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SC adjourns Manish Sisodia's interim bail plea to October 4

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday adjourned till October 4 hearing on an interim bail plea moved by former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia who is behind the bars in connection with corruption and money laundering cases related to the now-scrapped excise policy. At the outset, a bench comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and S.V.N. Bhatti said that it could take up the pleas for hearing at the end of the board today (Friday) or on some other day. "There is urgency and if this case can be accommodated on October 4," requested senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Sisodia, adding that the hearing will require a substantial amount of time. Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju appeared before the top court for the central probe



agencies. Sisodia has moved an interim bail to meet his ailing wife Seema on "humanitarian" ground and has furnished medical reports related to her deteriorating health condition. On August 4, the Supreme Court had declined to pass any direction on the interim bail and directed re-listing of the case for hearing

On July 3, a division bench of the Delhi High Court refused to grant bail to Manish Sisodia saying that he was not able to meet the twin conditions for grant of bail under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), and the triple test for grant of bail. In a statement issued by the ED on July 7, the probe agency said that it has attached assets worth Rs 52.24 crore belonging to Manish Sisodia, his wife and some other accused persons in connection with the Delhi liquor policy case. The ED had arrested Sisodia on March 9, after the CBI arrested him on February 26 this year. In April, Special Judge M.K. Nagpal had denied bail to the AAP leader holding that the evidence, prima facie, "speaks volumes" of his involvement in the commission of the offence.

India placed to become Third-Largest Economy by FY 2027-28 : IMF

NEW DELHI: Gita Gopinath, the first Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, said India will become the third-largest economy by 2027-28, based on current projections. During an interview with India Today Group, the economist said India's contribution to global GDP is around 15%. Referring to India as an "engine of global growth", Gopinath, however, added that there is a lot more work that needs to be done. "The more important thing is to maintain a high growth momentum for many more years in just the next four or five years. And that will require structural reforms. India is a large country, so in per capita terms, that will still be a small number even if we're the third largest economy. So India needs to keep pushing on that front to keep the growth momentum going much more," said the economist. She added that the expected growth rate of the country for the current fiscal year is over six per cent. According to the economist, the two factors which are driving the growth are public investment and resilient consumption spending. Gopinath stressed the need to attract private investment to increase the levels of per capita income and to get to continued



high levels of growth. In order to enable an environment for private investment, it is imperative that the investment in public infrastructure continues, she added. Commenting on India's G20 Presidency, she said it was a "huge deal" that a leaders declaration was adopted unanimously. "Nobody expected that there would be a leader's declaration. The fact that there was one is a huge deal. It tells you that even though countries can have different opinions about the way the world is headed, they can actually come together and have a declaration that I think is huge," she added. She also applauded the work done during India's presidency on crypto regulation, debt issues and multilateral development bank financing.

PoK will become part of India, soon: Gen VK Singh



Union Minister and former Army chief Gen VK Singh on Tuesday expressed his belief that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) will eventually merge with India "on its own." The declaration was made during a press conference in Dausa, Rajasthan, where he was addressing questions regarding the demands of the people in PoK who seek the opening of the border with India. Gen VK Singh also pointed out India's success as the host of the G20 Summit, highlighting the country's growing prominence on the global stage. When questioned about the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) choice for the chief minister's candidate in the upcoming state assembly elections, Gen VK Singh clarified that the BJP does not typically announce its chief ministerial candidate before such elections.

Anantnag encounter: Soldier goes missing as anti-terror operation enters Day 3

A soldier has gone missing as security forces continue their operation against terrorists in the Anantnag district of Jammu & Kashmir, reports said. The operation, which began on Wednesday evening, is a joint effort by the Army and Jammu and Kashmir police aimed at eliminating terrorists hiding in the forests surrounding Gadool village in Anantnag's Koker-nag area. The operation has already claimed the lives of Col Manpreet Singh and Maj Ashish Dhonchak from the 19 Rashtriya Rifles, along with DySP Humayun Bhat of J&K Police, lost their lives during a fierce gunfight on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. Major Dhonchak, a recipient of the Sena Medal in 2023, has been laid to rest in Haryana's Panipat, while DSP Bhat, survived by his wife and a three-month-old son, was already laid to rest in Budgam on Wednesday evening. The terrorists involved are suspected to be associated with The Resistance Front (TRF), a shadow group reportedly backed by Pakistan's Lashkar-e-Taiba. Security forces have deployed drones and helicopters to aid in tracking down and neutralizing the terrorists.

RAPIDX Trains will run above the Metro Blue Line at New Ashok Nagar

YOGESH KANT
New Delhi

The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor has achieved an important milestone in Delhi. The construction of the viaduct of the RRTS corridor crossing over the viaduct of the Blue Line of the Delhi Metro corridor has been completed successfully. This viaduct of the RRTS corridor crosses the Delhi Metro corridor at a height of about 20 meters at this point near the New Ashok Nagar Metro Station. Carrying out construction work at such a height over the existing and already operational metro track successfully is a big achievement from the engineering point of view. Moving from Sarai Kale Khan RRTS station towards New Ashok RRTS station, the elevated alignment of the RRTS corridor is crossing the viaduct of the Blue Line of Delhi Metro which provides services to a large number of people every day. To ensure the convenience and safety of commuters travelling from this station, construction of this part of the viaduct has been done during the night time only with the help of Tarini (Launching Gantry). In this process, segments of the



girder were lifted and joined together to construct the full span of the viaduct. NCRTC received unwavering support from DMRC during this whole construction. The construction was completed safely by NCRTC while ensuring uninterrupted services of the metro. Multi-modal integration is the guiding principle of the RRTS project being implemented by NCRTC. To facilitate this, RRTS stations have been strategically planned in such a way that they can be built as close as possible to the existing modes of public transport. Provisions have been made to provide seamless connectivity for a smooth and uninterrupted travel experience for commuters. NCRTC, while ensuring this, has also had to face many complexities related to construction and civil engineering but with innovative techniques and strategic planning, it was made possible. New Ashok Nagar Metro Station receives a large number of commuters from Noida. Once the RRTS corridor is operational, commuters will have the option to travel towards Meerut or other RRTS corridors from this station. To provide connectivity between the RRTS station and metro station at this point, NCRTC is constructing an about 90-meter-long and 6-meter-wide Foot-Over Bridge (FOB) which will be connected from the concourse level to the concourse level of both the stations.

Kejriwal lauds Punjab CM for taking path breaking initiatives to promote industrial development in state

SAYS MANN IS THE BEST CM PUNJAB EVER HAD

ASSERTS THAT PUNJAB GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED FOR FACILITATING THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN STATE

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday lauded the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann for taking strenuous efforts for promotion of industry in the state. Addressing the gathering during the Sarkar Sannatkaar milni here today, the Delhi Chief Minister said that Punjab is scoring new heights in every arena. He said that in form of Bhagwant Singh Mann Punjab has got the best Chief Minister for the state. Arvind Kejriwal said that Punjab is making rapid



progress in every arena which is unprecedented and unmatched. The Delhi Chief Minister said that From sacred land of Amritsar, we made history by opening government's first high-tech school of Eminence from here yesterday and will convert all government schools into ultra-modern with world class infrastructure institutions. He said that Today through such conclaves, we will solve all issues of industry. Arvind Kejriwal said that there were 882 steel foundry units in the past but now only 126 units are operating due to the apathy of previous state governments.

Commanding Officer, Major, Dy SP killed in South Kashmir encounter



Three Army personnel including a Colonel, a Major, and a Deputy Superintendent of Police were killed in an encounter at Kokernag in South Kashmir on Wednesday evening. This is the second such major attack in South Kashmir in the past two months. Earlier on August 4, three soldiers lost their lives in the Halan forest area of Kulgam district. The deceased were identified as Colonel Manpreet Singh, the Commanding Officer of 19 Rashtriya Rifles; Major Ashish Dhonack; and Deputy Superintendent Humayun Bhat. DySP Bhat, son of a retired Deputy Inspector General of Jammu and Kashmir Police, lost his life due to heavy blood loss, leaving behind a two-month-old daughter. The banned Resistance Front, believed to have links to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, has claimed responsibility for this attack. Officials suspect that the same group of terrorists was responsible for a similar attack on army personnel on August 4, in Kulgam. The operation against the terrorists began on Tuesday evening but was temporarily halted during the night. Early in the morning, the hunt for the terrorists resumed after receiving information that they were spotted at a hideout. Colonel Singh, leading his team, confronted the terrorists but was critically injured. Major Dhonack and Deputy Superintendent Bhat were also struck by bullets, sustaining critical injuries. The attack comes shortly after another incident in which an Army personnel and a military dog were killed in a gunfight in the Jammu region, highlighting the ongoing security challenges in the region.

