

REGION

2



CLEAN DRINKING WATER SUPPLY ROW: KEJRIWAL HOLDS REVIEW MEETING WITH JAL BOARD OFFICIALS

BANKING & FINANCE

6



WORLD BANK APPROVES \$700MN TO HELP SRI LANKA IMPLEMENT FOUNDATIONAL REFORMS

POTPOURRI

8



MATRIX FIGHT NIGHT: INDIA'S STAR MMA FIGHTER ANGAD BISHT TO DEFEND FLYWEIGHT TITLE AGAINST BRAZIL HUGO PAIVA AT MFN

Gross NPAs in MSMEs drop to 6.8%: RBI Report



NEW DELHI: All scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) have seen a decline in gross non-performing assets (GNPA) from 9.3% in March 2022 to 6.8% in March 2023, as per Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest Financial Stability Report. This led into the improvement of the asset quality of the MSME portfolio of all SCBs. It is to note that the improvement in the MSME asset quality profile coincided with the expiry of regulatory forbearance and restructuring schemes introduced since 2018.

Quarter-on-quarter, the GNPA ratio improved from 7.4% in December 2022 and 7.7% in September 2022 and 9.8% in June 2022. The GNPA ratio for MSME loans below Rs 25 crore, which are particularly vulnerable to slippage, also declined sequentially from 7.2% in March last year to 6.7% in March this year, the report noted. In terms of special mention accounts (SMAs), the share of SMAs in the MSME portfolio of SCBs also dropped from 11% in March 2022 to 8.6% in March 2023. SMAs are accounts that show signs of incipient stress leading to the borrower defaulting in servicing the debt.

SGPC setting up its own studio for live broadcast

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) General Secretary Gurcharan Singh Grewal here today informed that SGPC is set to launch its YouTube channel to broadcast live Gurbani from the Golden Temple and Rs. 60 lac budget was already earmarked in the SGPC budget for the purpose.



Assembly led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann passed the Sikh Gurdwaras (Amendment) Bill, 2023, to allow free-for-all telecast. However, the agreement between SGPC and PTC network for live broadcast of Gurbani from the Golden Temple is going to expire in June 2023.

Congress questions AAP's move to back Uniform Civil Code

NEW DELHI: A day after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) announced to support the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), the Congress hit back saying it was surprised with the speed at which it supported the BJP-led central government's move even as other responsible parties want the draft proposal and asked if it has exclusive access to the draft.

In a tweet, Pawan Khera, who is chairman of the Congress media and publicity department said, "I am truly surprised at the speed with which AAP has extended support to the Uniform Civil Code. Even as other responsible parties wait for the draft proposal from the govt, does AAP have exclusive access to the draft of the UCC proposal?"

His remarks came a day after the AAP announced to support the UCC, and said also said that these set of laws should be implemented only after wider consultations.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday while addressing BJP booth workers in Madhya Pradesh said that Muslims were being misled in the name of UCC. "These days, people are being provoked by the UCC. You tell me, if there is one law for one person in a home, and another law for another person, can that house function?" he asked. The Congress and AAP has been engaged in bitter war of words in last few weeks over the Centre's ordinance in Delhi. During the opposition parties meeting in Bihar's Patna Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal asked Congress to clear its stand on

“These days, people are being provoked by the UCC. You tell me, if there is one law for one person in a home, and another law for another person, can that house function?”

the ordinance row. After the opposition meeting, the AAP also said that its hesitation and refusal to act as a team player on an important issue would make it very difficult for the party to be a part of any alliance that includes Congress.

