

REGION

2

**BHAGWANT MANN LAUNCHES MASSIVE AWARENESS DRIVE 'HAR SHUKARVAR DENGUE TE VAAR' TO CONTROL DENGUE**



CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

5

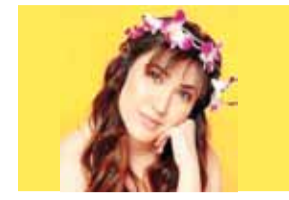
**45% JOB-SEEKING GRADUATES MEET INDIA'S INDUSTRY DEMANDS: STUDY**



POTPOURRI

8

**SHEENA BAJAJ TO MAKE BOLLYWOOD DEBUT WITH 'NON STOP DHAMAAL'**



## Punjab CM Mann reviews the progress of ongoing 'Special Girdawari' in the state



**CHANDIGARH:** Reiterating the firm commitment of state government to compensate people for loss of every single penny due to floods, the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday reviewed the progress of ongoing 'Special Girdawari' in the state.

Chairing a meeting here at his office in Punjab Civil Secretariat I, the Chief Minister said that the Punjab government is duty bound for compensating the people in wake of floods across the state. He said that there is no dearth of funds with the state government for this purpose and every effort will be made to give relief to the flood hit people. Bhagwant Mann said that he had himself

took first hand information by visiting the marooned areas of the state and now no stone is being left unturned for giving succour to people of flood affected districts.

that the officers have been directed to ensure that the Special Girdawari is completed by August 15 by all means. Bhagwant Mann assured the people that his government will compensate the people for every loss of crop, cattle, house or anything.

The Chief Minister said that 1495 villages in the 19 districts of the state have been affected badly by floods. He said that as per the reports 44 people have lost their lives, 22 were injured, 391 houses have been fully damaged and 878 have been partially damaged besides 1277 people were lodged in 159 relief camps during floods. Bhagwant Mann said that in order to compensate these people for loss of every single penny the Special Girdawari will be completed by August 15.

Prominent amongst others present on the occasion included Cabinet Minister Brahm Shankar Jimpa, Chief Secretary Anurag Verma and others.

## GST Collection Surges with 11% YoY growth in July 2023



**FW DESK**  
New Delhi

India's gross GST revenue collected in the month of July, 2023 is Rs 1,65,105 crore of which CGST is Rs 29,773 crore, SGST is Rs 37,623 crore, IGST is Rs 85,930 crore (including Rs 41,239 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 11,779 crore (including Rs 840 crore collected on import of goods).

In the latest data released today, the government has settled Rs 39,785 crore to CGST and Rs 33,188 crore to SGST from IGST. The total revenue of Centre and the

States in the month of July 2023 after regular settlement is Rs 69,558 crore for CGST and Rs 70,811 crore for the SGST.

The revenues for the month of July 2023 are 11% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year. During the month, the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 15% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. It is for the fifth time, the gross GST collection has crossed Rs 1.60 lakh crore mark.

In June, GST collection was Rs 1,61,497 crore.

## NIA raid on Khalsa Aid office is unfortunate action, says Harjinder Singh Dhami

**JAGMOHAN SINGH**  
Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami has taken note of the raid by India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) on the office of Khalsa Aid and the house of its manager and said that it is a very unfortunate action by ignoring



the effective role of Sikh organisations in the field of human welfare. He said in a statement issued here that it is characteristic of the Sikhs that they always support the needy following the teachings and principles of the Gurus. If there is a problem anywhere in the world, Sikhs are at the forefront to help. Khalsa Aid organization is also one such organisation that is serving humanity worldwide without discrimination. Dhami said that it is not appropriate to harass the managers of such humanitarian organisations. He said that if any investigation was required, the responsible managers of Khalsa Aid could have been sent a notice and called to join the same. Creating an atmosphere of fear by raiding offices and homes without notice is not justified. He said that the investigative agencies of the Government of India should never forget that Sikh organisations are at the forefront of relief work at all times. The terrible period of the Covid-19 pandemic is the most recent example when the volunteers of Sikh organisations served humanity without caring for their lives.

## Missing Army Jawan recovered by Jammu and Kashmir Police



**FW DESK**

In a dramatic turn of events, a missing army soldier, Javed Ahmad Wani, who had disappeared from his native Kulgam district in Kashmir while on leave, has been located and recovered by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

The police made the announcement via a post on X (formerly Twitter), revealing that a joint interrogation will take place following a medical checkup of the soldier. Javed Ahmad Wani, 25, and a resident of Achathal area in Kulgam district, had gone missing on July 29. He was on leave since June 29 and was preparing to rejoin his duties in Ladakh. On the evening of his disappearance, he left his home in Asthal, Kulgam, to buy groceries, as he was scheduled to return to Ladakh the following day.

## Punjab Govt will fully compensate people suffered by people due to floods: Anurag Verma

**CHANDIGARH:** Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann led State Government stands with its people in the difficult times caused by floods and is committed to fully compensate them for the loss of the people of the state. It was disclosed by Punjab Chief Secretary Mr. Anurag Verma in a press communiqué after a video conferencing meeting with all the Deputy Commissioners along with the top officials. The Chief Secretary instructed all the Deputy Commissioners to complete this work on time by following



the orders given by the Chief Minister of Special Girdawari by August 15. He said that the work of Girdawari in the field should be done with complete fairness and transparency. The

Deputy Commissioners should also ensure that according to the instructions of the Chief Minister, the work of Girdawari should be done on the spot.

The Chief Secretary also instructed the Deputy Commissioners and SDMs to personally visit the spot. Apart from this, compensation for loss of life and property should be given immediately. He asked the Deputy Commissioners to immediately dispose of the pending compensation cases while taking the district wise report of the compensation

and Girdawari work. Anurag Verma said that the farmers whose paddy crops were damaged due to floods are being given free paddy saplings by the State Government. He told the DCs that wherever there is a problem in the availability of paddy sapling, they should immediately contact the Agriculture Department. In this regard, Secretary Agriculture Arshdeep Singh Thind is the nodal officer. He asked all the districts to send progress reports of Girdawari, compensation and damages to the headquarters on daily basis.

## My duty remains same to protect idea of India: Rahul Gandhi after Supreme Court's relief

**KAVITA SHARMA**  
New Delhi

Maintaining grace and dignity in victory, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, said that his duty remained the same to save the idea of India.

Reacting to the Supreme Court decision staying his conviction in a defamation case, Gandhi tweeted in his characteristic humble and gracious way, "Come what may, my duty remains the same. Protect the idea of India".

The Congress meanwhile hailed the Supreme Court of India's verdict to stay the conviction of former party president Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case.

"Truth Alone Triumphs!", remarked Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in a tweet, while adding, "we welcome the verdict by the Hon'ble Supreme Court giving relief to @RahulGandhi. Justice has been delivered. Democracy has won. The Constitution has been upheld".

Lashing out at the Bharati-



ya Janata Party, he said, "BJP's conspiratorial hounding of Shri Gandhi has been thoroughly exposed. Time for them to stop their malicious targeting of Opposition leaders".

Kharge observed, "it is high time they respect the mandate given by the people and start governing the country, on which they have miserably failed in the last 10 years".

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi remarked, while quoting Gautama Buddha, "Three things cannot

be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth".

Congress general secretary, Communication, Jairam Ramesh said, "the decision of the Supreme Court is an affirmation of truth and justice". "Despite the relentless efforts of the BJP's machinery, @RahulGandhi has refused to bend, break or bow, choosing instead to place his faith in the judicial process", Ramesh tweeted, while adding, "this is a lesson to the BJP and their minions: You may do the worst, but we will not back down. We will continue to highlight and highlight your failures as a government and as a party. We will uphold our constitutional ideals and keep faith in our institutions which you want to destroy completely".

Hailing the decision, Congress general secretary, Organization, KC Venugopal said, "we welcome the Hon'ble Supreme Court's verdict staying @RahulGandhi ji's conviction. Justice has prevailed. No force can silence the voice of the people".

## INDIA leaders meet in Parliament, seek PM's statement on Manipur Crisis

**NEW DELHI:** Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) party leaders on Friday met in Parliament and once again decided to press for their demand for a statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in both Houses on Manipur violence.

The meeting of the INDIA leaders was held in the chamber of Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. During the meeting it was



decided to demand for the statement of the Prime Minister in

Parliament and "honour his responsibilities".

The INDIA parties have been demanding a statement by PM Modi in both Houses of Parliament on Manipur violence.

They have also demanded a detailed discussion on the issue in Parliament.

Ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3 and since then hundreds of people have died and thousands have been forced to take refuge in relief camps.

## Indian Railways install MRFs for waste management in more than 250 stations: Chairman Railway Board

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Railways policy, we target to reduce water consumption by 20% by 2023 and have set up MRF (material recovery facilities) for waste management in more than 250 stations, said Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman & CEO, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways while speaking at the 7th International Conference Rail Tech 2023 organised by ASSOCHAM.

Beyond climate action, Indian Railway has also taken significant steps in other environmental challenges such as water and waste management, said Mr Lahoti, Chairman & CEO, Railway Board at the 7th International Conference Rail Tech 2023: Innovative Technologies for Indian Railways organized by ASSOCHAM today.

Modern transport systems are technology based and Indian Railways is leading from front. Indian Railways has been utilizing its huge talent base in modernizing its assets and infrastructure using innovative technologies in several areas such as track construc-



tions, electrification, signaling, information technology, manufacturing of locomotives and coaches and maintenance of track, monitoring of trains, control, communications and electronics and design material etc, added. Lahoti.

The Railway Ministry would be working in close cooperation and support from all stakeholders, industry bodies like ASSOCHAM in order to continue to Indian Railways' journey towards modernization using latest technologies, so that transportation in the country becomes commensurate with the country's goals and aspirations of "Viksit Bharat". The newly introduced Vande Bharat is focused to enhance passenger experience. These trains are

indigenously built semi high-speed trains, with a number of features such as automatic door closure, reclining/rotating and high comfort seats, modern toilets, CCTV in all coaches, emergency alarm push buttons, mini pantry and many more. Its design and built involves high technology applications. It offers huge opportunity in providing auxiliary services, components, parts to Indian Railways so that the production capacity can be enhanced to the desired level. So far, 50 services (25pairs) are operational. The plan is roll out more such services a very fast pace. Long distance Vande Bharat and Vande Metro for suburban passengers are also being planned, mentioned Lahoti.

## Peace prevailed in Nuh-Sohna and Gurugarm after communal violence

**SUNIL THAPLIYAL**  
Nuh/Sohna

Following Monday's communal violence in Nuh-Sohna, Mewat, in which six people, including two Homeguards, were killed and over 90 injured, including more than 20 police officers, the angry mob set fire to over 100 vehicles and left burnt vehicles on the highways. A large contingent of police and paramilitary forces was deployed in case of any untoward incidents. Law enforcement agencies are on the lookout not only on the ground but also in cyberspace for potential flashpoints that could spark further unrest in the region.

"Six people, including two members of the Home Guards and four civilians, died in the incident. So far, 116 people have been arrested. They are being remanded in custody. Those found guilty will not be spared. We are committed to the safety of the public. The overall situation in the state is normal. We



appeal to the public to maintain peace, calm and brotherhood," Haryana CM Khattar told a news agency. Some 93 criminal cases have been registered, including 46 in Nuh, 23 in Gurugram, three in Faridabad, three in Rewari and 18 in Palwal, said TV S N Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), adding that a Rapid Action Force centre would be set up in Nuh soon.

The failure of the district administration to take action against communal elements has created a situation resembling a war zone in Nuh and Sohnana areas of Mewat district in Haryana. A curfew has been imposed in the town for the past four days after the administration failed to take action against the communal leaders who triggered this violence.

The violence erupted in Nuh in an attempt to stop the annual Hindu religious procession through the Muslim-majority Nuh region, which spread to Gurugram in recent days. The Muslim community was outraged when it was announced that the procession would include Monu Manesar, who is wanted by police for the murder of two Muslim men.

## Over Rs 10000 cr VAT refund scam of Trade & Industry in Haryana

**SATISH HANDA**

Haryana police recovered over Rs 112 crore from four major gangs allegedly involved in Goods and Services Tax (GST) scams. At least 89 people were arrested in these cases in 10 districts across the state. As many as 40 cases were registered with 89 arrests from four accused gangs (group of firms) allegedly defrauded the government exchequer to the tune of over Rs 464.12 crore through fraudulent means in the state. The nexus of these fraudsters were active not only in Haryana but across the country, the Haryana police said. Then Director General of Police, Haryana said that these persons issued fraudulent invoices to numerous firms and companies without actual supply of goods through fraudulent E-way bills (GST related challans for transporting consignments) and facilitated fake ITC entitlement on GST portal through GSTR-3B form. The major goods involved in these GST invoice scams were scrap, iron and steel articles, cotton-yarn and paper and recovery of Rs 112



crore by unearthing fake GST Identification Numbers.

Giving details about their modus operandi, police said, the maximum number of E-way bills which were generated by these fraudsters were found to be fake on verification by the Sales Tax and Crime branch. These E-way bills mentioned vehicle numbers related to ambulances, government vehicles, motorcycles, private owned vehicles which are contrary to be used for commercial purposes. Further inquiry revealed that the bank account numbers which were shown in GST registration form of the bogus firm were also found dubious and the fraudsters used another fake bank account to deceive concerned government authorities.

# Bhagwant Mann launches massive awareness drive 'Har Shukarvar Dengue te Vaar' to control dengue

**CHANDIGARH:** In order to prevent the spread of dengue disease in the aftermath of floods Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann today launched a special campaign 'Har Shukarvar Dengue te vaar' for checking the spread of vector borne disease to save the precious lives of people. Launching the camp here on Friday, the Chief Minister directed health department to make coordinated efforts to control the spread of disease and lay thrust on awareness among community regarding dengue prevention. He said though the water has receded at most of the places in state but the standing water at several places provides breeding ground for mosquitoes. Bhagwant Mann said that



the campaign should focus on making the state mosquitoes free so that dengue can't spread its wings in Punjab. The Chief Minister asked the Health department to make

elaborate arrangements for stepping up fogging in rural as well urban areas and to enhance manpower for larvae checking. He said that the department must take concrete steps

to check the cases of dengue and adequately focus on ensuring prompt medicine to people. Bhagwant Mann said that though dengue case load is very low yet as compared to previous years but still in wake of floods there should be no laxity in terms of efforts being put in to control dengue.

The Chief Minister emphasised that health department should make all-out efforts to control dengue and try its best to provide a safe environment to its citizens. He appealed the people to keep their houses and surroundings clean to avoid spread of dengue virus. Bhagwant Mann on stressed upon the need that the health department is coordinating with other line departments

such as school education, rural development, local body department to control the dengue virus.

The Chief Minister said that despite the advancement in the field of medical sciences dengue causes serious challenge to health of people. He said that awareness is a key to control the disease adding that all the stakeholders should continue their efforts against dengue. Bhagwant Mann gave clarion call to people to join hands against dengue and assured state government will take steps on war footing for the success of dengue control campaign.

On the occasion Health Minister Dr Balbir Singh and others were also present.

# Health Department UT Chandigarh joins hands with MOMENTUM

**Workshop's primary objective was to sensitize the media prior to the launch of IMI5.0 and emphasize the significance of vaccinating all eligible children and bolstering immunity in the face of existing challenges.**

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI**  
Chandigarh

Health Department UT Chandigarh in support with The MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity Project successfully conducted a State Media Sensitization Conference on Intensified Mission Inradhanush 5.0 (IMI 5.0) in the esteemed presence of Dr Suman Singh, Director Health & Family Welfare cum MD NHM, UT Chandigarh and Dr Manjeet Singh, District Immunization Officer, UT Chandigarh. The meeting highlighted the importance of vaccinating eligible children and strengthening immunity amidst prevailing challenges. The event witnessed participation from prominent media representatives, health officials, and community stakeholders, all coming together to advocate for the success of Intensified Mission Inradhanush 5.0.