Three hurt as private aircraft with 8 onboard skids, crash lands at Mumbai airport



MANPREET SINGH
Mumbai

At least three persons were injured after a private business aircraft with six passengers and two crew flying from Vizag to Mumbai skidded off the runway and crashed-landed at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, officials said here on Thursday. VT-DBL, a non-scheduled charter Learjet business aircraft, skidded off the runway and crashed while landing. According to preliminary information, the mishap is attributed to heavy rains and low visibility at the time of the incident, around 5.30 p.m. Flight operations have been suspended and the three injured persons have been hospitalised, while details of the other passengers and crew are awaited.

Heroes of Anantnag cremated with military honours

FW DESK
Chandigarh

Amid chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Vande Matram', mortal remains of third-generation soldier Col Manpreet Singh and his colleague Major Aashish Dhonchak, who made the supreme sacrifice while protecting the nation from the terrorists in Anantnag, were cremated with full military honours at their hometowns in Punjab and Haryana, respectively. As India saluted the brave hearts, visuals from Col Manpreet Singh's village Mullanpur Garibass in Mohali in Punjab and Major Dhonachal in Haryana's Panipat touched everyone's heart. With folded hands and tearful eyes, Col Manpreet Singh's wife, Jagmeet Kaur, bid him a



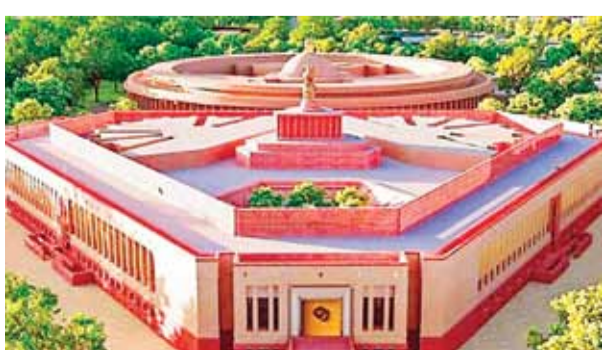
final goodbye. His six-year-old son, Kabir Singh, dressed in army fatigue saluted his father, who was a chartered accountant by profession and rose by ranks

with his hard work. Col Manpreet Singh had a rare distinction to become an officer in father's battalion. His family, comprising mother, wife Jagmeet Grewal and two children -- a daughter and a son, resides near New Chandigarh in Mohali district. His mother Manjit Kaur said since her son joined the Army she had been regularly watching news channels to know about the welfare of the army men posted in Jammu and Kashmir. "There was always a fear in my mind about some mishap happening with my son and it happened," the mother said.

Govt released Agenda, 4 bills in 'tentative list' for Parliament's Special Session

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

There were big speculations about the government proposing a "One Nation, One Election" bill in the ensuing Special Session, there was no mention of it in the tentative list shared by the Central Government. There was also another speculation story taking round about the government bringing a resolution to "rename India as Bharat". The Government released a 'tentative list' of the agenda for Parliament's special session from September 18 to 22. The tentative agenda included 2 bills



which were passed in the Rajya Sabha on August 3 itself. The said Bills are, "The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023" and "The Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023" - to be taken up in the Lok Sabha. On the other hand, Rajya Sabha is set to discuss "The Post Office Bill, 2023" and "The

Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023". These 2 bills were introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 10. Special Sessions were called 7th time after Independence to till August, 2023 and this time it will be 8th time Special Session is going to be held. In 1977, Special Session of the Rajya Sabha was held in February for 2 days to extend President Rules in Tamil Nadu and Nagaland. In 1991, 2 days Special Session was held in June for the approval of the President's rule in Haryana.

Govt calls all-party meeting on Sept 17, only a day before Parliament's special session

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

The central government has called an All Party Meeting on September 17, Special Session of the Parliament will start from the next day itself. The Modi government called for an all-party meeting before the first session of the new parliament building. According to the sources, the topics of the special session can be discussed in this all-party meeting. The Center has called a Special Session of Parliament from September 18 to September 22. But the Modi government is still tight lipped about what issues will be discussed in that special session. Naturally, there is no end to the speculation surrounding that session. It is rumored that the Uniform Civil Code Bill will be introduced in that session. Sometimes it is heard that the name change of the country may be discussed in that special session. Some sources saying that Women Reservation Bill can be tabled. The opposition has repeatedly protested the calling of this special session. After the decision to convene the session became public, Congress MP Sonia Gandhi wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the agenda. She asked that the public issues like economy should be



discussed keeping in mind price rise for discussion in the special session. She has also written that Government should talk about minimum support price (MSP) and farmers' problems, discuss the demand for a joint parliamentary committee on the Adani case, highlight the situation in Manipur, discuss the climate of communal unrest in states like Haryana, state the government's position on Chinese aggression, speed up the nation. Surveys should be discussed, Centre-State relations should be highlighted and flood situation of different states should be discussed. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi tweeted on Wednesday that an all-party meeting has been called on September 17, after the tweet came from Trinamool's Derek O'Brien and Congress's Jairam Ramesh regarding the Agenda of the said meeting. However, no information about the content of the meeting was disclosed.

Nuh violence case: Congress MLA Mamman Khan arrested from Rajasthan

GURUGRAM: A special team of the Haryana Police has arrested Congress MLA Mamman Khan from Jaipur on charges of instigating people of a particular community during the violence that was witnessed in the Brajmandal Yatra in Nuh on July 31. The MLA will be produced in the Nuh district court on Friday.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the violence case had earlier issued a notice on August 25 to Mamman, the MLA from Firozpur Jhirka Assembly constituency of Nuh district, on charges of instigating people for violence, and had asked him to join the investigation on August 31. In response to the notice,



the MLA sent a medical note that he was suffering from a fever. After that, a second notice was given by the police on September 5 and then again on September 10, but he did not come. Mamman filed a petition

in the Punjab and Haryana High Court defending himself from being arrested by the police, arguing that the case should be investigated by an SIT monitored by higher officials. The high court issued a

notice to the state government and the concerned authorities advised Mamman to file a petition in the lower court and gave him the next date scheduled on October 19. It was said on behalf of the MLA that he was not in the area on the day of the incident, while the police had collected complete evidence against him.

On July 31, violence took place during the Brijmandal Yatra in the Nuh district, which later spread to other areas in Gurugram, Palwal, Rewari, Sonapat and Faridabad. Six people died in the violence, including two home guards and a cleric. Apart from this, more than 80 people were injured.

Nearly 56,000 people in 10 UP districts impacted by floods



LUCKNOW: Following incessant rains in the past 36 hours in various parts of Uttar Pradesh, around 56,000 residents have been impacted by floods.

Aditi Umrao, project director at Relief Commissioner's Office, however, said that the necessity for emergency rescue operations has not yet arisen. A total of 19 tehsils span-

ning 10 districts, encompassing around 173 villages, are grappling with floods, affecting 55,982 people after just one full day of rain across the state.

The relief commissioner's office affirmed that the department is fully prepared with all relief measures and stands ready for deployment should the need arise.

"The situation has not

reached a point where we had to relocate people due to flood-induced displacement. However, we have identified locations where we can offer shelter, and these shelter facilities are fully operational. We have not had to utilise them as yet," said Umrao.

The state has established a total of 23 flood shelters, Umrao added. The State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) teams have been deployed to specific areas and are on high alert in case an emergency or rescue operation becomes necessary. Umrao further said that meal packets have been distributed to families affected by the floods, and support has been extended to those who have lost family members due to the torrential rains.

Additionally, medical camps have been established, vaccinations for stray animals are ongoing, and relief activities are actively underway.

Delhi Police arrest sharp-shooter in murder case Kabaddi player Sandeep Nangal Ambian



NEW DELHI: The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested one Harry, a key suspect connected to the murder case of international-level kabaddi player Sandeep Nangal Ambian, a source said. Ambian was an international kabaddi player from Punjab. Harry, a sharp-shooter, allegedly played a significant role in the murder. Harry had been on the run since March 14, 2022, when he allegedly killed Ambian. "Harry has a close association with gangster Kaushal," the source said.

Murder or suicide? death mystery of armyman unsolved



SATISH HANDA Ambala

In spite of joint efforts by the teams of Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF), Parao police station Ambala Cantt, CIA Staff of Ambala police, Army Police and Forensic experts the death mystery of an army Havaldar identified as Pavan Shankar originally hailing from village Kalai in Kanpur district (U.P.) presently working with the army's 40 SD Unit at Ambala Cantt could not be solved in past four-five days. Body of Pavan was recovered in pieces scattered on the side of a railway track a few kilometers from Ambala Cantt railway station. The investigation teams are yet not sure if Pavan was killed or committed suicide by jumping before a running train.

Fake Desi Ghee manufacturing factory raided, owner arrested



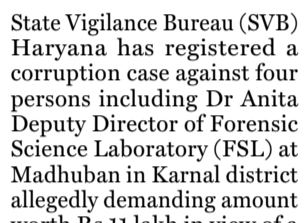
SATISH HANDA

Team of food security department Haryana accompanied by CIA Staff of Jind police raided a Desi Ghee manufacturing factory running in a residential building at village Deshkhedha in Jind district and seized 456 liter fake ghee being packed in reputed brands of the country including Amul, Patanjali, Milk Food, Madhusudan and Vita. The owner of the factory Amit was arrested by the police and a case was registered against him.

