World Health Organization (WHO) says approx 113 crore people suffer from high Blood pressure across the world, with 40 Crores only in India. It is a silent killer and women suffer more than men with High Blood Pressure.

Singer-rapper King celebrates World Music Day



Singer-rapper King, who is known for 'Tu Maan Meri Jaan', celebrates World Music Day not just on June 21 but on all 365 days of the year. He revealed that his favourite tracks are 'Fragile' by Sting and 'Rockstar' by Nickelback.

King shared with media "I personally feel there is no one particular day to celebrate music, I listen to music all the time every day of the year. Music is an important part of my life, so I celebrate it each second of the day. There is nothing more magical and alive than music for me."

Talking about what tracks he would revisit on the occasion, he said: "I would also take this day and listen to my favourite tracks 'Fragile' by Sting which relaxes me down and 'Rockstar' by Nickelback which gets me into the groove." King recently announced his maiden world tour titled Champagne Talk. The world tour will see him perform at different places including London, New York, Toronto, Atlanta, Houston, Vancouver and Los Angeles.

Aaliya Siddiqui remembers how she fell in love with Nawazuddin Siddiqui, says 'not getting married again'

Aaliya opened up about her love story with Nawazuddin Siddiqui and also spoke about finding love again

NEW DELHI: It's been just two days since Bigg Boss OTT 2 launched, but the contestants have been serving drama in abundance. From Jiya Shankar-Palak Purswani talking about their now sour friendship to Manisha Rani and Akanksha Puri trying to catch Jad Hadid's attention, fans of the show have plenty to talk about. Amid this, Aaliya Siddiqui also opened up about her relationship with estranged husband Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and recalled their love story while



speaking to co-contestant Cyrus Broacha.

In the latest episode, Aaliya shared that she knew Nawaz's brother, who was then the ac-

tor's assistant. Aaliya was living as a paying guest and was thrown out of her house for some reason. Nawaz's brother asked her to stay with them till she finds a new place.

She remembered that she wasn't comfortable initially, but said yes. "I saw his photos first and I liked his eyes. His eyes are very sexy. Then we met and fell in love. Then we started living together. This has been our journey," she shared. Cyrus also quizzed her about the new man in her life, to which she shared that he is Italian and a very beautiful person. She laughed and said that one of her friends played Cupid for them.

"So he said he liked my eyes and then we started talking. He is a software engineer. He gives you respect and love. He makes you feel protected and chivalrous. That's why I came into this relation-

ship openly after 19 years. I wasn't scared," Aaliya shared with Cyrus. And when he asked her if she plans to tie the knot with him, Aaliya dismissed it, saying she doesn't plan to get married again.

Before entering the show, Aaliya had spoken about finding love again and how she hopes Nawazuddin would realise that she was wronged in their relationship. "He is a really great friend of mine. Someone more than a friend. But we aren't planning on getting married or anything. I haven't committed that to anyone. I want to live my life with my kids and start my own career. We all need mental support, a companion in life, and he's the one for me."

Fashion designer Kiren Sandhu's 'KSD Fashion Academy' Inaugurated by Punjabi beauty Aarushi Sharma

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Mohali

Renowned fashion designer Kiren Sandhu, who has made a name for herself in the world of fashion and made peoples dreams come true, has opened her new «KSD Fashion Academy» inaugurated by the most beautiful woman in the Punjabi industry, Aarushi Sharma.

Kiren Sandhu, a well-known fashion designer, established the KSD Fashion Academy. The institution, which has an outstanding reputation in the fashion business, provides comprehensive instruction and education in different elements of fashion design and style. With the growing need for fashion designer courses in



mind, an innovative institution has launched, offering a variety of fashion-related courses.

Speaking about the academy, fashion designer Kiren Sandhu said, "I am very happy that our dream of creating an academy that concentrates on the ones who can turn their dreams into reality in this fashion field has come true. The institution is well-known for its dedication to developing talent, encouraging originality, and preparing students for successful careers in the fast-paced world of fashion.

Varun and Janhvi all set for the worldwide premiere of their upcoming film 'Bawaal'

MUMBAI: Actors Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor are all set for the worldwide premiere of their upcoming film 'Bawaal'. Before hitting OTT however, the movie will have its first screening at the Salle Gustave Eiffel in Paris.

The movie will make it the first Indian film to get a screening at the Eiffel Tower.

The film is a love story set in the backdrop of World War 2 and will feature a gripping narrative, taking the audiences on a journey through Europe.

The premiere will take place at the exquisite Salle Gustave Eiffel, offering a panoramic view of the city of love as the backdrop. Apart from Varun, Janhvi, Sajid, and Nitesh, the premiere will be attended by movie enthusiasts and French delegates, making it one of the biggest premieres for an Indian film, "a source told Pinkvilla.

Directed and co-written by Nitesh Tiwari, the romance drama is produced

by Nadiadwala Grandsons. The film was announced in 2020 and wrapped up production in July, 2022. Additional writing credits include Piyush Gupta, Shreyas Jain, Nikhil Mehrotra and Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari.

Janhvi who was last seen in the 2022 releases 'Mili' and 'Goodluck Jerry' will also be seen in 'Mr. & Mrs. Mahi' and will be making her Tollywood debut in the Koratala Siva directorial 'Devara' starring NTR Jr alongside other projects which include and Saif Ali Khan.

Varun who was last seen in the film 'Bhedhiya' will now be starring in the Indian version of the American spy-thriller web series 'Citadel' alongside Samantha Ruth Prabhu.