Addressing various factors that have limited vaccination coverage, IMI 5.0 targets populations facing barriers, striving to vaccinate children and eligible pregnant women who have been left out or dropped out of Routine Immunization



activities. The state has already conducted comprehensive training at the State, district, and block levels, emphasizing the importance of reaching the unvaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals and ensuring their inclusion in the immunization schedule. IMI 5.0 is committed to prioritizing children aged between 0 to 5 years who have not received any vaccines, with the goal of providing life-saving vaccinations to every eligible child. Additionally, the initiative represents a significant step towards achieving Measles & Rubella elimination nationwide, ensuring that every child under 5 years old completes the essential two-dose schedule of Measles and Rubella Containing Vaccine (MRCV).

Dr Suman Singh, Director Health & Family Welfare cum MD NHM, UT Chandigarh said, "IMI 5.0 serves as a steadfast commitment to reach those who have not yet received vaccinations, closing immunization gaps, and securing a healthier future for our children. We are dedicated to ensuring that every eligible child receives the necessary vaccinations to stay healthy, while also enhancing immu-

nity throughout our region. With the collaborative efforts of The MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity Project, our healthcare teams, and the support of our community, we are determined to make a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of our children and build a stronger, healthier Chandigarh".

Dr Manjeet Singh, District Immunization Officer, UT Chandigarh, highlighted the crucial role of the media in IMI 5.0. "The role of the media in IMI 5.0 is crucial and cannot be underestimated. Media professionals play a vital part in effectively communicating the significance of vaccination, which, in turn, fosters community engagement and substantially boosts vaccine acceptance and coverage. By raising awareness and dispelling myths, journalists contribute significantly to the success of this life-saving initiative. We believe that by addressing the barriers to vaccination and implementing a targeted approach, we can make a substantial difference in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our children and pregnant women."

# Wearing black costumes during LS session surprizing, generally worn at a sad occasion : Anil Vij



**SATISH HANDA**  
Ambala

In reply to a question during interaction with media persons here as regard few political leaders from opposition were seen wearing black costumes during recent Lok Sabha session, Haryana Home & Health Minister Anil Vij expressing surprise said that he fails to understand why such leaders were seen wearing black costumes, usually worn during a sad occasions.

Pointing over an anti-ruling government statement by Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda, leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha and former Haryana chief Minister, Vij said why to comment on others when Congress itself is divided not only in groups but also in pieces, as such has failed to form a unit in the state since a long time inspite of the fact next Lok Sabha as well as Vidhan Sabha polls approaching, when BJP will show them mirror third time like in past two occasions due to increasing rift between their senior leaders, as seen party's senior leaders Kumari Shejla, Randeep Surjewala and Kiran Chaudhary are on way to east and Hooda Saheb himself marching ahead towards south divided in groups.

Vij said that ruling state government in Haryana is making all efforts to fight flood situation in the state and provide immediate relief to flood affected people as well as farmers suffered heavy crops loss and provided them immediate compensation towards losses suffered by them.

# Electricity department employee identified as mastermind of of gang stolen 70 transformers

**SATISH HANDA**

A search by Matloda police station in Panipat district on a clue busted a gang of five persons allegedly involved in stolen 70 electric transformers in the state installed by the Haryana State Electricity Board which included 53 transformers stolen in Panipat district, 14 transformers stolen in Karnal district and three transformers stolen in Jind district in past 19 months. The arrested accused during preliminary investigation admitted crime and were identified as Varinder alias Kala a resident of village Kavi in



Sonipat district employed with Haryana State Electricity Board who was the kingpin of the gang and admitted crime due to earning huge money.

Among other four arrested accused were Naveen, Vipin both residents of Matloda, Vikram originally hailing from Nepal and Sonipat district employed with Haryana State Electricity Board who was the kingpin of the gang and admitted crime due to earning huge money.

The prime accused Varinder said that they used to bring

coils from stolen transformers and sell to Rishi Pal of Matloda running a disposal goods business. He disclosed that he was also running an electric store in the name of Shiv Electricals at Matloda as an eyewash. Police also recovered a scooty, a motorcycle and Rs 6000 from Varinder alias Kala. A case was registered against all five members of the gang with the police where they admitted involvement in the large number of thefts of electric transformers mostly stolen from agriculture fields during night hours. All arrested were sent to judicial remand at Sonipat jail.

# Haryana's Govt hospitals doctors threaten strike in protest of chargesheet to 5 doctors

**SATISH HANDA**

The call for a pen-down strike was given by the Haryana Civil Medical Services (HCMS) Association against the chargesheet on five doctors in Karnal, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Charkhi Dadri districts allegedly neglect in duty and action was taken on the directions by officers of the National Health Mission who visited several hospitals in the state and found five doctors not sincere to their duties. The President of Association Dr Rakesh Khayalia and the General Secretary Anil Yadav told media persons that they attempted to see Additional Chief Secretary G, Anupama twice for a personal meeting but failed to get time as such they held pen down strike for three hours between 8 am to 11 am on 19th July 2023 wearing black badges when large number of patients arrived in OPD kept on waiting or returned disappointed at the hospitals. However, emergency services remained ineffective. The Association president said that in



case appropriate action will not be taken they will be compelled to move on protest for which intimation through E-mail has been sent to the Director General Health, Haryana as well as State Health Minister.

Information reveals, services at the out-patient departments (OPD) of government hospitals in Karnal were hit as doctors went on a three-hour strike in protest on the chargesheet on five doctors in Karnal, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Charkhi Dadri wearing black badges in protest, the doctors alleged that the action against their fellows Dr Aman, Dr Anshul, Dr Anu, Dr Abhishek and Dr Mohit of negligence in their duty under Rule 7 of Haryana Civil Services (Punishment and Appeal) Rules 2016 was ironical as they were just discharging their duties as per government orders.

# 580 fresh Hepatitis cases identified in Ambala district only worries state health department

**SATISH HANDA**  
Ambala

Fast spreading hepatitis in the state is a matter of concern for state health department since in past six years district health department Ambala had received 547 and the district health department expressed worry due to as many as 580 fresh cases received in past about a year with 46 deaths. According to Dr Sanjiv Singla District Health Officer it has been observed use those addicted to drugs and taking excessive liquor from families below poverty line, youths having 'tattoos' on their bodies were found victims of this dreaded hepatitis also known as 'Kala Peelia' disease, getting done shaving from a barber shop with unhygienic blade, use of an infected syringe or during blood swere observed prime reason for this disease.

Dr Harsha Ambala district Health Department Nodal Officer said that we are getting large number of patients suffering from Hepatitis from adjoining



Punjab state as well as from neighboring Yamunanagar, and Kurukshetra districts also at the Civil Hospital Ambala and among patients include nearly 50% prisoners lodged in Ambala central jail. He said that among prime symptoms of this disease include lack of appetite, loss of weight and feeling of tiredness, swelling of liver and it is difficult to identify this disease for which a thorough screening of suspected patient is necessary.

During the year 2019 a National Virus Hepatitis Control

Programme 'Jiwan Rekha' was started in Haryana state in order to conduct screening test and treatment of disease. For the treatment of this disease usually a patient had to spend an amount between Rs 30 to 40 thousand every month on the treatment and huge amounts to be spent on screening tests at a private hospital, but the Haryana state government provides free treatment as well as medicines to a patient suffering from this disease.

# CM visits Trident Group founder Rajinder Gupta's residence to condole demise of his mother

**KAMALJIT SINGH**  
Ludhiana

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday visited the residence of Trident Group founder Rajinder Gupta where he condoled the demise of Maya Devi, Rajinder Gupta's mother. He expressed sympathies with the bereaved family. As per the information, the Chief Minister spent one and a half hours with the family before leaving the



residence. Maya Devi expired on 25th July 2023 at the age of 89. The prayer meet in her memory will be held on August 6, 2023 at Ludhiana.

# Gopal Kanda's return on political pitch

**SATISH HANDA**

After the the acquittal of Gopal Kanda of the Haryana Lokhit Party and also a member of the Haryana State Vidhan Sabha assembly from Sirsa, in the high-profile Geetika Sharma suicide case recently now have opened new political opportunities for the businessman-turned-politician, which now could have a turning point for his political career once again with entry into politics. Lone MLA of his political party from Sirsa in Haryana state, Gopal Kanda possesses the quality to attract high command of any party, as such he was near and dear to Om Parkash Chautala when he was chief minister Haryana, he was sincere and dear to Bhupinder Singh Hooda former Haryana chief minister and became Home Minister in the state during Congress rule.

It cannot be denied the role of Kanda after the 2019 Vidhan Sabha election results to bring Bharatiya Janata Party in the state which fell short of majority in the 90-member House in the state. The two-time Sirsa MLA Gopal Kanda continued to extend unconditional support to the state BJP all these years and voted for the party's candidates for President, Vice-President and the Rajya Sabha. Needless to say Kanda will prove an asset for BJP to find a political foothold in Sirsa constituencies with the aid of his local standing in the area. His elder brother Gobind had joined the BJP in 2021 to contest the



Ellenabad bypoll on his party's symbol but failed to win this seat in a close contest. During recent Union Home Minister Amit Shah's rally at Sirsa, Kanda brothers had played an important role in gathering the crowd for the success of this rally as admitted by BJP itself. Kanda is known as near and dear to Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khatter also and there are chances of Haryana Lok Hit Party to be merged in BJP anytime prior to 2014 polls, besides holding a responsible position in the party.

Information reveals, after his acquittal now Kanda will try to expand his political presence beyond Sirsa and also stand a chance of being rewarded with a position in the Haryana government. According to the present political scenario of the five assembly seats in Sirsa district, two each are held by the Congress and the Independents, and one by the Indian National Lok Dal with the BJP drawing a blank at present. The BJP, however, hopes to change the political presence in the coming assembly poll with the support of Kanda brothers having strong hold in the area.

# Gang of 4 busted involved in pre-natal sex determination by seven Ambala health department with 2 arrests



**SATISH HANDA**  
Ambala

Health department team of Ambala district comprising of Dr Balvinder Kaur SMO, Dr Vijay Verma, Dr Hitarth Markanday and Manish on a clue about an intr-state racket running business of illegal pre-natal sex determination of unborn child in pregnant women prepared pregnant woman who contacted a member of the gang a broker Vikki resident of village Naneola in Ambala district to get checked the sex of unborn baby she was carrying in her womb. She was asked to reach Manav Chowk on Ambala-Hisar Road where she reached at the appointed

time by a car arranged by the health department, where both Vikki and another broker Harmeet were waiting for her and the deal to check the sex of the unborn child was finalized at Rs 40,000. Both took the pregnant woman to village Matehri in Ambala district, then took her to village Devigarh adjoining Ambala in Punjab area where the woman was introduced to another youth Satpal. The pregnant woman was taken to Shahbad in Kurukshetra district, then to Pehowa and Yamunanagar just to confuse the pregnant woman without knowing that they were chased by the health department team in another car.

From Yamunanagar, the

car carrying four moved their vehicle towards Saharanpur and Haridwar, which however went out of sight of Ambala health department team chasing them. However, the pregnant woman along with three agents reached Nattur in Bijnor district in U.P where they went to a well equipped ultrasound centre to get the woman checked. However, health department team started waiting on the roadside at the entry point of Yamunanagar and after few hours saw car coming, stopped the vehicle when police accompanying health department team along with a female constable arrested Harmeet resident of village Lottan in Ambala district and Satpal a resident of village Dudhan in Patiala district, but Vikki managed to slip. The pregnant woman said that the brokers had paid Rs 26000 to the owner of the ultrasound centre and health department team recovered Rs 14000 from both agents. After registering the case on August 1 late night Ambala police started a search for the arrest of agent Vikki and took action against the owner of the ultrasound centre.

# ADC Mohali distributed certificates to successful trainees of Jute Products Entrepreneurship Training Course

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI**  
Mohali

Punjab National Bank's Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) located at Vikas Bhawan, Sector 62, SAS Nagar Mohali is the only center in Mohali for Rural Self Employment Training course. Rural Self Employment Training Institute of Punjab National Bank organized training for Jute Products Udyami at Village Agganpur, Tehsil Dera Bassi, SAS Nagar Mohali. The valediction ceremony of which was organized under the chairmanship of Mr. Amit Bamby, Additional Deputy Commissioner (D), SAS Nagar Mohali. All the trainees who completed this 13 days training course were awarded certificates by Additional Deputy Commissioner (D) SAS Nagar Mohali.

On this occasion Amit Bamby Additional Deputy Commissioner (D) SAS Nagar Mohali said that Punjab National Bank's RSETI Mohali is the only training institute to organize such programs and the district administration is also committed to provide all pos-



sible assistance to them in providing such course facilities. He said that PNB RSETI is actively working to provide free training in more than 60 courses to the rural unemployed youth of Mohali district. He said that RSETI is also playing an important role in Punjab Government's Ghar Ghar Rozgar Yojana through skill development training. Amit Bamby talked about providing jute products employment in the villages to the trainees, so that the unbanked rural population could get benefits.

PNB Circle Head Mohali Rita Juneja (DGM) said that the training has been taken to the next level by Punjab National Bank's Rural Self Employment Training Institute. Many new

recognized courses have been started including Beekeeping, Jute Products Udyami, Dairy Farming and Beauty Parlour, Women Tailoring & Embroidery and Vermi Compost, Fast Food Making etc. We have also taken cooperation of many NGOs, influential people of the society and media so that the concept of Rural Self Employment Training Institute can reach every unemployed rural youth. Our vision and objective is to facilitate skill development for gainful employment Chief Lead District Manager MK Bhardwaj, Amandeep Singh Director, Punjab National Bank Rural Self Employment Training Institute, SAS Nagar Mohali were specially present on the occasion.

## Centre has switched off engine of Constitutional responsibility, says P. Chidambaram

**NEW DELHI:** Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Wednesday questioned the Modi-led Central government about the situation in Manipur, and said, "the Centre has switched off the engine of Constitutional responsibility and thrown away the key."

Taking a swipe at the BJP governments at the Centre and in Manipur, Chidambaram said, "How long will it take for the Supreme Court's indictment of the Manipur Government to reach PMO in Delhi and CMO in Imphal? If the chief minister of Manipur, N Biren Singh, has any sense of constitutional morality, he should quit immediately. Only those who practise rajdharm can preach rajdharm."

"The central government is like the driver of the police jeep who told the molested women 'there is no key'. The central government has switched off the engine of Constitutional



responsibility (Articles 355 and 356) and thrown away the key," the former Union minister said.

His remarks came after the Supreme Court on Tuesday came down heavily on the Centre and Manipur government. The court said that the state police "is incapable of investigation" and "there is no law and order left" in the northeastern state.

and recording of statements of victims by the Manipur Police.

The top court summoned Manipur's Director General of Police (DGP) on August 7, the next date of hearing.

The Supreme Court also raised questions over non-interrogation of the police officials who allegedly handed over to the mob, as per their statements recorded under section 161 CrPC (Criminal Procedure Code). "If law and order machinery cannot protect them then what happens to the people?," it asked.

Ethnic clashes erupted in Manipur on May 3 and since then hundreds of people have died while thousands have been forced to take refuge in the relief camps.

A delegation of INDIA bloc MPs, who visited Manipur on July 29 and 30, along with the floor leaders will meet President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday.

