

Punjab CM hosts farewell for retiring Chief Secretary Janjua

CHANDIGARH: In a first of its kind gesture, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann hosted a farewell party for Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Janjua, who superannuated on Friday, at his office here amidst the presence of large number of IAS officers.



In his remarks on the occasion, the Chief Minister said Janjua had served on various positions during his distinguished career of 34 years as an IAS officer.

He said the state government has taken several pro-people decisions in the last one year and the Chief Secretary played a key role in its implementation.

Mann said it was quite challenging to implement the decision to regularise services of contractual teachers, but Jan-

different positions was of great help to the government.

He envisioned that Janjua will continue to work for the welfare of Punjab and its people.

Meanwhile, welcoming newly-appointed Chief Secretary Anurag Verma, the Chief Minister exuded confidence that he will discharge his responsibility to implement the pro-people initiatives and programmes of the government with utmost dedication.

Describing administrative officers as the backbone of the government, he said all officers serving at various capacities are like family to him, adding it is heartening to see that all of them are working tirelessly for the betterment and progress of the state.

Janjua has meticulously ensured smooth implementation of all these welfare decisions of the government with the utmost dedication.

He also lauded Janjua for ensuring that people will get the

benefits of various pro-people and development oriented schemes of the government at the grassroots.

Extending his warm wishes to Janjua for the future, Mann said his vast experience of serving at

Punjab women farmers condemn move on UCC

JALANDHAR: Expressing concern over the far-reaching effects of the Uniform Civil Code, the Mahila Kisan Union, a member of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, on Thursday condemned the hasty move of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to implement this legislation.

The union has demanded to reconsider this decision so that it should not cause any harm to the diverse religious and cultural fabric of India.

In a statement, Mahila Kisan Union president Rajwinder Kaur Raju said the saffron party "aims to establish a uniform law to control personal laws and matters, including marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption of all communities and religions".

She said the principle of equality enshrined in the Constitution is laudable but regrettably, the "right-wing party's



approach to implementing this code on all communities lacks sensitivity and understanding of India's rich cultural and religious diversity".

The farmer leader said the BJP was hell bent on polarising the country vertically with such sensitive issues to win the next year's general elections.

Raju said the implementation of uniform code without proper consultation with the stakeholders and the hasty step taken would violate the

fundamental rights, undermine customs and traditions of various communities, tribals and especially religious and cultural minorities.

Furthermore, the MKU has also criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), its convener Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for unconditionally supporting the BJP for implementing this code, saying that these political leaders, being the "charioteers of the BJP's agenda have betrayed the communities and sections whom they falsely claim to represent".

She added AAP's support to the saffron party was a disregard for the concerns and aspirations of the minority communities and shows a lack of understanding and empathy towards India's diverse cultural, traditional and religious heritage.

Union Cabinet approves schemes worth over Rs. 3.70 lakh crore for farmers: Mansukh Maandaviya



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

Union Cabinet has decided, the subsidy on Chemical Fertilizer is reduced by at least Rs 1 lakh crore. "In the next three years, the Modi government will be spending Rs 3 lakh 70 thousand crore for farmers' welfare," said Union Health Minister Mansukh Maandaviya at a press briefing after Cabinet meeting. As soon as this decision is taken, the responsibility of reducing the pressure on the exchequer will be put on the states.

Although BJP government is waiting to win the Lok Sabha elections in 2024, after that Modi government will start 'reducing Subsidy abhiyan' randomly. The amount of subsidy will start reducing in a big way from everywhere, Finance Ministry and NITI Aayog have taken such a decision and its process has already started. Allocation of funds for many public projects has been reduced in this year's budget. In the coming days, the fertilizer sector will be hit first by the subsidy cut.

It has been decided that states which reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and are more successful in using organic fertilizers will be given a share of the surplus subsidy for development. That is, in the coming days, the amount received from the center for the development of the state will increase only when the fertilizer subsidy can be reduced. Fertilizer subsidy will be limited to Rs 3 lakh crore in the next three financial years. Then gradually this subsidy will be given in minimum quantity, special plans have been taken to reduce the subsidy. The full name of the scheme called, Promotion of Alternate Nutrients for Agriculture Management Yojana (PRANAM), aims to promote balanced use of fertilisers along with bio-fertilisers. The names in the short, of these special schemes are "Pradhan Mantri Pranam Yojana" and "Market Development Assistance Scheme". The Union Cabinet approved the "Pradhan Mantri Pranam Yojana" today. States will be asked to provide 50 per cent of the surplus subsidy if they reduce the use of chemical fertilizers in the last three years.

The scheme was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the budget for 2023-24. The driving point behind the scheme is to cut down the subsidy burden on chemical fertilisers, which is estimated to reach Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-23, much higher than the previous years.

Sidana Institute of Education holds tree plantation



FW DESK
Amritsar

Expressing concern over the depleting tree cover in the city, its ill effects on the environment, and the resultant need for planting more trees, Sidana Institute of Education held a tree plantation drive in its campus at village Khiala Khurd. The institute planted around 135 trees including shady, flowering and fruit trees all over the campus, with each teacher planting at least one tree.

The teachers placed their nameplates on the trees planted by them to help them locate these and ensure that these trees are well cared for. The event was organized and managed by the Sidana Institute of Education.

Eminent Environmentalist Prakash Singh Bhatti, President, Missionaries Khudai-Khidmatgaaran, presided over the event, during which he also addressed the teachers of Sidana Institute of Education and the doctors at Sidana Multispecialty Hospital. He was honoured by Dr Jeewan Jyoti Sidana, Director, Sidana Institutes Amritsar, on this occasion.

Dr Jeewan Jyoti Sidana termed rampant deforestation as one of the key reasons behind the erratic weather patterns resulting in the extreme heat and cold in the summer and winter months, respectively, and the storms lashing the country. "The need of the hour is to plant as many trees as possible, wherever one finds space, besides ensuring that these green landmarks that we leave behind are well cared for, for the benefit of the whole humanity," she said.

AAP govt has failed moong farmers for second time in a row : Sukhbir Badal

CHANDIGARH: Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) president Sukhbir Singh Badal said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government had failed farmers for the second time in a row with moong growers being forced to go in for distress sale of their produce with government agencies failing to procure the same.

Calling for immediate purchase of moong by government agencies at the minimum support price (msp) of Rs 7,755 per quintal, the SAD president also demanded that the government compensate farmers for the losses suffered by them by selling short to private traders.

In a statement here, the SAD president said "last year farmers sowed moong following a personal appeal by chief minister Bhagwant Mann and an assurance that their produce would



be procured at msp. However the government procured only 17% of the total produce coming into the market leading to huge losses for farmers".

Asserting that the position was even worse this year, Sukhbir Badal said "this season government purchases are 77% less than last year. Government agencies have purchased only 2,280 quintals of moong till now compared to 9,902 quintals purchased during the same period last year". He said this had happened despite the fact that 42 mandis had been notified for procurement of moong.

Stating that the total abandonment of farmers at the hands of the AAP government had left them to the mercy of private traders, Badal said "private traders have purchased as much as 1.47 lakh quintals of moong from mandis in the State till now". He said farmers were forced to sell their produce around Rs 1,000 per quintal less than the msp of Rs 7,755 per quintal.

Condemning the chief minister for presiding over the total collapse of the farm economy in the State, Badal said "moong cultivation is encouraged in the State in the hope that it will not only lead to diversification but also save ground water". He said the chief minister had also announced that moong, maize and sunflower would be procured on msp due to which farmers had

increased the acreage under these crops. "Now when the time has come to procure the produce, the AAP government has run away from its responsibility". Asking the chief minister to give due attention to the agriculture sector as well as welfare of farmers, Badal said "even maize farmers have been left in the lurch. Against an msp of Rs 2090 per quintal, maize was sold at Rs 1900 per quintal recently". He said adequate dryers had also not been provided in the markets to help farmers dry their produce besides lack of cleaning facilities".

Sukhbir Badal said it was condemnable that the AAP government was not compensating farmers for losses suffered by them through the Bhavantar scheme which was being implemented in Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

Chandigarh's special child Prarthana Bhatia won team silver medal in 4x25 relay in swimming at the World Special Olympics Games Berlin



KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

Chandigarh's special child Prarthana Bhatia won team silver medal in 4x25 relay in swimming at the World Special Olympics Games Berlin.

Sunil Rai honored Prarthana Bhatia and her coach Sheetal Negi with a citation at the felicitation ceremony held at Chandigarh Press Club on Thursday. Prarthana's parents Vishal Bhatia and Anju Bhatia were also present on this occasion. Anju Bhatia said that she did not expect that her special child could bring a medal at the Olympic level in any Games.

Chief of the Army Staff pays obeisance at Sri Harmandir Sahib



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pandey along with his wife Archna Pandey paid obeisance in the sanctum sanctorum of the Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) here today.

He spent some time in the VIP enclosure of the Sanctum Sanctorum where he listened to Shabad Kirtan, thereafter he paid obeisance at Akal Takht (highest Sikh temporal seat). He was honored by the

SGPC officials in the Information Centre of the Sri Harmandir Sahib with a set of Sikh religious books, a replica of the Sri Harmandir Sahib and woolen shawls.

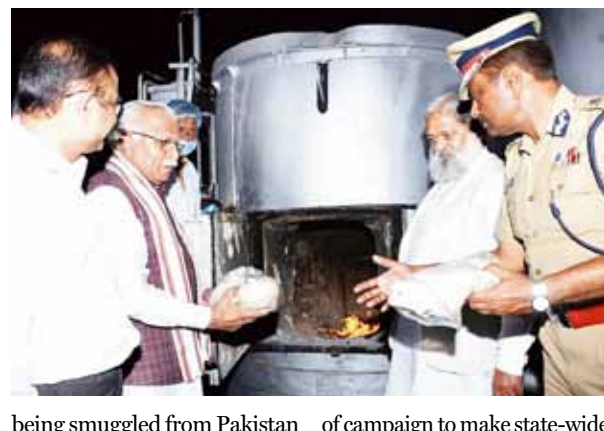
Before leaving the Information Centre of Sri Harmandir Sahib, he wrote in the visitor's book, "I feel blessed to have the privilege to pay obeisance in the Golden Temple. I pray before Almighty for the well-being of army personals of all ranks and their good health and May God keep them happy".

Drug-free Haryana campaign launched

SATISH HANDA

Looking to fast increasing cases of drug smuggling and addiction among people, especially youths, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has launched a state-wide drug-free Haryana campaign (Nasha-mukta Haryana Abhiyan) on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Day at Panchkula and also introduced a Task Force in the state to fight this evil. Information reveals that few districts in the state have been worst affected due to drug smuggling as well as supply of drugs which include Sirsa, Ambala, Yamunanagar and Panchkula generally known as hubs for drugs in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Khattar said, a multi-pronged strategy will be adopted by the Task Force to break the network of drugs smugglers mostly being supplied from neighboring Punjab states which is originally



being smuggled from Pakistan through drone services and delivery at the Indo-Pak border area in Punjab. Chief Minister urged the people of the illegal activities, besides an awareness campaign is being run all over in the state for this, mission teams have been constituted from village level to the urban areas in the state. Social welfare institutions and religious saints to work jointly for the success

of campaign to make state-wide drug-free Haryana.

The Chief Minister said that new task force constituted in the state would comprise of members from all social and religious organizations, government representatives, police personnel and representatives of concerned departments. He said, a smartphone app called 'Saathi' has been developed to curb the unlawful sale of

intoxicated drugs pharmaceuticals being supplied at large presently. He said, the interstate drug secretariat has been established at Panchkula, with an software 'Hawk' has been developed to keep a record of the database of drug smuggling and supply. According to state police data during year 2022 police had arrested 6044 persons involved in smuggling and sale of drugs in Haryana and government had demolished and attached properties of those in drug business of value worth between 52-53 crores. Information also reveals that there are 152 drug de-addiction centres in Haryana state for the treatment of those addicted to drugs. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Haryana along with Home Minister Anil Vij and P.K. Aggarwal DGP Haryana had destroyed drugs recovered from drug smugglers of value worth Rs 101 crore a couple of days ago.

Haryana to host Startup G20 meeting in July

SATISH HANDA

After hosting the G20 working groups meet in March, during this year Haryana government gearing up to host two rounds of discussions in meetings at Gurugram between July 3-14 in which large number of guests, entrepreneurs are likely to attend meetings, it was disclosed to media persons by Sanjeev Kaushal Chief Secretary Haryana at Chandigarh. Khattar said that as many as three IAS officers and 80 HCS officers have been deployed to take care of the invited guests from different countries. He said, the first event, Startups-20 Shikhar will be organised by the department of industrial policy and promotion in collaboration with the state government on July 3 and 4 at Gurugram. The second event on crime and security will be organised by the Union ministry of home affairs on July 13 and 14.



gentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union are likely to participate in the conference. He told that nine countries — Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain, and the UAE, have also been invited as guests to the conference.

Sharing details about the scheduled events with media persons, the chief secretary said the conference on crime and security will address the

challenges posed by emerging technologies such as non-fungible tokens, artificial intelligence, and the metaverse, and their impact on crime and security. He added that the conference will provide a platform for experts, policymakers, and stakeholders from around the world to engage in meaningful discussions, share insights, and develop strategies. He said district administration Gurugram has been advised to maintain law and order as well as traffic conditions during visit of guest and arrangements for their stay have been made this time at Hotel Hyat and Hotel Grand Hyat instead of Hotel Sheela.