Congress alleges corruption in Predator Drones Deal

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

Congress party today alleged that India is paying more price for the 31 Predator drones deal with the US. A deal that was welcomed by PM Modi and US president Joe Biden during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US. Addressing media persons in Delhi, AICC spokesperson Pawan Khera said That the Indian Government is paying 3,072 billion deal for 31 MQ-9B predator drones manufactured by General Atomics. "Why is India paying more than actual price of the drone, as compared to other countries? Why are we paying highest price for the drone, which does not even have AI integration?", he said. The party also asked Modi Govt



of number of drones being purchased. In April 2023, the Indian Armed Forces informed the Modi Govt that the requirement for predator drones is just 18 and not 31, then why the BJP govt buying 31 drones now?

Giving examples of some similar variants, Congress leader Pawan Khera said the US Air Force bought MQ-9 drone, a superior version, at USD 56.5 million per drone. The UK Air Force bought MQ-9B at USD12.5 million per MQ-9B drone in Spain. These drones were bought by Spain at

USD 46.75 million per drone.. and Germany bought it for USD 17 Million per drone, he added.

The Congress also said that when Rustom II Unmanned Aerial Vehicle is already available in India, what is the need of an alternative, and it is developed on the lines of the Predator drones of the US. It is designed for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. It is capable of staying at a maximum flight altitude of over 22,000 feet for more than 24 hrs. Congress have also asked why cabinet Committee on security (CCS) not approve the drone deal. Alleging that Air Force had reservations about skyrocketing prices of these drones, why was the deal brokered in a hurry? The party also asked questions on "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" in Defence.

Three 'garbage mountains' will be cleared in next 18 months: Delhi LG

FW CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena on Wednesday assured that the three landfill sites in the national capital will be cleared in the "next 18 months" while the Najafgarh drain will be cleaned in the "next few months". Speaking at an event here on 'Delhi 2041 - New Master Plan', Saxena cited various initiatives undertaken in the development of Yamuna flood plains, revamping of roads, and removal of garbage dumps in the city, under his tenure in the last year.

He called upon Delhi citizens to participate in the beautification and grooming of the city. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) issued a statement after the event which was also attended by Subhashish Panda, vice chairman of the authority, who said the Master Plan of Delhi 2041 (MPD-2041) would ensure sustainable development and will be notified soon. Highlighting the cleanliness work done in the national



capital at an "unprecedented pace", Saxena assured that the three "garbage mountains" will be cleared in the next 18 months, and the Najafgarh Drain, spread over 57 km, will also be completely cleaned very soon. "Out of the 57-km stretch of the Najafgarh Drain, 30 km of it has been cleaned and the rest will be cleaned in the next few months," he was quoted as saying in the statement. The interactive session on MPD-2041 was organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI).

access to resources, services, and economic opportunities, Saxena said.

The plan aims to foster inclusive growth and prosperity. Entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation will be nurtured, contributing to the overall economic development of the city, the LG added.

He also said that like never before, this year thousands of residents of Delhi performed yoga at eight locations on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga, along the cleaned stretch of the Najafgarh Drain. The LG asked citizens of Delhi to remain vigilant and raise their voices for better roads, other basic facilities, and also against encroachment. "People have the right to ask for a clean environment," he said.

On an emotional note, he stressed that it is our duty to bring back the lost glory of the Yamuna river for future generations. He said in the endeavour, an 11 km patch of Yamuna from Signature Bridge to the ITO Barrage has been cleaned.

NESO demands PM to break silence, quell violence in Manipur

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT

The North East Students' Organization (NESO) has called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address the unceasing unrest in Manipur, which has persisted for around two months. NESO, an alliance comprising seven student organizations from the northeastern states, expressed deep concern over the prolonged silence of the Prime Minister and emphasized the urgent need for his intervention to restore peace and normalcy in the region.

As part of their ongoing efforts, NESO organized a candlelight vigil for peace at the western gate of the iconic Kangla in Imphal. Similar programs were simultaneously held in the capitals of all eight northeastern states. The vigil aimed to bring together the



NESO orchestrated a poignant candlelight vigil, followed by the symbolic act of affixing the candles in front of the revered Kangla's western gate on Wednesday evening.