## Opposition likely hold next meeting of INDIA coalition in Mumbai on Aug 31-Sep 1

**NEW DELHI:** Opposition bloc INDIA is likely to hold its next meeting on August 31 and September 1 in Mumbai. They said it would be held on the format of the Bengaluru meeting with leaders first confabulating in an informal setting on August 31 before their main meeting the next day.

"The opposition meeting will be a two-day affair and will take place on August 31 and September 1 with all leaders approving the dates," a source said. The likely venue would be a hotel in Pawai and there will be a press conference on August 1 evening, the source said. There have been several dates that have been talked about earlier

but those did not work out as all leaders were not available on those dates.

The third meeting of the bloc is being hosted jointly by the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP's Sharad Pawar faction, with support from the Congress — the three constituents of the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance. The MVA constituents had been holding parleys to schedule the meeting. The INDIA bloc's first meeting was held in Patna in June and the second in Bengaluru last month. The coalition is also likely to announce the composition of committees for specific actions such as communication and 2024 general election campaign in the run-up to the polls. A joint secretariat for

better coordination among the parties will also be announced soon, the sources said.

During the meeting, the parties are expected to iron out their differences as much as possible, especially in states where they are in a direct poll battle. At the Bengaluru meeting, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had announced the name of the opposition bloc — Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) — after a nearly four-hour-long meeting of the 26 parties. He had said a committee of 11 members will also be set up for coordination, and a convenor will be selected at the next meeting in Mumbai.

## Gold worth Rs 49.12 lakhs seized at SGRDI Amritsar



**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**

Custom officials have seized smuggled Gold weighing 808 grams having worth Rs. 49.12 lacs at Shri Guru Ramdas ji International Airport August 1. In an official statement issued here stated that Customs staff of SGRDI JI International Airport, Amritsar intercepted one passenger coming from Dubai by Spicejet flight SG56 in the morning of today. On his personal search, 3 capsules were found hidden inside his rectum weighing 1173 grams. The recovered gold from the said 3 capsules is 808 grams and market value of the said gold is Rs. 49.12 lacs. The same was seized under section 110 of Custom Act, 1962.

## Amrit Bharat Station Scheme: Upgradation work at 76 Rly Stations of Central Railway, 15 in Mumbai

**MANMOHAN SINGH NAULA Mumbai**

Station upgradation work will be launched at three suburban Stations viz Parel, Vikhroli, Kanjurmarg by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 6th August 2023.

Introducing the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, a visionary initiative brought to life by Narendra Modi, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. This transformative scheme is set to revitalize 1309 railway stations across the nation, breathing new life into travel hubs and enhancing the overall passenger experience. Amrit Bharat Station scheme envisages development of stations on a continuous basis with a long term vision.



Naresh Lalwani, General Manager, while addressing a Press Conference on laying of foundation stone for 508 Railway stations across the Nation under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 6th August 2023 said "The Amrit Bharat Station scheme envisages to take up 76 railway stations over Central Railway for upgradation/modernization and in that at 38 stations the foundation stone will be laid". It involves preparation of Master Plans and their implementation in phases to improve the amenities

at the stations like improvement of station access, circulating areas, waiting halls, toilets, lifts/escalators as necessary, cleanliness, free Wi-Fi, kiosks for local products through schemes like 'One Station One Product', better passenger information systems, Executive Lounges, nominated spaces for business meetings, landscaping etc. keeping in view the necessity at each station. The scheme also envisages improvement of building, integrating the station with both sides of the city, multimodal integration, amenities for Diyangians, sustainable and environment friendly solutions, provision of ballastless tracks, 'Roof Plazas' as per necessity, phasing and feasibility and creation of city centres at the station in the long term.

## An Indian shot dead at Indo-Pak border

**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**

An unidentified man was shot dead by the Border Security Force, in the morning of August 3 around 4 a.m.

According to a BSF official a man who was found near the barbed fencing at village Bhikwind - Khalra area falling in the Tarn Taran district was killed as he was aggressively marching towards the BSF troops in spite of repeated warning given to him but he was not willing to surrender. The BSF officer further informed that when he reached near to the BSF troops and kept marching continued in an aggressive posture, forcing BSF troops to fire gun shot in self-defence. BSF clarified that the man who was shot dead



at Indo-Pak border was found uncircumcised as he may not be Muslim. He also clarified that yet also not clear that the dead was whether Indian or Pakistani as investigation was underway.

Talking about the appearance of the dead man Officer further said that he was having long unkempt hair and seemed insane.

On being contacted to Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) Preetinder Singh said that the dead man was Indian but still unidentified, managed to reach near the barbed fencing in the BSF area and during fire opened by BSF he was killed.

## Rain likely in several states till Aug 6

**NEW DELHI:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that Odisha and Chhattisgarh are expected to experience isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall with the possibility of extremely heavy rainfalls on Wednesday while Madhya Pradesh is likely to encounter such intense rainfall on Thursday.

The weather forecast agency further predicted that from Thursday (August 3) to August 6, Northwest India may also experience isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall. However, peninsular India is expected to witness subdued rainfall activity over the next five days.

In the bulletin issued on Wednesday, IMD also said that currently, there is squally wind speed reaching 45-55 kmph



gusting to 65 kmph prevailing over the North Bay of Bengal and the adjoining coasts of Bangladesh and West Bengal.

However, this is expected to decrease to 35-45 kmph gusting to 55 kmph from the afternoon to night of Wednesday.

Additionally, the sea conditions are currently rough to very rough over the North Bay of Bengal and the adjoining coasts

of Bangladesh, West Bengal, and North Odisha. However, from Wednesday afternoon, the sea conditions are likely to become rough to moderate, with gradual improvement expected thereafter.

According to IMD, in the upcoming days, various regions in India are expected to experience varying degrees of rainfall.

## UCC: Lest It Becomes a Pit Bull?

**JAG MOHAN THAKEN**

The Haryana and Manipur communal violence has, for the time being, capped the 'Zinn of UCC' in the bottle, but it will come out again at its appropriate time. However, these communal clashes have shown that the 'Zinn' of UCC may also create a dangerous cloud of abhorrence and people fear that it will thus unnecessarily cause disturbance and unrest in the country.

Indian society is a colourful rainbow of different cultures, customs, ideas and no Uniform Civil Society in India, then how can it be just and possible to implement Uniform Civil Code? The Bharatiya Janata Party government is determined to implement its previously declared and unannounced objectives. In the mid-eighties, the BJP, during the peak era of L.K Advani, focused on three main issues - the UCC, abrogation of article 370 and a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. After the removal of Article 370 and commencing work on Ram Mandir, BJP has started feeling that it is capable of making and implementing any law due to the majority in the Parliament. But until the uniform civil society does not come on the ground, it would be meaningless to bring a uniform civil code law. Has society ever been bound by the rope of law alone? If this were the case then why are child marriages still happening? Why the Dalit class is being treated as second grade class? Why are rapes happening every day? Why the country's pride women players had to protest and stage sit-ins even to file a case of sexual harassment to get justice against a Bahubali MP? Had the accused been an ordinary person and not a Bahubali Member of Parliament, would the police have given the same laxity in arresting him and filing a case? Why have not the same norms been adopted? Will all the problems be solved after the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code

Act which the present BJP government is trying to force?

**What the UCC is?**

On a wider scale, Uniform Civil Code means one law for the whole country. Where the Uniform Civil Code applies, in that country, whatever laws are made related to marriage, divorce, child adoption, property division and all other subjects, they have to be considered equally for the citizens of all religions and castes. At present, many laws in India are decided on the basis of religion and ethnicity too. It is being claimed that the condition of women in India will improve with the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code. There will be simplicity and clarity in the laws. Discrimination on the basis of laws related to personal or religion will be abolished. But can this really happen?

Expressing doubts over the new UCC, Shiromani Akali Dal president, Sukhbir Singh Badal, pleads that the issue had already been examined in depth by the 21st Law Commission which had in its report in 2018 noted that UCC was neither necessary nor desirable at this stage. It said the Commission also observed that reforms in family laws of different communities would provide better guarantee of securing rights of women and children than bringing in Uniform Civil Laws. It also detailed how the Commission emphasized that cultural diversity must not be compromised and that nothing should be done to pose even a remote threat to the idea of 'unity in diversity' and eventually pose threat to the country's territorial integrity. It said in this light there was nothing significant after 2018 to compel the union government to seek views of stakeholders afresh.

**Why the Minorities are afraid of the UCC?**

Differing the new UCC, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) clearly rejects the proposed UCC and states that it is not in nation's interest. Opposing the essence of UCC, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in a recent letter informed the 22nd Law Commission that the proposed



Uniform Civil Code (UCC) was not in the nation's interest and enforcing it without a genuine countrywide inter-faith consensus, especially among minorities, would violate the spirit of the Constitution and generate fear, distrust and divisive sentiments.

The SAD president also informed the Commission that the party had held consultations with different stakeholders in the State and outside. "On the basis of that, the widespread impression we gathered is that the UCC, if implemented, will definitely affect the freedom of minority communities of different caste, creed and religions".

Sukhbir Singh Badal also asserted that the framers of the Constitution kept the Uniform Civil Code in the Concurrent List. He said after a detailed discussion on UCC it was decided not to put it in the list of Fundamental Rights but in the Directive Principles of State Policy. The SAD also stressed that the proposed UCC would also affect Social Tribes who have their own diverse customs, culture and different personal laws. "It will thus un-necessarily cause disturbance and unrest in the country, especially in North Eastern states which enjoy special exemptions from certain laws under article 371 of the Constitution", Badal added.

**Will BJP dare to end the privilege of Hindus?**

Addressing BJP booth workers in Madhya Pradesh, on June 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi 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. But under the HUF, giving a special privilege to Hindus, are there not two discriminatory laws existing for different religions in India?

Will the UCC being implemented by the BJP government dare to end the special exemption in income tax currently given to Hindus (Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs) under Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), which is not available to other religions (Muslims, Christians, Parsis)? Or will the people of other religions also get the benefit of its exemption? Probably not. The BJP government, which is looking forward to win the 2024 elections only on the Hindu vote bank, will never want its Hindu vote bank to be angry, nor will it allow its religion-based purpose to go astray by giving this exemption to other religions at present.

In his article in Indian Express on July 18, 2023 - 'HUF and Uniform Civil Code', Deepak Joshi a CA writes, "Hindu Undivided Family is a legal entity that allows the khap panchayats have been seeking an amendment in the Hindu Marriage Act to prohibit same gotra marriages. Supporting the concern of Khap Panchayats, on January 10, 2020, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had asserted that it has been proven scientifically that intra-clan marriages should not be performed."

"The khap panchayats have a principle that within a village or intra-clan, marriages should not take place. It has

been proven scientifically that intra-clan marriages should not be performed," Khattar said in Panchkula.

**Will UCC be able to protect gotra restrictions in marriage?**

According to the present law, any two adults - boy and girl - can marry each other and live together, but in many castes, there are gotra/clan restrictions for marriage, they cannot marry in their own gotra. If the matrimonial system of Jats is seen, then we find that at present three clans and some areas are forbidden in the community. The boy and the girl should not be residents of the same village or fraternal village, both should not be of same clan, marriage is also prohibited in their mother's and grandmother's gotra. But the present law gives recognition to such marriages, due to which tension arises in the society. And the social fabric gets frayed and there comes a rift in social harmony and brotherhood. Whenever a young man or woman marries in a forbidden gotra or area, it is considered a question of honour in such families in the society and in most of the cases, incidents of 'honour killing' come to the fore. Although the law serves to protect such a married couple, which is considered to be a violation of social norms, and the society grows angry against not only the married couple but also against the government and the law. The government should study such 'honour killing' cases and make this law socially compatible.

Social Khap Panchayats have also been demanding from time to time the government to enact a law to stop marriages in prohibited gotras/ areas. Since long, the khap panchayats have been seeking an amendment in the Hindu Marriage Act to prohibit same gotra marriages.

Supporting the concern of Khap Panchayats, on January 10, 2020, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had asserted that it has been proven scientifically that intra-clan marriages should not be performed.

"The khap panchayats have a principle that within a village or intra-clan, marriages should not take place. It has

been proven scientifically that intra-clan marriages should not be performed," Khattar said in Panchkula.

Giving example of Gujarat, Khattar stated, "If the relation of sister and brother is followed within the village, or within neighbouring villages and khaps, then certainly it will have a positive impact on the society. I have noticed this in Gujarat also where the women are referred to as Behen (sister) and the men are referred to Bhai (brother)."

Will the Chief Minister's words be heeded? Will consanguineous and same-village marriages be legally prohibited as demanded by Khap Panchayats? Will UCC be able to solve this discrepancy? Questions need answers.

**Discrepancies in Reservation: Will UCC Resolve?**

Reservation in India is purely based on religion and caste, and that too on discriminatory grounds, will UCC be able to resolve these discrepancies?

Alleging "appeasement politics" in granting OBC status to communities in West Bengal, National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) chairperson Hansraj Gangaram Ahir himself, on June 8, 2023, stated the state government should fix the "discrepancy" at the earliest.

The NCBC chief also charged that OBC reservations were not being implemented correctly in Rajasthan, Punjab and Bihar — states with non-BJP governments, whereas there are seven districts in Rajasthan which do not extend any reservation to the OBCs and the Punjab, which has 25 per cent reservation for the OBCs, was just granting 12 per cent to the community.

"In Bihar too, there were issues related to Kurmi community which still are to be resolved," the NCBC chief said.

The question arises here that BJP has a majority government at the centre, why don't they talk about creating an equal civil society by removing the anomalies of OBC reservation before bringing the Uniform Civil Code? In Rajasthan, except two

districts of Bharatpur and Dholpur, Jats of the rest of the state are considered in the OBC category. Here the question arises that what extra social and educational achievements did the Jats of these two districts have that they were not considered under the backward category? Is it only because these districts had Jat princely states?

Do all the subjects of that caste or society automatically come in the upper class from the social and educational point of view when a particular person or family becomes the head of the state.

If so, Raja Rao Tula Ram had princely state in Rewari and adjoining Ahirwal area in Haryana, his heir Rao Birendra Singh was the chief minister of Haryana and at present his descendant Rao Inderjit Singh is a minister in the centre, then why the Yadav subjects of this Yadav dynasty have been included in the OBC category? Jats and Yadavs in Haryana are almost in the same social, economic and educational category. Both are agricultural castes and both have been living on agriculture and animal husbandry. Both have been sending their youth to the army to be martyred in the interest of the country. Then why are the Jats of Haryana being denied the OBC category? Even the ancestors of Jats were not the owners of any princely state in Haryana. Are these discrepancies in reservation not the obstructive anomalies hindering the formation of an equal civil society? Will UCC find a solution for them? Though any majoritarian democratic government has the power to legislate a law to act as a watchdog for the Country's and Society's security, safety and welfare, but should always keep in consideration - "Before we pet a watchdog, test and ensure its breed, creed, seed, deed, and need."

Otherwise, the watchdog may turn out a Pit Bull, which not only bites passers-by, but may also maul the owner, the past instances have proved so.

*Jag Mohan Thaken is a Haryana based retired Senior Bank Manager, views are personal*

## Hard work, dedication needed to join BJP's 'ideological family': Himanta



**GUWAHATI:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has maintained that joining organisations within the BJP's "ideological family requires hard work and dedication". In a Twitter post, the BJP leader also asserted that no easy entry should be provided even for his son. He was reacting to a tweet by academician Ashok Swain, who had shared a photograph of Sarma with his wife and their two children.