Cong divided in groups in Haryana might lose 2024 polls if failed to unite

SATISH HANDA

Congress lost power in 2019 in Haryana state only due to internal rift between party's senior leaders and in spite of defeat in 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls still there is no improvement in relationship between senior party leaders still divided in two groups led by former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also leader of opposition in state Vidhan Sabha and former Union Minister Kumari Selja also a former Rajya Sabha member as well as former HPCC president in the state. Surprisingly, even the members of rival groups do not attend party gatherings by the leader of both groups which was observed recently in a function when Kumari Selja had a get-together at her Ambala Cantt residence about a month ago in which large number of Congress leaders and workers from Ambala and adjoining districts were present but to utter surprise there was not a single Congress worker or leader from rival Hooda group present in this function, when questioned by media persons Selja changed the topic.



was held in Chandigarh recently on 24th and 25th June in which Deepak Babaria the new in-charge of the party in Haryana state was present as the chief guest in this meeting authorized by the Congress high command as well as HPCC President Uday Bhan who had invited All India Congress Committee members, Congress MLAs in the state, former MPs and former MLAs to attend this meeting and take feeding from them for the coming Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls in the state.

Information reveals that after a long time such meeting was held by Congress in Haryana in which the leaders of Congress had been called on a platform by senior

Congress leader Deepak Babaria was going to hold the first time meeting after assuming the post of party in-charge in the state to review preparations for 2014 polls and seek suggestions by former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Congress National General Secretary Randeep Surjewala, senior leaders Kiran Choudhary, Kumari Selja, Captain Ajay Yadav and many more in the list including former MPs and MLAs as well as district presidents in the party in the state invited to join meeting after absence of Congress activities in the state after about nine years which is a biggest challenge before the newly appointed in-charge to end factionalism within the party.

Opposition comprising of quail, monkey and bear preparing 'Maha-gathbandhan' to face lion in 2024 polls: Khattar

SATISH HANDA

Talking to media persons, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on the issue of political parties in opposition preparing for 'Maha-gathbandhan' raised a question how quail (Bater), monkey (Bandar) and bear (Bhalu) may join hands to create a 'Maha-gathbandha' in order to face lion in coming 2024 polls. Focusing on Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Maan recently joined rally at Patna on formation of 'Maha-gathbandha' had made a statement as regard Narendra Modi comparing him with a lion, saying that all leaders of political parties in opposition are joining hands to prepare themselves to face Modi similar to a lion and its surprising that now Bhagwant Maan himself has joined hand with this proposed 'Maha-gathbandhan' group.

While replying to a media question, Khattar said that leaders of political parties in opposition cannot be successful in uniting themselves because of their different views, policies, aims and self-vested



interests as such 'Maha-gathbandhan' under such circumstances cannot be possible or prove successful under democratic circumstances. Khattar claimed BJP was successful in all rallies held recently in Haryana state including Amit Shah's rally at Sirsa which is regarded as an non-BJP belt in the state.

Chief Minister Khattar, on a three-days tour of Sirsa for the 'Jan Samvad' programme had completed in eight districts and a plan was made for the remaining districts also during this month. However, BJP has taken a decision regarding simultaneous polls that would depend on the results in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Mizoram states where elections are scheduled to be held during this year 'send.

Manipur Violence: Ibobi Singh not given sufficient time in all-party meeting, alleges Congress

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT

In the highly anticipated all-party meeting held on Saturday evening in Delhi, the Congress party has alleged that its representative, three-time Manipur Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh, was not given sufficient time to present the party's perspectives on the ongoing turmoil in the state. Ibobi expressed his disappointment in a press conference following the meeting, stating that he had only been allotted a meager 7-8 minutes to share his views. He further mentioned that he had requested an additional five minutes to express his opinions, but the request was denied.

The state of Manipur continues to grapple with persistent violence and unrest, as the government's efforts to restore peace have proven ineffective. Not even the visit of Home Minister Amit Shah could quell the turmoil engulfing the region. With over 50 days of continuous violence, the all-party meeting aimed to address the situation, bringing



As the violence persists, a group of courageous women known as Meira Paibis stand watch at night, safeguarding their villages and residents from malicious attackers and acts of arson in Senjam Chirang, Imphal West, Manipur.

PHOTO: ARIBAM BISHWAJIT

together prominent leaders from various political parties, including the BJP, Congress, Shiv Sena, Trinamool Congress, Mizo National Front, BJD, AIADMK, DMK, RJD, Samajwadi Party, and AAP.

Echoing Ibobi's sentiments, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh criticized the meeting, dismissing it as a mere formality. Ramesh emphasized that Ibobi

was the only leader from Manipur present at the all-party meeting, and he regarded the lack of opportunity to fully express his point of view as an insult not just to the former Chief Minister and the Congress party but also to the people of Manipur.

The Congress party had previously voiced its dissatisfaction with the meeting, deeming it "too little, too late." Congress



leader K.C. Venugopal emphasized, "After 50 days of death and destruction in Manipur, the Home Minister's call for an all-party meeting is insufficient and belated. The government only took action after Sonia Gandhi ji's address to the people of Manipur."

Earlier, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also expressed frustration with Prime Minister Modi's silence on the matter. In a tweet, Gandhi pointed out that Manipur had been engulfed in flames for 50 days, yet the Prime Minister remained silent. He further criticized the timing of the all-party meeting, noting that it was called while the Prime Minister was out of the country, suggesting that it was not a priority for him. Despite the conclusion of the meeting, no reports have indicated any

fruitful results that could alleviate the prevailing law and order crisis in Manipur.

Manipur has been gripped by a state of turmoil and violence since May 3, following a rally organized by the All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) in protest against a Manipur High Court order. The court had directed the state government to send a recommendation to the Centre regarding the demand to include the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribes (STs) list. The wave of unrest has resulted in over 100 deaths and the destruction of thousands of homes.

The situation in Manipur calls for immediate attention and prompt action from both the state and central governments. It is crucial for all stakeholders to collaborate and find a lasting solution that restores peace and stability to the region. Comprehensive and inclusive measures must be taken to address the grievances and concerns of all communities, paving the way for peaceful coexistence in Manipur.

Manipur Women Vendors Association Calls for Political Unity, opposes President's Rule

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT

In an apparent response to the demands of some political parties seeking a change in the chief ministership, Khwairamband Keithel Nupi Marup, an association representing approximately 1000 women vendors, has called for unity among political parties, MLAs, and ministers to work towards a common goal. Laishram Memma, President of the Manipur Keithel Nupi Marup, conveyed this message during a press conference held at the Manipur Press Club, reiterating the people's opposition to President's rule in Manipur.

Memma drew attention to the ongoing attacks by armed Kuki militants since May 3, which have resulted in the tragic loss of innocent lives in the outskirts of the Valley areas. Stressing the urgent need for ministers, MLAs, and political parties to unite, she emphasized the importance of establishing a common goal to address this issue. Memma discouraged the culture of blame and criticism, stating that the people of Ma-



nipur are already familiar with the conduct of both past and present governments.

The representative also urged political parties, ministers, and MLAs to refrain from advocating for President's Rule or seeking a change in the state government leadership. Memma criticized the Union Home Minister for expressing administrative preferences that create divisions between the hills and valleys, demanding clarification on this matter.

Raising concerns about hid-

den agendas, Memma questioned the motives behind the Mizoram BJP's support for President's rule in Manipur. She highlighted the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum's stance on changing the Chief Minister, threatening non-cooperation with ongoing peace talks unless their demands are met. Emphasizing the importance of transparency, Memma called on these groups to disclose their hidden agendas to the common people, as achieving peace should be the top priority.

ED summons Trinamool youth wing chief Sayani Ghosh in Bengal job scam case



NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) probing the multi-crore school recruitment case in West Bengal has now summoned actress-turned-politician and Trinamool Congress state youth wing president Sayani Ghosh for questioning in connection with the case.

She was summoned at ED's central government office (CGO) complex at Salt Lake in the northern outskirts of Kolkata on June 30. A notice had been served to Ghosh late Tuesday evening, sources said.

Sources said that the notice to Ghosh was issued after two clues came to the notice of ED sleuths. The first was recovery of some WhatsApp chats between Ghosh and expelled youth Congress leader Kuntal Ghosh, who is currently in judicial custody because of his alleged involvement in the school recruitment case.

Secondly, sources said, some banking transactions between Sayani Ghosh and Kuntal Ghosh relating to some purchase of property were found. The WhatsApp chat history from the mobile phone of Kuntal Ghosh.

Sayani Ghosh is not the first celebrity from the Bengali silver screen world who has been summoned and questioned by ED sleuths in connection with the school recruitment case. In March this year, actor Bonny Sengupta was similarly questioned by the central agency sleuths after it came to the notice that the investigating officials got access to clues of Sengupta receiving a huge amount of money from Kuntal Ghosh.

President to participate in 125th birth anniversary celebrations of Alluri Sitarama Raju on July 4

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu will be visiting Hyderabad on July 4 to participate in the 125th birth anniversary celebrations of legendary freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju.

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari presided over a high-level coordination meeting and reviewed the arrangements to be made in connection with the visit of the President.

She directed the officials to make elaborate arrangements as per the protocol in close coordination with all the line departments. "Repairs to roads across the route should be taken up immediately. Baricading and adequate bandobast arrangements should be made. Sanitation and cleanliness should be ensured," the Chief Secretary told the



officials.

The electricity department has been asked to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the visit. Medical team should be kept ready in case of an emergency.

DGP Anjani Kumar, Special Chief Secretaries Sunil Sharma, Arvind Kumar, Principal Secretary Home Jitender,

DG Fire Services Nagi Reddy, Hyderabad CP Stephen Ravindra, Secretary GAD Sheshadri, Secretary R&B Srinivas Raju.

Born on July 4, 1897, Alluri Sitarama Raju is remembered for his fight against the British, to safeguard the interests of the tribal communities in the Eastern Ghats region (in Andhra Pradesh).

Karnataka govt's Shakti scheme free bus travel for women sees 23% jump in daily travelling

ARUNKUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Karnataka Government's Shakti scheme for women, which offers free travel on state-run buses, has pushed up public transport patronage. The average number of people travelling by state buses including BMTC daily has touched 1.03 crore. A 23 percent jump according to the sources. Transport minister Ramalinga Reddy told media that "This is a significant increase. More people have started travelling by state-run buses in the last two weeks". In fact, the average number of people travelling by buses of all four corporations—KSRTC, BMTC, NEKRTC AND NWKRTC—was 84 lakhs per day before the shakti scheme was rolled out. He also said that there is need to increase the fleet size of all the RTCs by at



least 10,000 buses to meet the increasing patronage. According to Sources, in the last two weeks, more than 7.6 crore women passengers have travelled in state buses and the total value of tickets expended on them added to around Rs 180 crore. The daily women ridership count even crossed the 60 lakh mark from the previous average of 42 lakh. Anbukumar, Managing Di-

rector of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) told media, "once the scheme was launched, there was an overwhelming response from the women passengers. Due to rise in demand, occupancy has increased from 70 to 90 percent in ordinary services. Interestingly, on weekends and holidays, the number of people travelling in our buses jumped significantly. The increased rid-

ership will help the corporations optimally utilise their fleet and improve revenue. Depending on demand, we are running more buses on certain routes," he added.

The free bus-travel scheme may have got an overwhelming response from women, but not all are enthused. The scheme has thrown up some new challenges for commuters, the authorities concerned as well as other stakeholders in the mobility sector as there have been multiple instances of creak facing the ire of passengers. Auto drivers in the city say the free facility has resulted in revenue loss for them. "They said," it has become very difficult to earn even Rs 400 per day. We are hardly getting any passengers now. At a time when we are facing competition from bike-taxis, this free bus travel has come as another blow".

Gath-bandhan or Thug-bandhan? Opposition leaders neither sincere nor have any policy: Anurag Thakur

SATISH HANDA

During 'Gauravshali Bharat Rally' organized by Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) at Panipat in Haryana, Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur while addressing media said that nearly 15 political leaders of different political parties gathered at Patna to form a 'Maha-gathbandhan' to fight jointly against BJP and defeat in coming Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls. Anurag Thakur said, he fails to understand if it is a 'Gath-bandhan' or a 'Thug-bandhan' without having any sincere leader or any firm policy.

Pointing at thr Congress, Anurag Thakur reminded film 'Devdas' saying that people had seen this film on screen through reel and now they will see it as a real film in which Congress playing lead role, whereas other prominent key



roles are being played by different artists including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, former UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and few others involved in conspiracy against ruling Narendra Modi led BJP government in the country. He said that the meeting held at Patna recently ended without any specific result regarding 'Maha Gath-bandhan', except an agenda regarding discussion over Rahul Gandhi's marriage and his mother Sonia Gandhi unhappy due to this.

Two crore Govt jobs every year merely a fake promise to youths: Report

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA

The promise of 2 crore Government jobs every year remained only promises to youths, according to the data of the Union Ministry of Finance, there is an example of the government's failure in central government jobs in the era of Modi Government. Cracking down on the prices of petrol and diesel, a new record was revealed after increasing unemployment among the youth across the country. According to the latest report of the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance, at present there are 30 lakh 13 thousand central government employees across the country. This is the lowest number of central government employees since 2010. Also, as the report states, both the number of posts and jobs sanctioned by the central government have declined significantly in the last 3 years.

Presently the number of vacant posts in central gov-



ernment jobs is 9 lakh 64 thousand. Union Territories are also considered as a state. How did the number of posts decrease? According to the Finance Ministry's Annual Report on 'Salaries and Allowances', as on March 1, 2021, the number of regular workers sanctioned by the Center (excluding Union Territories) in the civilian sector stood at 40 lakh 35 thousand. But on March 1, 2022, it reduced to 39 lakh 77 thousand. It appears that there has been a lot of pressure regarding recruitment to Group C posts. At the same time, there has also been a considerable decrease in the number of employees working in the posts of the Central Government.