34 affected communities, mourn the loss of over 120 lives, and condemn the destruction of numerous properties, which has resulted in the displacement of over 50,000 individuals across Manipur. NESO advisor Sinam Prakash, speaking on behalf of the organization, raised questions regarding the Prime Minister's silence and its impact. "PM Modi's prolonged silence, even after 50 days of violence in the state, deeply concerns us," he stated.

BJP, Congress lock horns after Bishnupur cops halt Rahul Gandhi's convoy

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT

Congress senior leader Rahul Gandhi, faced a significant obstacle during his visit to Manipur on Thursday as he sought to assess the ongoing conflict in the region. To his surprise and frustration, Gandhi was abruptly prevented from entering the Churachandpur district by road. Manipur authorities, citing safety concerns, informed his convoy that it would not be safe to



continue traveling by road near the town of Bishnupur, which lay roughly 20 kilometers away from their intended

destination. Consequently, the scion of the Gandhi dynasty had no choice but to retrace his steps and return to Imphal International Airport, where he boarded a helicopter to reach his planned location. Attempting to shed light on the reason behind their decision, Heisnam Balram Singh, the Superintendent of Police in Bishnupur, emphasized the prevailing ground situation. Singh asserted, "Given the volatile circumstances

on the ground, we made the judgment call to halt Rahul Gandhi's progress and strongly advised him to proceed to Churachandpur via helicopter. There exists a real and credible threat of a grenade attack along the very highway that Mr. Gandhi would have traversed. Our primary responsibility is to prioritize his security and well-being, and thus we could not allow him to continue the journey by road."

Karnataka govt to give cash instead of extra 5kg rice, as Procurement fails

ARUNKUMARRAO
Bengaluru

After having failed to procure the required quantity of rice to roll out its Anna Bhagya scheme, the Karnataka government decided to pay Rs 34 per kg for the addition 5kg of the food grain promised to BPL families under one of the five pre-poll guarantees issued by the congress.

KH Muniyappa, the minister for food and civil supplies, said each member in families Below the Poverty Line (BPL) will get Rs 170 by way of cash transfer at Rs 34 per kg of rice from July. If there were five members in BPL family then family will receive Rs 850 a month and the money will be deposited in the bank account of the head of the family through direct benefit transfer



(DBT) from July 1, the minister clarified. However, about 14 lakh families to whom the state had provided BPL cards, over and above the limit set by the Centre, will not receive this additional cash benefit. The Centre sets the limit for each state to issue Public Distribution System cards. Over and above that, the state govern-

ment bears additional expenses. "We need 22,000 tonnes of rice to cater to these families. Procuring this quantity will not be a problem for our government, HK Patil, law and parliamentary affairs minister said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launching attack on centre said, "Despite having sufficient stock, Centre has denied us rice. On the other hand, rice is being sold to private players through auction. This shows the Centre is trying to scuttle our scheme." Former BJP chief ministers BS Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai should have asked the Centre to release rice to the state, he added.

him as he has to generate additional resources with politically significant sections such as Streehakti self-help groups and farmers demanding that their outstanding loans be waived by the government.

The Congress government has political obligation to clear the pending dues of civil contractors since their complaint against the erstwhile BJP government over allegation of 40% kickbacks in procuring government contracts had helped the grand old party gain considerable traction with the electorate in the recent assembly polls. Congress' successful PayCM campaign was based on the contractor association complaint to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about allegations of rampant corruption in the BJP-led state government.

My intention is only peace, not politics: Rahul

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, has said that his visit had no political agenda and his sole objective was to bring about peace in Manipur, emphasizing his intention to promote peace in the state. He was taking the opportunity to address the media and express his views following his meeting with Manipur Governor Anusuiya UIkey in front of the Raj Bhavan, Imphal.