With 'Adipurush' suffering, 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' gets more runs in theatres

MUMBAI: After Prabhas, Kriti Sanon and Saif Ali Khan-starrer 'Adipurush' has dipped at the box-office, animated film 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' has got more shows added in India into the fourth week. 'Spider-Man, Across the Spider-Verse' has entered the Rs 50 crore club, with theatres increasing shows in its fourth week, according to a statement.

The film has earned Rs 50 crore GBO in three weeks in India and \$500 million globally.



"Theatres have almost doubled the shows in its fourth week, with even IMAX and 4DX screens increasing their show count for the film," read the statement. 'Adipurush' on its Day 1 raked in Rs 37 crore in its Hindi version and minted only Rs 7 crore in all the Indian languages on its sixth day since release.

Kiara Advani roped up for the spy thriller 'WAR 2' by Aditya Chopra

Actress Kiara Advani has been roped in by Aditya Chopra for the spy thriller 'War 2' starring Hrithik Roshan and NTR Jr. A source said: "Kiara Advani fits the bill to the T as far as YRF Spy Universe and 'War 2' is considered. The YRF Spy Universe is a league of all-time blockbuster films like 'Ek Tha Tiger', 'Tiger Zinda Hai', 'War' and 'Pathaan', and the expectation from each movie coming out from this franchise is sky high. "Look at the superstars who have graced this Universe. It's the most coveted film Universe in



India that stars the biggest superstars of the country. Kiara is right now at the top of the heap and Aditya Chopra taking her for 'War 2' loudly signifies that. "The source also said that 'War 2' right now has the 'hottest' cast. "You have three superstars like Hrithik Roshan, NTR Jr and Kiara Advani in the film! Then you have the brightest young director of the country, Ayan Mukerji, directing 'War 2'! Aditya Chopra is going all out to make this film the coolest action entertainer that this country has ever seen. It will be really exciting to see Kiara in this Universe and how Ayan and Adi present her in 'War 2'."

Tajinderpal Singh Toor sets new Asian shot put record

Punjab athlete hurls 21.77m to break his own mark set two years ago and gets emotional after the feat. This achievement just 3 days after losing his grandmother

NEW DELHI: The moment the shot put left Tajinderpal Singh Toor's hands in his third attempt at the interstate meet on Monday, the reigning Asian Games champion knew it was going to be a huge throw. The gentle giant, as he's popularly known on the circuit, let out a roar as everyone waited for the officials to confirm the exact distance he had hurled the 7.26kg metal ball.

A few seconds later, the field officials confirmed his hunch of a big throw. Toor had managed a 21.77m throw, breaking his previous national and Asian record of 21.49m set two years ago. After the distance came up on the board, he closed his eyes and looked up to the skies, remembering his grandmother who passed away just three days ago. "When I realised I broke the record, I got a little emotional. My eyes went moist and I was thinking about her for a moment. I want to dedicate this medal to her," an emotional Toor said after the event.

Toor, who was already the current Asia leader with 21.20m, is the favourite to win gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games to be held later this year. The Punjab athlete has had a tumultuous



couple of years, starting from the Tokyo Olympics where he failed to reach the finals after suffering a wrist injury. He had to undergo surgery later, which kept him out of action for a while.

Even on the personal front, Toor has had to overcome a lot of grief. In December, his wife had to undergo an abortion due to complications. "Kaaafi jhatke lage hain. (I have faced many setbacks) but I always pick myself up and continue. I did not want to come to the interstate meet after I lost my grandmother, but then this was an Asian Games trial so I somehow pushed myself to come here. I also strained my groin area just before arriving here, so it wasn't easy. I just came here believing God will lead the way," said Toor.

For someone who hasn't spoken to or met Toor before, the 150kg, muscular 28-year-old comes off as an intimidating figure. But that's far from the truth. He is one of the warmest

characters on the circuit. "When people see me, they assume I would be a little arrogant but trust me, I am a very calm and kind person. All the aggression is limited to the field," he said.

While dedicating the gold medal and the new continental record to his late grandmother, Toor recalled the time when she would send him money from Canada for his training requirements. "Until I got a job in 2016 with the Indian Navy, she helped me with my expenses. Shoes, kits, everything. She would send money whenever I needed it," he said.

Toor's expenses were much more than the average thrower's due to his enormous build. His extra-large shoes cost him a fortune. "It was so difficult to get US size 13 shoes for myself. Now I order them from abroad but they don't last long due to my weight. The soles go flat within a couple of months," he said.

Toor has been on the circuit for a long time and has seen several ups and downs, but has never regretted taking up sports as a career. The gentle giant feels he was destined to be a sports person, especially after his school teachers gave up on him. "I don't think I could have done anything apart from sports. Teacher maar maar ke thak gaye (teachers gave up on me entirely) and almost every day I would hear, 'Tajinder Toor, please get out of the class'," he recalled.

CSR Initiative: Diplast holds cycling event to promote wellness



KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

A 50-km long cycling rally was held to promote wellness and camaraderie among the cycling groups of tricity and Ambala. Another objective of the activity was to generate awareness among cycling enthusiasts about the upcoming mega wellness programme of Diplast, to be organised on June 25. The cycling event was held as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme of Diplast.

Ashok Gupta, MD of Diplast said, "We supported the cycling event in keeping

with our objective of promoting health and wellness in the region. I am happy to announce that we will be holding under our CSR initiative a wellness programme to encourage regular exercise, proper diet, and mental well-being so that illnesses are prevented and people are brought closer to nature. The programme which is scheduled to be held on June 25 at 'The Tree House Farm', located near Dappar barrier in Mohali district will include activities such as yoga, ayurvedic treatments, a healthy breakfast, interactions on wellness and nutrition etc."

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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