## Jamaat feels that this is a continuous onslaught of organized violence against Muslims: Malik Moatasim Khan

**FW DESK New Delhi**

The Vice President of Jamaat e Islami Hind, Malik Moatasim Khan has condemned the cold-blooded and targeted shooting of three citizens belonging to the Muslim community and an officer of RPF on a running train by an Indian Railways Protection Force (RPF) constable. The RPF constable also killed his senior assistant sub-inspector. In a statement to the media, the JIH Vice President said "We condemn the cold-blooded and targeted shooting of three citizens belonging to the Muslim community and an RPF officer on a running train by an Indian Railways Protection Force (RPF) constable. Media reports about the heinous manner of the killing suggest that it was a hate crime wherein the accused hunted out passengers who resembled Muslims and shot them in cold blood."



**RAKESH SOOD** EXPLAINS WHY COLD WAR ESCALATION MANAGEMENT LESSONS NO LONGER APPLY TO U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS



## Nuclear signaling: Time for change



and Finland to give up their long-standing neutrality and seek security under NATO's nuclear umbrella.

### Probing for red lines

Russia's nuclear doctrine issued on June 2, 2020 specifies two conditions under which Russia would use nuclear weapons: "...in response to the use of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it/or its allies" and "in the case of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons, when the very existence of the state is put under threat". Mr. Putin has declared more than once that Ukrainians and Russians are one people with a shared history. Russia, therefore, does not see Ukraine as entirely 'sovereign'.

Second, there is the oft-cited escalate-to-deescalate approach, that implies using tactical nuclear weapons to overcome a stalemate on the battlefield, thus forcing a termination of hostilities on favourable terms. In its 2022 National Security Strategy, the U.S. rejected this by declaring that first use would not lead to de-escalation on Russian terms, "but alter the nature of conflict creating potential for uncontrolled escalation".

U.S. caution is reflected in calibrating the supply of more sophisticated weapons by continuously probing Russian red lines even though Ukrainian demands continue to grow. Meanwhile, it suits Russia to increase ambiguity. It is also likely that since Russia failed to achieve its military objectives, its thresholds are evolving.

The path-breaking studies of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky in economics showed that humans often tend to double down on bad bets because of 'loss aversion'. The Cold War escalation management lessons applied to a different world; today, the U.S. and Russia no longer enjoy parity and Russia's red lines are fuzzy. Nuclear signalling today is taking place in uncharted political territory. New guard rails are necessary if the nuclear taboo has to be preserved.

Rakesh Sood is a former diplomat who served as India's first Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and also as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation in 2013-14. Views are personal.

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The conflict in Ukraine and the recourse to nuclear rhetoric have revived concerns about nuclear escalation management between the major nuclear powers. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States-Russia nuclear rivalry had taken a back seat. Instead, North Korea, Iran and India-Pakistan got attention, with many analysts getting nostalgic about 'nuclear stability' during the Cold War. But, as it is becoming clear now, in today's changed political environment the escalation management lessons of the Cold War no longer seem to work for the U.S. and Russia.

### Deterrence failure

In June 2021, U.S. and Russian Presidents, Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin, met in Geneva. Nuclear arms control was a high priority item on the agenda but no progress proved possible. As concerns grew about the Russian troop presence in Belarus on the Ukrainian border, Central Intelligence Agency Director Bill Burns flew to Moscow in November to spell out the consequences of aggression. In January 2022, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken met Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Geneva to reiterate the message. On February 24, Russia began its "special military operation" in Ukraine. U.S. attempts to deter Russian aggression had failed.

Even as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders met to decide their response, Mr. Biden made it clear that the U.S. was determined to avoid a Third World War or allowing the conflict to escalate into a NATO-Russia conflict. After the freezing of Russian reserves and a slew of financial, energy-related and political sanctions, other elements of military assistance, lethal and non-lethal, began to take shape. Intelligence sharing and restoring Internet connectivity was the first step. The second was the supply of ammunition and some weapon systems which the Ukrainian forces were familiar with. NATO deepened its military involvement by providing gradually more and more sophisticated weapon systems, beginning with the Javelin and Stinger missiles, and moving on to Patriot missile defence batteries, long-range Himars, Storm Shadow and Scalp long-range missiles, and now F-16s. Russian attempts to deter NATO involvement had failed.

On February 7, 2022, Mr. Putin warned that "if Ukraine attempts to take back Crimea, European countries will be in conflict with Russia, which is a leading nuclear power superior to many NATO countries in terms

of nuclear force". Annual nuclear exercises, normally scheduled for autumn, were announced for February 17, with Mr. Putin personally witnessing them. Announcing the launch of "special military operations", his words of caution were, "whoever tries to hinder Russia will face consequences never seen in history". To drive home the threat, on February 27, Russian nuclear forces were placed on a "special combat readiness" with leave for all personnel cancelled.

Even as the U.S. issued blunt warnings to Russia against using tactical nuclear weapons, in the first week of March, NATO decided against a no-fly-zone and Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria announced that they would not be sending MiG aircraft to Ukraine on account of Russian threats against their airfields from where these aircraft were to take off. Russian officials tried to downplay the nuclear threat by pointing out that Russia would resort to nuclear use only if faced with an existential threat, while U.S. officials tried to convey reassurance to their European allies that while Mr. Putin's threats were to be taken seriously, there were no indications of unusual activity at nuclear sites.

Mr. Biden declared on April 24, "We are neither encouraging nor enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders," adding that the "U.S. was not seeking regime change in Russia." In short, the U.S. objectives were to support Ukraine, bolster NATO unity and avoid any direct conflict with Russia. Ukraine is not a NATO member and so does not have the security of the nuclear umbrella provided by U.S. policy of 'extended deterrence'. Russia's resort to nuclear rhetoric failed to deter NATO involvement though it influenced its pace and timing. Therefore, both Russia and the U.S. are operating in a grey zone, taking turns at escalatory rhetoric even as they probe each other's red lines. During the Cold War, the U.S. and the former Soviet Union engaged in multiple proxy wars, Vietnam in the 1960s

and Afghanistan in the 1980s, but these were in distant theatres.

### Cold War lessons

Deterrence is fundamentally based on the assumption that both adversaries are rational enough to judge when costs outweigh the benefits of the act. Nuclear deterrence adds a conundrum. With their huge arsenals that provided for assured second strike capability, neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union had an incentive to try a surprise first strike. This realisation was crucial in shaping nuclear deterrence theory.

Thomas Schelling, whose writings during the 1960s and 1970s shaped nuclear deterrence thinking (he won the Economics Nobel in 2005), concluded that nuclear weapons were not usable but had political utility in terms of preventing a war with another nuclear power. Clearly, Schelling was looking at the situation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union which had no territorial dispute. Schelling also concluded that even though any use was "irrational", the nuclear threat had to be "credible" in order to deter. This introduced a degree of uncertainty into the equation. Using his economics training, he interpreted the uncertainty as risk that could be analysed in terms of probabilities. Risk was intended to induce rationality in the adversaries. Realising the conundrum, he concluded that the key to making nuclear deterrence credible is through escalation and raising the risk, that in the final analysis, "leaves something to chance".

This, along with the lessons of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis kept the U.S. and Soviet rhetoric in check during the Cold War even as they engaged in proxy wars outside Europe, and away from NATO and Warsaw Pact territories. Today, there is no Warsaw Pact, and NATO has expanded to include a number of former Warsaw Pact members. The Ukraine conflict has persuaded Sweden

ONE SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE A BACKUP PLAN TO REPAY THE LOAN OR TO GENERATE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF INCOME, WHERE NITIN DESAI FAILED MISERABLY. FINANCIAL LITERACY ISN'T TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS. YOU'RE RICH WHEN YOUR MONEY WORKS FOR YOU WITHOUT YOUR EFFORT. YOU AREN'T RICH IF YOU HAVE TO TRADE LABOUR FOR MONEY.



## Financial skills could have saved Desai

**NARVIJAY YADAV**

The suicide committed by Nitin Chandrakant Desai, the Bollywood art director, in his Karjat studio near Mumbai, shocked everyone in the entertainment industry and others in the country. The great art director, who created the sets of Kaun Banega Crorepati, Aapki Adalat, and big-budget films like Jodhaa Akbar, and Lagaan, etc., was struggling to repay a Rs 180 crore loan which had increased to Rs 252 crore, and a bankruptcy court had recently approved an insolvency petition against his company, ND's Art World Pvt Ltd. The unfortunate incident has once again highlighted the importance of financial literacy.

Nitin Desai was a great creative person, but he seemed to lack basic knowledge of financial management. He took an ultra-heavy loan to fulfill his desire of creating a massive film studio, without much backup plan in case something



had happened to his project. Once he stopped getting work, his dreams shattered and the loan became the cause of his untimely demise. One should always have a backup plan to repay the loan or

to generate alternative sources of income, where Desai failed miserably. Financial literacy is one skill that is not taught in schools, and the lack of this knowledge causes misfortune to a majority of people, who otherwise earn fantastically well but fail to rise in practical life.

Financial literacy is as important as making money. It can make you rich. It is basically your relationship with the money you earn and how effectively you use it to improve your finances. Adopting proper budgeting, saving, and investment is what financial literacy is all about. So step one is to make money which would be most important, but once you have money or sufficient income, step two becomes most important, i.e. to utilize that money to its greatest potential or to help you achieve your long-term goals.

World's most successful investor Warren Buffett once said "Never invest in a business you do not understand." An investment journey takes time. Starting from a small amount and for the long

term is best practice. Starting an investing journey in the stock market is so easy these days. One just has to open a Demat account, and then things take forward.

Depending on the income and expenses, the emergency fund can be 6 to 12 months of the monthly income. If you earn Rs 40,000 a month and Rs 20,000 goes into meeting your routine living expenses, then your emergency fund should be in the range of Rs 2 to 4 Lakh. This corpus is for emergencies only. A financial advisor once told me, "Money management is way more important than earning money. I know people with an income of over Rs 25 Lakh a year, who are so deep in debt that they would lose everything if they ever had to go through a couple of months without a paycheck. Once you have made some money you need to figure out what you are going to do with it. You can spend it, save it, invest it, or a mix of these three."

*The writer is a senior journalist and columnist, Views are personal.*

## Reject anything that potentially dents democracy

The recent communal clashes in Haryana have laid bare a deeply troubling tension in the region, resulting in many deaths and significant destruction. Sparked by a local religious procession, the incident escalated into a conflict, highlighting how quickly situations can unravel when political agendas, religious fervor, and social media provocation combine. Previously a peaceful local affair, the yatra has become politicized, with groups like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad mobilizing participants from neighboring states. This year's event was marked by provocative slogans and weapons, leading to a violent confrontation. The administration's lack of preparedness is a grave failure that must be addressed. Tensions had been building, fueled by social media threats from extremist groups. Despite warnings, the administration's response was inadequate, leading to further violence, including the vandalization of a mosque and the death of an Imam. The police's failure to control the situation raises serious concerns about law enforcement in Haryana. The Chief Minister's claim that the violence was premeditated points to a failure of intelligence and preventive measures. The role of groups associated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in inciting tensions must be investigated. The Haryana administration must act decisively, bringing perpetrators to justice and ensuring such incidents do not recur. This includes legal action and rebuilding community trust. Social media incitement must be curbed, and law enforcement must be better trained and equipped. The Haryana events are a grim reminder of the fragility of our societal fabric. Ethnic and religious differences can be exploited for political gain, with tragic results. The government, law enforcement, and community leaders must foster understanding, tolerance, and peace. The lessons from Haryana call for a commitment to the values that bind us as a nation and a rejection of anything that betrays our democratic principles.

### LETTERBOX

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

**GROWTH IS NEVER BY MERE CHANGE; IT IS THE RESULT OF FORCES WORKING TOGETHER.**

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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### BOOKS: REVIEW

## From commerce to culture: How opium shaped India

Amitav Ghosh, the renowned author of the Ibis trilogy, delved into the hidden history of opium at the launch of his new book "Smoke and Ashes: A writer's journey through Opium's hidden histories." In conversation with singer and activist T.M. Krishna, Ghosh revealed how opium has left an indelible mark on both eastern and western India, shaping not only the economic landscape but also the very fabric of society.

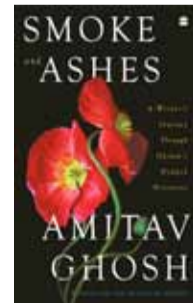
Opium, once a vital part of the global economy, has been largely erased from our collective understanding. Ghosh's book, described as a "travelogue, memoir, and an excursion into history," explores the profound impact the opium trade had on Britain, India, and China. In India, the focus is on the cities of Kolkata and Mumbai, where the influence of opium

extended beyond commerce to shape demography and cultural identity. The opium trade was not merely a commercial enterprise; it was a complex system that influenced various aspects of life. Ghosh explained how the trading community from western India began to settle in Kolkata, and how the commercial character of Mumbai and the colonial character of Kolkata were shaped by opium relations.

The British administration of the opium trade in India was a "bureaucracy within a bureaucracy," with the Purvanchal region, where much of the opium was produced, described as a "kingdom within an empire." The Opium Department had its paramilitary forces, enforcing a strict surveillance system on farmers who were often forced to produce opium below cost, even during times of famine. This

**The opium trade was not merely a commercial enterprise; it was a complex system that influenced various aspects of life**

led to widespread resentment, and Ghosh pointed out that the opium factory in Patna was one of the first targets during the war of 1857. The long-term effects of opium production and trade are still felt today. Ghosh noted that economic historians have identified lasting disparities in social indicators between districts that produced opium and those that did not. The legacy of opium is not just a historical curiosity; it continues to shape the social and economic landscape of modern India. But Ghosh's exploration



Smoke and Ashes: A writer's journey through Opium's hidden histories  
By Amitav Ghosh  
Fourth Estate  
India  
408 pages, Rs699

of opium goes beyond historical analysis. He also discussed the power of myths in silencing history and how the colonial idea of progress has become one of the most potent myths of western modernity. By embracing this language of progress and advancement, Ghosh argued, we have brought the world to the brink of annihilation. He cited examples of how large tracts of forests were handed over to mining companies, with devastating consequences for local populations.

Ghosh's insights into the opium trade are not just a historical examination; they are a reflection on the nature of progress, exploitation, and the selective memory of

history. By uncovering the hidden histories of opium, he challenges us to confront the uncomfortable truths about our past and present.

"Smoke and Ashes" is more than a book about opium; it is a call to recognize the complex interplay between economics, politics, culture, and the environment. It is a reminder that history is not just a collection of facts and dates but a living, breathing entity that continues to shape our world.

In a time when history is often reduced to simplistic narratives, Ghosh's work stands as a testament to the power of nuanced understanding. By delving into the hidden corners of history, he reveals the intricate web of connections that bind us together.

The launch of "Smoke and Ashes" is not just an event for literary enthusiasts; it is a moment of reflection for anyone interested in understanding the complex forces that have shaped our world. Ghosh's exploration of opium is a window into a forgotten chapter of history, a chapter that continues to resonate in our contemporary landscape.

# 45% job-seeking graduates meet India's industry demands: Study

**BENGALURU:** Just 45% of graduates in India who apply for jobs have the readiness to meet industry's fast-changing demands, as per Mercer | Mettl's latest report.

The report was exclusively shared with ET which is based on evaluations across 2,500 campuses and 440,000 learners has suggested. According to the 'India's Graduate Skill Index: 2023' report finding candidates with high employability in non-technical skills is easier than finding candidates with high job-readiness for technical skills.

About 53% of Indian graduates are employable for top non-technical jobs compared with 44% of graduates who are employable for top technical jobs.

Applied mathematics has



the highest employability of 72%. About 48% of Indian graduates applying for AI/ML (artificial intelligence/machine learning) roles are job-ready.

Data science and data analyst roles have employability of 39% whereas on-the-job skills such as MS Office, accounting and numerical ability showcase higher employability

at 61%, 60 and 57%, respectively, reflecting the strengths of Indian graduates in office software and financial competencies across all tiers of colleges. Project management has the lowest employability of 23% among the top in-demand non-technical skills.