The raiding team seized all containers, packing material in the name of all brands, three drums of fake ghee manufactured with Vanaspati and refined oil, three packing machines, LPG cylinder, 10 rubber stamps and few chemicals used in preparing ghee. Dr Joginder Singh Food Security Officer said that four samples of each brand of ghee were collected for sending to the forensic laboratory Karnal for test report.

Four including FSL Deputy Director booked in corruption case in Haryana

SATISH HANDA Karnal



State Vigilance Bureau (SVB) Haryana has registered a corruption case against four persons including Dr Anita Deputy Director of Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) at Madhuban in Karnal district allegedly demanding amount worth Rs 11 lakh in view of a tender for amount Rs 6 lakh for the purchase of one crore DNA PCR kits. Among others against whom case has been registered include Neeraj Gaur director of a private firm Mygen Life Solution Company Delhi and Brij Singh Operation Manager and Chander Bhan Choudhary Operation Sales Manager of Gurugram bases firm Thermofisher on the complaint of FSL Deputy Director Dr Rajiv Kwatra who submitted Watts up recording of all conversations as regard demand for amount Rs 20 lakh which was settled at Rs 11 lakh in this deal to State Vigilance Bureau investigating the case, which was however denied by the officers of the firms.

Information reveals that the case was investigated twice by Special Investigation Teams (SIT) on the orders of Home Minister Anil Vij led by a senior IPS officer in the rank of IGP and by an Additional

Director General Police. The case was moved to Punjab and Haryana High Court for the hearing which directed Chief Secretary Haryana government and Director General Police Haryana for immediate action against all those involved in illegal practices. According to information in January 2021 the tender enquiry was floated by Haryana Medical Services Corporation Limited for purchase of one crore DNA PCR kits and a committee was constituted for the purchase of material, when an officer of the firm had contacted Dr Rajiv Kwatra Assistant Director on 29th October, 2021 and the matter appeared in the newspaper when State Health & Home Minister Anil Vij ordered the SIT to investigate the case, which handed over the report to the State Vigilance Bureau along with the Watts up recording messages between FSL officials and the firms.

Congress's Bhupinder Hooda & Kumari Shelja likely in next Chief Minister race of Haryana

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

Senior Congress leader, Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda recently during a media gathering 'Jan Milan Programme' declared himself a strong contender for the Chief Minister of the state in case Congress wins majority in 2024 Vidhan Sabha polls which was organised by the former Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Sharma in the CM's constituency. Hooda's statement came at a time when factionalism was emerging during the district-level meetings before the co-ordinators. Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Surjewala and former Union minister Kumari Selja had already met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and raised the issue of sidelining the party workers. The Congress from time to time is continuously conducting several public programmes like 'Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh', 'Hath Se Hath Jodo' campaign

and 'Jan Milan programme' to attract Vote Bank in the state. While talking to media persons, Hooda said that through such programmes, we get feedback from the people, their problems, their desires and the suggestions.

Denying reports of any factionalism in the Haryana Congress, Hooda said there was no rift and groups in the party. All party leaders and workers are working to strengthen the party. He said anyone can meet party president Kharge, on being asked about Selja and Surjewala met him recently. The state president Uday Bhan was also present at the occasion. Hooda said the 'Jan Milan' programmes were being organised in all districts to reach out to the people and know about their issues. Hooda, as usual, strongly criticised the ruling BJP-JJP government in the state and blamed the alliance for failing on all fronts and bringing the state to a standstill.

Hooda accused the present



government as a non-performing government ever since came to power, debt has increased five times, inflation four times, unemployment three times and crime has increased two times in the state, he said, due to unemployment the youth of Haryana are leaving the country and migrating to foreign countries which is a very serious problem. The priority of the Congress government will be to stop this migration by providing employment opportunities to the youth in their own state. Hooda demanded the resignation of former sports minister Sandeep Singh and alleged that in the chargesheet filed by the police, serious allegations have come to the fore, so he should resign on moral grounds.

Haryana Congress chief Uday

Bhan present at the occasion said paddy had started arriving in the markets but till now the government has not started purchasing it, due to this the farmers were not able to get MSP. He said the district-level organisational structures would be formed soon. Meanwhile, former Union Minister and a former Rajya Sabha member Selja while talking to media persons at her Ambala Cantt residence strongly condemned Hooda's statement claiming that he was a right choice for the Chief Minister if Congress comes to power and said that such decisions are taken by Congress high command. Scenario reveals that several other senior Congress leaders in Haryana state like Randeep Surjewala, Kiran Choudhary and even Selja seem to be active in the race to become Chief Minister in Haryana state (in case Congress wins majority in 2024 polls) since Selja too while talking to media persons at an occasion expressed desire to contest Vidhan Sabha polls this time.

MP Vikram Sahney to take up issue of MEP on basmati rice

FW DESK Amritsar/New Delhi

Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha Vikramjit Singh Sahney will lead a delegation of Members of Parliament from Punjab to meet Union Minister for consumer affairs, food and public distribution Piyush Goyal for his intervention into rationalizing Minimum Export Price (MEP) on rice which has been fixed to USD 1200, hence adversely impacting the exports from India.

Today, Sahney, along with the office bearers of the Basmati exporters association took up the matter with the CM Delhi Arvind Kejriwal and CM Punjab Bhagwant Singh Mann in an



Industrial interaction meeting "Sarkar Sanatkar Milni" in Amritsar, issuing him an appeal to make efforts to resolve the issue. The Chief Minister Punjab authorized Sahney to take a delegation and meet Minister Goyal. The Chief Minister Punjab on his part, will also write a DO letter to Union Minister Sh. Piyush Goyal for relaxation in the rice export norms.

According to Sahney he had

received a request from Punjab Rice Millers and Exporters association which is the leading association for Basmati Rice trade in India, regarding the central government's decision of Minimum Export Price.

Sahney in a written communication to Union Minister Piyush Goyal, mentioned that the total Production of Basmati rice in India is 6.00 million tonnes and total production of non-Basmati rice in India is 135.54 million tonnes for the year 2022-23. On one hand there is no restriction on export of non-basmati parboiled which means a variety of 300 USD per tonne is allowed to be exported with a duty of 20%.

Jammu Kashmir records 31% reduction in fire incidents this year



FW DESK

Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a 31% reduction in fire incidents this year, according to Alok Kumar, the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) of Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES). From August 2022 to July 2023, the region saw a significant decline in fire-related emergencies, with only 4,000 incidents reported compared to the previous year's 59,000. The reduction can be attributed to the efforts of F&ES, which organized 28,000 fire awareness events across multiple locations in Jammu and Kashmir. As part of these initiatives, over three lakh individuals were trained in fire safety and prevention measures.

Youth alleged died due to torture in drug de-addiction centre at Ambala

SATISH HANDA

Ambala police booked four persons of a drug de-addiction centre Kalyan Foundation at village Mokha Majra near Ambala City when a youth Gaurav (32) resident of Baldev Nagar Ambala City running a mobile shop, in the habit of drugs addiction was admitted by his family on 5th September died at the Civil Hospital Ambala City on Saturday night under mysterious circumstances. The case was registered on the complaint of the deceased's father Raj Kumar running a utensils sale shop at Baldev Nagar Ambala City, who alleged his son was tortured too much during treatment in the drug de-addiction centre for which he had paid an amount Rs 10000 towards fee for a month.

The complainant told police that he got a telephone call from the drugs de-addiction centre at around 11,50 PM



on 9th September 2023 that Gaurav was suffering from High Blood Pressure, became unconscious and taken to the Civil Hospital Ambala City when he along with his wife Saroj and daughter-in-law Ritika reached Civil Hospital immediately and found that his son Gaurav was lying unconscious on a bed in the General Ward alone and was told by staff on duty that the person brought him to the

Fake call centre racket posing as helpline for insurance company on google busted with 7 arrests



SATISH HANDA Jind

Cyber cell of Haryana police busted a racket involved as a helpline for insurance company on the google enabling to make early remittance of insurance claims and cheated large numbers of people by running fake call centre. The fake call centre was being operated from Jind in Haryana state. Cyber cell of police started an investigation and busted the gang with seven arrests. Sandeep Dhankhad DSP Jind addressing media persons said that police has been successful in arresting seven members of the racket on the complaint of a woman Seema a resident of village Harigarh in Jind district lodged by her on 18th August 2023 after she was cheated amount worth Rs 30 lakh who told that she received a phone call from a person on 21st July 2023 introducing himself as an officer of IRDAI for the refund of amount of claim of her insurance policy and advised that she would have to deposit some amount in the bank to get the amount as such she was cheated for amount worth Rs 30 lakh.

DSP Dhankhad said that cyber crime cell reached up to the fake call center and arrested seven persons including five females all identified as Lakshay resident of Ghaziabad, Aman Kumar resident of Gautam Budh Nagar, Deepa, Dolly both residents of Ghaziabad, Vanshika, Nisha both residents of Noida and Fiza resident of East Delhi. During the raid, at the fake call centre police recovered 23 mobile phones, one laptop and 30 sim cards.