When asked to comment on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's prolonged silence since the outbreak of violence on May 3, Gandhi stated that he would refrain from making any political remarks and reiterated his focus on achieving peace in Manipur. Gandhi expressed his purpose in visiting Manipur by emphasizing his desire to empathize with the people and acknowledged the tragic events that had unfolded. He remarked, "It is a horrible tragedy that has



taken place," expressing his sorrow on behalf of both the people of Manipur and India as a whole. He further elaborated on the dire situation in Manipur, having visited relief camps and interacted with individuals from various communities. Gandhi highlighted the deficiencies in these camps and urged the government to take immediate action to address them.

Drawing attention to the conditions in both Imphal and Churachandpur districts, Gandhi stressed the need for improved basic amenities, enhanced food provisions, and the supply of essential medicines in the relief camps. He expressed that he believed that violence would yield no positive outcome and called upon everyone to actively work towards achieving peace. Gandhi assured his commitment to assist in restoring normalcy to Manipur, stating, "I am here. I will help anyway, do anything I can to bring peace to the state. I love all the people of Manipur, and once again, it's a terrible time, and we need to bring peace to the state."

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

Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to fwletters@gmail.com. We will publish them on this page.

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

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

RNI NO. DELENG/2011/38860

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY SWINDER BAJWA
ON BEHALF OF FW MEDIA

PRINTED AT JAGJIT PUBLISHING CO. PVT LTD
D-12, INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-1, MOHALI,
PUNJAB 160059

PRINTER & PUBLISHER SWINDER BAJWA
OWNER: FW MEDIA

PUBLISHED AT: BUILDING NO-23, NEHRU PLACE
NEW DELHI 110019; PHONE: 9888040061

EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

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



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 Gurjar-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

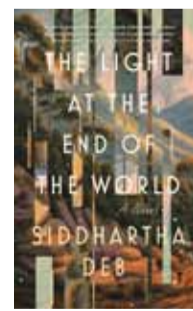
journalism and news, challenging the conventions of storytelling and pushing the boundaries of literary experimentation.

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.

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 Lavjot 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 Lavjot 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 Lavjot 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.

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.

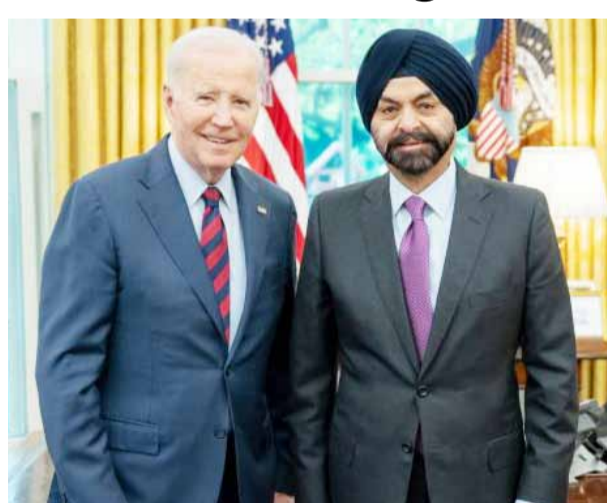
With over 30 years of experience in key positions,

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 as 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 ges-

ture 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

Drifting premium cars to set new benchmarks

Mercedes, Lamborghini, and Hyundai put to test for records



NEW DELHI: The number of individuals and institutions finding a significant place in the India Book of Records (IBR), India's leading record-setting platform, is growing rapidly. Some of its stories are really mind-boggling and inspiring. Drifting a car is not an ordinary task. But, companies like Launch Control India and the Power Drift Studios are doing it with ease once and again.

The record for performing a continuous drift for the most extended duration in a car was set by Launch Control India at the Buddh International

Circuit, Greater Noida, when Mudit Grover, driving a modified Mercedes Benz C-Class, drifted non-stop for 19 minutes, 20 seconds. Then, the Power Drift Studios set the record for unboxing a smartphone while performing the fastest drift in a sports car. Gaurav Gill, a champion of premier car races in the country, achieved this feat by unboxing the OnePlus 11 mobile while drifting a Lamborghini Huracan Spyder at a speed of 205.47 kmph at the NATRAX automotive test tracks, Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh.