The widening skill gap necessitates a collaborative ef-

fort between academia and corporates to bridge this talent divide.

"Almost all of our educational institutes have to transform themselves to equip students with the relevant skills of the future and align their learning outcomes with industry needs. Industry itself is grappling with changing goals given changing skill requirements. If the curriculum doesn't catch up, then the gap gets wider," Mercer | Mettl chief executive Siddhartha Gupta told ET.

The analysis involved data from campuses in 30-plus states and union territories, with further categorisation based on college tiers (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3) according to the National Institute of Ranking Framework by the Ministry of Education.

## Foxconn and Karnataka govt signed LOI project worth 5000 cr



ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

In a remarkable development, the Karnataka government met with Foxconn Chairman Young Liu and signed the Letter of Intent (LOI) for 2 marquee projects in the state, securing investments worth 5000 cr. The 2 projects would create employment opportunities for 13,000 people in the Karnataka state.

The signing ceremony took place between the Government of Karnataka and Foxconn at Hotel Leela Palace in Chennai. M.B.Patil, Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka, Priyank Kharge, Hon'ble Minister for IT & BT, Rural Development & Panchayat Raj, Dr. E.V. Ramana Reddy, Additional Chief Secretary to Department of Electronics Information Technology Biotechnology and Science & Technology and Ms. Gunjan Krishna, Commissioner for Industrial Development, Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Karnataka were present.

## Ford issues recall notice for over 800K F-150 trucks in US

Ford Motor has issued a recall notice for 870, 701 F-150 trucks in the US that could potentially experience a wiring-related problem with their electric parking brakes.

In a safety recall report to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the automaker said the rear axle wiring harness bundle may contact the rear axle housing in the affected vehicles, leading to unexpected activation of the electric parking brake.



"Damaged electric parking brake wiring may lead to inadvertent parking brake application while driving, potentially resulting in loss of control of the vehicle and increasing the risk of a crash," NHTSA mentioned.

The 870, 701 trucks that could be affected are from the model years 2021 to 2023 and have single exhaust systems. The recalled automobiles were manufactured during a three-year period.

According to the report, owners of impacted F-150 pickups will receive letters advising them of the recall and the repair for the issue beginning September 11, the same date dealers will receive a notification.

# Overburden to Sand: Waste to Wealth-A Unique initiative by Coal & Lignite PSUs

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Even as the mandate is to produce & despatch coal/lignite to its consumers, Coal & Lignite Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), under the guidance of Ministry of Coal, has taken an out of box initiative to produce sand from overburden at a much cheaper price. This initiative is not only helping in minimising environmental pollution due to sand siltation from overburden, but also providing an option for getting cheaper sand for construction purpose. Production of sand has already started in Coal



PSUs & a roadmap of next five years has been drawn to maximise the output of sand from Coal India Ltd. (CIL), Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLCL) & Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL).

The extraction of coal comes with a significant by-product

known as Overburden. During open-cast mining of coal, the strata lying above coal seam is known as overburden comprising of clay, alluvial

sand & sandstone with rich silica content. The overburden is removed to expose & extract coal from beneath. Later, on completion of coal extraction, the overburden is used for back filling to reclaim the land in its original shape. While extracting

# Bosch Limited registers 12.8 pc profit before tax in Q1 FY 2023-24

REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS UP 17.3% AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Bosch Limited, a leading supplier of technology and services revenue rose 17.3% to Rs 4,158 crore in the June quarter compared to the corresponding period last year. The revenue from operations in quarter 1 has been higher compared to the previous quarter, mainly due to increased sales of Exhaust Gas Temperature (EGT) components in passenger cars and commercial vehicle segment, outperforming the market.

The Profit before Tax (PBT) stood at INR 533 crores (60 million euros) which is 12.8% of total revenue from operations, an increase of 21.7 percent increase over the same quarter of previous year. The Profit after Tax (PAT) stood at INR 409 crores (46 million Euros) which is 9.8% of revenue from operations.

Addressing Annual Press conference Guruprasad Mudlapur, Managing Director, Bosch limited and President of Bosch Group in India said, "We are optimistic about the future as we navigate a rapidly changing global market with positive trends in the Indian automotive industry which is witnessing a shift towards premium vehicles and cleaner fuel options and electrification. Hence, embracing change is crucial and we are ready to leverage technological advances to cater to the evolving



consumer preferences. With India emerging as a promising market and our focus on green hydrogen and innovative automotive offerings, Bosch is well-positioned for growth and success in the year ahead." He added.

The power train solution business registered a growth of 12.5% over the same quarter of previous financial year outperforming the overall automotive market growth. This has resulted in an increase of 13.6% in the product sales of the automotive segment. While there are still supply bottlenecks, the global semiconductor supply situation has eased in the recent months. The weakening of demand due to global economic crisis has helped better distribution of semiconductor supplies across the world. As a result, the two-wheeler business has experienced a remarkable sales recovery, with a substantial growth of 42.8% compared to the same quarter last year.

Guruprasad Mudlapur com-

mented about the outlook for the upcoming fiscal year. "Bosch is poised to embrace the transformative changes ahead of us. Cleaner fuels, green hydrogen and electrification take centre stage in our commitment to a climate-neutral future. Bosch India will showcase the BS6 stage 2 hydrogen engine trucks, by early 2024. This is also exemplified by the successful launch of our first hydrogen-powered demonstrator vehicle in India in June 2023 which comes after the announcement about the launch of the pilot Hydrogen Engine Testing infrastructure in Bengaluru later last year."

"At Bosch India, we are fostering a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and continuous learning for our associates' success. By investing in our people, we aim to enhance their capabilities and maintain our position at the forefront of the industry. Exciting times lie ahead as we navigate the evolving landscape of the India market," Mudlapur added.

## Tork motors sets up first experience zone in Bengaluru



ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

TORK Motors, India's first electric motorcycle manufacturer, has inaugurated its first Experience Zone in Bengaluru announcing its entry into the state of Karnataka and this 3S facility will be home to the brand's KRATOS-R motorcycle and will offer sales and after sales services to consumers in the region. The new facility will cater to the existing and potential customers in and around the city of Bengaluru and help establish TORK Motors' footprint in the state. Customers will be able to get up-close with the KRATOS-R and gain an immersive experience of India's first electric motorcycle through comprehensive test rides. On this occasion, Kapil Shelke, Founder and CEO, TORK Motors, said, "We are delighted to open our first Experience Zone in Bengaluru. The city is hailed as the country's 'tech capital' and is also a city of motorcyclists, making it a very significant market for us."

## Bengaluru hosts the '5th World Coffee Conference 2023', provides unparalleled business opportunities for Global Coffee Stakeholders

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

International Coffee Organization (ICO), in collaboration with the Coffee Board of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, Government of Karnataka and the Coffee industry to bring the "5th World Coffee Conference (WCC) 2023" from 25th to 28th September 2023 at the Bangalore Palace, Bengaluru. WCC 2023 announced Rohan Bopanna, India's No.1 Doubles Tennis Player & Arjuna Awardee as its Brand Ambassador. Announcement event Bopanna along with other dignitaries unveiled the



event logo, theme and highlights of the most anticipated event of the Coffee sector.

During the unveiling of the WCC 2023 Logo and Theme "Sustainability through Circular Economy and Regenerative Agriculture" Dr. S. Selvakumar, IAS, Principal Secretary of the

Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Karnataka, said that, Karnataka is undoubtedly the Coffee capital of India, with

a rich heritage of producing some of the finest coffees in the world. There is tremendous opportunity for investments across the coffee value chain—from bean to cup right from equipment companies, coffee machines, and soluble coffees brands as well coffee chains.

## "2nd Edition of India Startup Festival 2023" in Bengaluru from August 10 to 12



ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

India Start-up Foundation, a prominent Not-for-profit organization supporting the growth and development of the Indian Start-Up ecosystem, announced during the press conference "2nd edition of India Startup Festival (ISF) 2023" from 10th to 12th August 2023 at Muddanahalli, Bengaluru. The theme of ISF 2023 is 'Innovation at the Bottom of the Pyramid' Engaging discussions during the event will encompass vital areas such as Rural Healthcare Education, Fintech, Rural Innovation, Agritech and Foodtech. Elite policymakers from the nation and world-leading change harbingers who will attend ISF 23 to address grassroots-level challenges and propose impactful solutions.

ISF 2023 will be a unique platform for startup founders to Connect with peers, industry leaders and investors collaborate and draw a growth path for their venture. The event is expected to be a dynamic platform fostering ideas, innovators, and Start-ups by providing them an ecosystem to interact, network, and collaborate with industry, government bodies and investors making it an ultimate hub of entrepreneurial excellence. ISF 2023 will host over 10,000 startups from India, UK, Japan and many other countries.

# Gig workers in Rajasthan are legally protected

Dr P S VOHRA

The Rajasthan government passed a bill, a few days ago, related to the economic and social welfare of "gig" workers in the state legislative assembly. The discussion about such laws started to gain momentum nationwide, highlighting the importance of providing economic security for those working in the unorganized sectors. The social existence of a person working in the unorganized sector, which is a very large part of Indian society, is possible only when he gets the economic security of his basic needs. He depends on day-to-day employment for himself and his family, but his problem is that despite sacrificing his life, he does not get any kind of financial security from his employer or institution towards his future. Under this, neither he has the option of monthly financial savings through investment in the provident fund nor any kind of insurance facility in case of accidents. Apart from this, the inability of the family to get any kind of financial facility after the sudden death of a worker working in the unorganized sector is also a pain that a large section of society has been holding on to it for the last several years. During the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, the sight of crowds on the streets for days highlighted this suffering, as gig workers were compelled to walk back to their villages due to the lack of economic and social security in the cities. Notably, Rajasthan is the only state in the country that has implemented provisions related to the economic and

social welfare of gig workers through this bill. The Gehlot government had presented these provisions in the budget of February 2023, and it was unanimously passed last week.

It is also a fact that generally every other person in society might not know the meaning of the word "gig," but these days, they are hearing it frequently in their surroundings. In reality, another word closely related to the term "gig" is "freelancer." Since the economic reforms of the 1990s, there has been a significant increase in the popularity of technology and management degrees among Indian youth specially over the last two to three decades. In recent years, it has been observed that the youth do not want to tie their qualifications to a single institution for an extended period and prefer flexibility due to financial reasons and the distance from home to the cities. Consequently, they have started giving priority to jobs where they can connect with various organizations at the same time. During the coronavirus pandemic, when big companies established a "work from home" culture in Indian society, the trend of freelancing became quite prevalent. On the other hand, it is also observed that companies themselves have given more priority to such employees because it reduced their financial costs. Currently, there are around 15 crore people working as freelancers in various companies in the country, primarily in IT, BPO, FMCG, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, marketing, branding, online education, transportation, and accounting fields. According to various experts, in the next two to three years, there is a possibility of a growth of one and a half to two percent in the



GDP through freelancing. They also predict that in the coming years, gig work will provide employment to nearly 30 to 35 crore people. However, at present, the number of such employees in big companies is around ten percent.

These days, the term "gig" is also representing those laborers in Indian society who are actively involved in various startups, playing a significant role in the development of modern India, and in reality, they are the backbone of these startups. In the current era of modernization, India's new entrepreneurs are trying to take credit for the fact that the most skilled workforce in the world is found in India. In big cities, when a customer get their preferred food items delivered within ten minutes of placing an order, it proves that companies like Swiggy, Zomato, and others are investing significantly in research and development for their workers. Similarly, in big cities, when a taxi is available to a customer within five to ten minutes through mobile applications like Ola and Uber, it saves them from the hassles of public transportation and also eliminates the risk of getting lost on unfamiliar routes. In addition to this, in big cities, using a virtual card, customers can have their preferred vegetables delivered by a delivery boy without any inconvenience,

including an annual interest rate of 12 percent and fines ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, as mentioned in the legal provisions. The maximum limit for this penalty is fifty lakhs rupees. The bill also proposes the establishment of a welfare board for gig workers.

The movie "Zwigato," featuring comedian Kapil Sharma, sensitively portrays the struggles and realities faced by gig workers in startups. Several poignant scenes in the film depict gig workers delivering orders with multiple packages and inquiring about additional charges, only to be told that the charge is per package. It also highlights how gig workers consider themselves fortunate when they manage to reach home early one day. In this film, the children of a gig worker ask their father why he doesn't take up another job? Many sensitive scenes like this portray the real-life struggles and financial situations of gig workers. The Rajasthan government, under Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, has been in discussions for various social welfare schemes across the country, starting with an expansion of healthcare-related facilities. Now, with the passing of the law concerning the economic security of gig workers, it has further extended the scope of social welfare. In a democratic society, it is the government's responsibility to ensure the economic and social well-being of marginalized sections of society. The passing of these provisions in Rajasthan raises the question of whether other states will follow suit and implement similar legal measures for the welfare of gig workers.

The Rajasthan government has passed a bill in the legislative assembly to ensure the economic and social welfare of gig workers associated with various startups, making it a significant step for all gig workers in the country. According to the Rajasthan government, approximately 3-4 lakh people are currently engaged in such employment in Rajasthan. This law guarantees various economic and social security measures for all gig workers. Under its main provisions, the Rajasthan government will register all these workers on a portal and provide them with a unique code for individual identification. Through this portal, all registered gig workers will have direct access to the various social and economic welfare benefits offered by the Rajasthan government. Startups will also have to invest a specific amount in the Employee Welfare Fund. Failure to do so can result in penalties,

making it prevalent for them to be available at their doorstep in the morning. Moreover, in big cities spanning 30 to 40 kilometers, courier services are also available in a single day. All these people working in these startups are also called "gig workers" who are in reality similar to the workers working in the unorganized sector in various economic and social facilities.

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

## FMCG, Retail witness 23% decline in new job opportunities: Naukri

**NEW DELHI:** The Naukri JobSpeak Index for July has revealed that sectors like FMCG, retail, BPO, insurance, and education showed a 16-23% decrease in new job opportunities compared to the previous year.

For white-collar jobs in India there was a significant drop of 19% in hiring compared to the same period last year. The report highlights the persisting challenges in the IT industry, where new job creation experienced a substantial 46% drop compared to July 2022. Despite the overall decline, sectors focused

on the domestic economy, such as oil and gas and real estate, remained robust in their hiring activity. The stability in these sectors showcased the resilience of the Indian job market.

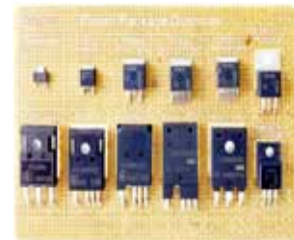
While the overall job market faced challenges, AI-related roles remained steady, with new job openings staying relatively flat around 31,780 compared to the previous month. Niche roles like full-stack AI scientists and ML engineers experienced a positive trend, with a 9% and 6% increase, respectively, compared to the beginning of the year.

## Infineon uses recyclable PCBs from Jiva Materials to minimize electronic waste and carbon footprint of demo and evaluation boards

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Munich, Germany

With the growing amount of electronic waste generated by consumers, industry and other sectors, it is critical to address this specific environmental issue. Reducing the carbon footprint and promoting sustainability are therefore key to achieving climate goals and improving environmental protection. This is why Infineon Technologies AG (FSE: IFX / OTCQX: IFNNY) is taking another important step towards a greener future with the introduction of Soluboard®, a recyclable and biodegradable printed circuit board (PCB) substrate based on natural fibers and a halogen-free polymer. The product was developed by UK start-up Jiva Materials and helps to reduce the carbon footprint of the electronics industry, Company press statement said here.