NIA raids multiple locations in Kashmir in crackdown on OGW network



FW DESK

National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted multiple raids in Kashmir valley on Monday.

A local news agency GNS reported that an NIA team with the assistance of police and CRPF conducted searches at multiple locations in Kashmir.

They said the raids were being conducted in south Kashmir's Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian districts, and north Kashmir's Baniptora.

The raids are being conducted in case RC 5/22 regarding the crackdown on Overground Workers network.

Sudden spike in prices of vegetables will go down soon: Officials

FW CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

The spurt in prices of tomato is a temporary seasonal phenomenon, and rates will cool down soon, a top government official said, as retail prices of the kitchen staple shot up to Rs 100 per kg in major cities.

It is a highly perishable commodity. Transportation gets affected in areas that received sudden rains. It is a temporary issue. Prices will cool down soon. It happens every year during this time," said an official at the Department of consumer affairs. Stating that there is a seasonality in tomato, he said the data on tomato prices of the last five years shows that the rates have risen every year at this time. From Himachal



Pradesh, the supply to Delhi will start coming in the next 10 days and prices will soften.

According to the data maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs, the average price of tomato on an all-India basis is Rs 46 per kg on June 27. The modal price is Rs 50 per kg while the maximum price is Rs 122 per kg. Across four metros, the retail price of tomato in Delhi is Rs 80 per kg, Mumbai is Rs 80-110 per kg, Kolkata is Rs 100-150 per kg and Chennai is Rs 50-70 per kg.

AIMPLB to 'strongly' oppose UCC proposal

LUCKNOW: The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) will oppose the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC) law, which seeks to formulate and implement a set of common personal laws for all the citizens of India regardless of their religion, caste, and creed, as per the religious body's member Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali.

A decision to this effect was taken in an emergency online meeting late on Tuesday evening after Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocated for the nationwide implementation of the law.

During the online meeting -- attended by AIMPLB president Saifullah Rehmani, Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali, chairman of Islamic Centre of India and member of AIMPLB, AIMPLB lawyers and others -- the Muslim body agreed on presenting its views more powerfully in front of the Law Commission.

At the meeting, the documents to be submitted to the Law Commission were also



The views put forward by Prime Minister Modi on Tuesday were in sync with the affidavit filed by the Union ministry of law in the Supreme Court a few months ago.

The affidavit said that "citizens belonging to different religions and denominations following different property and matrimonial laws is an affront to the nation's unity". Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali said, "AIMPLB will oppose the Uniform Civil Code tooth and nail. We are chalking out a strategy to counter the proposed move of the government by presenting our view in front of the law commission more powerfully. All prominent Muslim leaders of the country were present in the online meeting held on Tuesday."

If Modi govt stands tall, its because of UPA govt, says Chidambaram

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Monday hit out at Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman saying that she has highlighted five achievements of the Modi government, of which three are not true and that if the central government stands tall in some areas, it is because it is standing on the shoulders of the UPA government.

In a tweet, Chidambaram, a former Union Finance Minister, said, "The Finance Minister has penned an article on the achievements of the Modi government. Many examples she has cited are true as would be true of every government that has ruled for 5 or 10 years. The FM has cited 5 examples of the Opposition taking the government to Court and losing the case."

"She is wrong at least in three: The Supreme Court had de-



clared triple talaq illegal even before Parliament passed a law. The Article 370 case has not yet been heard by the Court. Numerous cases under the GST laws are pending," Chidambaram said.

The Congress leader further said that the Finance Minister claims credit for India achieving top ranks in production of milk, honey and fruit and vegetables.

"These ranks were achieved years ago and we retain those ranks. The FM claims credit for Direct Benefit Transfer. She forgets that Aadhaar was conceived, created and rolled out by the UPA government and the first transfers under

DBT were done by the UPA government. The Finance Minister boasts about the 11.72 crore toilets built. She should read her own government's reports on how many of them are unused and unusable because they lack water," he said.

"Every government will have achievements to its credit. So does the Modi government. If the Modi government stands tall in some areas, it is because it is standing on the shoulders of the UPA government," Chidambaram said.

The Congress has been critical of the government on several issues and has been highlighting the failures of the government which includes faulty implementation of GST, demonetisation and unemployment at 40-year-high among others. Chidambaram even has questioned the government on several policy related issues.

Cabinet approves Introduction of National Research Foundation Bill, 2023 in Parliament

It will strengthen research eco-system in the country

FW DESK
New Delhi

Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the introduction of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023 in the Parliament. The approved Bill will pave the way to establish NRF that will seed, grow and promote Research and Development (R&D) and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.

The bill, after approval in the Parliament, will establish NRF, an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per



recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP), at a total estimated cost of Rs. 50,000 crore during five years (2023-28).

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the administrative Department of NRF which will be governed by a Governing Board consisting of eminent researchers and professionals across disciplines. Since the scope of the NRF is wide-ranging - impacting all ministries - the Prime Minister will be the ex-officio President of the Board and the Union Minister

of Science & Technology & Union Minister of Education will be the ex-officio Vice-Presidents. NRF's functioning will be governed by an Executive Council chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

NRF will forge collaborations among the industry, academia, and government departments and research institutions, and create an interface mechanism for participation and contribution of industries and State governments in addition to the scientific and line ministries.

Act now as rising food prices pose inflationary risks

Indian households are grappling with soaring prices of essential kitchen staples, presenting a renewed challenge for consumers. The prices of tomatoes, onions, potatoes, tur dal, and rice have witnessed significant increases, putting a strain on household budgets. Tomato prices, in particular, have more than doubled in a month, with the average retail price reaching Rs 53.59 per kilogram on June 29, compared to Rs 24.37 on May 29. Although the rise in onion and potato prices over the same period seems relatively modest at 7.5% and 4.5% respectively, the overall trend of price gains across the food basket reflects underlying inflationary pressures in the economy. The price of tur dal, a vital protein source for vegetarian households, continues to surge, rising by 7.8% month-on-month to Rs 130.75 per kilogram on June 29. Official retail inflation data for May indicated a 31-month high of 6.56% in pulses prices, including tur dal, registering a year-on-year increase of 128 basis points. Despite the government's imposition of stock limits on urad and tur dal on June 2, price gains in lentils have remained unabated. While seasonal factors and market dynamics influence farm produce prices, the current price levels for various food items, including tomatoes, remain significantly higher compared to the same period last year. With monsoon rains currently 13% below normal levels and the uncertainty surrounding the spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall due to the El Niño phenomenon, there is a real risk of food prices triggering a further acceleration in retail inflation. Policy-makers must prioritize efforts to curb inflation, as sustainable inclusive growth depends on maintaining price stability. The Reserve Bank of India's economists emphasized the importance of price stability in paving the way for high-quality, inclusive economic growth. As such, it is imperative for policymakers to not only acknowledge the inflationary risks posed by rising food prices but also take appropriate measures to mitigate them.

LETTERBOX

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What you feel,
you attract.
What you
imagine, you
become

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COLONEL SHASHANK RANJAN BELIEVES SOLUTIONS TO MILITANCY-RELATED CHALLENGES ARE NOT OBTAINED IN SILOS

Pay heed to militancy resurgence

The Rajouri-Poonch region of Jammu and Kashmir has been in the news recently for all the wrong reasons. The border districts here have seen a relative surge in terror-related incidents over the last couple of years. Since October 2021, militants have killed at least 20 soldiers in the area between the Bhatta Durian-Chamrer forests in Poonch and Pargal-Dangri in Rajouri; in the latest incident, five special forces soldiers were lost in a blast on May 5 during a combing operation. This region has been relatively calmer since the mid-2000s, after being a hotbed of insurgency in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. Traditional infiltration routes were through the hilly and forested terrain of Rajouri-Poonch, mainly being on the Line of Control (LoC). Terrorists infiltrating through the Poonch, Mendar and Rajouri sub-sectors of the LoC used to pass through these areas while heading for the Pir Panjal ranges to enter the Valley. An extensive network of over ground workers and an associated support base flourished in the region. Also, the forested area of Surankote (in Poonch district) on the higher ridges was used as transit camps and training grounds for terrorists.

Gurjar-Bakkarwals as a pillar of support

This was the context to Operation Sarp Vinash (of 2022) also known as the Hill Kaka Operations launched by the Counter Insurgency Force 'Romeo'. The operation resulted in the elimination of an estimated 65-70 terrorists. While being deployed in the region since the early 1990s, hundreds of security personnel have made great sacrifices for peace. The forces have also been strongly supported by the local population. The demography of the region is one of Muslim domination with the Gurjar-Bakkarwal community in the majority.

The support of the Gurjar-Bakkarwals to the Indian Army saw the first Muslim village



defence committee being set up in this region in December 2002, in response to atrocities on locals by Harkat-ul-Mujahideen cadres. The support of the Gurjar-Bakkarwals to the Indian state in counter-insurgency operations gained traction when in 2002, Tahir Hussain returned to Surankote from employment in Saudi Arabia to avenge the death of his brother killed by the Lashkar-e-Taiba. Several others from Surankote tehsil, accompanied Tahir Hussein to fight the insurgents who had consolidated themselves in the forested areas of Surankote. Since 2004-05, peace has prevailed largely because the people decided to stand up to the terrorists; the Gurjar-Bakkarwals have had a major role to play in this.

A revival of militancy

Having seen the sensitivity of Rajouri-Poonch, the recent revival of militancy, though not on the scale it was earlier, is a matter of concern. It is quite certain that terrorist cadres and their leadership in Pakistan will be looking to diversify in wanting to become a force to reckon with, much beyond the Kashmir Valley. The constant variable in

recent terror strikes in this region has been that militants continue to be at large, except for one 'kill' during an operation launched by security forces on June 1.

There are many attributes to the short-term gains that terror cadres have been able to achieve. According to government sources, analysts and the media, a few of the factors in favour of the terrorists are: use of smart technology by terrorists to communicate and move around, operations in small groups and from urban pockets, a thinned down counter-insurgency grid in Jammu region due to troops being pulled out for deployment on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), reinvigoration of sleeper cells and over ground workers, a deepening drug menace and its nexus with terrorism.

Also, certain sections maintain that infiltration is not taking place in a conventional manner across the LoC any more, but is happening through the Nepal and Bangladesh borders. In a nutshell, the causes behind a revival of militancy in this region are multifarious and by re-establishing support of Gujjar-Bakkarwals, all the challenges could be overcome. In the short and mid term,

outsmarting terrorists in the use of technology or defeating them in use of rhetoric on social media has always proved to be a tall order for state agencies.

Relevant questions

The most crucial questions that the very few are asking are these: 'What has led to the drying up of hitherto local support that could have overcome all handicaps stacked against the state?' 'Has the Gurjar-Bakkarwal community been alienated?' It has been established beyond reasonable doubt that terror can thrive only on the plank of support of the local population, irrespective of the technology and the methodology that the terrorists adopt.

Looking back at the socio-political landscape of the region, there could be many reasons behind the distancing of the majority population in Rajouri-Poonch, from the state. In addition to issues such as unemployment, a few of the drivers that seem to have mattered are gaps in sound implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006 in Jammu and Kashmir that has directly affected the Gurjar-Bakkarwals, and the deepening and festering divide between Gurjar-Bakkarwals and Paharis over the reservation issue.

The proxy war by Pakistan forms a subset of a grey zone or hybrid warfare and calls for a 'whole of government' approach. Solutions to militancy-related challenges are not obtained in silos and permeate through several layers in society including governance and, most importantly, the realm of justice. The stakes are high and peace in the Rajouri-Poonch region rests on the sweat and blood of soldiers and the Gurjar-Bakkarwals. It is time the state saw the realities clearly.

Colonel Shashank Ranjan is a retired Infantry officer, currently an Adjunct Professor with OP Jindal Global University. He has served extensively in the Rajouri-Poonch region while deployed for counter insurgency



V. SURYANARAYAN EMPHASIZES COOPERATION BETWEEN STATE AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS TO SAFEGUARD DIASPORA'S INTERESTS.

Outreach to diaspora and statesmanship crucial for govts

In a speech while addressing the Tamil diaspora in Tokyo in the course of his overseas tour in May 2023, to Singapore and Japan, to attract investments to the State, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, had said that the Government of Tamil Nadu would protect the Tamil diaspora that has spread far and wide in search of education, business, and employment. He added that protecting the Tamil language meant protecting the Tamil community. He held forth the promise that his government and the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) would extend all support to the Tamil community.

Among the Indian diaspora, Tamils constitute a substantial number. They form the overwhelming majority of the Indian population in Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, are in good numbers in Myanmar, Mauritius, South Africa, the Seychelles, the Re-Union Islands, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Australia, New Zealand, the Gulf countries, the United States and Canada, Britain and the European countries.

These dynamic groups have three identities — first, the Tamil identity; second, the Indian identity, and third, the identity of the countries in which they have settled. Equally interesting is the phenomenon of the diaspora of the diaspora. From Fiji, Malaysia, and Singapore, the Indian diaspora is migrating to greener pastures such as Australia, Canada, and the U.S. Bharati Mukherjee, the well-known diasporic writer, was apt in saying: "I am a woman with a series of countries. It is necessary for me to put down roots wherever I land and wherever I choose to stay."