Haryana has become No.1 in unemployment, increasing prices and crimes in the country: Hooda

SATISH HANDA Ambala

Former Haryana Chief Minister and leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha Bhupinder Singh Hooda while addressing media persons here at the residence of the former MLA Jasbir Mallour said that earlier in 2014 Haryana state was number 1 in per capita income, employment and law and order, but today it has become number 1 in unemployment, increasing prices and crimes in the country. He said, BJP-JJP Haryana government deliberately delaying paddy procurement as it wants to deprive the farmers of minimum support price (MSP). He said paddy has started arriving in the market and farmers have



been forced to sell the crop at low rates and the government has become a mute spectator thus watching the losses being incurred by the farmers since paddy is being sold below the MSP, so is in case of bajra.

Expressing deep concern, Hooda said that the gov-

ernment has also left flood-affected farmers in the state to fend for themselves, even after so many days have passed the farmers have not been compensated so far, instead of giving compensation, the government has kept the farmers are being harassed in the

web of portals. Hooda said, at some places the public is being harassed in the name of compensation portal, somewhere in the name of 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora', somewhere in the name of property ID and somewhere in the name of family identity card. Hooda said, in case Congress comes to power in Haryana state after victory in Lok Sabha and 2024 Vidhan Sabha polls will extend full support to the people in every sector including farmers, labourers, traders, employees and common people residing in urban as well as rural areas in the state.

Hooda said that no doubt digital system is good but it should be favorable for the people and it is assured that when Congress would come to

power in 2024 all unfavorable schemes will be withdrawn immediately which include 'Parivar Pehchan Patra', 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora'. Hooda said, Congress after coming to power will provide 100 yards plots to the families below poverty line, Rs 6000 monthly old age pension, availability of LPG cylinder at the price less than Rs 500 and improve infrastructure of Haryana Gurudwara Prabandhak Committ which was formed for the development of gurudwaras in the state. In reply to a question as regard shouting slogans against each other by the workers of both groups of Congress in the presence of Congress state poll convener Hooda said that such symbols indicate that the party is becoming strong.

Soldier, terrorist die in encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri

FW DESK

An unidentified militant and a soldier lost their lives, while two soldiers and a policeman sustained injuries during an encounter that took place on Tuesday in Narla village of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir, according to officials.

Following intelligence reports indicating suspicious militant activity in the area, the security forces launched a joint operation by the Army and police under the Teryath police post jurisdiction.

Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh confirmed the loss of one soldier and the death of an unidentified militant during the operation.

Despite the identification of the slain militant, retrieving



the body remained a challenging task due to the continued exchange of gunfire. The security forces suspect that one to two additional militants may be hiding in the nearby forested area.

The cordon and search operation around the area has been intensified with deployment of additional lighting to counteract the darkness of nightfall.

G-20 bridged global divides successfully

The recent Leaders' Summit under India's G-20 presidency concluded with an unprecedented victory. Against the odds, the New Delhi Declaration was unanimously adopted, which came as a surprise to many. The pessimism stemmed from the well-known division between the G-7-EU alliance and the Russia-China duo regarding the Ukraine conflict. The UN Security Council has been a testament to this deadlock, with both factions consistently wielding their veto powers. The 2022 Indonesian G-20 negotiators managed a joint statement that criticised Russia. However, this consensus was fleeting. This year saw Russia and China staunchly oppose any repetition. Given these dynamics, India's tactful approach was to build a consensus on other topics before addressing the Ukraine issue. The pivotal moment came when the G-7 softened its stance, leading to a more balanced Declaration. India's strategy to tread the "middle path" and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal diplomacy with G-20 leaders were instrumental. Substantive outcomes of the Declaration include cryptocurrency regulation insights and an almost \$10 trillion allocation for climate change initiatives. Yet, setting clear deadlines for phasing out fossil fuels remains a challenge. Other notable initiatives were the African Union's inclusion, rectifying an imbalance in the G-20. The inception of the Global Biofuel Alliance marks a stride towards alternative energy solutions. The proposed India-Middle East-Europe Corridor holds immense potential, although the intricacies of its execution remain under wraps. In an unconventional move, India expanded the G-20 format, organising 200 meetings across over 60 cities, attracting a vast influx of global officials. This break from tradition, though cost-intensive, has redefined the G-20's image, transforming it from a mundane summit to a vibrant global event. In essence, India's G-20 presidency has showcased the nation's ability to mediate in a polarised world. Mr Modi's planned virtual "review" in November aims to uphold the integrity of decisions made, ensuring they don't merely remain on paper. Truly, this has been India's defining G-20 moment.

LETTERBOX

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Great companies start because the founders want to **CHANGE THE WORLD** not make a fast buck

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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



RAMYA NATARAJAN HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED TO EXAMINE STRATEGIES WITHIN THE LARGER ECOSYSTEM TO PREVENT NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

Targeting biofuel sustainability

Until a few years ago, working on biofuels called for constant justification in the face of electric vehicles (EVs) taking over the world. Today, while there is no doubt that EV adoption has amplified over the years, there is growing awareness of the fact that no decarbonisation strategy is trade-off-free. For instance, for a transition to EVs, existing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and the supporting infrastructure need to be replaced entirely, which is capital intensive. Further, the required batteries and critical minerals used in them need to be imported, adding to environmental concerns on how these minerals are mined, among other issues. Biofuels, on the other hand, can be used in existing ICE engines and infrastructure with little to no modifications (depending on the blending rates) and offer import independence.

However, 'biofuel' is a blanket term that includes both sustainable and unsustainable fuels, and an understanding of their difference will be essential to drive effective decarbonisation action.

The challenges in India

In India, biofuel is synonymous with first-generation (1G) ethanol, which is primarily sourced from food crops. The policy target in India of achieving 20% ethanol blending with petrol (E20) by 2025-26 is expected to be met almost entirely by 1G ethanol made from sugar cane and foodgrains. Second-generation (2G) ethanol, which is made from crop wastes and residues, is unlikely to contribute much to achieving this target due to several challenges related to feedstock supply chain and scaling up.

The groundwater depletion implications of growing sugar cane are well known, but the food security implications of groundwater depletion and of using foodgrains for ethanol



production are harder to imagine because India is currently a surplus food producer. But there are several reasons why diverting the surplus produce towards energy or specifically growing a crop for energy may not be a sustainable strategy. First, India's crop yields have already stagnated, and global warming is expected to reduce yields, which means that the same area under cultivation (arable land) will produce less with time but will need to suffice for a growing population. So, our strategy to meet blending targets cannot depend on surplus crop production.

Second, a recent study led by the University of Michigan projected that the rates of groundwater depletion could triple during 2040-81 compared with the current rate. This is again attributable to temperature rise and the resultant increase in crop water requirements. With such limited resources, be it groundwater or arable land, food production should be prioritised over fuel.

Third, the agriculture sector is one of the hardest-to-abate in terms of direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. So, increasing GHG emissions from this sector for motor

fuel production in order to decrease GHG emissions from the transport sector is an unnecessary balancing loop that would achieve little net benefit.

In India, the ethanol blending policy has been a good strategy to deal with the surplus sugar production. Another good strategy to deal with the surplus sugar production would be to reduce surplus sugar cane cultivation. Increasing farmer income is often waved as a white flag in response to this argument, but sugar cane being a remunerative crop has more to do with government intervention than anything else. This means that any unassuming crop could be made as remunerative as sugar cane if so desired.

'Sustainable' biofuels are produced from crop residues and other wastes, with low water and GHG footprint. The Global Biofuels Alliance that was formed at the G-20 Summit in New Delhi last week is expected to strengthen the development of sustainable biofuels, in addition to promoting ethanol uptake. It is, therefore, a historic moment for India, demonstrating its commitment to climate action with global cooperation.

Sustainable biomass use

The Energy Transitions Commission, in its report on 'Bioresources within a Net-Zero Emissions Economy', recommended that biomass should be prioritised for use in sectors where there are limited low-carbon alternatives. Long-haul aviation and road freight segments, wherein complete electrification might take longer to achieve, could make the cut, whereas petrol vehicles (for which ethanol blending is currently being targeted) would probably not.

According to the International Energy Agency, to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 globally, sustainable biofuel production needs to triple by 2030 to fuel modes that have few other mitigation options. Although 1G ethanol is unlikely to fit the bill, 2G ethanol could be counted as a sustainable fuel, especially if the production is decentralised, i.e., crop residues do not have to be transported large distances to a central manufacturing plant. But this might affect achieving economies of scale for the 2G plant. Balancing economies of scale with the energy needs (and costs) of biomass collection and transport across large distances is a major challenge. The Global Biofuels Alliance could help drive innovation and technology development in establishing an efficient biomass supply chain and smaller-scale decentralised biofuel production units.