Soluboard's plant-based



PCB material is made from natural fibers, which have a much lower carbon footprint than the traditional glass-based fibers. The organic structure is enclosed in a non-toxic polymer that dissolves when immersed in hot water, leaving only compostable organic material. This not only eliminates PCB waste, but also allows the electronic components soldered to the board to be recovered and recycled. By using Soluboard for its demo and evaluation boards, Infineon is making another important contribution to the testing of sustainable designs in the electronics industry.

# MSME delegation urges FinMin to prioritize Medium Enterprises for Economic Growth

**NEW DELHI:** A delegation of Federation of Indian Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) called upon the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday seeking prioritisation of medium-sized enterprises in the economic development of India.

The FM extended her support to a collaborative effort between the Federation of Indian Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) and IFCI Ltd to establish the 'Center of Excellence for Aspiring SMEs'. The initiative aims to address the specific needs and challenges faced by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in India.

The delegation was led by Rajendra Agrawal, Member of Parliament and Convenor of Friends of MSMEs in Parliament, along with FISME's office bearers as



they discussed the pressing issues faced by the MSME sector with the FM.

Currently, India boasts around 6 crore MSMEs, out of which only 25,000 are categorized as medium-sized industries. These medium-sized enterprises have distinct financial, technological, and regulatory requirements, differentiating them from both traditional MSMEs and large

proposed Center of Excellence for Aspiring SMEs will act as a crucial interface between Indian SMEs and foreign companies, with a special focus on joint ventures with Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The Center will offer essential services, including technology interface for aspiring SMEs, allowing them to access modern technology for higher productivity and competitiveness. It will also provide much-needed financial and management advisory services, equipping these enterprises to become ready for SME Exchange listing.

The FISME delegation, comprising Dinesh Singh (Chairman, Policy Committee & MD, Kanohar Electricals Ltd), Neeraj Kedia (Chairman, Banking & Finance Committee, and MD, Chkaradhar Chemicals Pvt Ltd), Mohan Suresh (Chairman, Intl

Trade Committee, and MD, Technospark Pvt Ltd), and Anil Bhardwaj (Secretary General, FISME), emphasized the urgency of addressing these constraints. IFCI Ltd, a long-standing statutory financial institution with a history of over seven decades, currently focuses on providing advisory and consulting services to various industries, including managing 13 PLI schemes.

The collaborative decision to establish the 'IFCI-FISME Center of Excellence for Aspiring SMEs' signifies their dedication to empowering the sector and fostering a conducive ecosystem for its development. The joint initiative aims to enhance the growth prospects of aspiring SMEs, providing them with the necessary support and resources to contribute significantly to India's economic activities.

# India & LAC Region should target \$100 bn trade by 2027 says S Jaishankar

**NEW DELHI:** India and the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region should aim to double their trade to USD 100 billion by 2027, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday.

Addressing the inaugural session of the India-LAC Conclave organised by the external affairs ministry and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), union minister said that the two sides should also look at negotiating mobility agreements since legal mobility is becoming increasingly important and mutually beneficial in a knowledge economy.

As per reports, the trade between the two regions was worth nearly USD 50 billion in 2022-23, and India's exports to Brazil stood at USD 10 billion, almost double the exports to Japan.



The EAM suggested a plan with four pillars for intensified trade and economic engagement between India and LAC countries. "The two sides should look at supply chain diversification since the Covid-19 pandemic had highlighted the need for resilient supply chains for redundant sourcing, diversified production, and food and energy security", he said.

He added that given India's status as the fifth largest economy and the country's rising demand for oil, gas, strategic minerals and food, the two

sides should work on resource partnerships.

"The two sides should share developmental experiences, including digital capabilities, health solutions and agricultural practices. In this context, India can provide customised training and exchanges for LAC countries," Jaishankar said.

Referring to importance of mobility arrangements for professionals, Jaishankar said, "We are willing to work with LAC countries to make movement easier between our businesses and our people."

The business conclave is part of India's upgraded engagement with LAC countries in recent years. India's top leaders have made 34 visits to the region in the past nine years, including four by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## Axis Bank launches 'Sampann' premium banking services for Rural and Semi-Urban customers



**KULBIR SINGH KALSI**  
Ludhiana

Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India, announced the launch of 'Sampann', a premium banking proposition specifically curated for the growth focused and progressive customer segment based in rural and semi-urban regions. This new offering is part of Axis Bank's ongoing commitment to the customer-centric model for RUSU (Rural and semi-urban) customers. Sampann is part of Axis Bank's mission to cater to the new-age Bharat and ensure that they have curated and easy access to financial solutions.

Through Sampann, Axis Bank will offer exclusive benefits such as discounts on farming devices, agriculture inputs like pesticides, seeds and a wide range of value-add services like crop advisory, weather forecasting, and real-time information about mandi prices etc. It will also facilitate credit accessibility to the customers by giving them discounts on processing fees for agri loans, gold loans, tractor funding, auto and two-wheeler loans.

# India's GDP to double by 2030, will touch \$6 trillion: Standard Chartered Bank

**NEW DELHI:** In the next seven years India's GDP will touch USD 6 trillion, and per capita income will increase to USD 4,000 by 2030, Standard Chartered Bank Research said in a report on Friday.

India's GDP currently stands at about USD 3.5 trillion and per capita income at USD 2,450 during CY 2022. While India turning into the third largest economy by the end of the decade is a known narrative, its potential transition to an upper-middle-income economy from a lower-middle-income is an under-appreciated theme, the report said. India's drivers of growth will be consistent policy reforms, macro stability, healthy financial sector, large share of



working population, digitalisation and political stability, public capex push, it added.

The report further said that several states are likely to be far wealthier than the national average by 2030 and household consumption expenditure may be similar to India's current GDP levels by then. These include states like Telangana, Delhi, Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, among others. "We believe more mea-

sures to address job creation, infra gap, income inequality, climate challenges could further boost India's growth prospects," it added. According to the United Nations, as many as 415 million Indians moved out of poverty in the 15-year period between 2005-2006 and 2019-2021. The latest update of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which was released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford earlier this month, said that 25 countries, including India, successfully halved their global MPI values within 15 years.

# RBI Likely To Maintain Status Quo On Policy Rate Despite Rising Inflation: Experts

**MUMBAI:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may keep the policy rate unchanged in the monetary policy review next week in spite of mounting inflation.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das will meet from August 8-10. The monetary policy review will be announced on August 10. Professor NR Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor, Ambedkar School of Economics University, Bangalore, told news agency PTI that although consumer price index-based inflation is rising, mainly due to food inflation, credit demand remains stable.

I don't think RBI will ignore it. It will probably maintain the



status quo on the interest rate. He said retail inflation may be around 5.5% due to seasonality and if we remove it, it will be around 4 to 4.5%. It is noteworthy that retail inflation increased

to 4.81% in June from 4.31% in May. Siddharth Sanyal, Chief Economist, Bandhan Bank, said that curiosity about the next MPC meeting has definitely increased. He said the MPC maintained the status quo in the policy rate in the April-June quarter after hiking the interest rate in the previous fiscal. The move paid off with consumer price index-based inflation falling below five percent in the summer months. The RBI had raised the key policy rate repo by an overall 2.5% through May 2022 to control inflation, before leaving the rate unchanged in April.

The US Federal Reserve recently raised the interest rate by 0.25% points to 5.25-5.5%, taking it to the highest level in several years. The European Central Bank has also increased the interest rate by 0.25%. Due to this, its main rate has become 3.75%.

# PNB, Bank of Maharashtra lead in collateral-free MSME loans in FY23

**NEW DELHI:** One of the top public sector banks (PSBs), Punjab National Bank (PNB), Bank of Maharashtra and Union Bank of India are the banks with the maximum number of collateral-free MSME loans up to Rs 10 lakh and Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh as of March 2023, said Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma, Minister of State for MSME in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

In the list of 12 PSBs, PNB led the tally with 18 lakh loans amounting to Rs 27,124 crore. It is followed by 15.20 lakh loans involving Rs 22,783 crore



by Bank of Maharashtra and 14.64 lakh loans involving Rs 20,351 crore by Union Bank of India as of March 2023 under the up to Rs 10 lakh collateral-free loan category.

Within the Rs 10 lakh loan vertical, loans from State Bank of India stood at 9.92 lakh involving Rs 17,406 crore while another leading PSB Bank of Baroda had 13.66 lakh loans amounting to Rs 21,543 crore outstanding as of March 2023.

SBI and Bank of Baroda had 54,753 and 44,062 loans

amounting to Rs 6,869 crore and Rs 5,372 crore outstanding as of March 2023 respectively.

The Minister further in his response said, "All scheduled commercial banks (excluding Regional Rural Banks) are mandated not to accept collateral security in the case of loans up to Rs 10 lakh extended to units in the MSE sector. Banks are also advised to extend collateral-free loans up to Rs 10 lakh to all units financed under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) administered by KVIC."

# Power Finance Corporation's Non-Convertible Debentures lists on BSE

**FW DESK**  
New Delhi

The Public Issue of secured, rated, listed, redeemable non-convertible debentures by Power Finance Corporation Limited, a Company registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a non-deposit taking systemically important Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), classified as an Infrastructure Finance Company (IFC) on July 28, 2010, with a belief that its NBFC and IFC classifications enables it to effectively capitalize on available financing oppor-



tunities in the Indian power sector, listed on the BSE.

The issue was oversubscribed 5.65 times garnering Rs 2,824.48 crore. The NCD has a face value of Rs. 1,000 each. The base issue size is Rs. 500 crores with a green shoe option of up to Rs. 4,500 crore,

aggregating up to Rs. 5,000 crore ("Tranche I Issue"), which is within the shelf limit of Rs. 10,000 crore ("Issue").

The HNI Category was the most subscribed with 8.99 times, followed by Non-Institutional Category with 3.58 times. Institutional Category was subscribed 2.50 times, whereas, Retail Category was subscribed 2.09 times. Issue opened on Friday, July 21, 2023 and was scheduled to close on Friday, July 28, 2023. The issue was early closed on July 26, 2023 by exercising option of early closure.

# 88% of Rs 2000 notes returned to banks till July 31: RBI



**NEW DELHI:** As the process for the withdrawal of the Rs 2000-currency notes continues, the RBI on Tuesday said that 88 per cent of the high-value denomination banknotes in circulation have been returned to banks till July 31. The total value of Rs 2000 notes in circulation, which was Rs 3.62 lakh crore till March 31, had come down to Rs 3.56 lakh crore by May 19. As per the latest data from banks, the total value of the Rs 2000 notes received back from circulation till July 31 is Rs 3.14 lakh crore -- 88 per cent of the total. Presently,

the Rs 2000 banknote still in circulation stands at Rs 0.42 lakh crore, said the RBI. The central bank's data indicates that of the total banknotes in Rs 2000 denomination received back from circulation, around 87 per cent was in the form of deposits and the rest 13 per cent were exchanged into other denomination notes. The RBI has urged the people to utilise the next two months bank to deposit or exchange the Rs 2000 banknotes still held by them to avoid any rush before the deadline of September 30, 2023.

# Growing Dissatisfaction with Mismatched Tax Collection

**SATISH SINGH**

**1** 64th Income Tax Day celebrated on 24th July 2023. On this day, for the first time, tax on income was collected in India. In 1857, the Indians tried to get independence in an organized way, due to which the British rule suffered a huge loss, which was compensated by imposing income tax.

Even though it has been more than 7 decades since the country got independence. Still, the number of income tax filers is nominal. Still, income tax is not deposited by many businessmen. Not only this, businessmen also do not file income tax returns. Due to this reason, there has been an increase of only 1.63 percent in the number of income tax payers in the last 5 years. However, there has been an increase of 73 percent in the case of personal tax deposits and this success has been achieved by the Income Tax Department due to technology, because now both salaried and non-salaried individuals cannot hide the interest income earned in the bank. Now everyone will have to pay tax on such income.

Only 6.2 per cent of the less than 70 million taxpayers in India file income tax returns, more than 5.5 per cent zero tax returns, while about 60 per cent of the taxable population in the USA file income tax returns. While only 0.70 per cent of the taxable population in India pays income tax. In this country with a population of about 140 crores, the number of people who pay 30 per cent income tax is only 60.8 lakhs &

they have Rs 10 lakhs income per annum, whereas in the financial year 2021-22 this number was 48 lakhs.

In India, 6.2 percent of about 70 million people file income tax returns, while 59.9 percent in USA, 56 percent in Britain, 58 percent in France and 9.8 percent in China. People pay less tax in India when the tax rate here is very less as compared to developed countries. The tax rate is 54 per cent in Canada, 51.6 per cent in the USA, 49 per cent in France, 47 per cent in Italy, 45 per cent in South Africa, China, Japan and Germany, 40 per cent in the UK and 37 per cent in India. In many countries of the world, almost no income tax is collected. Countries like Malta, Cyprus, Andorra, Singapore, Antigua, Luxembourg, Iceland, Ireland, Mauritius, Monaco, Switzerland, Bahamas, Bermuda etc. fall in this category.

In developed countries the income tax rate is high and at the same time, nominal tax is collected in a few countries, however, the facilities provided to the citizens are many times more and better than the facilities provided in India. Apart from this, indirect tax in India is also collected from the direct taxpayers. If direct and indirect taxes are combined, then a person paying 30 percent income tax has to spend more than 50 percent of his income in paying taxes to the government. Due to such a situation, neither development is taking place in the country nor citizens are getting better facilities.

In the financial year 2021-22, the number of taxpayers paying more than Rs.1 lakh in the country is 30,08,033, taxpayers paying tax between Rs.1 and 10 lakh are



27,93,463, the number of people paying income tax between Rs.10 and Rs.50 lakh is 1,96,535, the number of people who paid tax between Rs.50 lakh and Rs.1 crore was 12,963 and the number of people who paid income tax more than Rs.1 crore was 5,072. According to the figures of the financial year 2021-22, the percentage of those earning less than Rs.2.5 lakh in the country is 57 percent, while the percentage of those earning Rs.2.5 to Rs.5 lakh is 18 percent, the percentage of those earning Rs.5 to Rs.10 lakh is 17 percent, those earning Rs.10 to Rs.50 lakh. 7 percent and 1 percent of those earning more than 50 lakhs.

According to the data available till August 2020, Uttar Pradesh is at the first place with a share of 18 percent in income tax filers, Bihar at the second place with a contribution of 10 percent and Madhya Pradesh at the third place with a share of 8 percent. Maharashtra and Rajasthan are at the fourth position with a share of 6 percent each. These figures show that the people of Bihar states are better than the developed states in terms of depositing income tax.

Salaried people in India pay the maximum tax, while non-salaried people, which include

professionals such as doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, architects and businessmen, pay less tax. According to an estimate, non-salaried individuals in the country file an income tax return of Rs 31,500 on an average, while salaried individuals file an income tax return of over Rs 90,000. 96 percent of non-salaried people file income tax returns of less than Rs 10 lakh, while 88 percent of salaried people file income tax returns of less than Rs 5 lakh.

In our country, non-salaried people get many exemptions in income tax, due to which their tax liability is less, in spite of this, some businessmen do tax evasion. Having a machine in the factory, small businessmen get the benefit of 10 percent of the cost of the machine in the form of depreciation, that is, if a person has a machine worth Rs 10 lakh in his factory, he will get the benefit of 10 percent of the cost of machine.

By the way, there are some other reasons for depositing less income tax, for example, due to the informal economy in India, a large part of economic activities is still outside the purview of the government monitoring system, due to which a section of businessmen do not deposit

income tax.

Many small businesses, such as street vendors, daily wage workers, etc. fall under the informal sector, due to which it is not easy for the government to track their income. Another reason for the low tax base in India is the low participation of women in the work force.