It would be simplistic and naïve to assume that the hopes that they entertain and



the problems that they face are identical. It is closely related to the nature of their migration, their numerical numbers, their educational and professional attainments, their economic clout, and, above all, the majority-minority syndrome in the host countries. The Tamil diaspora has excelled in politics, economics, literature, the fine arts, sports, and science. A few names that shine include Dr. Chandrasekhar, Monty Naicker, Sambandan, Janaki Thevar, T.S. Maniam, Saumiyamoorthy Thondanam, S.R. Nathan, Muthiah Muralitharan, Nagamattoo, Indira Nooyi, Sundar Pichai, Raghuram Rajan and Kamala Harris.

Host country policies, their impact

Stalin's speech is a reminder of two statements made by Jawaharlal Nehru, in Malaya in March 1946 — "When India becomes free, her hands will be long and powerful to protect each and every one of her children abroad." And, "Indians abroad must remain united and guard their rights and uphold their heads proudly as Indians — children of a country with a great past and greater future."

But Nehru's hopes were soon shattered.

The first legislative enactment of Ceylon, soon after independence, was to render the Indian Tamils, who were taken to Ceylon under the protective umbrella of the British Government, to provide labour in the tea plantations. Nehru's principled stand was that all those who considered Ceylon to be their home and have stayed there for long should be conferred citizenship. Ceylon argued that it was its sovereign right to introduce citizenship regulations.

The Burmese government never granted citizenship to thousands of Indian Tamils and expelled them. On the eve of their departure, the Burmese currency was demonetised. The women could not even bring their mangalyasutra with them. As far as neighbouring countries are concerned, bilateral relations have two dimensions.

The first is to improve relations with governments, politically, economically, and culturally. The second is to protect and foster the interests of Indian minority groups. An overview of India's policy towards Sri Lanka shows that to improve political relations, New Delhi, on some occasions, was willing to sacrifice the interests of the Indian diaspora. The Sirimavo-Shastri Pact of October 1964 is an example of betrayal. New Delhi adopted the policy of give and take and converted the Indian Tamil community into merchandise to be divided between the two countries. It must be highlighted that all important leaders of the Madras Presidency, Rajagopalachari, Kamaraj Nadar, C.N. Annadurai, P. Ramamurti, and Krishna Menon were opposed to the agreement.

Stalin has highlighted the necessity to protect and promote the Tamil language. But the sad fact remains is that in many countries, the Tamil community has for-

gotten the Tamil language, one of the key elements of Tamil culture.

Federal camaraderie is essential

The policy towards the Indian diaspora comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the central government. Even then, State governments can influence policies by building public opinion. What is essential, in the present context, is camaraderie and friendship between the Narendra Modi government and the DMK government.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), could have used the term 'persecuted minorities'. The CAA also does not include Sri Lanka, where ethnic fratricide has compelled many Tamils to come to Tamil Nadu as refugees. New Delhi terms Sri Lankan Tamil refugees as illegal immigrants and argues that they must go back to Sri Lanka.

Instead of trying to have cordial relations with the central government, a policy of confrontation by Tamil Nadu would be self-defeating. What the refugees want is Indian citizenship. All of them fulfil the residential qualifications laid down in the Indian Citizenship Act. Indian Tamil refugees, who number 29,500, are stateless. What is more, Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are willing to surrender their Sri Lankan citizenship to get Indian citizenship.

The need of the hour is for the state and central government to come together and arrive at an amicable solution. This calls for statesmanship, not political opportunism.

V. Suryanarayan is the Founding Director and Senior Professor (retired), Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Madras. Views are personal

BOOKS: REVIEW

New novel blends fact, fiction; offers literary reflection on modern society

The idea of the experimental non-fiction novel that plays with news and meanders through the quirky alleys of journalism is an intriguing one. American writing, which has been bold and spirited particularly on the terrain of non-fiction and journalism, has blazed some striking trails here — be it the radical left critique of American culture in John Dos Passos' U.S.A. Trilogy, the imaginative New Journalism of Norman Mailer, or the searing Vietnam-era coverage by journalists such as Michael Herr.

"The Light at the End of the World" by Siddhartha Deb is a notable addition to this tradition, attempting to blend non-fiction and fiction in a thought-provoking exploration of the intersection between the two genres. Deb's novel delves into the realm of

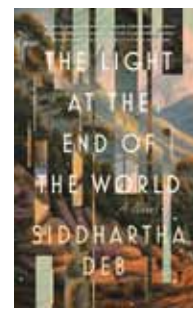
journalism and news, challenging the conventions of storytelling and pushing the boundaries of literary experimentation.

The real challenge for such writing, when it courts the imaginative uniqueness of literature, is to do something different from what the newspaper does even as it plays with that form. Should fictional lives end up confirming media reports and their stereotypes, or should they tease them and create something recognisable yet alien?

Deb takes up this challenge by crafting a narrative that blurs the lines between reality and fiction, weaving a story that engages with contemporary issues while incorporating elements of allegory and historical events. The private lives of key characters embody the fictive stakes of such novels. "The Light at the End of the World"

The real challenge for such writing, when it courts the imaginative uniqueness of literature, is to do something different from what the newspaper does even as it plays with that form

draws the reader in with some real empathy for the protagonist, Bibi, the near-anonymous, marginal employee in a policy report-producing company in the midst of rabid, reactionary times that is an allegory of our present. The novel introduces us to Bibi, a character who represents the struggles and challenges faced



The Light at the End of the World
Siddhartha Deb
Context
458 pages; Rs 799

by individuals in today's world. Through her experiences, the reader gains insight into the complexities of contemporary society and the impact of media and social media on individuals' lives. Bibi's journey serves as a mirror to our own realities, evoking a sense of empathy and connection.

Surreal times

But the allegorisation, where the private melts into the public, is where the novel falters. It embeds everything we know today from news headlines and social media storms. In sentences such as these, the allegorisation becomes see-through: "In the longest of the entries, Muktibodh

ingeniously connects the Brahmastra superweapon being developed by the Indian conglomerate Ombani with a superbug resistant to every known antibiotic that has been classified as NaMo-03."

Passages like these might have packed their punch in the novel if they were not ubiquitous: "Everywhere, there are men, and some women, outing Bibi — as a Pakistani agent, as a prostitute, as a sex-crazed woman, as a lesbian, as the holder of fake university degrees, as a Naxal, as a plagiariser who stole her reporting from others. Sometimes she is a Muslim, sometimes a Christian, sometimes a Marxist, numerous versions of Bibi out there on the multiverse of the internet, living lives that are variations."

The hostility she faces is savage and brutal, but given the surreal times in which we live, such fiction fails to enrich or complicate our digitally enhanced reality in any way: "Some send videos that Bibi doesn't want to watch but that start playing automatically as soon as the message arrives, without even her touching the screen.

MCX extends software service pact with 63 moons for one more time

MUMBAI: After failing to execute its project management of technology migration, the Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX) has extended its software service support arrangement with 63 moons technologies for six months one more time.

MCX has decided to extend the support services of its existing software provider 63 moons technologies for six months from July 1 to December 31, 2023, at a consideration of Rs 250 crore.

In its filing to BSE on Thursday, 63 moons said, "We wish to inform you that we have once again agreed to the eleventh-hour request by MCX, which according to MCX is for the 'last time' for one more time. We sincerely wish that this 'last time' really happens someday,



so that we deploy our excellent team of exchange technology engineering group in a mega promising opportunity in a new digital world."

Notably, this is the third time that MCX approached 63 moons to extend the software support

service arrangement after the long-term agreement with MCX ended on September 30, 2022.

MCX selected the new technology service provider TCS way back in February 2021. According to the agreement with TCS, MCX had to migrate to the new

technology starting from April 1, 2022. However, MCX failed to get desired results from TCS within the specified timeline.

63 moons stated: "We have been offering MCX since August 2020 an option to purchase the software source code for self-use which is in line with the practices adopted by all best exchanges in India as well as across the globe. We also offered them long-term contracts of two years in 2022. However, for the reasons best known to them, they have not opted for it. These are mission-critical technology which is of the highest excellence in functionality and performance."

The 63 moons technology exchange engine has been at the heart of MCX since 2003, working uninterruptedly for 16 hours a day all throughout.

"As the founders and well-wishers of MCX, we wish them good luck with these new experiments and hope that they will reach the right destination one day," 63 moons added.

MCX said, "We understand the importance of providing a reliable and robust platform to our users, and we are committed to continuously improving our services. We will communicate to all our stakeholders about the roll-out plan to migrate to the new Commodity Derivatives Platform."

63 moons technologies mainly provides next-generation technology ventures and solutions for creating digital markets and marketplaces that enable price discovery and transaction efficiencies across industry segments.

MSMEs should be the core of economic policy formulation: FISME President

NEW DELHI: The government needs to position Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the centre of all policy making set-up, said the Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME).

On the occasion of 'World MSME Day' (June 27), Prashant Patel, President, FISME said, "The World MSME day reminds us that masses are employed with MSMEs. For instance, not more than 10% of people are employed in formal sector in India."

He emphasised that majority of people are either self-employed or working with self-employed and suggested that MSMEs should be in the centre of our all policy making set-up up to District level.

Reflecting on the challenges Patel pointed out that governance systems in cities and towns where they are located are almost completely oblivious of their presence and importance. He called out for a change in this situation and a dire need to make policies focused on MSME sector.

The MSME sector comprises nearly 63 million enterprises, which contribute 30% to India's GDP, 45% to manufacturing, 40% to exports, and provides employment to over 113 million people.

WhatsApp Business surpasses 200 mn monthly active users globally



Meta (formerly Facebook) announced that WhatsApp Business has surpassed 200 million monthly active users globally, up from 50 million in 2020.

Soon, businesses will be able to publish ads directly to Facebook or Instagram from the app and there will be no requirement of a Facebook account, said Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

Meta said it's also testing letting businesses automatically send personalised messages to multiple customers for a fee.

"Starting soon we'll begin testing a new feature within the WhatsApp Business app where small businesses will have the option to send personalised messages to their customers -- like appointment reminders, birthday greetings or even updates on a holiday sale -- in a faster and more efficient way," the company said in a statement.

This new feature will allow businesses to send personalised messages with the customer's name and customisable call-to-action buttons to specific customer lists, such as those with a select label (like 'VIP customers' or 'new customers'), schedule the day and time the messages are sent.

The company also said that it will soon make it possible for the many small businesses across the world that run their entire operation on the platform to create, purchase and publish a Facebook or Instagram ad directly within the WhatsApp Business app.

This means that no Facebook account will be required, and businesses all need to get started is an email address and form of payment.

"When people click on an ad, it opens a chat on WhatsApp so they can ask questions, browse products and make a purchase," the company said.

IndiGo flight briefly enters Pak airspace due bad weather



NEW DELHI: Due to adverse weather conditions, a Srinagar-Jammu IndiGo flight momentarily entered Pakistan's airspace, according to sources. Citing the inclement weather, the airline said that the diversion was necessary and subsequently, flight 6E-2124 was redirected to Amritsar. "Before the flight entered Pakistani airspace, the airline promptly informed the relevant authorities in both countries," said an airline official.

Consequently, the Jammu and Lahore Air Traffic Control (ATC) centres worked in coordination to facilitate the smooth diversion of the flight. "The passengers on board arrived safely at their destination despite the weather-related detour," the official added.

Infineon and Kontrol join forces to improve the safety of autonomous vehicles

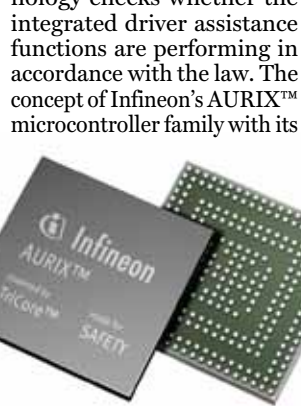
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Munich, Germany, and Linz, Austria: Infineon Technologies AG (FSE: IFX / OTCQX: IFNNY) and the Austrian control compliance company Kontrol are entering into a strategic partnership to make the future of mobility as both legally compliant and safe as possible.

In the field of autonomous driving, legal requirements, standards, norms, and court rulings still pose major challenges for all market players. For authorities and vehicle registration services, the challenge is to find a safe and cost-efficient approach to autonomous driving licensing in public transport, typically in the form of laws and technologies, company statement said here.

Kontrol translates and digitalizes complex legal regulations and relevant road traffic standards and regulations into

machine-readable language. The company's KoPilot technology checks whether the integrated driver assistance functions are performing in accordance with the law. The concept of Infineon's AURIX™ microcontroller family with its



compatibility and scalability in terms of the processor core, package, safety, and peripherals enables a simple upgrade path. This allows Infineon and Kontrol to provide necessary regulatory updates for their customers at any time, thus ensuring road safety in line with current standards. Together, the two companies can safely integrate the digital

driver license for autonomous vehicles into intelligent driver assistance systems.

"The software technology from our ecosystem partner Kontrol implemented on the dependable AURIX microcontroller architecture is a step forward to enhance the trust in autonomous driving technology by a deterministic, algorithm-based solution which is able to offer legal based, regulatory boundary conditions for vehicles on the road," said Lars Wemme, Vice President ADAS, Chassis and EE-Architecture at Infineon.

"We are very pleased to have a strong partner at our side who trusts in our technology and believes in the future of autonomous driving," said Andreas Lauringer, CEO and co-founder of Kontrol. "With Infineon as the world's leading expert in automotive semiconductors, together we can make tomorrow's mobility safer".