Achieving true sustainability is complex, especially with respect to biofuels. Therefore, any strategy should be carefully examined in the context of the larger ecosystem to avoid unintended negative consequences.

Ramya Natarajan works in the area of climate, environment and sustainability at the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSSTEP), a research-based think tank. Views are personal.



AMIT KUMAR EXPLAINS HOW BEIJING'S TECH PROWESS SETS A NEW BENCHMARK FOR THE INDUSTRY

'Made in China' phone forges new paths in success stories

Huawei, the Chinese smartphone giant, has created ripples within the strategic and business community with its newly unveiled Mate 60 Pro which houses the Kirin 9000 processor. The chipset reportedly used Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp (SMIC)'s second-generation 7nm fabrication technique, thereby demonstrating China's capability to manufacture a 7nm chip.

Consequently, observers have claimed that the capability marks a major breakthrough in Beijing's drive to attain self-sufficiency in manufacturing advanced chips. The fact that China succeeded in achieving this feat despite American sanctions on key semiconductor technologies has led many to even question the efficacy of the sanctions. However, while China's technology demonstration deserves appreciation, the capability itself might not mean much as several challenges besiege its self-sufficiency drive.

To begin with, the fabrication technique used by Huawei-SMIC to manufacture the Kirin 9000 processor is highly inefficient. The wafer yield (a metric of efficiency) of the deployed technology is way less than 50%. In contrast, Taiwan's Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited (TSMC)'s 7nm fabrication technique has a wafer yield in excess of 90%. This makes the SMIC's process extremely expensive — up to 10 times the costs incurred by other players in the market, and therefore highly uncompetitive.

Second, the 7nm fabrication technique represents the zenith of China's capabilities with the available Deep Ultraviolet (DUV) lithography tools. The United States's sanctions that cut off Beijing's access to the most advanced lithography tool in the market — the Extreme Ultraviolet (EUVs) — meant



that China had to rely on DUVs to fabricate the Kirin 9000 chipset. While DUVs can technically be used to make 7nm chips, the process is extremely messy and inefficient, thus lowering its yield. For instance, the SMIC technique used multiple rounds of masking or layering on the wafer to manufacture a 7nm chipset, leading to multiple exposures. On the other hand, the TSMC with the EUVs can perform the same task of high complexity with a single exposure.

Third, it is doubtful that Huawei-SMIC could produce the current chipsets on a large scale. The fact that the U.S. and its allies have restricted China's access to even DUVs lately means that large-scale production of 7nm chips would be a challenge for Chinese companies.

Thus, low yield rates, inefficient and costly procedures along with difficulty in achieving the scale are likely hurdles in Huawei's attempt to commercialise its new technology product. This is significant because the failure to achieve commercialisation will impact incremental innovation as they reinforce each other. And products that fail to innovate alongside their competition eventually fade away.

A comparison

Besides, there are several other challenges that plague China's chip ecosystem compared to the U.S.-led ecosystem. The fact that America's encompasses the most advanced economies of the world confers upon it several advantages that China's isolated ecosystem will find nearly impossible to compete with.

First, the extensive and distributed nature of the U.S.-led tech ecosystem allows individual countries to achieve functional specialisation according to their respective comparative advantages. The existing supply chain — where the U.S. specialises in EDA tools and designing, the Netherlands in producing lithography tools, Japan in manufacturing specialised materials, and Taiwan and South Korea in fabrication — corroborates the claim.

China, on the other hand, not only has the mandate to become self-sufficient in each segment of the value chain but has to also achieve sophistication in each of these to remain competitive. Achieving specialisation in any one segment of the chip value chain itself is highly capital intensive; to achieve so in each of them is impossible. It is also important to remember that advanced chips

are only one of the many core technologies that China aims to become self-sufficient in. Given that the Chinese ecosystem is not as elaborate as the U.S.'s and is rather isolated, there are limits to Beijing's potential with its finite resources.

As for the U.S.-led ecosystem, the costs can be distributed among the participating countries, most of which have much higher per-capita income than China. Therefore, to compete with a larger pool of resources, China will need to strike a higher success rate on every dime it spends on research, which is difficult to achieve given that breakthroughs in basic research are capital intensive and may not yield success as often. If that alone is not enough to burden the scientific community, the pressure to perform and deliver in China's authoritarian system further compounds the problem. To sum it up, China's appetite to absorb failures is extremely limited when compared to the U.S. and its allies. This makes for quite an un conducive environment for innovation given that it thrives best in a free environment. Finally, the U.S.-led tech ecosystem allows it to source talent from diverse regions, owing to its open immigration policy and distributed network. China, on the contrary, will have to solely rely on its national or overseas talent pool as the movement of human capital to China becomes more difficult due to deepening rivalry in the high-tech sectors.

Going forward, China's tech ecosystem faces a daunting challenge to succeed in everything all by itself. It may score a victory in odd areas, but replicating the feat in every single domain is impractical.

Amit Kumar is Research Analyst, Indo-Pacific Studies Programme, the Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru. Views are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

Beyond the hill: An author's journey for a greener India

Every once in a while, a memoir surfaces that not only gives an insight into the author's life but also drives a poignant narrative about the world around him. "A Walk Up The Hill: Living with People and Nature" by Madhav Gadgil is one such book. It isn't just an autobiography of an esteemed ecologist and policymaker; it is a vivid tapestry woven with personal experiences, professional insights, and passionate advocacies for the environment.

From the outset, Gadgil's childhood curiosity is evident. Be it his correspondence with the famed ornithologist Salim Ali or his eagerness to explore the communities of Kodagu in Karnataka at such a young age, the reader is given a glimpse into the formation of a man who would later become a significant force in Indian ecology. His journey from a curious child to an authoritative figure in ecology is beautifully chronicled and is a testament to dreams realized.

This memoir serves as a treasure trove, delineating India's ecological combat — the victories and the losses. Gadgil's candid discourse on pressing topics such as the caste system, corruption, and community forestry offers a no-holds-barred perspective on the intricacies of India's ecological landscape. His critiques, especially of the Forest Department's policies, resonate with urgency, echoing the unsung voices of local communities and the silent pleas of dwindling forests.

One of the book's strengths lies in Gadgil's reflective prose. Through lucid storytelling, he embarks on an exposition of India's vast biodiversity and multifaceted ecological zones. His first-hand experiences, like the one aboard a Japanese trawler, showcase his anthropological and ecological prowess. His emphasis on the 'precautionary principle' offers a much-needed approach to conservation and sustainable growth.

Through lucid storytelling, he embarks on an exposition of India's vast biodiversity and multifaceted ecological zones

is synonymous with groundbreaking ecological studies. His formidable education, from being one of the first Indian ecologists trained at Harvard to being influenced by seminal works like Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring", has solidified his legacy in the field. His pioneering efforts, including the establishment of the Centre for Ecological Sciences in Bengaluru and contributions like the People's Biodiversity Register, have paved the way for a more environmentally conscious India.

The author's deep connection to the Western Ghats paints a vivid



A Walk Up The Hill: Living with People and Nature By Madhav Gadgil Penguin Allen Lane 412 pages; Rs 999

picture every monsoon. It's impossible to detach his name from the policy document stemming from his in-depth research on this ecologically delicate region. Furthermore, Gadgil's embrace of technology and an unyielding commitment to research have provided him with a unique lens to discern environmental patterns. His predictions about the changing climate and its ramifications on India's west coast are both insightful and alarming.

Yet, what is perhaps most poignant is the underlying message of the book: a lesson and a dire warning. At a juncture where environmental norms are being sidestepped with alarming rapidity, Gadgil's life and work present a clarion call to action. It's a wake-up call to India and the world, highlighting the hefty price of ignorance.

"A Walk Up The Hill" transcends its status as a mere memoir; it emerges as a beacon of hope and a masterclass in environmental stewardship. Gadgil's personal anecdotes seamlessly intertwine with the broader narrative of India's ecological evolution. The memoir paints a vivid picture of a nation blessed with rich biodiversity, but simultaneously, it highlights the constant tug-of-war between rapid industrialisation and the necessity of conservation.

Madhav Gadgil's encounters with renowned figures such as Salim Ali and Irawati Karve not only provide readers with an intimate view into the world of environmental studies but also underscore the collaborative nature of the field. These interactions serve as a testament to the power of shared knowledge and the merging of diverse experiences to address the daunting ecological challenges faced by India. Furthermore, his unwavering commitment to community-driven solutions, evidenced by his stance on community forestry and emphasis on locally-sourced biodiversity information, underscores the need for inclusive and participatory environmental strategies.

22 Countries Exploring Bilateral Trade in Indian Rupees: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

NEW DELHI: India's finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said that around 22 countries are negotiating and exploring bilateral trade with India in rupees.

In an interview with NDTV, Sitharaman said, "About 22 countries are negotiating and approaching us to see if bilateral trade can be held (in rupees). It is also because many of those countries are running short of dollar. They are seeing the Indian rupee as a stable currency."