According to a World Bank report released in June 2022, there has been a steady decline in the labor force participation of Indian women since 2005 and is set to fall to a low of 19 percent in 2021. A large population of India is still dependent on agriculture. Since agricultural income is exempt under Income Tax, due to which almost 50 percent of farmers do not file Income Tax Returns.

In the old and new tax regime, income tax has to be paid only when the income is above a certain limit. In the old tax system, no income tax has to be paid to those earning up to Rs.5 lakh. The annual income of a large population in India is less than 5 lakhs and those with this much income are exempted from paying income tax. Not only this, those whose income is up to 5 lakhs also refrain from filing income tax returns.

Obviously, bringing informal businesses and workers into the tax net will benefit both the country and the general public. Therefore, businessmen should be encouraged to self-register their businesses with the government machinery and comply with tax laws. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) system can also help in this task. Depositing income tax regularly can get financial help from the bank and can also get the benefit of gov-

ernment schemes. With the help of GST, the benefit of deposit of input tax can be availed and the large buyers can get benefit in continuation of supply.

High earners can be identified with the help of bank transactions, credit cards, property purchases, etc. to bring them under the income tax net. The income of some farmers is in lakhs and crores of rupees, but they do not pay taxes. Tax base can also be increased by bringing agricultural income into the tax net.

Collecting tax at source in the course of purchase of certain goods and services can also identify potential taxpayers. Many people in the country earn huge amount every year, but they steal without any fear. Currently TCS is collected on expensive motor vehicles, gold jewelry or money transferred abroad etc. but the scope can be extended to consumer durables, domestic luxury travel, stay in expensive hotels etc.

It can be said that there are many anomalies related to income tax in our country. Salaried people are paying tax, but some professionals and businessmen are evading tax. There are also some loopholes in the matter, for example, the government has failed to collect taxes from the businessmen working in the informal sector. Along with this, the taxpayers who are depositing taxes are not getting the expected facilities, due to which there is a lot of anger in their mind about the way and system of the government.

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

# US judge rejects Trump's attempt to derail 2020 election probe

Former US President Donald Trump's attempt to derail an investigation into his alleged meddling in the 2020 presidential election in the state of Georgia has been rejected by a judge, the media reported.

On Monday, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney rejected efforts by Trump's legal team to keep a Georgia district attorney from prosecuting him and from using certain evidence gathered in her investigation into the case, reports Xinhua news agency.

In his ruling, McBurney said there are no grounds to disqualify Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis from pursuing her investigation. Willis has suggested that she may seek charges in the case in the com-



ing weeks. Trump's legal team in Georgia had previously asked the court to throw out all the evidence from the special purpose grand jury investigation and disqualify Willis, citing concerns about the constitutionality of

special grand juries in the state and about "a prosecutor's office that was found to have an actual conflict, yet continued to pursue the investigation".

The special grand jury did not have the power to indict.

## Donald Trump pleads not guilty to charges of plotting to overturn 2020 election

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump has pleaded not guilty before an Indian-American judge to four charges that he plotted a criminal conspiracy to remain in power despite losing the November 2020 election. Donald Trump, 77, entered his plea on Thursday before Magistrate Judge Moxila Upadhyaya at a Washington, D.C., federal courthouse not far from the US Capitol, where the alleged conspiracy he's accused of orchestrating turned violent on January 6, 2021.

But it did issue subpoenas and hear from witnesses and issue a final report with recommendations for Willis.

But despite Trump's mounting legal troubles, his status as the clear frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination continues un-

abated.

The former President has been indicted twice in the past four months -- once in New York for alleged financial crimes and once in a federal court on charges that he mishandled sensitive government documents and obstructed an investigation.

# Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif hints at delaying elections

As the Pakistan government is ready to bring in an interim setup with a mandate to hold elections within 90 days, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has hinted towards a delay in the polls, creating a rift within his coalition partners.

The visible rift, as seen on various social media posts, is exposing the lack of talks and closed door consultations between Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party and its major coalition partner Pakistan People Party (PPP). The premier has said that elections will be held only on the basis of the 2023 digital census, hinting towards a delay between eight months to one year. "We have to hold the elections on the basis of the new census... When the census has been conducted, the polls should be held on its basis unless there is an obstacle that cannot be overcome. But I don't see any such hurdle," he said during an

interview. Sharif's comments have sparked a widespread debate as the PPP has made it clear that it would not endorse any decision that results delaying the polls. "The party has already taken a position on the subject that fresh delimitation would cause delay in

holding general elections and given this reason, the party has opposed it," senior PPP leader Nawaz Muhammad Yousaf Talpur said. "Fresh delimitations would in theory require four months, but in reality, it might take as long as eight months or an year," said PPP information secretary Faisal Kareem Kundi. Meanwhile, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has also opposed the decision of going to the polls based on the old census.



# British Pakistani radical preacher faces terror trial in May 2024



LONDON: A radical Islamist preacher with dual British and Pakistani nationality charged with three terrorism-related offences will face a trial in May next year, a UK court ruled on Friday. Anjem Choudary, 56, was arrested at his home in east London by the Metropolitan Police last month and charged with membership of a proscribed (banned) organisation, addressing meetings to encourage support for a proscribed organisation, and directing a terrorist organisation under different sections of the UK's Terrorism Act 2000.

He appeared before the Old Bailey court in London via a video link on Friday, when a provisional trial date was set for May 20.

A Canadian national, 28-year-old Khaled Hussein, who was also arrested in a related counter-terrorism inquiry on charges of membership of a proscribed organisation will also face trial next year. Both men were remanded into custody to appear before Kingston Crown Court on January 5, 2024.

"On Monday, July 17, Met counter-terrorism detectives investigating alleged membership of a proscribed organisation arrested a 56-year-old man in east London and a 28-year-old Canadian national at Heathrow Airport, after he arrived on a flight," the Met Police had said in a statement at the time of charging the suspects last month. "They were held under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and detectives were granted warrants of further detention allowing them to detain the men until Monday, July 24," the statement added.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) told the court at the time that Choudary spoke online to weekly small groups from June 2022 until his arrest, giving lectures on the establishment of an Islamic State in Britain. Co-accused Hussein is said to have effectively worked for Choudary in Canada.

"The charges relate to the proscribed organisation Al Muhajiroun, also known as the Islamic Thinkers Society. Criminal proceedings against Mr Choudary and Mr Hussein are now active and they each have the right to a fair trial," said Nick Price, from the CPS Counter Terrorism Division.

"It is extremely important that there should be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prejudice these proceedings. The function of the CPS is not to decide whether a person is guilty of a criminal offence, but to make fair, independent and objective assessments about whether it is appropriate to present charges for a criminal court to consider," he said. UK-born Choudary has been associated with different radical outfits, including the now-banned Islamist group Al Muhajiroun. He was released from London's high-security Belmarsh prison back in 2018 where he was held after being convicted by the Old Bailey court in London in September 2016 for radical preaching and calling on Muslims to support the terrorist group.

# Bodies of three Nepalese pilgrims recovered from flash flood & landslide site in Kedarnath Yatra Route



KATHMANDU: Bodies of three Nepalese pilgrims who were killed have been recovered and eight others still missing after a flash flood swept away a hotel where they were staying near the Kedarnath temple area in Uttarakhand in India, a media report said here on Friday.

The bodies of at least three Nepalese pilgrims have been identified while those of eight others continue to remain missing following the landslide that hit the Kedarnath Yatra route in Uttarakhand due to heavy rains on Thursday, Nepal's government-run Gorkhapatra daily reported.

Earlier, on July 28, a news appeared in the section of media wherein it was reported State trooper Charanjot Ti-

# Stopping Sikhs from growing beard in NYPD, violation of religious freedom: Dhami

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami has raised objection to the policy of the New York Police Department (NYPD), of stopping Sikh policemen from growing their beard. The SGPC President has written a letter in this regard to the Indian Ambassador to the United States of America (USA) Taranjit Singh Sandhu. He has also sought intervention from the Union Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar.

Earlier, on July 28, a news appeared in the section of media wherein it was reported State trooper Charanjot Ti-



wana, based in Jamestown, New York, requested permission to grow his beard to the length of one-half inch (1.27 centimeters) in March 2022 for his wedding but the Tiwana's request was denied on the basis that it posed a safety issue regarding the use of a gas mask, according to his union, the New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association.

SGPC president on the basis of news in his letter to the Indian Ambassador to the USA,

Harjinder Singh Dhami said that the NYPD policy of stopping a Sikh policeman from growing a beard on the basis of safety issues is not rational. "Stopping Sikh policemen from growing a beard on the basis that it posed a safety issue regarding the use of gas mask is wrong. Even if a Sikh trooper has a fully grown beard, the gas mask can easily be worn by tying the unshorn beard while serving on such a duty. An example of this is the Sikh soldiers serving in the Indian Army, one of the world's top military forces", said Dhami.

"Initiated Sikhs do not cut hair and keeping hair unshorn for a lifetime is one of the commitments towards the Sikh religion and the Gurus (masters).

# Russian stock market hits 17 month high as oil prices surge

MOSCOW: Russia's ruble-based MOEX index exceeded 3,000 points, marking its highest level since February 22, 2023, the day before Moscow launched its military operation in Ukraine, local media reported.

The index was 0.7 per cent higher at 3008.61 points on Friday. Since the beginning of 2023, the MOEX has increased by about 40 per cent. The stock market has demonstrated consistent growth since a collapse following the announcement of partial mobilisation in September, 2022. Analysts told Russian business daily Kommersant that the rally had occurred due to a dropping ruble, rising oil prices, and the dividend policy of the country's corporate sector. Ex-



pects expect the MOEX index to reach 3,500 points by the end of the year, RT reported. In the latest trading session, shares in LUKOIL, Rosneft, Tatneft, Gazprom Neft, and Surgutneftegaz were among the major oil companies that demonstrated solid growth. Sberbank stocks rose by 0.6 per cent, the strongest among firms in the financial sec-

tor. Meanwhile, Brent crude oil, a global benchmark for Russia's main export, was up 1 per cent at \$83.72 per barrel, nearing a three-month high and supporting Russian stock indexes. Russia's national currency, the ruble, edged lower to trade at about 90 against the greenback, nearing its lowest point since April 2022, RT reported.

# Spain-based Indian held from Delhi for terror funding

NEW DELHI: The State Special Operation Cell (SSOC) of Punjab Police on Thursday said it has arrested a Spain-based Indian national Harjeet Singh from the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi in connection with terror financing and involvement in planning to execute targeted killings in the state. The police have also arrested Harjeet's close-associate, Amrinder Singh, alias Bunty, from his home district Khanna. The development came in less than a week after Punjab Police busted a target killing module with the arrest of five module members handled by foreign entities linked to Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF). Divulging details, AIG SSOC, SAS Nagar, Ashwani Kapur, said they had received an input that Harjeet Singh, a native of village Ghanshampur in Gurdaspur, had come to India around a month ago and is involved in activities of terror financing and also planning to execute few target killings in the state.

# Trudeau Couple Separation : Punjabis have sweet memories during their visit to Sri Harmandir Sahib

AMRITSAR: People in Punjab have sweet memories of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife Sophie Gregoire's maiden visit to Amritsar in November 2018 during which they offer prayers at the Golden Temple, Sikhism's holiest shrine that gets millions of visitors annually.

Dressed in Indian clothes with their heads covered, the Trudeau couple, along with their children, bowed before the holy book of the Sikhs and tried their hand at making chappatis at the 'langar' as they spent over an hour at the shrine.

Responding to an announcement by the Trudeau couple over their separation, the media advisor to former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, Raveen Thukral tweeted on Thursday: "And they separate... memories when Justin Trudeau & Sophie were together in Amritsar with @capt\_amarinder in 2018. Lovely family, sad to see them drift apart."

Thukral, who is currently residing in Canada and was attached with the Chief Min-



ister during the Prime Minister's visit, shared photos of the Trudeau family from his collection regarding their visit to Amritsar when they Captain Amarinder Singh, who had initially refused to meet the Canadian leader, claiming his cabinet members supported the formation of Khalistan.

With 800,000 Sikhs calling Canada home, the largest Sikh diaspora, the roots of the first Sikh in Canada dating back to the 1800s. The Sikh community is very active in Canadian politics. Their influence is reflected in Trudeau's first cabinet, which was represented by four out of 40 ministers. Prominent Sikhs outside

the government include NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and Conservative finance critic Jasraj Singh Hallan. Sophie Gregoire announced on Wednesday that she and the Prime Minister, who have been married 18 years, had decided to separate. The couple, in statements posted on Instagram, said they made the decision after "many meaningful and difficult conversations". A statement from the Prime Minister's office said they both have signed a legal separation agreement.

"They remain a close family, and Sophie and the prime minister are focused on raising their kids in a safe, loving and

## HIGHLIGHT

- In statements posted on Instagram, said they made the decision after "many meaningful and difficult conversations".
- Canadian Prime Minister's office said they both have signed a legal separation agreement.

collaborative environment," the statement said. "The family will be together on vacation, beginning next week." The Prime Minister's Office requested respect for their privacy. The couple got married in 2005 and they have three children, 15-year-old Xavier, 14-year-old Ella-Grace and nine-year-old Hadrien. The youngest one had to skip the Golden Temple visit as he was not well.

Justin Trudeau is the second Canadian Prime Minister to announce a separation while in office.

# Toronto Mayor does bhangra as record 300,000 attend India Bazaar festival



TORONTO: Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow performed bhangra and danced to Bollywood beats as she joined crowds at North America's biggest Indian festival at the Gerrard India Bazaar here.

The Gerrard India Bazaar, which is the oldest and biggest Indian market in North America, drew a record crowd of over 300,000 people to its 21st annual festival.

The Toronto mayor opened the festivities as the two-day event of food, Bollywood music, dance and fun attracted Indians, Pakistanis, whites, blacks and various other ethnic groups in Canada's most diverse city.

Stretched over seven blocks on Gerrard Street, the bazaar remained jam-packed as fun-seekers, food and music lovers and shoppers thronged shops,

food stalls and stages as Bollywood music blared from loudspeakers.

The organisers also introduced 'Cricket Gully' this year to introduce Canadians to India's most favourite sport.

"Over 300,000 people, including more than 40 per cent of non-Indian background, attended the festival this year. It has become a great platform to introduce our culture, food and sport to our next generations as well as the mainstream," said Gerrard India Bazaar president Chand Kapoor. Over 300 artists from various ethnic backgrounds performed during the two-day festival. "We have never seen so much diversity of performers. Everybody seems to be drawn to Bollywood," said Gerrard India Bazaar executive director Tasneem Bandukwala.

# S-Korea's inflation at 25-month low

THE OVERALL RISE, HOWEVER, WAS LIMITED AS PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY PRODUCTS EDGED DOWN 0.5 PER CENT ON THE BACK OF THE FALLING COSTS OF BEEF AND PORK



September 2021, reports Yonhap News Agency.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, rose 3.3 per cent on-year in July, down from a 3.5 per cent increase tallied in June.

The prices of utility services continued to grow sharply, advancing 21.1 per cent over the period, as the state-run Korea Electric Power Corp.

raised electricity bills to make up for its snowballing losses. South Korea depends heavily on imports for its energy needs.

The overall rise, however, was limited as prices of agricultural and fishery products edged down 0.5 per cent on the back of the falling costs of beef and pork.

Prices of industrial products remained unchanged in

July, as those of diesel and gasoline plunged 33.4 per cent and 22.8 per cent, respectively, offsetting gains in bread that shot up 8.1 per cent.

The price of fuel, in particular, fell at the sharpest rate since the agency started compiling related data in 1985.