"We are very pleased to have a strong partner at our side who trusts in our technology and believes in the future of autonomous driving," said Andreas Lauringer, CEO and co-founder of Kontrol. "With Infineon as the world's leading expert in automotive semiconductors, together we can make tomorrow's mobility safer".

Oracle introduces generative AI capabilities to boost HR productivity

Cloud major Oracle on Wednesday introduced generative AI-powered capabilities within Oracle Fusion Cloud Human Capital Management (HCM) solution to help boost HR productivity for enterprises.

Supported by the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) generative AI service, the new capabilities are embedded in existing HR processes to drive faster business value, improve productivity, enhance the candidate and employee experience, and streamline HR processes.

The move will help enterprises streamline HR processes for candidates, employees, managers, and recruiters.

"With the new embedded generative AI capabilities in Oracle Cloud HCM, our customers will be able to take advantage of large language models to drastically reduce the time required to complete tasks, improve the employee experience, enhance the accuracy of workforce insights, and ultimately increase business value," said Chris Leone, executive vice president, applications development, Oracle Cloud HCM. With Oracle Cloud HCM, customers use their own data to refine models for their specific business needs -- each customer's dedicated generative AI models are only tuned on the customer's own proprietary data.

By giving customers control of the data used by generative AI, Oracle is helping keep sensitive and proprietary information safe.

According to Deepa Param Singh, vice president applications, Oracle India, despite



significant strides in the business landscape, several HR challenges persist in enterprises, hindering their ability to create an efficient work environment for their employees.

"As we move forward into an increasingly digital era, our generative AI embedded Oracle Cloud HCM will emerge as an intelligent tool that is set to elevate employee experience by equipping employees with in-built modern, intelligent tools and features that will automate mundane daily tasks," said Singh.

Google-owned navigation platform Waze lays off employees

Google is reportedly laying off employees from its navigation and mapping company Waze, as it aims to merge mapping products.

The tech giant is moving Waze over to Google's ads system which means there will be job cuts at Waze in "sales, marketing, operations and analytics," reports CNBC.

The report cited an email by Chris Phillips, VP and GM of Google's Geo unit, which read that the company hopes to "create a more scalable and optimised Waze Ads product".

Waze has more than 500 employees and it was not clear



how many of those will lose jobs.

"We have decided to transition Waze's ads monetisation to be managed by the Global Business Organisation (GBO), similar to Google Maps," Phillips wrote in the email.

"Unfortunately, this will result in a reduction of Waze Ads monetisation-focused roles in sales, marketing, operations

and analytics," the email noted. Waze was acquired by Google for about \$1.1 billion in 2013.

The Waze app, which has around 140 million active users, uses a crowdsourcing technique that allows it to determine the fastest driving route from one location to another, with the most recent traffic information.

In 2020, Waze had laid off 5 per cent of its global workforce, about 30 people, amid the pandemic.

Waze had shut several of its offices in the Asia-Pacific and Latin America regions as it sought to refocus its business on certain markets.

TikTok COO resigns after nearly five years

V Pappas, TikTok's chief operating officer (COO), has resigned after nearly five years at the Chinese short-video making app to "refocus" on her "entrepreneurial passions".

Pappas tweeted on Thursday, "After nearly 5 years at TikTok I am stepping down as COO. To our amazing community of creators, employees and people who have made TikTok 'the last sunny spot on the internet', it has been an absolute privilege to serve you all and to be a part of this once in a lifetime journey."

In a note to all Twitter employees, she said, "Five years ago when I was first approached by TikTok, I was incredibly inspired by the product vi-



sion to be a new mobile-first video experience that serves as a canvas, bridge and window for everyone."

"The pitch was to take on a role to transform and grow the product and broaden its appeal through developing diverse communities and content. I was sold."

"Given all the successes reached at TikTok, I finally feel the time is right to move on and refocus on my entrepreneurial passions," she added.

During the transition, she will stay at the company in an advisory role.

"In particular, supporting our diverse creators with efforts like our 'culture of credit' or 'visionary voices' initiatives has marked some of my personally most rewarding work," Pappas said.

According to Pappas' LinkedIn profile, before joining TikTok, she had spent more than seven years at YouTube leading company-wide strategic growth initiatives at the intersection of content and product.

Maharashtra No 1 State in top infra development claims CM Eknath Shinde



BY DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the State is ranked as the "number one" state in the country for creating maximum infrastructure facilities.

"Maharashtra has taken the lead in foreign investments in India where FDI worth Rs 1,18,000 crores was made last year itself," he said.

The Chief Minister recently urged farmers to attain prosperity by employing state-of-the-art technologies alongside traditional farming methods in agriculture.

Noting that farmers need to cultivate crop species which give double income in the equivalent inputs, Shinde expressed confidence that a recently-held agricultural exhibition would prove to be useful in highlighting information of new projects to farmers.

The occasion was the Krishna Pandhari Exhibition and Cereals Festival, where the Chief Minister said that the state government had taken many decisions in the interest of farmers and these included the "Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan 2.0" and "NaMo Shetkar Saman Nidhi" scheme.

While the State Government would be paying the instalment towards the premium in providing crop insurance at Rs 1, farmers would benefit from the Government's decision to give Rs 6,000 per year to the beneficiaries of the PM Kisan Yojana in addition to the same amount by the Central Government, he said.

The Exhibition highlighted information of modern technologies in agriculture, besides various government schemes, strengthening the farmer-science extension mechanism, developing farmer-producer-consumer chain, providing a boost to market-oriented agricultural production and marketing, besides importance of cereals in nutrition.

The Chief Minister also visited a Mega-Health Camp in Pandharpur for providing necessary health services to pilgrims on annual pilgrimage there.

Highlighting the State Government's public health initiatives, Shinde said the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya scheme would provide health cover of Rs 5 lakhs instead of Rs 1.5 lakhs, while the Hindu Hriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Aapla Davakhana had been sanctioned for 700 places in the State. The Chief Minister also handed out appointment orders on compassionate grounds to various beneficiaries during his visit under the "Government at your Doorstep" programme.

He said the Government had announced giving 75,000 jobs and was reviewing this time to time, besides providing all types of certificates under one roof and conveying schemes effectively to people.

Shinde also stated that a provision of Rs 100 crore is being made for the "Banana Development Corporation, while revised administrative approval would be given for the Bodwat lift irrigation scheme.

ECONOMICS OF SMALL THINGS: "Why We Should Pay Our Maid More"

HARVINDER KAUR

In our daily lives, we engage in countless economic transactions, often overlooking their significance and impact. From buying a cup of coffee to taking public transportation, the economics of simple things floods our routines. This article aims to shed light on the interwoven web of economic interactions surrounding these seemingly ordinary activities and explores how they shape our lives and the broader economy. From the third law of demand to consumer surplus, we are always unconsciously guided by the invisible hand of economics.

Last month we shifted to our new house in a new locality as I was unable to find a reliable servant. Suddenly I remember about the book by Sudipta Sarangi, Economics of Small Things and ideas strike in my mind. I paid 20 per cent more than their trending rates which we call equilibrium price in economics which is decided by the forces of demand and supply. I was surprised that the servant

was ready to spend more time in our house and she was ready to do extra work also. We can apply simple microeconomics in our daily life. Sometimes unconsciously we use economics in our daily routine from small decision-making to investment in the share market. So economics can be used to explain domestic issues as well and one such issue is managing domestic help. Our neighbours often complain about their domestic help quitting or not doing their job properly. Rarely do we find someone happy with their domestic help, and if we do, the more envious ones among us are desperate to steal them from our unsuspecting neighbours. So what does one do to retain their domestic help? The example is before you. "Why We Should Pay Our Maid More". This common experience is sufficient enough to discuss the concept and effects of efficiency wages. Efficiency wage refers to the idea of paying a higher-than-market wage to your domestic help, which ensures that your domestic helper will work with all sincerity because of the fear that in case s(he) loses the job, s(he) will be unable to find a job that will pay more than the



market wage. Moreover, we can pay one month's advance wages so that she or he will not leave immediately. If you are eating pizza always share a slice of it with your servant or your co-worker. He or she will do work with more efficiency and these are called efficiency wages in economics and the third law of demand will work. We can also increase their income in kind, as we can offer one-time meals or even clothes.

Stories on complements show up in examples as well, such as recounting a common experience of the Indian religion while visiting the temple. Most Indians have been a victim of petty thievery and had their shoes stolen, especially if they were sporting a new pair during their

visits to the temple. Shoes, by the way, are a classic example of complementary goods where the left pair is useless without access to the right pair, and vice versa. One strategy suggested by Sarangi is to separate the pairs when visiting the temple so that the thief has to hunt to find the matching pair. This strategic idea does not seem to be fool-proof, however. The Swedish experience of shoe stores as they display only the left pair in the storefront, presumably to minimise the risk of theft. The gang of thieves will be unable to complete the pair.

Economic theory assumes that individuals are rational decision-makers who seek to maximize their utility or well-being. This assumption implies that individuals

make choices that they believe will bring them the highest utility or satisfaction, given their money and accessibility constraints. The utility is the want satisfying capacity of the commodity or the service. According to the economics of simple things, individuals weigh the utility they expect to derive from a particular good or service against the price they have to pay. This evaluation helps determine whether the purchase is worthwhile from an economic standpoint. If you are going to market and want to buy a costly saree, have a pause of two minutes and think and do a cost-benefit analysis. If you will wear a saree of ten thousand only two times in functions then buy two sarees of five thousand each and you can wear it four times on different occasions or you can go for a rented dress also. By following these simple economics you will save your money and in an economy like India, savings are very important to increase the rate of investment. The cash in your hand is like a king and a penny saved a penny earned is an old proverb.

At the heart of the economics of simple things lies the price mechanism—the language through which goods and ser-

vices are exchanged. Prices convey information about scarcity, demand, and value, allowing consumers and producers to make decisions. Whether it's the cost of a loaf of bread or the price of a movie ticket, these seemingly trivial numbers reflect the underlying forces of supply and demand, signalling the equilibrium point where buyers and sellers agree to transact.

Consumer behaviour plays a crucial role in the economics of simple things. Our preferences, tastes, and budget constraints shape the goods and services we choose to buy. Factors like brand loyalty, convenience, and quality influence our decisions. For example, opting for a sustainable product may reflect our environmental concerns, while choosing a locally sourced item may reflect our desire to support local producers. Consumer behaviour is a dynamic force that drives market demand and shapes the production and availability of goods and services. As a person who travels to Indian Airlines supports the income of the domestic country.

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

World Bank approves \$700mn to help Sri Lanka implement foundational reforms

COLOMBO: The World Bank Group said it has approved \$700 million in financing for two operations to help Sri Lanka implement foundational reforms as the island nation is trying to overcome its worst-ever economic crisis.



The CPF, which covers the years from 2024 to 2027, lays out a two-phased approach that starts with a focus on urgent macro-fiscal and structural reforms and supports protecting the human capital and the most vulnerable population.

people's lives and demands deep reforms to stabilise the economy and protect the poor and vulnerable.

Sri Lanka's poverty rate is estimated to have doubled from 13.1 to 25 per cent between 2021 and 2022, an addition of 2.5 million poor people, and is projected to increase by another 2.4 percentage points in 2023, according to the statement.

"The extent of the crisis in Sri Lanka is unprecedented, but offers a historic opportunity for deep reforms to reset the country's economic storyline," said Faris H. Hadad-Zervos, World Bank country director for Sri Lanka.

RBI will make every effort to bring down inflation to 4%: Governor

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will strive to get headline inflation to its 4% target, said Governor Shaktikanta Das flagging El Nino as a challenge.

In an interview with PTI news agency, Das expressed confidence that the economy will grow at 6.5% in FY24, as estimated by the RBI earlier. Since May 2022 the central bank's rate hikes by a cumulative 2.50% along with supply-side measures from the government, have helped get the inflation down to 4.25% in May from a peak of 7.8% in April last year, Das said.

He said the RBI continues to be watchful on the inflation

front as they expect inflation to be at 5.1% in FY24. "We will continue to strive and get it down to 4%," he added.

On the high borrowing costs, Das said interest rates on loans may have a direct relation with inflation, and if inflation cools down on a durable basis, people can expect lower interest rates on loans.

The governor explained that the Russia-Ukraine war, which led to a shoot-up in the commodity prices, led to a surge in inflation, but added that crude prices are not a concern from an inflation perspective now as they've come down to USD 76-76 a barrel.

Commerce Ministry advises departments to consult PLI beneficiaries



NEW DELHI: The Commerce and Industry Ministry has recommended departments to hold consultations with PLI beneficiary companies to understand their issues.

The suggestion was made in a workshop on the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme called by the ministry recently.

The meeting assumed significance as the government disbursed only Rs 2,900 crore till March 2023 out of Rs 3,400 crore claims received under the scheme.

The scheme was announced in 2021 for 14 sectors, such as telecommunication, white goods, textiles and pharma with an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore. The departments were also asked to ensure that PLI beneficiaries complete their investments and meet production targets.

"It was suggested to the line ministries now to call the PLI beneficiary companies for consultations with them only and if they flag any issue, it could be conveyed to the commerce and

industry ministry so that those issues can be taken up with the highest authorities," one of the officials said.

The Ministry, which coordinates the scheme, also urged PLI beneficiaries to take up any procedural challenges/ issues with the respective implementing ministry or department so that positive reforms can be brought about and the scheme can be made more efficient and effective.

The workshop witnessed participation from 10 implementing central departments, companies/PLI beneficiaries under 14 key sectors, various Project Management Agencies (PMAs) like IFCI (Industrial Finance Corporation of India), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (MECON), Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), select industry associations and relevant export promotion councils.