Speaking on India's Digital Payments Infrastructure (DPI), the finance minister said, "There's a lot of interest in DPI. The way India has used digital infrastructure has earned praise from global leaders, including the World



Bank." On G20, Sitharaman said, "This time India managed to have a consensus on all issues and I am very satisfied with the Delhi Declaration. The G20, essentially a financial forum, has to take collective action whether it is crypto, global debt, etc."

"I will completely credit the success of the G20 Summit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for having a complete picture, much before we started, about India's stature, India's image. The vision of the PM played out and it benefitted all," she said.

RBI develops public tech platform for frictionless credit to MSMEs

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched the "Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit" which is a MSME-credit-focused platform.

It aims to revolutionize the credit access to MSMEs in the country, reported the news agency Asian News International (ANI).

The platform will streamline and enhance credit delivery by financial institutions and contribute to greater financial inclusion, said the report.

The program, developed under the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub, will provide an end-to-end digital solution designed for easy integration by all banks, offering an open architecture with accessible APIs and standardized protocols, enabling a seamless "Plug and Play" approach.

According to the release, the platform will simplify the process of financing and re-



duce friction for both lenders and borrowers by consolidating all the necessary information on a single platform.

Hence, the platform will integrate all the central and state governments, Account Aggregators (AA), banks,

credit information providers, and digital identity authorities together. T. Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor of RBI unveiled the program who further highlighted its potential to revolutionize credit access for MSMEs.

No Tax Hike on Diesel Engines: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari clarified on Thursday that India will not increase tax on diesel engines, reported CNBC TV-18.

He said the central government is encouraging to shift towards green fuels.

These speculations were raised when earlier this week the Union Minister said that the government will have no option but to raise tax on diesel vehicles if the manufacturers do not limit their production.

He was speaking at 63rd Annual SIAM convention in New Delhi.

This statement came across as warning to Indian carmakers.

However in an interview



with CNBC TV-18, he said, "I'm not against diesel or diesel cars. I'm not advocating for a tax increase on diesel vehicles. But we should move towards green fuels. The vision and mission for industry should be to move towards biofuels."

Tata Power Solar & SIDBI join forces to encourage solar adoption among MSMEs

MUMBAI: Tata Power Solar Systems Limited (TPSSL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL), signed a MoU with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) on Tuesday to offer an easy financing option for MSMEs.

MSMEs that are willing to opt for Rooftop Solar PV Plant or associated services from Tata Power or its authorised Channel Partners across India will be financially supported by SIDBI under the scheme, said the press release.

The MoU exchange ceremony was held at the Global SME Finance Forum 2023 in Mumbai in presence of Union Minister of State for Finance, Dr. Bhagwat Karad.

Dr. Praveer Sinha, CEO&MD,



Tata Power and Sivasubramanian Ramann, Chairman & Managing Director, SIDBI exchanged the MoU.

Under this strategic partnership, TPSSL and SIDBI will encourage solar energy adoption among MSME by offering cus-

tomised & innovative financing solutions through SIDBI's 4E (End to End Energy Efficiency) Scheme, as per the official statement.

The 4E solar financing scheme offers TPSSL's customers an array of compelling

benefits, including the most competitive interest rates and loan limit to meet the requirement of the MSME sector.

TPSSL and SIDBI has also announced the launch of The Big Solar Fest at the Global SME Finance Forum 2023 to offer zero processing fees for the upcoming festival season to encourage the widespread adoption of solar energy among MSMEs.

The Big Solar Fest will spread awareness on the most competitive financing offerings with zero percent processing fees for the upcoming festival season.

This additional incentive will serve to expedite the green journey of the MSME sector, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable growth and clean energy solutions.

FICCI to Host ESG Summit in Mumbai on October 9

MUMBAI: The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) is organising the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Summit on the theme of driving sustainable transformation in Mumbai next month.

The event intends to discuss the increased focus on ESG disclosures and stakeholder scrutiny, adherence to ESG principles which is taking centre-stage.

The Summit will be held on October 9 at Taj President, Cuffe Parade in Mumbai.

Companies are now incorporating ESG into their mission and values, endeavouring to fully integrate it into their strategy and operations, noted FICCI.

The Summit is being organised under the aegis of FICCI ESG Committee, chaired by Imtaiyazur Rahman, MD&CEO, UTI AMC and co-chaired by Amit Tandon, MD, IIA.

Dinesh Khara, Chairman,



SBI will deliver the Keynote Address during the Inaugural Session. Discussions at the Summit would be geared towards catalysing public and private investment in sustainable businesses through effective policy regulations, institutional mechanisms and business practices.

The Summit will bring together all participants of the eco-system i.e. representatives from the Indian Government and Regulators, banks, domestic and international institutional investors, industry leaders, intermediaries and other stakeholders.

The registration link for the event: <https://registrations.ficci.com/ficesg/online-registration.asp>

Centre Government to launch 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme on Sept 17



NEW DELHI: The central government is preparing the launch of PM Vishwakarma scheme to provide toolkit incentives to artisans.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the scheme at the India International Convention & Expo Centre in New Delhi on September 17, 2023.

Under the scheme, beneficiaries will get Rs 15,000 each as toolkit incentives through

e-vouchers or eRUPI.

This will be apart from collateral free enterprise development loans at concessional rate of interest.

Further, the artisans would also get an incentive of Rs 1 per transaction for maximum of 100 transactions per month, showed a presentation prepared by the MSME ministry.

The artisans would have to go through a skill verification

THE ARTISANS WOULD ALSO GET AN INCENTIVE OF RS 1 PER TRANSACTION FOR MAXIMUM OF 100 TRANSACTIONS PER MONTH, SHOWED A PRESENTATION PREPARED BY THE MSME MINISTRY

phase followed by a five-day training session. An advanced training session will be provided for 15 or more days and during the training period they would get a stipend of Rs 500 per day, the presentation showed.

The scheme also has a corpus of Rs 250 crore for quality certification, branding, advertising, publicity and other marketing activities.

The scheme was approved by the cabinet committee on economic affairs (CCEA) on 16 August with an outlay of Rs 13,000 crore for a period of five years (FY24-28)

Nifty touches all time high level of 20,000 points



MUMBAI: Nifty advanced for the seventh straight day to log the best stretch of gains in 11 weeks and touched the all time high level of 20,000 on Monday (September 11), says Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

At close, Nifty was up 0.89 per cent or 176.4 points at 19996.4. Volumes on the NSE were on the higher side compared to

recent average. Midcap index rose more than the Nifty even as the advance decline ratio rose to 1.23:1, he said.

Net investments into actively managed equity schemes in India increased more than 2.65 times month-on-month to Rs 20, 245.3 crore in August. SIP contribution to mutual funds industry in August stood at Rs 15, 813.5 crore, compared with

Rs 15, 242.7 crore in July, he said.

For the first time ever, Nifty reached the 20,000 mark as euphoria around India's leadership at the G20 conference trumped concerns resulting from crude at \$90 per barrel, says Vaibhav Vidwani, Research Analyst, Bonanza Portfolio. The majority of sectoral indexes also saw gains, with Nifty PSU Bank and Nifty Metal leading the pack with gains of 3.13 per cent and 1.81 per cent respectively. SJVN Ltd was amongst one of the top performing stock on Monday, up by 20 per cent, as its subsidiary, SJVN Green Energy's and Bhakra Beas Management Board (BMB) inked a power purchase agreement for an 18 MW solar power project. The project's land parcels in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh will be developed by BBMB, he said. By August 2024, the project should be put into operation. Adani Ports, Adani Enterprises, Apollo Hospitals, Axis Bank and Power Grid Corporation, were among the top gainer while losers included Jio Financial, Coal India, ONGC, Bajaj Finance and L&T.

India growing at a rate of 7%: Union Minister Som Parkash



NEW DELHI: Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash on Monday said that India is growing at a rate of seven per cent, adding the current growth rate will continue.

The Minister said that in a few years, India will become a premium economy. "Today, the Indian rupee has become a global currency and I am happy to share that 22 countries are doing businesses in rupees, a matter of great pride for us," he said. He was speaking at a conference on demystifying trade and investment.

The event, organised by the

CII Northern Region, brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and experts to deliberate on the pivotal role that standards play in enhancing India's exports and the essential preparations required by the industry to integrate into global supply chains seamlessly.

Keeping in view India's vision of becoming Atmanirbhar, production linked incentive schemes for 14 key sectors have been announced.

Talking about ease-of-doing business, the minister shared that the government of India has reduced 39,000 compli-

Release of Property Documents: RBI tightens noose

JAG MOHAN THAKEN

Now the lending institutes will have to release the property documents upon receiving full repayment and closure of loan account within thirty days, otherwise they will have to compensate the borrower at the rate of Rs 5,000/- for each day of delay. RBI, in its letter dated September 13, 2023, has directed all Commercial Banks (including Small Finance Banks and Regional Rural Banks, excluding Payments Banks), all Local Area Banks, All Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks, all State Co-operative Banks and District Central Co-operative Banks, all NBFCs (including HFCs) and all Asset Reconstruction Companies to adhere to these guidelines or face the conse-

quences. These Directions have been issued under sections 21, 35A and 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, sections 45JA and 45L of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, and section 30A of the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.