With the electric vehicles

making their way, Hyundai (India) set a record for the fastest EV run, covering the 7 Wonders of India. The Hyundai IONIQ-5 team embarked on a journey from Delhi to visit the Golden Temple, Taj Mahal, Khajuraho, Nalanda, Sun Temple, Hampi and Gomateshwara, covering 6458 km.

The Art of Living Foundation created two records for the largest number of people reciting Ganesh Atharvashirsha and the largest number of people taking the pledge for a drug-free India in one place, entering the Asia Book of Records also. A total of 54,560 people recited the hymn at Suryakant Kakde Farm, Pune, while 1,26,613 students participated in the Drug-Free India campaign. Pune University supported the event. Art of Living founder, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis graced the event. On the announcement of the records, Sri Sri Ravishankar said, "It is a matter of pride for all of us to be named in the India Book of Records."

Axis Three Dee Studios display 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-lumière (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 Shammam

Actress Lindsay Lohan is pregnant with her first child with husband Bader Shammam 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.

Matrix Fight Night : India's star MMA fighter Angad Bisht to defend Flyweight title against Brazil Hugo Paiva at MFN



KAVITA SHARMA

India's biggest Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Promotion, Matrix Fight Night (MFN) is returning to the National Capital Region (NCR) once again with MFN 12 set to take place on July 1st at the Indoor Stadium in Noida. The fans of martial arts will get a chance to witness the thrilling MMA action and intense fights.

In the main event India's Angad Bisht will defend his flyweight title against Brazil Hugo Paiva. Bisht defeated Egypt's Mohamed Gamal for the Flyweight title at MFN on 10th November 2022. MFN is India's premier Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) property and is the brainchild of Bollywood sensation Tiger Shroff, his mother Ayesha shroff and sister Krishna shroff. The

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 the line of duty with criminals and give tough time to dreaded criminals. After that he was put in jail.

standing. 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.

POTPOURRI

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.

Diljit Dosanjh responds to being mentioned by US leader at luncheon hosted for PM 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 Intiaz Ali. The film also stars Parineeti Chopra. It will stream on Netflix.

PGDAV College of DU wins 'Gandhi Darshan Competition'



MAHIE JK New Delhi

Navrang, the theatre Society of PGDAV College in Delhi University secured First Position in the "Gandhi Darshan Competition" held at Jawahar Bhawan on 25th June. Aurbindo College and Shivaji College of DU scored second and third position respectively. The theme of the Drama was "Gandhigiri" where many colleges of Delhi University participated.

The competition on Gandhigiri was jointly organized by Nation First Foundation and DU Ahimsa Unit. The Title of the play was "Vichardhara ya Mithya". The Play was directed by Sourabh Mishra and Soubhagya Kukreja and was written by Sourabh who also played the character of Mahatma Gandhi in the play. After securing the first position, the President of Navrang, Soubhagya said, "All our team members have worked very hard for this act," we are looking forward for some more in the future."

On this occasion Nation First Founder, Devendra yadav appeal to the students to follow the principles of Gandhiji in their lives. The performance of the students was outstanding, Yadav added. The other members of the Navrang theatre group that participated in the play were Mahie, Ayush, Baleshwar Kumar, Vanishika, Anshika, Shubham, Deepanshu, Ankit, Parth, Raghav, Yashika, Aditya raj, Payal, Aaina, etc. Navrang has given many outstanding performances in the past also.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

THE FINANCIAL WORLD
Read & Lead

A weekly Newspaper from Chandigarh & Delhi

For more stories & E-paper log on
www.thefinancialworld.com

SUBSCRIBE: YOUTUBE CHANNEL
FW News

FOLLOW US
@thefinancialworld | @FWMedia_Tweets | fw.thefinancialworld