Government keeps interest rates for popular small saving schemes unchanged



NEW DELHI: The government has kept the interest rates for popular small savings schemes like national saving certificate, public provident fund (PPF), Kisan Vikas Patra and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, unchanged for the next three months, i.e from July 1 till September 30, 2023.

According to a Finance Ministry notification, only the interest rate of one year time deposit has been hiked to 6.9% from 6.8%.

Also the interest rates for 2 years time deposit scheme has been hiked from 6.9 per cent to 7 per cent, while for five-year recurring deposit, the interest rate has been increased from 6.2 per cent to 6.5 per cent.

However, the rates for PPF (7.1 per cent), national saving certificate (7.7 per cent), Kisan Vikas Patra (7.5 per cent), Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (8 per cent), monthly income scheme (7.4 per cent) and senior citizen saving scheme (8.2 per cent) have been kept unchanged for the next three months.

Banks withdraw foreclosure charges after MSMEs decide to involve Banking Ombudsman

NEW DELHI: Two private lenders Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC) First Bank Ltd., and Karur Vysya Bank Ltd., (KVB) have decided to reverse their decision on foreclosure charges unfairly imposed on their MSME customers.

Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) is pro-actively involved in resolving such issues faced by MSMEs and has provided extensive support in these two cases.

Sethia Handicrafts in Jodhpur had complained that IDFC was not cooperating in the closure of their account and imposing foreclosure charges.

The bank reversed its decision after being reminded of RBI's guidelines that banks have been advised to continue to follow their commitment to MSMEs as failure to adhere to the Code can be a ground for approaching Banking Ombudsman. According to the Code of Bank's Commitment for Micro and Small Enterprises' which was adopted by all commercial banks in 2012, Banks had committed that they would 'permit prepayment of fixed rate loans up to Rs 50 lakh without levying any pre-payment penalty and also 'permit prepayment of floating rate loans without levying any prepayment penalty'.

For operational reason IDFC has requested the MSME unit to apply for FCL after the next EMI is recovered.

Similar case of Rathna Sweets in Tirupathur, Tamil Nadu has recently been settled after private lender Karur Vysya Bank Ltd., (KVB) agreed to waive off the pre-closure charges

Danske Bank Selects Infosys as Strategic Partner to Accelerate Digital Transformation

Infosys will also acquire Danske Bank's IT centre in India which employs 1400 digitally skilled professionals. Engagement expands Infosys' footprint and reinforces commitment to the Nordics.

ARUNKUMAR RAO
Bengaluru/
Copenhagen(Denmark)

Infosys (NSE, BSE, NYSE: INFY), a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, today announced that it has signed a strategic collaboration with Danske Bank, a leading Nordic Bank, to accelerate the bank's digital transformation initiatives with speed and scale. This collaboration will help Danske Bank achieve its strategic priorities towards better customer experiences, operational excellence, and a mod-

ernised technology landscape, powered by next-gen solutions, company press statement said here today.

Headquartered in Denmark, Danske Bank provides banking services to personal and business customers, as well as large corporate and institutional customers. In a bid to accelerate the bank's technology transformation, optimise their access to talent and capabilities and improve productivity, Danske Bank chose Infosys as its strategic partner, statement said.

As part of this collaboration, Infosys will also acquire Danske Bank's IT center in India, where over 1,400 professionals are employed. With its global expertise and industry-solutions, Infosys will accelerate the bank's digital agenda by significantly enhancing their IT operations and capabilities, powered by Infosys Topaz, an AI-first set of services, solutions and platforms, experience design, and services that support operations.



Frans Woelders, Chief Operating Officer, Danske Bank, said, "Our Forward '28 strategy sets clear ambitions for Danske Bank to be a leading bank in a digital age. This is backed by significant investments in digitalisation and technology, including plans to further develop our customer-facing digital solutions, and modernising our technology infrastructure to enable even better customer experiences and drive operational efficiency. We have a strong starting point, and we want to further accelerate our digital and technology transfor-

mation. We have conducted a thorough process to find a partner that can help us achieve that. Infosys has the tools, experience, and expertise to support us in accelerating our transformation using cloud and AI technologies. Given Infosys' global presence and scale, this collaboration will also give us access to wider talent pools and capabilities."

Sail Parekh, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, Infosys, said, "We are delighted to bring our rich experience in financial services transformation to work for Danske Bank

and help the bank accelerate its strategic growth agenda. Infosys will collaborate with Danske Bank to strengthen their core business with greater digital, cloud and data capabilities. This will help Danske Bank create more value for their customers using powerful advances in AI, including generative AI.

Infosys looks forward to welcoming Danske India employees joining our team as part of this journey. Nordics is a strategic market for Infosys and this collaboration further enhances our commitment to the region. Infosys has acquired BASE Life Science in Denmark and Fluidio in Finland, and recently opened a new proximity center in Gothenburg, Sweden and Oslo, Norway. With this relationship with Danske Bank, Infosys has further enhanced its localization strategy in the Nordics. Infosys expects the transactions to be completed before Q2FY2024, subject to customary closing conditions.

Slowdown expected in consumption, real estate which could disrupt retail lending boom

NEW DELHI: An expected slowdown in consumption and/or residential real estate in FY24 could unsettle credit growth in the country, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said in a report.

"We expect the slowdown in private consumption to be more severe than the consensus projections, implying that the deterioration in real estate could be less intense. However, since non-mortgage personal loans are the fastest-growing category within household debt, this scenario could also be equally forceful in disrupting the retail lending boom," the report said.

In the past couple of years, notwithstanding higher inflation, the consumption and real estate sectors have performed very well at the expense of fi-



financial savings.

Net financial savings (NFS) dropped to a three-decade low of 6% of GDP in FY23, while physical savings increased to a decade-high of 13 per cent of GDP.

However, in 2HFY23, the growth in private consumption and residential investments weakened substantially, boosting financial savings, the report

said. NFS could have bottomed out and may rise in the near future. Thus, we expect household spending trends in FY24 to match more with 2HFY23, rather than 1HFY23. In that case, due to weak income growth this year, growth will subside significantly in either private consumption or real estate investments or both, the report said.

According to the recent RBI survey of professional forecasters, although consumption growth is expected to weaken in FY24, its share in GDP is projected to rise, implying a further fall in household savings. It means the consensus is more inclined toward a sharp deterioration in the real estate sector, which could surprise investors.

Instant line of credit top MSME need: Survey

NEW DELHI: The instant line of credit and industry networking are the top requirements of majority of MSMEs, as per survey by fintech Kinara Capital.

According to the 'MSME Sentiment Survey' about 55% of the total MSMEs interviewed said an instant line of credit is their top requirement to accelerate everyday business decisions.

Flexible repayment products were favoured by 16% of respondents that will give them the choice to make daily or weekly loan payments or variable loan payments, based on their business turnover for the selected time period, it added.

The survey also cites that

there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of MSMEs and unlocking this sector's full potential will require a personalised approach.

"It is a sign that India's small business entrepreneurs are now seeking much more than access to formal credit and want tailored products and services aligned with their growth needs," Kinara Capital founder and CEO Hardika Shah said.

The report surveyed 2,600 formal MSMEs that are Udyam-registered and represent a range of businesses across manufacturing, trading and services sectors in Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

India's Labour Participation Rate drops in FY23: CMIE

NEW DELHI: The labour participation rate (LPR) of India has declined from 40.1% in financial year 2022 to 39.5% in financial year 2023, said Centre For Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

According to CMIE's data, India's LPR is one of the lowest compared to global estimate of 60%.

The data cited by the analysis suggested that around 90% of women in their working age are out of India's labour force.

According to the definition of LPR, it refers to share of working age population which is either employed or unemployed, looking for employment.

Compared to LPR of Indonesia (67%), South Korea and Brazil (63-64%), India's LPR is behind with quite a



margin.

CMIE analysis said that the low participation rate is a worrying sign as a large share of population has dropped out of the workforce and isn't willing to seek employment.

A sharp decline in Indian workforce was seen during the pandemic when the workforce declined from 442 million in 2019-20 to 424 million in 2020-21.

This recovered to 439 million in 2022-23 but was still lower than the pre-pandemic level.

Stock Market-Boom Reflects Growth



SATISH SINGH

At present, the selling shares is going on in the stock market of almost all the developed countries including USA. Along with ups and downs, the stock market is also diving. Due to corona pandemic, geopolitical crisis, ongoing war between Russia-Ukraine, high price of crude oil in the international market, the condition of the stock market in developed countries is not good. The global economy also remains dismal. There are chances of recession in some countries.

On the contrary, Indian stock market has been on a boom for the last few months. On June 21, the Sensex closed at a record high of 63,588 with a gain of 261 points and earlier on December 1, 2022, it closed at 63,523 with a gain of 195 points. Now on June 28, the Sensex crossed the 64000 marks. According to experts, by the end of this year the Sensex can reach the level of 70,000.

Even though the Nifty could not reach its highest level of 18,887 on June 21, however, it remained around the all-time high of 18,640. Then, on 28th June it crossed 19000 level.

According to experts, Nifty can reach the level of 21000 by the end of this year. Due to

the boom in the stock market, the wealth of the stock market investors has increased by Rs.40 lakh crore in the last 3 months. Not only this, by the year 2025, it is being said that the Indian economy will be from 3 trillion to 5 trillion. At the same time, in the recent report of HSBC, it has been said that the Indian economy will be 7 trillion in coming 5 to 10 years. Thus, right now, there is a favourable environment for investing in India. Domestic institutional and foreign direct investment (FDI) can take advantage of this.

The Indian economy is also in a state of recovery. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also improving. In the last quarter of the financial year 2022-23, the GDP was estimated to be 4.2 percent, but it was 6.1 percent. 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 predicted 6.8 percent of GDP, which was 7.2 percent.

What is stock market?

To understand the ups and downs in the stock market, it is necessary to understand its operations. Share means share in asset or company. Shares of



companies listed in the stock market are bought and sold with the help of a stockbroker, that is, shares of companies are bought and sold. Now, due to the digitization of buying and selling of shares, there is no need for stockbrokers. Any investor can buy and sell shares by himself through a smartphone. There are two major stock exchanges in India namely Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and National Stock Exchange (NSE). Bonds, mutual funds, and derivatives are also bought and sold in the stock market.

Meaning of Buying Shares

Any listed company issues share to raise capital. Investors have to buy shares as per the offer of the company. The more an investor buys shares, the more he owns the company.

When shares are issued, it is up to the company to decide how much shares to give to an individual or group. Investors can sell their share of shares anytime in the stock market with the help of a broker or on their own. Brokers charge some fee from the investors in lieu of this work or the investor has to pay some fee even after buying and selling the shares online by himself.

Procedure for getting the company listed.

To list itself in the stock market, the company has to enter into a written agreement with the stock market. Thereafter, the company submits the required documents to SEBI, which is examined by SEBI. If the information is found to be correct on verification, the company is listed on BSE or

Fluctuations in share prices

Evaluation of the work of a company, whether orders are received or not, profits increase or decrease, level of import, or export, stoppage of work in the factory, production decreases or increases, level of marketing of finished goods, etc. Therefore, the price of shares fluctuates daily depending on the positive or negative impact it has on the company.

SEBI is the Regulator

The regulator of the stock market is SEBI, which works to monitor the activities of the listed companies. If a listed company works outside the agreement, then SEBI separates it from BSE or NSE. Its work is also to rein in the brokers who artificially increase or decrease the prices of shares. Last years, Harshad Mehta, who was a stockbroker, had carried out a big scam by artificially inflating the prices of shares.

Effect of weak rupee on Stock Market

The weakening of the rupee against the dollar makes

it costlier for Indian companies to import, as goods worth Rs.100 have to be bought for Rs.105 or Rs.110. Since, India is still dependent on imports to meet most of its needs, therefore, companies have to spend more money in importing raw or finished goods, which leads to a fall in the stock price of the company when its economic condition is tight.

The value of the rupee against the dollar entirely depends on its demand and supply, which is decided based on imports and exports. If a country exports more than it has more reserves of foreign exchange. Since, India imports more than exports, therefore, the reserves of foreign exchange are always limited here. Due to low foreign exchange reserves, the rupee always remains weak compared to the dollar.

Dollar is an international currency, which is used by many countries and for this reason it is considered the strongest currency in the world. Therefore, in international trade, we pay the price of goods in dollars.

Rupee weakens even when foreign exchange reserves are low. For example, if India has a currency reserve of \$ 100, but it has to buy or import goods worth \$ 110. In such a situation, he has to spend more money to buy \$ 10 from

the market, due to which the rupee depreciates.

Conclusion

Generally, domestic, and foreign investors invest in companies in the form of shares in the hope of getting higher returns, but due to lack of understanding of the economy or proper analysis of the balance sheet or financial results of the companies, or economic, political reasons etc., investors have to bear the loss. So, if an investor wants to invest in the stock market, then he needs to be cautious and keep a close eye on the activities of the listed companies in the stock market.

It is not only the investors who suffer due to the fluctuations in the share price. This also has a negative impact on the country's economy. Selling by foreign investors reduces FDI, whereas FDI is very important for India's economic development. In the absence of this, the growth rate of India, which is already running slow, can go down further. If FDI comes less, there will be a decrease in employment as well as economic activities will also be adversely affected.

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

INTERNATIONAL

Putin calls PM Modi 'great friend of Russia'

NEW DELHI: Russian President Vladimir Putin called Prime Minister Narendra Modi "a great friend of Russia" and also praised the Centre's 'Make in India' initiative.