The service sector gained 3.1 per cent on-year in July due to higher insurance and house management costs. Prices of daily necessities -- 144 items closely related to people's everyday lives, such as food, clothing and housing -- climbed 1.8 per cent on-year, slowing from a 2.3 per cent jump a month earlier.

Last month, the Bank of Korea kept its key interest rate unchanged at 3.5 per cent for the fourth straight time.

The central bank delivered seven consecutive rate hikes from April 2022 to January 2023.

# Swiss embassy denies suspending Schengen visa appointments for Indians

Some media reports last week claimed that the Swiss embassy had suspended Schengen visa applications for Indians till October. However, the officials rejected it and clarified that the process continued without any issues.

New Delhi: The Embassy of Switzerland in India has denied reports that it has suspended Schengen visa appointments for Indian tour groups until October due to high volume of applications. "We have almost 800 daily appointments through the end of September 2023. These include 22 groups," the mission said in a statement released on Thursday.

Asserting that people-to-people contact is at the core of Swiss-Indian relationship, the Embassy said that it has processed more visa applications in the current year than it did in 2019. "We have surpassed our pre-pandemic times processing level. From



January until June, we handled 129,446 applications, as against 120,071 during the same period in 2019 -- a 7.8 per cent increase." In addition, it said various measures have been implemented since the beginning of 2023 to further ease the visa application process for Indian applicants.

As per these measures, it would now be possible for the applicants to apply for their visa six months before their date of travel, as against one month in the past.

So, someone wishing to travel in June can already apply for a visa in January.

Further, the Embassy has increased its overall capacity in India. With a new Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Lucknow, there are now 13 VACs all over India, where applications can be submitted.

The mission also informed that at present it takes "no more than 13 working days between the appointment by our partner VFS Global and the Embassy's decision on the

application".

The statement of clarification came following media reports on Tuesday which said that Indian tour operators were informed by the Swiss embassy to reschedule group trips to allow ample time for visa processing. "Swiss embassies are currently dealing with a lack of staff," several media reports had said, citing Simon Bosshart, Head of Markets East at Switzerland Tourism.

A Schengen visa is a short-stay visa granting individuals an opportunity to travel to any member country within the Schengen Area for tourism or business purposes for up to 90 days. One Schengen visa application costs 80 Euros or Rs 7,260 in India.

India had the second-highest number of Schengen visa rejections worldwide in 2022, leading to an estimated loss of Rs 87 crore on canceled trips, according to SchengenVisaInfo.com.

# SHEENA BAJAJ to make Bollywood debut with 'Non Stop Dhamaal'



Actress Sheena Bajaj is all set to make her Bollywood debut with movie 'Non Stop Dhamaal', directed by Irshad Khan. The actor plays the role of Kaaya in the film which also stars Rajpal Yadav, Annu Kapoor, Manoj Joshi, Shreyas Talpade, Hemant Pandey and many more.

"The film marks my return to comedy after a long break. My last in the genre was sitcom 'Best Of Luck Nikki'. I had an amazing time making this film with such talented cast and crew. Learnt so much from Rajpal Yadav. He was always there to help and we even improvised a lot. He said nice things about my work. Such things mean a lot," Sheena said.

Now that she is starting her journey in films, we ask about the kind of roles she is keen on taking up. She said: "In Bollywood, my perspective primarily revolves around seeking roles that are deeply performance-oriented, ones that allow me to truly shine as an actor. It's that singular film where you have a specific number of minutes to captivate the audience with your performance."

"Once you achieve that and people recognise your talent, there's an unstoppable momentum that propels you

forward. 'Non Stop Dhamaal' is scheduled for release on August 18, and the trailer is set to launch on the 4th. I extend a warm invitation to everyone to join me at the JW Marriott event from 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Please watch the trailer, enjoy the music, and contribute your insights about the film. Your feedback could potentially lead to valuable improvements.

"Additionally, there's another film on the horizon, and I sincerely implore everyone to shower me with their unwavering support, love, and affection during this exciting journey." The actor is a known face on television and south films. Ask about the difference she has noticed and she is quick to add: "I've had the opportunity to work extensively in films as a child actress, particularly with Mahesh Bhatt and the Mukesh Bhatt camp. I've portrayed the childhood versions of various heroines, including Kareena, Katrina, and others.

"Additionally, I've been part of numerous TV shows and advertisements during my time as a child actress. However, I've noticed distinct differences between these various mediums. Television demands a tremendous amount of effort, often spanning around 16-17 hours."

# Kartik Aaryan alongside Kiara Advani is set to headline another film titled 'Chandu Champion'

Bollywood actor Kartik Aaryan, after registering a sturdy success of his last theatrical film 'Satyaprem Ki Katha', in which he starred alongside Kiara Advani, is set to headline another film titled 'Chandu Champion', the first look of which was unveiled on Tuesday.

It shows Kartik looking into the camera as he dons the blazer with "India" written on it. The picture also shows "military" written on the blazer signifying that Kartik's character serves in the Indian forces. The upcoming film, directed by Kabir Khan of 'Bajranghi Bhaijaan' fame, is based on a true story of a sportsperson. The actor sports short hair in the first look, and has attempted a never been seen before look for the film. His off screen messy hairdo may command a colossal following and therefore, it's refreshing to see the actor take a 180 degree turn for his character. His sharp buzz-cut haircut and the intense look on his face gives the viewers a glimpse that he has a riveting story to tell and one that will make the nation proud. 'Chandu Champion' went on floors with its mahurat shot in London in the presence of Sajid & Warda Nadiadwala along with Kabir Khan and Kartik Aaryan present at the location with, a special guest of honour Minister of Culture, Media and Sports of the UK, Stuart Andrew. The film is being jointly produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and Kabir Khan. 'Chandu Champion' has booked a grand release on the occasion of Eid in June 2024.

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The team of 'Carry on Jatta-3' organised a success party for celebrating the super achievement of the movie in Chandigarh. PHOTO: KULBIR SINGH KALSI

# POTPOURRI

## 'Gadar 2' has released its revamped version of the iconic dance number 'Main Nikla Gaddi Leke'



After an exciting teaser, 'Gadar 2' has released its revamped version of the iconic dance number 'Main Nikla Gaddi Leke', mixing in folk, electronic, a strong bass which is sung by with great passion by Udit Narayan and his son Aditya Narayan along with music director Mithoon. The original track from 22 years ago is an all time classic, so releasing a new version carries its own risks. But this is no longer the case as 'Gadar 2' very much honours the original track, with Udit Narayan once again coming in with his great voice and showing no signs of ageing.

But this time, much like how the father-son duo of Tara Singh (Sunny Deol) and his son Charanjeet Singh (Utkarsh Sharma) dance to the song, Udit Narayan and Aditya Narayan do an amazing collaboration perfectly complementing each other's voices, with great choreography wrapping up nostalgia with a new flavour. If the original was about love, this time the song is now about the strong bond of a family as Tara Singh and Charanjeet dance to the song along with Tara's wife and Charanjeet's mother Sakina Ali Singh (Amesha Patel), displaying their strong love and massive energy. The revamped version has also received great reception, garnering over two million views on YouTube within just three hours of releasing, with great praise being directed at Sunny Deol's dancing and Udit Narayan's voice, both of whom do not reflect their age in their performance. The addition of Aditya and Mithoon was also praised as both the singers blended their own voices perfectly with Udit Narayan, and created an entirely new composition out of the exact same song. 'Main Nikla Gaddi Leke' from 'Gadar 2' is indeed the same as the original, but it is also very much different as it brings in a more modern production with a far more open mix, and new vocal dynamics. The new version has only hyped up audiences more for 'Gadar 2' and the fight that awaits Tara Singh and his family, as the Anil Sharma directorial hits theatres on August 11, 2023.

# Silence! This is Surinder Vicky, the 'Kohrra' actor everyone is talking about

NEWDELHI: While ace cinematographer Satya Nagpaul spent hours preparing a shot for Gurvinder Singh's 'Chauthi Koot' during Punjab's biting winters, actor Surinder Vicky would quietly enter the frame and sit on the charpoy.

No words would be exchanged. Both focused on their jobs -- Nagpaul on setting the frame, and Vicky on internalizing the angst of his character.

For Ivan Ayr's 'Milestone', where he played a truck driver, Vicky ensured that the seat was uncomfortable during the long driving lessons and actual shooting. After all, the character's physical and mental exhaustion



had to come forth. While his latest 'Kohrra', directed by Randeep Jha, that recently dropped on Netflix is taking everybody by storm including Karan Johar who wrote on Twitter: "I was blown away by the

performances @suvindervicky is and will be the revelation of 2023 across film and streaming... his silences can launch a million scripts; praises are pouring in from significant directors like Hansal Mehta and Deepa Mehta.

"Of course, I am on cloud nine. It is a high when people love your work. But I must add that I have always given my 100 per cent to each project, just that 'Kohrra' has touched a lot of people. "the 50-year-old actor, who is originally from Hissar in Haryana tells IANS.

Vicky, who has been seen in a wide variety of roles including those in films like 'Kesari', 'Milestone', 'Uda Punjab' and several Punjabi movies, portrays the role of the cop Balbir Singh with multiple layers and several shades in 'Kohrra', in a performance punctuated with long silences, pregnant gazes, and allowing the abyss to look back at him.

# Pakistani Hockey team arrives India to play on Indian turf



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Pakistan hockey team here Tuesday crossed over to India via the Attari-Wagah border for the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy slated to be held in Chennai from August 3.

The much-anticipated match between arch-rivals India and Pakistan will take place on August 9. The Pakistan team is scheduled to fly into Chennai later tonight after entering Amritsar by road. Muhammad Saqlain, head coach of the Pakistan Hockey team, told media that the team was scheduled to travel to Chennai to play in the Asian Champions Trophy. The teams from all over Asia are featuring in the tournament. We can hope for good and stronger relationships with sports, he quipped.

# Anju and Seema Haider's online Indo-Pak love

KAVITA SHARMA

India's Anju goes to Pakistan and Seema Haider in reverse comes to India to meet their Boyfriends they met on social media. The two women of rival countries are making headlines for "love" and not hatred. Their decision is full of legal challenges but is being considered as a Bold step. The investigating agencies are trying to find out the truth behind it.

It is love across nations, when Indian women Anju met Nasrullah on Facebook, and Pakistani women Seema Haider met Sachin Meena on a popular online game PUBG. Both married women fall in love with their online friends. Both belong to enemy countries, both married with children and both crossed the borders to unite with their lovers. The only difference between them is Anju entered Pakistan on legal documents through Wagah border while Seema Haider illegally came to India with her four kids in the month of May via neighboring border Nepal.

On her arrival in India, 30 year old Seema Haider the Pakistani women was interrogated by the Uttar Pradesh Anti Terrorism Squad. After which she submitted a mer-



cy petition to the President Droupadi Murmu seeking permission to live with her supposed Husband 22 year old Sachin Meena whom she had married in Pashupati Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal. In a mercy petition to the President, Haider has explained how she had embraced Hinduism and got married to Sachin Meena following Hindu rituals. "If you show some mercy, the petitioner will spend the rest of her life with her husband, four minor children and matrimonial relative, will be grateful that you gave a chance to make something of myself and to be a source of strength and support matrimonial petitioner can. The petitioner will finally be able live a life of dignity in India," Haider stated in a petition.

Seema Haider hails from Sindh province in Pakistan. She got in touch with Meena through online game PUBG in 2019-20 and they started talking on whatsapp and Instagram before falling in love with each other. Haider was arrested by local authorities of Greater Noida in UP on July 4, for illegally entering India and got bail on July 7. Since then she is staying in Greater Noida with Sachin Meena.

On the other hand Anju had fallen in love with Nasrullah (who resides in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) through facebook, and went to Pakistan. According to media reports of Pakistan, Anju has embraced Islam and become Fatima now. After reaching Pakistan and meeting her friend Nasrullah , Anju through a video message informed everyone in India that she is in Pakistan and have gone there legally, in a planned

manner. She also said she is safe in Pakistan and will soon return to India. But after one day her news of converting to Islam religion and marrying Nasrullah shocked everyone. The conversion of Hindus is very common in Pakistan and especially in the cases of women. Now the 34 year old Anju a mother of two kids have tied the knot with 29 year old Nasrullah in a local court. Anju has a 15 year old daughter and six yr old son, she left her home on the pretext of visiting Jaipur.

Meanwhile Seema Haider has applied for Indian Citizenship and Anju who has converted to Islam after Christianity will reside in Pakistan. Anju's father and her husband are very disappointed by her decision and want to dissociate with her now. According to Anju's father Gaya Prasad Thomas, "She has ruined the future of her kids, her family. She is dead for us." They will not ask the govt. to get her back, he said. Although Anju, through her video messages is still denying she has not converted and will be back soon. Seema Haider, now residing in Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh is happy and is pregnant with Sachin Meena in India, but will Anju stay happy in Pakistan is a big question.

# Angelina Jolie is keen on starting a new life with her rumored move



Hollywood star Angelina Jolie is reportedly keen on starting a new life with her rumored move. After she was spotted apartment hunting with two of her children in New York City earlier this month, she is said to be ready to date again once she moves to Big Apple, reports aceshowbiz.com. "Angelina's not really into the L.A. scene with all the entertainment industry so-called insider shares. "She'll know it when she sees it." "Angelina plans to split her time between Los Angeles and NYC, "the source goes on revealing the 48-year-old's plans. "She really thrives on activity and movement, and she's excited to be in one of the greatest cities

in the world." While she has been staying in Los Angeles to keep her children close with their father Brad Pitt, the site notes that it's getting easier to move around as the kids get older. "Angelina didn't need Brad's permission to take Pax and Zahara to NYC because they're legal adults now, "the source explains. As for Shiloh, Knox and Vivienne, the source said: "It won't be long before they can make their own decisions about where they want to be." The plan reportedly is for them to stay in NYC during the summer and while on school breaks, while "Brad will still get his time with them when they're in California." The source added: "It's a lot of shuffling around, but the Jolie-Pitt clan is used to that." In the meantime, Brad has been enjoying a romantic summer with his girlfriend Ines de Ramon.

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College girls wear traditional Punjabi dress as they dance the 'Giddha' during the Hindu Teej Festival to mark the month of Sawan (Rainy) at a College in Amritsar on Friday. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

# Duo of Emiway x Swaalina released their latest single 'Kudi'

The duo of Emiway x Swaalina, captivating stage presence and groove laden music have released their latest single, 'Kudi'. The track fusion of pop, electronic, hip hop, R&B with a strong dose of desi swag, giving a stylistically modern touch on heartfelt romance.

The track features good production featuring a strong bass combined and a very open space letting all the instrumentation breathe while the vocals blend in perfectly creating an immersive atmosphere that complements the song's deeply evocative themes. The accompanying music video is also well crafted and extremely well produced, thus perfectly capturing the essence of the song's great emotional depth and the feeling of an ever-sought romance which has been found and now is asking the loved one never to leave.

Emiway Bantai has taken the music industry by storm with his unique style and powerful storytelling. With an impressive discography and a dedicated fanbase, he continues to push the boundaries of modern day



rap with his penchant for experimental and stylistic fusion, which even impresses audiences beyond his own fanbase. Reflecting on his latest romantic single, Emiway said "I wanted to create something that not only celebrates love but also delves into the complexities and nuances that come with it, "adding "Kudi is about embracing romance and the beauty of genuine connections."

The beautiful Swaalina who steals eyes in the video says "Being a part of this romantic hip hop video was an amazing experience. Working alongside the rapper and the talented team behind the scenes was a joy. I'm grateful for this opportunity to explore a different side of my craft and be a part of something so beautifully expressive."

# A complete KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE



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