RBI letter states that in terms of the guidelines on Fair Practices Code issued to various Regulated Entities (REs) since 2003, REs are required to release all movable / immovable property documents upon receiving full repayment and closure of loan account. However, it has been observed that the REs follow divergent practices in release of such movable / immovable property documents leading to customer grievances and disputes. To address the issues faced by the borrowers and towards promoting responsible lending conduct among the REs, these Directions are being issued.



RBI directs that the REs shall release all the original movable / immovable property documents and remove charges registered with any registry within a period of 30 days after full repayment/ settlement of the loan account.

The borrower shall be given the option of collecting the original movable / immovable property documents either from the banking outlet / branch where the loan account

was serviced or any other office of the RE where the documents are available, as per her / his preference.

The timeline and place of return of original movable / immovable property documents will be mentioned in the loan sanction letters issued on or after the effective date.

RBI directions further adds that in order to address the contingent event of demise of the sole borrower or joint borrow-

ers, the REs shall have a well laid out procedure for return of original movable / immovable property documents to the legal heirs. Such procedure shall be displayed on the website of the REs along with other similar policies and procedures for customer information.

Tightening the noose, the RBI warns that in case of delay in releasing of original movable / immovable property documents or failing to file charge satisfaction form with relevant registry beyond 30 days after full repayment/ settlement of loan, the RE shall communicate to the borrower reasons for such delay. In case where the delay is attributable to the RE, it shall compensate the borrower at the rate of Rs 5,000/- for each day of delay.

In case of loss/damage to original movable / immovable property documents, either in part or in full, the REs shall assist the borrower in obtaining

duplicate/certified copies of the movable / immovable property documents and shall bear the associated costs, in addition to paying the compensation as indicated above. However, in such cases, an additional time of 30 days will be available to the REs to complete this procedure and the delayed period penalty will be calculated thereafter (i.e., after a total period of 60 days).

The compensation provided under these directions shall be without prejudice to the rights of a borrower to get any other compensation as per any applicable law.

These Directions shall be applicable to all cases where release of original movable / immovable property documents falls due on or after December 1, 2023.

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

INTERNATIONAL

Int'l media highlights the G-20 summit

FW DESK
New Delhi

In the week leading up to the 18th G 20 Summit in New Delhi, international media ran stories about India playing host to world leaders like Joe Biden, Rishi Sunak, Emanuel Macron and several other dignitaries scheduled to attend the Summit on 9th and 10th September. In the run up to the summit, a section of International media also focused on stories like demolition of slums, status of democracy, India's economic disparity etc.



played on the large LED screens where he said "Good news has just arrived. With our teams' hard work and your cooperation, consensus has emerged on New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit Declaration... I propose that the Leaders' Declaration be adopted. I announce adoption of the Declaration."

BBC called it "a day of unexpectedly big headlines at the G20 Summit". Underlining that few expected a joint declaration on the first day of the Summit, given the sharp divisions among the group members over the war in Ukraine, BBC stated "The Delhi declaration appears designed to allow both

statement on Ukraine is sign of India's growing influence". Wall Street Journal wrote "As India rises, The G-20 Reveals a Shifting World Order". Beijing praised the New Delhi declaration adding that G20 is a body for economic issues, not geopolitics. Al Jazeera reported "Russia praises 'balanced' declaration as summit concludes". New Delhi Summit is seen by observers as an important platform for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to expand the country's clout on the global stage. It also offers US President Joe Biden an opportunity to deepen ties with his hosts and reach out to developing countries" wrote South China Morning Post published from Hong Kong

The Washington Post and CNN also highlighted the announcement of India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor calling it an "ambitious proposal aimed at further connecting a volatile region and countering China's years-long backing of massive infrastructure projects around the world."

Trump demands recusal of US judge in 2020 pol subversion case

Former US President Donald Trump has demanded the recusal of the federal judge in his 2020 presidential election subversion case. Trump's attorneys on Monday argued that US District Judge Tanya Chutkan's comments, which were made while sentencing two previous January 6 defendants that appeared to reference Trump, indicated she believed that the former US President "should be prosecuted and imprisoned", Xinhua news agency reported.

"Judge Chutkan has, in connection with other cases, suggested that President Trump should be prosecuted and imprisoned," the former President's attorneys said in a court filing.

"Such statements, made before this case began and without due process, are inherently disqualifying," they added. Trump has been charged by US Special Counsel Jack Smith with four felony counts for allegedly attempting to subvert the results of the 2020 presidential election.

Rishi Sunak confirms raising British Sikh's detention with Modi

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has confirmed that he raised the case of a Scottish Sikh detained in India since 2017 during his talks with counterpart Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, a BBC report said.

While the UK Foreign Office ruled out intervening in the Jagtar Singh Johal's case on September 8, Sunak, under pressure to highlight the issue, said he raised it along with other consular issues.

He did not provide details, but said: "The Foreign Office is continuing to provide support to Mr Johal's family and will continue to do so." In response to the development, campaigners for Johal said the UK government should declare Modi's response to Sunak on the issue, and that it is "meaningless" if the Prime Minister didn't call for "immediate release", the BBC reported on Sunday.

"What did Rishi Sunak say to Narendra Modi about the case and how did he respond? Without answers to these questions, the prime minister's talk is meaningless," Maya Foa, Director of human rights group



Reprieve, told the BBC.

The UK Sikh Federation said Sunak had appeared "very reluctant" to press Johal's case since entering No 10, and "has demonstrated his weakness and lack of leadership by shamefully failing to stand up for the rights of a British citizen". "Rishi Sunak and his Foreign Office ministers are now talking utter nonsense in terms of Jagtar's best interests and justice. They appear scared and clueless on how best to apply diplomatic pressure on India and are leaving it to the corrupt Indian judicial system," Dabinderjit Singh, the principal adviser to the Sikh Federation, told the BBC.

Sunak's action came after a group of more than 70 MPs called on him last week to urge Prime Minister Modi to secure the 36-year-old Sikh campaigner's "immediate release".

En route New Delhi for the G20 Summit on September 9-10, Sunak, on being asked whether he would be raising the case, said that he would be "raising a range of things with Prime Minister Modi -- this (Johal's case) is something that, just so people are reassured, has already been raised on multiple levels on multiple occasions".

Technical snag delays Canadian PM Trudeau's departure from Delhi



NEW DELHI: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's visit to India for the G20 Summit 2023 hit a snag on Sunday when his official plane experienced a technical issue at Delhi airport.

Airport sources said Trudeau's plane CF001 encountered a technical problem shortly before its scheduled departure.

The Canadian delegation, including Trudeau and his son Xavier, will remain in India until the issue is resolved by the engineering team on the ground, said the sources.

The unexpected delay has led to adjustments in the Canadian delegation's travel plans. Originally slated to depart on Sunday, they will now extend their stay in India until the aircraft is deemed fit for travel.

Biden says he raised human rights, free press with Modi

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said on Sunday that in addition to the "significant business" done at the just-concluded G20 in India such as the rail-ship economic corridor extending from India to Europe, he was able to raise the "importance of respecting human rights ... the vital role (of) civil society and a free press" in his bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a customary trip-ender news conference in Hanoi, the second leg of his tour of India and Vietnam. Biden was peppered with questions about China and President Xi Jinping, who had skipped the G20 meeting, and about Ukraine. In his opening remarks, Biden thanked Modi's "leadership and his hospitality and hosting the G20".

He went on to speak about a part of the visit that was overshadowed by the G20 meeting — his bilateral with the Indian leader. Biden said he and Modi had "substan-



tial discussions about how we're going to continue to strengthen the partnership between India and the United States, building on the Prime Minister's visit to the White House last June".

Biden had hosted Modi in a state visit, with the customary state dinner, which was the first for the Indian Prime Minister.

Biden then went on to say: "As I always do, I raised the importance of respecting human rights and the vital role that civil society and a free press have in building a strong and prosperous country with Modi."

Morocco struggles after rare, powerful earthquake kills and injures scores of people

More than 2,000 people were killed, and the Morocco quake toll was expected to rise as rescuers struggled to reach hard-hit remote areas

Morocco has revised upward the death toll from a powerful earthquake that shook Marrakesh and surrounding regions. The Interior Ministry said late Saturday that 2,012 people were killed when the temblor struck late Friday. The toll is expected to rise as rescuers struggled to reach hard-hit remote areas.

The ministry said the highest number of deaths were recorded in Al Haouz province, with 1,293 killed; and Taroudant, with 452. At least 2,059 people were injured, including 1,404 critically. The government also announced three days of national mourning. The magnitude 6.8 quake on Friday was the biggest to hit the North African country in 120 years. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant held a phone call with his Moroccan counterpart to express Israel's desire to assist the earthquake-stricken country "as much as is required." Mr. Gallant ordered



the Israeli military to prepare to provide Morocco with humanitarian aid.