Addressing an economic forum in Moscow organised by the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI), the President said on Thursday: "Our friends in India and our big friend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the 'Make in India' initiative several years ago. It has had a truly impressive effect on the Indian economy. It would do no harm to emulate what is working well, even if it was not us but our friends who created it," RT News



reported.

Putin made a case for India as he discussed the opportunities for Russian companies due to the West's sanctions policies, and the need for the Moscow to "offer support tools to help our companies

ing our products more convenient and functional, with a modern look and properties".

Industrial and product design should become an important resource for the development of domestic business, RT News quoted the President as saying.

The 'Make in India' initiative was launched by Prime Minister Modi in 2014 aimed to create and encourage companies to develop, manufacture and assemble products made in the country and incentivise dedicated investments into manufacturing.

Putin and Modi last met on the sidelines of a regional security bloc summit in Uzbekistan in September 2022.

PM Modi's visit to the US takes bilateral relations to greater heights: ASSOCHAM

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US which included his inspirational address to the US Congress and meetings with the President Joe Biden, has taken India-US strategic and commercial relations to greater heights, paving way for immense opportunities for the bilateral engagement, ASSOCHAM has said.

"Prime Minister's visit is being viewed as a turning point in Indo-US relations in a fast-changing world order which would see both the countries emerge as the most influential economies with strategic prowess in the unfolding international political economy," ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said.

Deepak Sood said while Modi demonstrated India's



soft power as he participated in the International Yoga Day at the UN Headquarters in New York, his personal chemistry with President Biden at the White House demonstrated shared cultural values of the two largest democracies of the world.

"In his inspirational address to the joint sitting of the US Congress, Modi conveyed to the world substantive all-round progress India has made in the most critical areas for

our country and the world. These include an inclusive and impressive expansion in the Digital landscape with 850 internet connections, online transactions and tech-enabled governance. The Make In India initiative has started yielding dividends in electronics and strategic space of defence manufacturing, as is evident in the deal between GE Electric and Hindustan Aeronautics for manufacture of fighter jet engines in India".

The 'Initiative for Critical and Emerging Technologies' is a demonstration of mutual trust paving the way for co-operation in the cutting-edge technologies. Joint commitment in sustainable development under the aegis of India-headed G 20 too stands out as a common area of interest.

Indo-Canadian biologist takes up cudgels for Indian elephants in UK Parliament



LONDON: With only 40,000 of Asian elephants left on the entire planet and 60 per cent in India, biologist and conservationist Sangita Iyer is rallying hard to save the endangered pachyderms in their last bastion, India.

Canada-based Iyer, along with Conservative MP Henry Smith, recently addressed the UK Parliament, imploring Indian authorities to act urgently in the wake of the alarming number of elephant deaths caused by electrocution, poaching and habitat loss, among other growing threats.

As part of their collaborative efforts, they are also encouraging lawmakers, business leaders, and celebrities to do their part in saving the indispensable natural climate champions before it's too late.

With only 27,000 left in India, saving them in their last stronghold is critical in order to save the species, according to Iyer, founder of Voice for Asian Elephants Society, which was created in 2016 to protect wild and captive elephants of India. In her presentation before the UK Parliament, Iyer said that the threats facing the endangered Asian elephants have reached a crisis point in India where they are being killed at an alarming rate. The parliamentary presentation also called the state of Odisha the "largest elephant graveyard". In the last 10 years almost 1,200 elephants have been killed across India. And in the last three years, 245 of them have been killed in the central state of Odisha where mining is rampant. The mega herbivores have already lost 80% of their habitats to reckless development such as mining, electrocution, railways, roadways, and agriculture. Forest fires are also on the rise, most of them set off by arsonists and poachers to lure the wildlife and trap them.

SGPC President Dhama expresses grief over murder of Sikh shopkeeper in Pak



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhama has condemned the attacks on minority Sikhs in Pakistan. In a statement issued from SGPC office in Amritsar, Dhama said that murder of Sikh shopkeeper Manmohan Singh in Peshawar city in Pakistan is a very unfortunate incident. He said that the government there should be serious about the security of minority Sikhs in Pakistan. This is the second incident of attack on Sikhs in two days. Dhama said that it is sad that many such incidents have taken place in Pakistan in the past, too. If the government had given severe punishment to the culprits in past cases, then this would not have happened again. The SGPC President sought strict action from Pakistan's government against those who killed Sikh shopkeeper Manmohan Singh.

OpenAI opens office in London, home base of Google's DeepMind

LONDON: Sam Altman-run OpenAI is expanding beyond the US with opening a new office in London as part of its global expansion plans.

London is the home base of DeepMind, Google's largest AI research division.

The first international office in London, said OpenAI, signifies a milestone in OpenAI's growth, "showcasing our commitment to broaden the scope of our operations, bring in diverse perspectives, and accelerate our mission of ensuring that artificial general intelligence (AGI) benefits all of humanity".



Altman, CEO of ChatGPT developer OpenAI, said that they see this expansion as an opportunity to attract world-class talent and drive innovation in AGI development and policy.

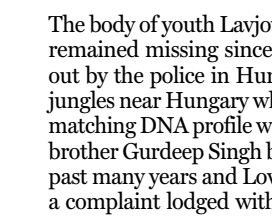
"We're excited about what the future holds and to see the contributions our London office will make towards building and deploying safe AI," he said in a statement.

The teams in London will focus on advancing OpenAI's leading-edge research and engineering capabilities while collaborating on its mission with local communities and policy makers.

"We are eager to build dynamic teams in Research, Engineering, and Go-to-Market functions, as well as other areas, to reinforce our efforts in creating and promoting safe AGI," said Diane Yoon, OpenAI's VP of People. More than 1,300 AI companies are based in London and the city was the top-funded in the UK in terms of venture capital invested, reports said recently.

Desire to settle abroad brought death to youth whose dead body recovered due to hunger & thirst

SATISH HANDA



The body of youth Lavjot desired to settle abroad in France remained missing since past about 11 months was traced out by the police in Hungary lying at a lonely place in the jungles near Hungary which was identified with the help of matching DNA profile with his father Daljit Singh and elder brother Gurdeep Singh both already settled in France since past many years and Lovjot was to join them. According to a complaint lodged with police by victim's mother Manjit Kaur resident of village Dadiana in Ambala district her son Lovjot was introduced by Gurbpreet Singh a resident of village Kachhwa sending people abroad along with his other companions Manga Singh and Jaspal and a deal was finalized at Rs 15 lakh to send Lovjot to Europe but he was left on a lonely place near Hungary jungles after snatching luggage, mobile phone and cash amount he was having by the members of immigration agents. According to victim's mother Manjit Kaur, she had last spoken to his son Lavjot about 11 months ago on 25th July 2022 and since after there was no where about of his son Lavjot and her husband and elder son residing in France too attempted to make search of missing Lavjot through police in Hungary and spent amount between Rs 20 to 25 lakh for the same but to no result and failed to find where about of his younger son, Lavjot in spite of all efforts, finally he came to know that the body of a youth was recovered in Hungary jungles months ago in a highly decomposed condition beyond recognition, which had lost life due to hunger and thirst.

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Border situation with China matter of perceptual difference: Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday termed the border situation with China as a matter of 'perceptual difference' but there are agreements and protocols based on which the armies of both the countries carry out patrolling.

Rajnath, while referring to the stand-off in East Ladakh in 2020, said that the Chinese Army ignored the agreed protocols and unilaterally tried to change the status quo along the LAC.

He lauded the valour and dedication of the Indian Army which prevented the attempts by the PLA to change the status quo.

Rajnath Singh reiterated the



government's stand to resolve the border issue through dialogue and in a peaceful manner. He added that talks are continuing at the military and diplomatic levels to resolve the dispute.

He assured the nation that the government will never compromise on India's border, its honour and self-respect. "We will never

let the sanctity of our borders be violated," he said. He touched upon the measures taken by the government to bolster national security, including strengthening border infrastructure and achieving 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.

He listed a number of steps taken to attain self-reliance, namely notification of positive indigenisation lists and earmarking 75% of the defence capital procurement budget for domestic industry in the Financial Year 2023-24.

"India does not want to depend on imported weapons. Our national security will only strengthen when we become self-

reliant in defence manufacturing. Our aim is to 'Make in India, Make for the world'.

"Our efforts are bearing fruit. Today, we are manufacturing tanks, aircraft carriers, submarines and various kinds of weapons. Defence exports have crossed Rs 16,000 crore from a meagre Rs 900 crore before 2014. The exports will soon touch the Rs 20,000 crore mark," he said.

Rajnath Singh also enumerated the structural reforms undertaken by the government, including the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff and setting up the Department of Military Affairs.

World Bank's Ajay Banga named in Carnegie's 2023 'Great Immigrants' list

NEW YORK: World Bank President Ajay Banga has been named to this year's "Great Immigrants" list by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which honours contributions by immigrants to American life.

Indian-American Banga, who became the 14th president of the top bank this year, was among 35 honorees from diverse backgrounds and fields whose contributions and actions enriched and strengthened American society and democracy.

From India, he is the only honouree in the prestigious Carnegie list, which has named more than 700 "Great Immigrants" since 2006.

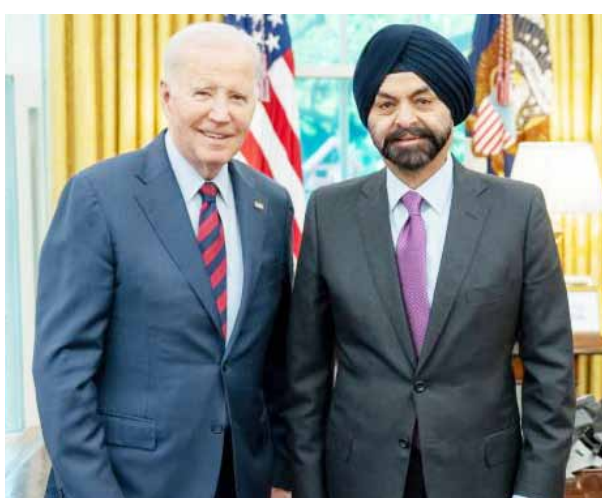
With over 30 years of experience in key positions,

Banga is expected to usher in transformative policies at the World Bank to combat poverty and address climate change, opening opportunities for people around the globe, a Carnegie statement said on Wednesday.

"We need to find ways to embrace the value and talent immigrants have to offer -- not the least of which is their diversity. Their diverse perspectives and experiences make us stronger," Banga was quoted as saying in the statement.

Earlier this month, Banga became the new president of the World Bank, the first-ever Indian American to lead the institution.

He started his career in India, spending 13 years at



Nestle India and two at PepsiCo, and in 1996, he joined Citigroup, eventually leading the Asia-Pacific region as CEO.

Later moving to the US, he served as President and CEO of Mastercard for 12

years before being named executive chairman.

Among numerous honors, he was awarded the Foreign Policy Association Medal, Padma Shri and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

The Class of 2023 Great Immigrants has individuals from 33 countries, who, according to the Corporation, "have fostered opportunities for others through their work as educators, mentors, philanthropists, job creators, public servants, storytellers, and advocates".

"The 35 naturalized citizens honored today embody that tradition, reminding us that the contributions of immigrants make our country more vibrant and our democracy more resilient," said

Dame Louise Richardson, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, and a naturalized citizen who first came to the US from Ireland as a graduate student.

Other honorees in the list are esteemed leaders in their fields, including two Nobel Prize laureates, an Olympian, a member of Congress, a university president, a public theologian and immigration advocate.

It also includes celebrities such Elle magazine editor-in-chief and TV personality Nina Garcia, bestselling novelist Min Jin Lee, seven-time Grammy Award winner Alanis Morissette, Hollywood star Pedro Pascal, and Academy Award winner Ke Huy Quan.

Australian parliamentary panel recommends ban on gambling ads



An Australian parliamentary committee on Wednesday recommended a ban on gambling advertising in the country within three years.

The standing committee on social policy and legal affairs tabled a report from its inquiry into online gambling and its impacts, reports Xinhua news agency.

After months of hearings and submissions, the committee made 31 recommendations including a comprehensive ban on all forms of advertising for online gambling, to be introduced in four phases, over three years.

Peta Murphy, chair of the committee, said the three-year time frame would give sports broadcasters time to find alternative advertisers.

"Australians are the biggest losers in the world when it comes to gambling. We have a culture where sports and gambling are intrinsically linked. These behaviors are causing increasingly widespread and

serious harm to individuals, families, and communities," she said in a statement.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), citizens lost approximately A\$25 billion (\$16 billion) on gambling in the financial year 2018-19, representing the largest per capita losses in the world.

The inquiry also called on the federal government to implement a comprehensive national strategy on online gambling harm reduction, supported by national regulation, an online gambling ombudsman, a harm reduction levy on online wagering service providers, a public education campaign, more independent research and improved data collection.

It recommended a crackdown on illegal gambling websites and a requirement for gambling companies to verify a customer's identity before accepting their bets.

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav

The video of US singer Mary Millben touching the feet of PM Narendra Modi trended for a long across the media. This news was special to me, as I had the privilege of inviting her to an Indian event for the first time in 2020.

The video of US singer Mary Millben touching Prime Minister Narendra Modi's feet during a grand public event held at Ronald Reagan Center in Washington DC trended for a long across the media. Modi's visit to the US provided us with several proud moments, but this event was a bit different. Mary sang the national anthem of India and then greeted the Prime Minister by touching his feet in a very emotional way in full public view of a packed stadium. Obviously, her gesture towards Indian culture has touched the hearts of us Indians!

This event was even more special for me because I had the privilege of inviting Mary Millben to an Indian event for the first time in September 2020, when the world was battling the lockdown and pandemic. As soon as the lockdown was announced in Chandigarh, I started a regular Twitter Chat, in which every week a public group chat was held with one or the other celebrity. Hundreds of

With due respect from the US

people used to participate in this Twitter Chat that happened on Sundays at 6 pm. It was India's first and longest-running Twitter Chat during the pandemic era.

Mary Millben, the African-American Singer, became a social media sensation in August 2020 by singing India's national anthem on Independence Day. That's when I thought to invite her to our popular chat show held every week in collaboration with the Bloggers Alliance. Later, she gained more popularity by singing 'Om Jai Jagdish Hare' aarti on the occasion of Diwali. Later she also visited India as an official guest. She has a special respect for India, which is evident in her acts and words.

Meanwhile, Mary also participated in the 9th International Yoga Day programme held at the United Nations on June 21, where she was seen sitting next to



Prime Minister Modi. Having sung America's national anthem for three consecutive US presidents, i.e. President George W. Bush, President Barack Obama, and President Donald Trump, she has become one of the world's hottest new voices. Her shows have taken place at the White House, the US Congress, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, and numerous concert halls worldwide.

As you know, Indo-US relations are going to prove beneficial for our shared future. It is the friendship between the two Superpowers, which explains the growing

strength of India. The next ten years are going to change the fate of India. We are fortunate to be witness to such a critical time and change. Among the more than 30 agreements signed with the US in defence, technology, space and healthcare sectors, the most important is the technology transfer agreement. Now India will be able to become a big player in the field of semiconductors, manufacturing and defence. A few semiconductor plants will start here in a year. The made-in-India chip will hit the market next year. The US company will train 60,000 Indian engineers. American warships will also be repaired in India. Both countries will jointly make jet engines. All such changes will be turned into reality soon.

The writer is a senior journalist and columnist. Views are personal, Twitter @narvijayyadav

Diljit Dosanjh responds to being mentioned by US leader at luncheon hosted for Modi



MUMBAI: Popular Punjabi singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh was mentioned by US leader at the luncheon hosted for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and he had a very subtle reaction. US Vice President Kamala Harris with US State Department hosted a luncheon for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the luncheon, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spotlighted how India is part of their daily lives, a clip of which Diljit Dosanjh shared on social media. He was standing on a podium and said: "Here in the US, India is a part of our daily lives. We enjoy our Jhumpa Lahiri novels over samosas. We laugh at the comedies of Mindy Kaling." "We dance to the beats of Diljit at Coachella. And yes, Mr Prime Minister and

I can say this from personal experience, we keep ourselves more or less fit and healthy doing yoga." Unlike his usual banter-filled captions, Diljit just shared an Indian and US flag for the video he shared on Twitter. On the acting front, Diljit Dosanjh will next be seen 'Chamkila', which is directed by Imtiaz Ali. The film also stars Parineeti Chopra. It which will stream on Netflix.

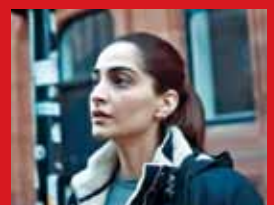
Aditya says working with Anil Kapoor is a flip side of teaming up with an energetic star



"ONE COMPLEX YOU DO GET WHILE WORKING WITH ANIL KAPOOR IS THAT YOU FEEL YOU AREN'T WORKING HARD ENOUGH, AS HE IS THE MOST HARD-WORKING ACTOR"

Aditya Roy Kapur, who has worked with Anil Kapoor on various projects, says there is a flip side of teaming up with an energetic star. Aditya Roy Kapur was interacting with the media on "The Night Manager 2" in Mumbai along with the Disney+ Hotstar show's creator, Sandeep Modi, and co-stars Anil Kapoor, Shobhita Dhulipala and Tillotama Shome. After 'Malang', the 2020 action thriller directed by Mohit Suri, "The Night Manager" marks the second outing of Aditya Roy Kapur with Anil Kapoor, so he was naturally asked about the pros and cons of working with a senior actor. "One complex you do get while working with Anil Kapoor is that you feel you aren't working hard enough, as he is the most hard-working actor," Aditya said. "I can only think of that as a con, for you feel like shit and keep thinking you need to pull up your socks." Continuing in the same vein, he added: "There is plenty to learn from him. I was working with him for the second time, yet he never ceases to amaze you -- the kind of zest he approaches his work with, the passion with which he approaches his roles, his attention to detail, and being a team player who wants everyone to succeed. "He has the wisdom, and he wants everyone in the team to succeed, so in return the whole project becomes successful. His love and experience have been invaluable to this project," Aditya added. In Season 2 of "The Night Manager", who premieres on June 30, the alliance of Shaan (Aditya Roy Kapur) and Shailendra (Anil Kapoor) promises to shake up established systems and spin a new web of conspiracies and deception.

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja plays a visually-impaired key witness to crime in 'Blind' trailer



Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, is coming back to the screens after the maternity break, will be soon seen in the upcoming crime drama 'Blind' in which she will essay the lead character who is visually impaired.

The trailer of 'Blind' was unveiled on Thursday and it presents a riveting tale of a blind girl, played by Sonam, who helps unravel a crime committed by Purab Kohli's character. Clocking 2 minutes in length, the trailer starts off with the reference to 'Pulp Fiction', as a woman named Mia Wallace goes missing. Sonam's character goes to the authorities to report the missing woman saying that she has a strong feeling that the taxi she boarded had the girl in its boot. From there begins the cat and mouse chase with hints of Sonam's house invasion. 'Blind' also stars Vinay Pathak, Lilette Dubey, and Shubham Saraf, and has been directed by Shome Makhija. It is a story of a visually impaired resilient woman (played by Sonam) who becomes a key witness to a crime. In her efforts to trace the unusual turn of events and give testimony about the incident, she is forced to confront the killer on her own.

Presented by Jio Studios, in association with RV Motion Pictures & Lead Films, a Kanai, Avma and Kross Pictures Production, 'Blind' will premiere on July 7 on Jio Cinema.

Axis Three Dee Studios display's sound & light show at Statue of Belief in Rajasthan

NEWDELHI: Axis Three Dee Studios—a one-of-its-kind initiative in immersive visual media and projection mapping—launched a fascinating son-et-lumiere (light-and-sound) show display at the recently inaugurated 'Vishwas Swaroopam' (Statue of Belief) as a permanent installation. Revolving around the themes of 'Aarambh' (The Beginning) and 'Shabd Utpatti' (Origin of Language), the shows keep the audience enthralled throughout the entire 20-30-minute program. With many more stories to be introduced shortly, the 369-foot Statue of Belief promises to be a 'must-visit' landmark already thronged by thousands of visitors every day.



The unique narration is in a 'Kathavachak' or narrative form, and has been scripted and narrated by Madan Paliwal Ji, Chairman of the iconic conglomerate, Miraj Group, of Udaipur. The language brings alive the timeless knowledge and wisdom of this ancient land weaving lucidly into the narrative numerous anecdotes, references and direct quotes from the Sanatani scriptures.

Lindsay Lohan to welcome baby boy with husband Bader Shammass

Actress Lindsay Lohan is pregnant with her first child with husband Bader Shammass and reports say they are expecting a baby boy.

The couple, who got married in 2022, are readying themselves for parenthood, with the 'Mean Girls' star said to be due imminently, reports mirror.co.uk. And now reports claim the 36-year-old, who has lived in Dubai for eight years, is expecting a baby boy to enter her world.

According to TMZ, a source close to Bader has confirmed the gender of the unborn child, telling the publication the star is very close to giving birth. It's said the actress' mum Dina will be on hand to sup-



port her daughter through her first pregnancy when the time comes to give birth. And some of her closest family members, including her siblings will be in the area at the same time in order to meet the bundle of joy. Lindsay first announced she was expecting back in March.

She simply posts an image to Instagram of a baby grow which had the words "coming soon" emblazoned across the front. Many of her fans and friends rushed to the post at the time to send congratulatory messages. Among them was pal Paris Hilton, who gushed: "Congratulations love! So happy for you Welcome to the Mommy Club." Baby nappy brand also got involved in the messaging and joked: "Is the baby due... October 3rd? We can already tell you're not like... a regular mom." The news was also music to the ears of proud granddad-to-be Michael, with Lindsay's father telling MailOnline at the time that his daughter is going to be "an unbelievable mom". He said: "It's so amazing to welcome another grandchild into the world. It's a totally new chapter in her life." Michael added they had "waited a while" but gushed that "everything is coming at the right time". Speaking previously about her day to day life since moving from Los Angeles to Dubai, Lindsay confessed: "Sometimes, I call it The Truman Show, because it's the same thing every day. "But I love it. I really love structure, because I didn't think I had that when I was young. Everything was coming so fast and I had so many things happening. My only structure was filming and being on set."



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Raghav Chadha and actor Parineeti Chopra pay obeisance at Shri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar on Saturday Morning. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL



Punjab police personnel greet Muslim devotees after Eid al-Adha prayers at the Jama Masjid Khairuddin in Amritsar on Thursday. Photo: Prabhjot Singh Gill

Rob Kardashian and Khloe Kardashian celebrating 39th birthday



Former reality TV star Rob Kardashian took to Instagram to pay tribute to his older sister, Khloe Kardashian, in celebration of her 39th birthday. As per 'People', the 36-year old "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" reality star made

buttercup!" The first photo showed Rob donning a fitted baseball cap as he and his blonde-haired sister smiled at the camera. The second photo showed Khloe pursing her lips playfully as she posed next to a smiling Dream, Rob's six-year-old daughter. Rob wrote: "I cherish you deeply and am immensely grateful to have you in my life, and for everything you do for Dream and me. I can't imagine my life without you." In response to the post, Khloe replied, "My baby!!!! You are my favorite human being in the entire world. You are my heartbeats." In recent times, Rob has chosen to maintain a more private lifestyle, opting to stay away from the spotlight, 'People' reported. Earlier in March, on Rob's 36th birthday, Khloe, the mother of two, had shared an emotional Instagram post dedicated to her brother, further highlighting their bond.

'Kanpur Files' is coming in line with 'Kashmir Files' and 'Kerala Story'



KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh GM Foundation's production house Global Middas Capital (GMC) announced the making of a film titled 'Kanpur Files'. At a press conference held at Chandigarh Press Club here today, producer Sardar Inder Preet Singh said that his film will be based on the real events of the 1984 Sikh genocide. The full name of the film is 'The Kanpur Files - 1984 Sikh Genocide'. The premeditated mass killings, looting and violent incidents against Sikhs in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district during 1984 will be brought to the screen with facts, evidence, witnesses and victims in this docu-drama film. Sardar Inder Preet Singh said that this incident was very unfortunate but it is a matter of regret that even after so many years of the incident, no action was taken against the culprits and neither the victims got justice. The release date of the film 'Kanpur Files - 1984 Sikh Massacre' is likely to be October 31, 2023. Sardar Inder Preet Singh says that his film will provide a strong base to those fighting for democratic rights, civil liberties and human rights, to take up the case in the United Nations for justice for the victims of the 1984 Sikh Genocide. He said that to punish those involved in Sikh Genocide of 127 people in Kanpur and to provide justice to the victims, the SIT was formed on February 5, 2019, 35 years after the incident, through the efforts of Sardar Kuldeep Singh Bhogal, President of the All India Riot Victims Relief Committee, 1984, and Advocate Prason Kumar, a Supreme Court lawyer, for identification and prosecution of those involved in the killings.

Kumar Sanu recounts when he sang in hotels for money



MUMBAI: Legendary playback singer, Kumar Sanu, who is known as 'King of Melody', and has sung some of the most iconic numbers such as, 'Mera Dil Bhi Kitna Pagal Hai', 'Tujhe Dekha To', and 'Baazigar O Baazigar', will be seen recollecting his struggling times when he had to sing in hotels to earn money, in 'India's Best Dancer 3'. Watching the performance of one of the contestants, Vipul Kan-dpal, choreographed by Pankaj Thapa to his iconic song 'Ladki Badi Anjaani Hai' from the movie 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', Kumar Sanu recalled his own hard past whilst commending the contestant. He said: "Vipul started working at a young age and so he could earn money to pay his own fees. I did the same thing. I used to sing in hotels for money. I met a music director there and got an opportunity."

Suhaib Ilyasi's serial Crime Alert will be aired on Dangal TV channel soon: Gulshan Kumar



FW DESK Yamunanagar Producer, director and anchor Suhaib Ilyasi, the country's famous and popular serial India's Most Wanted's new serial Crime Alert will be aired very soon on Dangal TV channel. Giving this information, Suhaib Ilyasi's colleague Gulshan Kumar said that the Crime Alert serial is based on the brave police officers who risked their lives to apprehend gangsters, even take bullets in encounters with criminals and give tough time to dreaded criminals. After that he was put in jail. Gulshan Kumar also said that the police officers played an important role in nabbing the criminals by solving various complex knots of crime with their courage, courage, conscientiousness and understanding. This serial is based on the bravery of the police officers and the purpose of this serial is also to make the public aware of the crimes committed. In this, public is made aware through dramatization of incidents like cybercrime, fraud, love affair. Significantly, the serial India's Most Wanted, aired earlier by Suhaib Ilyasi, is about the criminals who were absconding and were far from the police's grip. In this serial, such in-depth information about the wanted criminal was given that it became difficult to hide the criminal. After the telecast in the serial, on the information of the public, that most wanted criminal was caught by the police. Through India's Most Wanted serial, many most wanted criminals were brought behind the bars of the jail.

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