Israel and Morocco normalised relations in 2020 and have recently moved to deepen their diplomatic and security ties. Moroccan Senate president Ennaam Mayara was scheduled to be the first Moroccan official and one of the few Muslim leaders ever to set foot in Israel's Knesset, or parliament, earlier in the week but called off the visit to Israel at the last minute due to a medical emergency.

"A significant part of the

PM Modi 'doing the right thing' by promoting Make in India: Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin has once again lauded the 'Make in India' initiative and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "doing the right thing" by promoting the policy. In his address to the plenary session of the 8th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok on Tuesday, Putin gave India's example while responding to a query about Russian-manufacture automobiles. "You know, we did not have domestically made cars then, but we do now. It is true that they look more modest than Mercedes or Audi cars, which we bought in vast amounts in the 1990s, but this is not an issue. I think that we should emulate many of our partners, for example, India. They are focused on the manufacture and use of Indian-made vehicles."

"I think that Prime Minister Modi is doing the right thing in promoting the 'Make in India' programme. He is right," the Russian leader said. He went on to say that it is "absolutely fine" to use Russian-made automobiles. "This will not lead to any infringements of our WTO obligations, absolutely not. It will concern state purchases. We must create a certain chain regarding what cars different classes of officials can drive, so that they will use domestically-made cars."

"You probably know about the proposals to continue buying these cars. It would be easy to do, because the logistics are streamlined," Putin added. In June while addressing an economic forum in Moscow, Putin had called Modi "a great friend of Russia" and praised the 'Make in India' initiative. "Our friends in India and our big friend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the 'Make in India' initiative several years ago.



Putin's 'Economic Mind War' in Russia

DR P S VOHRA

Few weeks back, when a dispute emerged between the Governor of the Central Bank of Russia and President Putin's economic advisor, it was widely believed that the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has lasted for more than 500 days, was beginning to have an impact. The main reason for the dispute between them was the decision by the Central Bank's Governor to increase the bank's interest rate by 350 basis points in a single day. Just a few weeks ago, there had already been an increase of 100 basis points in interest rates by the Central Bank. As a result of these increases, the interest rate in Russia has risen from 8.5% to 12% at present. It's worth noting that in the past ten years, there hasn't been such a significant increase in interest rates in India. Therefore, the sudden policy changes in recent days have brought Russia's economic situation into discussions, although there is no other substantial evidence or proof available to support this. Given the stature of President Putin, it does not seem that Russia will go into a period of economic uncertainty so soon, although the US and its NATO friends, various countries of the European Union, have imposed many economic sanctions on Russia, specially the ban on the purchase of gas and crude oil from Russia.

The main purpose of increasing interest rates, according to the governor, is to control the ever-increasing inflation in Russia these days. It's known that the current inflation rate in Russia is around 7.6%, and this rate doesn't appear to be



exceptionally high, similar to what some major developed countries experienced after the pandemic. In this context, it is also necessary to clarify that the policy of tolerance on the rate of inflation in Russia remains up to 4 percent and necessary steps are taken when it goes above it. Now it is also necessary to look at why this inflation rate is increasing? For the last one and a half years, almost all the factories and industries of Russia have been producing only to meet all the needs of the Russian army, causing shortages or reduced availability of various goods in society, leading to an increase in their prices. It's a rather simplistic analysis to assume that due to a shortage of foreign currency reserves, Russia is unable to import essential goods. Foreign exchange reserves figures show that Russia's position is much stronger. When the war with Ukraine started, Russia had a reserve of 640 billion US dollars, which is equivalent to about 586 billion dollars today. The same reserve is also in India today. It is also important to mention that Russia's lowest foreign exchange reserves in the last ten years (350 billion US dollars) were in the year 2016.

No one can disagree that when inflation levels are consistently

in interest is responsible for it. This situation has led to disagreements between President Putin's chief economic advisor and the Governor of the Central Bank.

Russia's economy is mainly identified on the global stage as an exporter of gas, crude oil, and various food products. India has been buying oil from Russia since April 2022 and it is increasing rapidly. Till March 2023, India had purchased an average of 1.02 million barrels of crude oil from Russia. Russia has now become the top country supplying oil to India, which was at number 10 till last year. After the Ukraine conflict, Russia's economic growth rate was mostly negative in the year 2022, but in 2023, the economy has shown a significant rebound, with an average growth rate of over four percent. Amidst all this, President Putin, who is leading his country with national pride in the Ukraine conflict, must be grappling with economic questions, including maintaining economic stability in the country and consistently providing financial support to the ongoing conflict. In the midst of these considerations, when inflation suddenly rises over the past few months, Putin is likely aiming to control it, but certainly he wouldn't want it to have certain effects that could harm the economic interests of the common Russian citizens. This might be the reason why the increase in interest rates by the bank was openly criticized by Putin's chief economic advisor. It's important to mention that Russia's population is consistently declining and is roughly equivalent to one-tenth of India's total population. The declining population also leads to a shortage of skilled workers. Observations reveal that employees are working in

shifts of 3-3, indicating a shortage of skilled labor. Therefore, for Putin, it has become crucial to bring certainty and stability to the country's internal economic matters.

After Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022, western countries not only imposed strict sanctions but also asked other countries not to do business with Russia. Products that have been banned include Russian oil, gas, vodka and tobacco, etc. But Western countries have shied away from imposing sanctions on Russia's nuclear products because they are needed to generate electricity. According to the US Energy Information Administration, Russia sent 12 percent of its total uranium exports to the US last year. In 2022, Europe will get 17 percent of Russia's uranium. Russia's isolation from the West has increased due to the imposition of new and tougher economic sanctions. Therefore, pursuing closer relations with Africa is an intrinsic part of this vision. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also signaled the same geopolitical stance during several of his visits to Africa amid the ongoing war with Ukraine. Russia's growing trade relations with African countries have created new avenues and, in a way, have helped Russia's economy. Undoubtedly, the US and other developed countries have not been able to intimidate Russia very much on the economic front. Russia is now entering a new era of international diplomacy with India, China and many other countries and is doing business transactions of crude oil, gas etc. with the domestic currencies of these countries.

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St Kitts and Nevis celebrates 40 years of friendship with Taiwan

BASSETTERRE: The 2023 Taiwan Expo held in St Kitts and Nevis, was organised by the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAI-TRA) in collaboration with the Taiwanese Embassy on the island and marked a pivotal moment in the diplomatic history of both nations.

Held in August at the Visitor Centre, Malcolm Guishard Recreational Park in Nevis, the event commemorated the 40th anniversary of official diplomatic relations between Taiwan and St Kitts and Nevis. Through a myriad of exhibi-



tions and cultural experiences, the Expo further solidified the deep-rooted bond between these two countries.

Showcasing Taiwanese Innovation - The Expo featured 26 Taiwanese companies rep-

resenting diverse industries. Visitors had the privilege of exploring a wide array of cutting-edge products, including high-quality scissors, knives, and sharpeners, health supplements, sealing machines, solar products, house accessories, leisure foods, and state-of-the-art ICT products such as smartphones, laptops, VR devices, dashcams, and LED smart projectors. Notably, all the ICT products exhibited were recipients of the prestigious Taiwan Excellence Awards, underscoring their innovation and superior quality.

St Kitts and Nevis crowned as best destination to invest in according to 2023 CBI Index

FW DESK
Basseterre

St Kitts and Nevis has been recognised as the best CBI destination in the 2023 edition of the CBI Index, trumping 11 other countries with active citizenship by investment (CBI) programmes.

The country, which has made several sweeping changes to its CBI Programme in the last year, took top honours, scoring 77 points in a race between nations such as Dominica, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, Malta, Vanuatu, Turkey, Egypt, Austria, Cambodia, and Jordan.

The 2023 CBI Index noted that St Kitts and Nevis has been the most proactive CBI nation in the Caribbean when it comes to responding to security concerns raised by Western nations. The country 'stands out for taking immediate and decisive action based on the 'Six Principles' framework. Moreover, it un-



derscores a political will to take a proactive leadership role in the long-term sustainability of the industry through good governance, enhanced due diligence, and regional harmonisation with international partners.

Now in its seventh year, the CBI Index utilises its established nine-pillar index architecture to provide investors with a data-driven framework with which to measure the performance and appeal of global CBI programmes. The nine pillars include Standard of Living, Freedom of Movement, Minimum Investment Outlay, Mandatory

Travel or Residence, Citizenship Timeline, Ease of Processing, Due Diligence, Family and Certainty of Product. St Kitts and Nevis scored full marks in Mandatory Travel or Residence, Ease of Processing, Due Diligence and Certainty of Product pillars. The Mandatory Travel or Residence pillar examines the travel or residence conditions imposed on applicants both before and after the granting of citizenship. St Kitts and Nevis does not have travel or minimum residency requirements for its programme, making it straightforward for busy entrepreneurs and global citizens to attain citizenship in the country.

The Ease of Processing pillar measures the end-to-end complexity of the CBI application process.

